

Were the Mennonite Van Dijcks related to the New Amsterdam Op den Dycks?

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Philipp van Dijck (1564)

One of the early Netherlandic Mennonite ancestors on record is Philipp van Dijck. Information about him is scarce. Michael Calmeyer mentions Philipp and his wife Maria Grauwert in connection with the marriage in Danzig of their daughter Maria (born 1606 in Danzig) to Gysbert de Veer (born 1600) in 1628 [See *De Nederlandsche Leeuw*, 1967, p. 344]. Horst Penner mentions Philipp as well, noting his membership in 1592 in a Mennonite congregation in the Marienburg area of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth [See *Die ost und westpreussischen Mennoniten*, 1978, p. 256]. Ulrich Dyck records the marriage of Maria Grauwert of Klein Mausdorf to Philipp van Dijck (born 1564) [See Dyck's working papers, p. 132 at https://mla.bethelks.edu/metadata/ms_482.php].

From these references we can conclude that Philipp was a Mennonite and that he lived in the region of the Vistula Delta in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth as early as 1592. His daughter's marriage to Gysbert de Veer produced descendants who, in later generations, were among the eighteenth-century settlers who established the first Mennonite Settlement of Chortitza along the Dnieper River in modern Ukraine.

We have no concrete information about Philipp's origins or his parents.

A search for Philipp van Dijck on the popular genealogical web sites will generate a list of many public family trees (in one case more than 1,400), asserting that his parents were Gysbert op den Dyck (1528-1585) and Maria Ryswick of Wesel. The exciting aspect of this discovery is that Gysbert op den Dyck has a long and well researched lineage stretching back to the thirteenth century [See Charles Wilson Opdyke, "The Op Dyck Genealogy", 1889].

Can the information linking Philipp van Dijck to Gysbert op den Dyck be trusted?

The Op den Dyck Family

Gysbert op den Dyck was a public servant, serving eight terms as the Town Councillor for the Cow Gate Ward in Wesel, one term as Supervisor of the City Poor, and finally for seven years he held the position of Commissioner of Public Works. His wife, Maria, served a term in Wesel as Inspector of Washer Women. These work terms are documented in Wesel archives and span the adult lives of Gysbert and Maria, making it clear they spent their lives in Wesel.

The town of Wesel is located on the lower Rhine River in the region of Franconia. When Gysbert op den Dyck lived, this region was part of the Holy Roman Empire.

Gysbert and his family belonged to the congregation of St. Willibrord's Church in Wesel. This church was Roman Catholic at the time of his birth, but it became a Protestant church as early as 1540. It did not convert to an Anabaptist church.

The only documented child of Gysbert and Maria is a son named Lodowick (1565). Lodowick and his wife Gertrude van Wesek had three children. Extant baptism records indicate that Lodowick had his children baptized at St. Willibrord's and his family were not Anabaptists. Their son Gysbert (1605) emigrated to New Amsterdam around 1638. Within a generation the family name evolved to Updike. If numerous public family trees found online are accurate, then this adventurer who settled in North America is the nephew of Philipp van Dijck.

Analysis

The online family trees do not withstand scrutiny.

[1] The geographic circumstances: Philipp van Dijck's proposed father, Gysbert op den Dyck (1528-1585), lived his entire life in Wesel in the Holy Roman Empire and there is no indication he was ever in the Vistula Delta region of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth. It is possible that Philipp was born in Wesel and moved to Danzig or Marienburg as an adult, but if he was a child of Gysbert it would appear unusual that such a move would not be documented in the published genealogy of Gysbert.

[2] Documented children of Gysbert op den Dyck: The reliably documented genealogy of Gysbert op den Dyck contains no record of a son named Philipp.

[3] Religion: Descriptions of church affiliation show that Gysbert and his family were not Anabaptists. This does not preclude a son of Gysbert becoming an anabaptist. However, Gysbert was a revered member of St. Willibrord's – he was one of very few congregants honored at his death by the ringing of the church bells. If he had a child who became an Anabaptist, at a time when Anabaptists were being severely suppressed in Wesel as well as other towns [See Global Anabaptist Encyclopedia Online, "Wesel", [https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Wesel_\(Nordrhein-Westfalen,_Germany\)](https://gameo.org/index.php?title=Wesel_(Nordrhein-Westfalen,_Germany))], surely this would have been recorded in the published genealogy describing his relationship with St. Willibrord's.

[4] Contradictory marital relationships: Many online trees attempt to reconcile disparate and contradictory facts by claiming that Philipp van Dijck married Gertrude van Wesek, who is known to be the wife of Lodowick op den Dyck.

Conclusion

The genealogical linkage between Mennonite Philipp van Dijck and the Wesel op den Dycks who established themselves in New Amsterdam cannot be supported by available documentary evidence.