

Delving into the Dennert Descendancy

This extensive research written by Henk Dennert was originally published in May of 1973, written by typewriter. I have re-typed the complete work and have held as true as possible to his words and style. The text is mostly in English, but has excerpts in Dutch, German and French.

Many of my closest relatives have often asked me why I want to delve into the Descendancy of the family. The most skeptical ones were thinking of inheritance-reasons and such. Intriguing as that side of the problem may seem I personally shrug it off as inconsequential in relation to the much more intriguing aspects of human motivations in leaving the cradle of their birth place. Closely connected to this question is the aspect of transformation in physic and character.

I am only a layman and have no pretension to be able to approach this subject academically. It is only a wondering in how far the central point can be reached again from the outer sphere of the supposed transformations.

I would not have started this tracing back of the Dennert family line if there did not exist a basis to wonder about it. This basis rests on two pillars:

1. The family name Dennert is not common. It only pops up now and then and is miraculously in the Suriname / Holland / Antilles families remembrances centered around Germany.
2. The German contacts I have with family (in the stadium better "supposed family") are further centered around Bavaria.

We of the Caribbean branch in fact knew only two things:

1. that we were descendants of a German soldier in the service of the Dutch and whose name has been Friedrich Wilhelm Dennert
2. that he still had a family in Quedlinburg in the Harz in Germany.

In about 1951, while I was at a boarding school in Zeist in Holland, I found a plastic triangle setsquare on which the name "Dennert und Pape" located in Hamburg-Altona.

It had been the first time in my life that I had encountered my family name printed in a European connection. Enthusiastically I wrote my father (Harry Adolf) about it. A coincidence was that he as a purchaser for the Shell refineries in Curaçao at about the same time had received a brochure of this same "Dennert und Pape", which proved to be and still is a quite important trade-house for office materials in Western Germany.

On writing to this Mr. Dennert my father was informed that the Hamburg Dennerts were of Bavarian Descendancy and, as far as he knew, had no links with the Quedlinburg family. This was a disappointment, which somehow had no impact on me.

My real interest for a further research into the Dennert family grew when in 1966 (I was press and cultural officer at the Cabinet of the Minister Plenipotentiary of the Netherlands Antilles in The Hague) I struck on a booklet called: "Hoe de tijden veranderen", with the subtitle: "Herinneringen van een ouden planter", by E. J. Bartelink, published by H. Van Ommeren - Paramaribo, in 1916. On page 34 of the booklet I read;

Het eenige wat me speet, toen ik de plantage Barbados verliet, was dat ik van mijn collega, den heer Dennert weg ging. Wij hadden op Barbados echte vriendschap gesloten, die tot zijn dood zou duren. Wij zijn later weer dichterbij elkaar gekomen; toen ik Directeur op Geijersvijf was, was hij Directeur op Voorburg, aan den overkant.

Hij was een Duitscher, die als militair naar de kolonie was gekomen. Door een merkwaardig ongeluk verloor hij een oog.

Op jacht zijnde had hij een gewonde Sabakoe opgenomen. En terwijl hij de vogel dichtbij zijn gelaat hield, om naar de wond te kijken, pikte de beest hem een oog uit. Hij moest toen den militaire dienst verlaten en kwam bij de planterij, waarin hij zich een eervoll positie verwierf.

Next to the pleasant encounter with my unknown grand-grandfather in Suriname, I was struck by the biblical underground of "an eye for an eye". The whole thing had a poetic underground. I imagined that lovely German soldier (Plantation man all by himself in the Suriname jungles. For my West-European Dennert name bearing readers I must make a small detour and explain that in about 1916 three Dennert brothers), Friedrich (Frits) Samuel, Harry Adolf and Wilhelm (Willy) Adolf, left Suriname for the promising riches of the new oil refineries in Curaçao and Aruba. (Frits went to Aruba). They worked for the Shell in Curaçao and the Shell in Aruba. I was born in 1930 in Curaçao and had scarcely been in Suriname.

When I made the acquaintance of the above mentioned booklet in 1966, I had been endeavoring in the writing of poems and novels. This explains the fascination for that Sabakoe shooting Dennert on the one hand. On the other hand, I had just read a book by the famous Dutch author Slauerkoff, who described a young adventurer who went to Macao along the roads one of his 15th or 16th century forefathers had taken into the Far East, and who gradually was that forefather.

And here I became really intrigued. Who was this Sabakoe shooting Dennert? Who was and is his European family and what did the movement from continent to continent transform in the families? Can certain family traits be found back?

There were two sources from which I could start:

1. in the Suriname registers
2. in the Quedlinburg registers

The Quedlinburg source proved infertile, insofar that my two letters to the “Herr Burgomaster of Quedlinburg” remained unanswered. The president of the East German trade office in Amsterdam – who I met at a reception in The Hague for the Xth anniversary of the Soviet Russian Navy – promised to look into the matter. He kept his word. He reported after two months that indeed a lady Frieda Dennert and her seven daughters had lived in Quedlinburg but had left for Western Germany, whereabouts unknown. A letter by me to the Deutsches Rotes Kreuz, Suchdienst Hamburg, was answered on July 16, 1969, negatively.

A visit to Suriname in April 1969 had been more positive. In the registers I found that Friedrich Wilhelm Dennert, born in 1837 in Stendal in Preussen, at the age of 32, as first son of Friedrich Wilhelm Dennert and Friederike Catharine Luise Borsche, arrived in Suriname in the year 1869. He died on April 9th, 1888 at the age of 51 years, 2 months. He had been married to Henriette Josephina van Kamen. This same register explained that this Dennert “in 1869 (32 jaar oud) vanuit Hardewijk naar Suriname gegaan als officier, op 1 September 1869 in Suriname aangekomen”.

Two new sources for research, in fact three, Stendal, close to Wurtemberg between Berlin and Velle in Eastern Germany; Hardewijk in Holland and a “silverware factory in Germany”, one of my Suriname relatives namely could remember that the “old Dennert” cherished a silver tea-set very much as the only remembrance of his family in Germany who had a silverware factory.

A second phase entered my research somehow history became more tangible.

In Holland in the “Rijksarchief” in The Hague and in Hardewijk lists of military personnel to the colonies were still available. The Minister of the Interior, afdeling Overgang Indische Zaken, Foofskade 1 in The Hague allowed me to look into the “Stamboek der Onder officieren en Manschappen van mindere graden van het Detachement Suppletie Troepen van het Koloniaal Werf Depot op den 2 Mei 1856 vertrokken naar het Nieuwediep en den 4e ditto overgenomen aan boord van het schip Eliza, bestemd voor Suriname”, folio nummer 1315, doorlopende nummer 20451” And there he was: Friedrich Dennert, father Friedrich; mother Wilhelmina Sophia Bosscher.

He was born on February 17th, 1837 in Geneve in Switzerland. Before entering Dutch service, he had been with the British-German Legion. He left for Suriname on the "Johanna Christina".

On entering the Dutch service, he was:

"lang : 1 ellen, 6 palmen, 7 duimen, 3 strepen"

A description of his face said:

aangezicht	:	Ovaal
voorhoofd	:	laag
oogen	:	blauw
neus	:	gewoon
mond	:	groot
kin	:	gewoon
haar	:	blond
wenkbrauwen	:	idem
merkbare tekens	:	geene

The records further mentioned:

Op den 8 December 1856 was hij vrijwillig geëngageerd als soldaat voor den tijd van zes jaar te rekenen in te gaan met den dag van inschepping naar de overzeesche bezittingen. Voorhands geld toegestaan zestig gulden. Den 8 Februari 1857 aangekomen in Suriname, en ingedeeld bij het bataljon Jagers N.27. Van te voren had hij gediend bij het Britsch-Duitsch Legioen, 1e Regiment, waar hij was aangenomen op 23 Juni 1855. Bij de ontbonding van het Korps ontslagen op 27 November 1856. In Suriname / nummer "pretent Suriname N.1923, bevorderd tot soldaat Jager 2 klasse

And here the veils of historic mystery compel me to dwell a little longer on the following puzzles:

- According to the Dutch records, the name was only Friedrich and not Friedrich Wilhelm. The same goes for his father. Both father and son in the Suriname records are Friedrich Wilhelm.
- In the Dutch records the mother is Wilhelmina Sophia Bosscher. In the Suriname records; Friederike Catharine Luise Borsche. Not only different Christian names, but also Bosscher and Borsche.
- In the Dutch records the date of birth is February 17th, 1837 in Geneva in Switzerland. In the Suriname records, 1837 in Stendal.

I do not think that the mentioned Friedrich (son) wanted to conceal his identity as the names somehow are identical as to Dennert, Friedrich and Borsche / Bosscher.

The same veil of mystery covers the real fact of departure from Holland and arrival in Suriname. According to the Suriname records, Friedrich arrived in Suriname in 1869, according to the Dutch records he arrived in 1857. The same difference in data goes for the departure from Holland, Suriname record: 1869 from Hardewijk and Holland records: 1856 from Nieuwediep.

Personally I do not think that there have been two military Friedrich Dennerts from the same Borsche / Bosscher mother in the same historical period. Anyway, it is most intriguing and I do hope that God allows me the time to delve in this mystery of the officer / soldier (?) Dennert.

I have tried five other sources to find a trace in the Friedrich mystery.

1. Dr.K.Fischer, Archivar of Frankfurt am Main, "Römerberg 19-27, Municipal House. He informed me that there have been two British-German Legions, of which one from 1756 to 1763, the so called 7-year war and one in the Napoleonic wars. This last one fought under Wellington in Spain. In this case, our Friedrich must have had the honor. Lists of the names could be obtained at the Public Records Office, Chancery Lane, London S.W.2..
2. This Public Records Office could only come up with the name Theodore Deinert, who as private enlisted on August 3, 1855. He was born in Luxembourg. Description of Theodore is not similar to that of Friedrich.
3. "L'Archiviste d'Etat adjoint" of Geneva in Switzerland in her letter of August 4th, 1969, wrote to me. "Malheureusement le couple Friedrich Dennert – Friedrike op Wilhelmina Sophia Bosscher ne figure ni dans les recensements de la population, ni dans les registres de permis de sejour de cette époque, et la naissance de Friedrich Wilhelm Dennert n'est pas mentionné dans les registres d'etat civil á la date que vos indiquez"
4. The municipality of Hardewijk informed me on July 17th, 1969 that Wilhelm Friedrich Dennert, born 1837 in Stendal does not appear in the records from 1862-1880. In the register of military leaving for Suriname the name also is not mentioned. I am further directed to the Ministry of Interior as before mentioned.
5. On July 5th, 1972, the "Nederlandsch Historisch Museum Schipvaart Museum in Amsterdam" informed me that the ship "Eliza" had been renamed "Johanna Christina" in 1857. But there were many ships of this name, but no records of crew or passengers.

And to all appearances, I seem to have reached the end, an end veiled in mystery of a man who was, but whose goings and doings were steeped into bureaucratic errors or historical discrepancies.

Fate has brought me to Japan, to Tokyo. From cultural man I had been made into trade / industry promoter in this beautiful country.

And here reading through the reports on the possibilities the Netherlands Antilles offer I came upon the name "Feith Dennert". This report on the clay deposits of Curaçao by Dr. W. J. M. van der Weijden mentioned a.o.:

De in hoofdstuk I genoemde kleischalies zowel van klasse I als van klasse II lenen zich uitstekend voor de verwaardiging van geëxpandeerde klei. Proefnemingen terzake uitgevoerd door DSM, Feith Dennert, Rieterwerke en Miag werke leveren alle gelijk gunstige resultaten op

Through this Dr. van der Weijden I obtained the very valuable address of Mr. Heinz Dennert, 8602 Bischberg bei Bamberg in Germany.

Spontaneously he answered my request for information on his family. Amongst others, he wrote the following interesting facts: Mr. Heinz Dennert, 44 years old, is manager and co-proprietor of a large and important sales business of all kinds of building materials. He and his family and all the next of kin live in Northern Bavaria.

He revealed to me that all Dennerts living in Northern Bavaria have descended in a direct line which goes back to David Dennert in the year of 1593, David's year of birth. David Dennert was born in Burgwindheim, a village not far away from Bischberg bei Bamberg.

While traveling around, Mr. Heinz Dennert - who with me is of the opinion that the name Dennert is a rare one and not frequently encountered - studies the telephone books. In this way he found the following people carrying the name Dennert:

1. Dennert und Pape, Hamburg, Germany
2. Horst Dennert, in Frankfurt/Main, Grosser Hasenpfad, Germany
3. Rolf Dennert, in Frankfurt/Main 35 Hufnagelstrasse, Germany
4. Walter Dennert, Basel, 33 Feldplatten Strasse, Switzerland
5. Karl August Gustav Dennert, Wien 15, No.6, Würfelgasse, Austria presently living at Theresienstrasse 25, Munich, Germany

The ancestors of Horst Dennert in Frankfurt have come from Hamburg and the area around.

Rolf Dennert of Frankfurt, Germany, on his father's side have come from the area of Frankfurt/Main, Germany.

Kordon Walter Dennert in Basel, Switzerland was born in the United States. He is from the second marriage of his father, who died when he was five. His aunt is

still alive. His father emigrated from Germany to the United States in the last part of the last century.

Karl August Gustav Dennert in Vienna is a stage actor of 69 years old, now living in Munich. In Munich he works for the German T.V. and acts in propaganda and advertising pictures and films. On the side of his father's ancestors they lived in Pommerania on the Baltic Sea, Prussia, Germany and that there are lots of Dennerts there. He seems to have a genealogical tree at his home in Vienna and many records, which tree was composed by his sister during the Hitler-era, when this was very much in vogue.

Mr.Heinz Dennert was of tremendous help and opened the possibility of a stream of information.

For the benefit of our non-Caribbean Dennerts, I can record some information which, I must add, still is very incomplete, but may be an addition on the existing data. I then can start from my father's father whose name was Rich Adolf Friedrich Dennert and who was married to Helena Fernandez. Their children were:

- Julius Edmund Dennert
- Harry Adolf Dennert
- Friedrich Samuel Dennert
- Willy August Dennert
- Richelle Henriette Samson Dennert
- Betsie Julie Herrenberg Dennert
- Hielde Heloise Dennert

Having its source in Suriname, the former Dutch Guyana, - as far as we know – the Caribbean branch of the Dennerts has gradually branched out to Western-Europe (Holland especially) and the U.S.A. (mainly San Francisco / Los Angeles areas). I hope to be able to give a more specified account of all my nieces, nephews and cousins once the information is in my possession as to dates of birth and marriage, children, etc. By then I hope the additional information from Germany and Switzerland also will have reached me.

Then perhaps some light will be shed on two unclear things yet for me:

1. Have there indeed been two families carrying the name Dennert? One in the Bavaria area and one in the Stendal or Quedlinburg area?
2. If there has been one family, where did the separation take place? And in this relation perhaps the missing link in the discrepancy of the Friedrich mystery can be found.