
Griete Smit's Parentage: Proof in the Absence of Vital Records

By Yvette Hoitink, CG

Netherlands church registrations, often dating back to the early seventeenth century, can document vital events predating the country's 1811 civil registration. Earlier court, manorial, tax, or town records may not provide direct evidence of parent-child relationships, but this brick wall may be overcome.

Tracing property records and studying a person's family, associates, and neighbors help prove parent-child relationships, even when no single record identifies them. Both methods helped identify the parents of Griete Smit of Bredevoort, Netherlands.

Griete was born during the Eighty Years' War (1568–1648), when the Netherlands fought for independence from Spain. Bredevoort, a fortified town in Gelderland, guarded the country's eastern border. It suffered greatly. Besieged in 1572, 1597, and twice in 1606, Bredevoort was burned and plundered. Part of the population was massacred. Fortifications strengthened after the last siege repelled the Spanish, but in 1646 when lightning hit the castle tower, stored gunpowder destroyed the building and surrounding houses. Records relating to Griete Smit's family were lost. Ironically, these catastrophes also resulted in new records.

GRIETE SMIT AND HARMEN NACHTEGAEL

Griete Smit and her husband, Harmen Nachtegael, appear in Bredevoort as parents of three children: twins Jan and Aeltjen, baptized in December 1640;

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and son Jan, baptized in November 1643.¹ They may have had children born before 1638, when baptismal recordings begin.² Bredevoort marriage registers start in 1639 and burial registers in 1759, too late to contain records of the couple's marriage and burials. Records of surrounding Aalten, Dinxperlo, Lichtenvoorde, Varsseveld, and Winterswijk parishes also start too late.³

Court records and the couple's children's baptism records permit estimating their birth, marriage, and death dates:

- At least twenty years old on 28 November 1627, when they first appear in court records, Harmen and Griete were born before 1608.⁴ Griete, likely no more than forty-five in 1643 when her last child was born, was born after 1598.⁵
- Griete married between 28 November 1627, when she was called "Grietken Schmitz vertrawter [betrothed of] Herman Nachtegalen," and 31 January 1628, when they were called "eheluiden" [spouses].⁶

1. Nederduits Gereformeerde Gemeente [Dutch Reformed Church] (Bredevoort, Gelderland, Netherlands), baptisms 1638–1691, chronologically arranged, Jan and Aeltjen Nachtegal, December 1640; call no. 9, "Collectie Retroacta van de Burgerlijke Stand [Collection of predecessors to the civil registration]," 1605–1833, Record Group (RG) 3019; Erfgoedcentrum Achterhoek en Liemers [Achterhoek and Liemers Heritage Center (ECAL)], Doetinchem, Netherlands; consulted as finding aid with images, *Erfgoedcentrum Achterhoek en Liemers* (<http://www.ecal.nu>). Also, Dutch Reformed Church (Bredevoort), baptisms 1638–1691, Jan Nachtegal, November 1643. The first Jan died before November 1643. By Netherlands tradition the next son would be given the same name as the deceased child. For a discussion of naming traditions, see Rob van Drie, *Dutch Roots: Finding Your Ancestors in the Netherlands* (The Hague: Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie, 2002), 96–97.

2. "Collection of predecessors to the civil registration," finding aid, *Erfgoedcentrum Achterhoek en Liemers*, entry for Bredevoort.

3. *Ibid.*, entries for Aalten, Bredevoort, Dinxperlo, Lichtenvoorde, Varsseveld, and Winterswijk. Some Winterswijk church records, not turned over to the government when civil registration was introduced in 1811, are part of the Winterswijk Dutch Reformed Church archives, also at ECAL. This includes a fragment with baptisms from the 1620s, which mentions no one named Nachtegal. See Dutch Reformed Church (Winterswijk, Gelderland, Netherlands), baptisms 1620–1625, 1647; call no. 25, Hervormde Gemeente Winterswijk [Reformed Church Winterswijk], RG 0303, ECAL; consulted as finding aid with images, *Erfgoedcentrum Achterhoek en Liemers*.

4. Manorial Court (Bredevoort, Gelderland, Netherlands), volontaire protocollen [voluntary protocols (vol. prot.)], 1627, fols. 36v–37r, Johan Schaers loan from Grietken Schmitz, betrothed of Herman Nachtegale, 28 November 1627; call no. 400, Rechterlijk Archief Heerlijkheid Bredevoort [Bredevoort Manor Court Records], 1533–1818, RG 3017, ECAL. Available on *FamilySearch* (<https://familysearch.org/search/catalog/56473>). Bredevoort's manorial court was an itinerant court that held sessions in the town of Bredevoort and the villages of Aalten, Dinxperlo, and Winterswijk. A court-appointed clerk, tasked with making a truthful record, created the protocols during or shortly after each session.

5. Dutch Reformed Church (Bredevoort), baptisms 1638–1691, Jan Nachtegal, November 1643.

6. Manorial Court (Bredevoort), vol. prot. 1627, fols. 36v–37r, 28 November 1627. Also, *ibid.*, vol. prot. 1628, fols. 6r–6v, Smit sale to Nachtegal, 31 January 1628; call no. 401, RG 3017, ECAL.

- Herman died between 31 December 1652, when he purchased land, and 13 December 1653, when “Margaretha Schmidts” was his widow.⁷
- Griete Smit died after April 1664, when she witnessed a baptism, and probably before March 1667, when her granddaughter Margreta Aeltjen Theben was baptized.⁸ In this time and place, only deceased relatives’ names were given to newborns, suggesting that Griete Smit had died before the baptism of her granddaughter Margreta—a variant of Griete.⁹

THREE SISTERS AND PARENTAL PROPERTY

Two deeds mention Griete with her relatives. On 31 January 1628 sisters Lijsbet, Hermken, and Agnes Smit sold property to their brother-in-law and sister Herman Nachtegael and Grietken Smit:

- Shares in their parental home in Bredevoort, located between Lambert Cortz’s and Herman Soldaets houses, Mentinck’s land and street, fronting the street, backing toward Griete Klock’s house, and including use of Mentinck’s street
- A share in the garden before the Misterpoort [one of Bredevoort’s town gates]
- A “Suermaets deel” [share of the commons at Zuurmaat]
- Two cow meadows on the Swanenbroeck¹⁰

That day spouses Herman and Grietken sold the sisters their share in the Lutke Koesinck farm in Ratum hamlet near Winterswijk.¹¹ This farm was probably part of Griete and her sisters’ inheritance.

TRACING THE SISTERS

Two apparent sisters, Agnes and Hermken Smitz, daughters of the late Peter Smit and Mechteld, had enough funds to lend money and purchase annuities later in 1628:¹²

7. *Ibid.*, vol. prot. 1652–1654, fol. 44, Van Broeckhuijsen sale to Nachtegaell, 31 December 1652; call no. 418. Also, *ibid.*, fol. 81v, Stoffels to Nachtegaell, 13 December 1653. Griete is a Dutch diminutive of Margaretha.

8. Dutch Reformed Church (Bredevoort), baptisms 1638–1691, Harmen Evers, April 1664. Also, Margreta Aeltjen Theben, March 1667. Margreta Aeltjen was a child of Bertram Theben and Lijsbeth Nachtegael and a grandchild of Griete Smit.

9. Until the middle 1900s, Dutch children were usually named after their grandparents, living or deceased, but in Eastern Gelderland in the 1600s, only deceased grandparents’ names were used. This tradition in nearby Winterswijk is found in J. Das, “Genealogische moeilijkheden en mogelijkheden in Winterswijk,” [Genealogical difficulties and possibilities in Winterswijk], in *Mozaiëk van Wintereswic* [Winterswijk mosaic] (Winterswijk: Vereniging Het Museum, 1980), 67–68.

10. Manorial Court (Bredevoort), vol. prot. 1628, fols. 6r–6v, 31 January 1628. “Markegronden” is land owned in common, translated here as commons.

11. *Ibid.*, fols. 6v–7r, Nachtegaell sale to Smit, 31 January 1628.

12. Annuities were a form of investment, whereby the purchaser would receive a fixed income in return for a one-time sum of money, similar to interest on a loan. The annuity could be bought off later, usually for the same sum.

- On 22 April 1628, Agnes Smitz, daughter of the late Peter Smitz and Mechteldt, received an annuity in return for money she supplied. Herman Huijninck, husband of Agnes Smitz, received 350 guilders of the main sum on 29 January 1639.¹³
- On 28 April 1628, Hermken Schmitz, daughter of Peter Smits and Mechteld his wife, both deceased, received an annuity of 6 “daler” [dollars].¹⁴
- On 12 May 1628, Hermken Smitz, daughter of the late Peter Smitz and Mechteld, lent 100 “daler.” Willem Krabbenborch, husband of Hermken Smitz, received the sum on 13 May 1637.¹⁵

Two sets of orphaned, apparently unmarried sisters named Hermken and Agnes Smits in 1628 are unlikely in a town with fewer than two hundred houses.¹⁶ The property’s value in fortified Bredevoort probably exceeded that of the exposed Winterswijk farm, leaving Griete’s sisters with cash on hand in January 1628, three to four months before Peter Smit and Mechteld’s daughters lent the money. Investing in annuities would safeguard the money. Absent other candidates for Griete’s sisters, lenders Hermken and Agnes likely were Griete’s sisters, implying Griete also was a daughter of Peter Smit and Mechteld.¹⁷ In 1641 Hermken Smit, widow of Willem Krabbenborch, married Gerrit Harkinck.¹⁸

13. Manorial Court (Bredevoort), vol. prot. 1628, fols. 23v–24r, Van Hengel annuity to Agnes Smitz, 22 April 1628.

14. Ibid., fols. 26r–36v, Schnoeijenbusch annuity to Hermken Schmitz, 28 April 1628.

15. Ibid., fol. 34v, Hermken Smitz loan to Krabbenborch, 12 May 1628.

16. Bredevoort had just 192 houses in 1635. See Bredevoort Manor, “Visite van alle heertsteden, browketels, backovens, eesten etc” [Visitation of all hearths, brewing kettles, baking ovens, malt drying installations, etc.], 30 May 1635; Archief Drost en Geërfden van Bredevoort [Archive of the sheriff and shareholders of Bredevoort]; call no. 177, RG 0098, ECAL; consulted as finding aid with images, *Erfgoedcentrum Achterhoek en Liemers*.

17. Manorial Court (Bredevoort), judiciële protocollen [judicial protocols], 1588, 1589, 1595–1613 [gaps 1582–1587, 1590–1595]; call nos. 58–75, RG 3017, ECAL. Parts of these judicial records are hard or impossible to read because of poor penmanship and damage by water, mold, rodents, fire, and occasional torn-off pages. Also, Manorial Court (Bredevoort), vol. prot. 1614–1664, call nos. 387–425. Also, Manorial Court (Bredevoort), sententiën [civil sentences] 1602–1650; call no. 191, RG 3017, ECAL. Earlier sentences are not extant. Also, Henk and Franciska Ruessink, transcriptions of voluntary protocols of Bredevoort 1614–1663, PDFs, Yvette Hoitink, *Heerlijkheid Bredevoort* (<http://www.heerlijkheidbredevoort.nl>) > section “Bronnen” > “Rechterlijk Archief.” Using PDFs from Ben Baneman, *Genealogiedomein* (<http://www.genealogiedomein.nl>), the author searched all transcribed church, census, and tax records of Bredevoort and the surrounding towns of Aalten, Dinxperlo, Groenlo, Lichtenvoorde, Varsseveld, and Winterswijk. She also searched the Gelderland province index of all church records of baptisms, marriages, burials, and memberships. See “Personen,” index, *Gelders Archief* (<http://www.geldersarchief.nl>).

18. Hermken Smit, widow of Willem Krabbenborch, had banns published in Bredevoort to marry Gerrit Harkinck on 26 September 1641. See Dutch Reformed Church (Bredevoort), marriages 1639–1675, chronologically arranged, Harkinck-Smits, 26 September 1641; call no. 12, RG 3019, *Erfgoedcentrum Achterhoek en Liemers*.

The third sister, Lijsbeth Smit, was one of three candidates:¹⁹

- Elisabeth Smitz, Herman Sanders's widow, married Henrich van den Bongardt by 1615.²⁰ Likely too old to be Griete's sister, she would have been married or widowed, not single, in 1628.
- Elijsabet Smits was Henrick Craen or Kramer's wife in 1624 and 1630.²¹ Unlikely to appear in court in 1628 without her husband or his consent, she is probably not Griete's sister Lijsbet.
- Lijsbet Smit and her husband, Casper Evers, lent money on 31 March 1637.²² Like Herman Nachtegael, Casper Evers was a "keurnoot" [assessor] of the Bredevoort manorial court, indicating their families were of similar social status.²³ Casper's wife Lijsbet, therefore, is the likely candidate for Griete's sister.

Griete, Hermken, Agnes, and Lijsbet Smit, or their husbands, appear jointly in baptismal records confirming they acted as sisters:

- In November 1642 Agnes Smit witnessed the baptism of Willemken, daughter of Gerrit Harckinck and Hermken Smitt.²⁴
- In August 1643 Grietjen Smidt and Gerrit Harckinck, second husband of Hermken Smit, jointly witnessed a baptism.²⁵
- In October 1644 Gerrit Harkinck witnessed the baptism of Lijsbeth, daughter of Casper Evers and Lijsbeth (Smit).²⁶
- In November 1643 Casper Evers, husband of Lijsbet Smit, witnessed the baptism of Jan, son of Hermen Nachtegal and Griete Smit.²⁷

19. Church, court, manorial, and tax records for Bredevoort and the surrounding areas were searched. Manorial Court (Bredevoort), judicial protocols 1588, 1589, 1595–1613, call nos. 58–75. Also, Manorial Court (Bredevoort), vol. prot. 1614–1664, call nos. 387–425. Also, Manorial Court (Bredevoort), civil sentences 1602–1650, call no. 191. Also, Ruessink, transcriptions of vol. prot. Bredevoort 1614–1663, *Heerlijkheid Bredevoort*. Also, Ben Baneman, PDFs, *Genealogiedomein*. Also, "Personen," *Gelders Archief*.

20. Manorial Court (Bredevoort), vol. prot. 1615, fol. 65v, estate division of Herman Sanders, 19 October 1615; call no. 388, RG 3017, ECAL.

21. *Ibid.*, vol. prot. 1624, fol. 46v, will of Henrick Craen and Lijsbet Schmits, 28 September 1624; call no. 397, RG 3017, ECAL. Also, *ibid.*, vol. prot. 1630, fol. 16v, Henrick Kramer and Elisabet Smits to Stormb, 4 March 1630; call no. 403, RG 3017, ECAL.

22. *Ibid.*, vol. prot. 1637, fols. 21r–21v, Van Nee loan from Caspar Evertz and Lijsbet Smits, 31 March 1637; call no. 410, RG 3017, ECAL.

23. For Herman Nachtegal as keurnoot [assessor], see *ibid.*, vol. prot. 1650–1651, fol. 10, 15 March 1650; call no. 417, RG 3017, ECAL. For Casper Everts as assessor, see *ibid.*, vol. prot. 1661, fol. 34v, 16 September 1661; call no. 422, RG 3017, ECAL.

24. Dutch Reformed Church (Bredevoort), baptisms 1638–1691, Willemken Harkinck, November 1642.

25. *Ibid.*, Gerritjen Kremer, August 1643.

26. *Ibid.*, Lijsbeth Evers, October 1644.

27. *Ibid.*, Jan Nachtegal, November 1643.

- In April 1660 “Griete Smitts weduwe [widow] Nachtegal” and Gerrit Harkinck, husband of Hermken Smit, witnessed the baptism of Willemken, daughter of Henrick ten Broecke and Mechtelt Krabbenborch, daughter of Hermken Smit.²⁸
- In December 1661 Lijsbeth and Harmken Smit, “tsamen 2 susters” [together 2 sisters], witnessed the baptism of Christina Maria, daughter of Henrick ten Broeck and Mechtelt Krabbenborgh, daughter of Hermken Smit.²⁹
- In October 1666 Casper Evers, husband of Lijsbet Smit, and “Agnies Smitts vrou van [wife of] Harmen Huijninck” jointly witnessed the baptism of Harmen Roloff, son of Derck Theben and Gerritien Nachtegal, daughter of Griete Smit.³⁰

TRACING THE PROPERTY

House in Bredevoort

If Peter Smit and Mechteld were Griete Smit’s parents, they would have owned the house, land, and farm these sisters inherited before 1628.³¹ Bredevoort manorial court records include only one house purchase by Peter Smit and no sales.³² On 20 August 1614 Peter Smit “van Bilstein” [from Bilstein] and Mechtelt bought a house in Bredevoort, a garden before the Misterpoort [gate], a part of the Suermaet, and two cow meadows on the Swanenbroek.³³ This combination of property is consistent with Griete’s acquisition from her sisters in 1628. The house was in Bredevoort, bordered by Merfeldt’s land, Dijenberch’s land and house, the Market, and Jan van Basten’s land towards one corner.³⁴

The 1614 neighbors do not match those of the house the four sisters inherited by 1628, but court and manorial records link the two sets of neighbors:³⁵

- In 1614 one side and the back of Peter Smit’s house faced Merfeldt’s land. On 27 October 1627 Adolph van Merveld [Merfeldt] and his wife Helena Drogen sold Henrick Mentinck and his wife Deelen Nijhof a house and yard in Bredevoort, with one end facing Moselagen’s land, Griete Klocken, and the heirs of the late

28. Dutch Reformed Church (Bredevoort), baptisms 1638–1691, Willemken ten Broecke, April 1660.

29. *Ibid.*, Christina Maria ten Broeck, December 1661.

30. *Ibid.*, Harmen Roloff Theben, October 1666.

31. Manorial Court (Bredevoort), vol. prot. 1628, fols. 6r–6v, 31 January 1628.

32. Manorial Court (Bredevoort), judicial protocols, 1588, 1589, 1595–1613, call nos. 58–75. Also, Manorial Court (Bredevoort), vol. prot. 1614–1664, call nos. 387–425. Pre-1614 property sales were recorded with civil cases in the judicial protocols series. Post-1614 sales and other voluntary legal transactions were recorded in a separate series. Like the voluntary protocols, these judicial protocols were reliably kept by the court clerk.

33. Manorial Court (Bredevoort), vol. prot. 1614, fols. 36r–36v, Van Cuijck sale to Smit van Bilstein, 20 August 1614; call no. 387, RG 3017, ECAL.

34. *Ibid.*

35. *Ibid.* Also, Manorial Court (Bredevoort), vol. prot. 1628, fols. 6r–6v, 31 January 1628.

Peter Smits van Bilstein's house.³⁶ Mentinck's land bordered the house the Smit sisters sold three months later.³⁷ The timing and matching neighbor suggests the Smit sisters were Peter Smit van Bilstein's unnamed heirs in 1627. This also places Griete Klock's property, a 1628 neighbor, near the house.

- The other 1614 neighbor was "Dijenberchs land." On 13 May 1615 Albert Dijenberch van Rhemen and his wife, Geertruidt van Rees, sold Hans Cortz and his wife Stijnen two adjacent houses in Bredevoort, bordering Peter van Bilstein's yard.³⁸ Hans Cortz died before 25 March 1626, leaving a son Lambert Cortz.³⁹ Lambert Cortz was the sisters' neighbor in 1628.⁴⁰
- On 30 May 1615 Albert Dijenberch van Rhemen and his wife, Gertruidt van Rees, sold Harmen te Bockell and his wife, Aelken, their house in Bredevoort next to the house just bought by Hans Cortz, backing toward Peter Smit's house and yard.⁴¹ Herman te Bockel was also known as Soldaet.⁴² In 1628 his property was near the house that the Smit sisters had inherited.⁴³
- No deeds were found for Jan van Basten's (1614 neighbor) or Griete Clock's (1628 neighbor) property.⁴⁴ In 1613 and 1614 Peter van Bilstein, probably as court assessor, compiled a list of Bredevoort citizens taxed for a new garrison's upkeep. His entry, the next to last, follows entries for Jan van Basten, Herman te Bockel, and Hans Cortz. It precedes Hans Clock's entry.⁴⁵ The list is not ordered alphabetically or by taxable amount, suggesting it reflects the compiler's route. A 1616 list of contributors to maintaining Bredevoort's wells follows a similar order as the 1613 and 1614 lists. Its final six entries are Jan van Basten, Herman te Bockell, Hans Cortz, Peter van Bilstein, Clocks huiss [Clock's house] and Wopenreijens nije behuisong op Merfelts stede [Wopenreijens's new house on the Merfelt plot].⁴⁶ A "fire bucket list" of 1620, recorded in a different order, implying a different route, shows Peter Smit in the same neighborhood. The first ward ends with Merfelt, Henrick ten Spoell, Claes Wever, Jurrien Smit, and Griete Clocken. The second

36. *Ibid.*, vol. prot. 1627, fols. 33v–34r, Van Merfeldt sale to Mentinck, 27 October 1627.

37. *Ibid.*, vol. prot. 1628, fols. 6r–6v, 31 January 1628.

38. *Ibid.*, vol. prot. 1615, fols. 28r–29r, Van Rhemen sale to Hans Cortz, 13 May 1615.

39. Manorial Court (Bredevoort), vol. prot. 1626, fols. 16v–17r, debt owed to "wijlen Hans Cortz nu sijnen kinderen Lambert und Johan Cortz" [the late Hans Cortz, now his children Lambert and Johan Cortz], 25 March 1626; call no. 399, RG 3017, ECAL.

40. Manorial Court (Bredevoort), vol. prot. 1628, fols. 6r–6v, 31 January 1628.

41. *Ibid.*, vol. prot. 1615, fols. 29v–30r, Van Rhemen to Te Bockell, 30 May 1615.

42. *Ibid.*, vol. prot. 1632, fol. 19, sale by "Herman te Bockel genant Soldaet" [Herman te Bockel called Soldaet], 9 June 1632; call no. 405, RG 3017, ECAL. In the local dialect, Herman and Harmen are variations of the same name.

43. Manorial Court (Bredevoort), vol. prot. 1628, fols. 6r–6v, 31 January 1628.

44. Manorial Court (Bredevoort), judicial protocols, 1588, 1589, and 1595–1613. Also, Manorial Court (Bredevoort), vol. prot. 1614–1664.

45. Bredevoort Manor, "Settung . . ." tax list for upkeep of the garrison, 24 May 1613 and 5 February 1614; call no. 174, RG 0098, *Erfgoedcentrum Achterhoek en Liemers*. Water damage makes parts of the document's introduction illegible, but the names of the tax payers are legible.

46. Bredevoort Manor, "Settunge tott reparatie der beijden gemeinen Putten und toebehoers" [Contribution for the repair of both common wells and amenities], 7 May 1616; call no. 173, RG 0098, *Erfgoedcentrum Achterhoek en Liemers*.

ward starts with Gerrit Kuiper, Jan van Basten, Hermen te Bockel, Hans Cortts, Peter van Bilstein, and Stoffel Stoffelzen.⁴⁷ In 1617 Hans Clock's widow was called Griete.⁴⁸

Four lists place the Clock and Van Basten properties near Peter van Bilstein. See table 1. Other surviving citizen lists confirm this was the only house that Peter Smit owned in Bredevoort. He disappears from the lists before Harmen Nachtegael appears:

- Peter's absence from lists of Bredevoort citizens sharing in the division of common grounds in 1608, 1611, and 1612 suggests he did not then own a house in Bredevoort.⁴⁹
- His first appearance as property owner on a tax list taken 24 May 1613 and 5 February 1614 predates his recorded purchase of the house on 20 August 1614.⁵⁰ Recording of sales months or years after the fact was not unusual.⁵¹ Comparing neighbors lists confirms it is the same house, despite the date discrepancy.
- Peter Smit was absent from a tax list to pay for the garrison in 1627.⁵² The list includes consecutive entries for Henrick Mentinck, Gerrit Gijsberts, Jan van Basten, Herman Soldaet, Lambert Cortts, Joan Cortts, Sweer de Backer [Sweer the baker], Hans huys dochter [the house of Hans's daughter], and Griete Klocken. They include some of Peter's neighbors. As the name of Sweer de Backer is not on other lists, he might have used the house owned by Peter Smits (or his heirs) in 1627.

47. Bredevoort Manor, "Ordnung der rotten und emmers" [List of wards and buckets], 12 February 1620; call no. 41, RG 0098, *Erfgoedcentrum Achterhoek en Liemers*.

48. Manorial Court (Bredevoort), vol. prot. 1617, fol. 21v, Hans Clock's estate settlement, 13 March 1617; call no. 390, RG 3017, ECAL.

49. Bredevoort Manor, "Koeweyden upt Swanenbroeck" [Cow meadows at the Swanenbroeck], 1608 (copy, 1628); call no. 88, RG 0098, *Erfgoedcentrum Achterhoek en Liemers*. The manuscript says this is a faithful copy from the administration of the steward of Bredevoort, created in 1628 by court clerk Willem Wisselinck. The steward's administration for this period has not survived, so the abstract provides the most reliable information available. Also, Bredevoort Manor, "Verdeylonge und affteickenonge der Swanenbroecks Deelen . . ." [Division and partition of the Swanenbroeck shares], 1612; call no. 90, RG 0098, *Erfgoedcentrum Achterhoek en Liemers*. Also, Bredevoort Manor, "Namen der genner so Suermaets—Deelen in de Suermate ond Bredeforth gelegen holden und hebben" [Names of the ones who hold and have shares of the Suermaet located in the Suermaet under Bredevoort], 1612; call no. 91, RG 0098, *Erfgoedcentrum Achterhoek en Liemers*. This manuscript says it was abstracted from the administration of the church masters. The original has not survived for this period.

50. Manorial Court (Bredevoort), vol. prot. 1614, fols. 36r–36v, 20 August 1614. Also, Bredevoort Manor, a tax list for garrison upkeep, taken on 24 May 1613 and 5 February 1614.

51. The author's reconstruction of seventeenth-century Bredevoort property owners shows several people on citizen lists before their recorded purchases, sometimes by as much as two years.

52. Bredevoort Manor, "Onkoste totte Sauvegarde und anders" [Costs for safeguarding and otherwise], 21 September 1627; call no. 175, RG 0098, *Erfgoedcentrum Achterhoek en Liemers*.

Table 1

Neighbors of the Smit House in Bredevoort

1614 NEIGHBORS ^a	1628 NEIGHBORS ^b	EXPLANATION
Dijenberch's land and house	Lambert Cortz's house	13 May 1615: Dijenberch to Hans Cortz. ^c Cortz had a son Lambert. ^d
	Herman Soldaet's house	30 May 1615: Dijenberch to Herman te Bockel. ^e Herman was also known as Soldaet. ^f
Merfeldt's land	Mentinck's land	27 October 1627: Mervelt to Mentinck ^g
Market	Street to the front	Consistent, the street was not identified in the 1628 record.
—	Griete Klock's house	Not in 1614 record. Peter Smit/van Bilstein was listed near "Hans Clock" in 1613/1614, ^h near "Clocks huis" in 1616, ⁱ and near Hans's widow "Griete Clocken" in 1620. ^j
Jan van Basten's land	—	Not mentioned in the 1628 record. Jan van Basten was listed near Peter Smit/van Bilstein in 1613–14, ^k 1616, ^l and 1620. ^m

a. Manorial Court (Bredevoort, Gelderland, Netherlands), *voluntaire protocollen* [voluntary protocols (vol. prot.)], 1614, fols. 36r–36v, 20 August 1614, Rechterlijk Archief Heerlijkheid Bredevoort [Bredevoort Manor Court Records], 1533–1818, Record Group (RG) 3017, Erfgoedcentrum Achterhoek en Liemers [Achterhoek and Liemers Heritage Center], Doetinchem, Netherlands.

b. *Ibid.*, vol. prot. 1628, fols. 6r–6v, 31 January 1628.

c. *Ibid.*, vol. prot. 1615, fols. 28r–29r, 13 May 1615.

d. *Ibid.*, vol. prot. 1626, fols. 16v–17r, 25 March 1626.

e. *Ibid.*, vol. prot. 1615, fols. 29v–30r, 30 May 1615.

f. *Ibid.*, vol. prot. 1632, fol. 19, 9 June 1632.

g. *Ibid.*, vol. prot. 1627, fols. 33v–34r, 27 October 1627.

h. Bredevoort Manor, "Settung . . .," tax list for upkeep of the garrison, taken on 24 May 1613 and 5 February 1614; call no. 174, RG 0098, *Erfgoedcentrum Achterhoek en Liemers*.

i. *Ibid.*, well contribution, Peter van Bilstein and "Clocks huis" [Clock's house], 7 May 1616; call no. 173, RG 0098.

j. *Ibid.*, list of wards and buckets, 12 February 1620; call no. 41, RG 0098. Also, Manorial Court (Bredevoort), vol. prot. 1617, fol. 21v, Hans Clock's estate settlement, 13 March 1617.

k. Bredevoort Manor, tax list for the garrison, 24 May 1613 and 5 February 1614, Peter van Bilstein.

l. Bredevoort Manor, contribution for the wells, 7 May 1616.

m. *Ibid.*, list of wards and buckets, 12 February 1620.

- The 1635 hearth tax register contains no entry for Peter Smit, consistent with his death by 1627. An entry for “Nachtegall” (no first name) who owned an “eeste” [malt drying installation] and “backaven tott neringe” [baking oven as a trade] appears in a section listing people who owned hearths for business purposes.⁵³ By its nature this list gives an incomplete neighborhood picture. The Nachtegall entry appears between Bastiaen Crijsman and Lambert Cortz. Lambert was the neighbor of the house that Harmen Nachtegaele and Griete Smits purchased from the three sisters in 1628. Harmen Nachtegaele’s owning a baking oven is consistent with “Sweer de Backer’s” use of the house in 1627.
- In 1649–50 Herman Nachtegaele owned a house, a yard, three cow meadows, and two parts of the Suurmaet.⁵⁴ He does not appear near known neighbors, but descriptions of properties near landmarks, like the town wall or gates, suggest the list is not ordered by location. This list omits Peter Smit.

LUTKE KOESINCK FARM

Among the property the sisters divided in 1628 was the Lutke Koesinck farm in Raetman (Ratum), presumably inherited from their parents.⁵⁵ On 3 July 1620 Peter Smit and Mechteld purchased the Lutke Koesinck farm in the hamlet of Henxtell (Henxel), not Ratum.⁵⁶

The reference to Raetman in the 1628 record was a mistake, because Bredevoort’s property tax records in 1649–50 include only one farm named Lutke Koesinck or a variant. In Winterswijk, it lay in the hamlet of Henxel, where Huininck and Caspar Everts owned it.⁵⁷ On 24 July 1649 Herman Huininck and his wife, Agnes Schmidt, and Casper Everts and his wife, Elisabeth Smid, sold Lutke Koesinck in Winterswijk, a hamlet of Henxel. That sale confirms the farm’s location and the wives as Griete’s sisters.⁵⁸ It also shows the sisters owned property previously owned by Peter Smit and Mechteld.

53. Bredevoort Manor, Visitation of all hearths, 30 May 1635. The unbound pages of the list were scanned out of order. The entry for Nachtegall, at the bottom of page 3v (modern page number) is followed by the word “Lamb:” in the bottom right corner, indicating that that is the first syllable on the next page. The only page that starts with “Lamb” is now numbered as page 6(r), starting with the entry for Lambert Cortz.

54. Bredevoort Manor, “Quoijer vande huijsen, hoeven, landerijen ende groenlanden onder de stadt Bredevoort gelegen” [Tax register of the houses, farms, lands and fields located under the city of Bredevoort], 1649–1650, section 1, Bredevoort, fols. 14v–15r; call no. 384, Staten van het Kwartier van Zutphen en hun Gedeputeerden [States of the Quarter of Zutphen and their Deputies], RG 0005, Gelders Archief; consulted as finding aid with images, *Gelders Archief*.

55. Manorial Court (Bredevoort), vol. prot. 1628, fols. 6v–7r, 31 January 1628.

56. *Ibid.*, 1620, fols. 28v–29r, Basquez de Acuna sale to Schmit van Bilstein, 3 July 1620; call no. 393, RG 3017, ECAL.

57. Bredevoort Manor, Tax register of the houses, farms, lands and fields located under the city of Bredevoort, 1649–1650, section 2, Winterswijk, fols. 113v–114r, entry for Lutteke Koesinck; RG 0005; *Gelders Archief*. Pagination restarts with each section.

58. Manorial Court (Bredevoort), vol. prot. 1648–1649, fols. 48v–49r, Huininck and Everts sale to Koesinck, 24 July 1649; call no. 416, RG 3017, ECAL.

PETER SMIT AND MECHTELDT

Peter Smit and his wife, Mechteld, first appear in Bredevoort records on 16 July 1608.⁵⁹ Peter sometimes was called “van Bilstein” [from Bilstein], probably referring to his or an ancestor’s origin.⁶⁰ Several villages, farms, and castles named Bilstein are in modern-day Germany and France.⁶¹

No other Bilstein references appear in records of Bredevoort and surrounding villages.⁶² Peter and Mechteld may have come to the town after the Prince of Orange reconquered Bredevoort in 1606 and installed a garrison.

Peter Smit died before 22 February 1627, when Mechteld Olentz, widow of Peter Smitz, and her unnamed children purchased a garden. This is the only known record of Mechteld’s last name.⁶³ She died between that date and 22 April 1628, when her daughter Agnes was called the minor daughter of the late Peter Smitz and Mechteld his wife.⁶⁴ She might have died by 31 January 1628, when the sisters sold their inheritance.⁶⁵

Naming patterns consistently identify Peter and Mechteld as the sisters’ parents. Deceased parents were the first choice for children’s names. Lijsbeth and Agnes both had a son Peter.⁶⁶ Griete and Hermken named no son Peter, but

59. Ibid., judicial protocols, 1608, fols. 103v–104r, 16 July 1608, Peter Smitt and wife Mechteldt lend money; call no. 70, RG 3017, ECAL.

60. Ibid., vol. prot. 1614, fol. 9, Peter van Bilstein and Mechteldt loan to Hendrick ten Sandtberge, 9 February 1614. Also, ibid., fols. 36r–36v, Peter Smit van Bilstein and Mechteldt house purchase, 20 August 1614. Also, ibid., vol. prot. 1615, fols. 28r–29r, Peter van Bilstein neighbor of Albert Dijenberch van Rhemen, 13 May 1615. Also, ibid., vol. prot. 1620, fols. 28v–29r, Peter Schmit van Bilstein and Mechteldt purchase, 3 July 1620.

61. *Geonames* (<http://www.geonames.org>), entries for “Bilstein.”

62. Church, court, manorial, and tax records for Bredevoort and the surrounding areas were searched. Manorial Court (Bredevoort), judicial protocols 1588, 1589, 1595–1613, call nos. 58–75. Also, Manorial Court (Bredevoort), vol. prot. 1614–1664, call nos. 387–425. Also, Manorial Court (Bredevoort), civil sentences 1602–1650, call no. 191. Also, Ruessink, transcriptions of vol. prot., Bredevoort 1614–1663, *Heerlijkheid Bredevoort*. Also, Ben Baneman, PDFs, *Genealogiedomein*. Also, “Personen index,” *Gelders Archief*.

63. Manorial Court (Bredevoort), vol. prot. 1627, fol. 8r, Mechteld Olentz purchase, 22 February 1627.

64. Ibid., vol. prot. 1628, fols. 23v–24r, 22 April 1628.

65. Ibid., fols. 6r–6v, 31 January 1628.

66. For Peter Everts as son of Casper Everts, see Hof van Gelre en Zutphen [Court of Gelre and Zutphen], civil case files, 1662 [sic], Lumme ter Horst vs. Peter Evers, 27 July 1663; call no. 5455, Hof van Gelre en Zutphen, RG 0124; Gelders Archief. For Peter Huijninck as son of Harmen, see Dutch Reformed Church (Aalten), marriage register 1665–1732, chronologically arranged, Huijninck-Locken, 21 April 1672; call no. 3, RG 3019; ECAL, consulted as finding aid with images, *Erfgoedcentrum Achterhoek en Liemers*.

they might not have had two sons. All four sisters named a daughter Mechteld, suggesting it was their mother's name.⁶⁷

CONCLUSION

Genealogists associate wars with record loss, but Griete Smit's case demonstrates they can also lead to record creation. During the Eighty Years' War parts of the commons in Bredevoort were divided to pay for new fortifications. Safety regulations were strictly enforced, ensuring that wells were in good order and residents had sufficient fire buckets to withstand a siege. People were willing to have courts record their land transactions and loans, avoiding record loss to fire or marauding soldiers. The resulting records captured moments of the lives of Griete Smit, her sisters, and their parents, enabling reconstruction of their family ties.

Griete Smit, wife of Harmen Nachtegael, and her sisters Lijsbet, Hermken, and Agnes Smit divided their parental inheritance. Joint appearances in church, court, and tax records identify Lijsbet as the wife of Casper Everts, Hermken as the wife of, first, Willem Krabbenborch, and, later, Gerrit Harckinck, and Agnes as the wife of Herman Huijninck. Hermken and Agnes were recorded as daughters of Peter Smit and Mechteld. Two of the sisters had a son Peter and all four sisters had a daughter Mechteld, consistent with their parents' names. The four sisters inherited a house in Bredevoort, three types of land there, and a farm in Winterswijk. Peter Smit and his wife Mechteld had previously owned these properties. One record identifies Peter's widow as Mechteld Olentz.

Tracing the sisters of Griete Smit and the property she inherited from her parents leads to one conclusion: Peter Smit van Bilstein and his wife, Mechteld Olentz, were Griete's parents. Extensive research in the records of Bredevoort and surrounding villages found no evidence to contradict that conclusion.

67. For Griete's daughter Mechteld Nachtegael, see Dutch Reformed Church (Bredevoort), marriages 1639–1675, Swarte-Nachtegal, October 1660. For Lijsbeth's daughter Mechtelt Evers, see Dutch Reformed Church (Bredevoort), baptisms 1638–1691, Mechtelt Evers, January 1643. For Hermken's daughter Mechtelt Krabbenborch, see Dutch Reformed Church (Bredevoort), marriages 1639–1675, Ten Broecke-Krabbenborch, March 1659. For Agnes's daughter Mechtelt Huijninck, see Dutch Reformed Church (Aalten), marriages 1665–1732, Van Coudum-Huijninck, 28 October 1688.