

January 1954

Jetze W. Pruiksma  
to Mr. A.J. Pruiksma

209 Summer Street, Passaic, New Jersey  
to Sneek, The Netherlands

[This letter was composed by Jetze Pruiksma at the age of 86 years. He was the son of Watze, 1840; of Klaas, 1809; of Arjen, 1778; of Watze, 1748; of Arjen, 1710; of Claes, 1680.]

Dear Cousin [could also be "nephew," - translator]

To begin with, thanks for your letter of six pages full of interesting material, especially regarding the names of the Pruiksma family to be sent to you to complete the family tree. I can, however, not do as you ask, because my physical strength does not allow it. In November, 1954, I became 86 years old, and you know very well that the thinking of one of that age does not run as smoothly as that of someone forty years old. I will try to help you and send you the addresses of my son Walter and ask him to help you. He is a man over sixty and works nights in the Post Office in Clifton. His address is: 12 Tromp Street, Clifton, NJ, U.S.A.

I myself had 10 children, still have 33 grand-children, and 48 great-grandchildren, so it is no small matter to send you the information. And then there is the family of Uncle Sieder and that of my Uncle Arjen Pruiksma. This is at the moment all that I can write you, and I wonder what you have already done in this matter, and wish to have further information.

And now a bit about some of the remarks and questions in your letter. You ask if I can speak Friesian: as well as the best. Lipke Pruiksma was of my age and a shoemaker in Workum and died at middle age. My grandmother's name was Linskje and had been married to Hertzen Vander Schuit. It may be that Lipke later moved to Gaast. The poems of "Borger" were in my possession. I bought them when I was 14 years old in Leiden, but were lost in time. I still remember some passages from those poems, for example, \_\_\_\_\_ said Borger when he appeared before the professors in Leiden to be examined for a

scholarship and the professors noticed that they had to begin where they had ended with others; although because of his modest appearance did want to return his travelling expenses from Friesland and just not be examined, and then this quotation. [Unable to translate - Translator]

I also have had that book about Borger by P.S. Kooistra in my possession but gave it to a cousin in Windschoten, a state police, and did not want him to go through life without knowing who Borger was. He is a Friesian.

You ask whether in 1893, when I left the Netherlands, things were not too rosey. Do you mean in the Netherlands or in America? I will tell you this, in Heeg I went to the boys' society, so that was in the late 70's. At an annual banquet we once had a dialogue which began this way: "How much we hear now-a-days, almost nothing except complaints of the people about hard times, and about every day." Things were not so rose-colored in Friesland, you see? I was a butcher then but a person did not know if he would earn anything the next day. So many migrated to America at that time that we went by special train from Leeuwarden to Rotterdam. This was on Wednesday, May 3, 1893. And in America business was oh so bad. A person could just as well look for money as for work. But there is someone who directs our ways and that was also the case then. I got work the first day I looked for it and that was in a silk mill, "Dyehouse," where silk of all colors are dyed. We worked there from seven o'clock in the morning until 6:30 in the evening and on Saturdays until 3:30 for seven dollars per week at the outset, but work was so scarce that I did not work full time at first, so I did not take home a complete wage to my wife and four children. And when we had been here 8 weeks my wife gave birth to a little son, who will now be 2 years old in July. Now many people earn \$70 in a week and more. Then \$10 was the highest wage in the factory. I did that work for years on end. At that time we lived in Paterson and moved to Passaic where I became a butcher, a trade I followed until 1845, and the Lord has blessed me.

My dear wife died in 1934, leaving me with 10 children: 5 sons and 5 daughters, of whom nine are still living. Because of a fall I have discontinued having my own home last May 18, and since then have lived with my daughters, six weeks with each one. I am now 86 and in good health although age makes its claims. My walking, hearing, and eyesight are not what they

were.

My address is 209 Summer Street, Passaic, NJ, U.S.A.

Greetings,

J.W. Pruiksma