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The Family of Claes van Elslant of New Amsterdam  
Erastus Tucker Tefft and His Family in New York

★ Cornelis de Potter Revisited

The Family of Daniel Whitehead:  
A Century and a Half of Fact and Fiction

An Item Relating to the Woodard Family of Long Island

The Corby Family: Descendants of John Corby  
of Essex County, New Jersey (*concluded*)

Communicants of the First Presbyterian Church,  
New York City, 1769

Origin of the Dutch Ryder Family Revealed

Additions and Corrections to Articles in The Record

## CORNELIS DE POTTER REVISITED

BY JOHN BLYTHE DOBSON\*

In a recent paper in the present journal we considered the family of Cornelis de Potter, a wealthy New Amsterdam merchant, and showed that he had a sister Sara de Potter, wife of Abraham (de) Wijs, of Amsterdam. We also reviewed the previously known facts that a David de Potter served (possibly by proxy) as a baptismal sponsor for one of Cornelis' children in 1648, and had been suspected of being identical with the David Jaspyn who served in the same capacity (again possibly by proxy) for a grandchild of Cornelis' second wife, Swaentje Jans, in 1654.<sup>[1]</sup> As the de Potter family was somewhat secondary to our main purpose, we did not then pursue detailed research in primary sources.

Subsequently, a very interesting note commenting on our paper appeared in the Dutch genealogical magazine *Gens Nostra*, the substance of which may be translated as follows:<sup>[2]</sup>

Swaentje Jans . . . was married fourthly at Batavia in 1643 to Cornelis de Potter . . . "laatst weduenaar" (thus possibly widowed even earlier) of Elisabeth Ser Jacobs, and brother of Sara de Potter, wife of Abraham (de) Wijs. A David de Potter served in 1648 as baptismal sponsor for Cornelis' youngest child David. There is some indication that Cornelis' origin is discoverable. His sister Sara, described as a 22 year-old, coming from Rotterdam, was betrothed at Amsterdam on 14 Dec. 1628 to Abraham Wijs (baptized 1603 at Amsterdam, son of Guiliam de Wyse and Sara Berwijns). Sara was accompanied by her aunt Josyntie Vernay, probably the same person as Josina van Spier, who was betrothed at Amsterdam in 1627 to Michiel Vern(a)ijen, previously thrice widowed; at the baptism of her daughter Catarina the witness was David de Potter. Michiel's sister Anneken Vernyen was betrothed in 1599 at Amsterdam to Lodewijk de Potter, from Ghent, aged 21 years, accompanied by his parents Jan de Potter and Mayken Claes. A David de Potter, from Amsterdam, aged 35 years (son of Jaspas, coming from Ronse, betrothed at Amsterdam in 1589) was betrothed at Amsterdam in 1637 to Jenne Engelbert. Whether all these references apply to the same David is not known.

It may be noted that the places of origin of the elder de Potters are quite close together, Ghent and Ronse (known in French as Renaix) both lying in the province of East Flanders, and only some 22 miles apart. Although the conclusion is not explicitly drawn, the evidence adduced creates a strong implication that Cornelis and Sara de Potter were children of Lodewijk de Potter, although (as we shall see) Anneken Vernyen was not his only wife, and we cannot state with any certainty that she was the mother of all his children.

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<sup>1</sup> John Blythe Dobson, "Swaentje Jans and Her Five Husbands," REC. 129 (1998):161-70, especially 168-70.

<sup>2</sup> *Gens Nostra: Maanblad van de Nederlandse Genealogische Vereniging*, vol. 55, no. 1 (Jan. 2000):58, from a copy kindly supplied by Harry Macy, translated by the present writer.

In the meantime, we had ourselves been pursuing further researches on the de Potters, the results of which dovetail nicely with the discoveries announced in *Gens Nostra*. Abraham Wÿs, at his betrothal in 1628 was accompanied by his brother, Johan Wÿs, while his wife, Sara de Potter, who is described as “without parents” (*geen ouders*), was accompanied by Josjntie Vernay.<sup>[3]</sup> This couple had a son Julÿaen baptized on 12 Sept. 1630 in the Oude Kerk (Old Church), Amsterdam, the sponsors being Johan Wÿs and Saer [*sic*] de Potter.<sup>[4]</sup>

The David de Potter, son of Jaspas, who was aged 35 at the time of his betrothal at Amsterdam in 1637, must surely have been the son of this name born in 1602 to Jasper Pottert, merchant (*copman*), previously a lace-maker (*passementwerker*), by his wife Marie Lignière.<sup>[5]</sup> Further, we know that David, son of Jasper de Potter the merchant, was alive in 1656, when he served as godfather to a grandchild of his sister Maria, wife of Jan Baguelaer.<sup>[6]</sup> It is thus hardly possible to doubt that this is the David Jaspÿn named at the outset of the present note, despite our failure to find him so referred to in Dutch records.

While it might be tempting to guess that Sara and David (son of Jasper) were siblings, this possibility is disproved by the discovery that David already had a sister Sara otherwise accounted for. For Sara de Potter, accompanied on the occasion by “Jaspas de Potter & Marie Legnj her father and mother,” was betrothed on 4 July 1620 at Amsterdam to Jan Claesz.<sup>[7]</sup>

Thus Cornelis de Potter, as a brother of the other Sara, cannot have been a son of Jasper de Potter, although some close relationship likely obtained between them, and Cornelis may well have been, say, Jasper’s nephew. As Cornelis is variously said in contemporary records to have been born at ’s-Gravenhage (The Hague) or at Rotterdam, it is hardly surprising that no baptismal record has been found for him at Amsterdam. While preliminary searches in records of The Hague have provided no useful information,<sup>[8]</sup> records at Rotterdam have produced further traces of the Lodewijk de Potter mentioned in *Gens Nostra*, supporting him as a plausible candidate for Cornelis’ father. They also show numerous other de Potters whose connection to him, if any, is not obvious. While nothing conclusive

<sup>3</sup> Amsterdam marriage intentions, 433:326 (FHL 113193).

<sup>4</sup> Amsterdam DTB 6:282 (FHL 113132).

<sup>5</sup> Amsterdam DTB 4:32 (FHL 113132). Much more information on Jasper de Potter’s family is readily available in Amsterdam records, but this will be curtailed here to save space.

<sup>6</sup> Maria de Potter married in 1611 (as his first wife) Jan Baguelaer, of Amsterdam, and her sister Susanna married in 1630, Jean Dailly; their husbands, prominent figures in Amsterdam’s Walloon community, are discussed in F.G.L.O. van Kretschmar, “De portretten in het Walenweeshuis te Amsterdam,” *Jaarboek van het Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie*, 19 (1965): 158-80, at pp. 161, 165. Maria’s son, Jan Baguelaer (the younger), and his wife, Maria van Bleijswijck, had a son David baptized on 27 July 1656 at Delft, with David de Potter as one of the sponsors (DTB Delft, 57:87 *verso*, from a photocopy of the original in the Gemeentearchief Delft).

<sup>7</sup> Amsterdam marriage intentions, 425:2.

<sup>8</sup> We have had to rely on an index, in the form of the “Klappers op kerkelijke registers [te ’s-Gravenhage], 1589-1811” (FHL 6312619).

has come from our study, it seems worthwhile nevertheless to present briefly some additional details on this man, for whatever value they may have for future researchers:

LODEWIJK JANS DE POTTER, of Amsterdam and Rotterdam, born *circa* 1578 at Ghent, was (as revealed in the note in *Gens Nostra*) a son of Jan de Potter and Mayken Claes, who accompanied him at his betrothal to his first wife. We have discovered three marriages for this man. As "Lodewijk de Potter, from Ghent, aged 21 years," he married (1) (date of intention) 26 September 1599 at Amsterdam,<sup>[9]</sup> Anneken Vernyen, said in *Gens Nostra* to have been a sister of Michiel Vern(a)ijen. As "Lodewyck de Potter, widower, from Ghent, living in Hoofsteegh," he married (2) 3 August 1608 in the Reformed Church, Rotterdam, Heyltgen Govert, from Rotterdam, residing in the Houttuyn, widow of Lambrecht Joris. He is similarly described when (coincidentally on the same day of the year as that of his first betrothal) he married (3) 26 September 1610 at Rotterdam, Lysbet van Luchtenburch, residing on the Huynbrugg, widow of Jan Daems. Unfortunately the records (at least in the versions available to us) do not reveal his occupation.<sup>[10]</sup>

Considering that Sara de Potter was born about 1605 or 1606, if her father was indeed Lodewijk de Potter then her mother was pretty surely Anneken Vernyen. However, we have no idea of when Cornelis de Potter was born, other than the rough limits imposed by his first marriage some time prior to 1635. We therefore feel unable to make any conjecture regarding his maternity.

<sup>9</sup> Amsterdam DTB 409:59 (reference from index; original not checked).

<sup>10</sup> Records of second and third marriages from Collection van Rijn, Rijksarchief den Haag (FHL 1180732).