

# DAS ABENTEUERLICHE LEBEN DES ZIOKE JANSSEN (WESTERHOUT) AUS SANDEL BEI JEVER UND SEINE NACHKOMMEN IN MALACCA UND SINGAPUR

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## *The life and adventures of Sjouke Janszen Westerhout from Sandel near Jever, and his descendents in Malacca and Singapore*

*(translated from German by Megan Freeland, granddaughter of Joyce Westerhout Freeland, and edited by Geoffrey Morris)*

People all over the world are interested in their ancestors, and Singapore is no exception. When the Westerhout family began to research their ancestors, they found the Will of the earliest known ancestor- Sjouke Janzen Westerhout. This last will and testament, neatly penned on April 20<sup>th</sup>, 1774 in Malacca, gives us a glimpse among other things, of his origins and early days in Jeverland. He mentions this in regard to the fact that if his children should die before coming of age, their portion of the inheritance should be sent to his parents.

*("... should be sent to the Netherlands and from there to Jeverland, in Kirchdorf Sandel to the testators, my father and mother, Jan Jacobsz (living in Hustum) and Grete Swouke who was born in Kirchdorf Cleverns. Should they have already died, then the next relation will inherit.")*

In the church records of the Sandel parish we find the following entries:

### 1. BIRTH

August 9th, 1721: The son of Johan Jacobs and his wife Grethe was born, and some weeks later was christened at home with the name **Zioke**.

The pastor who performed the christening was Andreas Christian Bornholz, other witnesses included were Otte Cassens from Hustum, the church organist from Cleverns and the Schoolmaster Immensche from Cleverns.

Later in Holland, the name Zioke was written **Sjouke**, and his last name was made by taking the first name of the father, Johannsen or Janssen for short (spelled Janszen in Holland). – hence Sjouke Janszen.

### 2. PARENT'S MARRIAGE

June 14th, 1718: Johan Jacobs Jr. from Hosten is married to Grethe Zioke.

This marriage record lacked any information about the parents of the bride and groom. Due to the practice of creating the surname from the father's name and the frequency of the name Janssen, it was not possible to trace the ancestry father back. Sadly, the father's profession could not be found either. Even the death dates of the parents have yet to be found. The one who wrote his Will seems to have assumed that Sjouke's parents were still alive at the time of writing the Will.

Perhaps this report will motivate some genealogists from Jeverland to continue research into the origins and lives of the parents of this adventurous young emigrant.

His current descendants are naturally interested in learning more. They would also like to know whether there are distant cousins still living in Jever today.

The addition of the name **Westerhout** (in German, Westerholt) to Zioke Janssen's name first appears on a VOC ship's list upon departure from the Netherlands to the East Indies. Eventually this addition became the (dominant) surname of his descendants. One can only speculate about his motives for emigrating, as his village Sandel held to the law of the eldest being heir to the majority of the inheritance. If so, he would have inherited any land or property belonging to his parents. Thus we assume he had an adventurous spirit to give this all up and head to the Far-East to find a better life!

### 3. THE ADVENTUROUS LIFE

An old man from Jeverland makes his last Will and Testament in faraway Malacca in 1774. Based upon facts in this Will, he had accumulated quite some measure of wealth. This fortune would not have been possible if he were to have stayed in Jeverland. So where and what is Malacca?

Malacca (also spelled Melaka) is currently a seaport city of some 100,000 residents. It is located in the country of Malaysia, whose capital is Kuala Lumpur. Malacca is only 67 km to the south and lies on the strait between the Malaysian peninsula and the Indonesian island of Sumatra. This strait was and is still a very common sea route between East Asia and Europe. In 1511 the Portuguese had already established a stronghold here, which was taken over by the Dutch in 1641. In 1824 possession was turned over to England. In 1957 Malaya gained its independence and Malacca became part of the new Malaysian republic.



**Picture 1:**  
*In the middle of this image lies the Malaysian peninsula (where Malacca is located) and the island of Sumatra. The sea route through the Straits links the South China Sea with the Indian Ocean. (Circa 1700)*

Malacca was merely the last stage of Sjouke's adventurous life. As we know from the East India Company (VOC) books and Malaysian archives still accessible today, he led an adventurous and certainly strenuous life on the seas for approximately 30 years. He must have enjoyed excellent health to withstand the rigours of almost year-long voyages with limited supplies of fresh produce.

Sjouke Janszen first set sail with the Federal East India Company (VOC), one of the trading companies founded by Dutch merchants in 1602. The VOC, like similar trading companies in other European countries, was specifically for trading with overseas countries. Established by the state, they were endowed with special privileges such as weaponry for the trading ships, construction of forts, and fortification of overseas trading settlements, establishment of commercial factories to process commodities such as tin, pepper, etc, the power to mint coins, exemption from the courts, and the right to enter into confederations and agreements. Thus, the VOC frequently initiated colonization and functioned as the main exerciser of federal colonial power.

These trading companies were also militaristic enterprises. The markets and sailing routes needed to be controlled and protected not only against the native population, but also against other European and Asian powers that wished to take advantage of the VOC's profitable trade. Consequently, the trading company ships as a rule carried more soldiers than sailors.

Sjouke presumably set out on his first voyage at the age of 20 on May 24, 1741 on the ship "**Meerlust**" as a young sailor (or cabin-boy). This trip led him around the Cape of Good Hope to Batavia, then one of the Dutch colonies, now Jakarta, Indonesia. The sailing ship arrived in Batavia on the 7<sup>th</sup> of April, 1742, a trip of nearly 11 months, including a stopover at the Cape of Good Hope. According to the ship's list his name is now written with the addition of "Westerhout."

These sea voyages must have been horrendous for most of the simple soldiers. Georg Forster<sup>1</sup> who accompanied Captain James Cook in 1772 on his trip around the world, made detailed observations at Cape Town and reported the following experience:

*"...Another large building in Cape Town is a hospital for the sailors of company ships that dock here to nurse the tremendous numbers of sick on board on their way to Europe from India. A typical East Indian vessel often enlists six to eight hundred men to Batavia, and during their long trip across the hot tropical latitudes they are stacked together, with scarcely any water, and nothing to eat but salt preserved provisions. It is no wonder that so many come ashore to be nursed. It is very common that a Dutch ship from Europe has already disposed of around 80 or 100 dead men, and upon arrival still sends two or three hundred dangerously ill patients to the hospital.*

*The ease with which the Dutch soul-sellers of humanity dishonorably recruit manual labor for the East India Company and the extensive costs of caring for them, effectively make them indifferent to the plight of the poor men."*

Nothing here or in other Dutch colonies is commoner/ viler as enlisted soldiers in the company, standing in public, that stowed away in Holland. In the pharmacy, which belongs to the hospital, the necessary remedies are prepared, but not a single expensive medicine can be found, and instead two or three large bottles are dispensed alike to all patients, so it seems the healthy land and air, together with the fresh food, aid in the patients' recovery much more than the doctor's skill. On mornings with good weather, all the sick that can go, must walk in the adjoining garden. The neighbouring garden of the company delivers and gather for the Company all sorts of garden plants and anti-scurvy herbs."

In the following years Sjouke Janszen made further trips with the VOC <sup>3</sup>

Date	Other maritime service (Sailing ship)
October 2nd, 1745	He sailed aboard the sailing ship <b>Wiltrijk</b> as a rifleman and steward's assistant.  The ship sailed from Europe for the VOC center in Amsterdam. Sjouke Janszen was under contract as a rifleman with a salary of 12 guilders per month. The great book of the ship mentions him as Soeke Jansz Westerhout. At the Cape of Good Hope on March 15th, 1746, he was promoted to steward's assistant.
July 19th, 1746	He sailed with the ship <b>Osterhout</b> as a "Seaman"
June 21st, 1747	He sailed with the ship <b>Niewalcheren</b>
May 26th, 1748	He sailed with the ship <b>Souratte</b> (it isn't clear here whether or not he also stayed in a place of this name for a while)
March 15th, 1749	He sailed with the ship <b>Hof van Delft</b>
January 6th, 1750	He sailed with the ship <b>Leijdszaamheid</b>
July 15th, 1753	He sailed with the ship <b>Hagedis</b>
January 17th, 1754	He sailed with the ship <b>Hagewelt</b>
February 17th, 1754	He sailed with the ship <b>Hues te Manped</b>
July 17th, 1755	He sailed with the ship <b>Akerendam</b>
March 24th, 1756	He sailed with the ship <b>Vrijburg</b>
June 26th, 1756	He sailed with the ship <b>Arnestein</b> (it is also not clear here whether or not he stayed for a while in Batavia during this time)
In 1757	He sailed with the ship <b>Donquist</b> Now as commander with a salary of 48 Guilders per month. (Source: Malacca muster rolls)
August 31st, 1758	He sailed with the ship <b>Zeelelij</b>
September 31st, 1759 to February 3rd, 1762	He sailed with the ship <b>Vrijheid</b> , now as captain commander (Source: Malacca muster rolls)
In 1762 or 1763	He finally settled down in Malacca
Between 1764 and 1768	He served as a lieutenant in Malacca's coast guard. (Source: Malacca muster rolls)

Not all of these trips led him back to Europe. He apparently came back to Holland a few times. We don't know whether he then visited his parents in Jeverland or not.

#### 4. FOUNDING A FAMILY IN MALACCA

1. In 1757, at the age of 36 years he married Anna Maria Magdalena Holst, who later died in childbirth in 1758.

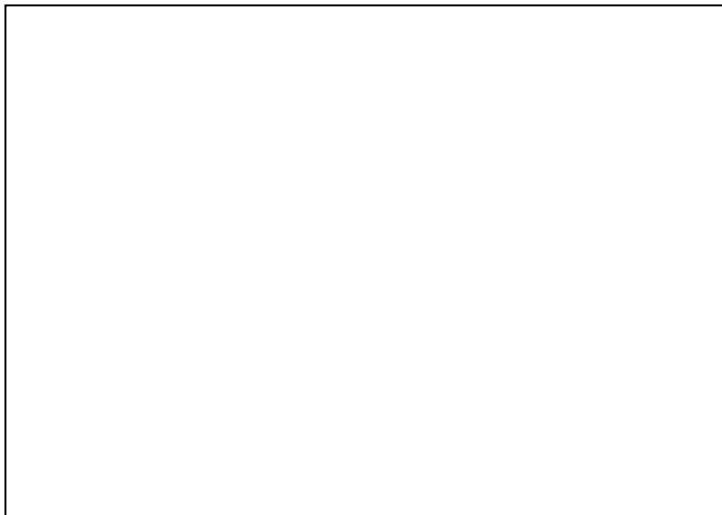
2. In 1760 he married the widow Catherine van der Wall, who was born in Malacca on June 8th, 1728 and was the daughter of Hendrik van der Wall and Isabella van der Veen. From this marriage came 2 children:

- Johannes, born 1764
- Margaretha Isabella Thet, born 1766

Catherina van der Wall died in 1767 (She had previously married Moses Carel Willem de Pommerolles on August 15th, 1751. He died between 1753 and 1755).

3. In 1770 he married Maria Elisabeth Smit. Her parents were most likely Jan Michiel Smit and Florinda Janse. Out of this marriage came two children:

- Jan Jacobz, born July 20th, 1771
- Anna Wilhelmina, born 1774



Picture 2: ***Malacca around 1726, according to a copperprint by Valentijn, Amsterdam***

The son Johannes probably died very young. Contrary to his sister Margaretha Isabella Thet, he is not mentioned in the last Will dated 1774

The son Jan Jacobz

was already vice-mayor of Malacca in 1789. He married Maria Catharina de Wind in 1793 and had three children with her. He died in 1807 in Malacca at the age of 36. His wife died in 1828. Their children were:

1. Johannes Barholomeus, born 1794
2. Nicholas Hermanus, born 1797, married on July 16th, 1829 in Malacca to Anne Jonkman
3. Jan Jacobz, born 1798 and died in 1812, at age of 14.



**Picture 3:**

*Johannes Bartholomeus Westerhout (1794 - 1856) was the grandson of Sjouke Jansz Westerhout. He was the Clerk of Justice Court, and later rose to rank of Assistant Governor (locally called Assistant Resident) of Malacca during the British Colonial era.*

There is a portrait of Johannes Bartholomeus Westerhout that has been handed down through his descendants. He was a judge and later married Johanna Charlotte van Bragt in 1823. In 1832 he played an important role in quelling the so called "Naning War". From 1837 he was made Assistant Governor of the then British Colonial Power in Malacca. He died in Malacca in 1856. Out of his marriage to Johanna Charlotte van Bragt came 9 children, 6 of whom died young.

1. Mathilda Catharina, who died before the age of 5
2. John Jacob (May 17, 1825 - April 6, 1855). He went to India like his youngest sister Jane, and there he married Martha Carey
3. Herbert William, who died at 15
4. Charles David, who died at 17
5. Alexander Samuel, born April 31st, 1831
6. Johannes Bartholomeus, who died before the age of 5
7. Newbold Benjamin, who died before the age of 16
8. Josiah Edwin, born March 29th, 1836 in Malacca, whose history we will discuss in more detail later
9. Jane Adelaide Agnes, she also went to India, married and lived until the age of 57.



**Picture 4:**

*Josiah Edwin Westerhout (1836 - 1905) was the eighth child of J.B. Westerhout. He was the Deputy Commissioner of Police, and later served as Sheriff of Malacca for 30 years.*

Josiah Edwin Westerhout, born in Malacca in 1836, became an assistant police commissioner and married Adrianna Pereira in 1867. In 1868 he became the sheriff of Malacca, a position which he held for 30 years. He died in 1905 in Singapore.

He and his wife had eight children - 7 sons and one daughter:

1. William Rayner, born January 29th, 1859
2. Hedley Harry, born January 22nd, 1860, died May 5th 1941
3. Arthur Gottlieb, born September 22, 1863, died December 5th 1919
4. Newbold Benjamin, born January 24th, 1865, died 1938
5. Alexander Winterscale, born September 7th 1869, died December 28th, 1950
6. Josiah Bartholomew, born November 9th 1870, died November 18th 1937
7. John Hinde Leffler, born 1872 or 1875 (?), died January 13th 1940
8. Jane Edith Constance, born 1877, died 1961

All lived to an old age and left behind them a multitude of descendents who can be found not only in Malaysia and Singapore, but also in many other southern lands including California and Australia.

## **5. GERMANS IN EAST INDIES**

In the 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> century many Germans began working for the Dutch East Indian Trading Company (VOC). Here we will only mention relatives of the Westerhout family.

Johan Michiel Smit, the father of Sjouke Janszen's third wife. He sailed in 1741 with the ship Beuignes as a smith for the VOC Amsterdam's chamber. He came from Abesteede.

Michiel Kilian, from Kreuznach, left Europe in the year 1751 with the ship Gustaf Willem in the service of the VOC Amsterdam's chamber as a soldier. He married the widow of Sjouke Janszen, and had 6 more children with her.

Johan Wilhelm Diehl, from Alsfeld, left Europe in the year 1766 as a soldier on the ship Huis ten Donk in the service of the VOC Amsterdam's chamber. He later married

Margarethe Elisabeth Thet Westerhout, the daughter of the second wife of Sjouke Janszen.

Those wishing to read further can go to <http://vocopvarenden.nationaalarchief.nl/> to see the ships' lists of the VOC. There one can find the names of many others who were born in the regions of Oldenburg, Jever, or Cloppenburg.

## 6. PROTESTANTS AND CATHOLICS

One passage in Sjouke Janszen's last Will is of particular interest. He states that his children should be raised as Protestants. While his widow initially has custody of the children, he states that if she should marry a Catholic the children are to be given to a Protestant family!

Here is some other interesting information found in the last Will, written in 1774.

The surviving spouse is responsible for managing all assets and for providing dowries for the children once they leave home. If a child should die before coming of age, then their portion should be sent to his parents in Jeverland.

Five Reichs dollars was to be left for the welfare of the poor.

The daughter of the second marriage, Magaretha Isabella Thet Westerhout, inherited one golden Pinang<sup>2</sup> box with the name of the Pommerolles (note- the name Pommerolles comes from Moses Carel Willem de Pommerolles, who was Catharina van der Wall's first husband, so this would probably have been left to her upon his death and naturally would be passed down to her daughter- Margaretha), a golden hair comb, a golden belt buckle, a cabinet, and a large bed.

The son Jan Jacob Westerhout inherited a silver clock with a gold face, a cane with a golden handle as well as a leeboard (a part of a ship commonly found on old Dutch barges or sailing ships used to help steer the vessel) with a silver handle as a keepsake.

Sjouke Janszen still had a wage claim against the VOC from his voyage on the ship **Wiltrijk** from Amsterdam to India in 1745.

## 7. FAMILY LIFE IN MALACCA

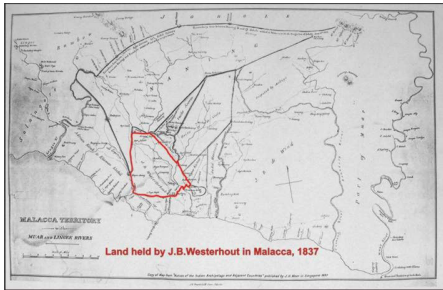
Alexander Winterscale Westerhout, the fifth child of Josiah Edwin Westerhout, collected photos of his time in Malacca. These pictures show that the family was part of the upper class in Malacca. They had agricultural land, rubber plantations, and also held important positions in the public administration. The following photos give an idea of their life in Malacca, sometime around the year 1900. How different their life in Malacca was compared to what would have been possible in Jeverland!





Picture 5.

**Alexander Winterscale Westerhout (1869 - 1950), lived an adventurous life like his great-great-grandfather Sjouke Jansz Westerhout. Alexander owned tin mines, ships and retail stores, and was a successful trader to many remote parts of Southeast Asia. He migrated to USA with his six sons after his wife passed away at a young age.**



Picture 6.

**J.B. Westerhout owned substantial land holdings around Malacca, like other Dutch families (eg. Koek, de Wind).**



Picture 7

**The Westerhout ancestral home. At least 3 generations of the family lived here, in one of the big houses facing the harbour, which were mostly owned by Dutch officials. (circa 1900)**



Picture 8.

**Morning sun on the verandah of the Westerhout home. (circa 1900)**



Picture 9.

**The Westerhout family owned another house along the Malacca foreshore (on the left of Fort Gate). (circa 1900)**

## **THE LATEST WESTERHOUT FAMILY REUNION IN MARCH 2008 IN PERTH, AUSTRALIA.** <sup>4</sup>

In 2004, almost a hundred members of the Westerhout family gathered in Malacca, home of their forefather, Sjouke Jansz Westerhout, a seaman with the VOC. Ten generations ago, he settled down in Malacca and began to raise a family. Now more than 250 years later, his descendants gather every four years somewhere in the world to renew their family ties. They celebrate their family history, learn about the latest information gathered from pain-staking research into the Westerhout past, meet relatives from all over the world, and in general have a good time!

The 2008 Reunion was hosted by the famously hospitable “Aussies” in Perth, Western Australia. They picked a lovely seaside resort 40 miles north of Perth where the Westerhout Reunion flag with its crest was raised before 75 cousins.... The local organisers booked a nearby Country Club for the Saturday banquet. Imagine the overseas cousins’ surprise when they arrived to find the golf fairways below the club occupied by hoards of wild kangaroos. What fun! It’s great to have relatives scattered all over the world...each place has something unique. Westerhout descendants are now found in ten countries, on four continents. The next reunion will take place in Ontario, Canada in 2012.



Picture 10:

***Descendants of Sjouke Jansz Westerhout (Zioke Janssen Westerholt) at the 3rd family reunion in Perth, Western Australia, 2008. Isn't it wonderful to see the broad diversification of Frisian (and other European) blood into the population of Southeast Asia and beyond?***

## REFERENCES:

(1) Georg **Forster**, Trip around the world (1771), Eichborn Verlag Frankfurt, 2007

(2) „Pinang“ is a type of Malaysian palm tree.

(3) Source - in the event that none other is given, VOC records

(4) Joyce Westerhout **Freeland**, USA, adapted from her account of the 2008 family reunion in Perth

(5) Geoffrey **Morris**, Singapore, history of the Westerhout family, various power point presentations,

„The Malacca Connection“, 2nd Westerhout Reunion, Malacca, Malaysia 2004

„The Missing Years“, 3rd Westerhout Reunion, Perth, Western Australia 2008