

JACOBA VAN WENSVEEN

Jacoba van Wensveen was a sturdy good looking woman with black hair and dark eyes. She was born February 27, 1870 in Rotterdam, Netherlands. When she was 14 she fell down a flight of stairs and got water on the knee. The doctors did not know how to fix the knee so they amputated her leg and gave her a wooden leg. This made life difficult for her, but she married and had 13 children.

Jacoba couldn't walk very well, and so she would call her son, Jan, "Jantjoeoeoeoeo". Jan was asked to run errands for his mother from the time he was very small. She would give him a little money, and then he would go buy milk. When he returned home she would ask him to spit in her hand. This was better than a lie detector. If Jan had taken a drink of the milk on his walk home, she would be able to see it in his spit.

Jacoba's father owned a sandbarge and would dredge sand from the river and sell it. His barge eventually sank when it hit another ship, and so he became a night watchman when he was older. Every night he would go to work with his little red dog. Jan helped clean his grandfather's house. He would eat the raw eggs out of the coop as a treat.

Jacoba became very sick during World War II. Along with having a wooden leg, she suffered with diabetes and lost her hearing. At one point she had breast cancer and a mastectomy. She also had a goiter on her neck. At the end of her life, she was bedridden and fearful of dying and asked her son Jan to find someone to pray for her. Jan went to two different ministers and asked if they could pray for his dying mother. They refused because she was not a member of their congregation. Jan remembered Tante Nell, Ammerentie's aunt, being a member of a different church. He went to her house and asked if a man from her church (Mormon) would pray for his mother. They found her home teacher who came to the house where his mother lay. He knelt by her bed and prayed for her. She had been unable to sleep for several nights; and, after his prayer, she went into a peaceful sleep. She died in her sleep at 4:00 a.m. This experience would later bless the family when Jan and his family became members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The dying wish of Jacoba truly blessed her posterity.