

The Origin Of the Van Laarhovens (Extracted From Ad Laarhoven's Information)

The Van Laarhoven family story begins in about 950. The oldest data files that Ad Laarhoven found regarding the Van Laarhoven families' forefathers are in the Brussel archives for the Dukes of Nether-Lotharingia / Brabant. These Dukes reigned from about 900 to about 1300 and their kingdoms lay in about present day Belgium and the Netherlands. Nether-Lotharingia included all the counties in present day Belgium and the Netherlands. A duke was a rank above the other earls, but a duke did not have any ruling authority over the other earls. Instead, a duke was more of an arbitrator. They were the most important nobles in the region and had the largest territories.

In about 950, the present day Netherlands belonged to the Emperor of the East Frankish kingdom (the Emperor of Germany). His land was governed by his Duke of Nether-Lotharingia in the Emperor's name, but the Duke had his residence (castle) in the neighborhood of Strasbourg (east France). He was also the Viconte (Burggraaf) of the Town of Antwerp and Antwerp lay a distance of 400 kilometers away. He had a local earl in his service who governed in his place. The local earl was the Earl of Loven and this person lived a distance of 70 kilometers away from Breda, the place where the Van Laarhoven families' first ancestors lived.

The German Emperor appointed earls in the Netherlands. There was only one earl above the Rhine River, the Earl of Friesland (west and north). Utrecht (for the east) and Luik were the only dioceses in this part. They were the two most important dioceses. Both were ruled by a bishop. In that time, a bishop was "a noble" and a minister of the crown. Both Utrecht and Luik were tributed to the German Emperor. Beneath the Maas River, there were several earls. There were no earls in north Brabant (present day Netherlands) since there were few inhabitants living in north Brabant, but there were some barons who administered little pieces of land. The soil in north Brabant was poor, sandy, and marshy with few farmers and villages.

The German Emperor of the East Frankish kingdom handled the Viking situation in his kingdom in the same manner as the French King had done in the West Frankish kingdom. The Viking Gisolf conquered Lotharique (present day east Belgium and France) and became the Duke of Lotharique. He made one of his captains the Earl of Loven (Leuven, Belgium) and another, the Viking Gerulf, the Earl of the Netherlands. In about 1000, there were local earls in several regions who were mostly decedents of Vikings. The earls from north to south were the Earls of Holland, Friesland, Gelre, Limbourg, Brabant, Vlaanderen, Hennegouw and Luxembourg. The three ruling Earls from Flandria, Holland and Brabant and the Earls of Namen, Henegouw and Boulogne all originated from Viking forefathers. The Earl of Holland was the most important in the north, but in the south, the Earl of Loven's might grew.

The Earl of Brabant is mentioned as the Earl of Loven in Belgian history. Loven is currently called Leuven and situated on the east side of Brussels, although the city of Brussels did not exist at that time. The Earl of Loven's capital was Leuven. The Earl's castle was situated on a hilltop in Leuven, and the Earl's territory was at least ten by ten kilometers. Later, the Earl of Loven's name was changed to Earl of Leuven.

The Duke of Nether-Lotharingia began a conquest of surrounding areas since this territory was a small one. First he conquered the County of Limburg. Then, he conquered the Luik diocese and all the land north to the Maas River until Zeeland, and parts of the Duke of Gelre's territory. He had many problems conquering Vlaanderen and Holland, and the western portion of north Brabant especially the land of Breda. The Earl of Holland meant to have a claim on the land of Breda.

The Earl of Leuven conquered his neighbors' land with success and so his might grew during the centuries. The Earl of Leuven grew rich and could pay soldiers. This attribute brought the Earl great favor and "fellowship" with the German Emperor as the Earl of Leuven went to war. The Earl of Leuven was promoted to the Duke of Nether-Lotharingia by the Emperor in 1106. The Duke of Nether-Lotharingia was the highest in rank in the Netherlands and then followed in rank the Earl of Holland (above the Maas) and the Earl of Flandria. The Earl of Flandria was tributed to the King of France because the Schelde (Scaldis) River was the border between France and Germany. All the other earls of lower rank (Earl of Limburg, Cleve, Luxembourg, Hennegouw, Geldern and smaller pieces) belonged to Germany and after 1000, they were all ministers of the German Emperor.

The Duke of Nether-Lotharingia moved his capital from Leuven to present day Brussels to further elevate his rank. At that time, Brussels was a small village laying between swamps. The word “Brussels” in the Dutch language meant “Brabant.” The Duke and his successors built a new city named “Brussels / Brabant” and so he received the title, Duke of Brabant. Later, the area became known as Brabant.

A portion of Brabant lay in present day Belgium when the Duke of Nether-Lotharingia moved to “Brussels / Brabant.” South Brabant (present day Belgium) was a nicer area to live in than North Brabant (present day Netherlands). It was hilly with little rivers and the soil was riverclay, so a good soil to farm. At that time, one can conclude that people would have preferred South Brabant far more than North Brabant. North Brabant was poor and uninteresting with bad soil and many woods with few inhabitants. The western portion of north Brabant was controlled by the Viking family of Breda. That family possessed the entire western area of North Brabant. By then, more than 150 years had passed since the Vikings had landed and the Vikings were no longer Vikings. They had melted together with the original inhabitants and lived peacefully as farmers. Their captain families had developed to free barons, but not under the Earl of Brabant.

It appears from the acts that the Van Laarhoven families’ Viking forefathers were the richest people in the Breda region. The region was empty wilderness when they settled there. There was no count or earl. They occupied empty land. The Van Laarhoven families’ Viking forefathers were in that time, a landlord without a ruler. They went their own way. They made their own rules, and the rule was the law of the sword. The Earl of Leuven was not strong enough to conquer them, so they lived for a long time undisturbed. Nobody dared to trouble them. Only a century after they settled the area did the Emperor of Germany tell the Duke of Brabant to conquer the western region of North Brabant, which he did in 1125.

The Duke of Brabant received an order from the German Emperor to conquer the western region of North Brabant controlled by the Viking family of Breda. The Duke lost the battle. Later, the Duke conquered Breda and its surrounding area with the help of the German Emperor’s army. There is written in Brussels’ history that in 1125 the Duke of Brabant set the City of Breda and “the borgh” on fire and he took “the land of Breda.” The history from the Dukes of Brabant tells that in 1125 A.D., Duke Henry III conquered the place of Breda where the descendants of the Vikings still reigned. The people of Breda, lived there for at least 200 years and their might went far to the east of North Brabant where they had an equal fortress which they built in the neighborhood of the later City of Oosterwic.

After the Van Laarhoven families’ ancestors’ land was conquered and the City of Breda was burned, they fled with the remnants of their Viking families and the people to their eastern fortress. Their wooden fortress was located to the east of North Brabant and inland. The Vikings built their eastern fortress in 1100 and it had existed for a century. The name of the Viking’s eastern fortress was Tilliborch / Tilliborg. The name Tilli came from the first name of the person who built the eastern fortress, and so the Viking settlement was called Tilli’s borg. Later, the name Tilli’s borg became Tillisborg.

The Vikings lived hidden in isolation in their eastern fortress as farmers for generations. The land surrounding the eastern fortress was wooded, wild, marshy, and empty. The Van Laarhoven families’ forefathers, the ruling Viking family of Breda, began a new life. They built their new farm and home in the area surrounding the fortress, and cultivated the wild land. They named this home “Laerhof - Laerhove.” Remarkably, shortly after the 1125 attack on Breda, this empty region was suddenly crowded with people from nowhere. Shortly after the settlement of this area, Ad Laarhoven found the first allocations from the van Laarhovens in that region.

The settlement around the eastern fortress and the ruling Viking family’s farm eventually grew into the place called Oosterwic, which means easterly laying village from Breda. In the old acts from Oosterwic, it is written that the present day City of Tilburg originated as a part of the old City of Oosterwic in about 1300. In the acts from about 1100, there is written the names West and East-Tillisborg. West-Tillisborg expanded to the present day City of Tilburg and East-Tillisborg is the present day City of Oisterwijk. A Belgian historian from the University of Brussel investigated the history of Oisterwijk and found still more proof of “ancient Oosterwic.” The historian’s work confirmed Ad’s conclusion and supports his historical research and analysis regarding Oosterwic. The City of Oosterwic is older in history when compared to present day cities in Brabant such as “s-Hertogenbosch, Breda, Tilburg and Eindhoven. Later, Oosterwic was called Oisterwijk. Today, Oosterwic is spelled Oisterwyk.

The Van Laarhoven families' Viking forefathers were the founders of the City of Oesterwic. They had citizenship of the Towns of 's-Hertogenbosch and Oesterwic and that was an important position. It was helpful to Ad's investigation because they are mentioned in so many documents. The reason Ad could trace the Van Laarhoven families' history back so far in time is because they were rich in land and farms. They were one of the mightiest family in their area. The Van Laarhoven families formed their own community council. Members of the families were always chosen as mayor and members of the Council of Oesterwic. The Van Laarhoven families ruled the government during this period and the Council had its own "writer."

Ad Laarhoven has hundreds of acts in his possession in which the Van Laarhoven families' Viking forefathers are mentioned. In these acts, the Van Laarhoven families are identified not only by their Christian names, but also by the name of their father and grandfather, and so Ad found their place in the family tree. Each piece of land the Van Laarhoven families bought was identified in these acts and where the land was located is also identified. This information allowed Ad to identify the exact present day location where the old homestead (hofstad – oldest settlement) stood. That place is not in the present day City of Oisterwijk. Instead, it is located northwest of that City. The village grew in a southerly direction from where the Van Laarhoven families' Viking forefathers' homestead was located. The village became the City Oisterwijk. In about 1330, the Van Laarhoven families acquired their city rights, but the Van Laarhoven families' forefathers were the founders of the City of Oesterwic, and although their property lay outside the City, they had lived there since 1125.

During the period from about 900 to about 1300, the inhabitants in the Duke of Nether-Lotharingia / Brabant's kingdom had to pay the Duke taxes for land they had in their possession. The Van Laarhoven families' forefathers had already many pieces of land for agriculture and wasteland during that period. The Viking family of Breda only had to pay the Duke taxes for agricultural land. Ad Laarhoven found several Van Laarhoven families' forefathers who lived in the area of the later City of Oesterwic in the tax registers in Brussels. In that time, there were no towns or villages. The Van Laarhoven families' forefathers were landlords without any sovereign. They were their own masters.

In about 1192, and after the Duke of Brabant conquered all of Brabant, he built a new city on the border of the Maas River. The city was named s'Hertogenbosh, and is the present capital of North Brabant. The Town of s'Hertogenbosh became the town of administration for this area, so the oldest acts / laws governing these people can be found in s'Hertogenbosh. The Van Laarhoven families' forefathers became the Duke's subjects, and by that time, the Duke and the Viking family of Breda were no longer enemies. The representative of the Oesterwic region came when the Earl of Leuven call "his men." (Later, in 1106, the Earl was promoted to a Duke.) The representative of Oesterwic was the oldest **van de Laerhof** of Oesterwic and was called the baron of that area. The leading family of this settlement was called **van de Laerhof** and later on van Laarhoven.

The Rise Of Industry And Commerce

European feudalism eventually confronted a competitor in the rise of industry and commerce.¹ Merchants had no position in the feudal order, but by the 11th Century, they had formed guilds strong enough to illicit concession from the local lords.² The merchants, their employees, and trading posts were considered free.³ As this type of commerce grew, so did the skilled trades, especially weavers, shearers, dyers and fullers of the cloth trade, nicknamed the “blue- nails’ because the wool discolored their hands.”³¹⁰⁴

Naturally, as the number of skilled trades grew, so did the number and size of the trade guilds.⁵ The trade guilds became “oligarchies as arrogant as the rural nobility” and the workers had no real forum to file a grievance and receive redress.⁶ The guilds were easily control by the powerful merchants and the workers were in many ways no better off than the rural serfs.⁷ “Badly housed, poorly paid and cheated with impunity, in periods of trade crisis, even skilled craftsmen roamed through the streets or the countryside begging their bread and terrifying the well-to-do by their lawlessness.”⁸ By the mid-thirteenth century strikes broke-out between the ruling class and the workers.⁹ For about the next one hundred years there were clashes between the discontent of all crafts and the ruling class.¹⁰ The ruling class made its laws harsher, including death for minor crimes.³¹¹¹

A revolution essentially broke-out in 1280 wherein the workers of Bruges, Ypres, Tournai and Douai rose, and ran loose through their towns “pillaging, massacring and temporarily taking over town halls.”¹² The patricians were terrified, so they appealed to the French king, Philippe le Bel, to help restore order, which he did and his action caused a powerful hatred of the French authority.¹³ Philippe le Bel was also known as Phillip IV.¹⁴ Phillip IV tried to annex the County of Flanders in 1301,¹⁵ but failed.¹⁶

In 1302 a weaver, Peter de Coninck, led the men of Burges in a dawn attack within the city, killing every man who could not correctly pronounce the tricky Flemish phrase *Schild en Vriend* (shield and friend). Virtually every Frenchman in Bruges perished. A few months after this ‘Martins of Bruges’ a pitched battle followed at Courtrai between the French army and the craft workers who, in a paroxysm of defiant fury, vanquished the French and killed without mercy all who could not speak Flemish. Later this extraordinary fight was called the Battle of the Golden Spurs, from the legend that the field was left strewn with them. Today, each anniversary of the battle is celebrated as a triumph of Flemish patriotism.¹⁷

The Battle of the Golden Spurs was fought on July 11, 1302.¹⁸ The French “estimated that ten heavily armoured knights were worth a hundred infantry,” which gave the French a qualitative advantage over their adversaries.¹⁹ The French had 2,500 nobles and about 4,000 crossbowmen and infantry.²⁰ The Flemish had 8,000 infantry supported by about 500 nobles.²¹ In the end, the Flemish infantry soundly defeated the French knights sent by Philip IV of France.²² The devastation was “appalling.”²³ “Half of the French knights, more than 1000, were killed and there was a huge amount of booty, including the 500 gilded spurs that gave the battle its traditional name (Battle of the Golden Spurs).”²⁴

Probably the Duke of Brabant developed a friendship with the Van Laarhoven families’ Viking forefathers and that seems to have occurred in 1302 when the Duke of Brabant went to war in support of the Earl of Fleming’s (western Belgium) fight against the King of France who tried to conquer Flandria. Flandria belonged to Germany. At the time the Battle of the Golden Spurs was fought, the reigning Duke was Jan II, 1294-1312.

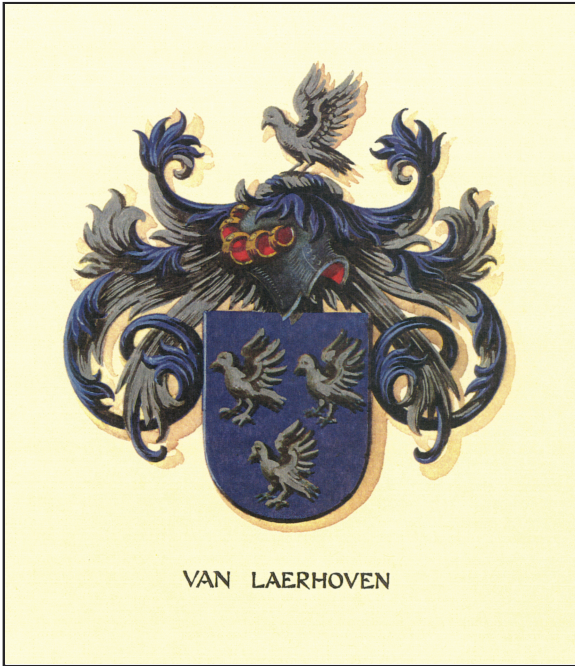
Ad Laarhoven found an act in which is told that the son of the ruling van Laerhove family fell in the Battle of the Golden Spurs and the survivors of that battle brought his dead body home. The fact that the van Laerhove family fought on the side of the Duke of Brabant indicates the relationship between the Duke of Brabant (South Brabant) and the van Laerhove family in North Brabant was very good.

Peter Toelenszoon's (b. 1279) children form the trunk of the Van Laarhoven family tree. As a result of the Battle of the Golden Spurs, Peter became the head of the family because he was the only male from the first three generations of Van Laarhoven family descendants who had children. His grandfather, Wilmer (b. 1222), had a brother, Walther, who lived to be 61 years, but he had no children. Peter's father, Thoenis Toelenszoon (b. 1251), had a brother, Aert, who died in the Battle of the Golden Spurs.

Peter Toelenszoon (b. 1279) had a younger brother also name Aert. Ad Laarhoven did not find any information regarding Aert. Ad believes that Aert went with his uncle Aert to fight in the Battle of the Golden Spurs and died in the Battle with his uncle Aert.

When the Duke asked his landlords for help, Aert Toelenszoon, unmarried, and as a landlord of the Duke, went with his escort to fight in the Duke of Brabant's army. Aert's older brother, Thoenis, took care of the family's Hof. Also, Thoenis had two sons (Peter and Aert) and therefore did not leave for the battle. In old times, it was a custom that the oldest son marry and that younger brothers live together with the family on the Hof to help each other in the interest of the clan. Often three generations lived together on the Hof, so Aert supported the family and the Duke's banner. Aert's death in the Battle of the Golden Spurs makes clear that the Van Laarhoven families' ancestors belonged to the class of landlords who had to follow the Duke when he went to war. They were not forced to follow the Duke. They followed for their own glory and out of a duty to their rank.

Van Laarhoven Family Armour



FAMILY ARMOUR

CIRA. 1449 FROM SEIGNEUR WILLEM VAN LAERHOVEN.
THIS ARMOUR WAS IDENTIFIED AS FOLIO 305, NO. 24.

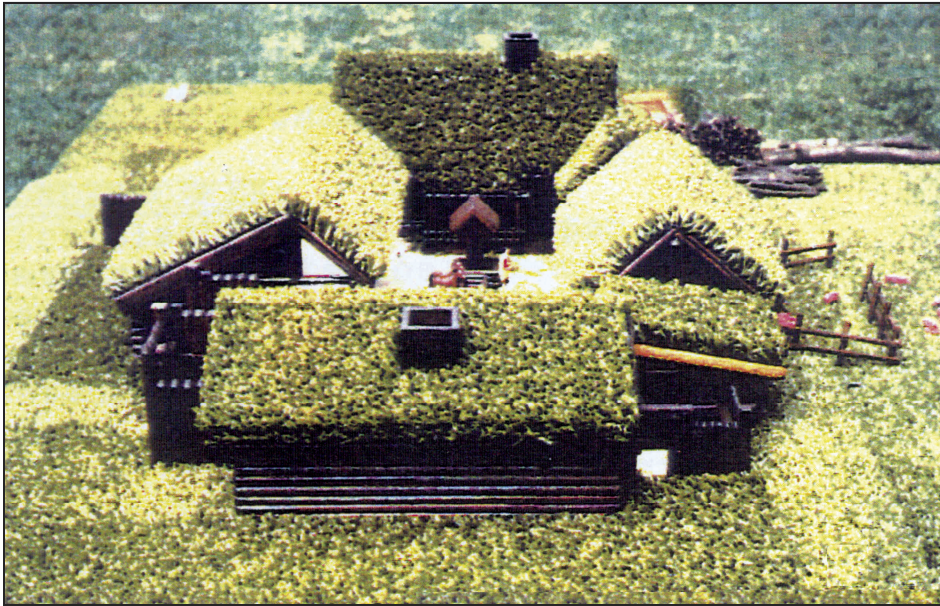
The van Laerhove family probably did not have their own armour at the time the Battle of the Golden Spurs was fought, but shortly afterward, Ad Laarhoven found a charter in a book from about 1449 for Seigneur Willem van Laerhoven and this armour is identified as folio 305, no. 24. Afterwards, Ad found an act from 1456 in an Armourial called The Netherlands Herald from 1887 for the same Seigneur Willem van Laerhoven. He is identified there as a governor from the Town of Breda. He had his “Hof” in the neighborhood of his family’s old Hof in Oesterwic. This armour shows three seagulls in silver on a blue fond.

A year later, Ad found an armour for Hubrecht van Laerhoven who lived in Oorscot. Hubrecht van Laerhoven was invested in the high place of a public notary. He also had the same armour as Seigneur Willem in 1449. Seigneur Willem van Laerhoven and Hubrect van Laerhoven are from different branches of the same family tree, but they have the same forefather and both bore the same armour. So one can conclude that this armour was the old family armour that both had inherited.



HUBRECT VAN LAERHOVEN'S ARMOUR

With this knowledge, Ad went to a well known heraldicus in The Hague. He asked the heraldicus to examine the two amours. The result was that two important people in that time with the same armour indicates that at that time, the armour was the family armour from the family van Laerhove. The helmet and shield is a sign that the family is a noble family from a high standard in that time, but not an earl or duke. In that time, very old families had to have a very old history from earlier times. The armour proves the van Laerhove family complied with all the rules and legal requirements of the period for obtaining armour. The silver seagulls on a shield with a blue field must have belonged to a very old family that must have lived there out of old times. This is the old German manner. In Latin, the seagull means “Larus:” Larus-hove werd zo [became]; van Laerhove.



RECONSTRUCTED VIKING FARM IN NORWAY
AD LAARHOVEN TOOK THE PICTURE.

Van Laarhoven Family Hof - van-laerhove

It is Ad Laarhoven's opinion that the current Van Laarhoven families descend from the old ruling Viking family of Breda whom the Duke of Brabant defeated in 1125. Ad concluded that the Van Laarhoven families' Viking forefathers must have been from that leading Viking clan. He saw in the acts from the 11th - 12th Centuries that the Van Laarhoven families' forefather must have been the leaders of the movement from Breda to Oesterwic. Ad found that the Van Laarhoven families' ancestors had an eminent family name by the 11th - 12th Centuries, namely

"vanlaerhove." The place, **vanlaerhove**, is identified in many acts / certificates in those centuries as a big manor with large areas of land and woods. The Van Laarhoven families' ancestors were a strong, rich and visible family that was respected by other families. They had the most pieces of land and in the following centuries they were and stayed the leading family in the development of Oesterwic. The Van Laarhoven families' forefathers were chosen to be in the City of Oesterwic's government and administration up to the 15th Century. They possessed a very strong farm. Ad found a charter from about 1400 in which it says how much land they possessed and a description of their farm. Based on this analysis, he believes the Van Laarhoven families are the descendants of the ruling Viking family of Breda and come from real Viking blood.

The first Vikings who landed in western Brabant came from Laerdal in Norway. Ad traveled twice to Laerdal and stood on the place where the Van Laarhoven families' first forefathers came from and where their ranch (hof - hove) stood. In Norway, he found a farm such as the Vikings would have built. The buildings were built from tree trunks and the roofs were laid with grass sod to prevent fire. The buildings were built and laid out as a fortress. Ad Laarhoven took photos of the buildings. It is reasonable to believe the Vikings would have brought their manner of building with them to their newly conquered land. It is also reasonable to believe that the farm which Ad photographed in Norway would resemble the type of construction, design and layout used by the Van Laarhoven families' forefathers.

Ad has an act from 1300 that specifically, and precisely described the house's place, the acres the Van Laarhoven ancestors possessed, and the two rivers. The entire farm was built from wood logs and separated in to four parts: the house, the stable for cows and pigs, the stable for horses and material, and the house for the servants (male and female). The act describes the details, including that the dwellings were built / arranged in a square for defense as a castle would have been built in the Middle-Ages. The buildings' roofs were covered with grass-plagge (probably sod) to prevent the roofs from burning.

In that time, houses were built as half fortress and for defense. There was no police or armies to defend the farmers and civilians in a village. Life was made worse by robbers and armies from earls, dukes and even kings who attacked, killed and took a person's property. At night, wolves sought food and only a strong man with a weapon (ax or sword) could survive. People who lived in the country built strong farmhouses, but not from stone for that was not always available. Instead, they built using wood logs. One can imagine that people who lived in the country built their houses in groups of three, four or five in order to help each other. People who lived in a small town were defended by walls and the nobles had their own castles. Traveling was only possible by horse and one had to be inside before nightfall for safety.

From around 1550-1600, the whole Van Laarhoven family, meaning mostly three generations, lived together on one farm. As time progressed, the original farm increased in size to include a large building with many stables and barns. The Van Laarhoven families' houses were strong and large as they had money and their own rules. The only taxes they had to pay was the tax on the surface of their land. They paid the tax to the lord who was their seigneur (earl or duke) but for this tax they received nothing in return.

After 1550-1600, the Van Laarhoven families started to spread out to other places in Brabant. The families were wealthy and a son would move to another place in Brabant and start a farm, or marry a woman from another place and move there. As the families spread out from their original home in Oosterwic, each family branch became the name of a village or town in Brabant.

The Van Laarhoven families' oldest forefathers went to Breda, so Breda is the first branch. Later, Ad Laarhoven found eight more branches for a total of nine branches. All branches start about 1550-1600. The first "home place" disappeared in the history. However, Ad found where the original home stood. Today a meadow exists where the first place stood. The meadow still bears the name "Laerense ackers." Ad refined the exact position where the original wooden castle stood, which was in the near vicinity of Laerense ackers. He had an aerial photo taken of that place. The photo clearly shows that something stood on that location. Ad sent the photo to a Dutch institution for soil science. They also said that it is a remarkable place. The location is now "protect soil." No houses, etc. can be built on that location. The location is registered with the Community of Oisterwyk. The land is protected and secure until the Institute examines the location.

Van Laarhoven Family Name "van de Laerhof"

The name, van Laarhoven, is a very old family name. Floris Prims, a well known Belgian historian, explained to Ad Laarhoven that people with the van Laarhoven family name lived in Antwerp and its surrounding environs. Mr Prims explained that the van Laarhoven family name is a very old name. He explained that a family name that ends in "hoven" is already very old and certainly when the forename "Laer" is attached before "hoven." This kind of name goes back to the Carolingian period (800-1100). Mr. Prims explained to Ad that Antwerp and Breda are "sister towns." Both originated around a Viking fortress and the decedents of the inhabitants who lived around both fortresses go back to Viking forefathers. According to Ad, Mr. Prims was sure the van Laarhoven family name came from Viking forefathers. Mr. Prims said that since the Van Laarhoven families' forefathers lived in Oisterwic after the 1125 attack on Breda, its is mostly acceptable that they came from Breda and are descendants of Vikings.

In the beginning, every person had only his or her name. After the person's name followed the name of the person's father, for example, Björn Ivarson²⁵ or Helgi Sigurdsdotter.²⁶ This method of naming a person was used during the first millennium. After that period, the method for naming a person changed. A person could have a nickname such as Charles the Great or John Little. In the 11th and 12th Centuries, people were called by the name of their village or town, but people who possessed a castle or farmstead were called by the name of their possession. Then people were call by their profession, for example, John the Baker, but every person received their second name from their father, for example, Peter Janssen.

From 1595 onward, the Church of Rome, the Roman Catholic Church, required every parish priest to book a child's baptism with the name of the child's father and mother.²⁷ It was during that period, and under pressure from the Roman Catholic Church, that recording a person's name began. Sometimes a child received its father's name and also the name of its grandfather. There was no booking a person's name before 1595. One can imagine how difficult it was for Ad Laarhoven to find people, and where they came from when the people did not have a family name. Few families can find their forefathers before the 16th Century because few families had a family name.

The Van Laarhoven families' forefathers, the ruling Viking family of Breda, began a new life in 1125. After fleeing Breda in 1125, they built their new farm and home in the area surrounding the Viking's eastern fortress. They named this home "Laerhof - Laerhove." The name "Laerhof" was a remembrance of where they came from. In that time, the word "hof" meant a habitat of a leading family and the word "laer" was in memory of their homeland from which they came.

Ad Laarhoven found that the Van Laarhoven families' ancestors had an eminent family name by the 11th - 12th Centuries, namely "**vanlaerhove**." They were called by the name of their property. The place, **vanlaerhove**, is identified in many acts / certificates in those centuries as a big manor with large areas of land and woods. The word van means "coming from" or in this case "living on the Laerhof." The word van can be found in many family names and means coming from a village / town or house or farm. Family names derived from farms or houses are the oldest names in history.

The name de Laerhof was already established in the 11th and 12th Centuries. The word Laer is the name for a "wet meadow" and that is correct for the farm / Hof was built between two small rivers. The Hof was built in this meadow because the rivers provide a natural defense in case of enemy attack. The people who lived in Laer where identified as the "people of the Laerhof." The word "laer" is not a Dutch word. It comes from the Saxon language. The word "laer" is a Norwegian term that identified where the Van Laarhoven families' first Viking forefathers came from, which was Laerdal, Norway in about 900 to conquer Breda. This settlement's leading family was called **van de Laerhof** and later on van Laarhoven. On the first page of the Van Laarhoven family tree one will find **Walther van Laerdal (b. 1195)** as the grounder of the Van Laarhoven family tree and his brother, **Wilmer van de Laerhof (b. 1222)**. The name changed from Laerhof (hove) as the name was written in 1100. In the Dutch language, the word "hof" was eventual spelled "hove" so people coming from the "Laerhof / hove" became "van Laerhove(n)."

In older centuries, the Van Laarhoven family name was written as "**van de Laerhove**" and in the 12th - 13th Centuries, it was written as "**van de Laerhof of hove**." (See Wilmer van de Laerhof born in 1222 in Oesterwic.) **Van de Laerhof of hove** was the correct name of the Van Laarhoven families' first forefather. Ad found the name in the oldest acts in the Brussel's archives. He found there is also another manner of writing the name as "van Laarhoven." This way of writing the name was present in the old acts of 15th - 17th Centuries for all members of the Van Laarhoven family. Those family members who currently spell their family name in this manner have inherited the original way of writing the name during the Middle-Ages.

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- 1 Margot Lyon, Belgium (New York: Walker and Company, 1971), p. 14.
 - 2 Lyon, p. 14.
 - 3 Lyon, p. 14.
 - 4 Lyon, p. 14.
 - 5 Lyon, p. 15.
 - 6 Lyon, p. 15.
 - 7 Lyon, p. 15.
 - 8 Lyon, p. 16.
 - 9 Lyon, p. 16.
 - 10 Lyon, p. 16.
 - 11 Lyon, p. 16.
 - 12 Lyon, p. 16.
 - 13 Lyon, p. 16.
 - 14 Lyon, p. 16; Michael Grant, The Civilizations of Europe (The New American Library, 1965), p. 119.
 - 15 Trabel.com and Arakea.com; <http://www.trabel.com/kortrijk/kortrijk-battle.htm>
 - 16 Grant, p. 119.
 - 17 Lyon, p. 16.
 - 18 Jacques Le Goff, Medieval Civilization 400-1500 (New York: Barnes & Nobels Book, 2000), Le Goff, p. 282.
 - 19 Le Goff, p. 282.

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- 20 Le Goff, p. 282.
- 21 Le Goff, p. 282.
- 22 Le Goff, p. 104; Grant, p. 119.
- 23 Le Goff, p. 282.
- 24 Le Goff, p. 104, 282; Grant, p. 119.
- 25 Björn is the child's name. Ivar is the child's father's name and the wording "Ivarson" indicates that Björn is Ivar's son.
- 26 Helgi is the child's name. Sigurd is the child's father's name and the wording "Sigurdsdotter" indicates that Helgi is Sigurd's daughter. Dot-
ter means daughter.
- 27 After 1806 Napoleon, Emperor of France, ordered every municipality of a town or village to make a certificate of birth, marriage and death
for every person - civil registration.