

# Mennonite Capital and Rural Transformation in Friesland and Overijssel, 1700–1850

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## Introduction

Mennonites played an important role in the rural economy of some parts of the predominantly agrarian Dutch provinces Friesland and Overijssel during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. But that role differed significantly from the role Mennonites played in rural society in other parts of the world.<sup>1</sup> Neither specific Mennonite agrarian communities nor a strong representation of Mennonite farmers existed in neither of these two provinces. In Friesland, the northern, agriculturally oriented and wealthy province that contributed more than 10 percent to the *Generale Middelen*, the national budget of the Dutch Republic, some 20 to 25 percent of the total population may have been Mennonite in the early seventeenth century. In some areas there were many Mennonite farmers, like the small districts of Utingeradeel (54.0 percent Mennonite in 1796/total population 2,507), Idaarderadeel (31.2/3,041) and Rauwerderhiem (15.8/1,477) in the middle of Friesland.<sup>2</sup> Around half of the total population may have been involved in farming. However, there is no evidence to suggest that

Mennonites differed in any way from other farmers, except for their religious beliefs. Mennonites were important for the Frisian rural society, but not because they were culturally distinct.

Meanwhile in a second Dutch province, Overijssel in the eastern part of the country, Mennonites had virtually no presence in the countryside.<sup>3</sup> In the eastern Overijssel district of Twente, for example, Mennonites were but a very small minority, maybe 2 percent of the total population and less than 15 percent in the towns and cities where they were concentrated.<sup>4</sup> Nonetheless, Mennonites had a serious involvement in rural society. Indeed, the economic importance of this small group can hardly be overestimated. Mennonite entrepreneurs, for example, were essential in the development of proto-industrial textile manufacturing, an activity dating to the last part of the sixteenth century, when they became involved as merchants and traders.<sup>5</sup> Later, many of these Mennonites became involved also in the proto-industrial textile production, at first in linen and after the early-eighteenth century also in mixed linen-cotton fabrics. In the main cities, Almelo and Enschede, at most 10 percent of the population was Mennonite but their share in the local economy, as well as in total wealth, was much bigger.<sup>6</sup> This success led to capital accumulation during the eighteenth and early-nineteenth century, which arose from the absence of other investment opportunities. Industrialization proper, which welcomed investments, was still decades away and government bonds were in this period a very risky investment. Thus, rural real estate and banking were the alternative, and it was in this respect that Mennonites in Twente had their impact on the countryside.<sup>7</sup>

It was a similar story in Friesland, which, unlike Overijssel, had very good soils, indeed some of the best in the country. Frisian butter and cheese had been traded from the early middle ages onwards. Still, Mennonites in Friesland also became noted for the number of Mennonite entrepreneurs who managed to gather impressive fortunes in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, mainly through trade and shipping. Initially they were most visible in Harlingen and in the major cities in the southwestern part of the province (Hindeloopen, Workum, Sneek and Bolsward). In the second half of the eighteenth century some Mennonite families, the Cats family in particular, made inroads to the wealthiest segment of the provincial capital, Leeuwarden.

Still, the Mennonites in Friesland were confronted with the same investment problems as their Overijssel counterparts. Until the Batavian-French period (1795–1813), some entrepreneurs, especially in Harlingen and the Frisian southwest were heavily involved in shipping, but with the decline of Dutch international

trade these opportunities disappeared. In the period of the American War of Independence, American bonds were an alternative (we also find these bonds in Twente in relative abundance), and other bonds that were issued on the Amsterdam market (Russian, Austrian) found their way to Friesland and Overijssel too. After 1793, during a long period of warfare, these alternatives disappeared, and investors had to cope with heavy losses.<sup>8</sup> The remaining alternatives were the same as in Overijssel: the Frisian capital owners bought rural real estate and supplied loans on the local capital market. This development went hand in hand with another significant development that occurred in the countryside of Friesland and Twente. In both areas noble and institutional landownership strongly declined. Burghers from towns and cities, as well as local farmers, were the buyers.

Although financial motives played a major role in investment behavior, there was an important cultural element as well. In both Friesland and Overijssel a general movement to an Arcadian lifestyle developed in the top segments of society.<sup>9</sup> Farms were purchased and transformed into country houses with large ponds and gardens. As major capital owners Mennonites were, at least from 1750 onwards, in the middle of this movement that had started a century before in Holland. In Friesland this development was most visible in and around the village of Oranjewoud in the south of the province. Here a new elite, mixed Reformed-Mennonites built the large country houses that characterize the area until the present day.

### **Developments in Landownership in Twente**

A long term perspective (1601–1832) indicates that Twente underwent an almost revolutionary transformation in landownership. While farmers were only of marginal significance in 1601, they were by far the most important group of landowners in 1832 (see appendix 1). The nobility had lost three quarters of their possessions. Landownership of churches and government had almost disappeared. The second group that profited from the nobility leaving the countryside were the inhabitants of the small cities and villages (appendix 1, total), the burghers. Within this group, Mennonites were strongly overrepresented in the areas around Almelo and Enschede (appendix 2). Both the farmers and the burghers benefited from the financial misfortune of the local nobility, which provided them with new investment opportunities. The decline of the nobility already started in the seventeenth century and accelerated after

1795, when noble privilege was abolished. While the nobility owned about half of all land and farms in 1601, it was down to 12 to 13 percent in 1832. Furthermore, as a consequence of the financial problems of the successive regimes in the Batavian-French period (1795–1813) government property came on the market after 1795. A large number of farms were up for sale during this period as 20 to 25 percent of all farms changed hands between 1795 and 1832.

The abundance of (Mennonite) capital meant that rural tenants could borrow the money needed to buy their farms.<sup>10</sup> But the involvement of owners of capital in the rural areas, Mennonites and non-Mennonites alike, was not limited to credit supply. Some town-based burghers also bought farms and land, a development that had started before 1750 when noble property first came on the market. In addition, the division of the commons, a movement that took up speed after 1840, offered the opportunity to buy and later cultivate grounds that had been in the possession of the commons or *marks*.<sup>11</sup>

### Wealth and Lifestyle in Almelo

The economic position of the Mennonites in the city of Almelo in the mid-eighteenth century is clear from the data given in table 1.<sup>12</sup> Comprising less than 10 percent of the total population, they owned three times as much real estate as might be expected based on their numbers. They were even more dominant in other measures of wealth. In the *Personeel* (personnel), a tax based on the number of servants, for example, they were assessed for more than two thirds of the total amount in Almelo. They were also by far the most important owners of real estate outside the city and dominant in the field of loans and mortgages, within and outside the city.

The Hearth Tax register of 1751 gives us more detailed information about the nature of Almelo Mennonite real estate holdings. It shows that in the vicinity of Almelo (the *Ambt* Almelo) Mennonite families owned four large farms and one small farm, while the Mennonite congregation owned one small farm.<sup>13</sup> By 1832 Mennonites had made only modest advances. Two farms, the *Schelfhorst* and *Meulenbelt*, were still in Mennonite hands, three had been sold, and five other larger farms had been acquired. From a purely economic perspective this does not seem all too spectacular, but the nearby countryside offered more than investment opportunities in real estate proper: after 1750 we find the first move toward the building of country houses and pleasure gardens.

	In Almelo		Outside Almelo	
	Value	%	Value	%
<b>Real Estate</b>				
Mennonites	56,470	29.4	120,660	70.8
Non-Mennonites	135,291	70.6	49,881	29.2
<i>Total:</i>	<i>191,761</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>170,541</i>	<i>100.0</i>
<b>Loans &amp; Mortgages</b>				
Mennonites	22,243	67.9	18,226	84.6
Non-Mennonites	10,516	32.1	3,330	15.4
<i>Total:</i>	<i>32,759</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>21,556</i>	<i>100.0</i>
<b>Personeel</b>				
Mennonites	84,585	69.7		
Non-Mennonites	36,800	30.3		
<i>Total:</i>	<i>121,385</i>	<i>100.0</i>		

Table 1: Wealth in Almelo, 1750

The Meulenbelt, north of the city on the road to Vriezenveen owned by Thomas Coster in 1751, may have been the first farm that was transformed into a park-like structure, a summerhouse with an accompanying garden complex.<sup>14</sup> Although it was already in Mennonite hands in 1691,<sup>15</sup> by 1832, on the Kadaster plan, the Meulenbelt had all the characteristics of a country house. It was still in the hands of the Coster family. A little south of the Meulenbelt, Mannes ten Cate, had gathered five farms with twenty-six hectares of mostly farmland.<sup>16</sup> Finally, Catharina Coster (van Lennep), the widow of Jacob Roeters van Lennep, had four farms in the same area, with the Schelfhorst as the main part of the estate.<sup>17</sup>

Meanwhile, southwest of the city, the *Beeklust* dwelling was set up by another member of the Coster family, Egbert Coster.<sup>18</sup> He bought a plot of land here on the small river Almelo Aa in 1777 and in 1784 the ponds and the outlines of the garden were already visible on the so-called Hottinger map.<sup>19</sup> In 1832 it had grown to a complex of more than five hectares, including a farmhouse. Close to the city, also on the river, a number of Mennonite families had small but apparently luxurious summerhouses, complete with gardens and ponds.<sup>20</sup>

This Arcadianism is just one element of the involvement of the Twente Mennonites in the rural world. Already in 1751 there were clear signs that investment in rural real estate was attractive. In

the area west of Almelo, in the municipality of Wierden, the Almelo Mennonites owned more farms than they did in their 'own' municipality of *Ambt Almelo*, likely a simple matter of supply and demand. When there were opportunities to buy real estate, the Mennonites took them. A clear example is the acquisition of *Het Warmtink*. This large property was bought by Egbert Coster and his son-in-law Hendrik ten Cate in 1816.<sup>21</sup> It was situated to the west of the city of Delden, at quite some distance from Almelo. Originally *Het Warmtink*, a country house and with six farms, had been in the hands of the semi-noble family Reyger. In the mid-eighteenth century it was bought by the wine merchant Gewin, who was responsible for the park-like structures that were developed. What plans Coster and Ten Cate originally had is uncertain, but the country house was demolished in 1846. The lands and farms are in the hands of the Ten Cate family till this day.<sup>22</sup>

### Investment Strategies in Twente: Three Examples

Only a few extant inventories illustrate the relative importance of different investments and the strategies in Twente. The inventory of the estate of Herman van Lochem (1695–1782), one of the founding fathers of the Enschede fustian industries, indicates a total value of 103,500 guilders, a vast sum in comparison to the annual wage of two hundred guilders of a labourer in Twente; about a third was invested in loans, a common banking activity in Twente.<sup>23</sup> Van Lochem's fustian industry, co-owned with his son Pieter, included a bleaching facility, yarn and fabrics and was bequeathed to his children in 1780, when Van Lochem was eighty-five years old. Like his Almelo counterparts, Van Lochem not only owned a farm but also a number of houses and gardens in and around Enschede. Importantly, from the perspective of lifestyle, Van Lochem owned a bridge over the city moat that led to some hedged gardens and '*het luthuisjen of koepel*', a small garden house. In one respect Van Lochem appears to be old fashioned: he had not invested any money in shares or bonds. His son, Pieter on the other hand, invested the larger part of his money in private loans, some in real estate and some in bonds. In this respect he was not very lucky: Polish bonds, issued to finance the Polish uprising of 1793, had become worthless, while shares, like ones in the Dutch East India Company (OIC), hadn't brought much profit either.

The third inventory from this period is from a member of the Coster family, Jan Harmen Coster. By the end of his life, Coster had already handed over more than a quarter of his large estate,

including his textile business, to his four sons in the form of allowances. Coster owned quite some real estate, valued at almost 16 percent of all his belongings,<sup>24</sup> most of it (11 percent) in rural real estate, including the Meulenbelt, his country house (see above). He also owned American and Russian bonds, bought on the Dutch capital market by Amsterdam bankers and brokers. The loans in the Coster estate consisted mostly of private loans to a large variety of people in Twente: nobles and burghers as well as farmers.

There were three main reasons why these entrepreneurs first invested in credit supply and then in American and Russian bonds. First, there was no possibility to plow back the earnings in their businesses; investments in capital goods were limited in the pre-industrial linen and fustian industries. Second, the agrarian sector suffered from a long lasting crisis that ended only in the latter decades of the eighteenth century, making the purchase of real estate to rent it out a risky investment. Third, government bonds were not allowed in the early eighteenth century, likely for religious reasons, and when religious teachings shifted, prospects on the government bond market were grim.

After the death of Jan Harmen Coster, the Napoleonic Wars and the accompanying disruption of international finance cut off one line of investment: Dutch and foreign shares and bonds were only attractive for investors with a death wish. The same financial disruption forced the Dutch government to sell its possessions. It gave the capital owners the opportunity to step in and buy farms or finance their purchase. The effect was that until mid-nineteenth century many farmers in Twente were deeply in debt.<sup>25</sup> The two main Mennonite families, Coster and Ten Cate from Almelo, had supplied 6.5 percent of all the loans in the period 1800–1812. In this way they were deeply involved in rural society without ever touching a plough or a cow.

In conclusion, the economic success the textile entrepreneurs enjoyed caused a very familiar problem for Mennonites: what to do with the riches they gained? In the 1780s foreign bonds and investment were quite popular, but carried considerable risks. The fiasco of the Polish uprising is a good example of how things could go wrong. The financial problems of the Dutch government in the Batavian French period offered unexpected new opportunities. In Twente many farms came on the market and capital owners could choose between buying the farms themselves and lending money to tenants who wanted to buy their dwellings. Mennonites in Twente exercised both these options.<sup>26</sup>

## Landownership in Friesland

Rent has been dominant in Friesland in the seventeenth century and at least the first part of the eighteenth century. Unfortunately it is not clear when the major changes in property relations took place, that is, when the nobility lost its dominant position. Faber, in his standard work *Drie Eeuwen Friesland* hardly touches on the issue and writes that rent remained the dominant system in Friesland.<sup>27</sup> Although this may be the case for some parts of the province, the two large *grietenijen* (municipalities) in the Southwest (Wymbritseradeel and Wonseradeel) show another picture. In 1832, according to the real estate register, the position of the nobility as a dominating landowning class had disappeared in this part of Friesland (see appendix 2). Farmers were, just like in Twente, the main landowning group, while burghers came in second.<sup>28</sup>

I have not been able to determine to what extent these farmers, or the other landowners, were in debt. Given the way capital owners like the Hinloopens and Dirk Roos played the role of local bankers, it is well possible that the developments in Friesland were comparable with Twente. The way Mennonites were overrepresented among burgher landowners in the Frisian Southwest in 1832 shows that, in this respect, the situations did not differ much.

In one respect, however, there is a considerable difference: the Frisian Mennonites owned much more land than their Twente counterparts. The most stunning example is Pieter Cats. He owned more than seventeen square kilometers of very good farmland, the larger part around Leeuwarden, valued at more than 1,250,000 guilders. Other members of the Cats family were by far not as wealthy, but still very well off. The possessions of the five main Mennonite families from Harlingen, in terms of real estate ownership, show that investment in real estate was widespread.

The involvement of some of the upper class Mennonite families of Harlingen and Leeuwarden with the countryside has been broadly noticed. Yme Kuiper gives a fine overview of the activities of these families.<sup>29</sup> The first Harlinger Mennonite family with a country estate was Fonteijn; *Andla State*, in the area of Ried, long remained in the hands of family members.<sup>30</sup>



Family	Location	Hectares	Land Values	Houses, etc.	Total
Adrianus Heringa Cats	Leeuwarden	51	28,926	15,240	44,166
Anna Cats Vriese	Leeuwarden	75	58,624	20,340	78,964
Elisabeth Cats	Leeuwarden	61	45,380	1,440	46,820
Jentje Epeus Cats	Leeuwarden	168	112,727	14,580	127,307
Jentje Szn. Cats	Leeuwarden	21	19,190	18,360	37,550
Pieter Cats	Leeuwarden	1,716	1,212,248	38,160	1,250,408
Taetske Cats	Leeuwarden	309	269,256	50,180	319,436
Rinske Heringa Cats	Leeuwarden	29	21,885	1,080	22,965
<i>Cats total:</i>		2,431	1,768,235	159,380	1,927,615
Epke Roos van Bienma	Oudeschoot/Heerenveen	369	163,284	27,900	191,184
Johannes van der Veen	Leeuwarden/Wolvega	728	213,875	55,060	268,935
Dirk/Klaas/Pier Zeper	Leeuwarden	116	84,065	45,460	129,525
Johannes Stinstra	Harlingen	227	181,511	12,060	193,571
Jan IJzenbeek	Harlingen	170	95,326	31,740	127,066
Wed. Wiebe/Jacob Wiebes Hanekuik	Harlingen	235	174,308	9,100	183,408
(wed.) Simon Stijl Hingst	Harlingen	156	93,554	31,100	124,654
Fontein (different members)	Harlingen	512	327,016	105,920	432,936

Table 2. Mennonite real estate, 1832

Other prominent families like Braam, Stinstra and Hannema followed suit. If it were just a matter of the foundation of a nice summer residence, one farm or country house would have sufficed, but in the last part of the eighteenth century and the early-nineteenth century many farms came into Mennonite hands.<sup>31</sup> The Harlingen Mennonites were by no means the only ones. In the eighteenth century the Mesdag family from Bolsward had a country house in Burgwerd, *Donia State*, and the Coopmans family from Workum owned one in Koudum.<sup>32</sup>

Although these families were all quite well off, their wealth was second to none compared with the Cats family from Leeuwarden.<sup>33</sup> The Cats family first came to Leeuwarden from a small town in the Frisian Southwest, Molkwierum. The first Cats to come to Leeuwarden, Sible Ypes Cats (ca. 1696–1744), was a cloth merchant. He, his children and his grandchildren did extremely well and invested a large part of their wealth in land. The third ‘source’ of Mennonite wealth was the city Sneek. Two families in particular, Roos and Wouters, were important in the rise of the small village of Oranjewoud as a center of a new Reformed-Mennonite elite in the early-nineteenth century.

### Investment Strategies in Friesland: Four Examples

A good overview of the ways rich Mennonites invested their money, and of how this changed over time, comes from some estate inventories for southwestern Friesland, in particular from three unmarried Hinloopen brothers from Workum and the Roos/Haarsma family in Sneek (see table 3). These inventories were drawn up because the beneficiaries had to pay the *Collaterale Successie*, an inheritance tax required if the deceased died without offspring. In 1780, Johannes Hinloopen, the first of the brothers to die, was the owner of at least six ships, or their equivalent in ship-shares. When his brother, Goijcke, died eight years later, the shipping interest had more than halved, which was a consequence of the fourth Anglo-Dutch War. Instead, the family’s private loans had more than tripled and, together with shares and bonds through Amsterdam bankers and brokers, were responsible for 22.8 percent of the estate, a percentage that increased to 27.3 when the last of the Hinloopen brothers died.<sup>34</sup>

The Haarsma family in Sneek was already active in the rural real estate market in the early-eighteenth century.<sup>35</sup> Bit by bit, they profited from a number of inheritances and their capital accumulated. At the end of his life in 1793, Epke Sipkes Roos, whose wife was a Haarsma, must have been one of the richest individuals in all of Friesland; in my estimation, his financial worth was approximately a million guilders.<sup>36</sup> Roos had done well for himself, but he had also profited a great deal from the previous generations. His unmarried brother, Jelle Sipkes Roos from Workum, left him more than 300,000 guilders. The estate of Dirk Epkes Roos, Epke Sipkes’ son, shows that the financial crisis had hit hard. The Dutch investments had lost more than half of their value and the other bonds had lost some 20 percent. The private loans and mortgages,

together with real estate (for example, Roos' owned 9.5 large farms), made up three quarters of the estate.

	Nominal	Actual	Total	%	%
Rural real estate, including rents etc.		191,140		26.8	
Other real estate		13,546		1.9	
Total real estate, including rents etc.			204,686		28.7
Private loans and mortgages, including interests			329,074		46.2
Russian bonds	19,000	17,623		2.5	
American bonds	8,000	6,420		0.9	
Other	10,000	8,500		1.2	
Dutch bonds, including forced loans	141,650	61,447		8.6	
Total loans and bonds			93,990		13.2
Allowances			77,255		10.8
Other			7,238		1.0
Total			712,243		100.0

Table 3. The Dirk Roos (d. 1807) estate in Sneek

In the end, the entire estate came into the hands of Epke Roos van Bienema, son the Epke Sipkes' sister Tetje. She had married Fokke Bienema from Heerenveen. Bienema, a chemist in Heerenveen, was from a family of entrepreneurs in the peat digging industry and this business had taken off in the Heerenveen area. Although Bienema himself was not a Mennonite, he must have had some sympathy for his wife's religion, as he donated a luxurious plaque for the newly built *Vermaning*, the Mennonite Church in Heerenveen, in 1762. Epke Roos van Bienema himself married into the governing elite of Friesland. His wife, Sara Susanna Bergsma, was the daughter of a *Grietman*, the Frisian name for the governor of a rural municipality. We do not know how Roos van Bienema's finances fared, but from the 1832 *kadaster* (real estate register) data, the same source we used for Twente, we learn that Bienema was among the largest landowners in the province (see Table 2).

Unfortunately there are, as far as I know, no inventories from the 1810s and 1820s that can tell us how capital was invested in that period. In all likelihood, investments in government bonds and in speculative foreign enterprises will not have increased. Real

estate, and mortgages and loans with real estate as a security, were by far the safest investment.

### **Mennonite Landownership and Culture: Oranjewoud**

The area of Heerenveen, in particular Oranjewoud, was beautiful and pastoral. The stadholders had established their summer residences there.<sup>37</sup> The movement began in the eighteenth century, first with Fokke Bienema and Tetje Epkes Roos (a sister of Dirk Roos from Sneek) who bought a farm in nearby Oudeschoot and built the house *Veenwijk*. They were followed by a Mennonite from outside the area, the wealthy minister Albertus van Delden (1748–1810) of the Old Flemish congregation in Sneek, who could not resist this attraction, especially as his congregation transitioned from conservative to moderate.<sup>38</sup> Van Delden first rented and later bought a plot in Oranjewoud where he built a nice country house, *Klemburg*. After his death in 1810 his niece, Catherina Tichelaar (born Wouters), from Sneek inherited the property. Another member of the Wouters family, Jan Berends Wouters came to Oranjewoud in 1832, when he bought *Jagtlust* from Fokke Bienema, son of Epke Roos van Bienema.<sup>39</sup> A third farm, part of the old estate of the stadholder, was purchased in 1812 by Johannes Martinus van der Veen (1770–1850), a rich tobacco and coffee merchant from Leeuwarden.<sup>40</sup> Although not a Mennonite himself, Van der Veen was closely connected to the Mennonite elite through his marriage in 1790 to Tjebbigje Gorter, daughter of the rich Mennonite merchant Klaas Oenes Gorter. Four years after her death in 1802 Johannes remarried with Aaltje Noyon from Sneek.<sup>41</sup> She was not a Mennonite but Van der Veen seems to have remained part of the Mennonite network, evidenced by the marriage of his son Cyprianus to Bregje Dirks Hesselink from Groningen, a Mennonite family with ties with Sneek.

Van der Veen and his family fit perfectly in the framework of the upcoming new elite, which consisted of a mixture of Mennonites and non-Mennonites. Wealth had become more of a criterion for suitable marriage than religion, while success as a merchant and manufacturer often led to public office. In Van der Veen's case, he became Justice of the Peace in the *Grietenij* of Ooststellingwerf (1831). His son, Cyprianus (1796–1863), followed suit, rising from a lawyer to occupy a number of public offices, eventually becoming one of the leading politicians in Friesland. In the meantime, Johannes van der Veen was heavily involved in real estate. His most visible asset was the *Huize Lindenoord* in the town

of Wolvega (grietenij Weststellingwerf), a large house that the noble Van Haren family had built in 1780. Purchased in 1811, it was most likely used at first only as a summer house, for Van der Veen already owned a prestigious house in Leeuwarden and a summer residence nearby. After his appointment as Justice of the Peace, with Oldeberkoop as the seat, the family moved to Wolvega.

Others, Mennonite or with Mennonite ties, also bought parts of the old estate of the stadholder. They included the merchant Tuimelaar from Heerenveen,<sup>42</sup> Lollius Adema (his stepmother was Catherina Tichelaar [Wouters]) and Fokke Bienema, who was part of the Roos family, also from Sneek. They also included Pieter Cats who bought *Oranjestein*, a property that had first been in the hands of Johannes van de Veen and then sold to Lollius Adema. Pieter's daughter Sjuwke and her husband Johannes Bieruma Oosting took residence in the country house and partly rebuild it.<sup>43</sup> So, around 1830 most of the wealthy Mennonites from Friesland, with the exception of the Harlingen families, were present in Oranjewoud. The district had become the center of a new Frisian elite, a merger of older, Dutch reformed status and new Mennonite money.<sup>44</sup>

## Conclusions

Both in Friesland and in Twente the Mennonites in the upper echelons of society were involved with 'the land' in three ways. First they followed a general societal trend of establishing summer homes outside the crowded and dirty cities. This venture could take the form of modest garden houses, of special chambers in a farmhouse, but also of park-like estates. The *Amelink* estate of the Blijdenstein family, and *Beeklust* and *Warmtink* of the Coster family, are the most prominent examples in Twente.<sup>45</sup> Different families from Harlingen, Bolsward and Workum were their Frisian counterparts. Their 'estates,' however, hardly compared with the luxurious dwellings that were bought and built in the Frisian area of Oranjewoud. Here the descendents of the Roos and Wouters families from Sneek, together with members of the Leeuwarden Cats family, built an almost new Arcadia.

In Friesland and Twente in the eighteenth and early nineteenth, Mennonite and non-Mennonite capital owners alike were confronted with a similar problem, that is, a lack of investment opportunities. This led to the second type of involvement in the land: investment in land and farms. The Frisian Roos family from Sneek, the Cats family from Leeuwarden and several Harlingen families are clear examples, while in Twente the activities of Egbert Coster

demonstrate that real estate and market also must have offered opportunities for wealthy investors. This changed in Twente only when the industrialization of the textile production took off in the mid-nineteenth century. No comparable development occurred in Friesland; the province remained focused on its strong agricultural sector in the nineteenth century.

The third way that Mennonites were engaged with rural land was somewhat less visible; however, based on the inventories that are left, it is clear that part of the loans that Mennonites supplied were used by farmers to buy their farms from the government or from the local nobility. Friesland, but even more Twente, witnessed a marked shift in property relations in the last part of the eighteenth and the early decades of the nineteenth centuries. This shift was only possible through low interest loans to the farmers. It was a safe investment and it took less effort than the ownership of real estate. This investment strategy is the main legacy of the Mennonite story of 'land' in northern Netherlands and is one that is quite different from the involvement of Mennonites in rural society elsewhere.<sup>46</sup>

### Appendices

	Arable land, 1601	Farms, 1751	Arable land, 1832
Nobility	56.9	32.1	12.1
Farmers	5.0	24.1	64.3
Burghers	5.9	15.1	21.5
Government/ institutional	32.2	28.6	2.1
	100.0	100.0	100.0

*Appendix 1.* Percentage of landownership in five municipalities in Twente (Ambt Almelo, Borne [except village], Wierden, Hengelo and Lonneker), 1601-1832

	Hectares	%	Value	%
<i>Municipalities in Twente: Ambt Almelo, Borne, Wierden, Hengelo and Lonneker</i>				
Nobility	2,757	7.5	412,614	11.8
Farmers	8,216	22.4	1,940,182	55.3
Burghers	2,928	8.0	762,877	21.7
Institutional	615	1.7	79,409	2.3
Commons	22,241	60.5	312,623	8.9
<i>Total:</i>	<i>36,757</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>3,507,704</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Burghers, Mennonite	463	16.2	125,297	16.6
Burghers, Non-Mennonite	2,465	83.8	637,580	83.4
<i>Municipalities in Frisian South-West: Wonseradeel, Workum, Wymbritseradeel</i>				
Nobility	1,077	3.1	758,390	4.0
Farmers	17,462	49.8	10,354,727	54.5
Burghers	10,126	28.9	6,489,596	34.2
Institutional	6,392	18.2	1,399,295	7.4
<i>Total:</i>	<i>35,057</i>	<i>100.0</i>	<i>19,002,008</i>	<i>100.0</i>
Burghers, Mennonite	2,437	29.2	1,486,644	22.9
Burghers, Non-Mennonite	7,688	70.8	5,002,953	77.1

### Appendix 2. Landownership in 1832, all land

### Notes

- <sup>1</sup> In this paper I refer to Frisian *Doopsgezinden* as 'Mennonites', even though technically only the 'Mennonite' inhabitants of Eastern Overijssel would have been 'Mennonite' before the eighteenth century. For a discussion of this issue see Piet Visser 'Menno's manco's: de Nederlandse doopsgezindheid binnen het mondiale mennonietisme (rede gehouden bij Piet Vissers afscheidssymposium in 2014)' *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen* 42 (2016): 283-306. A second problem is that it is sometimes very hard to determine if a person (or a family) was Mennonite, especially when the marriage of children from Mennonite families took place in the Reformed Church. This problem is much more prominent in Friesland than in Twente. In Friesland we find mixed marriages from the seventeenth century onwards, an immediate consequence of the fact that the majority of the Mennonites in Friesland were part of the more liberal part of the Mennonite movement. I have tried to circumvent the difficulty with identification by pointing out in each case of a mixed marriage what the Mennonite element was or had been.
- <sup>2</sup> J. A. Faber, *Drie Eeuwen Friesland. Economische en sociale ontwikkelingen van 1500 tot 1800* (Wageningen: Wageningen University Press, 1972), 428-429.

- <sup>3</sup> There were some Mennonite communities in the north western part of the province. Peat digging was the main economic activity in this area.
- <sup>4</sup> Cor Trompetter, *Agriculture, Proto-Industry and Mennonite Entrepreneurship: A History of the Textile Industries in Twente, 1600-1815* (Amsterdam: NEHA, 1997), 100-110.
- <sup>5</sup> Arend Kenkhuis from Almelo (ca. 1578–1642) demonstrates how Mennonites began to be involved as merchants and traders in the 1620–1630s. The *Schuldboek* (debt administration) is an important document written by Kenkhuis that has survived and has been published as: Tilly Hesselink-van de Riet, Wim Kuiper and Cor Trompetter, *Het Schuldboek van Arend Kenkhuis*. (Amsterdam: Aksant, 2008). For a further introduction into the history of Mennonites in Twente, and in Almelo in particular, see Cor Trompetter, *Leven aan de rand van de Republiek. Stad en gericht in Almelo, 1580-1700* (Amsterdam: Bert Bakker, 2006), 201-208. For Friesland see Cor Trompetter, *Doopsgezinden in Friesland: 1530–1850* (Gorredijk: Bornmeer, 2016) and Cor Trompetter, *Eén grote familie. Doopsgezinde elites in de Friese Zuidwesthoek 1600–1850* (Hilversum/Ljouwert: Verloren, 2007). Still usefull as an Introduction are S. Blaupt ten Cate, *Geschiedenis der Doopsgezinden in Groningen, Overijssel en Oost-Friesland*. 2 delen. (Leeuwarden/Groningen: n. p., 1842) and G. Heeringa, *Uit het verleden der Doopsgezinden in Twenthe* (Borne: n. p., ca. 1929). Some Mennonites may have been descendants of local farmers. For the quantitative data on Twente see Trompetter, *Agriculture, Proto-Industry and Mennonite Entrepreneurship*, 100-110.
- <sup>6</sup> Almelo and Enschede were by no means large cities by Dutch standards. Almelo had some 2,000 inhabitants in the mid-eighteenth century. Enschede only crossed the 2,000 mark around 1800.
- <sup>7</sup> In 1967 P.W. Klein 1967 already showed that the lack of investment opportunities were the key problem in the Dutch economy in the eighteenth century. (P.W. Klein, *Kapitaal en stagnatie tijdens het Hollandse vroegkapitalisme*. (Rotterdam: Universitaire Pers, 1967).
- <sup>8</sup> For an account of the Dutch economy from the 1780s onwards see Jan Luiten van Zanden and Arthur van Riel, *Nederland 1780-1914. Staat, instituties en economische ontwikkeling* (Amsterdam: Balans, 2000).
- <sup>9</sup> The intricate relationship between culture and economy is also pointed out by Kuiper and Nijboer Yme Kuiper and Harm Nijboer, “Between Frugality and Civility: Dutch Mennonites and Their Taste for the ‘World of Art’ in the Eighteenth Century,” *Journal of Mennonite Studies* 27 (2009): 75-92.
- <sup>10</sup> For example, the sale of the so-called “*Stift Weerselo*” in 1812, when fifty-eight farms, large and small were sold. W. Dingeldein, *Acht Eeuwen Stift Weerselo* (Hengelo: Boekhandel Broekhuis, 1991), 65-69.
- <sup>11</sup> One of the founders of the Nederlandsche Heide Maatschappij, a company that was responsible for large reclamations, was the Mennonite textile entrepreneur Albert Jan Blijdenstein from Enschede. See R. W. Jansen, *Een heide(ns) karwei: Albert Jan Blijdenstein, president van de Nederlandsche Heidemaatschappij 1889-1896* (Hoogeveen: RWJ Publications, 2005).
- <sup>12</sup> Historisch Centrum Overijssel (HCO), Statenarchief nr. 2556.
- <sup>13</sup> HCO, Statenarchief nr. 2582. It concerns Kievit, Muldershuis, Krabshuis, Rengelink, Weerhuis and Schelfhorst.
- <sup>14</sup> For Thomas see Bastiaan Willink, *Twentse Doopsgezinde Fabrikeursfamilies. Een genealogisch overzicht* (IJzerlo: Fagus, 2008), IIIId.



- <sup>15</sup> H. Woolderink, *Historisch boerderij-onderzoek in de heerlijkheid Almelo* (Enschede: Oudheidkamer Twente, 2015), farm nr. 1863.
- <sup>16</sup> HCO, Inventaris van de archieven van de Bewaarders van de Hypotheken en het kadaster in Overijssel, 1811–1989, nrs. 8065-8472; <http://www.hisgis.nl/hisgis/gewesten/fryslan/gewesten/overijssel/overijssel>. It concerns *Grobben, Kortenvoort, Nieuwhuis, Den Toren* and *Middelkamp*.
- <sup>17</sup> The others were *Pensink, Kamphuis* and *Stokkeler*, twenty-two hectares in total. Two other houses in this area, *Wachthuis* and *Vellener*, were also in Mennonite hands. For Catharina see Willink, *Twentse Doopsgezinde Fabrikeursfamilies*, Vd.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>19</sup> Hans Holtman, *Van Vriesen Aa to Broke; een cultuurhistorische beschrijving van het Almelse platteland* (Almelo: Gemeente Almelo, 2010), 45.
- <sup>20</sup> In the same area the Jewish textile merchant Moses Salomon had built a house that was valued at 4,800 guilders.
- <sup>21</sup> In the genealogy compiled by Willink he is Vd. Further information on ‘Het Warmtink’ can be found on <http://www.landgoedereninoverijssel.nl/landgoed-detail/t-warmtink.html>.
- <sup>22</sup> Close to Enschede the Blijdenstein family, Mennonite textile entrepreneurs bought the ‘Het Amelink’ in 1741 from another Mennonite textile family, the Enschede branch of the Ten Cates. Little by little ‘Het Amelink’ grew into a large country estate (See R.W. Jansen, *Stoom afblazen: Blijdenstein ontstaan, opkomst, bloei en uiteenvallen van de landgoederen van de Enschedese textielfamilie Blijdenstein in Twente van 1741 tot heden* (Delden: Gegarandeerd onregelmatig, 2008).
- <sup>23</sup> Z.W. Sneller, ‘Boedelinventarissen van Twentsche entrepeneurs-geslachten uit het laatste der 18e eeuw,’ *Bijdragen en Mededelingen van het Historisch Genootschap* 55 (1934): 33-118, 35. Sneller calls these banking activities ‘... een merkwaardig nevenbedrijf,’ an odd subsidiary business.
- <sup>24</sup> HCO, Collectie Kleine Aanwinsten, 1963 nr. 8. The farms were *Het Meulenbelt, De Schelfhorst, Het plaatsje Hendrik Veldhof (half), Schuttenboer, Holscher (half), Den Strol Het erve Dalvoorde* and *Het erve Roelof Aaldering*. The bonds were all estimated at their nominal value. The collapse of Dutch state finance in the Batavian period meant that the actual value of the estate was somewhat smaller. In an earlier analysis I only explored the investments, not at the whole estate (Cor Trompetter, “Burgers en boeren. Geld en grond. De betekenis van burgerlijk kapitaal voor veranderende eigendomsverhoudingen in Twente” in Cor Trompetter en Jan Luiten van Zanden, *Over de geschiedenis van het platteland in Overijssel. Elf studies, 1500-1850* (Kampen: IJsselacademie, 2001) 67-92, 82).
- <sup>25</sup> Trompetter, “Burgers en boeren. Geld en grond”.
- <sup>26</sup> Contrary to the Mennonites, only a few Catholics were involved in the textile industries (Trompetter, “Burgers en boeren. Geld en grond,” 82).
- <sup>27</sup> Faber, *Drie Eeuwen Friesland*, 215-220. In his defense we should note that the 1832 *Kadaster* data were not yet available.
- <sup>28</sup> In an attempt to development a new perspective on Dutch history, Paul Brusse and Wijnand W. Mijnhardt claim that large landowners from the peripheral provinces in the Netherlands were a strong political force in the period in 1750–1850. At the same time, the country went through a period of de-urbanization while the influence of Holland as the dominating province

diminished. It is a most interesting thesis, but it has sincere empirical flaws. Both in Friesland and in Overijssel (two provinces that are hardly mentioned in the book), the nobility as a landowning class was in many areas largely replaced by farmers, formerly tenants, as a property-owning group. More than the large landowners, farmers profited from a long period of economic growth. The effect was that there was strong discrepancy between the economic and political power. The velvet liberal revolution of 1848 made a start in 'repairing' this discrepancy. Because part of the Dutch office holders, like the mayors, were not elected but appointed by the king, the old elite, including the nobility, could long keep part of its power. See Paul Brusse and Wijnand W. Mijnhardt, *Towards a New Template for Dutch History: De-Urbanization and the Balance between City and Countryside* (Utrecht/Zwolle: Wbooks, 2011).

<sup>29</sup> Yme Kuiper, "Daar praaft het Landhuis in zyn' deftige plantage". Hofstede en Herenkamers in het doopsgezinde buitenleven in Friesland, 1650-1800," *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen* 40 (2014): 223-250.

<sup>30</sup> *State* is the Frisian term for a country house.

<sup>31</sup> Unfortunately there is no source for Friesland comparable with the Twente Hearth Tax or the Wealth Tax from the mid-eighteenth century. Just like in Overijssel, an attempt was made to reform the system in Friesland, but it was done in a different way. In 1749 a new tax was levied with an important 'wealth component', the *Quotisatie*, but the total wealth of a person was taxed in the municipality where he or she lived. We can identify Mennonites in this source through a comparison with membership lists, but we can only draw the conclusion that they were overrepresented in the richer strata of society (Trompetter, *Eén grote familie*, 282-283). Since we know that this was already the case in the second part of the seventeenth century (and probably earlier), this is not a very striking conclusion and it does not help us understand the investment patterns in Friesland. See for example Kees Kuiken, "Harlinger en Bildtse doopsgezinden. Kettingmigratie en elitevorming in Friesland omstreeks 1600," *De Vrije Fries* 83 (2003): 9-46 and G. Abma, "Dissenters yn 1672 of: De Mennisten wine har foar it jildlienen wei," in: J. J. Kalma en K. de Vries, eds., *Friesland in het rampjaar 1672. It jier van de miste kânsen* (Leeuwarden: Fryske Akademy, 1972), 175-185. Alternatively one could use the so-called *stemkohieren*, in which all owners of farms in Friesland with a vote in local and provincial elections were registered, but this would be quite time consuming as many families did not yet carry surnames. Furthermore, Mennonites were not listed as such and many farms were owned by several people or were part of an undivided inheritance. Another problem is that ownership is only part of the story; if real estate is burdened with large mortgages, ownership doesn't mean much and doesn't tell us the full story of the real estate market. Because ownership of farms was an absolute condition for political power in the countryside, people must have been willing to burden their possessions with large debts. Still, some Mennonite names, like Braam and Stinstra from Harlingen, show up in the *stemkohieren* of 1698 and 1728, but not in large numbers.

<sup>32</sup> Trompetter, *Eén grote familie*, 182.

<sup>33</sup> On some members of the Cats family see Yme Kuiper, "Van patriot tot notabele. De reis van de doopsgezinde koopman Pieter Cats uit Leeuwarden

- door de Republiek in de nazomer van 1792,” *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen* 35/36 (2010): 303-336.
- <sup>34</sup> Trompetter, *Eén grote familie*, 165.
- <sup>35</sup> Historisch Centrum Leeuwarden, TG 1800, Diverse personen en families te Leeuwarden e.o., 16e - 20e eeuw, nr. 26.
- <sup>36</sup> Trompetter, *Eén grote familie*, 122.
- <sup>37</sup> R.I.P. Mulder-Radetzky and B.H. de Vries, *Geschiedenis van Oranjewoud. Van vorstelijk lustslot tot voorname buitenplaatsen* (Alphen aan den Rijn: Canaletto, 2010).
- <sup>38</sup> Mulder-Radetzky and De Vries, *Geschiedenis van Oranjewoud*, 270; Trompetter, *Eén grote familie*, 127 ff.
- <sup>39</sup> See <http://friesscheepvaartmuseum.nl/beeld/fsm-col1-dat17364>.
- <sup>40</sup> Mulder-Radetzky and De Vries, *Geschiedenis van Oranjewoud*, 54. On Johannes van der Veen see J. A. Mulder, “Landschapsschilderijen van Aldert van der Poort,” *Fryslan* 19, no. 2 (2013): 8-10.
- <sup>41</sup> Aaltje Noyon (b. ca. 1783) was a daughter of Petrus Noyon. Her brother Joseph (1791–1828) married a daughter of Johannes van der Veen, Tetje, on October 10, 1821 (BS Friesland). Another brother married into the Harlingen Stinstra family ([https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petrus\\_Simeon\\_Noyon](https://nl.wikipedia.org/wiki/Petrus_Simeon_Noyon)).
- <sup>42</sup> In the mid-nineteenth century there were a number of marriages between girls from the Heerenveen Tuimelaar family and Mennonites from Sneek (Trompetter, *Eén grote familie*, 137, 140).
- <sup>43</sup> Mulder-Radetzky and De Vries, *Geschiedenis van Oranjewoud*, 171.
- <sup>44</sup> Y.B. Kuiper, “Inleiding,” *Nederlands Patriciaat* 77 (1993): VIII-XXXVIII, XXVII.
- <sup>45</sup> In the period of the industrialization entrepreneurs from Enschede like Van Heek did develop large estates.
- <sup>46</sup> The specific nature of the Mennonites as a closed community with a clear and identifiable character diminished in the eighteenth century, somewhat more quickly in Friesland than in Twente. In many ways this process is comparable to what happened in the German city of Krefeld, where, as Peter Kriedte has shown, their economic success ultimately led to the decline of the Mennonite character of the Mennonite economic elite. See Peter Kriedte, “Bescheidenheid, zakelijke soberheid en vroeg-industrieel kapitalisme. Geloof en handel in de Krefeldse doopsgezinde gemeente (1600 tot ca. 1830),” *Doopsgezinde Bijdragen* 35/36 (2009/2010): 59-82.