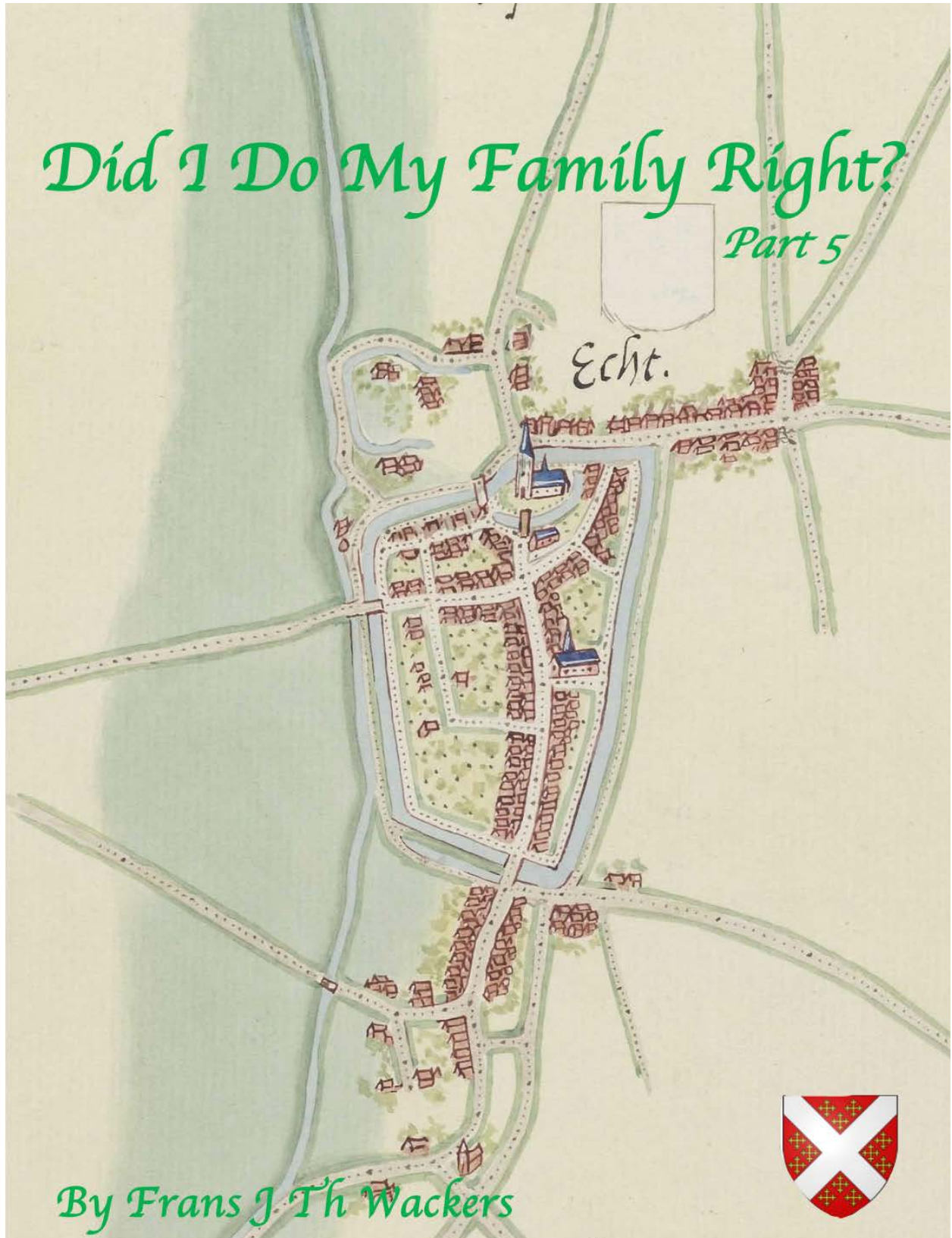


Did I Do My Family Right?

Part 5



By Frans J. Th. Wackers



From: Part 5 *Did I do my Family Right?*

by Frans J Th Wackers

October 2022

Lambert Hubertus Franciscus Wackers, Co-Founder Radio Holland (1862- 1950)

Lambertus Wackers was born in 1862 in a grain mill, the *Baalsbruggermolen*, in Kerkrade, South Limburg, on the German border. Three of his four siblings were born in the same mill. His parents were *Frans Antoon Wackers (1828-1889)* and *Maria Theresa Hubertina Rox (1834-1869)*. Frans Antoon was miller, the son and grandson of millers, and the brother of three millers. Lambert's father was born in Horn, close to Roermond, but on the opposite shore of the Meuse River. He moved in 1858 to Kerkrade as a miller and started a flour factory. The *Baalsbruggermill* was an ancient watermill associated with the Abbey of Rolduc, in Kerkrade. The origins of the mill go back to the early 1400s. In mid 19th century, the mill had various owners who turned the mill into a flour factory. Frans Antoon and his family lived in the mill; it is reasonable to assume that he was an owner.

Despite that background, Lambert did not think that he also should become a miller. He had other plans.



Baalsbruggermill where Lambert was born

On August 14, 1878, Lambert must have been an excited 16-year- young man. He just received the news that he passed the admission exam to the *Koninklijke Militaire Academie* (KMA, Royal Military Academy). The KMA was, and still is, a reputed school in the Netherlands for the education and training of Army officers. Before Lambert left for the academy, he and his father signed a notarized financial guarantor agreement.

The reader may remember that Jan Wackers' (of Gronsveld) motivation to sign up for the Army in the Dutch East Indies was driven by difficult economic times in Limburg (see pg.26).

Lambert grew up in the same province and lived through the same economic recession (1870 to 1880). Although this may have played a role, Lambert already had a clear plan. He applied to KMA to join the *Genie in Oost Indië* (Corps of Engineers in the East Indies) After four years of training at the KMA, Lambert graduated in 1883 as 2nd lieutenant of the Genie. He committed to five years of service with the Corps of Engineers (Genie) of the *Koninklijk Nederlandsch Indische Leger* (KNIL, Royal Netherlands East Indies Army).

I find it fascinating that in the 19th century, one could follow a person's travels from far away by reading newspapers' *Shipping News*. Using that information, I could reconstruct Lambert's military career movements more or less accurately. A confounding aspect is that "news" was frequently delayed and sometimes did not coincide with reality. Another limitation is that the newspaper messages usually do not reveal military tasks awaiting. The map below shows the places (red dots) where Lambert Wackers went during his military career.



- 1883, *Shipping News*: "On November 28, the steam ship (s.s.) *Prinses Wilhelmina* will depart from Amsterdam for the East Indies with a military detachment under command of 1st lieutenant of the infantry, JM Henning, with as co-commander 2nd Lieutenant of the Corps of Engineers L.H.F. Wackers."
- 1884, January 21, "L.H.F. Wackers has been assigned to join "works" in *Bandjermasin*."
- February 15, 1884 " the recently arrived from the Netherlands 2nd Lieutenant L.H.F. Wackers of the Corps of Engineers, departed with s.s. *Gouverneur Loudon* from Batavia to Surabaya."

Fort Willem-I, Corps of Engineers

Lambert stayed for two years in Surabaya. What he did during the 2-years-posting remains unknown. During this time, he was promoted to 1st lieutenant. On 1886, July 1, 1886, Wackers was assigned to the Corps of Engineers at Fort Willem I. Lambert must have been content that he was promoted and that he finally arrived at a posting where he was incorporated with the *Corps of Engineers*. Joining the *Genie* had been his goal from the very start of his training at the KMA. He was now 24 years old. He was a member of the Dutch Royal Institute of Engineers from 1881-1888.

Fort Willem I, in Middle Java, was a railroad station that was an important transshipment point. Transshipment means that travelers had to change trains because the gauge of the railroad tracks changed to a different width. I can imagine it was a place where engineers found enough technical problems to solve. Marjan and I visited the *Ambarawa Railroad Station Museum, Willem I*, in 2015, as described in Part 4, pg. 62.

Lambert was on duty at Fort Willem I from 1886 to 1888. Subsequently, he was transferred to the Corps of Engineers on the *Molukkan* spice islands, *Ambon and Ternate*. Newspaper messages provided no information about Lambert's tasks or responsibilities on the remote islands. He may have received more specific training in triangulation.

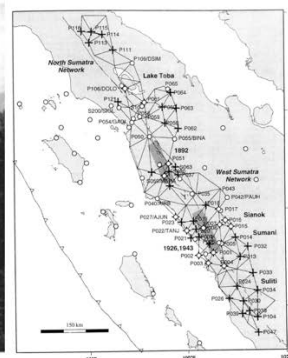
Triangulation for mapping Sumatra

On April 30, 1890, there was an announcement that Mr. L. Wackers boarded the s.s. *Sindore* in Surabaya to go to Semarang and Batavia. In May 1890, he arrived in Telok-Betong, on the south tip of Sumatra. He then continued his journey to join the ***Triangulation Brigade of the KNIL Topographical Service*** in Padang on Sumatra's west coast.

The reader should excuse me that I had no idea what triangulation work involved. I found a useful description in a relatively recent article by L. Prawirodirdjo, Y Bock, and JF Genrich of the Scripps Institution of Oceanography at UC San Diego in the *Journal of Geophysical Research*, "***One Century of tectonic deformation along the Sumatran fault from triangulation and Global Positioning System surveys.***" 2000; vol. 105: pg. 28,343-28,361. Although the main research article is about tectonic deformation, it described the triangulation survey as it was done more than 100 years ago by the KNIL Triangulation Brigade. I slightly reworded the text for better understanding,

Triangulation Survey

The triangulation survey on Sumatra was part of an extensive geodetic network established by the Dutch colonial government in the 1880s and 1890s. The entire triangulation network comprised more than 2,000 primary, secondary, and tertiary sites, covering most of the island. Construction of a concrete pillar and subsequent initial surveys often took several weeks at each site. Because triangulation involved point-to-point optical direction readings through a theodolite, most stations were located on mountaintops.



1880s triangulation pillars on mountaintops.

***triangulation sites (+)
GPS sites (o)***

Many of the triangulation monuments are in remote areas that even with modern logistics represent a formidable challenge for state-of-the-art, space-based geodetic surveys. The state of preservation of the triangulation pillars correlated inversely with accessibility.

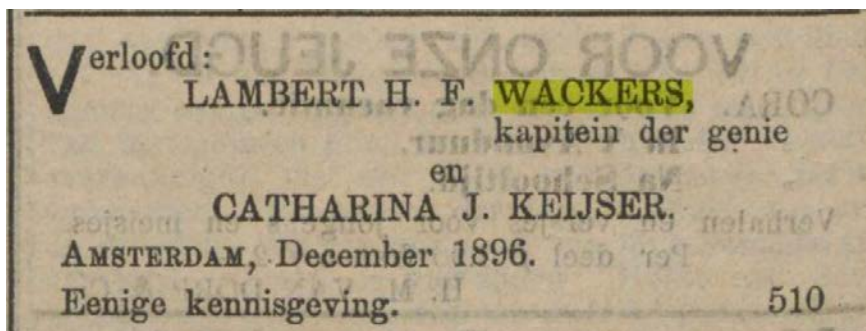
Now at least, we have an inkling of what Lambert's actual activities may have been. He worked in the wilderness, deciding on elevated triangulation points, building concrete monuments, and measuring, mapping and charting the island of Sumatra. It was plodding and climbing through a tropical wilderness, physically challenging, collecting precise scientific measurements on top of mountains, and analyzing geodetic data. These must have been interesting, demanding, and rewarding assignments for Lambert.

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In 1896, after 12 years of service in the tropics, Lambert was entitled to a one-year-long leave in the Netherlands. Near the end of his leave, Lambert was promoted to *Captain in the Corps of Engineers*.

Lambert did not return to Kerkrade or Breda. Both his parents had passed away; his mother died in 1868 in Düren, Germany, and his father in 1889, in Amsterdam.

The following suggests that Lambert went straight to Amsterdam. I found an engagement announcement with his fiancée, Catharina Jacoba Keijser, in the Java-Bode of January 20, 1897,



***Engaged (Verloofd, Fiancés)  
in Amsterdam, December 1896***

Three months later the Haagsche Courant, March 25, 1897,



**Family Announcements**

**Married (getrouwd):**

**L. H. F. Wackers and C. J. Keyser, in  
Amsterdam, March 23, (1897)**

When and how Lambert Wackers met his bride is unknown.

Catharina was born in 1866 in Dordrecht, about 35 km (21 mi) from Breda. If Catharina grew up in Dordrecht, Lambert may have met Catharina during his years at the KMA in Breda, but that is a wild guess. Waiting for 12 years while your boyfriend is with the KNIL, without interim leaves, seems improbable.

Why did Lambert and Catharina marry in Amsterdam?

Lambert's father, Frans Antoon Wackers, moved from Kerkrade back to Amsterdam. It is not known when and why he did so. It may have been after retiring from his flour manufacturing business in Kerkrade, which he started around 1858, the year of his wedding with Maria Theresa Rox (she passed away in 1868 in Düren, Germany). Frans Antoon's oldest married daughter Maria Louisa Schneider-Wackers lived in Amsterdam since 1879 with her husband Christiaan Schneider, and two sons. Frans Antoon passed away and was buried in Amsterdam in 1889.

When Lambert (34 yr) returned in 1896 to the Netherlands for his one-year leave, I suspect that he first went to Amsterdam to visit his sister Maria Louisa's family and his father's grave. There, he may have met friends, acquaintances, and also Catharina Keijser (31yr).

On April 17, 1897, Captain Lambert Wackers and his spouse Catharina sailed back to the Dutch East Indies on *ss Burgemeester den Tex*. After arriving in Batavia on May 22, 1897, he was put for a short while on "non-activity" because he was "overcomplete" (i.e., for his rank) but destined to return to the Triangulation Brigade of the Topographic Service. Captain Wackers fell ill and went on sick leave in September and November 1897 to *SukaBumi* (south of Jakarta, an area of coffee plantations and favored for its cooler climate.)

~ ~ ~

***In charge of Kota Radja Steam Tram and Ice Factory***

Recovered from his sickness in February 1898, Lambert went to Fort de Kock on the west coast of Atjeh (*Aceh*, North Sumatra) to rejoin the Corps of Engineers.

Unexpectedly, to me at least, captain Wackers was relieved from the Triangulation Brigade.

He simultaneously received two important new assignments.

- Chef of Exploitation of the *Atjeh Kota Radja steam tram*,
- Director of the *Kota Radja Government Ice Factory*.

*Kota Radja* was the Dutch name for the *Sultanate of Banda Atjeh*.

It is on the very north point of Sumatra on the Strait of Malacca. The town was an ancient multi-ethnic important strategic and mercantile trading hub. The people of the Atjeh Sultanate fought a fierce guerilla war against Dutch supremacy (Atjeh War 1874-1904). The "victory" by general van Heutz was bloody and limited. I understand that at the time Lambert Wackers was put in charge of the management of the steam tram, the Dutch had seized the *Kraton of the Sultanate*. Lambert became involved with overseeing the defensive railroad system around Kota Radja.



**40 km of defensive railroad surrounding Kota Radja**

### ***His other assignment***

One can imagine how important the directorship of the Government Ice Factory was in the tropics. Electrical refrigerators did not yet exist.

I remember watching the delivery of large ice bars at our home in Echt as a kid. A tall man dressed in overall, a cloth over his right shoulder, and a heavy bar of ice on top of the fabric. These bars were shoved in an insulated (non-electrical) cabinet in the kitchen.



## *Ice factory in Dutch Indië*

## *How ice was delivered at home*

In February 1900, Lambert was still in Kota Radja. Catharine's widowed mother, Maria Geertruida van Breda, visited and stayed with Catharine and Lambert. The Dutch newspaper "*De Telegraaf*" announced that she died during her visit to KotaRadja on February 18, 1900.

On March 14, 1900, Lambert was sick again. He received two weeks of sick leave to recover in the Pandang Highlands.

June 20, 1901, Wackers is transferred back to Padang.

July 18, 1901, again a one-month sick leave to recover,

I begin to be curious about what kind of sickness Lambert suffered from. Recurrent episodes of Malaria, seem likely.

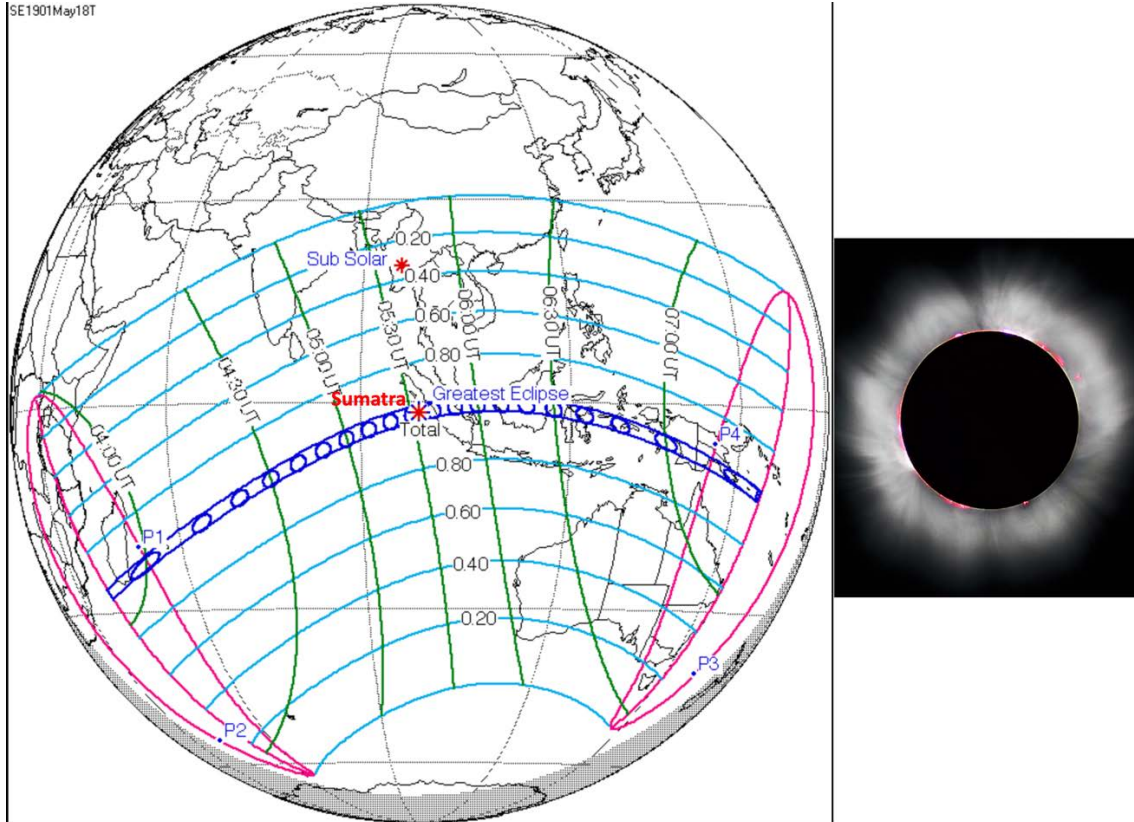


## **Total Solar Eclipse at *Karang-Sago (Padang)***

On May 18, 1901, A total solar eclipse was forecasted to occur on May 18, 1901. The best observation point was anticipated to be in Atjeh, Sumatra.



SE1901May18T



**Captain of the Genie, Lambert Wackers**, was charged to be the host and available to the **International Solar Eclipse Expedition**. His team consisted of one captain of the Triangulation Brigade, one adjutant non-commissioned officer, two technicians of the Genie, two European non-commissioned officers of the Genie, 12 indigenous fusiliers. A team consisting of 20 men, Lambert included.

The Dutch observers at *Karang-Sago (Padang)* were: Major Muller, chef, Captains de Rochemont and Wackers, Professor Julius, Professor Nijland, Professor Wilterdink, the gentlemen Hubrecht, de Boer, Ohlenroth and Keyser. American observers were: Dr. Atkinson and Dr. Dyson.

~ ~ ~

## 1902 Retirement

About one year after the solar eclipse expedition, captain Lambert H.F. Wackers requested and received honorable discharge from the Corps of engineers of the Royal Netherlands East Indies Army. I wonder whether his recurrent sick leaves had anything to do with his request.

Verleend: Wegens ziekte, een tweejarig verlof naar Europa, aan den kapitein der Infanterie E. A. Van Der Ven en aan den kapitein-intendant bij de militaire administratie A. E. G. C. G. Van Eelders.  
Ontslagen: Met ingang respectievelijk van 4 en 2 Juli 1902, op verzoek, wegens volbrachten dienstdienst, eervol en met behoud van recht op pensioen uit Hr. Ms. militairen dienst, de kapitein der Genie, L. H. F. Wackers en de kapitein der Infanterie C. Noltenius Van Elsbroek, eerstgenoemde on-

**Samarang Trade and Advertising Bulletin  
July 2, 1902**

*Discharged: Starting July 2, 1902, on request, due to completed service, honorably and with rights on pension... captain of the Genie, L.H.F. Wackers...*

### ***Captain Lambert Wackers and his spouse return to the Netherlands***

On July 10, 1902, *The Samarang Trade and Advertising Bulletin* announced that Captain L.H.F. Wackers of the Corps of Engineers and his spouse embarked in Padang to return to the Netherlands. Lambert was 40 yrs.old, and Catharina, 36 yrs.

Upon resignation, Lambert H.F. Wackers was granted the titular rank of Major of the Genie.

This concludes Lambert Wackers' 19 years of service in the Dutch East Indies.

~ ~ ~

### ***Lambert Wackers in Amsterdam***

Before leaving Sumatra, Lambert made a much-appreciated gift to the Zoological Garden, "Artis" in Amsterdam.

*Nieuws van den Dag, August 28, 1902 (Daily News):*

"The collection of animals in Artis was recently enriched with several precious gifts, among others, a rare "Javan Gibbon" or longarm monkey (*Hylobates variegatus Kuhl*). This Gibbon is a gift from Sumatra by Mr. L.H.F. Wackers."

*In 2009, the official name of the Javan Gibbon is Hylobates Moloch. This primate is now the most endangered monkey species. Their lifespan is 35 yrs in the wild, and 50 yrs in captivity. There are less than 2,000 gibbons living in the wild. They can attain a height of 1.4 - 2 feet (45-64 cm).*

*This gift by Lambert is somewhat unexpected. It shows how little we actually have learned about him. What are his interests? how is he as a private person? Is he only a technical person? Questions to which I have no answers.*



*Javan Gibbon, Hylobates Moloch (exclusively on Java)*

### ***Lambert's connections with Amsterdam***

When Lambert went back to the Netherlands after retiring from his military career, he did not return to his native Limburg. This should be surprising; Limburgers are very attached to their home province.

As a retired senior commander of the KNIL and engineer, he was offered a position as the founding director of a Rotterdam management company of real estate, "*Aerdenhout-Bentveld*". I can imagine that this was not exactly what he had in his adventurous and innovative engineer's mind.

Lambert's tenure at this job in Rotterdam did not last very long; He and Catherina decided to move to Amsterdam.

*I discussed on pg.45 the connections and ties that Lambert had with Amsterdam.*

Lambert's older sister Maria Louisa Wackers (43), her husband Christiaan Schneider (44), and their sons Casper (22 ) and Frans (20) lived in Amsterdam. I suspect that Lambert and Catharina also had other friends in Amsterdam, the city where they met and married.

On February 17, 1905, their first and only child, Maria Louise, was born in Amsterdam.

Lambert was not someone to rest on his laurels in retirement. At only 40 years old had other interests and ambitions.


### ***Candidate for the Municipal Council of Amsterdam***

Around May 28, 1904, the "*Comité van den Handeldrijvende Middenstand*" (Committee of Middleclass Merchants) in District IX of Amsterdam, held a meeting to discuss the desirability of having someone with more technical expertise on the City Council of Amsterdam. The Committee overwhelmingly voted for the nomination of a qualified strong candidate for one of the vacancies on the Council. Lambert Wackers, retired major of the Corps of Engineers, was unanimously elected as the candidate who had the Committee's trust and support.

Lambert's nomination to run for the City Council, is another indication that Lambert was not an unknown stranger, but someone who already was viewed as an invaluable asset.

*As an aside, here is once again evidence that members of the Wackers family have interest in public service.*

## Election Advertisement, June 15, 1904

|                                                                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Homeowners, Realtors, Storeowners<br/>and All in Construction<br/>In District IX</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Vote for Candidate<br/>L. H. F. WACKERS</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>An Engineer, Capable Overseeing<br/>Amsterdam<br/>Electric Tramways, and Gaz Plants</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Through Better Management,<br/>No Increase in Taxes</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Trust<br/>Wackers is Non-Political<br/>Liberal</b></p> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

There is no accessible record of the 1904 election results for the Amsterdam City Council, but the lack of information makes it plausible that Lambert was not elected.



## Wireless Communication

Not in the least discouraged, Lambert directed his attention to another project, a *Plan voor Draadlooze Telegraphy in Nederlands Indië* (Plan for Wireless Telegraphy in the Dutch Indies). Lambert saw ways to improve the infrastructure in the East Indies. He collaborated on the project with engineer Theodore F.A. Delprat\*, a former Head Engineer employed by the Dutch East Indies Government.

"On August 5, 1907, Mr. Lambert H.F. Wackers wrote an article in the *Journal of the Royal Dutch Geographic Association* about the significance of the concession to build **stations for wireless telegraphy in the Dutch East Indies** granted to *Mr. L. H. F. Wackers and Mr. Th. F. A. Delprat\**. The concession allows for the exploitation of 38 wireless stations. The projects' main purpose is creating *Communication between offshore ships on sea*. A network of wireless stations is planned at locations outside Java because many remote places are without any telegraphic connections. Thus, the concession significantly extends the governmental telegraph network, particularly in the far eastern regions of the archipelago. The required capital has been budgeted at **2,650,000 guilders, which has already been fully committed**. No additional funding is needed. No shares will be offered to the public until the viability of the enterprise has been established. The building of wireless stations will start immediately. One can expect powerful coastal stations to be at the disposal of the Navy and the Mercantile fleet within a short time".

### **Funding revoked, end of story**

*On May 12, 1909, the following message was published in Batavia.*



"The *Marconi Wireless Telegraph Company*, which initially offered to provide the entire capital for the *Dutch-Indies Telegraph Company*, reneged on its promise while the project's initial preparations were already underway. Extensive legal actions could not turn around the objectionable break of contract. The English judge who chaired the lawsuit was so indignant about the horrible conduct that he concluded, "Gentlemen, this is common cheating".

*One can imagine how furious Lambert Wackers and Théodore Delprat must have been.*

*\*Engineer Théodore Felix Albert Delprat (1851-1932) was for two decennia Head Engineer in the Dutch East Indies. He was involved in constructing railroads and bridges in Java and Sumatra. Later he became a well-known politician on the City Council of Amsterdam, where he was Alderman (Wethouder) of Finances (1902-1910) and of Public Works (1910-1916). Possessing an extensive collection of art and archeological objects from the East Indies, Delprat was one of the benefactors and later co-director of the former Koloniaal Instituut in Amsterdam. Wackers and Delprat may have met each other in Pandang at Fort de Kock, West Sumatra.*

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1909, 1910, Lambert runs again for public office.

In 1909 Lambert Wackers was again asked to run for office in the Amsterdam City Council. He accepted the nomination. This time he ran as a Liberal. Again, he did not get enough votes.

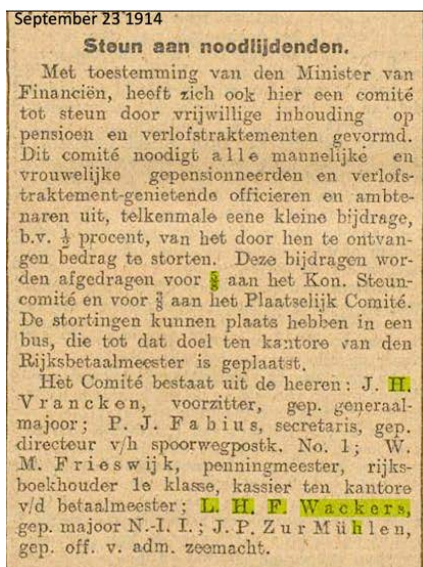
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## **The war of 1914-1918**

In 1914 the "Great War" (First World War) started and would ravage the rest of Europe. The Netherlands managed, through active diplomacy, to stay out of the war and remain neutral. "All we wish is to be left alone," the Dutch newspaper NRC wrote on August 1, 1914. Neutrality was threatened by the Germans, who might plan to pass through the province of Limburg to invade Belgium and France. After a few days of the war, the Germans and the British indicated that they would respect the neutrality of the Netherlands, but only if this neutrality did not benefit the enemy. Therefore, the Dutch constantly needed to compromise during the war to avoid offending both parties.

Shortly after the start of the war, the *Koninklijke Steuncomité (Royal Committee of Support)* was formed to show that neutrality did not mean insensitivity. **Lambert Wackers** was on the *local* support committee in Amsterdam.

Although World War I did not rage *inside* the Netherlands, it nonetheless caused significant problems in many areas. In the first months of the war, over a million Belgians fled to The Netherlands, the largest stream of refugees in Dutch history. As a result, the population in the Netherlands increased by about 15%: from 6.2 million to about 7.2 million. This led to scarcity of all basic necessities of life, shortage of food, and housing. The government issued distribution coupons that allowed the population to buy limited amounts of scarce goods such as coffee, tea, meat, cheese, milk, butter, wheat, soap and coal.



### **Support for those in need**

#### **The committee:**

**JH Vrancken, chair, ret. Major-General**

**PJ Fabius, secr., ret. Director Railroad Post**

**WM Frieswijk, treasurer, accountant**

**LHF Wackers, ret. Major KNIL**

**JP Zur Mühlen, ret. Navy administrator**

This short newspaper article explains how this committee encouraged voluntary withholding of small amount (**0.5 percent**) from pensions of retired military officers and administrators. These contributions will be distributed to the Royal Committee of Support and its local committees to support people in need.

This may be seen as evidence that Lambert Wackers was a socially sensitive person.

~ ~ ~

## **De Nederlandsche Draadlooze Telegrafie Maatschappij**

Despite the disappointing experience with broken promises in 1909, Lambert had not lost his passion or interest in wireless communication.

**On December 19, 1916, the "Daily News for Dutch East Indies" wrote the following,**

"Today, *The Holland-America Line, the Royal Dutch Lloyd, the Kon. Paketvaart Maatschappij, the West India mail service, the Java China-Japan Line and the Kon. Nederlandsche Stoomboot Company* have together founded the **Nederlandsche Draadlooze Telegraaf Maatschappij (NTM, The Dutch Wireless Telegraph Company)**.

The new company is named **Radio Holland**, whose purpose is to gradually replace the entire radio-telegraphy equipment on board of Dutch ships, which until now were managed by a Belgian Company. The new company has a founding capital of 1 million. **Mr. L.H.F Wackers** is appointed founding director of Radio Holland.

On the Board of the new company are representatives of the above-mentioned Dutch steamship companies and Professor C.L. van der Bilt of the Delft Technical College (now University of Delft)."

### ***Incentives for founding NTM Radio Holland***

*The disaster of the sinking of the Titanic in 1912 demonstrated the importance of wireless radiocommunication at sea. Without the SOS -call sent out by the Titanic radio operator, no passenger nor crew would have survived. Since then, many shipping companies installed radio equipment on board, and hired operators to improve safety on the high seas.*

The Dutch ships that had wireless equipment and operators on board, were before the war supported by the British Marconi Company. However, when World War I started, British and Belgian Marconi companies could no longer support radio equipment on neutral (Dutch) ships. This created unacceptable risks for seagoing vessels. Facing this problem, the above-mentioned Dutch Shipping Companies joined forces and founded *Radio Holland*.

*Quote:*

*"Tomorrow we'll found the new company, Old Chap." Which is apparently what Lambert Wackers said to his secretary, G. Fritsche on December 5th, 1916. The company was the Nederlandse Telegraaf Mij Radio-Holland (NTM RH). Wackers would be its first director.*

### **1916-1930**

With *Lambert Wackers as the first Executive Director*, Radio Holland was a great commercial success, showing spectacular growth. In the first 10 years, 170,000 telegram messages were sent, 416 ships were equipped with new wireless equipment, and 300 new wireless operators were trained. During these same years, there was rapid innovation of technology and applications and significant commercial expansion.

After the war, the demand for more radio equipment and operators continued to increase, despite economic recession. Not only passenger and cargo ships, but fishing fleets and airplanes were also interested in joining the trend.

In 1918 Lambert Wackers also founded the *Nederlandsche Seintoestellen Fabriek (NSF, The Dutch Factory of Signal Devices)*, another very successful technical business that Lambert started. Until 1960 the NSF in Hilversum was the largest radio and transmitter factory in the Netherlands. The company produced transmitters and receivers for the merchant fleet and radio sets for the public. In 1923 the NSF broadcasted the first experimental wireless radio concert of a jazz music and other popular music. This experimental broadcast led to the later national broadcasting associations in Hilversum.

When I read about this, I got very excited.

My grand-uncle, Lambert, is the founder of RADIO HOLLAND!

Did the company still exist?

When I Googled "Radio Holland" I got even more excited. Not only did the company exist, but it had also grown tremendously. The company was operating on a worldwide scale using the most advanced technology.

I sent an email though the company's website,

December 17, 2017

Dear Sirs,

I just found out that one my ancestors, Capt ret. Lambert H F Wackers, was one of the founders and first managing director of Radio Holland.



I would be very interested in receiving, if available, a copy of the early history of Radio Holland.

Thank you,

Frans J Th Wackers

and received a response,

FW: Message via Radio Holland website ↩ ↶ ↷

 **Annet Boers** <[Annet.Boers@radioholland.com](mailto:Annet.Boers@radioholland.com)>  
To:  Wackers, Frans Friday, December 22, 2017 at 12:48 PM


Dear Mr. Wackers,

What a nice surprise to receive your below mail!  
We have, for the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Radio Holland, 6 December 2016, issues an anniversary book and we will be delighted to send you this book.  
A portrait (oil painting) of Mr. Wackers, one of our founders, is present in our office in Rotterdam!  
Will send you some more information by separate mail lateron.

Thank you for your mail & Happy Holidays!

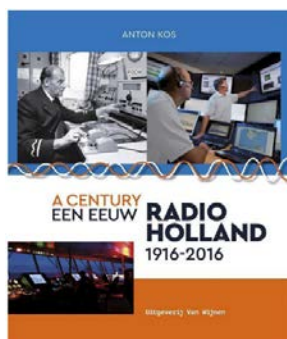
Met vriendelijke groet, Kind regards,

**ANNET BOERS**  
Manager Global Marketing & Communications



**RADIO HOLLAND GROUP B.V.**  
T +31 10 4283387 M +31 6 53282849  
Droogdokweg 71, 3089 JN, Rotterdam  
P.O. Box 5068, NL-3008 AB Rotterdam | Trade reg. 33178593  
E [Annet.Boers@radioholland.com](mailto:Annet.Boers@radioholland.com), [www.radioholland.com](http://www.radioholland.com)

I received the beautifully edited book by Anton Kos, "A century Radio Holland".





The book is worth reading; it describes the company's progression from simple radio-signal devices to shortwave worldwide expansion, directional signaling, the incorporation of radar, transistors, and electronic navigation devices on fishing ships and coasters (Decca and Loran), and since the 1980's satellites. Anno 2022 *Radio Holland Group, BV* offers telecommunication, satellite communication, navigation equipment, and e-navigation.

I can imagine it must have been very exciting for an engineer like Lambert to be involved with and manage new and rapidly evolving technology. Not only that, but also exploring new practical applications.

I am sure he understood that novel technology might reach a dead end. One should be prepared to adjust to better and different technical advances as long as it served the greater goal of improved telecommunication.

In 1930, Lambert Wackers stepped down as Director of Radio Holland. I did not find anything about Lambert's life during retirement. No interviews with him, no stories about the early days of Radio Holland. It is as if Lambert disappeared.

His wife Catharine passed away in 1933. Their daughter Dr. Maria Louise Wackers (1905-2003), had a doctorate in organic chemistry; she remained unmarried. I found no further information about the daughter either.

At this point, I have become very frustrated. I had hoped to discover more about the person of Lambert Wackers. Thus far, the only information I collected was about his career and professional accomplishments, but all that was relatively impersonal.

There is a portrait of Lambert Wackers in the headquarters of Radio Holland in Rotterdam. The picture probably was painted at the time of his retirement.



The portrait shows a gentleman seated in a chair. He is probably in his sixties but in good physical shape, with grey-white hair. He looks relaxed. I find his face striking; an intelligent

expression with penetrating eyes, ready to give you an answer, or his opinion, about what you just said. His hands are firm, but not of someone who did manual labor.

*There exist only two other items that are personal.*

- One single personal quote. The day before Radio Holland was founded, Lambert was clearly excited and full of anticipation.

*"Tomorrow we'll found the new company, Old Chap."* he said to his secretary, G. Fritsche.

- The 1950 obituary in "CONTACT", an employee's newsletter,

### **"Lambertus Hubertus Franciscus Wackers**

*The nestor of the Radio-Holland-family passed away on January 23, 1950, on the advanced age of 88 years, that he reached recently on January 13th.*

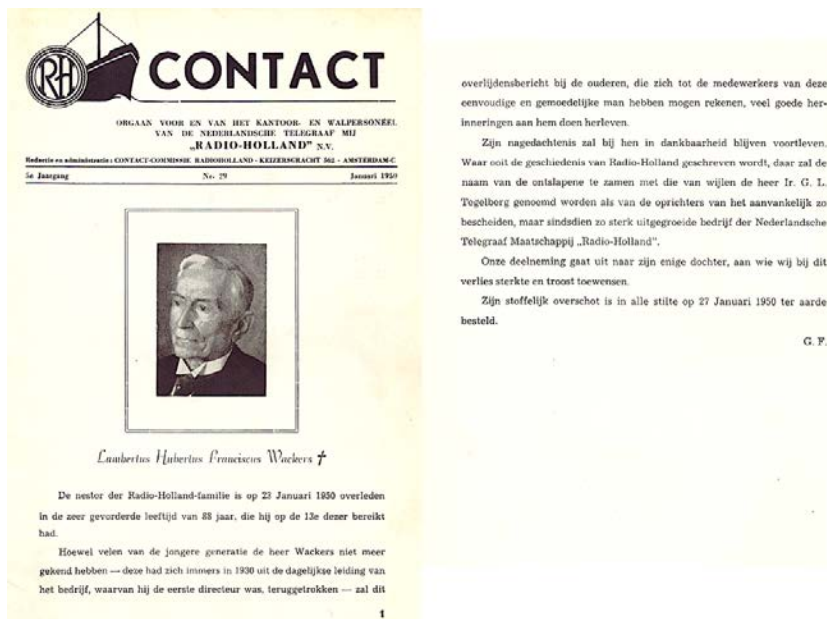
*Although many of the younger generation may not have known Mr. Wackers- he withdrew from the daily management of the company in 1930-, this obituary will for seniors in the company revive fond memories of him. For those who worked with him, he was an unassuming convivial man. His memory will live on in gratitude.*

*Wherever the history of Radio-Holland will be written, the name of the deceased will be mentioned together with that of the late Mr. G.L. Tegelberg, as the founders of the initially so modest, but since then so strongly grown company of the Nederlandsche Telegraaf Maatschappij "Radio-Holland".*

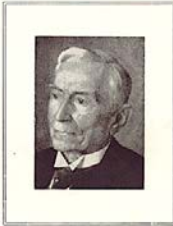
*Our condolences go out to his only daughter, to whom we wish strength and comfort at this loss.*

*His remains were laid to rest in silence on January 27, 1950."*

G.F



**CONTACT**  
ORGaan VOOR EN VAN HET KANTOOR- EN WERKPERSONEEL  
VAN DE NEDERLANDSCHE TELEGRAAF MIJ  
„RADIO-HOLLAND“ N.V.  
Redactie en administratie: CONTACT-COMMISSIE, RADIOHOLLAND - KEIZERSGRACHT 362 - AMSTERDAM.  
1e Jaargang No. 79 Januari 1950



Lambertus Hubertus Franciscus Wackers †

De nestor der Radio-Holland-familie is op 23 Januari 1950 overleden in de zeer gevorderde leeftijd van 88 jaar, die hij op de 12e dezer bereikt had.

Hoewel velen van de jongere generatie de heer Wackers niet meer gekend hebben — deze had zich immers in 1930 uit de dagelijkse leiding van het bedrijf, waarvan hij de eerste directeur was, teruggetrokken — zal dit

overlijdensbericht bij de ouderen, die zich tot de medewerkers van deze eenvoudige en gemoedelijke man hebben mogen rekenen, veel goede herinneringen aan hem doen herleven.

Zijn nagedachtenis zal bij hen in dankbaarheid blijven voortleven. Waar ooit de geschiedenis van Radio-Holland geschreven wordt, daar zal de naam van de ontlapene te zamen met die van wijlen de heer Ir. G. L. Tegelberg genoemd worden als van de oprichters van het aanvankelijk zo bescheiden, maar sindsdien zo sterk uitgegroeide bedrijf der Nederlandsche Telegraaf Maatschappij „Radio-Holland“.

Onze deelneming gaat uit naar zijn enige dochter, aan wie wij bij dit verlies sterkte en troost toewensen.

Zijn stoffelijk overschot is in alle stilte op 27 Januari 1950 ter aarde besteld.

G. F.

*This obituary is very disappointing. It does not reveal much about Lambert's personality and character.*