
Pieter Jans de Witt (c. 1624–c. 1705)

Born: Leiden, Holland (Netherlands), c. 1624 (working estimate)

Died: by 1705, Bushwick (Kings County), Long Island, New Netherland / New York

Also seen as: Pieter Jans **de Wit**, **de Witt**, **de Wijt**; sometimes shortened to **Pieter Jans**

One-paragraph overview

A Dutch artisan/householder who emerges in the records as one of the **first magistrates of Boswyck (Bushwick)** when the village court was erected in **1661**, and again in **1662**. Later lists indicate long residence in Kings County (with the typical 1687 Oath of Allegiance giving “years in the country” for many men of his circle). His family appears among the early Reformed Dutch Church communities around **Brooklyn/Bushwick/Manhattan**, and he dies by **May 1705** at Bushwick. The **magistracy entries** and the **Bushwick town/church record books** are the key anchors for his identity, chronology, and place. ([Wikimedia Commons](#))

Where & why in the 1630s

- The 1630s are the **setup decade** for western Long Island: Norwegians/Swedes at the creeks, WIC patents along Wallabout/Greenpoint, and ad-hoc bouwerries that later become the chartered town of **Boswyck** (“the woods”). De Witt himself surfaces as a public officer in the **early 1660s**, but the social and economic context he enters was formed in the **1640s–1650s** along **Noorman’s Kill / Bushwick Creek**. ([Internet Archive](#))
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Family & ties (working)

- **Parents:** Not yet proved in primary Dutch sources (Leiden archives to be searched).
- **Spouse/issue:** Children likely appear in NYC or Kings County Dutch Reformed registers (baptisms/marriages) in the 1660s–1680s; use the published church books below to confirm exact entries. ([ia601501.us.archive.org](#))

Research note: Many online trees place his birth **at Leiden** and death **at Bushwick in/just before 1705**; treat those as pointers only until matched to church/town/probate entries. The Bushwick town records and the First Dutch Reformed Church “First Book” (1660–1752) are the right places to confirm. ([Brooklyn Public Library](#))

What we can prove (with documents)

1. He was a Boswyck magistrate in 1661 and again in 1662.

- *Register of New Netherland, 1626–1674* (transcribed from the Dutch council minutes) lists the court being **erected 31 Mar 1661** and names “**Peter Jansen de Witt**” among the magistrates; he is listed again under **30 Mar 1662**.

What it proves: residence/status in Boswyck; civic role; terminus-ante quem for his arrival. ([Wikimedia Commons](#))

2. The appointment of Bushwick magistrates survives in the New York State Archives.

- “Appointment of magistrates for Bushwyck,” council minutes entry dated **30 Mar 1662** (series A1809).

What it proves: independent confirmation of the magistracy from the originating record group; use for image-level citation if needed. ([NY State Archives Collections](#))

3. Bushwick/Brooklyn Dutch Reformed registers (1660–1752) exist and are accessible.

- *Old First Dutch Reformed Church of Brooklyn, New York: First Book of Records, 1660–1752* (marriages begin 1639; baptisms later) — cataloged and widely held.

What it proves: framework to find de Witt family baptisms/marriages, land acknowledgments, and disciplinary/consistory mentions tied to Bushwick. ([Brooklyn Public Library](#))

4. Context: Boswyck was laid out and named by Stuyvesant; town governance and lots assigned.

- Municipal/landmark reports summarize Stuyvesant’s actions naming **Boswyck** and appointing a **subaltern court**, consistent with the council minutes that name de Witt.

What it proves: the governmental backdrop for Pieter’s office; use this for narrative context alongside the primary minutes. ([NYC Media](#))

Optional (use cautiously): Many compiled works note the **1687 Oath of Allegiance** entries in Kings County give “years in the country.” Look for **Pieter Jans de Witt** in those lists to

estimate an arrival year (~early 1650s if “35 years” is attached to him). Verify in the printed sources: **Documentary History of the State of New-York, vol. 1** and **Bergen, Register of Early Settlers of Kings County (1881)**. Don’t rely on unsourced transcriptions. ([Olivetree Genealogy](#))

Working timeline

- **c. 1624:** Birth at **Leiden** (to be confirmed in Leiden DTB registers/poorter records).
 - **by 1661:** Resident of **Boswyck (Bushwick)**; **magistrate** named in the erection of the local court (31 Mar 1661). ([Wikimedia Commons](#))
 - **1662:** Again listed among **magistrates** (30 Mar 1662). ([Wikimedia Commons](#))
 - **1660s–1680s:** Search for baptisms/marriages/lot mentions in **Old First DRC, Brooklyn**; possible appearances also in **NYC (Manhattan) DRC** baptisms/indexes. ([Brooklyn Public Library](#))
 - **by 1705:** Deceased at **Bushwick** (date used in many compiled genealogies; seek probate, town minutes, or church burial mentions to firm this). (*Research cue; verify in Bushwick town records collection*). ([NYC Collection Guides](#))
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Land & locality notes

- “Boswyck/Bushwick” included today’s **East Williamsburg/Bushwick**; creeks then called **Noorman’s Kill/Bushwick Creek** and **Maspeth Kill/Newtown Creek** defined the landscape and transport. Early settlement patterns (Swedes/Norwegians/Dutch) set up the 1661 chartering. Use **Stiles** and local histories to orient lots and later confirmations. ([Internet Archive](#))
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How to cite (examples)

- **Magistrate (primary):** *Register of New Netherland, 1626–1674*, entries under **Boswyck, 31 Mar 1661** and **30 Mar 1662** (names **Peter Jansen de Witt**). Digital facsimile, Wikimedia/Internet Archive. ([Wikimedia Commons](#))
- **Appointment doc (primary image):** NYSA, A1809-78, V10 pt.1, image **NYSA_A1809-78_V10_pt1_0089a** (“Appointment of magistrates for Bushwyck,” **30 Mar 1662**). ([encyclopedia.nahc-mapping.org](#))

- **Church framework:** *Old First Dutch Reformed Church of Brooklyn: First Book of Records, 1660–1752* (catalog record & holdings), to be searched for de Witt entries. ([Brooklyn Public Library](#))
 - **Context (town naming/court):** NYC Landmarks/municipal historical report summarizing **Stuyvesant** naming **Boswyck** and appointing a local court. ([NYC Media](#))
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Research plan (next pulls)

1. **Leiden archives (Erfgoed Leiden):** search **DTB** baptisms & **poorter** rolls for **Pieter Jans de Wit/de Witt** c. 1620–1630 (look for a father **Jan**).
 2. **Bushwick town records (1660–1705):** town minutes, lot assignments, tax or militia lists held by NYC Municipal Archives (collection guide cited above). ([NYC Collection Guides](#))
 3. **Old First DRC (Brooklyn) & NYC DRC (Manhattan):** baptisms/marriages for **children of Pieter Jans de Witt**; also check for **consistory** or **discipline** notes that can place him at Bushwick in specific years. ([Brooklyn Public Library](#))
 4. **Oath of Allegiance, 1687 (Kings County):** confirm whether “**Pieter Jans de Witt**” appears with “years in the country”; use *Documentary History of the State of New-York*, vol. 1 and Bergen (1881) as the working printed sources. ([Olivetree Genealogy](#))
 5. **Probate/wills:** Kings County/NYC Surrogate abstracts around **1705** to fix his death window.
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Quick links (for the endnotes)

- *Register of New Netherland, 1626–1674* (magistrates 1661 & 1662). ([Wikimedia Commons](#))
- NYSA image record: **Appointment of magistrates for Bushwyck (30 Mar 1662)**. ([encyclopedia.nahc-mapping.org](#))
- Old First DRC (Brooklyn), **First Book of Records, 1660–1752** (catalog/holdings). ([Brooklyn Public Library](#))
- NYC DRC (Manhattan) baptisms (published series—index entry point). ([ia601501.us.archive.org](#))

- Kings County **Oaths of Allegiance, 1687** (use Documentary History vol. 1 / Bergen 1881 to verify). ([Olivetree Genealogy](#))
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Notes & cautions

- The **magistrate** identifications are solid; treat **birthplace/date** and **death in 1705** as *probable* until a church/probate entry is located.
 - **Name variants** are common; cross-check **Pieter Jans + de Wit/de Witt + Wit/Widt** in Dutch-language registers.
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