

of the Swartwout escutcheon were early seen on shields and standards conspicuous in the battles in which the valorous Frisians repeatedly discomfited the forces of foreign invaders, for, since the time of the Latin historian Tacitus, that ancient stalwart race of Germans has had renown for its love of independence.

The political eminence of the Frisians in the Middle Ages is remarkably substantiated by the fact of their adjudicating differences arising between the inhabitants of one part of the country and those of another by the agency of arbitration commissioners. The constitution of the arbitration commission, of which, in 1338, Otto Swartewold of Drenthe was a member, is historically described as having been honored with the singing of "a great number of triumphal songs" by assemblages of gratified people. The ennobling character of the state-craft adopting this laudable method of settling sectional disagreements was signally heightened by the moral excellence and superior intelligence of the commissioners. The scroll of parchment on which the awards of the commission were engrossed, on June 30th, that year, in Latin, is preserved in the Imperial Archives of the province of Groningen, and of which a photo-engraved copy is displayed on two pages of the first chapter of the Swartwout Chronicles.

The protective manner in which officers were selected to administer the affairs of the city of Groningen was manifestly conducive to the maintenance of good government. A body of well-born and upright men, called as early as 1324 the Wisdom of the City (*de Wijsheid der Stadt*), and a century later the Sworn Commons (*de Gezworene Meente*), possessed the exclusive right to determine the eligibility of citizens to be municipal officers. In 1580, Johan Swartwolt was a member of this college of local sages, as he was afterward, and also as was Herman Swartwolt.

In the long war with Spain, the Frisians heroically perpetuated their native invincibility on many fields of battle. In 1580, when the enemy besieged Steenwijk, the daring achievement of Arent Swartwolt in extinguishing the flames enveloping the palisades protecting a gateway of the walled town, which the foe had surreptitiously set on fire on a dark night and had then guardedly covered with the guns of a concealed body of sharpshooters, is still admiringly recounted by Dutch historians.

Tomys Swartwout and his brothers Wybrandt and Herman were the first of the Frisian Swartwolts to write the surname conformable to modern Dutch orthography. They were evidently the first Hollanders to engage in the wholesale business of buying and selling in the Netherlands tobacco cultivated by colonists in Virginia and New Netherland. The fact of their dealing, in 1629, in Amsterdam, in tobacco grown and cured on the island of Manhattan, or three years after the purchase of the island by the Dutch West-India Company from the Indian proprietors, is well established.