

Before me, Mayor of this county of Sexbierum, Subdivision Franeker, District Leeuwarden, Department Friesland, has appeared Pieter Klazes, living in Oosterbierum, who has declared that he takes the name of Statema for family name; and that he has the following number of known sons and daughters: Antje, seven weeks old, who lives in the same house as the informer; and he has this document signed with us.

Pieter Classes Staatema

***Notation by John Nauta about this document: the clerk who transcribed this document wrote Pieter's name as the clerk wanted Pieter's patronymic and chosen surname to be spelled (Pieter Klazes and Statema). However, Pieter signed his patronymic and surname as he knew them to be spelled, in other words, as he had learned them (Pieter Classes Staatema). The spelling "Statema" is what became the "official" spelling of this last name although Pieter did sign a notarized document in 1826 with "Staatema". Interestingly, the clerk and/or mayor did not sign nor date this document. Most of these documents are signed by the person taking a surname (if they could write) and the officials witnessing this. Almost all of these documents were signed in the years between 1811 and 1812.

The first part of the name has its origins describing a rich barons or landowners' estate ("State"). These houses were very large compared to what the "common" people could afford. They were built on large tracts of land and many times the owners did not even live on the premises year-around. The upkeep, farming and all kinds of skill trades were performed by laborers hired from the local area. The suffix "ma" (and "stra") means "from" in Frisian. So, Pieter more than likely was working for one of these estates when he took his last name, which means "van een State" or "from an estate". It was common for people to take surnames that described where they lived (Hoekstra=from the corner, Dykstra=from the dyk) or what occupation they had (Timmerman=carpenter, DeBoer=farmer, Visser=fisherman). While there is no way to find out if Pieter actually worked for one of these 'barons' it seems likely. In 1813, Pieter's occupation was listed as "master tailor". From a trade point of view, he had accomplished a certain status as someone above just a "tailor" (of which there were many) and probably was part of a trade guild that bestowed him the designation of "master tailor" after meeting certain criteria. He may have also had one or more employees. It is possible his services were used by the barons who lived on the estates located in the area of the town of Oosterbierum where Pieter lived. His name pronounced a certain status, not necessarily for how much money he had or what he owned, but who, possibly, his clients were.