Universiteit Leiden
The Netherlands

New Netherland Stories: How Individuals shaped the Collective, 1615-1679

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Citation
Graaf, L. de. (2021). *New Netherland Stories: How Individuals shaped the Collective, 1615-1679*.

Version:	Not Applicable (or Unknown)
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Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

NEW NETHERLAND STORIES

How Individuals shaped the Collective, 1615-1674

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Date of submission: 29-11-2021
Thesis supervisor: Prof. dr. Michiel van Groesen
Second reader: Tristan Mostert
Word count: 19.480
Degree: Master History (Global and Colonial History)
Specialisation: Maritime History

Introduction

The founding date of the city of New York is a heavily debated subject. In 2009, the cities of Amsterdam and New York celebrated the 400-year anniversary of the arrival of the Dutch-employed Englishman Henry Hudson at the island of Manhattan in 1609. But there are historians who argue that the year should be 1614, as it was Adriaen Block who rediscovered the island, named it Manhattan and labelled the surrounding region New Netherland on his map in that year. Others point out that it was only in 1624 that the first group of settlers arrived in the area, while there is also a suggestion that the arrival of fort architect Crijn Fredericksz in the summer of 1625 marked the start of a real settlement on Manhattan.[1] Although the exact date is thus debated, the actual subject of New Netherland is one that has received much attention over the last few decades.

This interest is mainly fuelled by Americans who want to dive into their own heritage. As the former center of Dutch colonial power in North America, New Amsterdam lies at the center of these interests. The extensive WIC archive that has survived in New York and Albany, the former town of Beverwijck, is being transcribed and translated for use by American scholars. Under supervision of Charles T. Gehring and Janny Venema, thousands of papers have already been translated and uploaded to the online database of the New Netherland Institute since its foundation in 1974. Court Minutes of New Amsterdam, Rensselaerswijck and Beverwijck, personal letters of directors Wouter van Twiller, Willem Kieft and Peter Stuyvesant to the Chamber of Amsterdam, but also records of livestock, interaction with the Amerindians and correspondence between the Governors of New England and Virginia and the directors of New Netherland are all part of this vast collection.

Over the last two decades, this extensive amount of source material has enabled scholars to map out the colony of New Netherland, to sketch how New Amsterdam grew from an outpost to a city and how for example disease, war, and shortages affected the development of the colony. This thesis will use the same source material, but in a different way and with a different goal than previous studies. The central goal will be investigating if writing a micro-historical study of New Netherland is possible with the available sources, while at the same time proving that such a study can add much needed context and depth to the existing historiography. It will do so by enriching several subjects like religion, trade and marriages with personal histories,

[1] Henk Schutten, "New York 400 jaar – in 2009. Of in 2013? Of 2025?," *Het Parool*, June 19, 2008, https://www.parool.nl/nieuws/new-york-400-jaar-in-2009-of-in-2013-of-2025~bd6be6c1/.

paying attention to the ordinary man and woman, and their place within the larger colonial framework.

As stated above, various authors have investigated the colony and its place in Atlantic colonialism, each with its own perspective and approach. There is for example the work of Nan A. Rothschild, *Colonial Encounters in a Native American Landscape*, which compares Spanish colonial encounters with Amerindians in Central-America to the encounters between the Mohawk and the Dutch in North-America.[2] Similarly, although not a comparative imperial study, the work of Mark Meuwese, *Brothers in Arms, Partners in Trade*, looks at different Atlantic regions and compares how the Dutch interacted with the indigenous population of these different areas.[3] The regions that are studied in the book are the colonies of Dutch Brazil, New Netherland, Angola, Kongo and other African kingdoms on the Gold Coast, resulting in an overview of Dutch-indigenous relationships in the entire Atlantic world.

In cross-imperial histories, the importance of these European-indigenous relationships for colonial development and the impact they had diplomacy is a subject which received much attention. For the Dutch case, Meuwese has covered the entire Atlantic, but a study by Paul Otto, *The Dutch-Munsee Encounter*, is more geographically focused, namely on North America.[4] Here, the Dutch were struggling to get a hold on their surroundings, fighting several wars with the indigenous tribes, whilst the English settlers to the north kept expanding their influence over the local tribes. Andrew Lipman, in his 2015 book *The Saltwater Frontier: Indians and the Contest for the American Coast*, has attempted to further distinguish the borders between tribes and the English and Dutch colonies, when he investigated the interaction of the Amerindians with the sea and European style ships.[5] Although still loosely spread over a map of the area, Lipman shows how diverse the indigenous population was. Furthermore, Lipman successfully tries to incorporate the sea into the history of the Northwest-American coast, by starting and always coming back to the Atlantic Ocean after discussing land-based events, an aspect that up until then was somewhat overlooked in the grand histories of this area.

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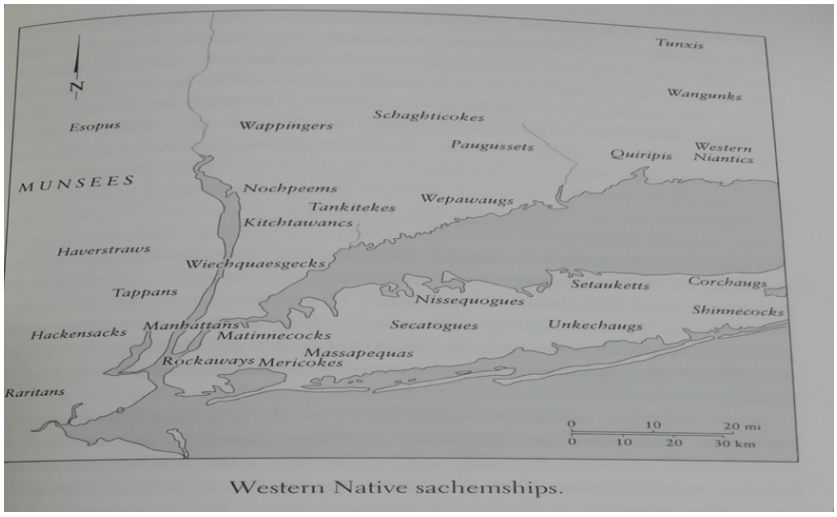
[2] Nan A. Rothschild, *Colonial Encounters in a Native American Landscape* (Washington: Smithsonian Books, 2003).
[3] Mark Meuwese, *Brothers in Arms, Partners in Trade: Dutch-Indigenous Alliances in the Atlantic World, 1595-1674* (Leiden: BRILL, 2012).
[4] Paul Otto, *The Dutch-Munsee Encounter in America: The Struggle of Sovereignty in the Hudson Valley* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2006).
[5] Andrew Lipman, *The Saltwater Frontier: Indians and the Conquest for the American Coast* (New Haven/London: Yale University Press, 2015).



Map 1, Sachemships of Long Island and Manhattan. Andrew Lipman, The Saltwater Frontier: Indians and the Contest for the American Coast (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015), 47.

Apart from histories about Dutch-indigenous relations, there are also broader histories about the political and economic developments of New Netherland. An example of such a work is *New Netherland: A Dutch Colony in Seventeenth-Century America*, by Jaap Jacobs, which gives an overview of the colony from discovery to just after the conquest of New Amsterdam by the English in 1664.[6] Oceanic and inter-colonial trade are of course covered by this excellent work, but the central focus lies on social and political development. April Lee Hatfield, in her work *Atlantic Virginia: Intercolonial Relations in the Seventeenth Century*, dives deeper into the notion of the intercolonial relations between the English and Dutch colonies in North-America.[7] It discusses personal ties between settlers, but predominantly the way the colonies sometimes depended on each other for food and supplies in a hostile and harsh land, as support from their homeland was often insufficient. Dennis J. Maika and Deborah Hamer both have written their dissertations about New Amsterdam, focussing on the merchants and the regulation of marriages by colonial officials respectively. While Maika's work gives greater insight into how the colonial economy of New Netherland developed and how its was hindered by strict WIC policy, Hamer's research puts expectation next to reality, as it explains how the WIC saw the colony as a carbon copy of the Dutch Republic, while its subjects had other ideas.[8]

[6] Jaap Jacobs, *The Colony of New Netherland: A Dutch Settlement in Seventeenth-Century America* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2009).
[7] April Lee Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia: Intercolonial Relations in the Seventeenth Century* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).
[8] Dennis Maika, "Commerce and Community: Manhattan Merchants in the Seventeenth Century," PhD. diss., New York University, 1995; Deborah Hamer, "Creating an Orderly Society: the Regulation of Marriages and Sex in the Dutch Atlantic World, 1621-1674," PhD. diss., Columbia University, 2014.

Although all of the aforementioned works use different perspectives and methods, they do have two things in common. Firstly, they are prime examples of the 'mainstream' colonial history that lays out the workings of a colony and which shows the cross-imperial connections between different colonies in the Atlantic. These studies provide us with interesting information about the forming of colonial administrations and societies, and how these administrations were connected to the mother country. Secondly, the daily life of the normal man stands not in the center of the study, but is merely a tool to explain larger theories and processes. This much more personal history, or the history of 'the exceptional normal', pays attention to the ordinary man and woman and their place within the larger colonial framework. It is this approach that will form the center of this thesis.[9]

An approach which takes a single person as a starting point, delving into that subjects' personal affairs and their trail in the archives, but which is not exactly the same as microhistory, is a biographic history. There is for example the one about Petrus Stuyvesant by Jaap Jacobs, which dives a bit deeper into the personal life of New Netherland's last director. *Stuyvesant Bound*, by Donna Merwick, is another example of a more anthropological or personal approach. [10] Janny Venema has also written a similar work on one of the other "great men" in New Netherland, although he never actually set foot in the colony: Kiliaen van Rensselaer.[11] Owner of the largest and most successful patroonship in New Netherland, Rensselaerswijck, Kiliaen focussed on setting up an agricultural estate which would prove vital for the colony's survival, making him an essential subject in the history of New Netherland. Then there is also *Wegen van Evert Willemsz. Een Hollands Weeskind op zoek naar Zichzelf* by Willem Frijhoff.[12] Evert Willemsz, also known as Everardus Bogardus, was the second minister of New Netherland and the book offers an insight into the life of one of director Willem Kieft's most prominent critics.

Although these works illuminate the backgrounds of Stuyvesant, Van Rensselaer and Bogardus, they still leave a lot of other people out of the picture who essentially formed the backbone of the colony. The macro-history of New Netherland, which encompasses the colony's position within the Atlantic framework, its place within the political agenda of the Dutch Republic, European neighbours and rivals and the economic and sociological changes that the Dutch Republic went through in the first half of the seventeenth century, has thus been

[9] Giovanni Levi, "Frail Frontiers?," *Past and Present* 242, no. 14 (November 2019): 41-42.
[10] Jaap Jacobs, *Petrus Stuyvesant: Een levensschets* (Amsterdam: Bakker, 2009); Donna Merwick, *Stuyvesant Bound: An Essay on Loss Across Time* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013).
[11] Janny Venema, *Kiliaen van Rensselaer (1586-1643)* (Hilversum: Verloren, 2010).
[12] Willem Frijhoff, *Wegen van Evert Willemsz. Een Hollands Weeskind op zoek naar Zichzelf, 1607-1647* (Amsterdam: Boom, 1995).

studied to the point that there are almost no "new" perspectives to discover. The microhistory on the other hand, with a focus on small pieces of information about the normal colonists and their lives, is a road that is not so heavily travelled.

For a few decades now, global history has been dominating the historical field, with new positions, projects and research groups being created around the world. It seeks to transcend the Eurocentric nation state histories and create a field which acknowledges that regions that are far apart, are influenced by each other through pertinent transnational economic and social relations. It focusses on connectedness, circulation, migration and integration between regions, but according to some it is collapsing under its own weight, ironically because of its broad definition.[13] Microhistory is in many ways much more focussed. Seeking out the 'exceptional normal' and following its archival trail, microhistorians try to understand their subject's choices and their motivations. They do this without losing track of the overarching events, like sometimes happens in global history, where subjects disappear into the generalizing uniformity of the study. Micro-history can cover persons or objects, but also towns or cities, and is not bound to a small period of time. It has, however, received some criticism, mainly focussing on the question what it is exactly that "the exceptional normal" adds to the discussion.[14]

In itself, microhistory cannot change existing theories and histories, critics say.[15] There are simply not enough 'exceptional normals' to support a new theory which can overthrow an existing one, be it because of too few archival records or just because the theory is not wrong and the 'exceptional normal' is indeed exceptional. I would have to agree with this criticism, but not without adding that there have been excellent studies with microhistorical aspects in the last two decades that presented their readers with new and substantial information about life in colonial America, enriching existing macro-historical works. Take for example *Beverwijck: A Dutch Colony on the American Frontier* by Janny Venema.[16] It studies the town of Beverwijck, the second largest town of New Netherland. After several disputes between the patroonships acting patroon, Brant van Slichtenhorst, and director-general Stuyvesant, the town was split off from the patroonship and became part of the jurisdiction of Fort Orange. From here, Venema studies how the town was brought under British rule, kept expanding and developing and how

[13] John-Paul Ghobrial, "Introduction: Seeing the World like a Microhistorian," *Past and* Present, 242, no. 14 (November 2019): 6-11.
[14] Jan de Vries, "Playing with Scales: The Global and the Micro, the Macro and the Nano," *Past and Present,* 242, no. 14 (November 2019): 30.
[15] Ibid., 31-32.
[16] Janny Venema, *Beverwijck: A Dutch Village on the American Frontier, 1652-1664* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2003).

eventually it became known as Albany. She tells this history by constantly zooming in and out, putting settlers in the spotlight to enrich the larger story.

A second example is *Death of a Notary: Conquest and Change in Colonial New York* by Donna Merwick.[17] It follows a Dutch notary in the town of Beverwijck named Adriaen Janse van Ilpendam. A proud but quiet member of the Dutch colonial enterprise, Adriaen kept hundreds of transactions and legal documents in his personal archive. The transfer of the colony from a Dutch into an English administration was difficult for him, as English became the lingua franca in official documents and he had never learnt it. This led to him becoming the only man who committed suicide in seventeenth century Albany. Although tragic, the work does use a personal history, that of Adriaen, to tell the bigger story of Dutch colonialism and the eventual conquest by the English in 1664.

Whilst not focussing on the Dutch Atlantic, Clare Anderson's *Subaltern Lives: Biographies of Colonialism in the Indian Ocean World, 1790-1920* also uses a similar approach.[18] It uses the theory of a micro history, so investigating small entities that exist within the larger body of a global or national history, to examine how the everyday incarcerated people that lived in the Indian Ocean world experienced colonial rule and its law system. By going through thousands of pages of colonial administrations, cross-referencing different archives and making never before seen connections, Anderson shows a completely different side of colonial rule: the one of the colonized. To simply copy and paste this approach on the Dutch Atlantic world would be problematic. There are simply no written sources of native origin, a large part of the WIC-archive was lost, and although Andersons archival research was already difficult, due to the fact that they are 200 years old, the New Netherland archives are even older.

Combining Dutch colonial histories in both the East and the West, the 2009 work of Deborah L. Krohn, Marybeth de Filippis and Peter N. Miller follows the life of a well travelled Dutch woman named Margrieta van Varick.[19] While she was born in the Dutch Republic, she moved to Malacca on the Malay Peninsula and to Manhattan in 1686. The book investigates the connection that Margrieta made between East and West, as she brought numerous goods from Asia with her to Manhattan. Apart from its focus on Margrieta and her family, the study also spans a long time period. Where Anderson thus looks solely at Asia and uses different

[17] Donna Merwick, *Death of a Notary: Conquest and Change in Colonial New York (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2002).*
[18] Clare Anderson, *Subaltern Lives: Biographies of Colonialism in the Indian Ocean World, 1790-1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).
[19] Deborah L. Krohn, Marybeth de Filippis and Peter N. Miller, *Dutch New York, between East and West: The world of Margrieta van Varick* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2009).

persons, Krohn and the other authors connect East and West by following a single woman and her immediate family.

Microhistory in itself thus provides readers with interesting stories, but it needs macro-historical ties to actually add something to the discussion, to give it weight. A study like this thesis, about the lives of a single family in New Netherland, does not add much in itself, at least not academically speaking. The families and individuals that will be discussed in the coming chapters need to be both connected to the micro-, as well as to the macro-history, in order to add something to the existing historiography. Therefore, this study will not just focus on one family, but on several families and groups over a period of two generations in the colony of New Netherland. On the one hand, this focus makes the chance of finding a mention in the archives higher, compared to when the focus is just on one person. Also, by extending the timeframe over two generations, the study takes both the settler generation and the American-born generation into account and therefore it becomes easier to make comparisons and see developments. Lastly, with the geographical location fixed on New Netherland, the circumstances in which the subjects of the chapters lived and travelled are the same for everyone

To be able to connect the personal stories to the bigger picture, certain subjects are chosen that will be discussed through the lives of the family members. Examples of these subjects are religion, trade, and politics. These three subjects are often discussed in macro-historical works, for instance to explain a country's development or its place in the world, but are rarely linked to the regular citizen. This is exactly what a microhistorical study does. Firstly, this approach will provide much needed detail to the big theories and histories about colonialism, offering a better understanding of how settlers experienced the hardships of colonial life, how they handled the sudden change in their surroundings, hundreds of miles away from their European homes, and how they navigated the geopolitical landscape crafted by the governing bodies at home. Secondly, the key difference between this thesis' approach from the works of Venema, Anderson and Merwick, will be that this thesis takes the individuals as subjects, and gives them meaning by connecting them to the bigger picture, not the other way around.

Considering these criteria, there are several families and persons present in the archive that have proven useful for this study. The first of these is the De Forest family, which came to New Amsterdam in 1637 aboard the ship *the Rensselaerswijck*. This Walloon family of Protestants originally lived in Avesnes-sur-Helpe, but moved to Leiden to escape prosecution by the French state. As this study tries to bridge the gap between a political-economic, cross-

imperial macro-history and a familial-social microhistory, the De Forest family is an excellent starting point. They were prominent enough to become entangled with the 'great men' the macro-histories tend to cover, like Willem Kieft, Petrus Stuyvesant and Kiliaen van Rensselaer, but were not an established merchant family like the Verbrugges, the Van Hoornbeecks, the De Wolffs or the Van Rensselaers.[20] This puts them close to the 'normal' city life of New Amsterdam, trying to make a living as merchants, farmers or brewers, something a microhistory focuses on. They did however climb the social ladder once they had settled in the colony and grew to be one of the most influential and respected families in New Amsterdam, with plots of land on Manhattan and Long Island and with connections to English trade partners. Jesse de Forest even received the nickname 'Founding Father of New York' and a monument in Battery Park, which was revealed in 1924, 300 years after his death, for his involvement in the initial settlement in New Netherland.[21] The De Forests will be the subject of the first chapter.

The second chapter will be about the Varleth family, which came to New Amsterdam in the early 1650s and who were thus part of the second generation of settlers that moved from the Dutch Republic to New Netherland. Just like the De Forests, the Varleths came to the colony without having any real importance, but they took every opportunity they could and eventually became a family that connected New Amsterdam, New England, Beverwijck, Europe and Africa. The third chapter will be slightly different, as it does not follow a single family, but several different persons from the town of Rensselaerswijck, or Beverwijck from 1652. One of these persons is Harmen Meyndertsz van den Bogaert, who travelled into Mohawk territory in 1634 to investigate the decreasing numbers of pelts being brought to Fort Orange in the north of the colony. Others that will be discussed are farmers, land owners and craftsmen, who each contributed to the development of the town.

By following these families and individuals, the personal side of colonial history is brought into the spotlight. It shows how colonists experienced the ever-changing circumstances that came from the tensions between the Dutch Republic and England, as well as intercolonial competition and disputes about ownership and legitimacy on, for example, Long Island. Although the De Forests and Varleths eventually had influence and wealth, they have not received the attention a high placed official like Stuyvesant or a patroon like Van Rensselaer would get from historians, even though their business activities and relationships were vital for the colony. Without these people, New Netherland would have had no chance to develop and

[20] Jaap Jacobs, *New Netherland*, 255.
[21] Robert W. de Forest, *A Walloon Family in America: Lockwood de Forest and his Forbears 1500-1848 Volume 1* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1914), 21-30.

prosper like it did during the 1650s. But this thesis will not try and rewrite the existing historiography by proving it wrong and presenting an entire new history. By showing that macro- and microhistories do not need to be mutually exclusive, but can complement each other and make both histories more interesting and informative to read, this thesis will simply expand upon the existing historiography and put it in a different light.

Chapter 1: The De Forest Family

Traveling in the seventeenth century was not something one did for pleasure. It was a difficult and long endeavour with treacherous circumstances, and hostile lands and inhospitable oceans to cross. This was the case for Europe, but even more so for the New World. These lands were settled, but by no means were they conquered. The actions of Native Americans were unpredictable if you would cross their lands and harsh weather made traveling over land as well as over sea a cumbersome undertaking. Why then would a businessman, coming from an established family of merchants, leave the comfort of his house in Leiden to settle in New Netherland? This chapter will follow the De Forest family as they moved from Wallonia, to Leiden and then on to New Amsterdam. Here, they expanded their merchant network, all the while navigating the ever shifting political landscape that was the seventeenth-century North American coast, in an attempt to survive the harsh conditions of the New World.

We start with the De Forest family, because much more can be found about them in the sources than about the other families. The part of the family that will be discussed in this chapter consists of several persons, each with a different connection to the New Netherland story. Jesse de Forest, together with his father Jean and his brothers Hendrick, Gerard and Melchior moved from Avesnes-sur-Helpe, Wallonia, to Holland. Jesse, who would marry Marie du Cloux, had ten children, of which three would eventually move to New Amsterdam: Hendrick, Rachel and Isaack. It is this colonial branch of the De Forest family that this chapter will then follow from 1637 onwards. Hendrick passed away in 1638, Rachel in 1643. Isaack, on the other hand, would marry Sara du Trieux and would establish himself as a businessman in New Amsterdam. The children that came from their marriage that are present in the colonial archives are Susannah, Johannes, Jan, Henry and David. With the persons that will receive the most interest in this chapter clear, let us start with Jesse and his exodus from Wallonia

Religion and Exploration

After his father moved to Bergen op Zoom, Leiden and later Amsterdam, Jesse followed his father and his older brother Hendrick to Holland in 1615.[22] The reason the De Forest family left their hometown and moved to the Dutch Republic probably had to do with the political situation in France. From 1562 to 1598, the French Wars of Religion were fought between French Calvinists and Catholics over religious, political and military privileges. As the conflict ended, the Huguenots, as the Calvinists were called in France, received many of these privileges from the king through the Edict of Nantes, but anti-Calvinist feelings were still present. From the 1620s onwards, conflict once again returned after Huguenots in southwestern France rebelled. When Louis XIV became king, he slowly increased Calvinist prosecution throughout the country.[23]

Whether or not the De Forest family anticipated this renewal of Calvinist prosecution after the Wars of Religion, they did leave their country just before it, settled down in a region that was Calvinist itself and became part of the Calvinist community in their respective cities. Jesse's brother Melchior and his father Jean had become members of the Protestant Church in Amsterdam in 1611. Gerard de Forest had stayed in Leiden since 1605 and was already a member of the Walloon Church when Jesse arrived there. Jesse is first mentioned as a member of the church in Leiden in 1615, whilst being present at several baptisms from 1620 to 1623, some of which were for his own children.[24]

His faith also brought Jesse into contact with some well known historical individuals. He had met the "Pilgrim Fathers" just before they left Leiden in 1620, and although Jesse was a merchant in woolen cloth and member of the Drapers Guild, he now wanted to establish a Walloon colony for Calvinist families in America. Perhaps seeking other means to support his family, he tried to gain permission for a settlement from the Virginia Company. After not receiving an adequate response from them, he asked the States General and the States of Holland to sail with the same families to Guiana, a request which was granted.[25] Thus, from 1623-1625, driven to find a suitable location to establish a private Walloon Calvinist settlement there, Jesse led the expedition to Guiana. But as Jesse's expedition returned to Leiden on November 16th, 1625, he was not amongst them. Jesse had passed away on the Suriname coast

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[22] Robert de Forest, *A Walloon Family in America,* 14-15.
[23] Philip Benedict, *The Huguenot Population of France, 1600-1685: The Demographic Fate and Customs of a Religious Minority* (Philadelphia: The American Philosophical Society, 1991) 160-165.
[24] Erfgoed Leiden en Omstreken, Dopen Vrouwekerk 1599-29 juli 1627, archival number 1004, inventory number 270.
[25] Robert W. de Forest, *A Walloon Family*, 16-17.

due to the effects of a sunstroke on the 22nd of October, 1624.[26] His plea to the States General however enabled the large group of Walloon settlers, that would have otherwise accompanied him to Guiana, to sail to New Netherland and be the first substantial group of colonists to settle there. His vision of a free and safe community for his fellow Walloons Calvinists was thus successful, also allowing his children to migrate to America thirteen years later, without them having to worry about their faith.

New Netherland would be, at least from the viewpoint of Jesse and his Walloon friends who settled there, a Calvinist colony. This was not as evident as it may seem, as the WIC and the Dutch Reformed 'predikanten' did not agree on the exact function of the colony. George L. Proctor-Smith has studied this disagreement between Church and State, pointing out that from the very first drafts for a North-American colony by Willem Usselincx, the dilemma between a new and morally better society or an economically oriented colony was present. Where they had approximately equal weight for Usselincx, in the 1621 WIC charter, religion was not even mentioned, as it was replaced with profit and war as the dominant objectives. New Netherland was therefore not settled with any grand design in mind, but simply because the WIC wanted to make its investment in the colony pay off, as Smith argues.[27] This duality between extracting profits or actually properly settling the colony was only clearly broken from 1648 onwards, when the WIC turned its attention to populating New Netherland and establishing a society.

The Dutch Reformed Church was equally unclear about what they wanted from the colony in the opening years. The predikanten in New Netherland were finding it hard to live amongst "the rough and dissolute" settlers and they expressed their discontent about the payment they received from the WIC, namely a plot of land, but no labour to work it or livestock to keep on it. As the predikanten were officially employed by the Company, in the first two decades the evangelical mission suffered from a lack of manpower and a lack of interest from the Company to spread Calvinism in the colony. Both Michaëlius and Everardus Bogardus, the first and second minister of the colony, had severe disputes with directors Peter Minuit, Wouter van Twiller and Willem Kieft about the position of the church and the influence it should have on society. For Calvinists, church and state were connected by an unbreakable bond, with the church showing the state how it should form society according to God's will, while the state was to make sure its civilians lived their lives according to God's laws. This created a tense situation where the minister stood next to the director, constantly reminding him of his moral

[26] Rober W. de Forest, *A Walloon Family,* 21-30, 50.
[27] George L. Procter-Smith, *Religion and Trade in New Netherland: Dutch Origins and American Development* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2010) 5-9.

duties, whereas the director had to do everything in his power to help the minister in the execution of his duties. Thus, while both had formal authority in their own sphere of influence, they also had a moral influence in each others' sphere. With an increasing population, which also grew more and more diverse from 1650 onwards, the Church became clearer about how they saw the colony and under director-general Stuyvesant, state and church began to be more aligned in their goals. With the arrival of Jews from Dutch-Brazil after that colony was lost to the Portuguese in 1654, Stuyvesant only let them settle in New Amsterdam because the WIC specifically ordered him to. In the years to follow, he would do everything within his power to make their lives as difficult as he could without arresting them, trying to encourage them to leave the colony.[28] Minister and director-general both saw the Jews as not welcome and formed a united front for once, but each still had different ideas about its own position in society and frustrations still occurred.[29]

When the De Forest children arrived in New Amsterdam in 1637, following their fathers dream, they brought with them their faith, just like the Walloon families had done in 1624. For Isaack, faith would remain a steady base throughout his life. It is safe to assume that he and his family were part of the Reformed Church in New Amsterdam, as Isaack was sworn in as a schepen in 1658.[30] Burgomasters and schepenen had to be members of the Reformed Church, with its members being called 'lidmaten'. They publicly confessed their religion, were under the discipline of the consistory and could partake in the Lord's Supper.[31] Although a member, it is difficult to determine if Isaack was a strong supporter of the church's plans for the colony. As he was a trader and brewer, he benefitted from the increasing amount of settlers in the colony. But the clergy in the colony wanted the population to stay close to the reformed faith, increasingly protesting the policy of the WIC that brought Lutherans, Quakers, Jews and Mennonites into the colony. Lutherans began asking for freedom of worship in 1654 and in 1657 Quakers began to preach throughout the colony, undermining the Reformed predikanten. With full support of the Classis in Amsterdam, minister Johannes Megapolensis expressed his discontent with the WIC policy, but to no avail. This disagreement between attracting settlers

[28] Evan Haefeli, *New Netherland and the Dutch Origins of American Religious Liberty* (Philadelphia: University of Philadelphia Press, 2012).
[29] Procter-Smith, *Religion and Trade*, 136-141; Willem Frijhoff, *Wegen van Evert Willemsz: Een Hollands weeskind op zoek naar zichzelf, 1607-1647* (Nijmegen: SUN, 1995) 581-602.
[30] The Council Minutes of New Amsterdam, Volume 8, 1656-1658, Online Publications, New Netherland Institute, 688.
[31] Jaap Jacobs, *New Netherland*, 290.

and making the colony's religious population purely Calvinist continued until New Amsterdam was taken by the English, after which the matter of religion was clearly bound to English law.[32]

It thus seems that Isaack de Forest was a strong believer, but not a strong supporter of the Reformed Church, because the policy the Church proposed would hamper population growth and thus business opportunities. Seeing them as supporters of a policy that would hamper the influx of new people into the colony, even other minded ones like Lutherans or Puritans, is therefore very difficult and highly unlikely. Also, the study of Isaack so far has shown that religious liberty, a term often associated with the Dutch Republic, was incorporated in the same way in New Netherland, meaning freedom of thought, but not of open practice.[33]

Connections and Relations

After Jesse de Forest had passed away during his two-year expedition in the Caribbean, his wife, Marie du Cloux sought comfort from her loss. Jean Mousnier de la Montagne, who had accompanied Jesse on the journey and who was a friend of the family, became a regular guest in the house. As Marie lived on the Voldersgracht (present day Langebrug), she lived close to the university and so her house was a logical accommodation for La Montagne, who wanted to study there. Jean became very close to Rachel, Marie's sixth child, only seventeen at the time. Despite the age gap of fourteen years, Jean and Rachel married on the 12th of December, 1626. The couple would move to Tobago in 1630, but in 1631 Rachel would move back to Leiden due to the trying climate. La Montagne returned to Leiden in 1633.[34]

Her older brother, Hendrick, was also a travelled individual before the family set off to live in New Netherland. In 1631, when he was twenty-five, he was employed as a sailor by Kiliaen van Rensselaer onboard *The Whale* to the colony of Swanendael. Van Rensselaer, known as the patroon of the only successful patroonship in New Netherland, had business ties with Hendrick's uncle Gerard. It is probable that through this connection, Hendrick was employed by Van Rensselaer. Hendrick was a regular deckhand, but later got the respectable position of 'voorlezer', the person who read the prayers and trained people in the commandments. Later on, he was also promoted to the position of commies of the victuals, or distributor of food, after the original one was found a drunkard. He fulfilled these positions admirably, building himself a reputation of a hard working and honest man. It shows that life aboard a ship was a society of its own, with felons being punished for crimes and the 'state', in

[32] Procter-Smith, *Religion and Trade*, 141.
[33] Ibidem, 62-64, 67-69.
[34] Ibidem, 59-62.

this case Hendrick, taking care of its people with food and drinks. After this journey, not much is known about Hendrick, only that after arriving at Swanendael, he switched employers and began working for the WIC, eventually returning to the Republic, where he married Gertrude Bornstra on the 1st of July 1636.[35]

When Hendrick and Isaack, together with Rachel, La Montagne, and their children sailed to the New World, they did so on *the Rensselaerswijck,* on the 25th of September, 1636. The ship was bound to supply the patroonship near Fort Orange. Due to the high costs of fitting out such a ship, Kiliaen had signed a contract with Gerard de Forest to split the costs between them. This made Gerard co-owner of the ship and gave him the opportunity to help his brother's children travel to the New World.[36] In the contract, it was stated that the children would be brought to New Amsterdam, together with approximately fifty-two others. After that they were free to settle wherever they wanted as 'freemen' or 'free merchants', but not in the patroonship, as there they would have to abide to the laws and plans of the patroon.[37] They arrived at Manhattan on the 5th of March, 1637.

After arriving, Hendrick quickly acquired two hundred acres of land in northern Manhattan from Director van Twiller for a tobacco plantation. Although the house and barn were built with help from the 'werkbaas' and the slaves that were owned and maintained by the WIC, the shed that was used for the curing of tobacco was actually built by an English carpenter by the name of John Merris. This indicates that there were too few carpenters of Dutch origin available and that settlers had to turn to the English colonies for craftsmen.[38] Also, considering the fact that this shed was blown down by the wind four years later, one might wonder why Hendrick did not let his friend and employee Willem Bout erect the shed. He was an excellent carpenter according to the sources, a rare occurrence at that time in the colony.[39] Before the house and shed were finished, Hendrick was called back to *The Rensselaerswijck,* on which he was still employed.[40]

On the 13th of June, 1637, Hendrick and the rest of the crew of *The Rensselaerswijck* sailed to Smith's Island, Virginia, where Hendrick was sent to shore to sell and buy goods.[41]

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[35]De Forest, *A Walloon Family,* 70.
[36] Ibidem, 69-71.
[37] Van Rensselaer Bowier Manuscripts, Online Publications, New Netherland Institute, 359-161.
[38] De Forest, *A Walloon Family,* 83-84, 87.
[39] The small number of carpenters and other craftsmen that were readily available in the colony and how this effected the development of the colony, is a subject that will be further discussed in chapter three, when we turn to the patroonship of Rensselaerswijck.
[40] Van Rensselaer Bowier Manuscripts, 375-379.
[41] Ibidem, 349-350

The good they bought are not known, but as Virginia's most important export was tobacco, Hendrick was probably buying some.[42] It is said that Virginia at this time of year was a very unhealthy stretch of coast, as Captain de Vries of *The Rensselaerswijck* wrote: "They attribute the mortality in this land to the variableness of the climate; one hour it is so hot, the next hour the wind shifts to the northwest with such freshness that one has to put on an overcoat" and another traveller spoke of "the epidemical disease of the country".[43] Unfortunately, Hendrick most likely contracted this disease while he was on shore, because although he reached New Amsterdam on July 16th, on the 26th of July 1637 De Vries wrote in his log "About two o'clock in the morning my mate heindrick de freest died".[44] La Montagne would buy Hendrick's estate during an open auction in New Amsterdam for 1.800 guilders on the 7th of October 1638, after which he named it Vredendal.[45]

La Montagne moved in with his wife and their five children and started to cultivate the land. Isaack had also acquired a strip of land after arrival in 1637, just south of the Vredendal estate. There he grew tobacco whilst living with his sister and brother-in-law. It would not be until 1641 that Isaack would start building his own home, after getting married to Sara du Trieux. She was the daughter of Philippe du Trieux, an old friend of Jesse de Forest and one of the first to settle in New Amsterdam.[46] In 1643, war between the native Americans and the Dutch settlers broke out.[47] A peace was signed in the summer of 1645, but Rachel would not live to witness it.[48] With his wife gone, La Montagne focussed on his newly acquired duties in New Amsterdam as close adviser and councilman for Director Kieft, with Isaack and Sara now living in New Amsterdam.

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[42] This tobacco trade between Virginia and New Netherland and its importance in the development of New Amsterdam will be further explored in the remainder of this chapter. The work of Jaap Jacobs, *The Colony of New Netherland: A Dutch Settlement in Seventeenth-Century America* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 2009) touches upon it, with Christian J. Koot, *Empire at the Periphery: British Colonists, Anglo-Dutch Trade, and the Development of the British Atlantic, 1621-1713* (New York University Press: New York, 2011) discussing it as its primary subject.
[43] Murphy Vries and H.C. Murphy, *Voyages from Holland to America, 1632 to 1644* (New York: Kraus Reprint, 1971) 193.
[44] Van Rensselaer Bowier Manuscripts, 382.
[45] Forest, *A Walloon Family*, 96.
[46] De Forest, *A Walloon Family*, 111.
[47] Ibidem, 103.
[48] Ibidem, 104.

Map of New Harlem, 1638. It shows Montagne's Flat in the middle, and also Montagnes Point just southwest of it. Isaack's bouwery is just south of Montagnes estate, here numbered 1. Taken from Robert W. de Forest, *A Walloon Family in America; Lockwood de Forest and his Forbears 1500-1848* (Houghton Mifflin Company: Boston, 1914) 97.

What becomes clear from this overview of the De Forest family in New Netherland, is that connections and relationships forged in the Old World, as well as new ones in the colony, were key for someone trying to build up a life in the New World. We have only covered the leaving of Europe and the first eight years of the colonial life of the De Forest family, but already many ties to important people have emerged. The most prominent of these ties is La Montagne, a fellow Protestant Frenchman who, through his friendship with Jesse and Marie, became closely entangled with the De Forest family. His prominent position in the council of both Wouter van Twiller and Willem Kieft and his position as commander of the armed forces provided him with a comfortable salary and as he was a trained physician, he already enjoyed a higher respect from New Amsterdam colonists. Having a brother-in-law in such a high position will have undoubtedly helped young Isaack in securing funds and leases, but also in any legal matters, as La Montagne knew him personally and could act as a guarantor.

Two other powerful acquaintances were Directors Van Twiller and Kieft, who both had worked with Hendrick and Gerard in the 1620s and early 1630s and by whom they had made a reputation of hardworking and honest men. Considering that both Hendrick and Isaack received land leases quickly whenever they asked, this reputation was not forgotten by both men. In getting up and running on their farms, and in the case of Isaack also in life, they were also

helped by old family friend Philippe du Trieux. Already a successful farmer/merchant and a respected burgher when the De Forests arrived in New Amsterdam, his wealth and influence was yet another basis to fall back on. This relationship was further strengthened when Philippe became Isaack's father-in-law, after his marriage to Sara. On top of this, patroon Kiliaen van Rensselaer and his work relationship with Gerard proved vital for the De Forests to get to the New World in the first place. One would presume this relationship would prove productive until the death of Van Rensselaer in 1643, but as mentions in Van Rensselears 'Brievenboek' indicate, Gerard was always behind on his payments and he often did not answer Kiliaens letters for weeks, suggesting that Kiliaen was hesitant to do business with him again.[49] Isaack and his brother and sister could thus build on an extensive network that was, although also partly built by themselves, established by their father and uncle. Familial ties, work, contracts and business tied the De Forests to the colonial society long before they even lived there, which would help them to settle once they arrived.

Politics and business

Apart from social relationships, Isaack also built up an extensive business network, expanding his involvement into all sorts of crafts, opening up an opportunity for him to participate in local governance. However, New Amsterdam was a city that was governed directly by the WIC and therefore the Company was hesitant to establish any form of popular representation, as was common in the Dutch Republic. Guilds were strictly prohibited, as the Company was afraid of the power these would have. Also, introducing guilds in a relatively young economy that had to adapt quickly to new circumstances and in which people mainly participated to make money and thus wanted to quickly pick up a trade, was considered counter-productive.[50] Nevertheless, the ability to quickly climb the social ladder is portrayed beautifully by Isaack.

Being only a tobacco farmer in the late 1630s, Isaack quickly expanded his mercantile network. During Kieft's War, in which many crops and farms were destroyed, he began buying and selling beaver pelts as well as dealing in real estate. With an increasing demand for proper housing from 1652 onwards, as more and more people came over from the Dutch Republic, this was a lucrative business. In 1653, further proving that he had understood what the market

[49] A.J.F. Van Laer, *Van Rensselaer Bowier Manuscripts: Being the Letters of Kiliaen van Rensselaer, 1630-1643, and other Documents relating to the Colony of Rensselaerswijck* (Albany: University of the State of New York, 1908), 333-344, 347.
[50] Jaap Jacobs, *New Netherland: A Dutch Colony in Seventeenth-Century America* (BRILL: Leiden, 2005) 237-238.

needed and where money could be made, he bought a brewery on the north side of the Prinsen Street and started a hop farm on the Long Island coast of the East River.[51] Beer was an important part of society at the time, as it was drunk more often than water, and thus demand for it was high. When in 1646 his good friend and rival brewer Jacob van Couwenhoven was in financial trouble, Isaack petitioned the court and asked to be allowed to buy as much heavy beer from Jacob as he could produce. As Isaack said in his petition, "a so well situated a brewery as that may not be abandoned, but to the contrary may become the means to maintain decently that man with his family, while otherwise his ruin might be unavoidable."[52] Isaack thus became one of the largest brewers in the city and supplied many tappers in the surrounding areas.

Although already in a comfortable position, he lacked the means to transport his own goods and was dependent on others to move his tobacco, pelts, beer and crops. To cut costs and transport his goods and building materials, he bought his own yacht, presumably in 1656 or 1657.[53] In the light of the decreasing worth of the pelts trade from the 1640s onwards, this was not a surprising purchase. Pelts were important in the first two decades of the Dutch colony, but the real money would turn out to be in the tobacco trade. Steadily growing in contrast to the downward trend of the pelts trade, the tobacco trade would be worth around four hundred thousand guilders in 1664. With his own ship, Isaack was able to take advantage of this trend and purchase tobacco and goods in New England and Virginia in exchange for his own beer, tobacco and other goods. These goods were provided by other merchants, who would buy space for their commodities on his ship.[54]

This trade in tobacco would prove to be the engine that drove the economy of New Amsterdam, and Isaack was a piece of it. In addition to tobacco that was grown in New-Netherland and shipped to the Dutch Republic, English farmers and traders shipped their tobacco to New Amsterdam as well, where it was sold and sent to Amsterdam and Rotterdam. The reason that the Chesapeake tobacco went to the Dutch Republic, was because the English market was not stable and thus not profitable. With the civil war in the 1640s, Oliver Cromwell's rise to power, and the subsequent implementations of the Navigation Acts, English merchants began using the Dutch as middlemen.[55] With the profits made from this trade, New

[51] De Forest, *A Walloon Family,* 124.
[52] The Council Minutes of New Amsterdam, Volume 8, 1656-1658, Online Publications, New Netherland Institute, 307.
[53] De Forest, *A Walloon Family*, 127
[54] Jaap Jacobs, *New Netherland*, 258-260.
[55] Dennis Maika, "The Economy of Seventeenth-Century New Amsterdam/Manhattan," interview by Russel Shorto, *New Netherland Praatjes*, NNI, August 6, 2018, audio, 10:29. https://www.newnetherlandinstitute.org/files/9814/7046/4598/009_Dennis_Maika.mp3.

Amsterdam inhabitants were able to import commodities like textiles, wine, tapestries, weapons and tableware, all goods they were prohibited from making themselves. And although imperial mandates spoke against cross-cultural trade during the Anglo-Dutch Wars, traders from both countries sought ways to profit from trading with each other. Not out of protest, but because it was simply convenient and beneficial for all involved, as the trade made sure the colonists could survive in the New World.[56] Economic contact with *patria* was thus important for the improvement of life in the colony, but without the trade with the English neighbours, many inhabitants, including Isaack, would not have been able to make a living. The same can be said for the English settlers, who otherwise would have to sell their goods at a lower price, meaning a lower standard of life. Dutch and English settlers were thus connected and dependent on each other, even more so when tensions in Europe were rising and support from home was uncertain. Local diplomacy was therefore just as impactful as the European political situation.

After Kieft's War, New Netherland got new leadership in the person of Peter Stuyvesant. Charged with getting the colony back on track and finally presenting the Company with some profits, Stuyvesant would lead the colony through several events. Tensions were rising in the early 1650s, with pressure from English settlers from New Haven, Connecticut, New Plymouth and Massachusetts increasing. Stuyvesant kept especially close contact with Governor John Winthrop of Massachusetts, the most influential man in New England, in order to avoid conflict between the colonies.[57] On the 30th of January, 1649, King Charles I of England was convicted of treason and beheaded by the Parliamentarians and their leader, Oliver Cromwell. This was the outcome of seven years of unrest, that had helped New Netherland merchants in their business. Charles' son, Charles II, was in the Dutch Republic at that time and thus the country was housing a fugitive royal. On top of this, Frederik Hendrik, Stadtholder of the Dutch Republic since 1625 and who passed away in 1647, had married his son Willem to Mary Stuart, the daughter of the now beheaded Charles I. Then, in 1651, the Navigation Act was passed, which prohibited the transport of English goods by foreign ships, but also called for foreign vessels sailing in the Channel to lower their flags in salute to the English. Tensions were thus high when Admiral Maarten Tromp, a firm Orangist who wanted the House of Orange back in power, and Admiral Robert Blake, an anti-royal Parliamentarian, encountered each

[56] Christian J. Koot, *Empire at the Periphery: British Colonists, Anglo-Dutch Trade, and the Development of the British Atlantic, 1621-1713* (New York: New York University Press, 2011) 49.
[57] Russel Shorto, *The Island at the Center of the World* (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 180.

other in the Straits of Dover. A brutal battle broke out after Tromp did not lower his flag, after which war was officially declared in July, 1652.[58]

With so many English settlers on Long Island and English colonies to the north and south, the Dutch in America were wary of any rumour of an English attack after war had broken out in Europe.[59] From this cautiousness came a subscription opened by Stuyvesant to repair New Amsterdam's defences. On the 11th of November, 1653, a group of twenty-one wealthy inhabitants agreed to submit to certain taxes "for paying the public expenses and keeping in repair the works of the city", with Isaack being amongst the names listed.[60] Although the fortifications were not needed in the end, as the English attack never came, the reparations of the fort and city were seen as important to the image of the colony and helping the council to do so, also helped Isaack's reputation. Once again, in 1655, Isaack offered to pay for the repair and advancement of the city. This time it concerned the paving of the Brouwer Straet with stone, on which he and nine others had their properties. They offered the council to pay for the re-pavement, but after some owners backed out of the agreement, it would be Isaack who would take the matter to court and repeatedly ask the court to take action.[61] The fact that the Brouwer Straet would be known as Stone Street just after the English takeover in 1664, suggests that Isaack got the street re-paved in the end.[62]

In addition to this, Isaack was also actively engaged in the political and social spheres of the city. Following Kieft's disastrous war effort against the Natives from 1643-1645, the Director knew he had to keep the support of the people and so he established a public board called the Eight Men. Chosen from and by the most established citizens, including Isaack, the board would advise the government. The Eight Men were dispensed and replaced with the Nine Men in 1647. Isaack would become one these Nine in 1652.[63] The position in the Nine would prove to be a stepping stone, as a year later he was appointed inspector of tobacco, in 1655 and 1656 he was the farmer of the revenues of the weigh house, in 1658 he would be appointed schepen in the council of New Amsterdam and in 1660 he would be farmer of the revenue of tavern excise.

With all these mercantile activities, offices and public activities, it was only a matter of time before Isaack would officially be part of the New Amsterdam elite. As Jaap Jacobs has

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[58] Shorto, *The Island at the Center of the World,* 247-248.
[59] The Council Minutes of New Amsterdam, Volume 5, 1652-1654, Online Publications, New Netherland Institue, 105.
[60] The Council Minutes of New Amsterdam, Volume 5, 145.
[61] De Forest, *A Walloon Family*, 132.
[62] Ibidem.
[63] Edmund Bailey O'Callaghan, *The Register of New Netherland, 1626 to 1674* (Albany: New York, 1865), 55.

pointed out, being a brewer at the time was an almost certain way of becoming part of the elite, as they had large set-up costs due to the prize of a brew kettle. As beer was the most important beverage, sales were high and thus their capital grew. This made that brewers were often part of the elite and had higher chances of being on the city council. This was the case in Holland, but also in New Netherland. Jacobs provides us with several individuals like Oloff Stevensz van Cortlandt, Willem Beeckman and Jan Vigne who were brewers and at various times members of the city council.[64] Isaack is not mentioned, even though he owned a brewery, received his great-burgher title on the 28th of January 1658 and became schepen the same year, clearly marking him as part of the elite and being involved in the city's development.[65]

Although Isaack was only one inhabitant, he is an example of the "exceptional normal", as his life portrays the impact crises had on the life in the colony, for example during Kieft's War or the growing English threat. These events of course caused fear, but also presented inhabitants with opportunities to solidify their position within society, like Isaack did by volunteering to help pay for fortifications or by offering cargo space to Dutch and English colonists.

English takeover

The years 1656-1664 were years in which New Amsterdam truly became a colonial metropole. People could easily climb the social ladder due to the prohibition of guilds, which in effect boosted the trade and provided the inhabitants with plenty of goods to buy. The number of inhabitants rose significantly to about 1.500 in 1664, streets were paved and gardens and houses were reorganized according to new regulations by the city council, improving the street view and hygiene of the city. The peace with England, signed in 1654, and Stuyvesants continued diplomatic contact with New England's governors, made sure that hostilities would not come from the north or south.[66] Although there were still problems with the Amerindian tribes, who would conduct raids on settlements throughout the colony, it is safe to say that the colony was in the best situation it had ever been.

Nevertheless, the colony never really overcame the problems that were present from the start and arose from a plan which was too ambitious and guided by too many rules. For example, when engineer Crijn Fredericxsz arrived on Manhattan in 1625, his instructions were to build a large pentagonal shaped fort. This shape would mean that each side, the Hudson River, the East

[64] Jacobs, *New Netherland,* 243.
[65] The Council Minutes of New Amsterdam, Volume 8, 688.
[66] The Council Minutes of New Amsterdam, Volume 5, 105.

River, the bay and also the landside would be covered by two bastions. This huge fort would have a diameter of almost 300 metres, allowing for an inner building site of 565 metres long and 450 metres wide for houses, warehouses, farms and barracks. It would act an enclave for Dutch trade in a hostile land.[67] This plan was however quickly pushed aside by Crijn and local WIC officials. As the Dutch lived in peace with the Amerindians and the location was not suited for such a fort, the same objective could be accomplished with a small square fort. The ambitious plans nevertheless shaped the development of New Amsterdam for decades to come, as the early construction for the pentagonal fort left small hills and open spaces in the landscape. These spaces would become the earliest streets of the city: the Breedewegh, the Hooghstraat and the Paerlestraat.

As the plots of land were slowly filled, from 1645 onwards the city had to create more building sites by opening up spaces. In 1650, this resulted in the creation of several new streets. Connecting the Breedewegh at the Noort Rivier and the Hooghstraat on the Oost Rivier, the Heeregracht and the Bevergracht were constructed by demolishing some small houses. In the years leading up to 1660, the Heeregracht was extended to form the Princegracht (and the Princestraet next to it). Along the newly build palisade in the north now ran the Cingel or Walstraet, connected to the Hooghstraet by the Smeestraet. With several other smaller streets, a somewhat orderly street network was created, connecting the relatively densely built-up community of about 1.500 souls with Fort Amsterdam at the far end of the island.[68]

This was the situation of the city when an English fleet sailed into the bay between the 26th and the 28th of August 1664. Sources indicate that Isaack was on a tobacco run to the Delaware river at the time and returned just as English vessels dropped anchor before New Amsterdam.[69] Not yet sure what the English ships were doing there, Isaack sailed into the bay and towards the city. A shot was fired in his direction by the English, after which he must have realized that he was in trouble. Taken aboard and questioned, he was then released on the 31st of August and brought before Director-General Stuyvesant and the council, as they wanted to know the strength of the English forces. To Isaack's knowledge, the English commander, Colonel Nicholls, had 600 soldiers under his command, far more than the 150 soldiers Stuyvesant had. Hearing about the English strength, a group of ninety-three burghers signed a

[67] Paul Meurs, "Nieuw-Amsterdam op Manhattan, 1625-1660," in *Vestingbouw oversee: Militaire architectuur van Manhattan tot* Korea, eds. P.J.J. van Dijk, C.G.F. Ampt, R.G.A. Bos, C. Tempel-Van den Bout and D. Winkelman (Zutphen: Walburg Druk, 1996), 21-22.
[68] Meurs, "Nieuw-Amsterdam op Manhattan," 26-29.
[69] De Forest, A Walloon Family, 136-137.

remonstrance in which they urgently advised Stuyvesant to surrender the city and not put up a fight. Isaack was one of them.[70]

The English force would turn out to be of the same size as the garrison and many people were unhappy with Isaack's report. Whether Isaack purposely exaggerated or was just shocked by his imprisonment aboard the English ship, we do not know. Perhaps, realizing that a Dutch defensive effort would damage the city that he had helped to build, and would probably mean the deaths of many of his friends and family, he told the council to surrender. More likely is that he exaggerated out of fear, because his actions in the years before indicate that he had no reason to conspire with the English and fool the city into surrender. Also, when on July 19th, 1673, a Dutch relief force came to retake the city, Isaack was amongst the almost 400 burghers that welcomed the Dutch soldiers into the city, again indicating that he had Dutch interests at heart.

Luckily for Isaack, he would not live to see another shift in power. He died in 1674, although the exact date is unclear. The last mention of him in the court records is on July 25th, 1674, as his case is moved to the next court day. On September 26th, 1674, his wife Sarah is mentioned as Isaack's widow, placing his death in that two-month period. Later that year, the Dutch would officially surrender New Amsterdam on November 10th and Dutch rule in North America would come to an end. But although sources become much less extensive, the De Forests continued to live in the now English colony. Sara du Trieux would die on November 9th, 1692, aged sixty-seven, leaving her seven children with the estate of their father.

In their will, it was arranged that after Isaack died, all children would have to learn a trade of their choosing. David, the youngest, learned to be a glacier but instead of staying in New York, he moved north to the town of Stratford in 1694. About the other children, not much is known. Jan, then fourteen, had to appear in court together with his father in 1658, as he was seen with two friends appearing drunk. The schout claimed that they had stolen beer from a cellar and wanted to lock them up. With the help of his father, young Jan was let go, but Isaack will have undoubtedly disciplined his son so soon after he was given the great burgher title. Johannes and Henry are only mentioned when they were appointed administrators for the house on the Brouwers Straet after Isaack's death, selling it to Harman Rutgers on May 2nd, 1693, a brewer from Albany. The eldest child, a girl named Susannah, was then forty-nine and married to Peter De Rymier.[71]

[70] De Forest, *A Walloon Family*, 138.
[71] Ibidem, 142.

Always staying close to their faith, a Walloon family spread its name from Wallonia, to the Dutch Republic, New Netherland, as well as Connecticut. Jesse had seen his father flee his country because of his faith and this made him even more of a believer. This strong evangelic feeling was passed onto his children and when they arrived in the New World, their faith was one of the foundations they could build on. It also helped Isaack in his career, as it enabled him to partake in New Amsterdam's political and social discussions. Taking with them their faith and their fathers intent of establishing a De Forest legacy in the New World, Hendrick, Isaack, Rachel, Susannah, Johannes and Henry did their part in the development of New Netherland. They employed English carpenters, traded tobacco and beer with the English, had close encounters during wartime and eventually even moved to the Chesapeake region. Microhistorical subjects, like New World migration, personal affairs, everyday activities and run-ins with the law, but also the macro-historical stories about Atlantic trade, political relations and the building of a colonial empire, are all present in the De Forest story.

Chapter 2: The Varleth Family

The story of the De Forests was primarily based on the work by Emily Johnston de Forrest, supplemented with the New Netherland records, which made it easier to follow the family over a longer period of time. During their lives, they were part of some of the most important moments in the history of New Netherland and left their mark on Manhattan, Long Island, and even in New England. For the Varleth family, however, such an extensive work is not available and thus their direct influence on the colony is harder to determine. Nevertheless, there are many mentions of the various family members in the court minutes. There are for example mentions of women conducting trade or business transactions, of the purchase and selling of slaves, and of contact with English settlers. This opens up possibilities to go into more detail about the position of women in the colony and their participation in the conducting of trade, as well as the extent of the slave trade in New Netherland and the inter-colonial connections between New England and New Netherland.

By reading the archive, the known family tied to New Netherland consists of six persons: Casper and Judich, the parents, their oldest son Abraham, a second son Nicolaes, their oldest daughter Anna and the youngest of the family, Maria. The family first lived in Utrecht for a long time, where Casper and Judich married on the 17th of October, 1615.[72] At least one

[72] Het Utrechts Archief, inventory number 94, page 264.

of their children was born in Utrecht as well, with little Abraham being baptized on the 6th of October, 1616. No other mentions of Varleth children can be found in the Utrecht archives, as sometime between 1620 and 1625 the family moved to Amsterdam. Here, Casper set up a silk factory in 1623, as there are several mentions of him importing silk in the Amsterdam notarial archive.[73] He was also active in the Atlantic trade, importing Brazilian wood and sugar as well as trading with New Netherland and New Sweden.[74] His son Abraham was also active in the Brazilian trade under the WIC.[75] It is not until early 1652 that the Varleth name appears in the New Amsterdam court minutes, and their name is still being mentioned in the Amsterdam archive in 1650. They moved from Amsterdam to the New World somewhere in that two-year gap, presumably because of the renowned interest of the WIC and traders in actually colonizing and utilizing the North American colony, as Dutch Brazil was on the brink of collapse after a general uprising in 1645. In doing so, the family took with them an extensive network of business partners, contacts and capital.

As there are no mentions of the Varleths in the archives of Rensselaerswijck and only in the New Amsterdam ones, taking into account the fact that the family had always focused on shipping, it is most likely that the Varleths set up shop in New Amsterdam or its close surroundings. Utilizing their existing networks, they continued conducting trade whilst settling into the colonial society of New Amsterdam. This chapter will first talk about Judich and Anna and their involvements in trade. After that, Maria will be the subject within the story of marital affairs, and lastly Casper and his son Nicolaes will be used as a stepping stone to the larger debate concerning the slave trade and English connections.

Women in trade

In colonial society, the focus was always on conducting business with as much profit as possible. This was also the case for at least the first few decades of New Netherland, during which ambitious people saw the colony as a way to make some quick profits. The colony also represented a new beginning for many settlers from all over Europe, for example for religious groups like Puritans, Jews and Lutherans, who were denied rights or sometimes even got prosecuted back in the Old World. During the 1650s, the colony steadily grew in population

[73] Notarial Archive Amsterdam, deed number 255232, archive number 5075, inventory number 1924.
[74] Notarial Archive Amsterdam, deed number 527389, archive number 5075, inventory number 1947.
[75] Notarial Archive Amsterdam, deed number 527389, archive number 5075, inventory number 1947, as well as Notarial Archive Amsterdam, deed number 501785, archive number 5075, inventory number 1947.

and became more popular as a settler colony with directors and civilians in the Dutch Republic. Trade increased and more and more opportunities arose for those able to act on them.

Judich Varleth and her daughter Anna are two of those seeking opportunity. As recurring figures in the court minutes of New Amsterdam, they often acted as defendants in cases regarding trade and business affairs. In one instance, they were summoned before the court to justify why they were late with a payment of 2.600 guilders worth of wampum to captain Geurt Tyssen. The payment was for the purchase of eight enslaved Africans and was agreed upon at the house of Hendrick Kypp, who acted as a witness. The court declared that both the slaves and the wampum had to be brought to the fort within twenty-four hours, but as both Judich and Anna claimed that they had already paid, the court gave them an opportunity to prove this. The matter was eventually resolved, as Judich and Anna provided the court with proof of payment in the form of a testimony by Hendrick Kypp.[76]

This sum of 2.600 guilders is a substantial amount. That two women could conduct business and handle a transaction of this magnitude might be seen as surprising, as women in the seventeenth-century Dutch Republic could not conduct business or invest money without their husbands' consent. In fact, the whole of Europe had a strong patriarchal society, with women taking care of the household and the men as the head of the family. However, in the Dutch Republic, when a husband gave his wife permission or made her an agent in his own business, a woman was able to operate within the economic and social structures normally reserved for men.[77] Daniëlle van den Heuvel has thoroughly studied the position of women as entrepreneurs in the Dutch Republic during the sixteenth, seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, showing that women were often active in the economic service sector or some sort of trade. The exact occupation of women varied per city, but as the Varleths came from Amsterdam and the colony of New Netherland was actually supervised by the Chamber of Amsterdam, looking at this city will give a first explanation for the position of Judich and Anna.

Already in 1585, two-thirds of the female heads of household in Amsterdam were employed in economic services. This was even before the city became the economic centre of Europe, during which the percentage of women that was employed in this sector only increased. Compared to male heads of household, women were more likely to end up working in this

[76] The Council Minutes of New Amsterdam, Volume 5, 1652-1654, Online Publications, New Netherland Institute, 58.
[77] Annette de Wit, "Women in Dutch Fishing Communities. The Cases of Ter Heijde and Maassluis, C. 1600-1700," in *Beyond the Catch: Fisheries of the North Atlantic, the North Sea and the Baltic, 900*-1850, eds. Darlene Abreu-Ferreira and Louis Sicking (Boston: BRILL, 2008), 367-371.

sector, a trend that would carry on well into the eighteenth century.[78] An example of such a female entrepreneur is Janneken Jans van Leeuwarden, who made several trips to Brazil and New Netherland from Amsterdam to trade with locals and settlers on a bases of debt and credit transactions.[79] This high degree of female participation in Amsterdam trade and commerce was exported to and expanded upon in the New World, where an always changing economic and political environment asked for quick decision-making to act on every business opportunity. Women were therefore more often than not participating in local and transoceanic commercial activities alongside their husbands, in order to seize every opportunity.

Anna, for example, was summoned to the New Amsterdam court in October 1652 because she was unable to pay for the shipment of a horse and three hundred planks to Virginia. The plaintiffs were Paulus Leendertsen, who presumably was the owner of the ship *Vaerwel* on which the goods were shipped, and future mayor of New Amsterdam, Allert Antony. They claimed that the goods were sent to Anna and Jorys' home, but according to Anna, the goods were never sent to them. As the court ruled that the plaintiffs need to prove the shipment of the goods, for some unknown reason Anna was also ordered to put her tobacco in the Company warehouse.[80] Perhaps it was to act as collateral, but the exact reason is unknown. What the entire court session proves, however, is that Anna was active in the intercolonial wood and tobacco trade between English and Dutch colonies and that she was defending her family's interests instead of her husband, Jorys Hackx.

This was something that was more common in New Netherland than in the Dutch Republic. On the one hand, in the Dutch Republic, marriage was something that came to be under civic law, which dictated the position of men and women in a marriage, aiming to promote social stability. In marriage, women were not equal to their husbands and needed a man's permission to conduct trade or act on his behalf. On the other hand, this same system also dictated that single or widowed women had the same rights as men and could own a business. In addition to this, precisely because marriage came to be under civic law, it could also be disbanded when creditable complaints were brought before court, giving women a legal basis to fall back on when they felt that their husband was mismanaging their affairs.[81] This

[78] Daniëlle van den Heuvel, "Women and Entrepreneurship. Female Traders in the Northern Netherlands c. 1580-1915," (PhD diss., University of Utrecht, 2007), 71-72.
[79] Susannah Shaw Romney, *New Netherland Connections: Intimate Networks and Atlantic Ties in Seventeenth-Century America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014). 17.
[80] The Council Minutes of New Amsterdam, Volume 5, 1652-1654, Online Publications, New Netherland Institute, 72, 78-79, 86.
[81] Michael E. Gherke, "Dutch Women in New Netherland and New York in the Seventeenth Century" (PhD diss., West Virginia University, 2001), 61-63.

legal system surrounding marriage and property was used by the West India Company in New Netherland, presenting a second reason for women's participation in New Netherland trade.

Kim Todt and Martha Dickinson Shattuck give a third reason as to why women in New Netherland were so active in commerce and business, in addition to the Amsterdam customs and the Dutch legal system presented by Van den Heuvel and Gherke. According to them, educating children, male and female, from a young age in writing, reading and maths made sure that every member of a household could do their part in supporting the household.[82] This was of course not the case for people from the lower social groups, but middle and upper middle class families educated their children by either tutoring them themselves at home, sending them to school or by letting them help in the family business. This gave women the same knowledge as men regarding trade and commerce, and combined with the earlier given reasons, enabled them to partake substantially in New Netherland trade networks. Anna Varleth connected people from Virginia, New Amsterdam, and Amsterdam, whilst Judich partook in the regional pelts trade and the slave trade, bringing contacts from Africa, the Caribbean and New Netherland together. They were not simply deputy-husbands, as Michael E. Gherke has called it, but they were active agents.[83] Their role in society, European and colonial, is therefore worth mentioning and can help to shed light on how colonists set up trade routes, kept in contact with each other, managed their business affairs at home and abroad, and simply survived in the harsh conditions of the New World.

Marriage and religion

While looking into the positions of women in New Netherland trade and businesses, marriage was briefly mentioned as a reason why women were able to be active agents in colonial society. Marriage laws provided women with legal means to defend themselves, but in her work on the regulations of marriages and sex in the Dutch Atlantic world, Deborah Hamer has stated that although colonial officials tried to keep people within these rules, there was a lot of disobedience concerning marriages.[84] These varied from inter-religious marriages, marriages without consent from the parents, or adultery, all bringing men and women before court in an attempt to sort out their grievances. The reason for this relatively high degree of disobedience

[82] Kim Todt and Martha Dickinson Shattuck, "Capable Entrepreneurs: The Women Merchants and Traders of New Netherland," in *Women in Port: Gendering Communities, Economies, and Social Networks in Atlantic Port Cities, 1500-1800,* eds. Douglas Catterall and Jodi Campbell (Leiden: BRILL, 2012), 191-195.
[83] Michael E. Gherke, "Dutch Women in New Netherland," 61-63.
[84] Deborah Hamer, "Creating an Orderly Society: The Regulation of Marriages and Sex in the Dutch Atlantic World, 1621-1674," (PhD diss., Columbia University, 2014), 43-51.

was that the WIC and the council of New Netherland saw New Netherland as an extension of the Dutch Republic, bound to the same laws and customs, but the people mostly saw the colony as a region where they could be free, have a clean sleet and make a profit. Maria Varleth, the youngest daughter of Casper and Judich, is a prime example of what happened when the system did not agree with one's choices.

At the start of 1654, Maria was supposed to marry Johannis van Beeck, a merchant in New Amsterdam. They were both not yet a major before the law, which they would only become when they turned twenty-five, and so their fathers had to give their consent. Needing a father's consent for marriage was a strict rule in Protestant teaching. The Catholic Church had always advised young couples to get parental consent before marriage, but it was not a requirement for making it a legal marriage. The Protestant reforms of the early sixteenth century changed this and made parental consent, in addition to the wedding being public and the proclamation of the three bans, a necessity in order for a marriage to be legal.[85]

Whilst Maria had gotten her father's consent, Johannis had not, and it would cause many problems for the young couple. For some reason, they had already been given the permission of the Director-General and council to marry.[86] This permission had expired, however, due to delays on the delivery to the house of Johannis and him not being home. Because Johannis' father kept disapproving of the marriage, Casper had tried everything to make sure that his daughter would be able to marry Johannis, even trying to "obtain ecclesiastical proclamation and solemnization", but the Director-General apparently obstructed them in everyway during their appeals.[87]

Nevertheless, in the weeks before the original wedding, Johannis had posted several marriage announcements throughout the city. In the court minutes, it is said that these posters were discovered on the 27th of February 1654, leading to the Council ordering Johannis to appear before them to explain himself and show any legal documentation that would make the marriage legal.[88] In addition to this, he also had to present the court with a good reason as to why he was not at home when this order was brought to him. When he would return to the colony, the council proclaimed, he was to be detained upon arrival and face the council. It would turn out that in secret, Casper, Maria, and Johannis had departed for New England between the 26th and 27th of February to marry there. They were brought there on the ship of

[85] Hamer, "Creating an Orderly Society," 22-23.
[86] Council Minutes of New Amsterdam, Volume 5, 120-121
[87] Ibid., 122. This is an unexpected statement, as it was first made clear that director-general and council had given their permission. Why Stuyvesant came back on his earlier decision is not mentioned.
[88] The Council Minutes of New Amsterdam, Volume 5, 122.

Augustinus Heerman, but the journey and marriage was done without consent and against the orders of Isack van Beeck, father and guardian of Johannis van Beeck.

The matter was resolved, but the couple would not live together for long, as in April 1656, Maria stood against Joost van Beeck, Johannis' brother, regarding the distribution of goods after Johannis had passed away. Joost claimed that he righteously collected three hogsheads of tobacco from his deceased brother, as the latter still was indebted to him. He also claimed that he and his father saw no other people as Johannes's heir, as they were never informed of a legal marriage. This was a wrong claim, as the marriage was indeed first considered illegal by the Council of New Netherland, but the court of New Amsterdam did consider the New England marriage between Maria and Johannis legal and gave Maria permission to receive goods and letters shipped to her husband.[89] On the 27th of April, 1656, the Council ruled that Joost had no right to the goods of Johannis, and that he shall give them or their value to Cornelis Schut, who was appointed as a substitute attorney for the curators of Johannis and they closed the case.[90]

It appears, however, that Maria was not satisfied with the ruling. On the 2nd of May, 1656, Maria sent a petition to the Court demanding that the ruling would be nullified. She argued that she never got the chance to defend herself, she was never called to court and that she has been incredibly discredited by the ruling. If the council would not nullify its ruling, she promised to go to court and accuse Cornelis van Tienhoven for the murder on her husband, as well as testify "against the director and his councillors for all the injuries and affronts done to me in the aforesaid judgment and proceedings as well as those done to me before and to come, whereby the blood and the damage on your honours, as impartials, shall be expelled and pursued". By accusing Van Tienhoven of the murder on her husband, she presumably meant that Van Tienhoven or the council in general could have prevented his death, but the circumstances around Johannis' death are not known. Her statement obviously did not sit well with the Director-General and council, who ordered that Maria would be incarcerated for debt, as well as slandering the honest councillors.[91] After this, there is no more mention of a bail paid by Casper or Nicolaes, a court ruling or a contract involving Maria, and thus this last ruling marks the sad end to a short but eventful life in the New World for Maria in this thesis.

[89] The Council Minutes of New Amsterdam, Volume 6, 1655-1656, Online Publications, New Netherland Institute, 263.
[90] Ibidem, 307.
[91] The Council Minutes of New Amsterdam, Volume 8, 1656-1658, Online Publications, New Netherland Institute, 7-8.

Marriage laws, then, gave women the means to defend themselves or their family in court, like Judich and Anna, but it also caused problems and painful experiences, as in the case of Maria. The fact that Maria and Johannis went to New England to get married, raises an interesting question about intercolonial contacts and faith. New England was a predominantly Puritan colony, meaning that a marriage came to be under civic law, as Puritans did not see marriage as a religious sacrament or institution. In the Dutch Republic and New Netherland, this was the same. The Dutch Reformed Church was the preferred religion, but as it never became the state religion and its clergy thus had not as much influence over the government as its counterparts in England or France, people could get married in other ways than that which was preferred by the Dutch Reformed Church. This can be seen in the story about Maria and Johannis, whose marriage was rejected by the Council of New Netherland and the Dutch Reformed Church, but found legal by the municipal government of New Amsterdam. As religious colonies, both New Netherland and New England saw marriage as something essential in order to establish a stable colonial society, but as Dutch Protestant and English Puritan colonies, they were cautious of giving the church power over the government. It was therefore logical for Maria and Johannis to get married in New England if they wanted their marriage to be found legal back home in New Netherland. This adds religion to trade and politics as another way New Netherland and New England were connected to each other by the lives of their colonists.

Local governance and slavery

The Varleth family arrived in New Netherland at a time of growth. As already mentioned in the De Forest chapter, from 1650 onwards New Netherland entered a relative peaceful and prosperous period in which new towns were founded and the colony once again got the attention from Amsterdam merchants. Part of this new phase of the colony was the establishment of municipal governments, just like in the Dutch Republic, in which burghers held the positions instead of Company officials. The first of these governments was officially established by a municipal charter proclaimed in New Amsterdam on the 2nd of February, 1653.[92] It was the result of a remonstrance written by the most prominent merchants in New Amsterdam in which they expressed their discontent about the way the Company governed the colony. According to them, the Company hindered them in fully utilizing the potential of the New World, with its vast wilderness full of riches. They found that, whenever a complaint was presented, the

[92] Dennis Joseph Maika, "Commerce and Community," 71.

Director-General and council would act unpredictably and would often only make matters worse in their attempt to improve the situation. The goal of the petitioners was thus to enable a more orderly trading process, making sure that merchants were not subject to the personal inclinations of Company officials, but instead could rely upon a clear set of rules and outlines to direct trade.[93] The way this would be guaranteed was by the establishment of a municipal government consisting of two mayors and five schepenen, who would be chosen from amongst the great-burghers of the city.

The remonstrance was signed by eleven prominent merchants, some of which are well known names like Adriaen van der Donck and Jacob van Couwenhoven. It is thought, however, that before the remonstrance was composed, the makers consulted most of the prominent residents of New Amsterdam, and that the ideas they presented in the document reflected the grievances and wishes of many of the city's trading inhabitants.[94] In order to further improve the situation for merchants, the Company was presented a petition to open up the tobacco trade, as well as other wares, and the trade with foreign nations in 1656. Nicolaes Varleth was one of the signers of this document, but as many of the inhabitants were consulted for the 1650 remonstrance, it is very likely that he and his father were also part of this earlier plea. The petition for the opening of the trade with foreign nations also indicates that Nicolaes, and presumably also his father, had interests in New England and Virginia.

This trade from New Netherland mostly consisted of pelts and tobacco. Over the years, as could be concluded from the De Forest chapter, the tobacco trade grew steadily and overtook the pelts trade in mass and worth. Casper, Abraham, and Nicolaes had been active in this trade for several years, long before Casper and Nicolaes left Amsterdam to live in the New World. However, there was another trade that occurred in New Netherland, one that spanned the entire Atlantic and has been the topic of many works over the last few decades: the slave trade. Millions of Africans were purchased by European traders and transported across the Atlantic to the colonies in North, Central and South America. The majority of these people were put to work on plantations in South-America, but in English colonies in the southeast of North America, there were also vast tobacco and cotton plantations. Although New Netherland was not a plantation colony like Dutch Brazil or Suriname and thus did not need a large, yearly influx of enslaved people, it did have a small African population. They were partly owned by

[93] Dennis Joseph Maika, "Commerce and Community," 71.
[94] Ibidem, 60.

the WIC as a workforce for building and farming and partly privately owned by settlers and employed as house maidens, cleaners and servants.

From the 1620s to the late 1640s, these enslaved Africans were mostly brought to the colony by Dutch and French privateers who captured them from Portuguese and Spanish slave ships. Later, when Dutch Brazil was lost to the Portuguese in 1654 and Curaçao became the main Dutch hub for enslaved Africans, they were shipped to Manhattan by WIC ships. Slave markets were held in New Amsterdam, with the prices ranging from 255 guilders to 615 guilders, depending on the gender, physique, and age.[95] During one of these slave markets, Nicholaes Varleth is recorded as having bought an African woman and her child for 360 guilders. His mother and sister had bought eight enslaved Africans for 2.600 guilders a few years prior and during a court session in which Casper was a defendant, Francois Gysbrinckx demanded from him "two camp beds and two slaves".[96] Nothing is said about the circumstances of this last reference, but what these several cases prove is that the Varleth family had ties to the transatlantic slave trade. In addition to this, the high number of slaves mentioned that were either bought or sold by the family, suggests that the Varleths had enough enslaved Africans to employ them in their household or on their farms.

From what can be found in the archive, it is not possible to tell if the Varleth's had any shops or factories like a brewery or a mill. Casper's background as a silk maker could be used as an indication that he might have continued this craft in New Netherland, but the WIC prohibited the production of these kind of commodities.[97] There is a mention of Nicholaes defending himself in court against Cornelis van Ruyven on the 29th of July, 1656. The matter was about him not being able to pay a debt of 390 guilders for two mares he bought the year prior, indicating that he perhaps owned a farm.[98] Also, Anna and Jorys are recorded as having shipped wooden planks to Virginia, suggesting they owned a sawing mill, but both of these instances are the only times anything like it is mentioned in the archives.

However, the family's transatlantic activities from when they lived in the Dutch Republic, their extensive network and the fact that Abraham was still living in Amsterdam, make a continuation of buying and selling goods from other people and shipping them across the Atlantic the most plausible option. That at least a part of the family gained a creditable

[95] "Slavery in New Netherland," New Netherland Institute, accessed June 19, 2021, https://www.newnetherlandinstitute.org/history-and-heritage/digital-exhibitions/slavery-exhibit/slave-trade/
[96] The Council Minutes of New Amsterdam, Volume 5, 1652-1654, Online Publications, New Netherland Institute, 59
[97] Koot, *Empire at the Periphery,* 49.
[98] The Council Minutes of New Amsterdam, Volume 8, 1656-1658, Online Publications, New Netherland Institute, 57.

reputation and influence within New Amsterdam, becomes clear from the fact that Nicholaes became commissary of incoming and outgoing goods at the Company warehouse in April 1657 and received the great burgher right on the 28th of January 1658. This was partially possible due to the fact that the council noticed small changes in competent persons in important positions over the years. These positions were only available to the people who were given the great burgher right and thus, to remedy the problem of the same people rotating trough the highest positions, they wanted to enlarge this group of qualified people and thus Nicolaes and several others received the great burgher right in 1657.[99]

Therefore, the Varleth family in New Netherland is a prime example of the interconnectedness between big themes as the transatlantic slave trade, the influence of religion on local governance, intercolonial trade and the position of women in colonial society. Although often small, the influence of the Varleth family on these themes is noticeable and therefore of importance for the story about New Netherland, because the stories of Judich, Casper, and their children confirm that a microhistory can add much needed information about everyday life to the broad Atlantic and Dutch colonial histories about politics, trade and warfare, written in the last decades. They show us that life in the Dutch Republic and in New Amsterdam was built around the same set of laws and customs, like in marital affairs. On the other hand, these stories also show that although the ground rules were the same, people in the colony learned quickly that quick responses and being able to adapt to changing circumstances was vital for survival. This resulted in more opportunities for women in legal and mercantile affairs, as well as business relations that ignored political rivalries in Europe, like the trade between New England and New Netherland. The last chapter of this thesis will expand on the first two chapters and focus on the area that was first known as Rensselaerswijck, but which was renamed to Beverwijck, and how this town fitted into the macro-historical framework that has been sketched in the prior chapters.

[99] Council Minutes of New Amsterdam, Volume 8, 367-369.

Chapter Three: The Vast North of New Netherland

When reading the archives, one notices that for a long time, there is a distinction between New Netherland material, consisting of Manhattan, Long Island and the coast between the Connecticut and Delaware river, and the northwest regions, consisting of the upper Hudson, Fort Orange and Rensselaerswijck. It is only from 1652 that these two separate regions are brought together in the WIC archives. Why this was the case, is already mentioned in Chapter One, but in short this region was mostly managed by Kiliaen van Rensselaer, patroon of the patroonship Rensselaerswijck. However, after a disagreement about landownership around Fort Orange between director-general Peter Stuyvesant and acting-patroon Brant van Slichtenhorst, Rensselaerswijck lost most of its territory to the Company, and was reduced to a small settlement. The congregation around Fort Orange was brought under Company control and renamed Beverwijck, with its own council residing in the fort. This shift in control makes that there are certain gaps in the archive about this region, making it hard to follow a single family like in the first two chapters. Therefore, this chapter will be made up of two parts that both will follow several people each and link them to the macro-historical themes, just like in the first two chapters.

The first persons to be discussed, are Evert Pels and Cornelis (or Claes) Segersz. While Evert was a farmer, a brewer and a ship-owner, Cornelis owned a farm and a yacht, sailing between the patroonship and New Amsterdam. They shall be used to discuss the business activities in the northern parts of the colony. This duo shall be complemented by discussing Jacob Jansz, a carpenter from the Dutch Republic who was employed by Kiliaen van Rensselaer. He built quite the life for himself in the colony and shows that craftsmen were essential to the development of the colonial enterprise. Lastly, Dutch relations with the Amerindians, more specifically the Mohawks, will be the subject of the last part, with Harmen Meyndertsz van den Bogaert and his travel journal from 1634 forming the starting point.

Pelts, Farming and Shipping

Up until 1652, an estimated 2.500 acres of cultivated land was available to the patroonship of Rensselaerswijck. According to optimistic letters from Kiliaen van Rensselaer to the West India Company and his partners in the 1630s, this land could produce 100.000 guilders of profit annually and even more when a successful cattle trade could be established.[100] This was in line

[100] Charles T. Gehring, *Annals of New Netherland: Privatizing Colonization, the Patroonship of Rensselaerswijck* (Albany: New York, 2000) 12-13.

with what the directors of the West India Company had in mind when they had given out the "Freedoms and Exemptions", in which private owners were granted a plot of land in New Netherland to cultivate.[101]

Although Van Rensselaer saw the colony as the 'grain silo' of the Dutch Atlantic empire, other professions found their way into the community. Millers, bakers and butchers processed the grains and cattle into flour, bread and meat, of which the largest portion went to the colonists of the patroonship, another to the WIC personnel in the Fort, and the rest was transported over the Hudson to New Amsterdam to be either sold to the Company or to other private parties. As already mentioned in the previous chapters, professions that made luxury products were prohibited in the colony and thus also in the patroonship. Ventures like brick furnaces, wood mills and potteries were allowed and also present in the patroonship, but silversmiths or luxury shoemakers did not exist in the colony.

Evert Pels, our first person of interest, is a prime example of how a settler in Rensselaerswijck would make a living. He was a farmer, as were the majority of the settlers, and also a licensed brewer of the patroonship. On the 5th of June 1642, Evert signed a contract with Kiliaen van Rensselaer in Amsterdam that made him a licensed brewer for the patroonship for the period of six years.[102] In addition to this, he was to follow all laws, ordinances, articles and clauses relating to freemen and settlers of the patroonship, which made him an official inhabitant of the colony. The reason Kiliaen contracted Evert, was because the prices for beer were rising constantly and at one point reached twenty guilders for one barrel of beer, all because settlers were individually brewing and selling their own beer. With the employment of Evert, the trade in beer could be better monitored and controlled.[103] Before Evert would move to Rensselaerswijck, he would marry Jannetje Symens on the 21st of November 1641 in Amsterdam, after he had moved there from Stettin, Poland, making him part of the second generation of immigrants to move to New Netherland, just like the De Forests.

Evert and his wife are mentioned a total of 28 times in the Rensselaerswijck Court Minutes of 1648-1652, several times in the later volumes, as well as in the Rensselaer-Bowier Manuscripts, the most of anyone that can be found in these documents. These mentions include paying off loans, the selling and buying of crops and seeds, petitions, and the occasional witness

[101] These private colonies would produce agricultural products that would feed the colonists, while the Company would ensure the safety of the colony with a military force, saving the Company expenses on costly resupply ships. This created a bond between the Company's headquarters in New Amsterdam and the patroonship of Rensselaerswijck, with the military power of the Company being projected from Fort Orange, which lay in the patroonship, close to the joining of the Hudson and Mohawk rivers

[102] Van Rensselaer Bowier Manuscripts, Online Publications, New Netherland Institute, 679.

[103] Ibidem, 680.

statement. Interestingly enough, after 1652, Evert is often listed as being present at council meetings to act as a witness to the procedures of the council and its visitors, but it is not known if he was elected as a schepen on the council. In addition to his agricultural endeavours and his brewery, it appears that Evert also owned several pieces of real-estate as well as leasing a saw- and gristmill from 1649 onwards. When Hendrick Andryes van Doesberg appeared before court to handle his purchase of the house of Claes Hendricksz van Utrecht, it is clarified where the house and the lot on which it stands are located. Apparently the plot of land adjoins the land of Evert Pels in the north and the land of Jan de Metselaer in the south, all three plots of land laying next to the broad, public road on Manhattan, meaning that Evert Pels, if it was one and the same, had different plots of land throughout New Netherland.[104]

A business opportunity from which the inhabitants of Rensselaerswijck could not make profits, was the fur trade. This trade was closed off to private traders by the Company to defend its monopoly. This was clearly stated in the "Freedoms and Exemptions" and any intrusion into the trade by private traders was punished. The pelts trade was coordinated from Fort Orange, in which Company officials met with suppliers. For this region, these suppliers were known as the Mohawk, one of the five tribes that together formed the Iroquois Confederation. From the Fort, the pelts were shipped to New Amsterdam, which acted as the staple market of the colony, just like Amsterdam did in the Dutch Republic. Here, they were marked, counted and shipped to the Dutch Republic. Although the trade was lucrative and profits grew steadily over the years, complaints about the Company's decision to keep it closed off for private traders did so to. With more and more illegal goods being transported on Company ships during the late 1630s and pressure from the States General to make immigration to New Netherland more attractive, at the start of the 1640s, the Company let go of its monopoly on the fur trade and opened it up for everyone.[105]

Someone that might have profited from this law change, was Cornelis Segersz. On the 25th of August, 1643, he signed a contract with Kiliaen van Rensselaer, just like Evert Pels. He, his wife and his six children swore to serve the patroon in the colony and support the community. He owned a farm and a ship and sailed between the patroonship and New Amsterdam. The archives do not mention the name of Cornelis' ship, but several times he is called upon by the council of Rensselaerswijck to transport goods down the Hudson or hold on to them for safekeeping. For example, in February 1649, 200 schepels of wheat were entrusted

[104] Court Minutes of Fort Orange, Volume B, 1654-1679, Collections of the Albany County Hall of Records, Online Publications, New Netherland Institute, 45:60.
[105] Jaap Jacobs, *The Colony of New Netherland*, 111-112.

to Cornelis by Brant van Slichtenhorst, because the person for which they were meant, Adriaen van der Donck, had not yet delivered the cargo he was in possession of, which was 380 guilders worth of cattle.[106] Although ships were the most important means of transport in the colony and the fastest way to reach New Amsterdam, in the winter months the Hudson was completely frozen, isolating Fort Orange and the patroonship from the rest of New Netherland. This meant that regular trade was impossible, making a second way of making money a necessity.

Cornelis did this by breeding horses and selling real estate. In a court entry from July 18th, 1659, it is said that Cornelis ceded and conveyed his estate in the colony of Rensselaerswijck to Gerrit Slichtenhorst, son of former acting-patroon Brant van Slichtenhorst. This estate did therefore not lie in Beverwijck, the congregation around Fort Orange, but in the colony of Rensselaerswijck, which after 1652 was severed, but still existent.[107] Cornelis thus owned a second estate near Beverwijck, on which he held horses and cattle. In the Rensselaer-Bowier Manuscripts, a list from 1651 states that he held a total of thirteen horses on this estate, as well as twenty-two pieces of cattle.[108] Both of these were valuable assets to have at that time, as they were not native to North America and had to be imported from Europe or bred in the colony.[109]

This problem of animals and products not being readily available from nature or craftsmen, occurred with many different goods. One of these were bricks and tiles. Kiliaen van Rensselaer had problems finding, buying and shipping enough of these materials to his patroonship. He therefore considered hiring a brick maker himself, presumably English workers from Connecticut.[110] It is only from 1653 that there is a mention of a brick maker traveling to New Netherland in the employment of Johan de Hulter. He built his brickyard near Fort Orange, as it was known that this area could provide good clay. By 1660, at least six brick and tile yards were present in Beverwijck, providing the patroonship and the rest of the colony with supplies. That business was good can be concluded from the fact that when Johan de Hulter died in 1656, his wife Johanna de Laet sold a roof tile oven to Pieter Meese Vrooman for 3,717 guilders, while keeping another oven for herself. The overall impact however of this local production was probably fairly moderate. For settlers, it meant that they could at least get small quantities of a few thousand bricks and tiles in an instant, but the majority of bricks were still coming in

[106] The Court Minutes of Rensselaerswijck, 1648-1652, Van Rensselaer Manor Papers, Online Publications, New Netherland Institute, 55:20, 61:25.
[107] The Court Minutes of Fort Orange, Volume B, 106:165.
[108] Van Rensselaer Bowier Manuscripts, Online Publications, New Netherland Institute, 736.
[109] The Court Minutes of Rensselaerswijck, 81:43.
[110] Jaap Jacobs, *New Netherland,* 236.

per ship, mostly as ballast in empty trading vessels. The ship *Wasbleecker* for example was carrying sixty-three thousand bricks and roof tiles when it sank en route to New Netherland.[111]

Although brick makers were brought to the colony to supply the colony with building materials, carpenters and wood workers were just as pivotal for the development of the patroonship. Therefore, in the spring of 1642, Jacob Jansz Flodder asked the patroon to engage in carpentry work in the patroonship. Originally from Kampen, Overijssel, Jacob was a carpenter, but he had worked as a servant under carpenter Claes Jansz Ruyter on Manhattan, after sailing there on *the Harinck* with him in September 1637. He arrived in Rensselaerswijck late 1642, and is listed to have leased a saw- and gristmill in 1643, the same mills which from 1649 were then leased by Evert Pels. In a contract from January 1654, it is stated that Jacob once again leased a saw- and gristmill, an agreement which would last for eight consecutive years.[112] In addition to this, he also was appointed ferry master in 1650, after the post was left vacant by the death of the former ferry master, Harry Albertsz.[113]

Jacob presumably acquired quite the fortune from his work in the patroonship, because in 1650 he was assisted by Hans Jansz Eencluys in buying land from the Amerindians. In 1677, after the English take-over, he owned a farm near Kinderhoeck that he sold to Adam Dingemans, whilst buying another plot of land the same year in the vicinity of this settlement, but which was more of an estate with barracks, a large house and a barn.[114] There are no further mentions about his life, his business, his estate or his death, but the story of Jacob is nevertheless fascinating. Being only the helper of a carpenter in 1637, he worked his way up to be a landowner of considerable wealth in the 1670s. The same can be said for the other two men of course. Evert and Cornelis both began their colonial journey from the Dutch Republic and used their skills to make a living for themselves and their family, whilst helping to build up the patroonship and later also Albany and the surrounding settlements that sprung up, showcasing the small but important roles these people played in the development of the colony.

Allied Neighbours or Business Partners?

Since the first European settlers arrived in North America, beaver pelts had been the number one commodity that traders and companies were interested in. In these opening years, the relationship between European powers and the Amerindians was purely oriented on business,

[111] Janny Venema, *Beverwijck: A Dutch Village on the American Frontier, 1652-1664* (Albany, New York: State University of New York Press, 2003), 210-215.
[112] Van Rensselaer Bowier Manuscripts, 816.
[113] Ibidem, 822.
[114] Fort Orange Records, 1656-1678, 237-239.

as both parties were figuring out what to make of the other. At first, the dozens of tribes that came into contact with the English and Dutch settlers vastly outnumbered the European settlers, ensuring that the latter would proceed with caution during any interaction. On the other hand, as the Amerindians had never seen vessels larger than a big canoe, they thought that the European ships were floating islands and that those who sailed upon them were actually mighty spirits.[115] This belief resulted in them gifting the Europeans goods and offering them food and shelter, which ultimately meant that the Europeans felt welcome, but also that they felt that they could permanently settle the area without much opposition.

That the Dutch, more than the English, did not understand the central idea of social reciprocity within Amerindians society has been thoroughly studied by historians. The biggest example of this would be Kieft's War, which lasted from 1643 to 1645, and resulted in a hundred dead settlers and several thousand Amerindians. The conflict could have been avoided if director Kieft had not presumed wrongly that the Dutch were the lords of the land and that they therefore could demand tribute from their native neighbours.[116] This decision was justified according to Kieft and his council, "because the company is put to great expense both in building fortifications and in supporting soldiers and sailors" as the Dutch "have protected the Indians against their enemies".[117] During the war itself, the Dutch employed Captain John Underhill, a soldier who had fought for the English during the Pequot War from 1636 to 1637. Although the stories of his harsh tactics whilst fighting the Amerindian tribes had spread along the coast and had reached the Dutch, which lead to them employing him in 1643, what they did not know was that Underhill knew when to apply diplomacy instead of force.[118]

For the English, this meant that after the war, they could negotiate with the tribes and assume more political power over the land and its people. For the Dutch however, the harsh tactics and the fact that Kieft did not give the tribes enough gifts to solidify the peace, resulted in a deeply rooted hatred towards the Dutch settlers amongst the young Algonquin people in the Hudson Valley, which in turn made future alliances or peace treaties difficult and fragile.[119] The relationship between the Amerindians and the Dutch, however, was not only made up of hostilities and mutual distrust. Further north, near Fort Orange, the Dutch actually had a good relationship with the local inhabitants. This relationship was at first born from the Dutch

[115] Paul Otto, *The Dutch-Munsee Encounter,* 110.
[116] Mark Meuwese, *Brothers in Arms, Partners in Trade,* 238-239.
[117] Paul Otto, *The Dutch-Munsee Encounter,* 112-114.
[118] Mark Meuwese, *Brothers in Arms, Partners in Trade*, 245-249.
[119] Paul Otto, *The Dutch-Munsee Encounter*, 125-126

demand for beaver pelts, and after a short period of hostilities in 1626, the Mohawks became the predominant supplier of pelts for the Dutch.

As Beverwijck became the meeting place for Dutch traders and the Amerindians sellers, the Mohawks became part of the daily street view. In her book about Beverwijck, Janny Venema has pointed out that the Amerindians would not only meet the commissary in Fort Orange, but sometimes also in the patroons house or in smaller numbers inside regular peoples houses. All over Beverwijck, people built small houses adjacent to their own homes, which they would call 'Indian houses' or 'little Indian house', as visiting Amerindians were invited to stay in these sheds whilst they were conducting trade. In their war against the French and their native allies, the Mohawk war leaders would also inform the Dutch about the developments and urge them to stay out of it, although they also pledged to 'defend their Dutch friends' if the conflict would reach them.[120] That friendships were made over time, becomes clear from the fact that colonists would invite small groups of Indians over regularly to eat together and exchange gifts. Volckert Jansz Douw, who arrived in Rensselaerswijck in 1642, became friends with the Mahican Amerindian Wattawit and received from him a plot of land in 1665 as a token of their friendship.[121]

These relationships were much more friendly and interactions were far more common than on Manhattan, as people in Beverwijck participated more closely in the trade with the Amerindians. However, the nature of the pelts trade made it so that the Dutch almost never ventured into Mohawk territory. One of the few times this happened, was in 1634, when Harmen Meyndertsz van den Bogaert, Jeronimus Delacroix and Willem Thomassen left Fort Orange to speak with Mohawk representatives about declining amounts of pelts being brought to the Dutch. Van den Bogaert kept a journal of the journey, which was first made public in 1895. The journal provides unique information about Mohawk traditions, politics and culture, enabling scholars to shine a brighter light on their way of life, as well as their interactions with European settlers, because the Dutch were not the only Europeans who had contact with the Mohawks. From New France, several messengers and traders had ventured into Mohawk territory, promising the Mohawks better prices for their pelts. This resulted in fewer pelts for the Dutch, who then sent out Harmen, Jeronimus, and Willem to investigate what caused the diminishing numbers.

[120] Venema, *Beverwijck*, 161-165.
[121] Ibidem, 168.

On their journey, they passed several "castles", palisaded villages of longhouses in which the Mohawks lived, slept and ate. Meeting with the village sachem, or the chief, they exchanged gifts for the hospitality that was shown to them. They received food and shelter, as well as information and goods. Harmen even went turkey hunting several times with sachems, underlining the friendliness of the entire trip: The Dutch representatives were not there to judge or to provoke, they only wanted an understanding of the situation. The three men arrived at the central castle near present day Tug Hill Plateau on December 30th, 1634.[122] They stayed there until the 12th of January, and in the two weeks that they were in the village, they met with several chiefs from surrounding castles, as well as a delegation from the Onondaga, another Iroquois tribe just east of the Mohawks.[123]

The several Amerindians that the Dutch delegation spoke to made it painfully clear that they were not happy with the payment they received from the Dutch when they travelled to Fort Orange. One group gave Harmen five beaver pelts and requested four hands of sewant and four hands of long cloth for each of them, as that was what the French were paying them. They then explained that their problem with the Dutch was as follows:

> "We have to travel so far with our pelts and when we arrive we often find no cloth, no sewant, no axes, kettles or anything else; and thus we have labored in vain. Then we have to go back a long way carrying our goods."

No payment meant that they would take their goods back home, leaving the Dutch without pelts. Harmen then writes that he made it clear to the sachems that they did not have the authority to agree to those prices, but that he would inform his sachem on Manhattan about the new demands. He assured them that he would visit them again in the spring to inform them about the WIC's decision.[124] The Dutch envoys would arrive back at Fort Orange on January 21, 1635. Overall, the mission could be labeled as a success, as there was more information about the political circumstances up north, although the fact that the Dutch delegation had not taken with them many material gifts, only words, did bother the Mohawks. Their society, like every other native society on the North-American eastern coast, was one of reciprocities. That

[122] Harmen Meyndertsz van den Bogaert, *A Journey into Mohawk and Oneida Country, 1634-1635. The Journal of Harmen Meyndertsz van den Bogaert,* trans. William A. Starna and Charles T. Gehring (Syracuse, New York: Syracuse University Press, 2013) 12.
[123] Van den Bogaert, *A Journey into Mohawk and Oneida Country*, 15.
[124] Ibidem, 15-16.

Harmen did not have much to give but was asking for a continuation of a business agreement and peace, was a sign of disrespect for the Mohawks.[125]

The relation between Mohawks and the Dutch would nevertheless continue to be friendly and beneficial, with the Dutch receiving pelts in exchange for weapons, gunpowder, cloth and ironware. There are no records of Harmen returning to the Mohawk villages, but his journey is an incredible addition to the overall knowledge of these lands and its people. It also shows how tough traveling was in those times, especially in the winter, and what the impact of this was on the speed information and goods could travel to their destination. Therefore, Harmen Meyndertsz van den Bogaert, but also Jeronimus Delacroix and Willem Thomassen, are vital parts in the overall history about Dutch relations with the Amerindian tribes of North-America, as well as the political landscape that was this vast stretch of land between French, Dutch and English colonies.

Everyday life

The stories of Evert, Cornelis, Jacob and Harmen all sound like exceptional lives. Living on and traveling into the frontier, trading and socialising with the Amerindians, while at the same time also having a connection to the European world through trade, relationships and politics, put these people right in the middle of the merging of two worlds. However, the truth is is that these stories are only a fraction of something that happened all the time. As Janny Venema has argued, the interactions between European settlers in Beverwijck and the Mohawk were, at least for the people living in the region, not special. Seeing a group of Amerindians on the street was normal. They were just passing through, looking for supplies, or they came to sell skins in the fort, or to meet up with friends they made over the years like Volckert Jansz Douw.

Does the fact that this happened almost everyday make these stories less interesting or important? I would argue it does not. It makes these people exactly that which defines "the exceptional normal", because when we historians find them in the archive, we are amazed and interested in how these very different people interacted with each other and built a life in the wilderness. They offer us a window through which we can look into the life of a carpenter near Fort Orange or the life of a farmer, allowing historians to reconstruct that period piece by piece, placing it more accurately in the bigger story of Atlantic colonialism. The microhistorical approach enables us to find and describe these pieces about Dutch-indigenous contacts, further

[125] Mark Meuwese, *Brothers in Arms, Partners in Trade,* 260-263.

enhancing our understanding about, in this chapter's case, seventeenth century colonial trade, craftsmanship and personal relations.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the research in this thesis has shown that, firstly, a microhistorical approach to New Netherland history is definitely possible. The amount of source material is more vast than many people realize, if one knows where to look. Many sources are available online through the New Netherland Institute, transcribed and all, but the original archive is also digitally available, enabling scholars to study the court minutes themselves from all over the world. This, in combination with private archives, letter books and reports from contemporaries, provides us with enough primary material to delve into the lives of dozens of seventeenth-century inhabitants of New Netherland. Secondly, by researching several of these inhabitants, this thesis has shown that a micro historical approach is not only possible, but also that it can add context and depth to the existing literature about New Netherland. Over the last forty-six pages, this thesis has covered almost six decades of colonial life, by following two families and several individuals from their homes in Europe to New Netherland and neighbouring colonies. With their stories as a basis, it has discussed trade between Dutch and English colonies, political and economic connections between the Dutch Republic and New Netherland, matrimonial affairs, warfare, socio-economic development of the colony and the relationship between Dutch settlers and the Amerindians.

In the first chapter, the story of Isaack de Forest and his family gives more background to various subjects. For example, the impact of moving across the Atlantic and how bad governance could lead to personal tragedy. With war breaking out just years after Isaack arrived in New Netherland, he was forced to leave his estate and move to New Amsterdam. This in combination with the loss of his brother and sister, due to diseases and the trying climate, meant that he had no close kin around him and he thus had to start over in the New World. On the other hand, Isaack also showed how good governance could create many opportunities for the colony's merchants and craftsmen. Under director general Peter Stuyvesant, the colony stabilised and started to grow, just as authors like Jaap Jacobs, Dennis Maika, April Lee Hatfield and Russel Shorto have established years ago. The increase of the tobacco trade, the opening up of the pelts trade and the establishment of municipal governments, all reasons these authors bring forth for the colony's growth, are brought together in the case of the De Forest family. Delving deep into the archive with a microscope as a tool, we found the first signs of real

development and progress in the colony: Isaack started to expand the tobacco business, as well as its trade, with his farm on Manhattan and his own ship, ushering in the eventual profitable tobacco trade with the English colonies.[126] With his decision to help his friend Jacob van Couwenhoven and buy his beers and distribute them throughout the colony, he made sure that taverns and households had access to affordable beer and could remain in business, laying the groundwork for adequate places to rest for traders and sailors, who's numbers began to grow when trade increased from the late 1640s onwards.

Moreover, studies like those of Evan Haefeli, George L. Proctor-Smith and Susanah Shaw Romney about the connection between religion, cross-imperial trade and politics have been discussed trough the relationships and history of Isaack de Forest. Isaack, the son of a Walloon Protestant who fled his hometown, was a successful businessman, a fervent Protestant, and active in New Amsterdam's governing elite, therefore fulfilling his fathers dream of a Protestant colony and the establishment of his family name in the New World. Isaack is therefore connected to both the religious, the economic, and the political aspect of New Netherland history, making him the most fleshed out character in this thesis.

Nevertheless, the Varleth family has done the same, enriching subjects like matrimonial affairs and the agency of women in colonial society with personal examples. Deborah Hamer and Daniëlle van den Heuvel have researched the position of women in society, in Europe as well as in North America. Van den Heuvel established that an opportunistic and seafaring mercantile society, like Amsterdam, was more open to the idea of women conducting trade, as it meant more opportunities for profit. Matrimonial laws also enabled women to defend themselves against their husbands when he damaged their business or in the case of adultery. Hamer also saw these constructs implemented in colonial society, or at least colonial officials tried to hold their subjects to these laws and customs. With the marriage case of Maria Varleth and Johannis van Beeck, as well as with the trade and court activities of Anna and Judich Varleth, these theories are now substantiated by excellent case studies in which theory is portrayed by practice. The position of women in the Dutch Republic was already higher than in other parts of Europe, but as the second chapter has shown, their agency was even greater in New Netherland. This was a combination of the implementation of Dutch law and the changing political and economic circumstances of colonial life, which asked for flexibility and adaptation in order to make a living and survive. Maria, but also Anna and Judich, can therefore be labelled

[126] Levi, "Frail Frontiers," 37-38.

as “exceptional normal” individuals, as they show researchers how women fitted into, and acted within, Dutch colonial society.

The third chapter was not centred around a single family, but followed four different persons who were in someway linked to Rensselaerswijck/Beverwijck. Evert Pels, Cornelis Segersz and Jacob Jansz Flodder complemented both works by authors already mentioned, like Jaap Jacobs and Dennis Maika, but also literature by Janny Venema and Martha Dickinson Shattuck about the life in a town on the frontier. Although all three of them had a different story, with Jacob being a carpenter, Cornelis a horse breeder and a ship captain and Evert being active in local governance and real estate, they show the same ability to leave their European home and exploit the colonial opportunities. What makes them even more interesting, is that they also represent the diversity of the colony, with Evert being an immigrant from Stettin, Poland, Jacob a trained carpenter from the Dutch Republic, and Cornelis, a simple family man who signed up to migrate to the New World in search of fortune.

Lastly, in order to dive into Dutch-indigenous relations, Harmen Meyndertsz van den Bogaert and his 1634 journal were discussed. The pelts trade had been important to the WIC since the establishment of the first trading posts in New Netherland, but the relation between the Amerindians and the Dutch that is most often discussed, is the one in the Hudson River Valley, where the Algonquin people lived. Paul Otto, and later Andrew Lipman, have investigated the economic, political and social connections between Dutch settlers and the Amerindian people in the Hudson Valley. It was Nan A. Rothschild who compared the Dutch-Mohawk relation to that of the Spanish and the Pueblo, studying and comparing European customs, settling patterns and diets and their impact on indigenous life. Van den Bogaert and his journey into Mohawk territory gives a rare insight into the Mohawk way of life. It also shows the role Van den Bogaert played in maintaining a good relationship with the Mohawks, which was essential for the continuation of the pelts trade. But, as mentioned at the end of Chapter Three, Evert, Cornelis, Jacob and Harmen’s group are not the exception, but the norm when it comes to living on the frontier. Janny Venema has proved as much, when she studied a mixed group of Dutch settlers and immigrants from the rest of Europe that tried to make a living in North America. Their contact with the Mohawks and their struggle to survive with an often faltering supply line are representations of everyday life in the area around Fort Orange. Using the stories of people like Evert Pels and Jacob Jansz Flodder, with a microhistorical approach in mind, this life can be further fleshed out and the work of Venema can be supplemented with other case studies.

A micro-history about New Netherland is thus not only possible, it is also valuable and can complement existing, macro-historical literature when both are combined. This study did not have as its intent to seek out abnormal individuals or the outliers, as Jan de Vries has called them, and to argue that existing histories are wrong or incomplete. Its goals was to reveal the depth the "exceptional normal" settlers of New Netherland can add to a period described countless times in previous studies.[127] Many more case studies are possible with the available sources, and future research should further explore the possibilities of this approach. Chapter One and Two, for example, both touched upon cross-imperial relationships and connections between Dutch and English colonies, but with more case studies and the use of English archives, these connections can be discussed more extensively. Hopefully the research in this thesis will lead to more micro-historical research of New Netherland, which will further answer the question of how individuals shaped the collective.

[127] De Vries, "Playing with Scales," 30-36.

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