

Plockhoy from Zurik-zee

**The Study of a Dutch Reformer in Puritan England
and Colonial America**

**Leland Harder
and Marvin Harder**

1952
Board of Education and Publication
Newton, Kansas

THE VALLEY OF SWANS

The rule of the Dutch in America of the territory called New Netherlands dates from 1621, with the organization of the Dutch West India Company, to 1664, when the English invaded the Province and won control. The first colonists in the Province were under the authority of Patroons, who were stockholders in the Company. The majority of the settlers were day laborers or indentured servants. The new Freedom and Exemptions adopted by the Company in 1640, however, provided for smaller, more liberal grants to free individuals. The population of New Netherland grew between 1640 and 1660 although never sufficiently to guarantee a great prosperity. The Dutch were primarily traders, not farmers; and the agricultural development of the colony lagged behind that of the English colonies which surrounded it. The Company's mercenary policy was the chief criticism of individuals at home and abroad who were sincerely interested in the development and welfare of the Dutch colony in America. One of the most vocal among the reformers was Jacob Steendam, noted in Chapter II as friend of Plockhoy and poet-member of Jan Zoet's Sweet Rest. Steendam wrote his Klacht van Nieuw-Amsterdam (Complaint of New Amsterdam) after having lived some time in the Province and observed first hand the conditions there. The Complaint was followed by the 'T Lof van Nuw Nederland (Praise of New Netherland) in which Steendam portrayed the excellent qualities of New Netherland, "the purity of the air, the fertility of the soil, production of the cattle, [and the] abundance of game and fish...." His real object was to encourage the emigration of a class of people interested in husbandry as well as commerce.

The part of the Province which was least profitable to the Dutch West India Company was the region of the South (Delaware) River, removed from New Amsterdam far enough to make communication difficult. In April, 1657, the Company signed the region over to the Burgomasters of the city of Amsterdam; and the capitol of this southern region was henceforth known as New Amstel. In an attempt to populate this region the Burgomasters promised prospective farmers "in free, fast, and durable property" as many "morgans [2.1 acres], both of ploughland and of meadow, as they could properly improve, with freedom from tenths for twenty years."²

Plockhoy was one of the few who hoped to derive advantage from this belated attempt to people the Dutch colony. It is immediately evident after repeated failures in England that his zeal as a reformer had not been deterred. Holland was no less in need of social reform than England, in spite of the capitalistic advances of the "Golden Age." "It is only too true," writes Vlekke, "that the masses of the townspeople received a very small share in the marvelous profit realized by the economic expansion of the country....In the busiest center of Holland's industry, twenty thousand people--not necessarily unemployed--had to be kept from starvation by charity and it was truly said that in Amsterdam contagious diseases which took the lives of thousands of poor people, never afflicted 'burgomasters, aristocrats, ministers of the Church, or town officials.'"³ It was again the poor people with whom Plockhoy was concerned.

The unfranchised masses had in the main favored the sovereignty of the House of Orange against the rich burgher classes that controlled the cities and provinces. The popular princes of Orange had led valiantly in gaining Dutch liberty and were largely

He had from the beginning of his negotiations with the city of Amsterdam twenty-four Mennonites (families) who wished to participate in his project and who formed the basis for the negotiations. The identity of these Mennonites has never been established but it is likely they came from the Lamist Mennonites of Galenus Abrahams de Haan's church in Amsterdam, who would have been most inclined to subscribe to the intellectual freedom and the liberal philosophy of the proposed settlement.⁴ After making several overtures to the magistrates (see below), this group petitioned the city of Amsterdam for a tract of land on the South River and 200 guilders in loan to each family. The Amsterdam Council record

[illegible]

Resolution of the Common Council of the City
of Amsterdam, 20th April, 1662
The Burgemeester,

The Burgomasters have also reported that about 25 Mennonist families had declared their inclination to remove to and reside in the city's colony in New Netherland, if this city would resolve to assist each family to that end with 200 guilders for each, in addition to the passage money, on conditions that such families would jointly and severally bind themselves to repay the same. Which being considered, it is resolved to lend each family 100 gl. on such conditions, the passage money therein included.⁵

Plockhoy made some additional requests after the Resolution was passed, and on June 6, 1662, completed a contract with the burgomasters. It stated "That he, Pieter Cornelisz Plockhoy, undertakes to present to us, as soon as possible, the names of twenty-five persons, who will agree to depart by the first ship or ships to the aforesaid colony of this city, to reside there and to work at farming, fishing, handicrafts, etc., and to be as diligent as possible not only to live comfortably themselves, but also that provision may thereby be made for others to come." The contract granted each member as much land as he could use at the "Horekil" or another part of the colony, the right to enact their own laws with right of appeal to the higher magistrates, exemption from taxes for twenty years, and a loan of 100 guilders to each family as previously granted. It took Plockhoy almost

It took Plochboy almost a year to get underway. The factors responsible for the delay were several. In the first place the group was still engaged in

Part of the contract between Ploekhoy and the Amsterdam Burgomasters,
dated June 6, 1662

the construction of an adequate framework of government, the privilege of which was granted them by the contract. In the second place Plockhoy wanted to list at least 100 settlers before embarking. Plockhoy's ideas for the administration and government of his colony had previously been submitted to the magistrates by an individual who signed his name, "H.V.Z.M." The latter was seemingly an attorney or notary who served as an agent for Plockhoy in the negotiations with the magistrates. The program was outlined in seven letters submitted to the magistrates by H.V.Z.M. between November 22, 1661, and May 25, 1662. The fourth of these letters was the most significant, containing 117 articles of government and association which "are open for correction."⁷

The first letter was written November 22, 1661, and was presented to the magistrates on December 13. It was submitted by H.V.Z.M. with "proper homage as agent for his clients, consisting of several decent-minded families who desire to remove to New Netherland under the auspices of this laudable City and government of Amsterdam, and with the E.E. Sirs Directors of the West India Company under approval of the States General of the United Netherland."⁸ The agent wanted it known that he was servant to his "Masters and Principals," and wished to remain anonymous. "It may please your Honors," he continued, "to grant a charter to these people, with so many families as they have already or will furthermore enlist, to transport them to the South River in New Netherland, and there to select according to their choice a suitable piece of land near the Horekil [Gloss: also called Sinkenesse or Swaanendael] or wherever else they might deem more favorable."⁹ One of the primary purposes for the project, in addition to reviving the colonial Province, was "also the relief of many

aggrieved and languishing families."¹⁰ An aspect of Plockhoy's philosophy descending from the Collegiants and included in his previous plan for a universal church without clergymen was included in this first letter to the Amsterdam magistrates. "Concerning the divine worship," it was stated, "these people wish to save the costs of a minister, and for the maintenance of good order, peace, and least offense to the different humors of the people to substitute the Holy Scriptures, to be read on Sundays and holidays by individuals in rotation, it being the purest minister, and to sing psalms."¹¹

The second letter, dated December 20, 1661, brought up two legal points in question. The first was the matter of government, which they desired to be in harmony with the interests of the society and at the same time in keeping with the laws of the country. The second question was the matter of freedom from tenths, which was desired for a period of thirty years. In relation to the first, distinction was made between civil and criminal laws; and it was to be known that the society wished jurisdiction in civil cases only, and that criminal cases would be left to the jurisdiction of the high magistrates. "About everything which is confined to the civil, they would draft a brief and concise agreement, with the approval of the A.A. Sirs Burgomasters of this City."¹² In regard to the question of freedom of tenths, reasons were given why a thirty year period of exemption should be granted. "No sensible people who can look further than the length of their noses have tried or will try to move to New Amstel under existing conditions. For those over there who have thus seemed to be of some ability have mostly been attracted by ambition for power, or expected profit, but since neither living conditions or trade turned out to be very favorable those people have, along

with others, been undeceived, and New Amstel, which for so many years was supposed to develop into a city, could in number of people, not speaking of the poverty there, not compare with even the least countryside in Holland....Considering this my Masters instruct me to petition the A.A. Sirs Commissars beforementioned to recommend to the A.A. Sirs Burgo-masters that they increase, rather than reduce, the requested number of years of freedom from tenths.¹³ The matter of tenths, states Clarence Rife, was of considerable importance to prospective emigrants.¹⁴ It had proved to be a burdensome charge, and "had the reluctant acceptance of the populace."¹⁵ Probably Plockhoy was aware of those hardships, perhaps through his friend Jacob Steendam, and insisted upon an immunity in this respect.

The third letter, dated December 3, 1661, sought to further clarify the matter of civil and criminal jurisdiction. "They do not in the least desire criminal jurisdiction, but on the contrary they free themselves from the same and clearly reject it as too difficult a task for them."¹⁶ It was requested, however, that during the first five years they would be given the privilege of disposing of all civil matters themselves. After that time the sheriff of New Amstel would have the right of inspection, to cite witnesses, etc. He should have no right, though, to begin legal proceedings against anyone without notifying the principal public servants of the society beforehand, or to execute domiciliary search or arrest without consent of the principal servants beforehand. Matters of dispute between the society and sheriff should be submitted to the "A.A. Patrons and highest Directors." Concerning the matter of taxation, thirty years exemption was still requested for reasons previously stated. "In closing," it was asserted, "my Masters and Clients wish it known that this and

all previous and forthcoming statements, written or oral, concerning the proposed settlement, are tentative outlines, intending the best for the society, with no intent to judge, much less criticize any existing form of government, since they wish not to be judged or considered so naive in the ways of the world that they would not know how different conditions, natures of people, as well as differences between large and small societies, require different methods of government."¹⁷

The fourth letter, dated January 10, 1662, contained the 117 articles of association, reprinted below. Equality was the first and foremost basis of the commonwealth. Popular government was to be inaugurated, the powers therein separated into branches suggesting the executive, judicial and legislative functions. New laws were to be enacted by majority vote and there was to be a single executive, elected by the people, who should approve all new laws. Military servants were to be included in the society for protection, although Mennonites, who believed in nonresistance, were to be exempt from military service by paying a tax. Mennonites also were to be exempt from voting on defense matters and fortification, and from orders from officers in this relation or concerning military service. The Mennonites were further to have two representatives among the principal public servants. The people were to disembark upon arrival overseas "as a straight Batavian and promoter of the common good, putting his shoulder to the wheel."¹⁸ The people were to work in common under the supervision of foremen during the first five years, working six hours daily. Leisure time was left to the individual for his "personal interests, desires, and pleasures."¹⁹ After the five year period the land was to be divided by lottery. The younger members of the society were

to be counseled with wisdom prior to marriage, and a committee was to be appointed to look after needy widows, orphans, the sick, the old, "in short, all impotent men, women, and children especially within the society, without forgetting, however, to bestow kindness upon all others who are not yet members, and this not in a stingy way, but very liberally, yea brotherly, in order that the unfortunate will be saved from becoming degraded, and will become instead worthwhile members of our society."²⁰

The fifth letter, dated March 3, contained revisions and amendments to the articles in the fourth. The Commissioners seem to have raised some objections to minor items and details of judicial jurisdiction. The letter was an "Answer to certain marginal notes made by or in the name of the E.E. Sirs Commissioners on the 'Still Further Remonstrance' which was handed in before."²¹

New Netherland was originally managed by a board of nineteen directors of the Dutch West India Company (the Nineteen), who were representatives from five chambers located in different parts of the Netherlands. The delegates from the city of Amsterdam held preferred positions, and after 1645 assumed exclusive management of the colony. The Amsterdam chamber, with twenty directors, organized itself into committees, one of which was the Committee for New Netherland. This committee had charge of all matters relating to the colony. Its members were referred to as the Commissioners for New Netherland. If a group of settlers desired to emigrate to the colony the matter might be presented to the chamber, but would normally be referred to the Commissioners to deal with. When the Company sold the region of the South River to the city of Amsterdam, the transaction complicated matters of jurisdiction. The government of Amsterdam consisted of the council (vroedschap),

having 36 members, and the burgomasters, who were elected by the council. Some of the council members were also directors in the chamber, and the latter were, at any rate, chosen from nominees by the burgomasters. Thus, New Amstel remained subordinated to New Amsterdam in judicial matters. In applying for a charter Plockhoy had to deal with three bodies--the commissioners, the councillors, and the burgomasters. The first five letters were, in fact, addressed to all three: "To the Honourable Sirs Commissioners and Directors, chosen by the A.A. Sirs Burgomasters, under authority of the A.A. Council of this City of Amsterdam."²² The Commissioners would have to approve any framework of government for a settlement in the colony, the Council would have to authorize a loan of money, and the Burgomasters would complete the contract.

The last two letters, dated May 5 and May 25 respectively, were addressed directly to the Burgomasters. The first begins by making mention of the foregoing addresses, both written and oral. It reveals that on April 22, the prospective emigrants were advised to apply to the Burgomasters for a charter "with assurance that our proposals and requests have been well considered by their A.A."²³ It reiterates Plockhoy's desire for free exercise of all handicrafts, trades, and commerce; freedom from tenths; and liberty of religion. In short, "the suppliants persist unwaveringly in all their requests, presentations, deductions and debates as previously submitted and under correction."²⁴ Concerning government, it was stated:

In order not to be destroyed or smothered by imposing military disciplinarians before really having begun..., and also in order to attain a divine progress and growth for the common benefit and satisfaction of every set-

tlar, they have not been able to contrive anything better...than a civil government with equal voting power, subordinated to the Highest Magistrates, or your A.A., and consequently limited, as set forth in their last and "Still Further Remonstrance," and in the three previous writings, now under correction.²⁵

In conclusion it asked for a speedy decision "in order to despatch some hundred male persons still this summer, who during the winter might begin burning off the forest, preparing the soil, cutting the timber for building, and providing for the ones, including the women and children, that would follow next spring."²⁶

The final letter refers to negotiations with the Burgomasters, chiefly with Cornelis de Graef, baron of South Polsbroek, which were soon to lead to an agreement. On June 6, 1662, the contract between Plockhoy and the Burgomasters was completed. In October the letters were published as part of an 84-page work entitled, Kort Verhael van Nieuw Nederlands.... (Brief Account of New Netherlands Situation, Advantages, Natural Qualities, and Peculiar Suitability for Colonization; together with some Requests, Representations, Deductions, etc., presented for that purpose by some interested persons at different times about the end of the year 1661 to the Burgomasters of this city and their Deputies, etc.). A note of introduction to the letters indicates a suspicion on the part of some that Plockhoy sought to abolish all differences between men in a forced system of communism. In defense of the project, it was stated:

Although the first article of Letter "D" poses equality as the basis of our society, we hope that nobody will be so naive, much less

malevolent, as to think, inspite of our clear distinction, that we are attempting to remove all differences between persons. This is so far from the truth that we on the contrary believe that to be as impossible as that our fingers would be the same length; for every human being, because of his natural characteristics and special qualities, comprising a universe in himself, will always remain different from others; wherefore they could correctly be considered the greatest fools in the world who try to bring many people under one rule or strict way of life without considering what every man in particular requires for his well-being. This is why in the enactment of all laws for the society the common welfare should be kept in mind without restricting anyone's personal and natural liberty. To suppress the individual by force, as is usually practised in the world, is according to our opinion merely deferring the larger evil and making it break out more violently. We want it understood then, concerning our important foundation of equality: namely, that in order to establish a stable Christian civilian Society, Republic, or Commonwealth, an equality (between more and less intelligent, more and less wealthy, male and female, ruler and ruled) must be contrived by reasoning and experience. Furthermore be it known that we fight against all violation of the true foundations of freedom, amongst which we consider: all domineering amongst members of the Society, or exercise of force, moreover all complacent obedience, such as in the Roman Catholic way of imposing upon us, freedom loving Dutchmen.²⁷

In addition to the matter of government, another

KORT VERHAEL Van N I E U W. *Niederland* NEDERLANDS

Gelegenheit, Deughden, Natuerlijke Voorrechten, en by-
zondere bequaemheid ter bevolkingh: Mitsgaders eenige
Requesten, Vertoogen, Deductien, enz. ten dien einden door
eenige Liefhebbers ten verscheide tijden omtrent 't laetst
van 't Jaer 1661. gepresenteert aen de A. A. Heeren BUR-
GERMEESTEREN dezer Stede, of der zelve E. E. Hee-
ren Gecommitteerde, . enz.

*Ziet breeder achter de Voor-Reden den Korten Inhoud, mitgaa-
derg de Waerschouwingh aen de Boek-verkoopers, staande
hier verholgens op d'ander- of tegen-zijde.*



Gedruckt in 't Jaer 1662.

Title page of the KORT VERHAEL VAN NIEU NEDERLANDS (1662)

Kort en klaer ontwerp, dienende tot Een onderling Accoord, O M

Den arbejd / onrust en moeye-
lijckheyt / van Alderley-hand-werck-
lyden te verlichten

D O O R

Een onderlinge Compagnie ofte
Volck-planting (onder de protectie vande H: Mo:
Heeren Staten Generael der vereenigde Neder-lan-
den; en bysonder onder het gunstig gesag van de
Achtbare Magistraten der Stad Amstelre-
dam) aen de Zuyt-revier in Nieu-ne-
der-land op te rechten; Bestaende in

*Land-bouwers,
Zee-varende Personen,
Alderhande noodige Ambachts-lyden, en Meesters
van goede konst en wetenschappen.*

Stennende op de vooz-rechten van hare Acht-
barheden (als hier na volgt) tot dien eynde verkeent.

t'Samen gestelt

*Door Pieter Cornelisz. Plockboy van Zierck-zee, voor hem selven en andere
Lief-hebbers van Nieu-neder-land.*

t'Amsterdam gedruckt by Otto Barentsz. Smient, Anno 1662.

Title page of the KORT EN KLAER ONTWERP (1662)

factor delayed the project. The original London project was designed for many more than twenty-five members; and Plockhoy desired to enlist at least 100 people before embarking. There were several allusions in the letters to the magistrates to the hope of establishing a colony which would grow to be a city or province. "Their thoughts, in spite of the small progress already made, have changed from a weak household or neighborhood which they first had in mind to the idea of founding a laudable province of city or state."²⁸ This called forth the prospectus, entitled *Kort en Klaer Ontwerp...* (Brief and Concise Plan)²⁹ the need for which was suggested in the second letter above, and the specific purpose of which was the enlistment of prospective settlers who were in sympathy with the ideas underlying the project. The prospectus was a sixteen-page quarto pamphlet including a copy of the contract between Plockhoy and the Burgomasters; a sonnet by the Dutch poet, Karel Verloove, upon the maxim, "Union Makes Strength"; Plockhoy's scheme for the establishment of an ideal commonwealth, similar in many respects to his London plan; a poem by the Dutch poet, Jacob Steendam, entitled "Spurring Verses," indicating the intention of spurring on friends of the undertaking; and a final statement that those desiring to join the society should be prepared to depart by the middle of September. From the latter statement it is evident the prospectus was published and circulated between the 9th of June, 1662 (the completion of the contract) and the middle of September of the same year (the tentative date of departure).

Although the plan was basically alike the English scheme, there were several innovations, the origin of which are easily discernible as protests to the political character of the Dutch nation or as changes necessitated by a New World environment. The settle-

ment in the New World could not rely as much on trade with the outside world. Agriculture was to become the predominant interest, to ensure almost complete self-sufficiency. Land and livestock were to be owned in common for a period of time only, after which they were to be divided among the members, thereby providing a greater personal initiative to work hard at the beginning. A greater opportunity was given to adventurers who wished not to emigrate but to invest in the enterprise. Government for the society became more important inasmuch as the central government was more remote and had less jurisdiction over them. Since the Dutch West India Company was a slave-trading corporation and Plockhoy's ideas of equality conflicted with the slave principle, an innovation forbidding slavery in the society was made. The New World further necessitated a greater preparation for self-defense than heretofore, especially because of the threat of the Indians. Part of the members of the society should be on guard at all times in readiness to defend the colony. Since the Mennonites, who formed part of the membership, were nonresistant in principle, they were to be exempt from protective service by paying a tax: "Those who have conscientious objections against the use of arms will be exempt from protective service by paying an annual tax to that part of the society which protects it, and whose task it is not only to appoint officers, but also (besides the daily exercises and drills) to provide ammunition and other necessities."^{29a}

Provision was made for persons remaining at home but who wished to participate in the profits of the colony to invest a sum of money, for which they were to receive "a share in the cattle that is bred, and all other profits which will result from the common labor during the mentioned [first five] years."^{29b}

Verloove's poem appealed to unity and concord as the supreme goal for the settlement. Steendam's poem paints an exaggerated picture of New Netherland. He indicates the dream of establishing, in time, a commonwealth of great size: "Communities the ground-work are of every state; they first the hamlet, village, and the city make; from whence proceeds the commonwealth; whose members great become, an interest in the common welfare take."^{29c} Many of the eleven stanzas sought to quell objections which had been advanced against the project. "Some persons seem to have had a religious fear of living in a state so democratic as the one planned by Plockhoy. Steendam assured these conservative folks that God would not withhold his blessings from this New World community merely because it was to be governed by neither kings nor dukes."³⁰

The number of people that finally agreed to emigrate is not definite,³¹ but the number was far short of Plockhoy's dreams. The group, at any rate, sailed in the ship, St. Jacob, shortly after the 5th of May, 1663--more than a year after the petition from the twenty-five "Mennonist" families was submitted. (It is possible an advance group embarked in the previous Fall as planned). A part of the invoice of goods of the St. Jacob follows:

5th of May, 1663, at Amsterdam

Invoice of goods shipped in the ship, "St. Jacob," skipper, Peter Lucas van der Goes, destined to go to New Amstel on the South River of New Netherland.

Peter Cornelissen Plockhoy takes along for himself and his family---all kinds of necessities and small articles for his own use, as for agricultural purposes and clothing, etc.,³² also 2 half bags of hops, guns for his people....

The St. Jacob arrived at New Amstel on July 28th, 1663, having left "41 souls with their baggage and farm utensils at the Horekil,"³³ commonly called Swaanendael (valley of swans). Since Plockhoy was to have settled at the Horekil, his people were undoubtedly the forty-one "souls." A year later, on August 27, 1664, the Dutch were forced to surrender New Netherland to the English naval forces. The fort at New Amstel resisted, and during the following month Sir Robert Carr proceeded to reduce and destroy the forts and colonies on the Delaware. "Under him the only blood was shed which accompanied the change from Dutch to English authority."³⁴ A later account of the campaign contained the statement that Carr "destroyed the Quaking society of Plockhoy to a naile."³⁵

One scant piece of information remains concerning the brief existence of the settlement. One of its members had written to the city of Amsterdam stating that the Indians at the Horekil "had declared they never sold the Dutch any land to inhabit."³⁶ It seems apparent that Plockhoy encountered nothing but difficulty and heartache at the very outset. Carr's procedure was entirely at odds with the Duke of York's instructions that the people were to be treated with "humanity and gentleness."³⁷ Had Carr been less destructive it is probable the settlement at Swaanendael would have left a greater imprint in the colonial history of America, for the English government proceeded to pursue a liberal policy in relation to the conquered Dutch peoples. As it is, there remains no record of the fate of the members of the colony, save Plockhoy himself. "History throws no light on the subject, and of contemporary documents there are none."³⁸ Some believe they were sold as slaves in the southern colonies.³⁹ Perhaps they returned to Holland. It is most likely they became lost in the

THE LIFE AND IDEAS OF PLOCKHOY

shuffle and confusion of the change in administration. If we knew the names of any of them, which we do not, we could doubtless find traces of their continued existence in the neighborhood of the Delaware, as we have of Plockhoy himself.

Plockhoy seemingly claimed a plot of ground in the new English town of Lewes (now Lewes, Delaware), near the original cite of his settlement, and built a temporary cabin for himself and his wife.⁴⁰ Later he petitioned for legal ownership of the lot. The court acted on January 9th, 1682:

Upon the peticon of Cornelis Plockhoy the Court Grant unto him the Towne Lott that he live upon in Lewis [Lewes], and the Lott next Adjoyning to that; on Condition that he build a dwelling house on Eche of the said Lotts according to the demencons that the Governor shall order, within one yeare after this Grant; or Else to pay five pounds to the use of the publick for Eache Lott; and Lose his Lotts also.⁴¹

On the 28th of May, Plockhoy declared allegiance to England and became a citizen thereof:

This day John Kiphaven, Alexander Moulston, Halmanias Wiltbanck, Cornelis Verhoofe, Cornelis Johnson, Francis Henry, Cornelis Plockhoy, Anthony Hamen (Hancen?) Alias Haverla, haveing publicly in opin Court solmonly promised and declared in the presence of God Alleaigance to the King of England, his heires and successors; and fidelity to William Penn, Proprietary and Governor of the provience of Pennsylvania & Territories thereunto belonging and to his heires & successors; After which the Governor declared all of them to be Nateral-



Part of Vissher's map of New World (1665) showing Horekil and Swaanendael on west bank of the Delaware (Zuydt Rivier), where Plockhoy settled (New York Public Library).

lized and as free men of this Government as any English men.⁴²

Ten years later, Plockhoy and his wife appeared in Germantown where they became public charges. Perhaps having grown old and blind, he was unable to fulfil his obligations in Lewes, and lost his land. As an only resort he turned for assistance to his fellow Mennonites, who had just recently established the Germantown settlement. His petition was not in vain. The Germantown Court records show that he was treated sympathetically:

3rd Session, 25th Day of the 11th Month, 1694/5

To the blind man, Cornelis Plockhoy, is granted the citizenship free of charge; and is granted permission to reside at the end of the village on the street from Peter Clever's corner upon a lot one rod broad and twelve rods long whereon shall be built a house with a garden which shall be his as long as he and his wife are living, but upon their death the property with all improvements shall return to the community. It is further decreed that Jan Doeden and Willem Rittenhuysen shall take a free-will offering for him and shall have charge of the building of the house.

9th Session, 26th Day of the 1st Month

At the end of the Session, the business brought up by Peter Clever was discussed, which concerned Wm. Strepper, who gave an acre of his land to Cornelis Plockhoy for as long as he and his wife are living. Trees shall be planted around the house; and after they have died or have moved, the property shall be evaluated by an impartial committee, its worth

Court Records of 1694 concerning Plockhoy from the GERMANTOWN RATHBUCH

THE LIFE AND IDEAS OF PLOCKHOY

determined, and sold. Half shall go to the community, and half to Wm. Streyper; and the latter shall have the right to reclaim the land.⁴³

The last known reference to Plockhoy is dated January 14, 1700, in the will of one John Kipshaven. Kipshaven had taken the oath of allegiance to the English crown along with Plockhoy and others (see above), and had been a justice at the "Whorekil" between 1674 and 1685. The reference, which indicates that he knew Plockhoy as a friend, follows:

Item. I give and bequeath unto Cornelius Pluckhoy the blind man Twenty Shillings.⁴⁴

After perhaps eighty years of life Pieter Cornelis Plockhoy died among his own people. His death in physical blindness and poverty is an ironical culmination of a life devoted to the relief of the poor and the weak. The rule of his life, as he wrote, was the command of Christ: "If any among you would be greatest, let him be servant of all."⁴⁵ What must impress all who read his writings is his sincerity. "For which end," he wrote, "that we may transmit the world unto our posterity in a better condition than we first found it, I have contributed this little."⁴⁶

NOTES

1. Ellis L. Raesly, Portrait of New Netherland. (New York: Columbia University Press), 1945, pp. 286-7.
2. Clarence W. Rife, "Land Tenure in New Netherland," Essays in Colonial History Presented to Charles McLean

Andrews by his Students. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1931), p. 61.

3. Bernard Vlekke, Evolution of the Dutch Nation. (New York: Roy Publishers, 1945), p. 178.

4. Mennonites had already taken part in the settlement of New Netherland, See, Ecclesiastical Records of the State of New York. Compiled by E. T. Corwin, Albany, 1901-1916, I, pp. 320, 335-6, 348, 387-8, 396, 486-7, 505, 513-4, 555, 667; II, p. 1053.

5. New York Colonial Documents, II, p. 176.

6. The Contract was reprinted as part of Plockhoy's Kort en Klaer Ontwerp. See below.

7. Kort Verhael van Nieuw Nederlants. (Amsterdam, 1662), p. 62.

8. Ibid., p. 43. Sets of initials like "E.E." or "A.A." are frequently used in addressing the Burgo-masters and high officials. "A" stands for noble, "E" for honourable, "H" for high, and "M" for mighty. When they are used double, they refer to more than one person, such as the A.A. Patrons.

9. Ibid., p. 44. Swaanendael meant literally, "valley of swans."

10. Loc. cit.

11. Loc. cit.

12. Ibid., p. 45. Italics Inserted.

13. Ibid., p. 46.

14. Clarence Rife, op. cit., p. 62.
15. Ibid., p. 63.
16. Kort Verhael, p. 47.
17. Ibid., p. 48.
18. See Article 49, below.
19. See Article 55, below.
20. See Article 109, below.
21. Kort Verhael, p. 65.
22. Ibid., pp. 43, 45, 47, 50, and 62.
23. Ibid., p. 65.
24. Loc. cit.
25. Loc. cit.
26. Loc. cit.
27. Ibid., p. 29.
28. Ibid., p. 66.

29. Brief and Concise Plan intended to be a mutual agreement to lighten the labor, anxiety, and difficulty of all kinds of handicraftsmen by the establishment of a community or common company (under the protection of their High Mightinesses the States General of the United Netherlands, and especially under the favorable authority of the Worshipful

Magistracy of the City of Amsterdam) on the South River in New Netherland; comprising agricultural people, mariners, men of all necessary trades, and masters of good arts and sciences; and depending upon the privileges granted by the said Right Worshipful to that end, as hereinafter set forth. (Amsterdam, 1662).

- 29a. Kort en Klaer Ontwerp (no pagination).
- 29b. Ibid.
- 29c. Ibid.
30. Ellis L. Raesly, Portrait of New Netherland. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945), p. 291.
31. Francis Vincent States the number was thirty-five men. A History of the State of Delaware. (Philadelphia: John Campbell, 1870), p. 393. The source for this information is not given.
32. New York Colonial Documents, XII, pp. 428-9.
33. Ibid., pp. 436-7.
34. Albert E. McKinley, "The Transition from Dutch to English Rule in New York," American Historical Review, VI (April, 1901), p. 718.
35. New York Colonial Documents, III, p. 342.
36. Ibid., p. 346.
37. See, Charles M. Andrews, The Colonial Period of American History, III. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1935), p. 98.

38. Samuel W. Pennypacker, Historical and Biographical Sketches. (Philadelphia, 1883), p. 50.

39. This is corroborated by Stuyvesant's statement concerning the English invasion of the Delaware: "At New Amstel on the South River, notwithstanding they offered no resistance, but demanded good treatment, which however they did not obtain, they were invaded, stripped bare, plundered, and many of them sold as slaves in Virginia." See New York Colonial Documents, XI, pp. 230-1. Possibly the English navy still sought retaliation for the massacre of English traders at Amboina in the Dutch East Indies in 1623.

40. The Federal Writers' Project, Delaware, (New York: Viking Press, 1938), p. 196, contains the statement: "Cornelis Plockhoy later swore allegiance to the English, and in 1680 a lot was granted to him in this town where 'he already has a house.'" The latter clause is seemingly a direct quotation from an original source, which the writer has been unable to locate.

41. C.H.B. Turner, ed., Some Records of Sussex County, Delaware. (Philadelphia, 1909), p. 87. English documents of the period used the Old Style calendar, while the Dutch employed the New.

42. Ibid., p. 97. Punctuation mine. Frequent allusions to the individuals listed with Plockhoy are found in, Original Land Titles in Delaware Commonly Known as the Duke of York Records, 1646-1679. (Wilmington, Delaware, 1899). Verhoofe was a public surveyor and clerk at the Horekil. Kipshaven was a justice, and was a friend of Plockhoy's. (See below). There is a possibility that these and some other men of Dutch background who declared allegiance to

England on the 28th of May were former members of Plockhoy's group. The Duke of York had deeded the "Territories" of the Delaware River to William Penn, as far south as Cape Henlopen, which included the region of the Horekil.

43. The Germantown Rathbuch. The original, in old German script, is preserved in the archives of the Historical Society of Pennsylvania.

44. Edwin Jaquett Sellers, Allied Families of Delaware. (Philadelphia: Lippincott Co., 1901), p. 134.

45. A Way Propounded, p. 1.

46. The Way to the Peace and Settlement of these Nations, p. 26.