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SKETCH
—OF THE—
EARLY HISTORY
—OF THE—
REFORMED DUTCH CHURCH
OF BERGEN,
—IN—
JERSEY CITY.

Compiled from the Ancient Church Records, and Deacon's Account Books of
BERGEN, COMMUNIPAW, AND HASYMUS.

ingenian
—BY—
D. VERSTEEG.

With an introduction by Rev. CORNELIUS BRETT, Pastor of the Bergen Reformed Church.

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INTRODUCTION.

The history of the Old Bergen Church has been frequently written; and yet, in the time-stained archives, hidden in a language that has been dead to the congregation for nearly a century, materials unused lay waiting the patient, painstaking work of the explorer and translator. Mr. D. Versteeg, a Hollander by birth, an American by education, and an antiquarian by instinct, has undertaken the work.

As a translator for the Holland Society of New York, his attention was first attracted to the value of the ancient records of Bergen. In the parsonage, where they are preserved, he has spent many days in a careful review of the documents, and the result of his labors is put forth in the pamphlet, now offered to those who are interested in the wonderful story of pious sacrifice, and devoted faith, exhibited by the early settlers from the Netherlands. Most of the facts herein written, are, I am sure, published for the first time.

The little volume cannot fail to be a valuable contribution to the colonial history of New Jersey.

CORNELIUS BRETT.

Parsonage of the Bergen Reformed Church,

January 4, 1889.

Sketch of the Early History of the Reformed Dutch Church of Bergen, N. J.

THE SETTLEMENT OF BERGEN.

DIRECTOR PETER STUYVESANT, though rather arbitrary in his dealings with the people whom he had been sent by the home authorities to govern in New Netherland, was withal a kind regent, as long as his military notions of civil government were not opposed by the "subjects," as he was fond of calling the free citizens of the province. Though his not always wise attempts at regulating the commerce of his "subjects," well nigh, for a time, ruined the former and procured him a host of enemies among the latter, still he did all he could to foster agriculture, and was ever ready, in his peculiar, high-handed way, to promote the farming interests of the country and to attract agriculturists to settle upon its fertile soil.

If, therefore, the foreign trade of New Netherland suffered during part of his administration, the agriculture and the domestic commerce of the province flourished, and the lands of many abandoned agricultural settlements were taken up again, or entirely new tracts brought under cultivation.

In the second half of the seventeenth century a small company of Dutch settlers had located themselves between the hills and marshes of the northern part of Scheyichbi (New Jersey) at about two miles distance from the North River, for the double purpose, undoubtedly, of tilling the soil, and trading with the several Indian tribes who passed near or through the settlement, to and from Fort Amsterdam, on the island of Manhattan. The location seemed to have been so well chosen that before long many more joined the number of the pioneers, the young community quickly outgrew even older settlements in its immediate vicinity, and on September the 15th, 1661, the Governor and Council of New Netherland granted it a village charter. The little pioneer village in the wilderness received the name of Bergen, after a small town in Holland, the most important of the

provinces, constituting the United Netherlands. Church and school to the early settlers were synonymous with civilization, and after the inhabitants of Bergen had built themselves dwellings and erected a stockaded enclosure as a protection against attacks of the Indians, they constructed a school-house, and in September, 1662, the "Schout" and "Schepenen" or civil authorities of the village petitioned the Governor and his Council for a Minister of the Gospel, at the same time subjoining a subscription list, by which twenty-five persons had obligated themselves yearly to contribute the amount of *f*417* in seewan for his support. But the affairs of the province at this period were in such a bad condition, and the treasury of the West India Company was so near bankrupt, that probably for those reasons the petition had to be ignored, and Bergen, for almost a century afterwards, remained without the services of a local pastor. But if a minister could not be had it was comparatively easy to procure a schoolmaster, who could at the same time fill the minister's place on Sundays, and edify the congregation by reading for them a sermon, after having taught the village youth during week days.

THE SCHOOL.

As the Bergen school-house was undoubtedly the first, and for years to come the only public building in the village, it is not more than proper to give it the first place among the several topics, about which this sketch is to treat.

The records, as far as they go back, say nothing about the erection of the earliest school house, so that it must have been built soon after the village received its charter. Church and school in those days were so closely united, especially in the rural communities, that the people, soon after forming an ecclesiastical body, built their school, at first for the double purpose of a meeting place for the congregation, and a lyceum for the children. It has been asserted that this school-house was a log building, but very slight historical evidence seems to show that this was not the case. New Amsterdam, with its saw-mills and lime kilns, was so close by, and there was so much building material in the neighborhood, that the expense for a brick, stone or frame school building would not come much higher than for a log house. And, besides, an entry in the account of the deacons, dated March 29th, 1678, says: "Lime for whitewashing the school-house *f*1 and 10 stivers," which would not have been necessary if the walls had

**f* is the Dutch mark for guilder, as \$ is the American mark for dollar, and £ the English mark for pound sterling. A Dutch guilder has 100 cents, or 20 stivers, and is equal to 40 cents American money. A stiver is equal to 2 cents American money.

been logs. Again, on January 18th, 1680, "School-house debit to Helmigh Roelofse (Van Houten) for nailing boards to the gable *f*6." Many other entries later on about work done on the school-house, and materials bought for it, especially nails, of which several pounds were used, appear to indicate that logs had not been made use of in building the first school of Bergen.

For almost fifty years Bergen's youth had received instruction in the now venerable building, and it became necessary to provide for a new one, which, at the same time, was to be a little better in keeping with the undoubtedly very much approved aspect of the village.

This second school-house was begun to be built in 1708, as appears from the following account: "On Tuesday, May 11th, 1708, Matheus Bensusm has made a beginning with the new school-house, and commenced with the foundation, and Mr. Adrian Vermeulen, *voorlezer*, at Bergen, laid the corner stone."

It may be interesting, after a lapse of so many years, to give an itemized account of the expenses incurred, and the work done upon the second school of Bergen, by which some idea can be formed of the probable size of the building:

1708.	To Adrian Quackinbush for 100 boards at 28s. a piece.....	<i>f</i> 140
"	" Matheus Bensusm, 10 days at <i>f</i> 10 per day, } masons }	100
"	" Marten Winne, 21 days at <i>f</i> 10 " " } " }	210
"	" Risso, the hod-carrier, 21 days at 3 Realtjes per day.....	95.10st.
"	" 6 lbs. nails at <i>f</i> 3 per lb.....	18
"	" the glazier for 23 feet of glass.....	69
"	" Samuel Bayard, for 84 lb. nails at <i>f</i> 3 per lb.....	252
"	" 5 lb. nails at <i>f</i> 3 per lb.....	15
"	" lock for the door.....	7.10st.
	Total for 1708.....	<i>f</i> 907

1710.	Expended over 1708.....	<i>f</i> 907
May 3.	To Mathys Mott, for ironwork.....	84
"	" Helmigh Roelofse, for paving stone (steenklinkers).....	86
"	" Cornelis Van Vorst, 2 lb. nails at <i>f</i> 3 per lb.....	6
"	" Hendrik Claasse Kuyper, for 4 lb. nails.....	12
"	" Gerrit Stynmets, for 4 lb. nails.....	12
Oct. 3	" Gerrit Roos, for laying the ceiling ..	40
"	" his board.....	6
"	" 10 lb. nails.....	15
"	" 10 boards at 36 stivers a piece.....	18
"	" for carting the boards.....	7.10st.
	Total cost.....	<i>f</i> 1193.10st.

Several of Bergen's citizens assisted at the building of the new school by carting, as it seems gratuitously, materials to the site, as is shown by the following list:

Johannis Michielse, 10 loads of stone	Matheus DeMott, 1 load of stone
Cornelis Blinkerhof, 10 "	The same, 10 loads of clay
Maritje Hartmans, 10 "	Jacob Jacobse Van Winkel, 5 loads of stone
Johannis Thomasse, 5 "	The same, 5 loads of clay
Fredrick Thomasse, 10 "	Robert Siggelse, 1 "
The same, 1 " clay	Jan Lubberse, 5 loads of sand, 1 load of clay, 1 load of lime.
Uldrick Brouwer, 4 " stone	
Johannis Pouwelse, 8 loads of stone	
The same, 3 " clay	

In all, 63 loads of stone, 21 loads of clay, 5 loads of sand, 1 load of lime.

The record does not say how long the second school-building served its purpose, but an expenditure in 1782 for work on the school-house points to the probability of its having faced Bergen Square till the end of the former, or the beginning of the present century.

THE CHURCH.

Up to 1681 the congregation of Bergen worshiped in the school-house, but as its membership increased, a more commodious place of worship was needed, and in 1680 the people resolved to begin the erection of their first church edifice. The list below, showing the cost of its building, is complete as far as it was possible to get at the figures, though it is evident, that not all the items, especially those for lumber have been preserved.

1680, June 20. For carpenter's work in seewant.....	f300
" " nails.....	117
" " 1,000 paving stone (steenklinkers).....	60
" " nails, and 1,000 paving stone, contr. by Gemoenepa.....	177
Sept. 5. " nails.....	117
Oct. 3. " 100 lb. nails.....	150
" To Cornelis Hopper, iron work.....	388.10st.
Dec. 30. " the carpenter.....	42
1681, April 3. For 40 lb. nails.....	60
" 28. " the carpenter.....	222
" " 20 lb. nails and 2 gallons of rum.....	42
May 10. " William Day, the English mason.....	35
" 29. " the carpenter.....	100
Sept. 25. To Captain Berry.....	28
Oct. 10. " Steven Cortland, for 1,000 paving stone.....	60
<hr/>	
Total in 1680 and '81.....	
f1898.10st.	
1682, April 4. To Johannis Van Giesen.....	75
M'ch 12. " the carpenter in silver money.....	200
Aug. 9. " same.....	200
1686, M'ch 18. " Claas Areense (Toers).....	198.10st.
" " same.....	40
<hr/>	
Total cost of church.....	
f2612	

On May 23d, 1681, Bergen's first church was ready for worship, and on that day the thankful congregation repaired thither to listen to the words of Rev. Caspar Van Zuren, from Long Island, who had been requested to preach the dedicatory sermon. In the gladness of their hearts the members of the congregation contributed the munificent amount of f 97.10st. or almost four times as much as when a minister, on other days, preached for them, and over nine times more than when their *Voorlezer* led the services.

A belfry adorned their "little" church, as it is sometimes called in the account book, and in the summer of 1683, or a little over two years after the dedication, the first bell, probably a present of some members of the congregation, began to call the people up to the house of worship, and to toll the funeral knell over those who were being carried to the grave.

The growing congregation and the ravages of time after 92 years of constant use of the first church building, rendered it necessary to erect a new and larger one, and in the beginning of May, 1773, work was begun upon the second house of worship in the village of Bergen. Part of the accounts having been lost, it was not possible either to find out when the church was finished, or the total amount expended upon it, but from May 17 to October 17, 1773, about £362 had been laid out for material and labor. For several years after the church was dedicated the old bell seems to have done service in the new belfry, until on June 20, 1787, another bell was bought by the consistory at a cost of £31 in New York money. This bell pealed forth its invitations for religious meetings in Bergen's second sanctuary for about 54 years after it had been suspended in the belfry, when a new place of worship was needed again, and in 1841 the congregation erected its third church.

THE MEMBERSHIP.

The Dutch Reformed Church in those early days was rather exacting in its requirements of the applicants for admission to membership. Before being accepted they had to pass a rigid examination before the minister and the consistory, sometimes in the presence of two members of the congregation as witnesses. This examination, besides covering the whole ground of Bible history, had for subjects the general evidences of the truths of Christianity, and the doctrines of the Reformed Church, as set forth in the Heidelberg catechism. If the consistory was satisfied with the answers, the applicants, at certain stated periods of the year, were accepted into membership before the whole congregation, provided no complaints had been brought against their moral character, and soundness in church doctrine. It took several years of study before the young people were deemed able

to submit to the examination, and during all that time they went at least once a week to "catechism" in order to recite from their question books to the minister, and in the absence of a pastor to the *voorlezer*, or an elder of the congregation. During that period of their religious instruction the learners were called "catechumens," or students of the rudiments of Christianity.

At the time of the beginning of the membership record in 1664, Bergen's church numbered only 27 communicants, viz.: 18 females and 9 males. In the following year this number was increased through the admission of new members, with 5 females and 6 males, so that at the close of 1665 the congregation of Bergen had a membership of '38, divided over Bergen, Ahasymus, Gemoenepa (Communi-paw) and Hackinsack. The number of communicants now speedily increased, until in 1686 the portion of the congregation living at and near Hackinsack, separated from the mother church at Bergen, and organized one of their own, with Mr. Guiliamo Bertholf as *voorlezer*. The latter and his wife on October 6, 1684, had come with church certificate from Sluis in the province of Zeeland, and joined the church of Bergen. From 1669 till 1675 there is a gap in the membership record, but from that time down to the latter part of the former century the register, with few exceptions, is continuous.

As an instance of the liberal spirit of the early founders of Jersey City may still be mentioned that among the 8 new members admitted in 1679, one, Jochem Anthony, was a colored man.

The reconversion of a most worthy woman from the Reformed to the Lutheran faith at the early history of Bergen's church has been brought down to posterity through the following curious entry in the membership record: "But after having not more than once communed with us she fell out, and having (formerly) left the faith of the Lutherans again returned to it. This has been put down as a cliff in the sea that others, seeing this, may not be shipwrecked from the faith."

THE CONSISTORY.

Up to May 6, 1751, no mention was made of the election of members of the consistory, but at that date Mr. Peter De Wint, who then officiated as minister of Bergen, made an entry in the register, recording the nomination of the following persons as members for the consistory: "Elder, Michiel Vreeland; Deacons, Joris Vreeland, Robert Siggels, son of Zacharias; Church masters, Hendrik Van Winkel, Hendrik Brinkerhof." "After these above-named persons had been three times announced by me in our church here, they have been installed by me in August of the same year." Occasionally mention is made before that time of deacons in the accounts of the deaconry,

which show that the consistory, beside two elders and two church masters, consisted of one deacon for Ahasymus, one for Gemoenepa (Communipaw) and two for Bergen. About the manner in which they were elected nothing has been preserved, but from what we know of other churches and their methods, we may infer that the first consistory had been chosen by the male members of the congregation, and afterwards elected their own successors. Judging from accounts of Ahasymus and Gemoenepa, the members of the consistory served for two years, though in some instances the deacons of these two places held their office a year longer.

On May 14, 1716, we have the first account of a meeting of the consistory, convened for the purpose of regulating the occupation and sale of seats in the church, which was accomplished in the following manner :

BERGEN, May 14, 1716.

The consistory met, and resolved, after calling upon the Lord's name, to remove some inconveniences regarding the seats in the church that all causes for discord may be taken away, and the church masters may know how to act in several cases without incurring opposition. It was further resolved to invite all the male members from the pulpit during the morning service to meet together in the barn of Helmigh Roelofse (Van Houten), where the consistory would submit to them certain salutary measures in order to be decided upon by a majority of votes.

This having been done, on the same date and place aforesaid, all the males belonging to the congregation, who there appeared with the church masters and the consistory, resolved and decreed that from now on the following five articles shall be observed by the Church Masters and that all whom they concern shall behave in accordance with them, viz :

I. Those belonging at present to the congregation, and having acquired seats by purchase, inheritance or any other lawful means, shall possess the same and peaceably retain them until their death or departure from the congregation.

II. All those not belonging to the village or the church of Bergen, and not contributing toward the maintenance of church, school or religious services, shall pay for either men's or women's seats the annual sum of six shillings, current money, into the hands of the Church Masters, or somebody authorized by them.

III. The seats of those who die, shall return to the church, but under condition that the Church Masters shall sell those places to the next heir of the deceased for two shillings, in case the former applies for them within one year, and he or she belongs to the congregation as per Art. II., and the seat was a hereditary one come down from the original builders of the church.

IV. Those possessing no seats in church and wishing for one, shall apply to the Church Masters for the purpose of purchasing one, and come to an understanding about the price, but,

V. Those belonging to the congregation, as stipulated in Art. II., and having no seat in church, shall apply to the Church Masters, who

will undoubtedly dispose of these seats at very popular prices (op eene zeer civiele wijze wel zullen accordeeren).

From Art. IV. and V. it will be seen that the congregation in this instance followed the Germanic policy in leaving great freedom of action to the authorities, charged with the execution of the law, whereas in other neighboring churches the Latin method was followed in the leasing of church pews, by laying down exact rules, according to which the Church Masters were to dispose of the seats.

BAPTISMS.

The baptismal record of Bergen commences on January 1, 1666, with the following entry: "Pieter Jansen Slot and Maritje Jacobs had their child baptized and named Jan: witnesses Elyas Machiels (Vreeland) and Steynty Jacobs." From 1669 till 1673 there is a gap extending over more than four years, during which time the children may have been entered upon the records of New York or other churches, and in 1674 only two children seem to have been baptized at Bergen. In after years it sometimes occurs that children, born at Bergen, were carried to New York to be christened, in which case the baptism was entered in the Bergen record in the following manner: "N. N. born at Bergen and baptized at New York."

On June 13, 1681, about one month after the dedication of Bergen's first church, Margrietje Hendrickse (Brinkerhof) and Hendrick Johannisse Spier were the first of the large number of children to be baptized within its walls, which fact the keeper of the records deemed interesting enough to preserve for posterity, while on April 2, 1683, the sacrament of baptism was first administered to a married woman, and thereupon to her two children.

The ages of the baptized children generally ranged from two weeks to a month, but circumstances sometimes induced parents to have it done at an earlier age, as is shown by the following entry: "April 11, 1687, Claas Arentse Toers and Jacomyntje Van Nest have their child baptized and named Judith. This child was born on the same date and year." Often the record mentioned the hour of the day or the night at which baptized children had been born, and sometimes contained particulars like the following: "1694, Jan'y 5th, was born the 2d daughter and the 4th child of Cornelis Van Voorst and his wife, Feytje Gerrits, at Ahasymus; was called Annetje, and baptized at New York." "This Annetje married a young man named Marten Winne, and was married 11 months, and had a son called Levinus. Annatje died and was buried at Bergen. After her funeral this son died also and was buried near his mother."

For about a century all the entries in the baptismal record had been kept in the Holland tongue, but on January 6, 1762, the child of English parents, non-residents of Bergen, was baptized, on which occasion the first entry was made in English, and reads as follows: "Jan'y 6, 1762, mother, Catharina French; father, William Andrew Doner; child baptized, William Andrew; godmother Ann Miller." The following entries were again in Dutch, and this was continued for several years after. At about the aforementioned time, also, Americans of English descent commenced to join the Bergen church, married into Dutch families, and, as a consequence, English names began to appear upon the records. It was rather hard work, though, for the *Voorlezers*, who up to that time, and during many years to come, understood very little of English, to record the foreign sounding names, and therefore followed the "phonetic" method of spelling them, which does not always render those English names very legible.

People very generally during the earlier days traveled with their little ones to other places in order to have them baptized there, and thus we often find that children were brought from Bergen to New York, and from New York, Hackensack, Acquackonck (Passaic) and other places to Bergen for the purpose of being baptized.

MARRIAGES.

After the membership record the register of marriages is the earliest, commencing on December the 3d, 1665, at which date Laurens Duyts and Grietje Jans were registered for marriage. After their banns had been published for three consecutive Sundays before the Bergen congregation, and no objections had been raised, the couple, on the morning of January 1st, 1666, were joined in marriage by a minister, who at that time happened to be in the village. Not always did the marriage ceremony take place after the proclamation of banns, for on May 26th, 1678, a couple, coming from England, had their banns published at Bergen, but the proceedings had to be suspended, on account of the contents of a note, received during the interval between the registration, and the last publication of the banns.

It was customary with many, in those, and later days, to have the marriage banns published at one place, and to get the ceremony performed at another. After the banns had been published during the required number of times, the young couple applied for the certificate of publication, which was signed by the proper civil or ecclesiastical authorities, and thereupon set out for a more or less distant town there to have the marriage concluded. In that manner parties coming from New York, Acquackonck, Hackensack, English neighborhood, Long Island, Esopus, Albany and other places, were married at Bergen, and parties from Bergen likewise went to Breukelen, New York.

Staten Island and other towns, and were there joined in wedlock. It seems that the persons who performed the ceremony wrote to the place from where the applicants for marriage came with their certificate, and by this the publishers of the papers were enabled to fill in the date and the place of marriage.

As the birthplace of both groom and bride were nearly always mentioned in the marriage record, it is comparatively easy to know whence many of Bergen's original church members came. Several of them had been born in the Netherlands and nearly every province had its representatives, rendering Bergen's population, if not cosmopolitan, then certainly inter-provincial. Before long, Maryland and Virginia furnished their contingent, whilst prior to that time several towns of New Netherland had sent representatives of their inhabitants. In the course of years English, Scotch, Irish and French settlers joined the original ones, and Captain Berry's plantation, also, aided very materially in swelling the numbers of the population of Bergen. In 1684 "Isaac Billau, born on the sea and Ida Suebringh," were joined in marriage at Bergen, though it does not appear that they fixed their residence here.

At a few miles distance from Bergen, near the banks of the Hackensack river, stood a Huguenot church of which, very strange, almost every remembrance has been lost, and up to this time, only a few stray entries in some of the old records of neighboring churches, point to its having existed. The church records of Bergen contain some such entries, one of which reads as follows: "1693, February 28th, Daniel De Vouw, widower, and Engeltje Cornelis appeared here with certificate from the French church at Hackensack, that for three Sundays they had had their marriage proclamations without hindrance. They were accordingly joined in marriage on February 28th, by R. Van Giesen, in presence of the court." A few days later, on March the 5th, 1693, Jan Wette and Annetje Cornelis, likewise from the French church at Hackensack, were also united in marriage at Bergen.

After the English had taken New Netherland, emigration from Holland to North America ceased almost entirely for about 180 years, and what little Holland emigration there was during most of that time, was directed towards South Africa. On August 12th, 1710, Cornelis Cornelisse Doremus, born at Middelburg, was married at Bergen, and eighty-five years elapsed before the name of another native born Hollander was entered upon the marriage record of the village. On December 27th, 1795, Peter Baten and Helena Catharina Coops, both from Holland, and living at English Neighborhood, were married by Rev. J. Cornelison, and five years later, on August 16th, 1800, William Anthony Vander Heyden and Elizabeth Van Holten, both from Holland and living at Bergen, were likewise married by the same.

Up to October 3d, 1681, all marriages had been performed in the school house, but on the above date Dirck Epkese (Banta) and Hester Hanse; besides Wiert Epkese (Banta) and Geertje Jelisze Mandeville were the first couples to be married in the church.

It is evident from the entries in the records that nearly all marriage ceremonies were performed publicly in the meeting place, before the congregation, either by some minister of the gospel or the *voorlezer*. When the latter tied the marriage knot, he nearly always inserted the clause, "and in the presence of the court of Bergen," whilst on February 13th, 1687, Jan Criscel and Nicoli Ager were married by the Justice Claas Arentse Toers, in the presence of some members of the congregation.

From an item in the deacon's account book it appears that the usual fee, paid in the early years upon marrying, was *f* 6 in seewant, which money seems to have been paid over to the church funds. After Rev. Cornelison had become pastor he put down after the names of every couple married by him, the amount of the fees paid by them, which amounts ranged from \$1 to \$20.

BURIALS.

The burial customs of the original settlers of New Netherland were identical with those of the fatherland, and somewhat peculiar as compared with the American funerals of the present time. No Dutch burial in the first place was complete, without the services of the *aanspreker*. The latter combined in his office some of the functions of the undertaker and the sexton of the present time, and the whole responsibility of the affair rested upon him.

As soon as a person had died, some one of the relatives or a kind neighbor went for the *aanspreker*, and the latter quickly followed up the summons, and appeared at the *sterfhuis*, or house of the deceased, taking with him a few sheets of mourning paper. Upon arriving at the house his first business was to take down the names of the people whom the family of the deceased wanted to acquaint with his demise, at the same time marking the names of those who were to be invited to attend the funeral, either as bearers or as mourners. After the preliminary instructions had been received, and the names put down, the *aanspreker* read his list before the family for possible corrections, and from this moment until after the funeral, he was the directing genius, and everything was executed according to his commands. He ordered the grave to be dug, the bell to be rung, if such was the custom in the town, ordered the coffin, the hearse, the carriages, if they were to be used; in short, directed the whole affair.

If the place was very small, or the deceased very prominent, the *aanspreker* announced from house to house, in which case he went

with an "open list." If the "list" was too large for one man, he called to his assistance other aansprekers, but the original one, of course, remained the head man, and responsible for the proper carrying out of all necessary operations. The aanspreker's dress on those occasions was peculiar. Low shoes, black stockings, black knickerbockers, a black cutaway coat, covered by a long, flowing black mantle, a white cravat or bands, and a queer looking three-cornered hat or *steek*, from one corner of which, to the right, floated a long black crape like a streamer, whilst upon the left corner a rosette had been pinned, showing the sex and condition (married or single) of the deceased. If the latter was very rich or prominent, sometimes ten or twenty aansprekers were employed in announcing his death, and one, usually an old servant of the family, went in the middle of the street, dressed like the aansprekers, walking slowly along with head bowed, his face buried in a big mourning handkerchief, and led by two aansprekers, one on each side, whilst the others were doing the *wete* or announcement at the houses.

When the appointed time for the funeral approached all those invited to attend, repaired to the sterfhuis. The nearest relatives and closest friends of the family usually went a little earlier, and waited for the rest, partaking of some refreshments generally consisting of a glass of beer or spirits, before coffee had come into general use, and smoking a long clay pipe or a cigar. After all were present the chief aanspreker sometimes spoke a few words of consolation, or offered up a prayer, and hereupon signalled to the bearers to carry out the bier. After the corpse had been brought out on the street or deposited in the hearse, the ruling genius who had been busy ranging the relatives and friends of the deceased, now said: "The relatives will please follow according to rank," and all filed out in the order assigned to them, the youngest members of the family coming first, taking their places in the carriages, or following on foot as the case might be. All the mourners and bearers, and sometimes the driver of the hearse, were either clad in the same garbs as the aansprekers, or else had rosettes pinned upon their sleeve, or upon the lapel of their coat, and the hands of the aansprekers were covered with white or black gloves, according to the sex of the deceased.

After everything was in readiness, one or two of the aansprekers took their places at the head of the procession, the bearers placed themselves alongside the hearse; other aansprekers, if there were any more, went between the hearse and the first carriage, and the cortege slowly wended its way towards the cemetery. Almost everybody, meeting the train, stood still, doffed hat or cap, and waited with bowed head until at least the hearse had passed by. At the gate of the cemetery the bearers took the coffin out of the hearse, carried it to the

grave, and here the aanspreker again spoke a few words or offered up a prayer, for which reason in some districts he was known by the name of *bidder* or prayer.

The corpse now was lowered into the grave, the aanspreker gave the sign to the grave digger to cover the coffin up, and hereupon the procession filed out in the same manner as they had come, and went in a body to the sterfhuis. Here beer or spirits, in later years coffee, and victuals had been prepared for them by the women who as a rule did not go to the cemetery. The long clay pipes with tobacco, or cigars, were on the table, and the mourners ate, drank and smoked some, in honor of the deceased. After the first pipe or cigar had been finished, all but the nearest relatives of the family departed, and the real mourners now were alone with their grief.

It is plain enough that the small pioneer village could not begin to conduct its burials in the manner just described. Bergen's inhabitants had to get along as best they could, and the funerals, at first, like everything else, were very primitive. The burial records commenced on March 4th, 1666, on which date the remains of Michiel Teunissen were laid in the grave. Neither bell nor pall, nor liveried aanspreker hallowed, so to speak, the humble funeral, and not until January 16th, 1678, when Engelbert Steenhuis' remains were interred, had the congregation been enabled to procure a pall.

This pall was rather expensive, for according to the accounts of the deacons the cost of it was as follows:

10 el of black cloth @ f'24 per el	-	-	-	-	f'240
A linen cover to protect the pall	-	-	-	-	14
Total	-	-	-	-	<u>f'254</u>

This first pall lasted till January 17th, 1715, when a new one was bought for the sum of f'195, and then the old pall was probably refitted to do service at the burials of children.

On January 1st, 1798, a new large pall was bought costing £5-11-3, and a small one at an expense of £2-13-10.

The cost of the bier generally amounted to f'17 or f'18, and the bier itself lasted 5 or 6 years.

After the church had been erected, several of Bergen's inhabitants wished, in imitation of the fatherland, for a resting place in the sanctuary, and on August 1st, 1682, the little daughter of Enoch Michielse Vreeland was the second to be buried within its walls. The third on September 4th of the same year was Peter Marcelis, but it was impossible to find out the first one, because either time or frequent handling had effaced part of the writing of a few entries, one of which must contain the mention of the first person, buried in the church. Two years had elapsed after the dedication, before the belfry received its

bell, but on June 21st, 1683, was "buried the corpse of Maeckje Baltusen, daughter of Baltus Barentse, the 6th, in church and the 1st, with knell," showing that about this time the village had received its church bell.

It seems that an extra price was paid for the privilege of being buried in church, for comparatively few had their remains interred within its walls. The last one whom the record mentions as having been buried in the church was "Annatje Jackson, aged 49 years, who died on Friday, January 13th, 1758, at about 8 A. M., and was buried on Sunday, January 15th, in the church in the bapistry." To be buried in, or before the bapistry was considered a token of deep veneration on the side of the members of a congregation, and this honor was usually only conferred upon preachers or other men, prominent in church affairs. The keeper of the burial record mentions one more case like the foregoing, though this funeral took not place at Bergen but at New York, viz: "1701 July 19th, died in the Lord the Rev. Selms, on Saturday afternoon, and was buried on Tuesday afternoon, July 22d, in the church before the bapistry at New York."

Many people dying at other places like New York, Pemmerepock, Ahasymus, Gemoenepa, Acquackenonck, Hackensack etc., were brought to Bergen for the purpose of there being interred, and likewise several corpses were conveyed from Bergen to New York, Constables Hook, Tappan, Acquackenonck and others. The first time a corpse from Bergen was buried at New York was on December 28th, 1683, at which date "Ide Corneliszen Van Voorst was buried at New York, with the pall of Bergen."

Though the Bergen cemetery or church were the customary burying places, it was not compulsory that the burial should take place there; and the records contain several instances of interments of the remains of the dead upon *bouwerijen*, or farms.

Occasional entries in the record show that Bergen's citizens, no more than those of other settlements, were exempt from visitations and calamities: "On October 25th was buried the corpse of Dirck Fransz, who had been shipwrecked with his boat." "On February 18th, 1701, were interred the remains of Moses Suxbery, who was killed in the cedar swamp, on February 17th, by a falling tree." "On April 17th, 1704, was buried the body of Jacob van Giesen, who was drowned on April 13th, and found on the 15th." Again: "1752, died October 18th, with the smallpox, a little boy of Pieter Van Bent-huyzen, aged 13 years." In 1753 three members of Nicholas Van Dam's family died within three weeks, and in 1775 three members of Daniel Solders' family were buried in five days. There are, besides these, several cases where two or more members of one family died within a few months, showing that sometimes the place was visited

by dangerous and deadly diseases. Yet the village and its surroundings did not seem to be very unhealthy either, for people generally reached the allotted span, and a few even surpassed it by many years. The records cite three instances of people who reached a ripe old age, viz.: Edward Farle, who died in his 84th year, and was buried on December 15th, 1711, on the island Sijckacus; Marcelis Pieterse, who died on October 23d, 1747, 91 years old, and Cornelis Blinkerhof, who died on September 1st, 1770, at the age of 97 years and 4 months, lacking 6 days. Mr. Cornelis Blinkerhof was probably, at the moment of his death, the last one of those above whom the banner of the Dutch Republic had yet floated, before the final surrender of New Netherland to England in 1674, and therefore, at that time, was the last link, connecting the past with the present.

We are indebted to the register of the dead for the name of one elder at least of Bergen's early church, viz.: "1732, August 13th, died and the 15th buried, Wander Diederix, elder at Bergen."

After the cemetery had been used for over 70 years, the need was being felt for a new one, and in 1738 Bergen's second burying ground was opened. The first one to be interred here was Joseph, son of Hendrik van Winkel, on November 22d, 1738, though the other cemetery was not yet entirely abandoned, for on April 11th, 1744, Geesje, daughter of Mathys De Mott was still buried upon the old one. This second cemetery, after having been used for just half a century, also became crowded, and the congregation was obliged to look around for a third burial ground, which was made ready for use and surrounded by a fence in the year 1789.

From an account, dated 1690, of the expenses incurred for the burial of a pensioner of the Bergen Church, something like an estimate can be formed of the cost of funerals:

Coffin and spirits, - - -	f25.10st.	Aanspreker, - - -	f19.10st.
$\frac{1}{2}$ keg of beer, - - -	15.16	Matheus Cornelisse, for cart-	
Flour and milk, - - -	6.05	ing the goods, - - -	3.00
Sundries, - - -	15.05		
Total, - - -			f85.06st.

RELIGIOUS SERVICES AND THE LORD'S SUPPER.

People from far and near came to Bergen to worship, because the little village, for several years, possessed the only organized Reformed Church community on this side of the North River. Near Hackensack a settlement had been begun in 1641, but no church was organized until 1686. Hasymus had been settled at about 1630; but though a hamlet had been formed there, the colonists, in church matters, resorted to Bergen, and the same was the case with Communi-

paw, where a stockaded enclosure against the Indians had been erected as early as 1655 or '56.

Before a minister had been permanently settled at Bergen, the *voorlezer* conducted religious services in the *dorp*, or village, during the morning on Sundays, and in the afternoon went to Ahasymus or Gemoenepa, where the inhabitants probably met in some farm-house, to listen to the reading of a sermon, published by some one of the leading divines in the United Provinces. At Bergen, therefore, services were held once a week in the morning, and at Ahasymus and Gemoenepa once in every two weeks during the afternoon. Besides those Sunday services there were meetings on the ecclesiastical holy days, and often also during the week days, as on days of prayer and thanksgiving, or in preparation for the coming celebration of the communion.

Several times "sermon books" were bought by the *voorlezer*, who was not allowed to deliver a sermon of his own construction, but had to read one by some leading orthodox Reformed divine. In 1679, *f*12 were expended in the purchase of printed sermons, and again, on December 31, 1682, the consistory laid out *f*75 for four large theological works, the titles of which were as follows:

1. The Secret of Happiness in God.
2. On the Epistle to the Philippians.
3. Explanation of the Catechism.
4. The True Repentance.

An hour-glass, or "sand-runner," stood on the reader's desk, and when the sand had run from the upper hollow into the lower, he was to suspend services, and to dismiss the congregation. Several times the accounts contain entries about the purchase of hour-glasses, the prices of which ranged from *f*4 10st. to *f*6. A large Staten Bible, costing *f*60, had been bought in 1680, and probably lasted till the introduction of English dispensed with its usefulness.

Three or four times per year a minister crossed over from New York, or some other place, to administer the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, and at this time all those, belonging to the congregation, came from far and near to take part in the celebration. From an entry in the account book, it seems that the sacrament was administered for the first time on September 10th, 1672, though it may also mean by a certain individual minister. It reads thus: "When the dominie administered the Lord's Supper here for the first time, coll. *f*16.1st."

On May 26th, 1678, Bergen's first communion set was bought at an expense of *f*74 10st., and consisted of the following articles: "8 lbs. of pewter, being 3 plates and a pitcher of *f*6 the lb., and 2 pewter beakers at *f*12 apiece, and 1 el of Ossenburger linen." At the same

time 11-el linen was bought for a tablecloth, costing $f5$ 10st. per el, or $f60$ 10st. for the whole. On January 26th, 1731, the pewter cups were changed for two silver ones, bought of Hendrikus Boele, and costing $f519$ 10st. in seewan. These latter cups are still in possession of the Bergen Reformed Church, and do service at every communion. The other communion expenses usually were about $f20$ for bread and wine, and $f6$ for cleaning, which was always done by the wife of the voorlezer.

The members, living at a distance, undoubtedly encountered many hardships in coming to church from a distance of twelve miles or more, and Prof. Demarest's pleasant fancy sketch on pages 12 and 13 in "The Huguenots on the Hackensack" applies to the Dutch as well as to the French communicants of Bergen's congregation, when he says: "I would that I were able to give an authentic account of the church-going habits of these people during their connection with the church of Bergen. Doubtless, they were all in attendance on every Communion Day, whether it were the Lord's day or Monday. They would make all their preparations on Saturday, so that they might start early in the morning, for the distance was nearly twenty miles, and the roads were not macadamized, and the wagons were springless, and the farm horses not very fleet. Besides, it was desirable to have, after so long a journey, a half-hour's rest before service, for the good of body, mind and soul. The proximity of the inn to the church, customary in those days, was not an unmixed evil. Perhaps, after the services, some Van Horn, or Van Winkle, or Van Riper, or Van Wagenen, or Vreeland, would insist on taking the company home to dinner, for nothing pleased the Dutchman of that day so well as to have his table crowded on a Sunday by people whom he respected. Sometimes very little of the day, especially in the winter, would be left after the close of public worship, for the communion service occupied hours, and then they would tarry till morning, and on the Monday wend their way homeward. They were not so driven and hurried in their worldly business as men now are. Perhaps they often brought their lunch with them, and, having been refreshed by it, started on their tedious journey for home, which they would not reach until after nightfall. We may well believe, too, that the forests, through which they passed in going to and returning from the house of God, were made to ring with the psalms of Marot and Beza" (and Datheen).

RECEIPTS AND EXPENDITURES.

The greatest part of the books, containing the accounts of the deacons, have been preserved almost from the beginning, but those of the church masters seem to have been lost. Many expenditures, therefore, outside of those for the poor, would have remained unknown if

the deaconry had not advanced money for the church funds, either in payment of salaries or for other purposes.

The principal sources of revenue for the poor funds were the weekly collections at Bergen, and the bi-weekly ones at Ahasymus and Gemoenepa, which latter were deposited in the treasury at Bergen whenever, after an election, the new deacons at those hamlets succeeded the old ones. The collections at Ahasymus and Gemoenepa generally averaged from $f2$ to $f3$ per service, and those at Bergen during the first few years amounted to $f3$ or $f4$ per week, later on to $f8$ and $f10$, but after the treasury contained about $f20,000$ in seewan and the number of poor, to be provided for, decreased each year, the usual weekly offerings there, during the first quarter of the former century, only averaged about $f5$. In 1760 the collections, taken up during a few services, ranged from 4s. to 14s. 9d., but at that time there was a minister, and all the people, resorting under Bergen's church, probably went thither to attend service. Whenever, before that time, a minister preached at Bergen, either during the week or on Sunday, the amount of the collections taken, was often five or six times higher than when the Voorlezer led the services, and the offerings, taken up during a minister's sermon, were sometimes entered as "a dominie's collection." But the communion collections surpassed all others. They ranged from $f7.14st.$ in 1673 up to $f106.14st.$ in 1683, but the average amount was about $f50$.

After the receipts surpassed the expenditures, the deacons commenced to look around for means of investing the surplus, and began to buy cows, which received names either according to color or disposition, like "Brown," "Wildman," etc. Those cows were given in the care of responsible members of the congregation, on a yearly "butter-rent" of 12 lbs., *i. e.*, those accepting a cow from the deaconry, had to pay an annual rent of 12 lbs. of butter, or its value in money. The price of butter amounted, in the winter of 1679, to 22st. per lb., so that the deacons then received $f13.4st.$ rent for one cow. Half of the risk, and half of the natural increase fell to the share of each one of the contracting parties. If the cow died while in the charge of a certain individual he had to bear half of the loss, but also received half of the market value of its calves. When a cow did no longer give enough milk it was fattened, and sold in the market. Bergen, like other neighboring settlements, probably had one or more local cow-boys into whose care the animal was intrusted, while being fattened upon the products of the forest. At one time the deacons paid $f37$ "pasturage money" for a cow, probably to the Bergen cow-herder.

After 1715 the deacons quit the "butter-rent" business and confined themselves solely to money lending as a means of increasing the revenue. Sums ranging from $f10$ to $f4,000$ were put out upon inter-

est, the rate of which was 6 per cent., though in a few cases borrowers, or their heirs and securities, were exempt from paying interest. For miles around people came to Bergen for money, which seems to have been readily granted upon the bond of the borrower and his securities, or upon giving in custody personal property to the value of the sum loaned. Once in a while, also, testators bespoke legacies to the deaconry, one of which was paid in the following manner: "1707, Sept. 29, per cassa of Maritje $\text{f}900$, which she owed to Hans Harmese, deceased, which sum he had ordered upon his sick bed to be paid to the deaconry of Bergen."

People who were privately married, besides paying their fee to the Voorlezer, sometimes took up a collection for the poor among their friends or relatives, as is shown by the following entry in the deacon's account book: "On Wednesday, November 6, 1678, when Siebe Epkese (Banta) and Maritje Aryanse Sip were united in marriage in the village of Bergen by the Voorlezer, collection $\text{f}2.19\text{st.}$ " Several times, also, living persons, who had reasons to feel grateful for some blessing or other, handed larger or smaller amounts to the deacons, to be expended for the poor. But the poor of Bergen were not in need of much, for though, during the first few years, many needy persons, even as far off as Raritan, received support, later on, several years passed by without hardly any expense for the sustenance of poor members, though it often happened that strangers, "who had been burnt out," or "without legs," and the like, received more or less liberal gifts.

Another very steady source of revenue was the rent for the pall. At first the deacons had resolved to charge $\text{f}14$ for every adult and $\text{f}7$ for each child buried with it, but on June 14, 1791, the price went down to $\text{f}6$ for an adult and $\text{f}3$ for a child. On December 25th, 1711, the receipts for the pall, since it had been first introduced, already amounted to $\text{f}864.17\text{st.}$, or about twice as much as what the combined cost price of the old and the new pall amounted to.

It seems that the business of the deacons, at times, was of such a nature, that the services of the sheriff had to be called in, for on June 6, 1694, an item was entered into the account book reading thus: "Paid to the sheriff $\text{f}12$." Other expenses were for new chests, locks, money bags, journals and cash books, binding and book-keeping. In 1747 2s. 5d. were paid to Hendrik Van Winkel for surveying church lands, and a few years later several entries were made, accounting for moneys disbursed to people whose colored servants had done work upon the church or its belongings.

Once or twice per year the entries in the journals of Bergen, Ahasynus and Gemoenepa were carried over in the cash book. The yearly expense for keeping the journals was $\text{f}12$, and the same amount

was paid for the annual work. As almost all collections taken up were received in seewan, or wampum, either loose or braided, the bookkeeping, for more than a century, only reckoned in guilders seewan, and all other moneys were reduced to that. The receipts of interest and principal of loaned money consisted of Dutch pieces of eight, realtjes, and loan dollars, the value of all of which was reduced to guilders seewan. The amount of seewan at hand was sometimes so large that in 1691 not less than $f4,000$ in seewan were brought to Stephen Van Cortlandt, to be changed by him for silver money. The following list will show the value in seewan of the kinds of money mostly received by the deacons at Bergen :

A piece of eight was worth	-	-	-	$f12.00$ st. in seewan.
A realtje	"	"	-	about 1.10 "
A loan dollar	"	"	-	11.00 "
A £ English	"	"	-	40.00 "
So that a dollar American money was worth	-			8.00 "

The deacons often bought commodities for their poor instead of paying them in money, which practice enables us to get acquainted with the price of some kinds of cereals at various times.

In 1673 the price of 1 schepel of wheat was $f6$ seewan; of 1 schepel of rye, $f4$ seewan, and of 1 schepel of Indian corn, $f4$ seewan. In 1690, October 12, a schepel of rye, only brought $f3$. On July 5, 1693, a schepel of wheat cost $f8$, and on May 25, 1694, the price of rye went up to $f6.5$ st. per schepel. A very sudden fluctuation had taken place in the summer of 1695. On August 11 of that year the price was yet $f5$ per schepel, and before two months had elapsed it had dropped down to $f4$.

It is evident from the several accounts that the deacons of Bergen took the utmost care of their poor, and did not let them want anything if they could help it. In 1688 they paid Dr. Robinson $f240$ for curing a man of insanity; in 1694 Surgeon C. Viele, of New York, received $f130$ for medical attendance upon a needy member; in 1735 they gave $f90$ to "Johannis Kruyer, for his passage to Amsterdam." A little later they paid the shoemaker $f1.6$ st. for mending a poor person's shoes. At another time they paid £6 per year for a poor man's board. And so it goes on *ad infinitum*. The following list of alms given to a needy member of Bergen's congregation may serve as an illustration: "1681, September 24, to a needy member"—

2 blankets,	-	-	$f58$	3½ lbs. of lead,	-	-	$f2$ 10st
2 schepel of salt,	-	-	6	4 lbs. of shot,	-	-	3
7 lbs. of wool,	-	-	14	4 deerskins,	-	-	35
13 lbs. of nails,	-	-	19 10st.	14 el of cloth at $f5$,	-	-	70
2 cowbells,	-	-	6	1½ el of cloth at $f12$,	-	-	18
2 lbs. of gunpowder,	-	-	6	3 doz. (rest illegible),	-	-	3

3 skeins of red yarn, -	f1	1st.	Sep. 24—Bill of Claas Arentse
7 measures of cod liver oil,	5	5st.	Toers, - - - - f90 15st.
Dec. 26, 1681—3 sch. of rye			Apr. 3, 1683— $\frac{1}{2}$ gallon of rum
and 4 sch. of seed wheat,	40		and 18 lbs. molasses - 5 18st.
1 sch. of rye, - - -	4		4 sch. rye and 2 sch. wheat, 34
Jan. 17, 1682—4 sch. of In-			Nails and starch, - - 6
dian corn, - - -	16		July 2—2 sch. rye, - - 8
June 11—3 sch, of wheat,	18		Dec. 16—Board for his child
In money, - - -	13	10st.	to W. Jansen, - - - 150
			Sum total, - f633 09st.

Once at a time, in the earlier years, Bergen's deaconry suffered a comparatively insignificant loss, because a person who had borrowed money from it, "died bankrupt." A much severer loss was sustained through the repudiation of the Continental, State, and communal paper money, issued during the Revolutionary war and earlier. Two packages containing \$1,214 in worthless continental bills, and upwards of \$700 in State and communal paper are still preserved in the church treasury, and may, at some future time, be of value to the numismatist or the antiquarian.

THE VOORLEZER.

Not one single man in the Reformed Church had so many offices united in his person as the Voorlezer of a small village congregation. His two principal duties were teaching the youth and educating them "in all the christian and social virtues" during the week days, and serving the congregation as precentor or voorlezer during Sundays. Before the minister entered his pulpit, at the beginning of the religious services, the Voorlezer took his place at a desk in front of the high pulpit, or "preaching chair," as it was called, and opened the meeting by announcing and reading a verse from the Psalms. He then led the congregation in the singing of it, for which reason he was often called "foresinger." When the verse had been sung, he first read the ten commandments, or the creed, and thereupon a portion of the Scriptures. The preacher, in the meantime, had ascended the pulpit, a verse was again sung, and the Voorlezer now left his desk, and took his seat in the pew, set apart for the members of the consistory. When the sermon, which usually lasted an hour and a half, was about half finished, the minister again announced a Psalm verse, the foresinger quit his pew for the desk, and while the congregation were singing, the deacons went around with "the bell," to gather in the collections. At the close of the services the "foresinger" again led in singing, the minister pronounced the benediction, and the congregation dispersed.

Beside teaching the youth in several branches of secular knowl-

edge, the schoolmaster-forereader was at the same time catechiser, and at the beginning of Bergen's history used in his school a question book, written by Dominie Johannis Megapolensis, minister at New Amsterdam. At the opening of the studies in the morning of each day a prayer was offered, a Psalm verse sung, and the lessons were often preceded by a Bible story. At the end of the morning session a Psalm verse closed the exercises; the afternoon lessons were again begun by the singing of a Psalm verse, and at 4 o'clock P. M. the work of the day was ended, by the singing of another verse of the Psalms and with prayer.

If there was no minister, then the Voorlezer took his place, and discharged all the duties of the local pastor, except baptizing children and administering the Lord's Supper, but he was not allowed to ascend the pulpit. Beside all this the Voorlezer sometimes officiated as bell-ringer, kept the church records, took care of the communion set, the bier and the pall, acted as bookkeeper for the deacons, and also served in the capacity of Aanspreker or funeral director. In this latter capacity the Voorlezers of Bergen kept the records of the dead.

It is evident from all this, that there was no man in the village who led so busy a life as this church official, and sometimes he had to call in assistance, especially for carrying over the accounts from the journals into the cash book, which took place twice a year. Some times he called in the help of Oliver Teller or Uldrick Brouwer; at another time it was Peter Marcells or Claas Arentse Toers, or Johannis Van Houten, and, later on, Zacharias Sickels often kept both, the journals and the cash book. The salary paid for keeping the books was f 24, viz. f 12 for the journals and f 12 for the cash book.

Little or nothing has ever been said about the early Voorlezers, but it is evident that they were as much of a power for good, though in a humbler way, as the ministers, and the people undoubtedly honored them almost as much, as they did the latter, especially when, in the absence of a local pastor, the Voorlezers were many a time the only educated persons in the settlement. As secular and religious teachers, as men of business and of experience in worldly things, and particularly as men of education, they exerted a great influence upon the popular mind, and were undoubtedly useful in shaping the public opinion of their fellow citizens. Bergen was lucky, in having for its Voorlezers men, who had evidently received a somewhat superior education, especially the four earlier ones, who may have been educated in Holland, and wrote the language grammatically correct.

The first Voorlezer of Bergen was Mr. Rynier Van Giesen, who probably came from Utrecht in the Netherlands, and before locating at Bergen seems to have settled at Midwoud on Long Island. He was not only at home in the language, but also in the history of his coun-

try, as is shown by his correct rendering in the marriage records of the historical divisions of the seven provinces which, at that time, was not a very easy task. After having served Bergen for forty-two years in the several capacities mentioned above, he died in the harness on May 12, and on "May 15, 1707, were buried the remains of Reynier Bastianse Van Giesen, after having filled the office of Voorlezer for about forty-two years, at Bergen."

Almost a year afterward, on February 8, 1708, Mr. Adrian Vermeulen read his first sermon in church, at which occasion the deacons took up for that time the rather liberal collection of $f7.10st$. On May 1 he concluded his first marriage at Bergen in presence of the Justice Helmigh Roelofse Van Houten, and a few weeks later was himself married by Rev. Guiliamo Bertholf, of Hackensack, as is shown by the following entry, copied from the marriage records: "On June 13, 1708, Adrian Vermeulen, born at Vlissingen in Zeeland, widower of Dina Swarts, married to Christina Fredricks, born at Bergen."

Mr. Vermeulen served Bergen's congregation for about twenty-eight years, and on April 3, 1736, was succeeded by Mr. P. Van Benthuyzen, who in his turn just twenty-five years later, on April 3, 1761, was succeeded by Abraham Sickels. Mr. Sickels was the last of Bergen's Voorlezers, and in 1789, his successor, Mr. John Collard, received the title of "clerk," upon a salary, it appears, of £2 15 shillings per annum.

It seems that the Voorlezer's salary, in the absence of a local pastor, exceeded $f600$, for in 1729 the deacons, on February 17, advanced $f300$ towards his salary, and again on July 27, $f302$. At another time in 1694 they paid to R. Van Giesen, "for back salary," $f401$. Beside his salary as Voorlezer and schoolmaster, the official also charged for his services as bookkeeper and as Aanspreker, and probably received some reward from the people, whose names he entered into the baptismal or marriage records, as it was the custom in neighboring congregations.

THE MINISTER.

From the time of its organization in 1662 till 1750 Bergen had been without a local pastor, and it seems that during all that time, except at the very beginning, no efforts had been made to secure one. The congregation probably was not able to support both a Voorlezer and a minister, and the members were satisfied with the stated weekly readings of their "forereader," and the occasional administrations by pastors from other places, whilst once in a while, in the absence of the local Voorlezer, other members like Uldrick Brouwer or Peter Marcelis took the place of the latter. Bergen's members, there-

fore, heard a great variety of talent in the course of every year, for ministers from all over the country, if they happened to be at New York or in its vicinity, nearly always crossed the North River to preach before Bergen's congregation.

Besides the New York ministers, who, at stated times of the year, very often during week days, administered the Sacraments of Baptism and of the Lord's Supper, admitted new members, installed the elected elders and deacons, and conducted special services, the pastors from Long Island, Hackensack, Esopus, Fish Kill, Tapan, Raritan and several other churches, preached before the pastorless congregation. The names of Revs. John and Samuel Megapolensis, Wilhelmus Nieuwenhuyzen, Caspar Van Zuren, Henricus Selyns, Gualterus Du Bois, J. Wyckstein of Esopus, P. Tassemaker, B. Varick, Godfried Dellius, G. Bertholf, W. Lupardus, B. Freeman of Schenectady, R. Erickson, A. Curtenius, Cornelius Van Schie of Fishkill, J. Leyt, Geo. W. Mancius, Th. Romeyn, J. Ritsema, J. Frelinghuysen, Samuel Verbryck, B. Vrooman, D. Marinus, and and others, often appear in the accounts of the deacons, some of them continually, showing that the little Jersey village was not forgotten by those, who had been called upon to bring the gospel to the Dutch speaking inhabitants of the North American Colonies.

Neither did Bergen's congregation expect those ministers to preach to them for nothing. They received from $f25$ to $f72$ per service, beside expenses and board. The New York ministers had to pay $f6$ to the ferryman and $f6$ for a carriage from the ferry to Bergen, as is shown by the accounts. Peter Marcellis sometimes went for the dominie, but Cornelis Blinkerhof seems to have been the man upon whom devolved this duty, and for years he conveyed the preachers between the two points. About ten years after Rev. Du Bois began his periodical services at Bergen, the Consistory in 1720 resolved to pay him $f6$ whenever he found other means of conveyance, or made use of his feet, upon coming to Bergen to preach. The Van Houten family seem to have enjoyed the monopoly of boarding the ministers, first Helmigh Roelofse Van Houten, and upon his death in November, 1729, Johannis Van Houten. The expenses for board, charged after every visit of the minister to Bergen, amounted to $f12$ n sewan.

On April 1, 1750, the consistory of Bergen met in order to deliberate about calling Dom. Petrus DeWint as joint pastor of Bergen and Staten Island, and resolved to submit the following articles, relative to the proposed call, to the male members of the congregation :

- I. and II. Expressing the desirability of calling Mr. DeWint.
- III. He should live at Bergen.
- IV. Bergen's congregation to build the parsonage.
- V. Bergen shall keep parsonage, fence and grounds in good repair.

VI. The salary shall amount to £80 per year, £40 to be paid by Bergen, and £40 by Staten Island.

VII. He shall have to preach once every Sunday, from November 1 till March 1, and twice from March 1 till November 1. He shall administer the Lord's Supper four times per year, and shall preach a preparatory sermon on the Wednesday preceding the day, set apart for the administration of the Lord's Supper.

VIII. The congregation of Bergen shall supply the minister with sufficient firewood the year round.

IX. Staten Island shall provide the minister, for the first time, with a good carriage horse; but when that horse is no longer able, he shall have to buy one at his own expense. The congregation of Staten Island shall always procure food for the minister's horse.

X. If, on account of wind or rain storm, the minister shall have to remain at Bergen, when, it is Staten Island's turn to have him preach there, he shall, notwithstanding, preach again at Bergen on the following Sunday. But if in winter the ice should prevent him from reaching the Kill Van Kol, then he shall repay those turns to Staten Island as soon as possible.

XI. The congregation of Bergen shall build their minister a house, on grounds next to the church.

XII. Finally resolved that on to-morrow all males who pay for the church and religious services, shall be invited from the pulpit, to appear at the close of the second service (in the afternoon) at the house of Johannis Van Houten, where all the foregoing articles shall be read to them, in order to deliberate about their contents, and to decide by a majority of votes.

The following day Rev. G. Dubois made the announcement from the pulpit, and all invited repaired to Johannis Van Houten's house to discuss the articles, submitted to their approbation. At this meeting some civil affairs were at the same time discussed, as appears from the following: "None of those present had any weighty objections to the proposed articles, but some judged that, according to a resolution of all the inhabitants of Bergen, the lands ought to be surveyed first, in order to find out who has more fenced in than belongs to him. All those present deemed this to be very reasonable, but with few exceptions the assembly resolved that the propositions of the governing consistory were all right, and ought to be acted upon as soon as possible."

"Hereupon it was resolved to submit the articles to the persons, come over from Staten Island, and if the congregation of Staten Island approved of them, to call Dom. Peter DeWint as soon as possible."

"Thereupon the friends of Staten Island were invited to see the Consistory about it. They appeared, and all the articles were sub-

mitted to them. As far as concerned themselves, they did not object to them, but requested a copy to submit it to their congregation. If the congregation accepted the propositions, they would, together with the congregation of Bergen, call Dom. De Wint right away, upon the proposed conditions."

"Hereupon the meeting came to a close."

"N. B.—The articles, copied by Dom. Du Bois, have been called for by the ferryman of Staten Island, sent for that purpose by the Consistory, on April 6, 1750."

Everything was now in order, and on April 17, 1750, Elder Gerrit Post, of Staten Island, and the Consistory of Bergen called upon Rev. Du Bois at New York to make an agreement between the two congregations, and hereupon Mr. De Wint was called as the preacher of the Reformed Churches at Bergen and Staten Island. On July 13, 1750, Mr. De Wint arrived at New York. Rev. G. DuBois, in the forenoon of July 21 following, took his leave of the congregations and introduced to them their new minister, who, in the afternoon of the same day preached his introductory sermon at Bergen as pastor of Bergen and Staten Island, in which capacity he served them for about a year. and then had to leave.

Before the close of 1751 the congregations were again pastorless, but after having once tasted the sweets of the regular preaching of the Gospel, they were desirous for more, and accordingly called, on June 22, 1753, Mr. William Jackson, theological student under Rev. Johannis Frelinghuysen, pastor at Raritan, upon conditions, as set forth in the call below :

"In the fear of the Lord's holy name, amen."

"Whereas, the preaching of God's Holy Word is the means ordained by Him to lead men to salvation: Therefore we, the undersigned elders and deacons, at present forming the Consistories of the combined congregations of Bergen, in the Province of New Jersey, and of Staten Island, in the Province of New York, having heard of the gifts of Mr. William Jackson, student of divinity ; and, whereas our congregations being well pleased and satisfied (with those gifts) and as calling "come over and help us ;" therefore we, having come together, earnestly to discuss the weighty matter about making a call, have, after calling upon the Lord's name, resolved with a unanimous vote to call the aforesaid Mr. Wilhelmus Jackson, as we do by the present, for our ordinary pastor and instructor, in order to administer the holy office among us, in accordance with the requirements of holy writ, of the Reformed Churches and of the discipline established in the Reformed Church of the Netherlands by the Christian Synod, held at Dordrecht in the years 1618 and 1619.

"We call his Reverence upon the following conditions :

“I. His Reverence shall, at the earliest opportunity, sail for Europe in order to be preparatorily examined by some Reverend Classis of the Reformed Church in any of the seven provinces of the United Netherlands, and having become a Ministerii Candidatus, to be peremptorily examined by the Reverend Classis of Amsterdam, and, with the laying up of hands, according to Apostolic and Reformed usage, to be set apart for the holy office, and to be inducted into it.”

“II. His Reverence, having returned to us, shall perform all the requirements of the holy office, viz.: Call upon the God of Heaven, as it behooves a God-fearing pastor and instructor of the Reformed Church of Jesus Christ; preach the Word of God in its purity; administer the holy sacraments according to the institutions of Jesus Christ; exercise the church discipline; visit the sick; instruct the youth, and have a good oversight in all its parts, as far as he is able, over the Church of Jesus Christ.”

“III. His Reverence, when in good health, and the weather being favorable, shall, if it please God, from Easter till the beginning of November, preach twice upon every Lord’s day in the churches of the aforesaid congregations, alternately, upon some text of God’s Holy Word, in the morning; and in the afternoon according to the topics furnished by the Heidelberg Catechism.” “But if wind or floating ice should detain his Reverence, so that on two successive Sabbaths he preaches before the same congregation, then the same will be done in the other church, that every congregation may receive each year the just half of his Reverence’s services.”

“During the rest of the year one sermon per day shall be deemed sufficient.”

“And if the congregation or consistory of the Church of Jesus Christ at Staten Island, should wish for some part of the service to be held in a language in which his reverence is at home, he will not refuse to accommodate them.”

“IV. His Reverence shall observe the church holy days according to the custom of the Reformed Church.”

“V. His Reverence will, if it please God, administer the sacrament of the Lord’s Supper three times per year in every congregation.” [In March, 1769, the consistory of Staten Island resolved to have communion four times a year, probably to give the Dutch and the English portion of the congregation an equal share.—Translator.]

“VI. His Reverence shall, before administering the Lord’s Supper, preach a preparatory sermon, and visit the members at their houses, as much as the weather, the time, and the opportunities will allow.”

“Upon these conditions we, the consistories of Bergen and Staten Island, in our qualities as elders and deacons, for us and our success-

ors, promise from time to time, as long as His Reverence shall be our pastor and instructor, besides all the love, esteem and obedience, due, according to God's Word, to a faithful minister of the gospel, this following, viz.:

1. "We shall pay His Reverence, after accepting and signing this call, £100 current money of the province of New York."

2. "We shall give His Reverence, and keep in good repairs, a decent house, with barn, garden and well, in the village of Bergen, to his, and the congregation's satisfaction."

3. "During the time that His Reverence, in the performance of his duties, shall be at Staten Island, the latter shall provide him with board and decent lodgings. The congregation of Staten Island shall likewise pay for his fare across the ferry."

4. "His Reverence will also receive a good horse with its equipments."

5. "We finally promise to pay His Reverence yearly and for every year, the sum of £100 current money of the province of New York, in two payments, and to pay every half year the right half, each congregation contributing its just quota."

"We, the undersigned, dedicate this call to, and deliver it up into the hands of the aforementioned Mr. Wilhelmus Jackson, wishing of the Lord to incline his heart to accept the same in the fear of the Lord, and praying that it may please the God of heaven, the governor of the world, to conduct him safely across the turbulent element, and to let him return to us with a rich blessing of the Gospel."

"That we are sincere and in earnest in this our act, therefore we put down our signatures and affix our seals in our consistory meeting, held at Bergen, this 22d day of June, in the year 1753."

(Here follow the signatures.)

"In the presence of us as witnesses :

JOHANNIS FRELINGHUYZEN,
V. D. M., at Raritan.

GOSE ADRIANS,
Justice of the Peace and Schildknaap."

(Rev. W. Jackson signed the call on September 10, 1757.)

In the same year, 1753, Mr. Jackson set out for Holland, and the consistory of Bergen, according to its promise, on November 4, 1753, paid him £50, which was undoubtedly also done by the congregation of Staten Island. After an absence of almost four years he returned in 1757, and continued to serve the churches of Bergen and Staten Island till 1789, when mental derangement incapacitated him from

any longer holding his office. The consistory of Bergen then granted him the use of a house and lot. in which he continued to live until his death in 1813.

During Rev. W. Jackson's ministry the church of Bergen was incorporated on December 20, 1771, and in 1792 united with English neighborhood. The two consistories now made a call upon Mr. John Cornelisson candidate for the ministry, which call he accepted, and on May 26, 1793, Revs. Warmoldus Kuypers, W. P. Kuypers, Nich. Lansing and Solomon Freligh ordained and installed him in the church, and before the congregation at Bergen. The Holland tongue now ceased to be the language of the pulpit and of the church records, though in some instances English and Dutch were alternately used in the latter till 1805.

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