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MARIA (TRUAX) VIELE PEECK 1617 - 1671+

Tavern, Broadway, New Amsterdam, 1646 - 1671

Maria Truax, daughter of Philippe du Trieux and his wife Jacquemyne Noirett, was baptized in Leyden, Holland, 5 April 1617 and emigrated with her family to New Amsterdam in 1624. She married first, by 1642, Cornelis Volckertsen Viele, who died early in 1648. She married second, banns published 20 February 1650 at the Dutch Church in New Amsterdam, Jan Peeck. He died c. 1664.

On 13 July 1643 Cornelis Volckersz received a patent for a large double lot on the Great Highway, New Amsterdam, and it was here that the family probably lived, and as Cornelis Volckertsen was a tapster and tavernkeeper, this was probably where the tavern was located.

On 26 April 1646 came the first complaint of the Fiscal against Maria De Truy for selling beer to the Indians. This was a real crime, as a drunken Indian might cause much mischief and often did. As time went on these complaints became more numerous and there can be no doubt but that the accusations were true.

During her husband's absences Maria was a trader and there is evidence in the Records of New Amsterdam that she carried on the work of the tavern at the same time. In March of 1648 Cornelis Volckerse, tavernkeeper, promised to live up to regulations for tapsters and tavernkeepers. Shortly after this, Volckertsen died, for on 20 February 1650 appeared the marriage banns of Marie Volckers widow and Jan Peeck, young man.

There is little recorded by the Court for misdemeanors on the part of the newly married Mrs. Peeck until 19 October 1654 when the following complaint was recorded:

Cornelis Van Tienhoven, as Sheriff of this city, represents to the Court that he has found drinking clubs on divers nights at the house of Jan Peck, with dancing and jumping and entertainment of disorderly people; also tapping during preaching, and that there was great noise made by drunkards, especially yesterday, Sunday, in this house, so that he was obliged to remove one to jail in a cart, which was a most scandalous affair. He demands, therefore, that Jan Peck's license be annulled, and that he pay a fine.

The Worshipful Court...decided, on account of his disorderly housekeeping and evil life tippling, dancing, gaming and other irregularities, together with tapping at night and on Sunday during preaching, to annul his license, and that he shall not tap any more until he shall have vindicated himself.

On 26 October 1654 a further judgment was pronounced: The Court having heard the demand and complaint of the Sheriff, and the acknowledgment of Jan Peck that he has frequently tapped unseasonable after 9 o'clock and bell ringing, and that he allowed the Lieutenant's servant to gamble and dance with Englishmen; also that he tapped on Sunday during the sermon, whereof the officers complaining, requests that deft. Jan Peck be deprived of his business and condemned in addition in the fine enacted; ...Jan Peck is condemned to lose his license and to pay the fine according to the aforesaid placard.

Much chastened, but by no means downed, Peck, a week later, on 2 November requested leave to tap. There is no record that the Court relented, but Peck persisted, because he could not support his large family with no money coming in. On the 9th of November the Court again considered his condition and the fact he had sent them oral and written petitions that he be allowed to pursue his business as before. The Court decided that since he was burdened with a houseful of children "and more besides", and since he was "an old burgher" granted him leave to resume his business, but only on condition that he behave himself, act without blame and not violate either one or the other of the placards, on pain of having his business stopped without favor and himself punished as he deserved if he should be found again in fault.

Alas for human frailty! A month later he was again being prosecuted for illegal tapping. He denied the charge. Then his wife entered a counter suit against the plaintiff, but this time it was learned that Jan Peck had been selling liquor without paying the proper excise tax. He was ordered to make a donation to the poor and not to sell any liquor in future without a permit.

Jan Peck now turned to real estate, to selling more of the Volckertsen land, but early in the new year, 1656, because he

could speak both Dutch and English he was granted permission to act as broker for Dutch and English merchants.

By 24 July 1656 he is called Jan Peeck, Tavernkeeper and he was imprisoned for having beaten and wounded soldier in his house. His defense was that he defended his house because the soldier wanted to run his wife through. The Court declared that "Whereas Jan Peeck is a Burgher here and firmly established, it is ordered that he be released from his confinement."

Maria Truax continued to be in and out of the Court on various complaints and as defendant. On 28 September 1660 Maria was accused of her old crime of tapping after nine o'clock by the Schout, Pieter Tonneman. She denied it, saying that two persons were at her house who counted their money which she owed them and she did not tap a drop. This time she was not fined.

On 18 December 1663 Schout Pieter Tonneman stated that he had found last Sunday at her house Lambert Barendsen and Teunis Tomassen Quick asleep by the fire, drunk; also that Maatseuw's mate was met coming quite drunk from her house; also that she did not have her chimney fixed. Maria denied having tapped for anyone else than Lambert Barendsen and his wife to whom she gave only three pints and that it occurred after the second preaching. She said that Teunis Tomassen Quick came to her house when drunk and lay down there to sleep. About two weeks later she was accused again of selling brandy to the Indians. She had done this once too often and sentence was pronounced by the Court: "Maria Truax fined 500 guilders and costs, and to be banished from the Island of Manhattan."

In January, on the 24th, Maria Truax petitioned the Court: "Maria Peeck, one of the oldest inhabitants of the City of New Amsterdam" asked for a remission of the sentence pronounced against her and for leave to remove to Fort Orange. She is said to have retired to the new settlement of Schenectady for a short period, but the Dutch regime coming to an end not long after her

banishment, she soon returned to New York and was the owner of a house on Hoogh Straet (or Duke's Street as the English began to call it) near the Town Hall.

The last time Maria's name appeared on the records was on 28 February 1670/1 when Isac Forest, as guardian of the children of Mary Peck, stated that the lot sold by him to Joris Janse Van Hoorn and still burdened with a mortgage in favor of Sybrant Janse Van Wien, was bought by Mary Peck. He requested that he be empowered to discharge the said mortgage and to convey the lot.

Maria Truax is said to have lived with her son Jacobus in Schenectady and perhaps to have died there. So exited Maria du Trieux, tavern keeper and wife of two tavern keepers.

- by James Churchyard

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