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MICHIEL JANSEN VREELAND 1610 - 1663

Innkeeper and Brewer, New Amsterdam

Michiel Jansen Vreeland, son of Jan Vreeland, was born 1610 in Scrabbekercke, Zeeland, The Netherlands; died before June 1663 in New Amsterdam. He married in Holland about 163- Fitje Hartman who probably was the daughter of Harman Wessels. She was born c. 1611 and died in Bergen, New Jersey where she was buried 17 October 1697.

Michiel Jansen sailed from Texel on the ship Het Wapen van Noorwegen in May 1638, arriving in New Amsterdam in August 1638 with his wife and two servants. After a few days they continued their trip to Rensselaerswyck Colony where Jansen had originally signed on to be a farm hand, but before he left he had changed his contract to work as a farmer.

In Rensselaerswyck Vreeland was head farmer from 1638 to 1639. From 1640 to 1646 he leased a farm. He was ambitious and had a strong will. He cut himself in on the fur trade, which was illegal, and also sold contraband munitions to the Indians. Needless to say this landed him in trouble and on 12 October 1648 he was arrested and ordered to make an accounting of his affairs.

Vreeland left for the Mannhattans in 1646 and evidently took 3 horses from the Colony with him. The Court kept asking for his accounting and a judgment against him for 2954 guilders, 11 stivers and for 469 guilders and 10 stivers were issued in 1651. Michiel had made a fortune in the fur trade in just a few years.

In Manhattan he leased a bouwerie (farm) which he immediately subleased, purchased the Lasley Plantation and land from Olaff Stevensen van Cortlandt. He sold both in 1653.

In 1646 Vreeland moved to a farm in Pavonia which had some cattle and an unfinished house. In the years 1647, 49 and 1650 he represented Pavonia, (N.J.) in the Council of nine men. In September 1655, he, his wife and six children were the only ones to escape alive when the Indians raided Gemoenepa (Communipaw, N.J.) and the

settlements across Staten Island the the North River. They lost all their possessions and had to start anew by returning to New Amsterdam where lived at what is now the corner of Stone and William Streets.

In November 1655 Michiel opened a tavern at #12 State Street and began to rebuild his fortune. He bought other land and another house in 1656 which was on Beaver Street. At the rear of his house he built a brew house. In 1660, in De Sille's list of inhabitants of New Amsterdam, the place Michiel Janse Vreeland lived was referred to as "The Schrijers Hoeck".

The Vreelands and others who had been forced to leave Pavonia after the Indian raid petitioned to be allowed to return to their former lands to restore their homes. The petition was granted with the provision they form a village for defense and protection and surround it with palisades. When Michiel returned to Pavonia he raised cattle on a large scale and became very successful. In 1660 a new town was formed on land lying behind Gemoenepa and named Bergen. Michiel Jansen was one of the first magistrates of the first court of justice in New Jersey. He died about June 1663 leaving his wife Ritje with much property which she ably handled. She lived many years after her husband and was buried in Bergen on 17 October 1697, leaving all the lands to her seven children.

-Helen Grey Henning Wright

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