

Everyday Life in a Dutch Colony

An Educational Resource
from the
New York State Archives

Compelling Question: How do people succeed in a new place or environment?



Courtesy: Len Tantillo

Bakers in the Colony

Objective: Describe the purpose of bakers in the colony and explain how bakers contributed to daily life in the colony.

Essential Question: How did bakers contribute to the growth and success of the colony?

Historical Background:

Bread was the main staple of the Dutch diet both in the Netherlands and in the colony of New Netherland. Residents of the colony ate at least three times a day and bread was a key part of every meal. Bread in New Netherland was made mostly from wheat which could be grown in abundance in this part of the world. Bakers baked both rye and wheat bread. White bread was the most desirable bread and therefore was consumed mainly by the wealthier residents of the colony.

Baking was a labor-intensive process that required significant amounts of time. The ovens were built with large bricks designed to stay hot for long periods of time. First, the baker would heat the oven with wood and clean out the residue when the oven was hot enough. Then the oven would be wiped clean with a wet cloth attached to the end of a stick. The baker had to knead the dough by hand or foot. Rye bread had to bake for 12 hours, while wheat bread had to rise twice and bake for an hour. The baker would blow his horn when the bread was ready so that his customers would know they could now purchase the bread and other baked goods.

The large amount of wheat bread and rye bread produced by Dutch colonial bakers reflects the influence of geography on colonial life. The abundance of natural resources necessary for the production of large quantities of wheat allowed for the increased production of the more desirable white bread. The availability of resources also allowed for the production of holiday treats like sweet breads, cakes, and cookies.

Documents:

1. Baker Account (Receipt)

Anno 75 in March			
Settled with Madam Van Rensselaer and paid for everything and baked once more			
3 <i>schepels</i> of Dutch rusks is	7 guilders	10 stivers	
in May for cookies	2	10 st	
baked in July 3 <i>schepels</i> of Dutch rusks	7	10 st	
in November 2 <i>schepel</i> of Dutch rusks	5		
All together 32 loafs of white bread were fetched this year	10	10 st	
Anno 1676			
Fetched again white bread, and there is fetched in total until now in December			
87 loafs of white bread is	77		
had cake, in 3 times	30	9 st	
2 Dutch rusks	1	1 st	[4???
carterd a load		4 st	
toward Saint Nicolas goodies		12 st	
baked 2 <i>schepels</i> of Dutch rusks	2	10 st	
18 loafs of white bread were fetched at the funeral of Brucke	5		
given 25 guilders in sewant	6	6 st	
	25		
Wouterde backer	sum	145	2 st
	Say	105	2 stivers

Baker's account from Wouter de backer, March 1675 (NYSL SC7079) Translated by JannyVenema

1. What is the purpose of this document?
2. What is the baker providing to the Van Rensselaer Family?
3. Summarize the contents of this document. Use evidence from the document to support your summary.

Document 2

The Baker
Job Berckheyde, 1681



Courtesy: Worcester Museum of Art

JOB BERCKHEYDE

Dutch, 1630-93

The Baker, about 1681

Oil on canvas

Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Milton P. Higgins

1975.105

1. Who is portrayed in this painting?
2. List all the objects in this painting.
3. Describe the scene in this painting.

Feast of St. Nicholas
Jan Steen, 1665-1668



Courtesy: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam

The Feast of St Nicholas

SK-A-385

painter: Jan Havicksz. Steen

1665 – 1668

oil on canvas

1. Who is portrayed in this painting?
2. List all the objects in this painting.
3. Describe the event depicted in this painting.

Recipes

(Taken from *The Sensible Cook: Dutch Foodways in the Old and New World* Translated and Edited by Peter G. Rose)

Small Seed Cakes

This recipe was adapted to use modern measures.

1/2 cup butter

1 cup sugar

2 eggs

2 cups flour

1 tablespoon caraway seed, bruised in the mortar with a pestle

Cream the butter with the sugar. Add eggs one by one and incorporate thoroughly. Add seeds and flour a little at a time, stir well. Use 2 teaspoons to shape the cookies about the size of a nutmeg and place them on a buttered baking sheet. Bake at 350 degrees for about 15 minutes, until the rims are browned. Makes 4 dozen.

Spiced Sweet Bread (*Deventerkoek*)

1 cup dark brown sugar, packed

2 cups flour

1 teaspoon baking powder

1 teaspoon cinnamon

½ teaspoon freshly grated nutmeg

½ teaspoon ground cloves

1 cup milk

Combine first six ingredients. Slowly add milk to make dough without lumps. Pour into greased loaf pan. Bake at 350 degrees for 1 hour. Loaf will be deep brown.

Assessment:

Part one: Reading

Determine the main idea for each document.

Part two: Paragraph Writing

Using evidence from the documents, describe the life of a baker in a Dutch colony.

Part three: Explanatory/Informative Writing

Using evidence from the documents, explain the importance of bakers in the Dutch colony.

Blacksmiths in the Colony

Objective: Describe the purpose of blacksmiths in the colony and explain how blacksmiths contributed to daily life in the colony.

Essential Question: How did blacksmiths contribute to the growth and success of the colony?

Historical Background: Blacksmiths played a key role in the development and success of colonial communities. Blacksmiths were responsible for producing most iron objects like horse shoes, hinges, locks, nails, and keys. In addition to production, these metal workers also were hired to repair items like wagons and sleighs. Individuals learned the blacksmith trade through apprenticeships which they entered in their early teenage years.

[Contract of Jan Karstensen to serve Remmert Jansen as a blacksmith] [70a] [I, Jan Karstensen], acknowledge that I have voluntarily and deliberately hired and bound myself as a blacksmith to Remmert Jansen for the term of eight months, beginning on this date and ending the sixteenth of April 1644; for which he shall receive twelve guilders per month, promising to conduct himself faithfully and diligently in his work as a blacksmith.
Done the 16th of August 1643. This is the **X** mark of Jan Karstensen Ren Yansen Acknowledged before me, Cornelis van Tienh., secretary

Courtesy New York State Archives

70a, Volume 2, Register of the Provincial Secretary, 1642-1647 Translation

Blacksmith Account from the Van Rensselaer Papers (NYSL SC7079) Translated by Janny Venema

Jeremias van Renselaer debet

made [?] anchors	f	12
2 irons for a [<i>spanse</i> ?] ¹ used 8 lbs of iron for this		4,, 16
made 2 wedges 2 hoops		4
an iron for the ridge of the house weighing 24 lbs		14,, 8
sharpened a plough share [<i>schaar</i>] ²	x	2,,12
sharpened a plough share	x	2,,
shoed a horse		8,,
made tongs		4,,
repaired two chains		1 – 4
made 5 clamps		1 – 10
made a hook on a sleigh with a handle	x	2,,
adjusted a bolt on a plough		--12
made 6 bracket for a gutter		12
repaired a chain		1
sharpened a plough-share and a coulter	x	2
reshaped [<i>beschlaagen</i>] a plough	x	3
sharpened a plough-share and a coulter	x	3
made a clapper [<i>knepel</i>] ³ and a cowbell.	x	,, 8
sharpened a plough-share and a coulter	x	6
welded a bracket [clamp?] to a plough with a bolt	x	1
welded a coulter, say, sharpened, welded 2 fittings	x	2,, 4
made 6 harrow teeth	x	6
made three hoops on the bucket	x	1,,10

¹ *spanse* could be a system of bearing iron rods.

² *een schaar* can also mean a pair of scissors, but the context makes clear that it is part of a plough.

³ Mijndert Fredericksz, the blacksmith uses the word *knepel*, but he probably means *een klepel*. The smith is originally from Ieveren in East Friesland (Germany). In German the word is *Der Knebel*. The German word *beschlaagen* (2 lines higher) also suggests that he, his brother Carsten (also a blacksmith) and their families still spoke the dialect from that area.

shoed a horse	x	2
made a handle for the churning staff	x	1,,10
made two bolts		1
repaired a lock		1
a clapper and a cowbell	x	.,[8
a handle to a kettle	x	.,[8
delivered 2 axes	x	4,, -
sharpened the plough-share and the coulter	x	3,,
repaired a hammer [<i>haar hamer</i>] ⁴	x	: [
sharpened a plough-share	x	2,,
made a cowbell	x	2,,
made a clapper a cowbell	x	.,[
made a shaft and a rack		6[
repaired a plough-share and/with a shield ⁵	x	3[
repaired a bolt with a ring an the bolt		
made [?] anchors		4[
made [a] grip ⁶		

4] hammer (to sharpen a scythe)⁷.

Adj 5 7^{ber} received by Mijndert Fre^{dr}. Sum[

The blacksmith Mijndert Fredericksz was in Beverwijck as early as 1655. He had a brother Carsten, who was a master smith. They had their smithy at the corner of present-day State Street and Broadway. Mijndert made also hardware for the poorhouse. He was still alive in 1704.

1. Summarize the main idea of this document.
2. Sort the items listed into categories based on their use.
3. Explain why these items were important to settlers.

⁴ A *haarhamer* is a hammer to sharpen a scythe.

⁵ The original word is *schil*, which means a skin, or peelings (of fruit etc). Perhaps he meant the Dutch word *schild/schilt*, which could be a shield. The word *met* means with, but was also used in the meaning of and.

⁶ A *houvast* could mean something to hold on to, or to hold something, such as a handle. It can also mean that it holds something together, such as a clamp, or a bolt. In that meaning it could also be a pointed iron pin that goes through a wall with on the other end a piece of flat iron (to keep the wall together).

⁷ See note 4.

Interior of a Smithy
Gabriel Metsu, 1657



Courtesy: National Gallery London

Interior of a Smithy

Gabriel Metsu, 1657

Salting Bequest, 1910

NG2591

Oil on canvas

1. Who is portrayed in this painting?
2. List all the objects in this painting.
3. Create categories and sort the items in the painting into those categories.

Artifacts

Adz

Hay Fork

Horse Shoe

Bit

Knife Blade

Hammer Head

Hoe

Mathook and Sith

Nails

Iron Spike

Scissors

Iron Fire Tongs

Fork and Knife

Farming in Rensselaerswyck

Essential Question:

What role did farming play in the life of the colony at Rensselaerswyck?

Historical Background:

The West India Company brought the first settlers to New Netherland to gather beaver pelts to sell back in the Netherlands but they had a hard time finding enough people to settle the colony. In an effort to attract more people, the company decided to give private entrepreneurs pieces of land in New Netherland if the entrepreneurs (patroons) promised to ship fifty colonists to it within four years. So, in 1631, a Dutch diamond merchant named Kiliaen van Rensselaer bought a large tract of land around Fort Orange from the Mahicans who had long lived there. He established a "patroonship," or private farming community, which he named Rensselaerswijck. Many patroons bought land, but Kiliaen Van Rensselaer was the only one who was able to build a successful colony. His patroonship, Rensselaerswyck, lasted into the nineteenth century, passing down through generations of the Van Rensselaer family.

Kiliaen Van Rensselaer never visited America, but he worked hard to make his patroonship a success. Rensselaerswyck grew quickly, with a steady stream of farmers and tradesmen coming from Europe. Farming was the main activity in the patroonship. The products of farming were used to support the growing patroonship, but also the settlers in colonies nearby. Van Rensselaer had thought that the nearby West India Company settlement of Fort Orange, in the area of present day Albany, and his own colony of Rensselaerswyck would be mutually supporting: the fort would provide protection, and the patroonship would supply the fort with goods. Van Rensselaer hoped to make a profit by selling goods to the settlers in the fort. But the two settlements were so close to each other that they competed for profits, leading to a tense relationship between the patroon and the West India Company that controlled the fort.

Common Core Standards:

- RH 9.1 ***Cite specific textual evidence to support analysis*** of primary and secondary sources, attending to such features as the date and origin of the information.
- RH 9.2 ***Determine the central ideas*** or information of a primary or secondary source; provide an accurate summary of how key events or ideas develop over the course of text.
- RH 9.4 ***Determine the meaning of words and phrases*** as they are used in a text, including vocabulary describing political, social, or economic aspects
- WHST 9.8 ***Gather relevant information*** from multiple authoritative print and digital sources, using advanced searches effectively; assess the usefulness of each source in answering the research question; integrate

information into the text selectively to maintain the flow of ideas, avoiding plagiarism and following a standard format of citation.

- WHST 9.9 ***Draw evidence from informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research***

Assessment

Imagine you are a farmer in Rensselaerswyck in the early years of settlement. Write a letter to your family back in the Netherlands describing your daily life and work.

Documents:

Contract between Kiliaen van Rensselaer and Gerrit Theusz de Reux June 13, 1632

Contract made and entered into by Kiliaen van Rensselaer, as patron of his colony (named Rensselaerswyck, situated on the river Mauritius or North River of New Netherland, above and below Fort Orange and on both sides of the said river), with Gerrit Teeusen de reux, as farmer of a farm to be established on the Fort Orange side near the fourth creek now called Blommaerts kit, situated above or to the north of Fort Orange, this 15th of June in the year 1632 in Amsterdam

First the aforesaid Gerrit de Reux shall bind himself by oath and on forfeiture of his stipulated wages and the goods which he may have in that country that neither he nor his men shall trade in prohibited furs, especially in otters or beavers, or obtain the same by way of present or other means without express consent from the West India Company and his aforesaid patroon. The patroon shall furnish Gerrit de Reux aforesaid, out of the animals which he has in that country if they are still alive and to be had :

four horses, if it is possible the same which Gerrit aforesaid used before

also three cows as above

also two heifer calves as above

also four sows as above

The aforesaid de Reux shall further do his best with the assistance of the smiths and the carpenters of the Company that the aforesaid house may at the very first opportunity be erected, roofed and surrounded by wooden palisades. Also that he may be provided with wagon and plow by the wheelwright.

And what he thinks can not be obtained in that country, he shall buy here at the expense of the patroon, taking care on the voyage over that the purchased goods shall be well kept. On the ship he shall with his men look after the calves which the patroon shall send thither by the ship on which he is to sail.

Further, the aforesaid Gerrit shall be bound to engage here a good farm servant and a boy at the expense of the patroon, and on his arrival there still another servant shall be added if possible. The patroon shall pay the wages and board of the servants and boy till the first of May 1634 and shall pay him, Gerrit de Reus, 180 guilders a year, from the time of his arrival in that country till the first of January 1634. All the crops and increase of live stock, likewise milk and butter and all other profits till the first of January 1634 shall therefore be for the behoof of the patroon.

After the first of January 1634, Gerrit de Reux shall obtain out of the aforesaid stock four horses, four cows, two heifers and so many sheep and hogs as he can raise and this on the following conditions, for four years, without leaving the service in the meantime on forfeiture as above; and from that time on, he shall no longer receive wages. The wages and board of the laborers, boy and the house servants from the first of May 1634, and also all other expenses whatever they may be called, as well as the damage and loss of live stock, wear and tear of wagons and plows, in short anything and everything, from the first of January 1634 on, shall be paid out of the common fruits, products, milk, butter, cheese and increase of stock; and of the surplus one half shall be for the aforesaid patron and the other half for the aforesaid Gerrit de Reux, it being understood that the increase of the stock shall be reserved for the patroon on condition that he may compensate the said Gerrit for the same at the rate fixed heretofore by the West India Company.

Every two years an inventory of the stock shall be taken and for one half of what shall be found above the four horses, four cows and two heifers, Gerrit de Reux shall as above receive compensation, the patroon having however the privilege of taking the said increase for himself or not, and if there be less than the above number, the aforesaid de Reux must try to raise so many that he reaches that number and shall not be entitled to any profit till the said number is again complete.

The aforesaid de Reux shall raise as many sheep and hogs as possible, and of what he sells thereof one half the proceeds shall go to the patroon and the other half to himself.

Of the winter wheat which is to be sown in the fall of 1633, one half shall be for the benefit of the aforesaid Gerrit de Reux on condition that the last year he deliver to the patroon, first of all, as much grain as he received the first year.

As to the butter, cheese, grain and other products which he may have on hand the first of January 1634, the same shall be appraised and accounted for to the patroon out of the common expenses.

Concerning the passage over, the patroon shall urge as much as possible that Gerrit aforesaid may receive the wages of a boatswain, but if this can not be arranged they must both see what they can do about the passage.

But the patroon shall pay the board of the servants during the passage.

Gerrit de Reux aforesaid shall also cause the yearly manure to be distributed over the land in the most advantageous manner, without wasting it.

The patroon shall provide the aforesaid de Reux with two good firelocks, on condition that each pay half.

Thus done and passed in the city of Amsterdam, and for all that is aforewritten, the said de Reux pledges and binds all his personal possessions, movable and immovable, present and future, none excepted, subjecting the same to the execution of all the honorable courts and judges; in witness whereof it is signed by him on the 15th of June 1632, new style.

[signed] The mark X of Gerrit Teeusen de reuse

Discussion Questions:

- What is GerritTheusz de Reux contracted to do for the patroon?
- What does de Reux get out of the contract? What does the patroon get?
- Who decides what kinds of crops and livestock are on de Reux's farm? Who supplies them?
- What might de Reux's crops and livestock be used for?

List of animals in the colony of Rensselaerswyck VRBM p. 220

List of animals in the colony of Rensselaerswyck

July 20, 1632

Classification of the animals belonging to the colony of Rensselaerswyck with specification of the persons from whom I have obtained them, this 20th of July 1632

Mares 3 from the farm of Evert focken — there remains still 1 belonging to the Company.

1 bought of the stave splitters has died in the possession of Rutger

4 bought of the Company, 1630, which are now all fully 3 1/3 years old

4 from the farm of Gerrit de Reux which bore colts

2 from the farm of Bylevelt which bear colts

Total 13

Stallions 2 foaled in 1630, bought of Pr minuijt

1 foaled in 1630, from the farm of Bylevelt

2 old ones bought of the Company, on the farm of Roelof jansen

1 thrown in 1629, bought of the Company, coming from minuijt

1 thrown in 1630 bought of minuijt. N. B. This shall be yours provided you give me some colts thrown May 1632 in return

1 thrown in 1630 or 1631, bought of Gerrit de Reus

1 colt, thrown in 1631, on the farm of Rutger; do not know whether it is a stallion or a mare

Total 22 horses with the increase which they have had [till] May 1632. Among these are probably 20 fit for work, even if you took the stallions from them, so that at least five farms could be stocked therewith.

Milch cows 2 from the farm of Evert focken

0 i ditto died on the farm aforesaid

2 bought of Minuyt

5 delivered by Gerrit de Reux to nootelman; should have been only 4, received therewith only 1 yearling and I have paid for the increase in value to Reux, to wit,

5bought from the farm of Bylevelt

1bought of the surplus of Bylevelt

Total 15 cows

Heifers 1 then a yearling, with the 5 cows of Reux. There are 4 cows and 2 yearlings instead of 5 cows and 1 yearling. Extra payment as above f50

2 born 1630, bought of Reux

4 born 1630, bought of minuyt

1 born 1630, bought of bylevelt

1 born 1630, bought of the farm of bylevelt

Total 24 animals, most of which will have calved in May 1632 and with which at least 5 farms can be stocked and Laurens Laurensen noorman be given 2 or 3 besides.

4 heifer calves born 1631, of the 8 sent over with nootelman

1 ditto born 1631, raised by Rutger hendrixsen

1 ditto born 1631, from the farm of Bylevelt

30 heifers and calves

also 10 yearling bulls and oxen, to wit, 1 yearling ox bought of Reux, 4 which Rutger hendrixsen has had, 2 bought of minuijt and 3 of Bylevelt

also 6 heifer calves which will now go across with Reux by this ship; cost f8i 113

The purchased hogs with the increase of young pigs, you will please also distribute over the five farms and, as I have now a fair quantity of animals, the farmers can give the hogs the surplus buttermilk to drink and have those that can not be sold in the country killed toward winter when

they are fat, and salted and cured, and if due attention is given thereto I imagine that it can be made a source of great profit, as they can get most of their food from the woods.

Discussion Questions:

- What kinds of animals are in the colony?
- What might they be used for?

Letter J.B. Van Rensselaer to Jeremias Van Rensselaer

FROM JAN BAPTIST VAN RENSSELAER

[] van Baerle in the *Meulen* [] casks of tobacco to mother [].

I asked you to let me know whether cousin Hans paid the order to Steenwyck or not and to advise me at the same time how much the tobacco weighed, of which you make no mention. Do not forget to have the tobacco weighed, as I wrote you before.

As to the voyage which you intend to make in going with the General to the South River, I wish you good luck and commend you to God. It was not convenient for me at this time to come down, otherwise I would have done so and brought with me what you ordered and what I am now sending down in Sander's yacht, to wit, boots and spurs, saddle and bridle, innocent and leather doublet, *Jan Saterdagh* and baldric, which you can demand from the skipper, paying him for the freight.

Your horse is still sleek and fat. The tobacco begins to ripen. Claes de Wael has weeded it. I bought a Negro of Madam, the widow of Roodenburgh, deceased. Be pleased to inquire about it and to select one of the best. Look for one who is quick in his movements and sound of limb. Then describe him and the Madam will send him up the river with others.

Ending herewith, I commend you, after greetings to S^rOloffStevense and his wife, to the protection of the Lord and remain,

Your affectionate brother

J. B. VAN RENSSELAER

In Rensselaerswyck

pr^{mo} September 1657

Addressed:

Mons^r

Mons^rJeremias van Rensselaer

in New Amsterdam

Discussion Questions:

- What crop does the author talk about in the letter?
- Why might the patroon have people growing tobacco in his colony? What might he do with it?
- The author gives some suggestions about selecting "one of the best" "Negroes". What is he referring to?

Ordinance Regulating the Picking of Hops VRBM p. 716

Ordinance regulating the picking of hops 25 August 31, 1644

The honorable court of the colony of Rensselaerswyck, noticing the great evil which occurs yearly by the untimely picking of the hops which tends largely to the loss and detriment of this colony, and wishing to remedy this, have ordered and thought fit, as they hereby do order and think fit, that no one shall be allowed to pick any hops in this colony or to carry any hops that are picked outside into the colony before the 25th of September of each year, on forfeiture of the said picked hops and an additional fine of 25 Carolus guilders whenever any one is found to act contrary to this ordinance; and the hops which have been picked or are being picked at present shall be burned by the officer of this colony, as they are not merchantable hops and cause great fraud by being mixed with others and otherwise. Therefore, let every one take heed and guard himself against loss. Done in council, this 31st of August 1644.

By order of the honorable court of this colony of Rensselaerswyck.

Underneath was written:

Arendt Van Curler, Secretary.

Discussion Questions:

- What are hops used for?
- Why might the patroon have people growing hops in his colony? What might they be used for?
- What instructions does the patroon give about picking the hops? Why?

Receipt for the Sale of Two Horses and Two Cows to Abraham Clock (p. A39 De Hooges)

On this date, the 30th of April in the year 1646, De Hooges, in the name of the honorable Lord Patroon, has sold to Abraham Clock two horses carrying foals and two cows, of which one has calved and the other is carrying a calf, included in this sale was a f41 advance on a number of beaver pelts and half of a vat of beer, as appears in the Ledger of the Colony of Rensselaerswijck, volume F, on folio 20, for the sum of six hundred and ten guilders, deducted from his account, as it appears in the aforementioned book in more detail. Dated as above.

Abram Clock

The first horse is called the Fast One, the other, the Old Grey; one cow is called the Little Momma, the other is a white-headed heifer of a sort no longer at de Vlackte. Abraham Clock is liable for these cattle and horses, provided they are watched like the others of de Vlackte.

Discussion Questions:

- Abraham Clock was a carpenter by trade, not a farmer. Why do you think he wanted two horses and two cows?

Creekside by Len Tantillo, 2009



Discussion Questions:

- Based on the painting, what are some of the advantages to farming in Rensselaerswyck? What are some of the disadvantages?
- What might daily life have been like on a farm like this?

Glossary

Baldric – a belt designed for holding an object such as a sword on a person's hip
Skipper – the captain of a vessel
Freight – the cargo of a vessel
Innocent – an article of clothing
Doublet – a man's snug-fitting jacket
Jan Saterdaggh – a type of sword
Yacht - boat
Milch – milk
Foaled – born as foals
Stave – a narrow strip of wood or iron used to band together a barrel or other vessel
Increase – the offspring of animals or people
Heifer – cow
Yearling – a horse between one and two years old
Untimely – happening at the wrong time
Detriment - disadvantage
Remedy – fix
Forfeiture – the act of surrendering something as a penalty
Merchantable – able to be sold
Stipulated – agreed to
Aforesaid – mentioned before
Palisade – a defensive fence made from wooden stakes
Behoof - benefit
Sow – female pig
Boatswain – a ship's officer
Compensate – pay
Firelock – a type of musket
Subjecting – placing under the control of

Artifacts

Hay Fork
Horse Shoe
Bit
Hoe