

THE FIRST FRONTIER—THE SWEDES AND THE DUTCH

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IN THE belief that Frederick Jackson Turner's much debated "frontier theory" is still in need of such documentary examination as Turner himself suggested, but did not carry out, this essay proposes to discuss it in relation to the history of the Dutch and Swedish colonies of approximately the first half of the seventeenth century. These colonies belong to the Middle Atlantic region, identified by Turner as the typical American area. They are moreover part of his "first frontier" along the Eastern seaboard.

Turner stated his thesis in broad terms. In the preface to *The Frontier in American History*, he said, "The larger part of what has been distinctive and valuable in America's contribution to the history of the human spirit has been due to this nation's peculiar experience in extending its type of frontier into new regions." The opening paragraph of the first and most famous of his essays offers a somewhat more definite contention. "The existence of an area of free land, its continuous recession, and the advance of American settlement westward, explain American development."¹

Turner himself never advanced any closely reasoned amplification of this essential theme, nor any extensive documentation of it. Analysis shows, however, his further belief that the influence of the frontier was both destructive and constructive, and that it acted to bring about changes in four manifestations of human activity, the personal, the political, the economic, and the religious. In the category of personality, he was most emphatic and least explicit.² Here he asserted that the frontier established a "com-

¹ Frederick Jackson Turner, *The Frontier in American History* (Holt, New York, 1921), p. 1.

² For a criticism of Turner in this and other respects, the reader is referred to George Wilson Pierson, "The Frontier and Frontiersmen of Turner's Essays," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, vol. LXIV (1940), pp. 449 ff.

posite" nationality, developed individualism, emphasized certain intellectual traits such as inventiveness and a constructive materialism, favored a laxity of morals, encouraged emotional buoyancy and exuberance, and produced an "idealism" that pervaded all fields of thought and action. In politics, he pointed to the "precipitation" and dissolving of European systems, to the formation of a government distinct from that of Europe, and to the promotion of democracy. In economics, he spoke of the demand for "a more liberal policy," the assumption of "squatters' rights," and of trade as a motive for exploration and expansion and as a basis for a new nationalism. The growth of dissent, the demand for religious liberty, and changes in religious organization were, he thought, the result of frontier life.

Although he did not deny the presence of European "germs," he believed the frontier to be the predominating factor, outweighing all others.

Criticism of Turner on this point has been outspoken and emphatic. Conceding a peculiar influence to the frontier, some of his commentators have argued that "it gave a distorted picture of American cultural history to concentrate upon its differences from other cultural history."³ The borrowing of political institutions and practices by the newer from the older states, the reconstruction (immediately behind the outermost fringe of the frontier) of the elements of European or Eastern civilization, the repetition on the frontier of ideas as old as history itself, the inevitable continuity of culture—all have been brought up as evidence against the unquestioning acceptance of the frontier thesis. Where this point of view is carried to an extreme, the origins of democratic thought in colonial America are sought in the Europe of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.⁴

A third opinion—that the freehold farmer rather than the frontiersman was the author of modern America—may be regarded as an extension rather than as a contradiction of Turner's theory, since it depends upon definition. Turner, though he did not believe it necessary to give a strict definition of the frontier,

³ Dixon Ryan Fox, ed., *Sources of Culture in the Middle West, Backgrounds versus Frontier* (Appleton, New York, 1934), p. 7.

⁴ Charles McLean Andrews, *Colonial Period of American History* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1934). Andrews puts it (Preface, vol. 1, p. xiii) that "the seventeenth century shows us an English world in America, with but little in it that can strictly be called American."

advanced two general statements. By the first, the frontier is "the meeting point between savagery and civilization."⁵ By the second, taken from the census, it is the "margin of that settlement which has a density of two or more to the square mile."⁶ For the purpose of this discussion, history itself has chosen between them. The Dutch and Swedish settlements of the first half of the seventeenth century never reached, over all, the density of population required by the latter.⁷ It is a corollary to that fact, and to other facts to be brought out later, that the freehold farmer never played a dominant part within the area and period, but achieved numbers only after 1650, to bring about a second phase of frontier development.

Here then the issue is plainly between the European heritage and the American environment. The environment is that of the Eastern woodlands, of which the forests were largely uncleared, which was inhabited by the powerful Indian confederacies of the Algonquians and the Iroquois. Two great waterways, the Delaware and the Hudson, provided ingress into the territory. The frontier is in its first phase, along the vague and wavering line where savagery and civilization were brought to a meeting.

The early years of New Netherland and New Sweden are peculiarly suited to contribute to the discussion. As has already been said, Turner himself identified the Eastern seaboard as the first frontier, its typical area the Middle Atlantic region.⁸ There the kind of frontier under consideration lasted longer than it did to north or south, since the emigrant population was slower to fill up the land and force the frontier fringe further west. Yet the efforts of the chartered companies under which settlement took place, the reports of their officers, and the writings of those who were settlers themselves or watched the process of settlement have left records adequate to the purpose.

These records will be examined for (1) the reaction of the individual to life in the wilderness, (2) the effect of the frontier upon established institutions, political, economic, and religious, and (3) the creation of new institutions along the frontier.

⁵ Turner, *The Frontier*, p. 3.

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ The population of the whole province of New Netherland was less than seven thousand, as late as 1664. Andrews, *Colonial Period*, Vol. III, p. 78.

⁸ Turner, *The Frontier*, pp. 4, 27, 67, et al.

The first reporter of personal behavior among the people of New Netherland, Isaac de Rasières, found that by 1626—only two years after the first settlement—its inhabitants had “become quite lawless,” had got bad habits and forgotten “their bounden duty and the respect they owe your Honors” (the Directors of the West India Company). They resented correction. They were profane, rough, and showed a “lazy unconcern” with regard to their bounden duty.⁹ Michaelius, their minister, at the same time noted that “the people, for the most part, are rather rough and unrestrained,” “not very industrious,” “jealous of each other,” “not very serviceable to the company.”¹⁰ They indulged in disputes and litigation. Not only the common people, but the officers drank excessively.¹¹ De Vries, sea-captain and patroon, called the latter, “fools . . . who know nothing except to drink.”¹² All are avaricious, and look for personal profit—“the servants of the Company, serving for hire, are only seeking to make a good deal of money and then get away.”¹³

Physical violence played a large part in the community. The early records and laws of New Amsterdam show a surprising incidence of stabbings, assaults, quarrels, and similar activities, along with the efforts made to prevent their occurrence.¹⁴

The brutalities of frontier life are sometimes presented baldly, without comment. An investigation of Indian troubles brought out the following testimony about a certain Hunthum, an official of the West India Company:

3. Whether a misunderstanding did not arise between himself and Honton, who had taken prisoner one of the [Indian] chiefs.

Yes.

4. Whether, although the ransom was paid by the chief's subjects, Honton, in spite of his promise, did not

⁹ A. J. F. Van Laer, trans. and ed., *Documents Relating to New Netherland, 1624-1626* (Henry E. Huntington Library, 1924). Doc. F, pp. 187-188, 207-8.

¹⁰ J. Franklin Jameson, ed., *Narratives of New Netherland, 1609-1664* (Scribner, New York, 1909), pp. 123, 132, 130, 125.

¹¹ A. J. F. Van Laer, ed., *Van Rensselaer Bowier Manuscripts*. Ninetieth Annual Report N. Y. State Library (Albany, 1908). Vol. II, Supplement 7, pp. 267, 269, 622.

¹² Jameson, *Nar. New Neth.*, pp. 186-189, 191.

¹³ Van Laer, *V. R. B. Mss.*, p. 247.

¹⁴ Berthold Fernow, *Records of New Amsterdam, 1553-1674* (Knickerbocker Press, 1897), Vol. I, pp. 35-36, and *passim*.

emasculate the chief, hang the severed member on the stay and so killed the Sakima.

Yes.¹⁵

Hunthum later met his reward at the hands of a Dutchman who, during a quarrel, stabbed him to death.

De Vries, outraged by the behaviour of his compatriots toward the Indians, exclaimed against the Dutch "acts of tyranny" perpetrated upon the savages of Staten Island, and the wholesale murders of Kieft's war, and warned Kieft "that this murder which he had committed on so much innocent blood would yet be avenged upon him."¹⁶ The Indians, he said, "although they are bad enough, will do you no harm if you do them none."¹⁷

In their own protest, quoted by De Vries, the Indians cited the promiscuity of the Europeans—"they had given them their daughters to sleep with, by whom they had begotten children, and there roved many an Indian who was begotten by a Swanneken, but our people had become so villainous as to kill their own blood."¹⁸

Kiliaen van Rensselaer, absentee patroon of Rensselaerswyck, found it necessary to issue warnings against intercourse with Indian women, debauchery, drunkenness, irregularity "both in secular and spiritual matters," cheating, indebtedness, quarreling, fighting, and laziness.¹⁹ Thievery, breach of contract, extravagance, licentiousness and wantonness—his reproaches against his tenants repeat themselves and gain in bitterness. He believed that the people were spoiled. "The people there live in too much luxury, those who are located here [in Europe] on the frontiers where war is would thank God to have such conditions."²⁰

He found not only the common people at fault. Although he defended his nephew Van Twiller from the aspersions of outsiders, he himself admonished the Director for vanity, drunken-

¹⁵ Van Laer, *V. R. B. Mss.*, p. 302.

¹⁶ Jameson, *Nar. New Neth.*, p. 234.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 211.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 231. "Swanneken" is one of the variations of the Indian word given in Daniel Brinton's *Lenape-English Dictionary* as "Schwonack," meaning European (salt man, or man from the sea). Brinton, D. G. and Anthony, H. S., *A Lenape-English Dictionary* (Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1888), p. 130.

¹⁹ Van Laer, *V. R. B. Mss.*, pp. 211, 330, 352, 442, 417, 615, 622, 686-697 et al.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 561.

ness, laziness and carelessness, lack of respect to the church, imprudence, and general intemperance.²¹

It is easy to find documentation for the lawless behavior of the early settlers, and there is no doubt of its authenticity. On the other hand, the evidence should be accepted with a certain caution. The lawbreaker was far more likely to find a place in the records than was his lawabiding brother. Moreover, certain of the accusations fall into the class of those made by every employer against his employee. The laziness so often complained of was very likely often the result of illness. Quarrelsomeness might be translated into more complimentary terms such as vigor and independence; avarice into a not unnatural desire to accumulate a small personal property. But the truth remains that there was a general relaxation of the moral code.

This appears also among the Swedes. Arraigned before Rising, the governor, because of the mutiny against Printz, his predecessor, Matts Hansson, spokesman for the colonists, replied "We confess there has been a disorderly and riotous life here and that many have deserted; this gives us pain."²² The blanket admission will serve to take the place of a catalogue, many of the items of which agree with those already given for the Dutch, although personal misbehavior seems, among the Swedes, to have been less common and less extreme.

It is perhaps less a reflection upon the colonists than upon human proclivities in general, that it is more difficult to find testimony to their virtues than their vices. In some instances, facts must speak for them. In taking up their scattered farms and in conducting their Indian trade, they certainly showed courage and independence. Those who remained in New Sweden and New Netherland in spite of scanty food or actual starvation, in spite of disease and violent death, must have possessed a hardihood that can only be imaginatively measured. For all of their warnings that they could not survive without help from home—help which rarely arrived in time—some of them managed to survive the bloody Indian massacres and to rebuild where everything had been destroyed. Perhaps the most conspicuous qualities bred by the vicissitudes of the frontier were individualism and self-reliance.

²¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 267, 269, 270-271.

²² Amandus Johnson, trans. and ed., *Geographia Americae*, by Peter Lindeström (Swedish Colonial Society, Philadelphia, 1925), pp. 125-126.

The author of the *Journal of New Netherland*, in discussing the choosing of the Eight Men at the height of Kieft's war, states the dominant motive among the people—"the occupation everyone had to take care of his own."²³

Toward the Indians, two attitudes appear. The first is one of forthright hostility and contempt. Printz begged for two hundred soldiers to "be sent here and kept here until we broke the necks of all of them in the river."²⁴ He was more tolerant of the inland Minquas, who provided most of the peltries. Kieft's desire "to wipe the mouths of the savages,"²⁵ and Michaelius's description of them as "entirely wild, strangers to all decency, yea, uncivil and stupid as garden poles, proficient in all wickedness and godlessness; devilish men, who serve nobody but the Devil"²⁶ sufficiently illustrate the prevailing official opinion.

The second reaction, usually tinged with condescension and sometimes with an understandable uneasiness, was on the whole friendly and familiar. *The Representation of New Netherland* expresses the indebtedness of the Dutch to the savages in forceful terms. "We are also in the highest degree beholden to the Indians, who have not only given up to us this good and fruitful country; and for a trifle yielded us the ownership, but also enrich us with their good and reciprocal trade, so that there is no one in New Netherland or who trades to New Netherland without obligation to them." The author begs God's forgiveness because in return the Dutch have not imparted to them "the Eternal Good."²⁷

Indians and white men mingled freely, adopting and modifying each other's customs. Megapolensis, the minister sent to Rensselaerswyck in 1642, said of the Mohicans, "They are very friendly to us, and we have no dread of them. We go with them into the woods, we meet with each other, sometimes at an hour or two's walk from any houses, and think no more about it than as if we met with a Christian. They sleep by us, too, in our chambers before our beds. I have had eight at once lying and sleeping upon the floor near my bed, for it is their custom to sleep simply on the

²³ Jameson, *Nar. New Neth.*, p. 279.

²⁴ Albert Cook Myers, ed., *Narratives of Early Pennsylvania, West New Jersey, and Delaware, 1630-1707* (Scribner, New York, 1912), p. 103.

²⁵ Jameson, *Nar. New Neth.*, p. 226.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 126.

²⁷ Henry C. Murphy, trans. and ed., *Representation of New Netherland* (New York, 1854), p. 49.

bare ground.”²⁸ Kiliaen van Rensselaer had occasion to warn his young officer, Curler, against excessive familiarity with the savages.²⁹

On the whole, the Swedes got along well with their savage neighbors. Acrelius records the “special friendship” formed between the Swedes and the Minquas, and identifies the Delawares as those “who called the Swedes their brothers.”³⁰ Although both Printz and Rising feared and guarded against Indian hostilities, and cited murders committed by the Indians, Lindeström (the Swedish engineer) reported, “The savages are ever willing and anxious to serve the Christians; [they] allow themselves to be commanded by the Christians, as if they were their subjects, but through good words; with dictation we get nowheres with them.”³¹ The exchange between Christians and heathen included not only furs, but foodstuffs grown by the latter, game and fruit, native clothing, mats, bags, and rope, for which European cloth, tools, trinkets, guns, lead, and powder were exchanged (the last three usually illegally). The money used was the savage currency, wampum or seawan. “The savages,” Lindeström found, “are honorable enough in their conversation with the Christians, after their manner. . . . The one who knows how to associate rightly with the savages [will find that they] are a trustworthy folk, when they are not angered, and even brave-hearted [enough] to risk death for their good friends, to whom they have professed friendship and faithfulness. . . .”³²

Intimate “conversation” with the Indians, tempered as it was with fear and scorn on the one side, and resentment and anger on the other, produced an exchange of customs along with the trade in goods. The extreme example of “Indianization” appeared on the Delaware, among the Swedes, to be handed down to Peter Kalm. “The men wore waistcoats and breeches of skin . . . some made fur caps.” Although they wore worsted stockings, “their shoes were of their own making. . . . These shoes were called kippaka.”³³ At that time, they likewise sowed flax here and wove

²⁸ Jameson, *Nar. New Neth.*, p. 175.

²⁹ Van Laer, *V. R. B. Mss.*, p. 442.

³⁰ Myers, *Nar. Penna.*, pp. 70, 73.

³¹ Johnson, *Geographia*, p. 212.

³² *Ibid.*, p. 235.

³³ The Indian word is *Machtschipal*. Brinton, *Lenâpé-English Dictionary*, p. 71.

linen cloth. Hemp was not to be had; they made use of linen and wild hemp for fishing tackle. The women were dressed in jackets and petticoats of skins. Their beds, excepting the sheets, were skins of various animals; such as bears, wolves, etc."³⁴ The Indians "had daily relations with the Swedes." "And since they (the Swedes) had no other people to associate with than the native Indians, they soon began to differ more and more in their actions and manners from the Europeans and old Swedes and began to resemble the Indians. At the arrival of the English, therefore, the Swedes to a large extent were not much better than savages."³⁵

Not only Kalm's countrymen, but the Dutch also adopted Indian ways, and some of them completely abandoned their own kind. Printz mentioned, in his report of 1647, Hollanders who "have entirely quitted the Christians, resorting to the Minquas, behaving with much more unseemliness than the savages themselves."³⁶

It should be noticed that only the last example is testimony to a complete rejection of civilization. Necessity and common sense forced the emigrants to take over certain native customs, clothes, foods, and practices. Of their own ways they retained what they could, and what was useful to them. Even in clothing, implements, and foodstuffs; and more notably in building, in the raising of cattle, in transportation, in language, and in learning they clung to their own heritage as far as it was possible for them to do so.

The ultimate effect of their environment upon them, after the first rigorous compulsion of the wilderness had passed, is best expressed by Jasper Danckaerts, who found in New York in 1679 "a wild, worldly world. I say wild," he explains, "not only because the people are wild, as they call it in Europe, but because almost all the people who go there to live, or who are born there, partake somewhat of the nature of the country, that is, peculiar to the land where they live."³⁷

What influence did this new "wild, worldly world" have upon the conception of European nationality? The question must be answered cautiously, since the national ties of the seventeenth

³⁴ Adolph B. Benson, ed., *Peter Kalm's Travels in North America* (Wilson, Erickson, New York, 1937), p. 272.

³⁵ Benson, *Peter Kalm*, p. 711.

³⁶ Myers, *Nar. Penna.*, p. 124.

³⁷ B. B. James and J. Franklin Jameson, eds., *Journal of Jasper Danckaerts, 1679-1680* (Scribner, New York, 1913), p. 44.

century were much looser than they became in a later day. Moreover, both New Sweden and New Netherland possessed populations of mixed origins. In both, the English appear as an important minority.

Speaking for the New Netherlanders, Wassenaer, as early as 1625, uttered a warning, in regard to national allegiance, to a tyrannical governor. "He who will order them [the Dutch colonists] as a superior will subvert everything and bring it to naught; yea, they will excite against him the neighboring provinces to which they will fly."³⁸ His prophecy finds echoes throughout the Dutch annals. In 1643, the Eight Men told the States General that "should suitable assistance not speedily arrive . . . we shall through necessity . . . be obliged to betake ourselves to the English at the East."³⁹ At the time of the surrender of New Amsterdam to the English, the burghers of the city informed the Director and Council that the conditions of "so generous a foe" should not be rejected, and showed more animus against those of their own nationality who had left them without "the smallest aid or succor" than against the alien besiegers.⁴⁰ After the surrender, their only objection to taking the oath of allegiance to the King of England lay in the supposition that it might annul the highly favorable articles of surrender.⁴¹ As for the Dutch on the Delaware, who had been taken over by the Swedes during the contest for possession of that river, they informed Rising "that they cared not who possessed the fort, as long as they were allowed to dwell there safely and freely."⁴²

The Swedes were not only willing, by their frequent desertions, to put themselves under alien control, but were far from reluctant to shift their loyalties on the spot. After the surrender of their Fort Christina to Stuyvesant, in spite of the agreement that all of the Swedes who so wished were to be returned to old Sweden, the Dutch conqueror "managed it so that he got all our common soldiers away from us, to swear the oath of allegiance to the

³⁸ Jameson, *Nar. New Neth.*, p. 76.

³⁹ J. Romeyn Brodhead, ed., *New York Colonial Documents* (Albany, 1856), Vol. I, pp. 139, 140.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 248-250.

⁴¹ Fernow, *Recs. N. Amsterdam*, Vol. V, pp. 142-145.

⁴² Amandus Johnson, *Swedish Settlements on the Delaware* (University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, 1911), Vol. II, p. 582.

Hollanders, as well as some of our officers and most of the non-commissioned officers."⁴³

The weakening of national ties was not peculiar to the Dutch and Swedes of the region. The English settlers within the Swedish jurisdiction told Ridder that they would submit to the government that "was strongest and most able to give them protection."⁴⁴ The English of Long Island took pains, in 1650, to assure Stuyvesant that they were not disloyal to him.⁴⁵ During the Dutch reoccupation of New York in 1673, the Englishmen of the colony were quite as ready to swear allegiance to the Netherlands as the Dutch had been, in 1664, to submit themselves to English sovereignty.⁴⁶

In customs, behavior, and ideas, then, the early colonists showed considerable divergence from their origins. It is now to be seen how well the political institutions sent by Europe fared on the new soil.

The political establishments of the Dutch West India Company and the New Sweden Company for their American colonies were simple. Because that of New Netherland was the earlier, and because certain participants of the West India Company had an influential part in the formation of the New Sweden Company, the two show a basic similarity. Both were essentially military in nature, the Swedish more obviously so than the Dutch. Supreme authority was entrusted to a Commander or Director. Among the Dutch, the colonists were bound to absolute obedience during their residence in New Netherland. Their Director was somewhat limited in his powers by the stipulation that "he shall deliberate and act" with certain other persons as councillors "upon all matters of importance." He is also required to adhere to "the ordinances and customs of Holland and Zeeland and the common written law qualifying them," and to report and refer matters of weight to the Directors of the Company itself. "New laws and Ordinances" passed by him and the Council must also be referred home. With the Council, he heard civil and criminal cases.⁴⁷

In the Swedish settlement, the governor was given authority

⁴³ Johnson, *Geographia*, p. 271.

⁴⁴ Johnson, *Swedish Settlements*, Vol. I, p. 217.

⁴⁵ *N. Y. Col. Docs.*, Vol. II, p. 155.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 583-4.

⁴⁷ Van Laer, *Docs. New Netherland*, Docs. A, I; C, p. 64; D, 20, 12, 19, 21.

"to rule the people."⁴⁸ When, under Printz, the Swedish plan was further developed, he was told to follow the manners, customs, and usages of Sweden. He was possessed of judicial powers, and in criminal cases might pronounce sentences of imprisonment and even death, but not without consulting "with the most prudent assessors of justice that he can find and consult in the country." By implication, he held an ordinance power.⁴⁹

In neither organization were the common people given any part whatsoever, with one small exception—the inclusion in the Dutch Council of a colonist, appointed by the Directors in Amsterdam.⁵⁰ Even this type of representation was later allowed to lapse, and the Council weakened, until, in the time of Kieft, the head of the colony could claim to be its sovereign.⁵¹

The patroonship, a subordinate type of politico-economic organization with close resemblances to the English manor, was allowed for by both Dutch and Swedes. The Dutch patroon, or Swedish patron, had political control over his domain, although he came vaguely under the supervision of the local government concerned, and definitely under the sovereignty of the home government. However, he possessed the right to appoint his own officers, to issue ordinances, to set up courts, and to exercise the "high, low, and middle jurisdictions."⁵²

The chief officer, therefore, whether Dutch or Swedish, controlled the executive, legislative, and judicial functions, with such slight checks as existed upon his power cancelled out by distance, or nullified by his general predominance.

The economic situation, as it appears in the earliest Swedish and Dutch records, was confused. Contradictory statements about trading privileges for the common people appear. Printz himself did not understand the regulations with regard to the ownership of land. "In my former relation . . .," he wrote in 1644, "I humbly requested information concerning the privileges of the nobility and the common people who take up land here in New Sweden each one according to his quota, how they and their descendants

⁴⁸ Johnson, *Swedish Settlements*, p. 127.

⁴⁹ J. B. Linn and W. H. Egle, eds., *Pennsylvania Archives*. Second Series, Vol. V, pp. 764-765, 766-774.

⁵⁰ Van Laer, *Docs. New Netherland*. Doc. D, 3.

⁵¹ Murphy, *Representation*, p. 56.

⁵² Van Laer, *V. R. B. Mss.*, p. 141; *Penna. Arch.*, Second Series, Vol. V, pp. 757, 759-764.

should own, enjoy, use, and keep it.”⁵³ He had no answer. Whatever the confusion, however many the contradictions, it is safe to say that in neither the Swedish nor the Dutch colony was land awarded to the settler in outright ownership, and that the restrictions upon freedom of trade were severe.

The Swedes, as late as 1653, accused Printz of forbidding them “the grass on the ground and the land to plant on,” and said they had no security of property.⁵⁴ When Rising, Printz’s successor, proposed to buy the plantations of older settlers for the use of newcomers, he specifically said that he did not mean to pay for the land—“payment for only the clearing being understood.”⁵⁵ In other words, he did not consider that the freemen held ground briefs. They owned only the improvements they had made.

None of the articles of the “Provisional Regulations” issued to the Dutch settlers of 1624 promised them an inalienable land-ownership. They were to receive from the company, without payment “the places and lands to be cultivated by them.” They were bound to remain “at the place of their destination with their families for the space of six consecutive years” and at the end “of their bounden time . . . they shall be permitted to trade or to sell their houses, planted fields, and cattle”⁵⁶—not the land itself. Perhaps as an echo of the protest against this situation, Wassenaer said of the colonists in 1624, “For their increase and prosperous advancement, it is highly necessary that those sent out . . . being freemen . . . be settled there in a free tenure.” Later he reported, “Each farmer has his farmstead on the land purchased by the Company, which also owns the cows.”⁵⁷ This remark probably referred to Manhattan Island, which the West India Company planned to keep in its possession. But even the “Privileges and Exemptions” of 1629, which enlarged the prospect of private landholding, promised “full ownership” only to “private persons who on their own account, or others who in the service of their masters here in this country shall go thither and settle as freemen”⁵⁸—that is, to those who paid their own costs of transportation and any other

⁵³ Myers, *Nar. Penna.*, p. 108; also pp. 106, 125-126.

⁵⁴ Johnson, *Swedish Settlements*, p. 463.

⁵⁵ Myers, *Nar. Penna.*, p. 139.

⁵⁶ Van Laer, *Docs. New Netherland*, Doc. A, 6, 16.

⁵⁷ Jameson, *Nar. New Neth.*, p. 76, p. 84.

⁵⁸ Jameson, *Nar. New Neth.*, p. 94.

expenses. The settler sent out by the company apparently remained a tenant.

In the patroonship of Rensselaerswyck, the tenant was never anything else. That "colony" was a private property, owned by a group of patroons of whom Kiliaen van Rensselaer was the chief. The farmers remained in his service.⁵⁹ "If anyone who is not in my service," he wrote, "should wish to do some farming in my colony, specially on the lands bought by me, you must not permit but must prevent the same."⁶⁰ He made complicated contracts with them, involving the payment of rents in kind. There was never any question as to the holder of the title to the ground.

The restrictions on trade were even more explicit. The Swedes were forbidden, in Minuit's instructions, to carry on trade for themselves or on commission for private persons.⁶¹ Printz's instructions forbade anyone but the company's agents "to trade in peltries with the Indians."⁶²

Similar regulations were enforced among the Dutch, although in the beginning a more liberal attitude was taken. The colonists of 1624 were "free to carry on and prosecute the inland trade without objection . . . on the express condition that they shall sell the goods they have purchased or collected to no one but the company's agents."⁶³ This permission was given provisionally, "until other regulations, as necessity may require, shall have been made herein." Necessity soon required that the privilege of the inland trade be rescinded. The fur trade was reserved to the company. Only its ships could traffic in New Netherland.⁶⁴ By 1626, the minister, Michaëlius, was doubtful whether by the laws of the company he was permitted to trade with the savages for food.⁶⁵ Kiliaen van Rensselaer, in his basic contract with his farmers, stipulated that they should not "trade in prohibited furs, especially of otter or beavers, or obtain the same by way of present or other

⁵⁹ Van Laer, *V. R. B. Mss.*, pp. 491-494, and *passim*.

⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 212.

⁶¹ Johnson, *Swedish Settlements*, Vol. I, p. 115.

⁶² *Penna. Arch.*, Second Series, Vol. V, p. 771.

⁶³ Van Laer, *Docs. New Neth.*, Doc. A, 8.

⁶⁴ Van Laer, *V. R. B. Mss.*, pp. 86-135 (West India Company's Charter and "Amplifications"). The "Freedoms and Exemptions" of 1629 permitted the patroons to engage in the coastwise traffic, but reserved the fur trade to the Company. *Nar New Neth.*, p. 93.

⁶⁵ Jameson, *Nar. New Neth.*, p. 130.

means without express consent" from both company and patroon.⁶⁶

Among both Swedes and Dutch, the religious organization was an extension of that existing at home. In New Sweden, divine service was to be "performed according to the true confession of Augsburg, the council of Upsal and the ceremonies of the Swedish church."⁶⁷ Ministers were provided for the colony by the company and the crown. The Dutch settlers of the Swedish "patronship" were given the liberty of practicing the Dutch Reformed religion.⁶⁸

The Dutch of New Netherland were instructed to adhere to "no other form of divine worship than that of the Reformed religion as at present practiced here in this country." Ministers were provided them, subject to the approval of the Directors of the West India Company, by the Classis of Amsterdam. Although the Dutch Reformed was the established church, no one was to be persecuted for matters of private belief.⁶⁹

With this general political, economic, and religious organization in mind, the response of the populace remains to be considered. The reaction in New Netherland to autocratic political control is described by Isaac de Rasières in September, 1626, in a letter already referred to and quoted. Willem Verhulst, "provisional" head of the colony, had recently been deposed, not by popular action, but by his Council, and not for abuse of power but for treasonable utterances. "As the people here," Rasières wrote,

have become quite lawless, owing to the bad government hitherto prevailing, it is necessary to administer some punishment with kindness, in order to keep them in check, to break them of their bad habits, and to make them understand their bounden duty. . . . As they have heretofore been very harshly ruled by Verhulst, and that without any legal formality, but merely upon his own authority, they deem it very strange that we now begin to inquire into their affairs and that they are summoned before the court to defend their cause. . . . Only that was punished which offended Verhulst or his dignity, not according to law, but according to his pleasure.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ Van Laer, *V. R. B. Mss.*, p. 193.

⁶⁷ *Penna. Arch.*, Second Series, Vol. V, p. 773.

⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 760.

⁶⁹ Van Laer, *Docs. New Neth.*, Doc. A, 2.

⁷⁰ Van Laer, *Docs. New Neth.*, Doc. F, pp. 187-188.

Although it was less conspicuously abused by later governors than by Verhulst, the governmental system remained basically unchanged under Van Twiller and Kieft. Throughout their regimes, the Dutch showed an aversion for community life—an aversion in which the avoidance of authority may be assumed, and in which economic motives were certainly present. By 1642, De Vries explained, “we were living far and wide, east, west, south, and north of each other.”⁷¹ The “Journal of New Netherland” records mixed motives in saying that the settlers “spread themselves far and wide, each seeking the best land, and to be nearest the Indians in order thus to trade with them easily.”⁷² The Report of the Board of Accounts, written in 1644 and largely adopted two years later, recommended that for the greater prosperity and safety of New Netherland “inhabitants should settle nearer each other.”⁷³ *The Laws and Ordinances of New Netherland* records the pressure put upon the Dutch to join in communities.⁷⁴ It was steadily resisted or ignored.

Some Dutchmen went to the further extreme of desertion, as is attested by the fact that an agreement was entered into between Stuyvesant and the authorities of New England, providing for the reciprocal return of fugitives.⁷⁵

The most evident response to autocracy, however, took the form of semi-legal protest. Resistance to Kieft was first manifested in the refusal of the Twelve Men, who were popular representatives, to sanction his war upon the Indians.⁷⁶ The Eight, who succeeded the Twelve, got along no better with the governor, and dispatched a memorial against him and his policies to the States General. Eventually Kieft was recalled, to be succeeded by Stuyvesant. The representative body summoned by the latter—the Nine Men—failed to function according to the new governor’s wishes. His attitude toward rebels had already appeared in his treatment of two of the leaders of the Eight. Having had them fined and banished, he is said to have declared, “These brutes may hereafter endeavor

⁷¹ Jameson, *Nar. New Neth.*, p. 214.

⁷² *Ibid.*, pp. 271-2.

⁷³ Brodhead, *N. Y. Col. Docs.*, Vol. I, p. 151.

⁷⁴ E. B. O’Callaghan, *Laws and Ordinances of New Netherland*, pp. 206, 234, 335, 368; Brodhead, *N. Y. Col. Docs.*, I, p. 213.

⁷⁵ Samuel Hazard, *Annals of Pennsylvania, 1609-1682* (Hazard and Mitchell, Philadelphia, 1850), p. 121.

⁷⁶ Jameson, *Nar. New Neth.*, p. 214.

to knock me down also, but I will manage it so now, that they will have their bellies full for the future."⁷⁷ Intent upon defending his authority along with Kieft's, he was unwilling to let the Nine communicate with the government at home except through him. In spite of his high-handed opposition, three emissaries of that body finally reached the Netherlands, where they presented a memorial and the *Representation from New Netherland* to the States General.

They complained, first and foremost, of oppressive government, in which money had been wasted, the people and the problems of population neglected, and initiative discouraged. Individuals had been abused. The public interest was neglected. The governor believed himself to be above the law. "Very great discontent has sprung up on all sides." Taxation "not consented to" was onerous and unfair. The administration of justice was arbitrary. As for the laws, the Director "almost every day . . . caused proclamations of various import to be published, which were for the most part never observed, and have long since been a dead letter."⁷⁸

In redress, the Nine asked that the government be taken away from the West India Company, that the public interests be cared for, and that a governor "godly, honorable, and intelligent," neither "indigent" nor "covetous," be provided for the colony.⁷⁹

Although the *Representation* was largely nullified by the fabian tactics of the Company, which described the petitioners as "these silly persons . . . who, as it appears will leave nothing untried to, abjure every kind of subjection to government, under pretext that they groaned under a too galling yoke,"⁸⁰ it is the fact that the protest was made that is of interest. The typical inhabitant of New Netherland was not of a class inclined to political protest; yet, according to Van der Donck, probable author of the *Representation*, it was compiled after consultation with the "commonalty,"⁸¹ and

⁷⁷ Murphy, *Representation*, pp. 81-82.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 65, 59, 81.

⁷⁹ Murphy, *Representation*, p. 98. The appeals of the Eight Men and the Nine Men were both accompanied by requests for the election of local officials and a representative body of deputies to act with the Director and Council. These proposals were not a departure from the European system, but on the contrary were rightly considered approaches to it. (Brodhead, *N. Y. Col. Docs.*, I, pp. 213 and 266.)

⁸⁰ *New York Historical Society Collections*, New Series, Vol. I, 1841, p. 377.

⁸¹ Murphy, *Representation*, pp. 91-93. Tienhoven, in his rebuttal to the *Representation*, does not deny that the "commonalty" had a part in it. He says, in objection, that the remonstrants were not given permission to speak to the people, and accuses them of having "excited" some of the latter. (Jameson, *Nar. New Netherland*, p. 372.)

may therefore be taken as an expression of the plain people, and as evidence of a growth in their political interest.

The *Representation* objected not only to the governmental, but to the economic situation—the two being so linked that the one could hardly be examined aside from the other. Its discontent with the restrictions of trade can be traced back to the beginning of settlement. Michaëlius, in 1626, explaining his own scruples about illegal commerce, said that the people traded regardless of the regulations.⁸² Isaac de Rasières was forced to raise the price he offered the colonists for their furs “in order not to have the skins go to strangers.”⁸³ In 1630, Symon Dircksz Pos reported that “The honorable directors hear nothing but idle complaints from their subjects; one says this, the other that, so that in place of the Company’s servants looking after the trading, someone else in the meantime goes off with the skins . . . while we here in this country are pursuing each other with suits and infamous invectives, the people send the otters and beavers under such cover as may be, stored away in their chests, from which the honorable lords will not be able to draw much profit.”⁸⁴

Although the regulation of trade was modified and relaxed from time to time, smuggling was nearly universal as late as 1649. Legal trade, the *Representation* declared, still “is more suited for slaves than freemen, in consequence of the restrictions upon it. . . . The Recognition [export duty] runs high, and of inspection and confiscation there is no lack; hence, true trade is entirely diverted, except a little, which exists *pro forma*, as a cloak to carry on smuggling.”⁸⁵

At Rensselaerswyck, the same situation prevailed. The patroon’s attempts to control the fur trade and to prevent his colonists from dealing with “strangers” were invariably fruitless. His basic contract with his farmers bound them on oath, under penalty of the forfeiture of wages, not to trade in “prohibited furs.” It also stipulated that, aside from the one half of the crops and increase that came to the patroon as rent, he should have the privilege of purchasing the farmer’s share. By 1638, he was brought to tolerate the fur trade, provided that his colonists sold their skins to him.⁸⁶

⁸² Jameson, *Nar. New Neth.*, p. 130.

⁸³ Van Laer, *Docs. New Neth.*, Doc. F, p. 216.

⁸⁴ Van Laer, *V. R. B. Mss.*, p. 170.

⁸⁵ Murphy, *Representation*, p. 54.

⁸⁶ Van Laer, *V. R. B. Mss.*, pp. 193-5, 418, 437, 559.

Himself protesting against the limitation of the fur trade to the West India Company, he felt no kindness for those who evaded his control of it in Rensselaerswyck.

In instance after instance, he was forced to admonish his people, as individuals and as a group, not to infringe upon his rights. In 1639, he issued an elaborate ordinance "concerning the sale and export of furs, grain, etc."

The . . . lord patroon, in order to prevent such evil, as well as for other reasons, has seen fit hereby earnestly to admonish and strictly to enjoin all subjects and inhabitants of the said colony that no one of them, whoever he may be, may send out of the aforesaid colony, by himself or by the servants of the aforesaid Company or by anyone else, either directly or indirectly, any furs, tobacco, or other goods, whether by water or by land, up or down, to the manhattans or to the fatherland or wherever else it may be, without having legally and properly given notice of the same in writing, both to the secretary and to the representative of the patroon, to each separately (and this before anyone has loaded or shipped any of the goods in the ships, sloops, canoes or other vessels), with declaration as to the patroons share therein, everything on pain of forfeiture. . . .⁸⁷

Whatever the ordinances and penalties, the illicit trade went on. "Is it not pure thievery," he exclaimed at last, "that the farmers sell to others without my knowledge some of the grain of which half belongs to me or that they trade . . . the furs which they ought to deliver to me?"⁸⁸ Not only the people, but his own appointed officers continued to smuggle and to enrich themselves whenever possible at their absent master's expense.

These same officers incidentally provide an interesting footnote to the political history of New Netherland. The patroon, who never came to America, had to delegate some of his authority to an agent and a group of councillors at Rensselaerswyck. He never intended that they should exercise the ultimate government, but kept constant check upon them. In 1640, he wrote Curler, secretary of the patroonship, "You need not ask such things of my council for I see that the council instead of being my council is their own council.

⁸⁷ Van Laer, *V. R. B. Mss.*, p. 451.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 559.

If they act that way I shall appoint others. I am surprised that they dare call themselves an (independent) community, as they are altogether my servants and subjects and everyone promised to subject himself willingly to the laws and ordinances which I had made and might make. . . . I do not wish to injure anyone but neither do I want to be injured. . . . I will teach the peasant councillors to mutiny against their lord."⁸⁹

Again and again he complained of breaches of contract, of lawless behavior, of cheating, and of riotousness. In May 1640, he took the precaution of negotiating for the assistance of the West India Company's militia. "The commander . . . promised to assist me with soldiers if any one of my people should become rebellious or turbulent," he wrote. In furtherance of this promise he asked Kieft, "in case of disturbance in my colony" to permit the commander "to assist me with some soldiers."⁹⁰

The question of the ownership of land caused some trouble in Rensselaerswyck, but was of minor importance there compared with the rest of New Netherland. Few colonists were attracted by the original provision of a quasi-tenant status. Some of them took the law—and the land—into their own hands, and occupied and purchased tracts directly from the Indians without the intervention, and with or without the permission, of the Company's officers.⁹¹ Officially, between 1638 and 1640, the restrictions on landholding were relaxed to provide settlers with as much land as they could cultivate, subject after a certain number of years to the payment of tithes. The registration of patents was required. Patents were promised, by ordinance of the Director and Council in New Netherland, to those who occupied and cultivated plantations for ten years, provided that they agreed to pay tithes. The tenure was one of free and common socage.⁹² Failure to obey the ordinances covering landholding and the conveyance of land was common, and the payment of tithes was generally successfully evaded until the last years of the colony.

Nor were the people satisfied with the more liberal provisions. In

⁸⁹ Van Laer, *V. R. B. Mss.*, pp. 487-488.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 497-498, 473.

⁹¹ O'Callaghan, *Laws and Ord.*, pp. 16, 130-134; Brodhead, *N. Y. Col. Docs.*, XIV, pp. 9-10, 132, 167-168.

⁹² *Essays in Colonial History Presented to Charles McLean Andrews by His Students* (Yale University Press, New Haven, 1931). Clarence White Rife, "Land Tenure in New Netherland," pp. 47, 52.

the *Representation* they complain that "Absolute grants were made to the people by the ground-briefs, and when they thought that everything was right, and that they were masters of their own possessions, the ground-briefs were demanded from them again, upon pretense that there was something forgotten in them; but that was not it." A contradictory proviso in favor of the Company was inserted. Moreover, a clause in the ground-briefs required the holders to submit "to all taxes which the council has made or shall make."⁹³ Neither property limitation, nor tithe, nor tax was pleasing to the New Netherlanders.

The only institution which did not suffer from popular resistance and popular resentment was the church. The ministers, from the time of Michaëlius who found his congregation "rough and unrestrained" but "in almost all of them both love and respect towards me,"⁹⁴ continued to come from the Classis of Amsterdam, to be received by the local consistory and the flock with a reasonably consistent enthusiasm. What friction there was, in the case of Bogardus, lay between Kieft and the minister, not between the minister and the commonalty. The Dutch Reformed remained the established church, with other creeds—until the later years of Stuyvesant's administration—tolerated according to the Dutch custom at home.⁹⁵ Diverse elements were increasingly present, however. Jogues found in the colony "Catholics, English Puritans, Lutherans, Anabaptists, here called Mnistes (Mennonites), etc."⁹⁶

If the Dutch on the frontier, while faithful to their religious heritage, protested against and evaded autocratic government and economic control, the Swedes, through a different course of events showed a very similar drift.

In Printz's first report, that of 1644, the universal desire of the surviving Swedish colonists—about one fifth of them had died between 1643 and 1644—appeared repeatedly. They wanted to go home. There was, Printz explained, "no longer any desire to remain here." Again he mentioned "the free people who in no wise wish to remain here, and in like manner a part of the freemen, Finns, and others (especially those who have their wives in old Sweden) desire to leave." The Commissary, Huygen, also "desires

⁹³ Jameson, *Nar. New Neth.*, p. 336. Murphy; *Representation*, pp. 73-74.

⁹⁴ Jameson, *Nar. New Neth.*, p. 123.

⁹⁵ Hugh Hastings, super. *Ecclesiastical Records of the State of New York*, 1901, *passim*, Vols. I, II.

⁹⁶ Jameson, *Nar. New Neth.*, p. 260.

to leave here," and Printz himself wished to "be relieved and allowed to return again" to Sweden.⁹⁷

In the history of the colony there was reason enough—aside from loneliness and homesickness—for this common wish to leave New Sweden. Fear, hunger, disease, and death weakened the people and discouraged whatever efforts they may have tried to make. However, in the tradition handed down through the descendants of the original colonists to Peter Kalm, another motive appears. Printz, Kalm said, "made himself detested among his own people by his ultra-severity."⁹⁸ As early as 1644, Printz's lieutenant (Papegoja) wrote that the soldiers of the colony "if they would find a small fault in me, would possibly murder me."⁹⁹ If this was an exaggeration, discontent against the rulers of the Swedes has the support of further evidence. Kalm echoed it more than once, giving as its basis Printz's tyrannical behavior—"the Governor [Printz] . . . had been rather severe and treated them mostly as slaves."¹⁰⁰

Acrelius, writing with the perspective of a hundred years, ascribed this dissatisfaction to their environment. "It is probable that the Swedes, after they came into this Canaan and got a taste of an unknown good, tired of such labor as was nothing more than usual at home, and thus conceived an unmerited hatred to their governor."¹⁰¹

Whether or not New Sweden in its early years deserved the name of Canaan, the behavior of its inhabitants under domination is a matter of record. They scattered, they deserted, and they mutinied.

The tendency to dispersion appeared in Rising's report of 1655. "For here," he said, "are as many who will scatter, as there are who will hold things together." In spite of his wish to establish a town at Christina, after a year only "six or eight lots" were occupied.¹⁰² The danger from the savages notwithstanding, the settlers chose—according to Nils Gustafson, with whom Kalm talked—to live in farms far apart, separated by woods, rather than in vil-

⁹⁷ Myers, *Nar. Penna.*, pp. 98, 107, 106, 109.

⁹⁸ Benson, *Peter Kalm*, p. 720.

⁹⁹ Amandus Johnson, ed., *The Instruction for Johan Printz* (Swedish Colonial Society, Philadelphia, 1930), p. 162.

¹⁰⁰ Benson, *Peter Kalm*, p. 645.

¹⁰¹ Johnson, *Swedish Settlements*, Vol. I, p. 465.

¹⁰² Myers, *Nar. Penna.*, pp. 163, 164.

lages.¹⁰³ After Stuyvesant's conquest of New Salem, "The free persons of the Swedish nation residing on the second corner above Fort Casimir, appear before council, and solicit that they may remain on their lands, as they have no inclination to change their place of abode, neither to build in the new village."¹⁰⁴

From the time of Printz until, in 1655, New Sweden became a part of New Netherland, desertion was almost a rule of conduct. Rising in 1654 reported finding "an empty country, disturbed partly by despondency, partly by mutiny and desertion."¹⁰⁵ The next year he wrote, "if the people were not animated by this hope [of reinforcement], there would be danger that a part of them would go beyond their limits, or that indeed a large number of them would desert from here." Continuing, he made plain that the danger was not merely a danger—"the English . . . keep those who deserted thither last year. . . . During Easter-time two more freemen deserted . . . and probably many were about to run, if I had not presented to them so seriously their proper duties, assuring them . . . that they would be condemned here and be killed." Again he admitted, "if they [the common people] lack anything they are immediately disposed to run away from here."¹⁰⁶ The disposition was often carried out. Under Stuyvesant, the English in Maryland were requested to return the "Dutch Swedes" to their rightful jurisdiction, but refused, denying the jurisdiction along with the request.¹⁰⁷ The complete disappearance of the Swedish "patronship" without remark of massacre, suggests desertion, but more terribly may have been the result of disease.

In the last year of Printz's administration, the colonists rebelled. Twenty-two of their small number, among them the more substantial freemen, presented the governor with a list of their grievances. "It states," according to Amandus Johnson, "that the colonists were 'at no hour or time secure as to life or property'; it complained that they were all prohibited from trading with either savages or Christians, although the governor never refrained from grasping an opportunity of traffic with these parties; the governor was accused of brutality and avarice and of passing judgment in his own favor against the opinions of the jury; he was accused of

¹⁰³ Benson, *Peter Kalm*, p. 265.

¹⁰⁴ Hazard, *Annals Penna.*, p. 208.

¹⁰⁵ Myers, *Nar. Penna.*, p. 136.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, pp. 156, 157, 160.

¹⁰⁷ *Penna. Arch.*, Second Series, Vol. V, p. 354.

forbidding the colonists from grinding the flour at the mill and of prohibiting them the use of the 'fish-waters, the trees in the woods, the grass on the ground and the land to plant on, from which they had their nourishment.' " They wished, therefore, to send two of their number to Sweden to appeal to the Queen and the Company for redress.¹⁰⁸

In reply, Printz executed the leader of the rebellion, and made a general denial of the accusations. He then departed from New Sweden, leaving to his involuntary successor, Rising, the fruits of the popular discontent.

Significantly, the Swedes protested not only against political but against economic subjection—the exclusion of the common man from trade, and the lack of title to land. Rising brought with him new privileges with regard to both.¹⁰⁹ The inland trade was opened to the colonists, and they were permitted to take part in the export trade to Sweden under a duty of two per cent. Land bought by freemen either from the company or the savages was to become the purchaser's property and that of his heirs. Title was to be made certain by patent from Rising.

That the governor harbored certain mental reservations about this new system appears in his report of 1654. "A part of the old freemen," he wrote, "have requested new lands, being encouraged thereto by the freedoms which Her Royal Majesty has now given, and have wished to transfer their cleared land to the new-comers; but no new-comers have means to redeem them, therefore I intend to buy them for the Company (payment for only the clearing being understood), and then set young freemen upon them, lend them oxen for working their lands, give them grain for seeding, and each year take one-half of the grain from the field. . . . By this means they are immediately and imperceptibly brought under a reasonable tax."¹¹⁰ How long the tax would have remained imperceptible is a matter of speculation. That the approach was once again to a tenant system is beyond doubt.

In the matter of patents also, Rising ran a choppy course. Indian rights, the Company's rights, the reluctance of the settlers to be deprived of lands which they had already occupied, and several royal patents issued at home—all these complicated the situation,

¹⁰⁸ Johnson, *Swedish Settlements*, p. 463.

¹⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 500.

¹¹⁰ Myers, *Nar. Penna.*, p. 139.

which was further confused by the failure of certain holders to pay their taxes. Rising, in 1654, spoke of lands "which have been forfeited for non-payment of taxes." The imposition of tithes was in the back of the governor's mind, but either experience or foresight warned him off. Education and the church could be supported, he remarked "if one could obtain willingly from the people tithes of grain and cattle."¹¹¹ The tone was nostalgic rather than hopeful.

In 1654 and 1655 Rising made two constructive efforts to settle his economic difficulties, and in so doing took a step that might have had political consequences if New Sweden had not so soon fallen to the Dutch. In each year he called together "the best men" of the colony to draft, with him, an ordinance by which all should be ruled. The ordinance of 1655 which was established "by the consent of most of the men" has survived. Its regulations were far from liberal, but it recognized what appears to be a freehold tenure, and certain rights based on occupancy.¹¹² The new system hardly had a trial in the few months before Stuyvesant by conquest brought New Sweden into New Netherland.

The third of the inherited institutions to be considered, the church, showed a conservatism among the Swedes as it did among the Dutch. The religious worship of New Sweden, from its beginnings to its end, and even after the Dutch occupation, continued to be that of the Swedish Lutheran establishment. Ministers were always present. In 1644, Printz wrote home that "the services with its ceremonies are conducted as in old Sweden."¹¹³ Lock, one of the pastors, was accused of taking part with his congregation in the mutiny against Printz, but no disagreement appeared between the congregation and him.¹¹⁴ According to the articles of surrender, the Swedes were permitted to continue their own religious practices and to retain a clergyman of their own creed.¹¹⁵

Thus under transplantation, such Dutch and Swedish institutions as were brought to the New World, except for the church, were weakened by the hostility of those subjected to them. The final question—what new institutions appeared among the colonists in response to the conditions of the frontier—remains to be answered. What signs were there, in this Middle Atlantic frontier, in this

¹¹¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 147, 150.

¹¹² Johnson, *Swedish Settlements*, pp. 502, 504-509.

¹¹³ Johnson, *Swedish Settlements*, Vol. I, p. 367.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 463.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, Vol. II, p. 609.

early period, of the formation of a government distinct from that of Europe, or of the promotion of democracy?

As far as institutions are concerned, three instances already described must answer both questions. The action of the council of Rensselaerswyck, in calling themselves an independent community and in assuming an authority in conflict with that of the patroon; the appearance in the Dutch administration of the representative bodies of the Eight, Twelve, and Nine Men (who were largely impotent, and were summoned and dismissed at the pleasure of the Director); and the calling together, by the Swedish governor, of two groups of the "best men" for consultation with him—these three developments were the whole of the constructive political change. The first was quickly checked, and the second and third can hardly be said to have made effective contributions to the prevailing political systems, or to any others which succeeded them. Nor was the representative body, of which they were feeble examples, unknown to Europe. The most that can be claimed for them is that they indicate a desire among the people for a share in government.

The same lack of constructive development appears in economic life. There the wish of the promoters to encourage emigration, and the assumption of land by the people led to an approach to freehold tenure, which was still resisted by the authorities and limited by claims of prior purchase and by the imposition of tithes. Freedom of trade appeared too late among the Swedes, and was too restricted among the Dutch, to be classed as an institution. Moreover neither freehold tenure nor freedom of trade were in any sense strictly American developments.

In religion and religious organization, no change occurred whatsoever, and no change was forecast, except in the appearance in New Netherlands of many different creeds.

The conclusion must be accepted that the frontier in its first phase was not, institutionally, a constructive force. The European "germs,"¹¹⁶ whose presence Turner admitted, seem superficially to have triumphed over environment. Yet, although they survived, it is equally obvious that they were not successful or accepted instru-

¹¹⁶ It should be noted incidentally that the European institutions established here were already largely archaic abroad; and that—under frontier conditions which affected governors as well as governed—they were "badly," i.e. corruptly, and personally administered.

ments of government, and that the frontier provided the theatre in which, and the means by which, they were resisted. It was in other words a destructive and transmuting force.

Popular opposition and evasion, made successful by the distances and the opportunities of the frontier, were as persistent as the imported offices and laws. Lawlessness, general if not universal, became a political as well as a personal weapon, whether wielded consciously or unconsciously. It took two directions, on the one hand toward anarchy, on the other, toward organized, articulate protest and the demand for reform. The second tendency, in turn, has two inescapable implications—that the common people, by discussion and pressure, were taking a new part in politico-economic problems, and that their insistence was upon change for their own benefit. They were widening the body politic to include them and their needs. The process is one of infiltration, by which the institution remains but its components alter. To a less, but still a noticeable extent, the same process appeared within the official circle. Men who were unlikely at home ever to have played a part in government, were called into conference by the authorities. The Dutch representatives of the Eight, Nine, and Twelve, the councillors of Rensselaerswyck, the Swedish “best men,” were interlopers in administration, who did not overthrow the system, but brought new elements into it. This penetration is perhaps the truly effective beginning of democratic action.

Within the sphere of economic life, much the same course can be traced. The common man on the frontier was able to thrust himself into the group of the propertied. The institution of private property was no longer exclusive, but inclusive of the majority. Again, lawlessness played a part—in land, with extra-legal purchase or occupation; in trade, through smuggling. Here, once more, two ideas are inherent—that of a personal right to property, and that of the possibility of improvement in personal status, both new, not in principle, but in the width of their acceptance and application.

The obvious and basic change appears in the individual. The weakened sense of European nationality, the dislike for and disregard of authority, restlessness, opportunism, individualism, a relaxation of the moral code, the combining of Indian with European customs, acquisitiveness, independence of mind and behavior—all appear, for better or worse, under more or less favorable names, as the characteristics of the frontiersman.

How many of these qualities can be ascribed definitely to the conditions of life in the American wilderness? Some of them can be dismissed without further discussion. "Indianization" could have taken place nowhere else. Restlessness, opportunism, self-interest, and laxity of morals are plainly responses to the opportunities and licenses of the frontier scene. How much of the current lawbreaking and rebelliousness was brought about by autocratic and unwise government, how much by frontier conditions, is a question more difficult to answer. It can be met, if the same qualities can be shown to appear on a frontier where the government was neither tyrannical nor "bad." From that point of view, it must be referred to other investigations. The evidence here presented suggests that the frontier was the dominant influence. Isaac de Rasières blamed "bad government" for the prevailing lawlessness. On the other hand, Kiliaen van Rensselaer believed that frontier "luxury" spoiled the people. Acrelius thought that in the new Canaan, with its heretofore unknown good, the people had become resentful of control. Jasper Danckaerts ascribed their wildness to the country in which they lived.

It remains to match the frontier theory, as Turner expressed it, with the history of New Sweden and New Netherland. The "precipitation" and dissolving of European political systems which he described was undoubtedly taking place here. No new government, however, can be shown to be taking the place of the old, except by the infiltration and transformation already suggested. Whatever minor change occurred was in the direction of a democratic, representative system. If democracy was foreshadowed, anarchy was more notably present.

Turner's "demand for a liberal land policy" is very evident. Like later frontiersmen, the Dutch and Swedes tended to assume "squatters' rights." The availability of land and the easily handled, and easily concealed, trade in furs were without a doubt essential factors in their intransigence. The change in economic situation was the extension—in the acquisition of property by the propertyless—of a European institution rather than a departure from it. That extension was, however, of an importance hardly to be overestimated.

Turner's statement of a possible breach of religious organization is not in the least borne out in the records of the time and place, in which the European establishment can be shown to have survived unchanged.

In the realm of ideas and personal behavior it is perhaps most difficult to compare Turner's frontier theory and historical fact. His belief that the frontier weakened national ties is confirmed by the records. No evidence, on the other hand, shows as yet the appearance of the "composite" nationality that he suggested. Individualism, materialism—whether constructive or not must depend on interpretation—and lax morality are matters of statement or justifiable inference. Such traits as inventiveness cannot be demonstrated, unless the mothering of necessity is taken for proof. The breaking of old habits and the adoption of new ones undoubtedly appears in the acceptance and adaptation of Indian ways. Unless buoyancy and exuberance are to be identified with riotousness and quarrelling, they find no documentation. Idealism, if it was felt, was not expressed. To expect it is to ignore the realities—hunger, hardship, danger, sickness, and bitter labor—that were inherent in the frontier. That form of idealism which is implicit in the possibility of personal betterment and in the demand for political change (which may fairly be called progress) can be accepted for the period.

Against this factual review, Turner's imaginative summary still stands.

For a moment, at the frontier, the bonds of custom are broken and unrestraint is triumphant. There is not *tabula rasa*. The stubborn American environment is there with its imperious summons to accept its conditions; the inherited ways of doing things are also there; and yet, in spite of environment, and in spite of custom, each frontier did indeed furnish a new field of opportunity, a gate of escape from the bondage of the past; and freshness, and confidence, and scorn of older society, impatience of its restraints and its ideas, and indifference to its lessons, have accompanied the frontier.¹¹⁷

The magnificent statement is broad enough to cover the narrower conclusions of this discussion within its restricted field—that the frontier made its widest immediate alteration in the individual; that its effect upon institutions was obstructive and destructive; that it extended and modified rather than built anew. It afforded, in other words, a proving ground for European institutions, in which some were strengthened, others weakened and nullified, and very few—indeed, perhaps only one—emerged entirely unchanged.

¹¹⁷ Turner, *Frontier*, p. 38.