



Dutch farmers work feverishly to repair the dikes before next year's rains. Willow branches - called *rijs* - are hauled in to form the underpinnings. In the Bommelerwaard, farmers like Ott van Tuyl not only repaired their assigned dike sections, but participated in a major overhaul of the Meidijk [Drawing by E. van de Velde, in H. van Heiningen: "Dijken en Dijkdoorbraken," Den Haag, 1978, pg. 11].

## Chapter 5

### Decline and Tragedy 1620 ~ 1670

#### *Dikes in Distress*

For the men and women who lived along the Waal, the Twelve Year Truce of 1609-1621 had effectively ended their war against the Spaniards. Now they could turn their attention to the true enemy, that most savage of destroyers: the *water*. Between 1570 and 1595, some six floods had wreaked havoc along the Waal, and the war had made proper repair and maintenance of the dikes all but impossible.<sup>1</sup> By 1612, the situation was desperate. To meet the challenge, the people turned to their secret weapon: organization. A special water board, the *Dijkstoel*, assumed control not only of dike maintenance, but also administration and hydraulic engineering. The chairman was called the *dijkgraaf* and his seven assistants *heemraden*, and they represented the entire Bommelerwaard - 3 men from Zaltbommel, 2 from the eastern villages and 2 from the west.<sup>2</sup> Sander and Ott van Tuyl, along with the other landowners, were each obliged to maintain certain sections of the dike, each section being associated with a plot of land he owned. The *heemraden* inspected the dikes, then caused the names of those negligent in dike maintenance to be read out in church on Sunday. If the laggard did not fix his dike within a few weeks' time, not only would he be fined, but the entire *Dijkstoel* would come to call - staying in a nearby inn at the farmer's expense - until he did the repair. If the landowner was unable to do the repair, or was absent, the *Dijkstoel* would bring in a crew of special workmen to get the job done.<sup>3</sup> This renewed attention to the dikes had its effect: with the exception of 1634-35, the dikes held firm during the first half of the 17th century.

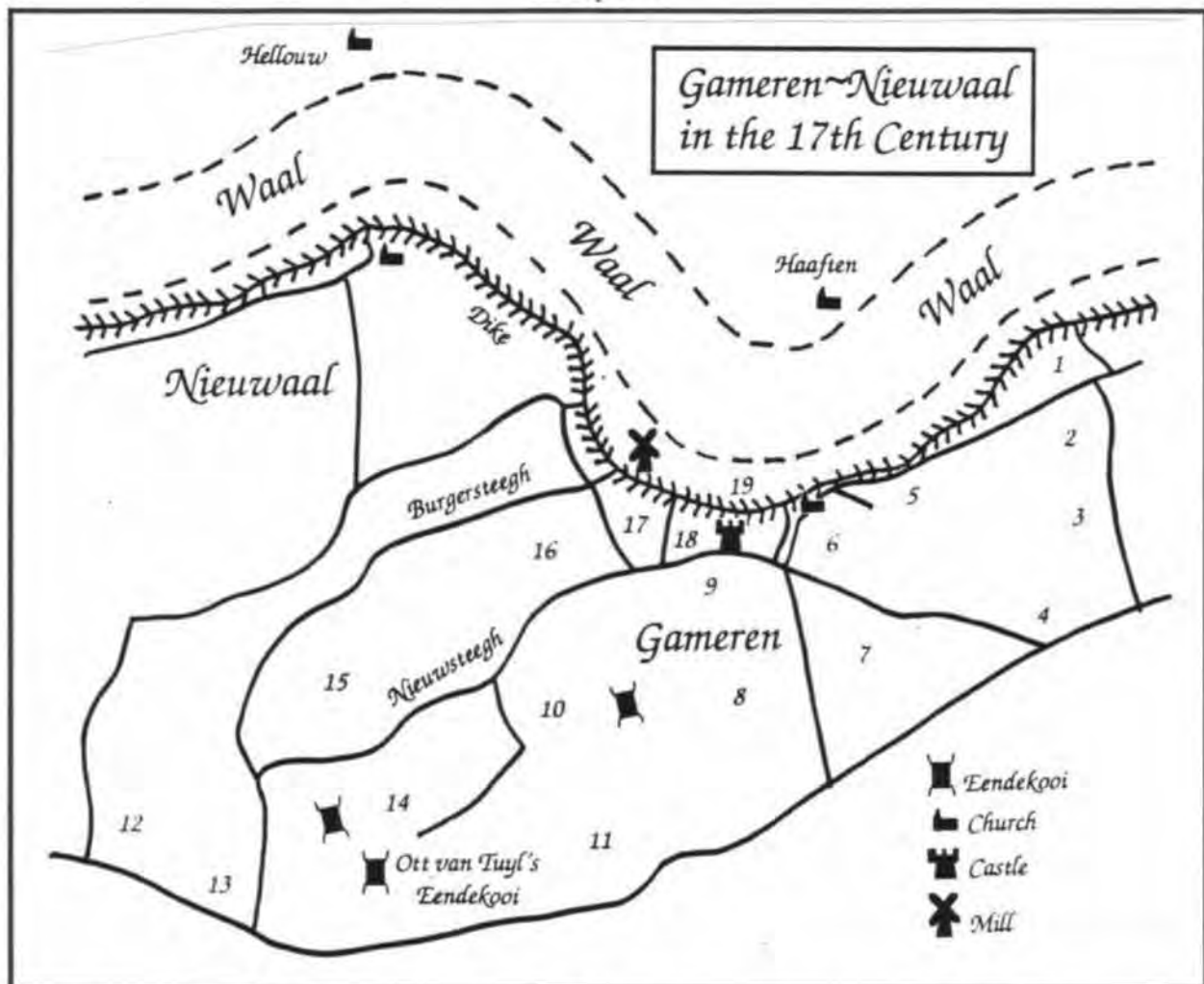
Ironically, this increased attention to public works led to an increased threat of flooding. With cities clamoring for more river traffic, the increasing navigation called for broader, straighter rivers. So, around 1655, several meanders of the Waal near Zaltbommel were straightened - in defiance of river physics - to accommodate this demand.<sup>4</sup> As so often happens when man interferes with nature, there were unforeseen consequences. The *uiterwaard* - land outside the dikes - was now more often under water, due to the altered flow pattern. In retaliation, those who owned affected land outside the dikes - many of them nobles - built small jettys which protruded

<sup>1</sup> Van Heiningen, H., "Dijken en dijkdoorbraken in het Nederlandse rivierengebied," Den Haag, 1978, pp. 30-31.

<sup>2</sup> Moorman van Kappen, O., "Tieler- en Bommelerwaarden 1327-1977," Tiel/Zaltbommel, 1977, pg. 190.

<sup>3</sup> Moorman van Kappen, pp. 59, 192.

<sup>4</sup> Van Heiningen, pp. 37-38.



The village of Gameren, located at a bend in the then-meandering river Waal, took shape in the early Middle Ages. According to the 1649 tax records, Gameren contained 625 morgen, 5 hont inside the dikes, plus 93 morgen *uiterwaard* [land outside the dikes], distributed as follows: 59% Grassland, 13% Farms, 10% Orchard, 10% Hop fields, 8% Woods.

Named sections of Gameren were:

- |                                       |  |   |
|---------------------------------------|--|---|
| 1. <i>Cluijt &amp; Voetackers</i> [F] | 7. <i>Oude Weyde</i> [G]                     | 13. <i>Overste gemeynten</i> [G]        |
| 2. <i>Beemden</i> [F]                 | 8. <i>De Hoeven</i> [G]                      | 14. <i>Knapendriesblock</i> [G]         |
| 3. <i>Leuten</i> [F]                  | 9. <i>De Oude Hoeven</i> [F]                 | 15. <i>Rooy- &amp; Hermiscampen</i> [G] |
| 4. <i>Tijningen</i> [F]               | 10. <i>Verckenscampen</i> [G]                | 16. <i>Burgersteegh block</i> [F]       |
| 5. <i>Oost en West</i> [F]            | 11. <i>Elscampen &amp; Achterbroeken</i> [G] | 17. <i>Molenblock</i> [F]               |
| 6. <i>Bullicken block</i> [F]         | 12. <i>Liescampen</i> [G]                    | 18. <i>Peperstraat block</i> [F]        |
|                                       |  | 19. <i>Uiterwaard</i> [G]               |

[F] = Mostly Farmland, orchards, hopfields [G] = Mostly Grassland & woods

Notice that the farmland, orchards, and hopfields were all located near the Waal, where the soil was better suited to agriculture. The family van Tuyl lived and farmed in the fertile *Burgersteegh block*.

#### References:

Rijksarchief in Gelderland, Archief van de Staten van het Kwartier van Nijmegen, 511; and Ir. H.K. Roessingh : Hoe zijn de Gelderse verpondingskohieren uit het midden van de 17e eeuw ingericht, Bijdragen en Mededelingen Gelre 63, Arnhem, 1969, pg. 61.

into the river, diverting water from their properties. But these jetties, in their turn, caused disaster for the dikes. Winter ice, no longer free to drift downstream, would pile up behind the jetties, exerting a tremendous force against the dikes, a force capable of rupturing them.<sup>5</sup> As a result, the villagers on both banks of the Waal were now more subject to that ultimate disaster: the wintertime dike-break.<sup>6</sup>

### *Van Tuyl Family Matters*

Though war was absent and the dikes were made sound, the first decades of the 17th century were not a peaceful time in Gameren for the sons and daughters of the late Jan Sandersz van Tuyl. They had embarked, it would seem, on a family feud. Jan Sandersz' oldest children, Sander and Marijken, had quarreled with their father over division of the estate, but just before his death in 1617, they had relented.<sup>7</sup> Then, immediately after the old man had died, Sander and Marijken, without formally dividing the estate, undertook to sell portions of it belonging to their younger brothers, Ott and Aert.<sup>8</sup> Clearly, the younger boys objected to what was happening, and in 1619 they asked the *Ambtman* to intervene on their behalf. They asked for a full accounting of their older brother's dealings on their behalf, and for the estate to be formally divided, so that they could take up their portion. The High Bench of Zuilichem thereupon decided to ask four "good friends" to act on behalf of the younger brothers.<sup>9</sup> The affair was finally concluded some seven years later, when Marijken, Ott, and Aert sold their divided portion of the estate, leaving Sander, their older brother, in possession of the family farm.<sup>10</sup>

Sander added to his lands in 1619, buying land to the south of his farm - land which had originally belonged to the family farm in the days of his grandfather, Ott van Oever. He purchased the land

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<sup>5</sup> Van Heiningen, pg. 37-38.

<sup>6</sup> The dikes in the village of Tuil, on the north bank of the Waal, would be particularly vulnerable in the coming years. See: van de Ven, P. G., "Aan de wieg van Rijkswaterstaat," Zutphen, 1976, pg. 27. See also: Elbers, P.F. "De Dijken van Tuil, een Treurige Geschiedenis," in *Mededelingen van de Historische Kring West-Betuwe*, Aug., 1992, pg. 1. This conflict between the interests of river-straighteners and river-dammers persisted into the 19th century.

<sup>7</sup> See chapter 3. Actually, it would appear that Marijken was the peacemaker at the time.

<sup>8</sup> These properties were: 1 1/2 morgen "Op de Woerden" for 912 guilders to Anthonis Gijsbertsz [RAG, RAZ 671, fol. 377, 25-07-1617]; 1 1/2 morgen "Lage Scheylwegh" for 350 guilders to Marijken, widow of Aert Ariensz [RAG, RAZ 671, fol. 378, 12-08-1617]; 5 1/2 hont "De Hemert" at Zuilichem for 100 guilders to Anthonis Anthonisz [RAG, RAZ 671, fol. 392, 24-02-1618]; 7 hont "De Achterbroeken" for 13 guilders to Aelbert Aelbertsz [RAG, RAZ 671, fol. 393v, 11-03-1618].

<sup>9</sup> Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ) 6, fol. 46, 23-03-1619. In fact, Aert may have been incompetent, judging from the fact that his brother Ott was acting as his guardian as late as 1626 [see genealogy section]. The four court appointees were: Anthonis Gijsbertsz, Willem Ambrosius, Aernt de Raeth and Andries Willemsz.

<sup>10</sup> Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ) 673, fol. 22, 07-05-1626.

from some of his grandfather's heirs.<sup>11</sup> Sander must have been well-respected in the community, because he was chosen to be *Buurmeester* of Gameren in 1620.<sup>12</sup> But by the mid-1620s, Sander was headed down the road to financial failure. First, he sold various properties he'd inherited,<sup>13</sup> then he started mortgaging his holdings.<sup>14</sup> In 1625, he borrowed 300 guilders against his holdings,<sup>15</sup> and several times, his property was seized because of unpaid debts: in 1622, because he owed 78 guilders, 10 stivers and again in 1624 because he didn't pay his beer-delivery bill (60 guilders 16 stivers). He was also late paying his taxes in 1622.<sup>16</sup> Though Sander died by 1637, he had by that time run through 3 wives, apparently without producing children.<sup>17</sup> His life, however, was certainly not dull, judging from the apparent personality of his second wife, Jenneken Ariens. In 1617, the second Mrs. van Tuyl got in a fight with one Jenneken Tonis, wife of Rob Geritsz, and bit off a part of her ear! For this lapse in behavior, she paid a fine of 32 *ponden*, plus court costs.<sup>18</sup>

In contrast to his older, more profligate brother, Ott van Tuyl seems to have been the soul of responsibility. Born in 1606, he was 13 years old when his father's estate was divided. Whereas Sander had kept his inherited land, which he then mortgaged, Ott sold his inheritance after the partition, using the proceeds to purchase, at age 22, farmland of his own.<sup>19</sup> He also, it must be noted, married well. He wed, in 1627, neighbor Neelken Geerlofs, daughter of Geerlof Aertsz, an

<sup>11</sup> Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ) 672, fol. 17v, 05-04-1619.

The heirs were the children of Anna van Oever and the underage Ott van Oever, the son of her brother Ott, who died before 26-01-1616 (when his widow Eelken Gijsbert Gerits remarried to Sander Dircksz, wheelwright of Zaltbommel). The minor Ott went in 1616 into the orphanage at Zaltbommel; RAG, RAZ 671, fol. 345. By 1649 this parcel with a farm on it belonged to Jan Anthonisz van Aelst [RAG, Archief Staten Kwartier van Nijmegen (ASKN) 511]. Josina Anthonis van Aalst was probably his sister.

<sup>12</sup> Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ) 6, 20-11-1620. A *Buurmeester* was one of two elected representatives of the village people [see chapter 3].

<sup>13</sup> 1 morgen "Scheylwegh" to Jan Cornelisz for 935 guilders [RAG, RAZ 672, fol. 51, 30-04-1620]; his part in 8 hont "Hermiscampen" to Arien Petersz Joosten [RAG, RAZ 672, fol. 142v, 15-01-1623]; 3 morgen "Liescampen" to Ghijsbert Jansz Schaey [RAG, RAZ 673, fol. 27, 10-06-1626].

<sup>14</sup> Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ) 672, fol. 88, 23-06-1621 (135 guilders) and RAG, RAZ 673, fol. 119v, 13-09-1628 (160 guilders 10 stivers). In 1631 the house was in the possession of Berndt Neteler and his wife Josina Anthonis van Aalst, RAG, RAZ 673, fol. 252v.

<sup>15</sup> Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ) 672, fol. 237v, 10-06-1625 (from Jacob Jansz Vorsterman).

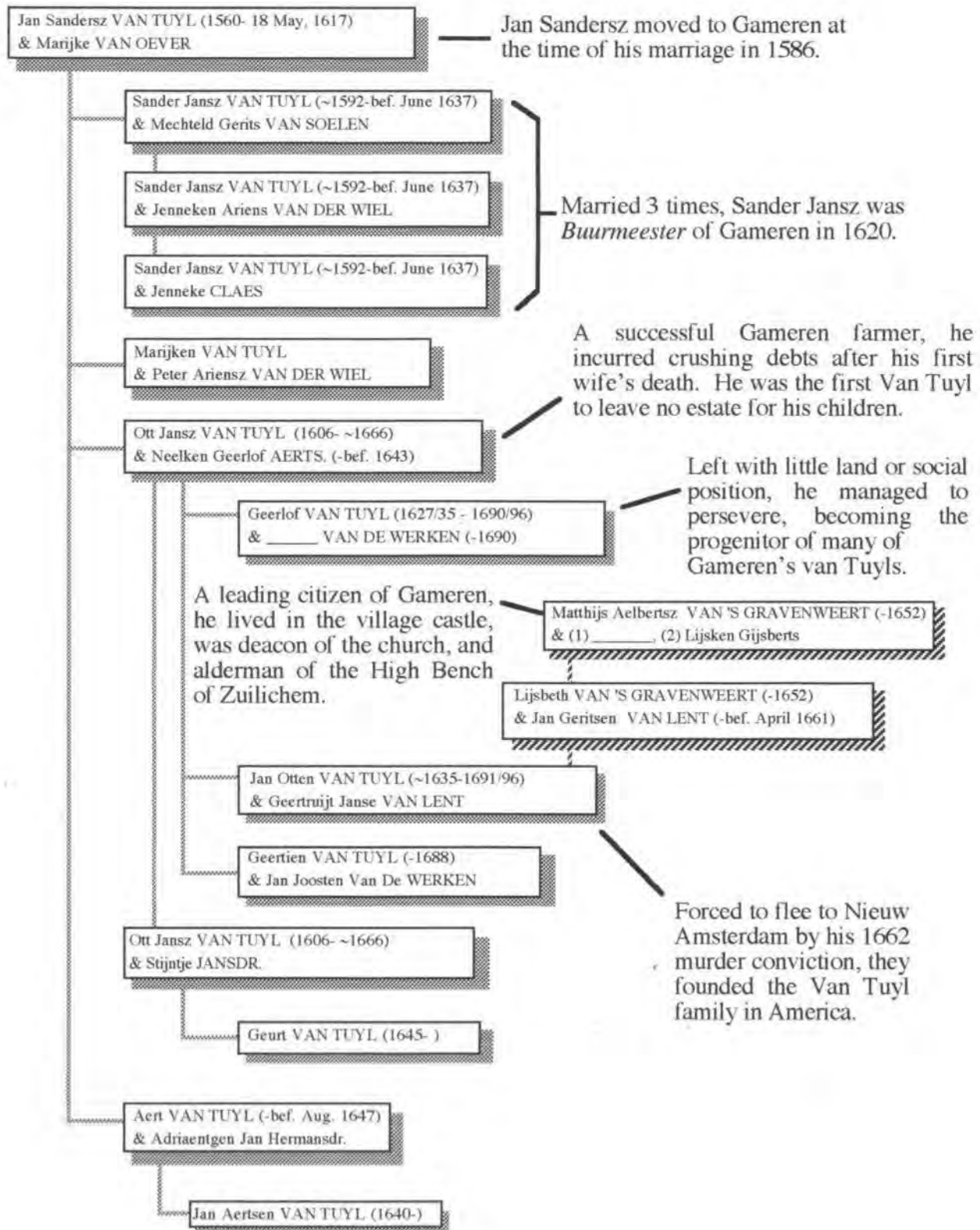
<sup>16</sup> Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ) 6, 06-12-1622; RAG, RAZ 6, 20-11-1624; RAG, RAZ 672, fol. 122v, 06-06-1622.

<sup>17</sup> On 04-06-1637 his third wife remarried [see genealogy]. Possibly, he died during the plague of 1635. The wives were: (1) Mechteld Gerits van Soelen, (2) Jenneken Ariens van der Wiel and (3) Jenneken Claes, widow of Frans Meyers.

<sup>18</sup> Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ) 5, fol. 227, 04-09-1617; RAG, RAZ 6, fol. 6, 19-11-1618.

<sup>19</sup> In 1628 he purchased land; between 1619 and 1628 no records have been found in which guardians purchased or sold land on his behalf.

# The Early Van Tuyls of Gameren



important property owner in Gameren, and administrator of the church from 1612-1624.<sup>20</sup> The young couple moved in with her parents - who also lived on the Burgersteegh - and before long, they added to the family holdings, purchasing an orchard which adjoined their property to the east.<sup>21</sup> New father-in-law Geerlof Aertsz gave Ott some *uiterwaard* property [land outside the dike, used mostly for grazing] in 1628.<sup>22</sup> And through the years of his marriage to Neelken, Ott continued to accumulate land, sometimes purchasing it in partnership with his sister Marijken's husband, Peter Ariensz van der Wiel. By 1649, Ott had become one of the village's major property owners, controlling 17 morgen, 1 hont of farmland, hop fields, orchards, and willow ground.<sup>23</sup> Twenty-one years of peace - and good family connections - had enabled him to prosper. Ott Jansz van Tuyl, now in his forties, was doing quite well.

### ***Peace and Protestantism***

Long after the 1629 surrender of 's Hertogenbosch, negotiations finally produced, in 1648, the *Peace of Westphalia*. The Netherlands were now an independent nation with colonies in Africa, the East Indies, West Indies, and North America. The rebellion which had started 80 years before with little hope of success had spawned a new, powerful nation with reformed institutions and exciting prospects.

The successful revolt brought about tremendous demographic change and economic growth, especially for Holland and cities like Leiden and Amsterdam. The population increase in Holland between 1514 and 1622 was about 150%, and the City of Leiden alone counted 10,000 new immigrants between 1580 and 1630, swelling its population to 65,000. Many of these new burghers of Leiden were active in cloth manufacturing, which before the war had been a trade dominated by Flanders.<sup>24</sup> Refugees from all over The Netherlands, Belgium, and France flocked to Amsterdam after the peace accord. The city hit hardest by this migration was Antwerp, whose prewar population had stood at about 100,000. After the war, it was left with only 35,000 inhabitants. Amsterdam, however, grew from about 30,000 townspeople in 1585 to 120,000 in 1648.<sup>25</sup> Tens of thousands of merchants, scientists, and artisans flooded Amsterdam, which had now become - and would forever after be - a melting pot if ever there was one:<sup>26</sup>

<sup>20</sup> Streekarchief Bommelerwaard [SAB], Oud Archief Dorpspolder Gameren [OAG] 799.

<sup>21</sup> Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem [RAZ] 673, fol. 87v, 15-01-1628 [Purchased from the guardians of Herman Hermansz van Oever].

<sup>22</sup> Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ) 671, fol. 135, 26-03-1603 and RAG, RAZ 673, fol. 108, 20-05-1628. He later sold this foreland to Matthijs Aelbertsz van 's-Gravenweert.

<sup>23</sup> Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Archief Staten Kwartier van Nijmegen (ASKN) 511. He rented 12 morgen of meadows in the uiterwaard from the descendants of the Lords of Gameren. The yearly land tax amounted to 202 guilders and 14 stivers. 6 morgens of his land was owned jointly with Peter Ariensz.

<sup>24</sup> Parker, pg. 244.

<sup>25</sup> De Nave, F., "Antwerpen en de scheiding der Nederlanden," Antwerpen, 1986, pp. 133-135.

<sup>26</sup> Wilson, C., "The Dutch Republic," in *Johan de Wit, een volmaakt Hollander*, Bussum, 1972, pg. 36.

Chapter 5

*Hence Amsterdam - Turk, Christian, Pagan, Jew,  
Staple of sects and mint of schism grew :  
That bank of conscience where not one so strange  
Opinion but finds credit and exchange .*

In the countryside however, the wounds of war were deep: in most provinces the population had barely recovered to the prewar levels of eighty years before. This was certainly the situation in the Bommelerwaard and Zaltbommel. After the surrender of 's Hertogenbosch, Zaltbommel was no longer a frontier city, and a postwar depression ensued. The garrison left the city and many merchants and craftsmen followed. More than 300 houses stood empty. Zaltbommel was now a quiet, economically weak, provincial city.<sup>27</sup>

But peaceful times and absence of floods had improved life for the Van Tuyls and their neighbors in Gameren. On 6 October, 1642, OS<sup>28</sup> they finally - after all these years of being served by the minister from Tuil - got their own full-time Protestant minister.<sup>29</sup> This first full-time minister was one Abraham Huysinghius - newly arrived from Meerkerk, where he had been postulant since 1640.<sup>30</sup> Apparently, the Gameren villagers had some trouble accepting this stern Calvinist zealot as their pastor. After Huysinghius' first Sunday preaching to the congregation, 21 church members were in favor of accepting him, but 10 voted against it. Among those opposed were: Peter Gijsbertsz, the *schout*, and leading citizens Matthijs Aelbertsz van 's Gravenweert and Ott Jansz van Tuyl. This was a significant level of dissension, so a mediator was brought in to resolve it. He patched things up, and 6 weeks later Huysinghius assumed his position.<sup>31</sup> Those in the congregation who had opposed Huysinghius apparently bowed to the will of the majority, and Ott Jansz van Tuyl for one, though he "...preferred to refuse the nomination," accepted the post of church deacon in 1644, "...because it was the will of God."<sup>32</sup>

As deacon of Rev. Huysinghius' severely Calvinist church, Ott van Tuyl surely became embroiled in the church's oversight of its members' behavior. For example, the church council in 1645 sent their minister and one of the church elders to pay a call on the wife of one of their members. Informing her that "... she encouraged improper behavior by tapping beer and [running] a dancing school," they elicited from her a promise "...to do her utmost to avoid such evil habits."<sup>33</sup>

<sup>27</sup> De Groot, J., "Zaltbommel, stad en waarden door de eeuwen heen," Zaltbommel 1979, pg. 244.

<sup>28</sup> The Gregorian calendar was introduced in Holland in 1583, but in Gelre it did not appear until about 1700. In charters, acts, etc. often two dates were mentioned with the addition OS (old style or *stilo veteri*) and NS (new style or *stilo novo*): 6 October OS was 16 October NS.

<sup>29</sup> Archive of the Dutch Reformed Church of Gameren.

<sup>30</sup> Ouwering, H., "Geschiedenis der dorpen en heerlijkheden Deurne, Liessel en Vlierden," Deurne 1933, pg. 443.

<sup>31</sup> Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ) 8, fol. 308, 14-08-1642. The mediator was Petrus Eijckenbergh, minister at Zaltbommel.

<sup>32</sup> Archive of the Dutch Reformed Church of Gameren.

<sup>33</sup> Archive of the Dutch Reformed Church of Gameren, 03-08-1645.



Huysinghius and his fellow Calvinist missionaries of the time emphasized in their teachings a resignation to a social order designed by The Lord. This meant, in their view, renunciation of many worldly pleasures, including organ music in the churches - a practice forbidden at a synod in 1574. Eventually this restriction was relaxed, probably as a result of the musical anarchy typical of most congregations' attempts to sing *à cappella*.<sup>34</sup>

The Reverend Mr. Huysinghius left Gameren in 1649, sent into battle against *paepsche superstition* in the village of Deurne in officially-Protestant, but in fact mostly-Catholic, Brabant. This was not an easy assignment for the Calvinist missionary: "Some people appeared who sneered in a very scornful way at him and the religion ... and treated him with laughter, mockery and dirty intentions," but other members mentioned him as their "dear and beloved preacher" and asked him to "...go to The Hague to deliberate on the rudeness and mockery that was done to him every day by the Catholics." Huysinghius continued his anti-Catholic crusade for 5 years in Deurne, eventually moving on to Bladel, where he died in 1686.<sup>35</sup> He left behind, in the village of Gameren, a strongly Calvinist tradition - one which would, in the 19th century, manifest itself in yet another "reformation".

### ***A Flood of Ill Fortune***

For Ott Jansz van Tuyl, the decade of the 1640s started out well enough. In 1641, the administrators of the *Gasthuys* [hospital] at Zaltbommel leased 3 morgen of land in Gameren to him and his brother-in-law Peter Ariensz.<sup>36</sup> The interesting thing about this property was that it contained an *eendekooi*, a duck decoy pond [see: *The Art of De Kooi*]. The partners Ott and Peter negotiated a lease which gave them the right to operate this decoy for a period of 12 years. Local experts taught Ott Jansz how to operate the pond - apparently with success - because he was able to bag 23 birds his first time out.<sup>37</sup> Naturally, such a successful operation attracted the attention of poachers, including one Arien Claesz Holler, who was apprehended in December of 1644 taking ducks with his dog.<sup>38</sup> This poaching problem was soon straightened out, but on another occasion a land deal gone sour nearly cost Ott van Tuyl his life.

On 4 February, 1645, Ott van Tuyl was nearly murdered. His assailant was a *burgher* from Zaltbommel named Hubert Cup, a man with whom Ott and Peter thought they had a business deal. Apparently, Hubert had secretly bought a plot of land for himself - even though he had an

<sup>34</sup> Presser, J., "De tachtigjarige oorlog," Amsterdam, 1978, pp. 296-309.

<sup>35</sup> Ouwerling, H., "Geschiedenis der dorpen en heerlijkheden Deurne, Liessel en Vlierden," Deurne, 1933, pp. 443-452.

<sup>36</sup> Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ) 676, fol. 199, 05-10-1641. The property was called *Gasthuis Loo*, the rent was 28 guilders per year.

<sup>37</sup> Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ) 8, fol. 412, 435/436, April 1642.

<sup>38</sup> *ibid.* The poacher tried to convince the authorities he had rights to the pond, but to no avail. It is from the record of this case that we know about Ott's operating the decoy.

agreement with Ott and Peter to buy it in partnership with them. Afraid that the partners would take him to court for damages - and probably in the midst of heated words on the subject - Hubert Cup took out his *boer's* knife and stabbed Ott in the shoulder with it. Ott recovered, and he and Hubert ended up in court. Hubert was ordered to pay a fine of 100 gold guilders to Ott, along with 240 guilders, 11 stivers in compensatory damages.<sup>39</sup>

In 1643, Ott had married Stijntje Jansdr from Herwijnen, a village across the Waal.<sup>40</sup> His first wife Neelken, the mother of his sons Geerlof and Jan Otten - the wife whose family had helped Ott in matters of business and property - was gone. It may have been no coincidence that his life started to go downhill from this point on. But in fact, many of Ott Jansz van Tuyl's problems were due to circumstances beyond his control. A combination of hard times and natural disasters, compounded by his penchant for borrowing money, made the last 20 years of his life truly difficult.

Times were tough in the countryside in the aftermath of the *Eighty Year's War*. People were going hungry in Gameren. The situation got so bad that Ott and his fellow church deacons felt compelled in 1646 and 1650 to promulgate rules restricting the local miller from distributing bread to the poor.<sup>41</sup> All over Europe the farmers were in trouble as the prices of grain decreased: in 1657 the price of grain was no more than 25 % of what it had fetched in 1620. To compound the farmers' plight, the wages of laborers in that period had increased tenfold.<sup>42</sup> Farmers like Ott van Tuyl were under severe pressure. Ott reacted to this pressure by borrowing money. Over the years, he took out the following loans, which he failed to repay:<sup>43</sup>

1636	Hendrick Jansz Timmer	500 guilders
1642:	Hendrick van der Steegh	800 guilders
	Neulen de Laet	500 guilders

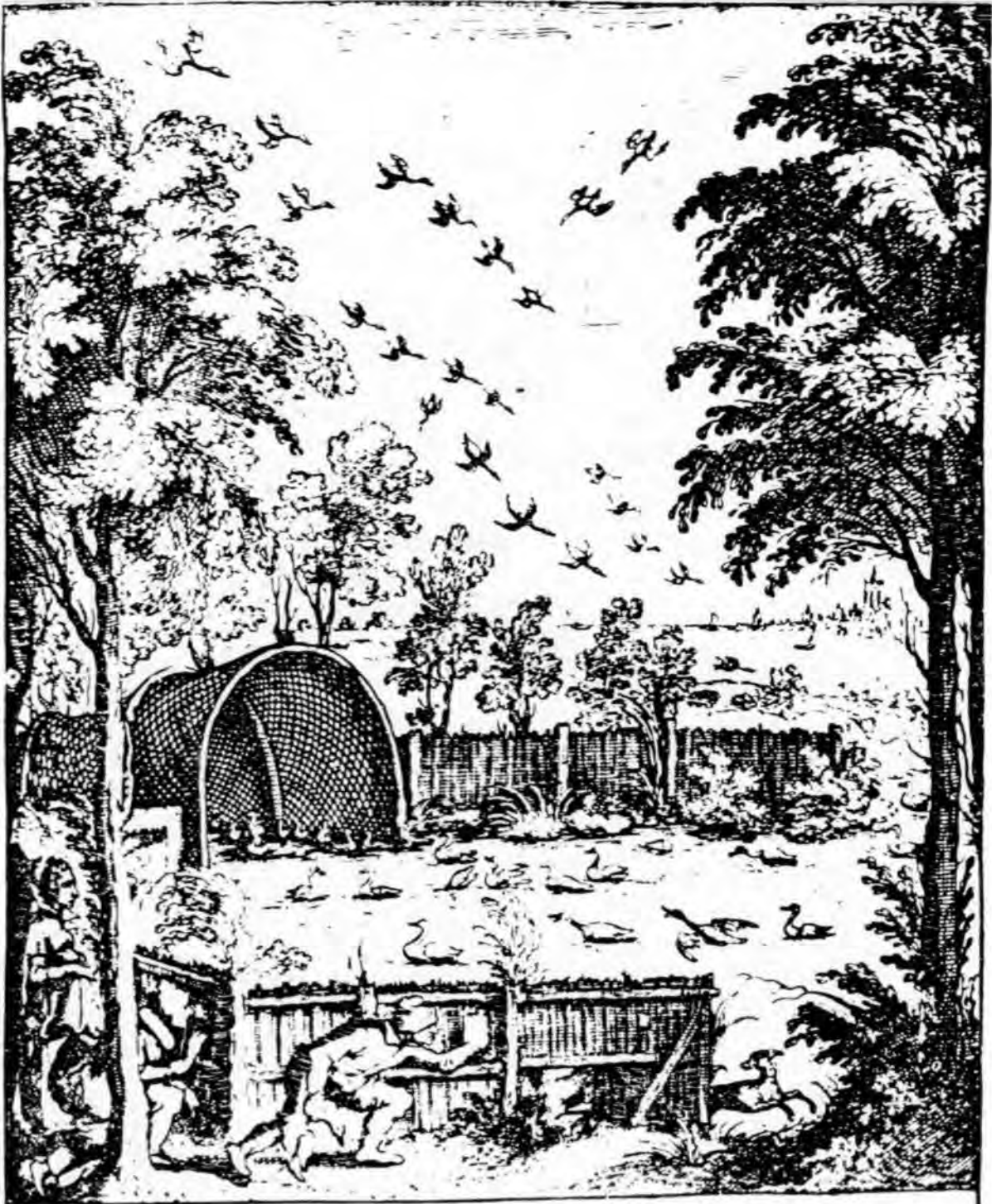
<sup>39</sup> Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ) 8, fol. 430; fol. 397; fol. 418. It is interesting to note that such an action, which today would be considered a criminal offense, was in those days a matter of civil law.

<sup>40</sup> Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), registration of marriages in Gameren, 26-03-1643.

<sup>41</sup> Archive of the Dutch Reformed Church of Gameren.

<sup>42</sup> Slicher van Bath, B., "De agrarische geschiedenis van West-Europa 500-1850," Utrecht, 1987, pp. 229-230.

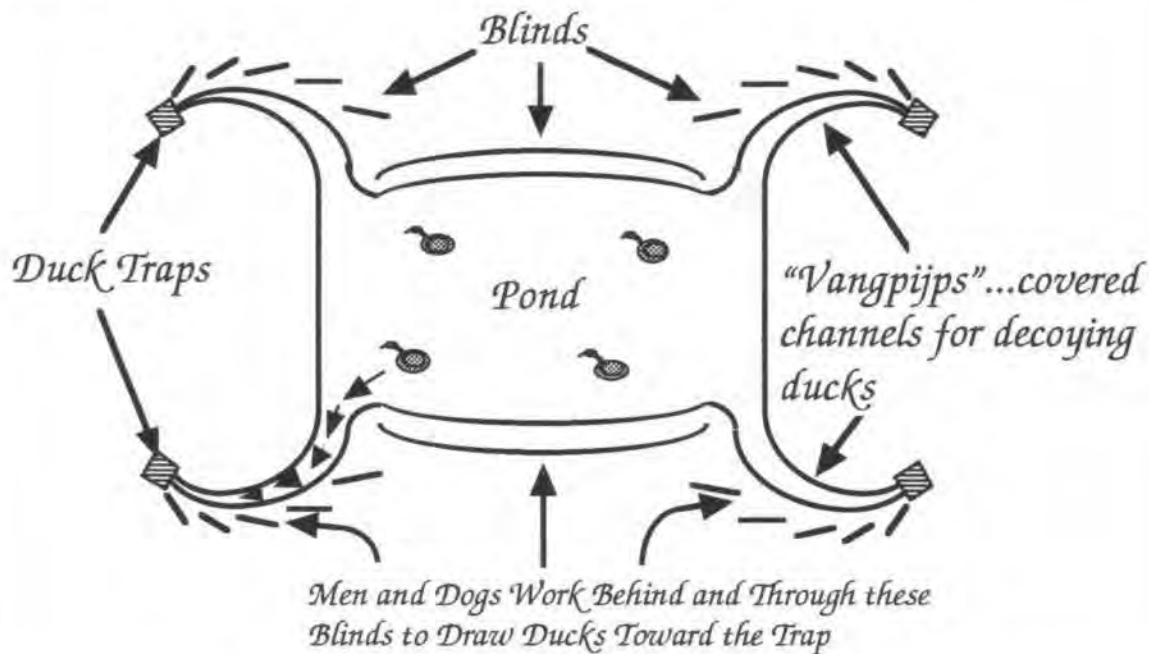
<sup>43</sup> Complete list of loans: 500 guilders from Hendrick Jansz Timmer, to be paid from all goods which he now has or will have in the future; repaid 1636; RAG, RAZ 673, fol. 224v, 27-01-1631. Loan of 800 guilders from Hendrick van der Steegh; RAG, RAZ 674, fol. 78v, 19-01-1642. Loan of 500 guilders from Neulen de Laet, widow of Gerard Hendricksz; RAG, RAZ 674, fol. 228, 18-08-1642. Loan of 400 guilders from Teuntgen Aerts, RAG, RAZ 674, fol.316, 24-05-1645. Loan of 300 guilders from Willem Collaert with his house as collateral; repaid 1663; RAG, RAZ 675, fol. 32, 19-12-1646. Loan of 400 guilders from Johan Ewaldtsz; repaid 1663; RAG, RAZ 675, fol. 48v, 17-05-1647. Loan of 215 guilders from Aerdt Schoock; repaid 1661; RAG, RAZ 675, fol. 103, 16-05-1649. Loan of 300 guilders from Hendrick van der Steegh; repaid 1663; RAG, RAZ 675, fol. 151v, 29-01-1651. Loan of 700 guilders from Johan van Blenckvliet with his house and two duck-decoys as collateral (one of the few loans to be repaid promptly : 29-09-1656); RAG, RAZ 675, fol. 274v, 10-05-1655. Loan of 1000 guilders from Johan van Blenckvliet with his house and some land as collateral; RAG, RAZ 675, fol. 310, 29-09-1656.



Argutus timidus quid cristas erigis? ecce  
 Sic anatem insidys garrula ducit anas  
 Exemplo præcit. et fallaci subdola cantu  
 Donec inescatam perdomicere canes.

# The Art of De Kooi...

Our English word *Decoy* comes from the Dutch *Eendekooi* - literally Duck [Eende] Decoy [Kooi] - meaning a special sort of pond used for trapping ducks. The Netherlands lie on the north-south flyway for many of Europe's migrating birds, and these fowl have always found the numerous ponds of the Rhine Delta to be attractive resting spots along the way. Probably starting in ancient times, the men who lived in what we now call the *Bommelerwaard* had tried to trap these migrating ducks using human guile and cunning - and some well trained animal assistants. Tame ducks or trained wild ducks resided permanently on the pond, helping to attract their migratory cousins. The *kooiker* [decoy-man] and his *kooihondje* [decoy dog] would work silently along the banks, the dog darting from behind the blinds to attract the curious fowl, while the man enticed them toward the traps with food. Since wind direction mattered, the *Eendekooi* was fitted with four traps - one at each corner of the pond. And since quiet was essential, these decoys had forests surrounding them, and were allowed to enforce silence in the area.



Since the 14th century, manmade *eendekooien* of the type pictured above have been used to trap ducks and geese. At one time, there were 25 of these decoys in operation in the Bommelerwaard. From 1641 to at least 1653, the *eendekooi* in Gameren's *Knapendriesblock* was leased and operated by Ott Jansz van Tuyl, a well-to-do Gameren farmer. Ott's decoy is the sole survivor of its kind in Gameren today - operated by the forestry commission for conservation purposes.

## References:

- 1 Van Balken, A.C., "De Bommelerwaard zien, kennen en waarderen," Zaltbommel, 1978, pp. 101-6.
- 2 \_\_\_\_\_, "Eendekooien," Staatsbosbeheer, 1985.
- 3 Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ) 8, fol. 435/436, April 1642.

## Chapter 5

1645:	Teuntgen Aerts	400 guilders
1646:	Wm. Collaert	300 guilders
1647:	Johan Ewaldtsz	400 guilders
1649:	Aerd Schooock	215 guilders
1651:	Hendrick van der Steegh	300 guilders
1655:	Johan van Blenckvliet	700 guilders
1656:	Johan van Blenckvliet	1000 guilders

By the 1650s, Ott Jansz van Tuyl was seriously over-extended.

*Then came the floods.*

In 1651, the Bommelerwaard was inundated for the first time in years.<sup>44</sup> And, in 1658, the dikes broke at Hedel on the Maas, and the people of Gameren were assessed 428 guilders, 16 stivers as their share of damage repair.<sup>45</sup> Of course, over and above the economic damage, these floods caused untold human suffering:<sup>46</sup>

*The trees, once rooted solidly in the clay, had been torn loose. Many houses collapsed, undermined by the water. The innocent victims took to the roof beams or the hayloft to save themselves...they suffered terribly from cold and deprivation. The cattle were panicked. The cows mooed and wailed as if proclaiming to all the world their miserable fate.*

In 1652, Ott van Tuyl, nearly bankrupt, asked to be relieved of his duties as deacon and elder of the Reformed Church of Gameren. He rendered his account to the church, showing that he was 67 guilders in their debt - a debt he could still not repay as late as 1662.<sup>47</sup> By 1660, Ott's financial situation started to collapse. His major creditor, Johan van Blenckvliet, sold the 1000 guilder note - which by this time was in arrears for interest to the tune of 244 guilders, 16 stivers - to people who apparently felt more confident about being able to collect it.<sup>48</sup> Just when it seemed that Ott van Tuyl's situation could not possibly get any worse, the world of this old man of 55 exploded in tragedy.

### ***Incident at the Hellow Tavern***

On January 24, 1662, *schepen* De Rouw and *schepen* Dorth, two members of the local court - the High Bench of Tuil - convened an enquiry at a tavern in Hellow, a village on the north bank of the Waal. Their purpose was to find out what had happened there the day before. They examined a

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<sup>44</sup> Van Heiningen, page 38.

<sup>45</sup> Streekarchief Bommelerwaard, Oud Archief Ambtsbestuur (OAA) 1B, 08-06-1658. The total costs of repair were 5912 guilders 14 stivers.

<sup>46</sup> Hoet, H., "Waternoot," in *De dijken van Tuil, een treurige geschiedenis*, by P.F. Elbers. [Mededelingen van de Historische Kring West-Betuwe, August, 1992, pg. 8]

<sup>47</sup> Archive of the Dutch Reformed Church of Gameren.

<sup>48</sup> Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ) 676, fol. 91v, 30-08-1660. The debt was further encumbered by some sort of judgment in the amount of 70 guilders, 5 stivers for legal fees. The purchasers of this distressed note, Anthonis Ariensz and Peter Adamsz, must have obtained it at a much-discounted price.

parade of witnesses - all of them local people - on behalf of the authorities in the *Tielerwaard*, the district wherein the village lay.

First came the local surgeons, Hermen Tijssen from Haaften and Dirck Anthonissen Quakernack from Herwijnen. The two doctors described in gory detail how they had attended a stabbing victim, a young man whose right arm had been sliced open from below, in such a way that the main artery and both its branches, as well as the nerves and basilic vein were severed, causing the victim to bleed to death in a matter of hours as he lay in the straw [on the floor of the village tavern].

Next came the witnesses who had observed the stabbing: tavern keeper Evert Cornelisz, his wife Teuntgen Jans and his son Jan Evertsz, 24, as well as two tavern patrons; Peter Jansz Keppel, 42, and Willem Geritz Crom, 33. Here is what they said:<sup>49</sup>

*“On the afternoon of January 23, 1662, six men from Gameren dropped in to the Tavern, asking for village clerk De Rouw. They learned he was at his home, and left the tavern. After 2 hours, the same six men from Gameren returned to the tavern. They were: Arien Spruckel, Jacob Jansz (nicknamed Hens), Jan Petersz, Wouter Mertensz, Geerlof van Tuyl and Jan Otten van Tuyl. Late in the afternoon, a quarrel started between Arien Spruckel and Hens. The innkeeper tried to calm the situation, but Jan Otten van Tuyl shouted, ‘leave them, they haven’t got the guts to fight. They are windbags, the pair of them’. At this point, Jan Otten van Tuyl pulled out his knife, made a scraping noise with it, and challenged Hens to a fight. Jacob Hens flinched, shouting that he didn’t have a knife. Then Wouter Mertensz cried out ‘but I do’, and drew his weapon. Willem Crom tried to separate the combatants with a chair, and the innkeeper’s wife and son intervened, the son grabbing Jan Otten while someone else held Wouter Mertensz’ left arm. But Wouter stabbed at Jan Otten with his free right hand. Jan Otten screamed at the innkeeper’s son, ‘Jan Evers, let go of me or I’ll stick this knife between your ribs.’ The innkeeper’s son released Jan Otten, who then struck at Wouter’s right arm - first slashing it, then stabbing with an upward motion that immediately drew a gush of blood. Wouter fell back, crying ‘now I will die. Now I will follow my brother who also died this way.’ The surgeons arrived soon after, and bandaged the wound. But Wouter, having lost a lot of blood, was beyond their help, dying some hours later”*

Sadly, tavern brawls of this sort were all too common: so common, in fact, that many towns and cities passed laws to try to prevent these knife fights from occurring.<sup>50</sup>

But just because a tragedy is commonplace, in no way is it made more acceptable to the victims and

<sup>49</sup> Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Tuil (RATL) 16, 384 - 384v - 385, 24-01-1662.

<sup>50</sup> The Dutch word for this type of establishment is *Herberg*, which was translated by the early New Yorkers as *Tavern*. In medieval Europe they were known by their Latin name: *Tabernae*. They grew up to serve the needs of medieval travelers; students, merchants, crusaders, and travelling artisans. Some developed a good reputation, becoming the *de facto* town center. But others developed a bad reputation as places for drinking, gambling, and, possibly, prostitution. [Hermesdorf, B., “De herberg in de Nederlanden,” Arnhem, 1977, pp. 1-2, 10-12, 18, 20-28, 102-138. Also: Manning, A., “Op zoek naar het alledaagse Nederland,” Amsterdam, 1975, pg. 44.

their families.<sup>51</sup> Wouter Mertensz de Graeff, the stabbing victim whose brother had died in a similar fracas, was virtually a next-door neighbor of the Van Tuyls. How must his parents have felt when the knock came to their door on the Burgersteegh? How, in fact, did Ott van Tuyl and Jan Otten's young wife, Geertruyd, react to the news? At eight the next morning, if not before, they learned something of what had transpired. It seems that Jan Dircksz Cluyt - a neighbor with an involved legal reason for coming to the door - brought them news that a bailiff of the court would be along in an hours' time to put a lien on all of Jan Otten van Tuyl's possessions. Indeed, the bailiff of the court arrived by nine o'clock to do his duty.<sup>52</sup>

As for Jan Otten van Tuyl himself? He went into hiding - and for good reason. It was not uncommon in cases of manslaughter for the perpetrator to forfeit not only his property, but also his life.<sup>53</sup> Of course, it was probably not too difficult to evade capture, since the only law enforcement of the time would have been the village *schout* and some bailiffs of the court, and the villagers would have been unlikely to betray him. In fact, he may not have been all that well hidden. It seems that in November of 1662, an agent of Jan Dircksz Cluyt was able to sell Jan Otten van Tuyl's possessions, having produced an unpaid receipt, allegedly signed on 13 July of that year by the fugitive Jan Otten - a receipt for delivery of beer!<sup>54</sup>

On June 3, 1662, the High Bench of Zuilichem, the local court with jurisdiction over Gameren, met in Zaltbommel. Judge Johan de Cocq and seven of the court's eight *schepenen* examined the evidence from the investigation held the previous January in Hellouw. No witnesses appeared. They delivered the following verdict: *death by the sword and confiscation of property*.<sup>55</sup>

As a direct result of this verdict, Jan Otten van Tuyl's options were foreclosed. He had to seek either anonymity in a place like Amsterdam, or a new life in one of the overseas colonies. As we now know, he, his wife Geertruyd, and their 2 year old son Otto appeared the following April,

<sup>51</sup> In a charter of 1589 from the city of Zierikzée, the municipality complained about the number of killings that took place in taverns. The city of Harderwijk passed laws requiring the innkeeper to warn his guests that no knives were to be allowed inside that were longer than the sample knife on display at the front of the courthouse. Furthermore, the innkeeper's kitchen knives had to have a blade with a blunt point. Municipalities expected their innkeepers to separate fighters: a 1616 law in Flanders specifically ordered innkeepers to do so. In case of negligence, the tavern keeper could lose his license for a period of three years. Proprietors were required to inform the *schout* about fights within 24 hours. [Hermesdorf, B., "De herberg in de Nederlanden," Arnhem, 1977, pp. 118, 221-222].

<sup>52</sup> Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Tuil (RATL) 10, fol. 274. Cluyt was the *momber* [guardian] for some underage children of Jan Geritsz van Lent, Jan Otten's late father-in-law. Since Jan Otten, as legal guardian of his wife, Geertruyd van Lent, had some control over her property, Cluyt apparently figured that the authorities could attach it on behalf of the aggrieved parents of Wouter Mertensz de Graeff, the stabbing victim.

<sup>53</sup> Kuys, J., "De ambtman in het Kwartier van Nijmegen ca. 1250-1543," Nijmegen, 1987, pg. 232.

<sup>54</sup> Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ) 10, fol. 305, 11-09-1662. Of course, Cluyt may well have forged the signature, knowing that Jan Otten could not come forward to dispute it.

<sup>55</sup> Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ) 10, fol. 284/284v.

1663, in Nieuw Amsterdam. Fleeing the death sentence, they had quite inadvertently - and probably against their will - become the progenitors of the Van Tuyl family of America.

### *The Aftermath*

It would be nice to report that everything worked out well for Jan Otten's father and brother and the other Van Tuyls that he left behind. But such was not the case. At least not in the short term. In December of 1662, as if in divine retribution for the sins of Jan Otten van Tuyl, the dikes broke at the bend in the river at Nieuwaal, right by the Van Tuyl farm. The Burgersteegh was inundated:<sup>56</sup>

*The turmoil and the floods progressed until the land was completely covered, many feet deep, with the water as high as the dike on both sides. The loveliness of the fields was smothered beneath the waters.*

This was absolutely the final blow. Ott van Tuyl, his finances in collapse, finally went to the lender of last resort, the local usurer: Lijsbeth Coenen. She was an agent for one Johan Gans of 's Hertogenbosch, and she charged dearly - perhaps too dearly - for her services.<sup>57</sup> By 10 March, 1663, she had finalized the deal: for the incredible sum of 5300 Caroli guilders, with yearly interest of 330 guilders 5 stivers (which he had little chance of ever collecting), Johan Gans would take as collateral all of Ott's property and worldly possessions.<sup>58,59</sup> In effect, Ott had sold everything he owned. He was now able to pay off the long-standing debts he had accumulated over the years, and perhaps help finance his son's emigration to America.

In less than 3 years from the time he mortgaged all his property, Ott Jansz van Tuyl, age about 60, died - probably a broken man. His surviving children now resorted to a legal stratagem to keep at least a part of the family lands for themselves. In Dutch society, both men and women inherited family estates, and these were passed on separately through mother or father to the surviving children. Debts, as well as assets, could apparently be inherited. So when Ott van Tuyl died, his children relinquished their claim on his [non-existent] assets, and with it, their liability for his debts:<sup>60</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Van Heiningen, pg. 38 and Elbers, pg. 8. The dike also broke near the *Cluyt* of Gameren, and in January the dikes of Tuil collapsed. Gameren and the other east Bommel villages finally abandoned the decrepit *Meidijk* in 1663, concentrating thereafter on shared maintenance the *Nieuwdijk* near Brakel as the western bulwark. [Moorman van Kappen, page 153-4] This agreement lasted for about 15 years. Later, the *Meidijk* was once again maintained.

<sup>57</sup> Or so testified various of the Gameren folk, including Geerlof van Tuyl, in 1684. [RAG, RAZ 13, fol. 170, 01-03-1684].

<sup>58</sup> Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ) 676, fol. 163v, 10-03-1663.

<sup>59</sup> The property comprised: His house and 1 morgen land; 2 1/2 hont hopfield and orchard bordering his house; 2 1/2 morgen meadows the "Elscampen"; 11 hont meadows the "Hermiscampen"; 4 1/2 hont hayfield the "Meurssen camp"; 7 hont hayfield the "Achterbroeken"; 3 morgen land with a duck-decoy [leasehold rights]; 5 hont farmland at Nieuwaal.

<sup>60</sup> Rijksarchief Gelderland (RAG), Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem (RAZ) 677, fol. 28, 26-04-1666.



### Chapter 5

*"...the body of their late father having been buried, which they did 'pietatis causa', out of honorable and filial love, and not with the intention to become heirs to their father's estate ... but only to take possession of that which is due them after the death of their mother".*

Since their mother, Neelken, daughter of Geerlof Aerts, had apparently brought substantial property into her marriage, this was a wise stratagem. Geerloff would at least have some inheritance to work with. Jan Otten's portion would apparently have been confiscated, per his sentence.

Having somehow survived the floods of 1664 and 1666, Geerlof van Tuyl must have wondered what the future held for him.<sup>61</sup> His brother was long gone, much of the family's property was lost, and he was left with barely enough to support his own family: a house with 3 hont of hop fields and orchard; 8 hont of meadows near the decoy; and 2 hont of marshland.<sup>62</sup> But he must have been a man of determination: a *survivor*. As we will see, he did indeed survive to produce a family. In fact, he became the progenitor of many of Gameren's Van Tuyls. But his life would be no bed of roses. Just a few years after his father's death and his brother's exodus - in 1672 - The Netherlands were attacked by France, England, and Munster. And within just a few weeks of this war's outbreak, the Bommelerwaard - and Geerlof Otten van Tuyl - found the conflict nearly at their doorstep!

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<sup>61</sup> Van Heiningen, pg. 38.

<sup>62</sup> Streekarchief Bommelerwaard, Oud Archief Dorpspolder Gameren 756, 1675. Johan Gans owned in 1675 many of the former possessions of Ott Jansz : 2 1/2 hont bordering the house, 11 hont meadows the "Hermiscampen", 4 1/2 hont hayfield, 7 hont hayfield the "Achterbroeken", 3 morgen land with the decoy. The other half of the 1 morgen near the house was in the possession of Cornelis Ronden and in 1680 of Jan Joosten van de Wercken, the brother-in-law of Geerlof Otten.

Ticht die Reister in plaats des Seeten Jan Otten van Tuyl, dat sij op den 23<sup>en</sup> Januarij lopende jaers 1662. met Wouter Mertensen ende meer andere van Gâmeren, gekomen is tot Hellowin ten huise van Evert Corneliszen, ende nae dat sij daer oerigen tijt waeren geweest, vrom Betiste sijn mes getrokken, ende daer mede oer de vloer schrappende, tot vrom Wouter Mertensen is toegesprongen, bringende den seluen eenen steek in den reisteren arm van beneden op, soo dat de arterie met beyde saete takken, mitgaders het medium basilica ende de sennen affgescheiden waeren, een wetlike quistiere vrom Wouter denige uren daer naer is comen t'overlijden, breder te vernemen wt de beede cond. d'appon, mitgaders attestatie van den chirurgijn Sies neffens gaende, ende alsoo die betiste sijn daer op met de vlucht seet gesalveert; Concludeert die Reister in sijn qualiteijt, dat die Betiste in landen van justitie comende, metten swerde gedeelt sal worden datter de doot

naevolge, off fugati off bliuende dat sijn goederen den fiscus sullen weder toekeken, ofte contenderende omni meliori modo makende mede eijss van costen ende misen van justitie. salvis in ende on alle 3<sup>en</sup> Junij

**The final verdict against Jan Otten van Tuyl** - then a fugitive from justice - was recorded 3 June, 1662 at the town hall in Zaltbommel by the local court with jurisdiction over Gameren: the Hoge Bank van Zuilichem [High Bench of Zuilichem]. Jan Otten's grandfather had at the beginning of the century been the chief judge of this very tribunal, but on this day the post was held by Johan de Cocq. He and 7 other High Bench members declared this verdict:

*The Judge on behalf of the Lord [of Gelre] [The] charge against Jan Ottensz van Tuyl is that on 23rd January of the year 1662 he came with Wouter Mertensen and others from Gameren to Hellowin, to the house of Evert Corneliszen, and after having spent some time there, the accused pulled his knife and, scraping it over the floor, then jumped at the fore-mentioned Wouter Mertense, inflicting an upward stab wound in the right arm, in such a manner that the artery and both its branches, as well as the medium basilica and the nerves were cut, as a result of which injury the aforesaid Wouter died a few hours later; moreover, taking account of the statements by sworn witnesses, as well as the attached attestation by the surgeon, and that the accused thereupon saved himself by fleeing, the Judge moves that the accused, when falling into the hands of Justice, will be cut by the sword until death ensues, or if remaining fugitive, his property will be confiscated, omni meliori modo, all costs of this trial on behalf of the accused. 3rd June 1662.*

Reference: Rijksarchief Gelderland [RAG], Rechterlijk Archief Zuilichem [RAZ] 10, fol. 284/284v.