



*Saint Mary's Island during a visit by Dutch explorers in 1619 [From: Prof.dr.G.J.Hoogewerff, "Journalen van de gedenckwaerdige reizen van Willem IJsbrantsz Bontekoe 1618-1625," 1952, page 24. (Used by permission of Uitgeversmaatschappij WalburgPers, Zutphen)].*

# Chapter 7

## Pirates and Privateers 1695~1705

### *The Business of Piracy*

Wherever the ships of Europe's trading nations went - be they Portuguese and Dutch to the East, or English, Dutch, and French to the West - they took with them a tradition of sea borne warfare. If the King declared it, his navy would fight for dominance, and it was called *war*; if the King authorized it, private ships would fight against His enemies, and it was called *privateering*; but if no ruler of standing declared his permission, ships would still turn on one another to fight to the death for profit, and it was called *piracy*. The line between pirate and hero was often a thin one, as in the case of England's Drake and Hawkins - *Sea Wolves* to the British, but *pirates* to the Spaniards. Zeeland's *Zee-Geuzen* were nothing but common pirates until their efforts helped free The Netherlands from Spain, making them heroes to the Dutch to this day.

Corporations also indulged in piracy. The Dutch West India Company was founded ostensibly as a trading company, but was in actuality commissioned to make private war on the Spanish and Portuguese in the New World. The greatest profit ever earned by The Company in its 173-year history was in 1628, when Piet Heyn sacked the Spanish silver fleet off Havana, outran the French pirates waiting off Dunkirk, and returned a dividend of seven million guilders to The Company's shareholders.<sup>1</sup>

For those colonies on the periphery of the British Empire during the 17th and 18th centuries forced into a form of economic servitude by the mother country, piracy became a central element of the economy - much as drug traffic is for many of today's poorer nations. In the Americas, Port Royale, Jamaica; New York City; Boston, Massachusetts; Newport, Rhode Island; and Charleston, South Carolina, all became key centers of piracy.<sup>2</sup> Of course, none of this was sanctioned by The Crown, but greedy Governors were often all-too-eager to sell their favor and protection to the maritime thieves, and to allow their colonies to suffer the presence of these thugs. The most infamous of these favor-for-hire governors was New York's Colonel Benjamin Fletcher. Fletcher arrived in 1692 and soon established a reputation for being much too cozy with the local pirates. Apparently the first of his office to bring his wife to New York, Fletcher was only too happy to accept rich gifts for himself, and his lady reveled in the perfumes and silks bestowed upon her by one Captain Thomas Tew, a notorious and particularly bloodthirsty pirate. The Governor, who owned the only carriage in town, scandalized Manhattan when he pardoned his

<sup>1</sup> Ritchie, R.C., "Captain Kidd and the War Against the Pirates," Harvard University Press, 1986, pg. 18.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*, pg. 19.

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“good friend” Tew for killing a man in a tavern brawl with a jewel-encrusted dagger, then took the notorious pirate for a ride in his carriage.<sup>3</sup> The message was clear: this Governor was pro-business!

In fact, the capitalists who financed pirate voyages were none other than some of the town's leading citizens - most notably Frederick Phillipse, New York's wealthiest citizen. Phillipse had developed a method for maximizing profits from piracy in the Red Sea without having to actually engage in piracy himself. Here's how it worked: A yearly trading voyage from the Indian port of Surat to the Red Sea port of Mocha offered the Moslem traders of India's Mughal Empire the opportunity to combine a religious pilgrimage to Mecca with a business trip to Arabia. The ships were richly-laden and slow - perfect targets for European pirates, especially the English ones. Successful pirates would return to St. Maries island off the east coast of Madagascar for refuge. They had two problems. How could they convert their stolen goods - often such valuable items as cloth - to gold or silver? How could they get safely home? Phillipse solved both problems for the pirates. First, through his agent on St. Maries, Adam Baldrige, he would buy the pirates' goods for liquor, weapons, clothes or supplies. Second, he would sell them passage home aboard one of his “slaving vessels” for 100 pieces of eight (not including food). Using a cargo of Madagascan slaves as a cover, Phillipse' ship would return to America, dropping pirates off at various way stations, or taking them all the way. At the mouth of the Delaware river, his ship would offload the pirates' goods - and usually the pirates themselves - before sailing into New York with a cargo of slaves. The contraband would wend its way to Hamburg, Germany for ultimate sale. A complex but profitable business it was!<sup>4</sup>

### ***Otto and Aert***

Otto Van Tuyl, trained as a sailor and ship's carpenter, married in 1693 at the age of 32. A likely explanation for his late marriage was this: he had been to sea. In fact, this conclusion is nearly inescapable when one considers the few employment opportunities open to such a man at the time. By September of 1694, Otto was a father, having been presented with a son by his wife, Grietje.<sup>5</sup> By 1695, they owned and lived in a modest house in New York's North Ward, so Otto must have been earning a living of some sort, perhaps as a sailor in the West Indian trade.<sup>6</sup> New York ships carried on a profitable barter trade between Barbadoes, New York, and England.<sup>7</sup> However, since the pay for an honest mariner of the day was only £2 New York money per month, the temptation to turn pirate or privateer must have been overwhelming.<sup>8</sup> Also, King William's war with France

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<sup>3</sup> Churchill, A., “The Upper Crust,” Prentice-Hall, 1970, pp. 1, 6.

<sup>4</sup> Ritchie, pg. 87, pp. 113-115.

<sup>5</sup> Cramer, Alma H., “Notes on the Van Tuyl Family”, 1959, pg. 2. This Jan died young.

<sup>6</sup> “Collections of the New York Historical Society for 1910,” pg. 23.

<sup>7</sup> “Ships and Shipping of Old New York,” Bank of the Manhattan Co., 1915, pp. 19-20.

<sup>8</sup> Ritchie, pg. 121.

had brought hard times to England and New York, interrupting sea trade to a great extent, and exposing honest sailors to great danger for little pay.<sup>9</sup>

Aert Van Tuyl, born in January of 1675, was only 18 years old at the time of Otto's marriage in 1693.<sup>10</sup> He was probably apprenticed as a shipwright, possibly working for, or with, his brother-in-law William Pell. It seems likely that Otto, 14 years Aert's senior, would have been a strong mentor for the young man, and after the death of Jan Otten Van Tuyl in the early 1690s, Otto's influence may have increased further. Given their modest employments, both brothers must have viewed the newly-rich pirates of New York with envy, and wondered if *they* couldn't share the wealth and adventure.

When opportunity knocked, in the person of Captain John Hore, the Van Tuyl brothers of New York were ready for the challenge.

### ***Voyage to Madagascar***

In 1695, New York Governor Col. Benjamin Fletcher granted a privateer's license to John Hore for the ostensible purpose of harassing French shipping in Canadian waters, the English and French then being in a state of war.<sup>11</sup> Fletcher's "fee" was £3000.<sup>12</sup> Hore had captured the French ship *St. Paul* in Canada, had her refitted in Rhode Island and renamed her *John and Rebecca*.<sup>13</sup> And Hore's brother-in-law and fellow Irishman, Richard Glover, had been granted a *letter of marque*<sup>14</sup> for an ostensible slave-trading mission to Madagascar the year before, and was now engaged in piracy in the Indian Ocean and beyond.<sup>15</sup> So Hore obviously knew where the profits lay, and surely made no secret of his true intentions to his prospective recruits. Thus, with the tacit approval of the New York and Rhode Island governors to engage in piracy, the *John and Rebecca* set sail for Madagascar in December, 1695.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Ritchie, pg. 129

<sup>10</sup> Cramer, pg. 2.

<sup>11</sup> Lydon, James G., "The Role of New York in Privateering Down to 1763", 1956, pg. 22. [Columbia University Ph.D thesis available from University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Mich.]

<sup>12</sup> O'Callaghan, E.B., ed., "Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York," Albany, NY, 1853-1887, vol. IV, pg. 388.

<sup>13</sup> Watson, H., "Narrative of Mr. Henry Watson, who was taken prisoner by the pirates, 15 August, 1696," in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series*, ed. J. W. Fortescue, vol. XVI pg. 106. (Item 224, Feb. 14, 1698).

<sup>14</sup> A *letter of marque* was issued to a privateer in time of war, authorizing him to plunder the enemy. A *letter of reprisal* was issued in peacetime on the theory that he was entitled to damages from his former enemy. This vicious cycle of officially-sanctioned gangsterism was wisely outlawed by the U.S. Constitution.

<sup>15</sup> Lydon, pg. 22.

<sup>16</sup> Grey, C., "Pirates of the Eastern Seas (1618-1723), A Lurid Page of History," London, 1933, pg. 181.

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The crew of Hore's 180-ton,<sup>17</sup> 15-gun ship carried 120-odd men,<sup>18</sup> including:<sup>19</sup> "*Doctr: a Dutchman*" and "*Carpintr: Arthr: a Dutchman*" ...surely Otto and Aert, respectively.<sup>20</sup> Had the Van Tuyl brothers missed the opportunity to sail with Hore, they would only have needed to wait another half year for another opportunity - the chance to sail with a more famous but far less successful pirate: Captain William Kidd. As it turned out, Kidd would also be headed for Madagascar, where he would cross paths with Otto and Aert.

The outbound ship's voyage from New York to Madagascar was anything but direct in those days. A typical strategy was to use the prevailing westerly trade winds to sail the North Atlantic to Madeira. Ships then crossed the tropics to the Cape Verde Islands, where they could re-provision. These long voyages risked scurvy all the way, so fresh food and water was absolutely essential. South of Cape Verde, the captain would steer south-west toward Cabo São Roque in Eastern Brazil so that he would not get caught in the doldrums of the Gulf of Guinea. As the ship drifted west crossing the equator, there were few breezes, and the ship might have been towed by men at oars in the lifeboat - anything to make southerly progress. Finally, the southern hemisphere winds would pick up, blowing from the west, and by 30° south latitude, they could set a course for the Cape of Good Hope.<sup>21</sup> In all, about 3 months was spent sailing from New York. Because so many men were usually dying of scurvy, they were desperate for landfall by the time they rounded The Cape.<sup>22</sup>

On the outbound voyage, the *John and Rebecca* had some navigation problems.

[She] mist the Island of Madagascar and went to Massoubook [Mozambique] and from thence to Augustine in Madagascar where they stayed 24 days to refitt and from thence to the Red Sea.<sup>23</sup>

They had arrived in St. Augustine Bay (on the south-west coast of Madagascar) in April, 1696, some four months after leaving New York. Twenty-four days were spent making repairs. Then, after taking on some survivors from the wrecked vessel *Susanna*, the *John and Rebecca* proceeded

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<sup>17</sup> Hill, S. C., "Notes on Piracy in Eastern Waters," in *The Indian Antiquary*, May, 1926, pg. 107.

<sup>18</sup> "Copy of ye Examination of Otto Van Toyle one of Hoar's men...", in *1699 Colonial Correspondence*, Public Records Office, Kew, Richmond, Surrey. CO5 1042, pg. 299 H22.

<sup>19</sup> "A list of Mens names on bd. ye Pirat Ship Jne & Rebecca- no=38 Recd 29 July 1698," in the India Office Library & Records, London. Reference IOR E/3/53. The provenance of this list is not clear. It appears *not* to be the one described in Watson's narrative, but contains details which only he would have known, including the name of the captured captain of the *Calicut Merchant* among the crew.

<sup>20</sup> Richard Henry Dana points out in *Two Years Before the Mast* [pg. 235] that "Doctor" was the title of the ship's cook on all American merchant vessels of the 1830s. This raises the possibility that Otto was actually the ship's cook as well as ship's surgeon. Besides Otto, Aert and Captain Hore, the ship's officers were: Charles Parker, Master; Walter Blower, Compass Quartermaster; Abraham Samuels, Quartermaster; John Eldridge, Boatswain; Robert Munday, Doctor's mate; Walter Trimble, gunner.

<sup>21</sup> Ritchie, pp. 71-75.

<sup>22</sup> An alternate route may have taken them via the West Indies, instead of Madeira.

<sup>23</sup> Otto Van Tuyl's Deposition.

*A List of ye: mens Names on board ye: Piratt Shipp Ine: & Rebecca*

- Cap<sup>t</sup>: In<sup>o</sup>. Hoar* ————— He was in overall command of the ship, and was also an owner of the vessel
- Cha<sup>s</sup>: Parker Mast<sup>r</sup>:* ————— Responsible for actually *Sailing* the ship. They commanded the small group of actual *sailors* on board.
- Edm<sup>d</sup>: Bradgate. Mast<sup>r</sup>:s afsistant* —————
- Walt<sup>r</sup>: Blower Comp<sup>as</sup>: Qw<sup>r</sup>: mast<sup>r</sup>:* ————— Probably the all-important navigator, called *Artist* on pirate ships
- Abra: Sam<sup>ll</sup> Cap<sup>ts</sup>: Qu<sup>r</sup>: mast<sup>r</sup>:* ————— He would have commanded the *Fighting Men*, keeping them in line between battles, and leading them in the fighting. He was typically the most powerful man on board, next to the Captain. Samuels took command after Capt. Hore's death.
- Qu<sup>r</sup>: Mast<sup>rs</sup>: afsistant Elias Wellcom* ————— Quartermaster Samuels' assistant
- Doct<sup>r</sup>: a Dutch man* ————— Responsible for the men's health, Otto Van Tuyl and his assistant would have performed amputations after battle. They probably also oversaw the cooking and distribution of food.
- Doct<sup>rs</sup>: Mate Rob<sup>rt</sup>: Munday* —————
- Boatswaine John Eldridge* ————— Responsible for the ship's amazingly complicated rigging, he would have been an experienced mariner
- Gunn<sup>r</sup>: Walt<sup>r</sup>: Trimble* ————— The gunner had to train teams of inexperienced men in the complex and dangerous art of naval gunnery.
- Carpint<sup>r</sup>: Arth<sup>r</sup>: a Dutchman* ————— Aert Van Tuyl was responsible for the continuous repairs necessary to keep the ship afloat. His was among the highest-paid mariner's crafts. Otto was also experienced as a *Ship's Carpenter*.

**101 additional sailors and fighting men**

Source: A list provided to the British authorities, apparently by Thomas Watson, a prisoner aboard *John & Rebecca* for a time. [India Office Library, London. Reference IOR E/3/53].

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to the Red Sea and the Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb.<sup>24</sup> This was the hunting ground that had lured them halfway 'round the world. The Red Sea opens to the Gulf of Aden here, and ships must follow a certain course south of Perim Island in the center of the strait, in order to avoid the shoals. It was an ideal spot for an ambush. While operating here, the *John and Rebecca* took two prize ships, the *Ruparrel* and *Calicut Merchant*.<sup>25</sup>

*On 15 August [1696] both ships were taken by a pirate which came out of the Babs [Strait of Bab-el-Mandeb]. Capt. Richard Glover was leeward of his brother-in-law [John Hore] at this time in the Charming Mary. He advised taking the prizes to the nearby port of Mocha, burning them and then sacking the town. Hore refused this plan. It was proposed to the Captain of the Ruparrel that she should be redeemed at Aden for 35,000 pieces of eight, and it was so agreed upon...*

Unsuccessful in their ransom demand, the pirates burned the *Ruparrel* and *Calicut Merchant* on 22 August in the harbor of Aden:<sup>26</sup>

*Whilst the ships were burning, the pirates became so annoyed at the incessant reproaches of Captain Sawbridge [of the Ruparrel ], at their needless and wanton cruelty and his own heavy losses, that they silenced him by sewing his lips up with a sail needle[!]*

At the suggestion of Thomas Hollins, the captured Master of the *Calicut Merchant*, they next decided to plunder *Congo* [the town of Kangan] in *Persia*. They sailed up and into the Persian Gulf where on 22nd September, they arrived at *Tompo*, an island near Kangan. Here they waited for six Portuguese men-of-war to leave the town:<sup>27</sup>

*They careened their ship and killed great quantities of antelopes, until being weary of that kind of flesh...they weighed anchor on 16 October and came down again to Cape Mussington [Cape Musandam, in the Strait of Hormuz].*

There, they plundered a fishing village for provisions, then returned to the antelope island of *Tompo* on 22 October. On the night of 25 October, the mates and gunners of the *Ruparrel* and *Calicut Merchant* escaped, and soon thereafter Henry Watson, whose firsthand account tells us the details of this voyage, escaped as well.<sup>28</sup> Within the month, the *John and Rebecca* apparently had further success, because in November, 1696, the pirates sailed for St. Maries Island, off the East Coast of Madagascar, arriving there on February 16 or 17, 1697. They brought with them a huge 300-ton prize ship from the Persian Gulf, laden with calicoes.<sup>29, 30</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> Grey, pg. 181.

<sup>25</sup> Watson's narrative [see 13, emphasis added in quote].

<sup>26</sup> Grey, pg. 170. The wound proved fatal for Capt. Sawbridge. [Emphasis added in quote].

<sup>27</sup> Watson's narrative [see 13].

<sup>28</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>29</sup> Grey, pg. 181.

<sup>30</sup> Baldrige, A., "The Deposition of Adam Baldrige," in *Privateering and Piracy in the Colonial Period; Illustrative Documents*, by John F. Jameson, Macmillan, 1923, pg. 184.

### ***St. Maries, The Pirates' Refuge***

In the slightly more than 1 year from the time they left New York, the crew of *John and Rebecca* had tasted success. But bad luck (or divine retribution) overtook them in St. Maries: many of the crew, including Captain John Hore, fell ill and died.<sup>31</sup> The survivors waited, recovering, for up to 15 months while deciding what to do.<sup>32</sup> They had three options: return home with the spoils of their voyage; embark on another pirate cruise with a different ship and crew; or join the natives to become a war chief. As we will see, various of the surviving crew of *John and Rebecca* chose one or the other of these three alternatives.

The island of Madagascar is rugged and mountainous, with only a few harbors suitable for anchorage. One such harbor was Augustine, on the southwest coast, where *John and Rebecca* called to refit in 1696. But the main island was inhabited in the 17th century by warlike clans who, having obtained guns from European traders, were not necessarily to be trusted by mariners. Thus, by default, the island which came to be called St. Maries, lying about 10 miles off the northeast coast of Madagascar and possessing a lovely harbor, became a refuge and trading center for the Indian Ocean pirates. The island was tropical and extremely wet. A circular lagoon on the southwest coast of St. Maries boasted a sandy beach lined with coconut trees and a view over a placid strait to the blue foothills of Madagascar's eastern escarpment. At the center of the easily-defended lagoon lay a small island (called *l'Île aux Forbans* [pirates' island] today) where Frederick Phillipse's agent, Adam Baldrige, established his trading fort in 1691.<sup>33</sup>

As in various gold rushes, where the merchants usually made more money than the prospectors, those who traded with the Madagascar pirates did very well indeed. New York Governor Bellomont had this to say about it:<sup>34</sup>

*'Tis the most beneficial trade, that to Madagascar with the pirates, that ever was heard of, and I believe there's more got that way than than by turning pirate and robbing. I am told this Shelley sold rum, which cost but 2s per gallon at N. York, for 50s. and £3 per gallon at Madagascar, and a pipe of Madeira wine, which cost him £19 at N. York he sold there for £300. Strong liquors and gunpowder and ball are the commodities that go off there to best advantage.*

According to trader Adam Baldrige's deposition, Hore and company arrived at the lagoon on 13 February, 1697 and bought some goods from him. Hore's brother-in-law Richard Glover had arrived the previous December, after being robbed of his ship by one Dirk Chivers and part of the crew. In June, Chivers showed up at St. Maries in the *Resolution*, refused to give Glover his ship back, and stayed around until September, when he sailed for the East Indies. Also in June of 1697

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<sup>31</sup> Grey, 182.

<sup>32</sup> We know the *John and Rebecca* was still in St. Maries in July of 1697 [Baldrige, see 28].

<sup>33</sup> Brown, M., "Madagascar Rediscovered," Archon Books, 1979, pp. 81-82 *passim*.

<sup>34</sup> "The Earl of Bellomont to the Council of Trade and Plantations, 22 July, 1699," in *Calendar of State Papers for the Colonies in America and the West Indies*, paragraph 675, pg. 361, [Brown, pg.291].



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there arrived two merchant ships from New York, one of Phillipse's ships captained by Cornelius Jacobs, and the *Fortune*, captained by Thomas Mostyn. Both ships traded with Hore's men before returning to New York.<sup>35</sup> In June the Brigantine *Swift*, a Boston trader, arrived and also sold some goods to the *John and Rebecca's* crew. Adam Baldrige, having accumulated some capital, decided to buy a share in the *Swift*, and sometime after June went trading with her on mainland Madagascar. Baldrige:<sup>36</sup>

*About 8 or 10 dayes after I went from St. Maries the negros killed about 30 White men upon Madagascar and St. Maries, and took all that they or I had, Captain Mostyn and Captain Jacobs and Captain Hor's ship and Company [Hore was apparently dead by this time]... The above mentioned men that were killed by the Natives are most of them privateers that had been in the Red Seas and took severall ships there. They were chiefly the occasion of the natives Riseing, by their abuseing of the Natives and takeing their Cattel from them...*

For the pirates who had survived the massacre and the disease, this life in "paradise" must have been wearing thin. A group of them decided to return to New York aboard *John and Rebecca*. In October of 1697, some 6 months after they arrived, a group of them, captained by former quartermaster Abraham Samuels, set sail for home. Samuels, a West Indian mulatto who had never commanded a ship before, wrecked *John and Rebecca* at Port Dauphin, near the southern tip of Madagascar.<sup>37</sup> To his good fortune, a local princess claimed to have recognized Samuels as her long-lost son. He was adopted by the natives as a sort of local "King", maintaining a royal bodyguard of his former shipmates, and conducting business with passing ships for some years thereafter.<sup>38</sup>

Abraham Samuels was not the only officer from Hore's crew to go native. Ship's Carpenter Aert Van Tuyl joined a local clan on Madagascar, just opposite St. Maries, where he spent the rest of his days as a "Pirate King".

### ***The Life of a Pirate King***

The people of Madagascar - called the *Malagasy* - are of mixed Indonesian and African origin. They speak an Indonesian language which probably migrated to the island in the first millennium AD. Archaeological evidence indicates these people were living on Madagascar in the 10th century AD. By the 17th century, they were living in groups which could neither be called tribes nor clans, but which were apparently more like villages governed by a local headman.<sup>39</sup> Among at

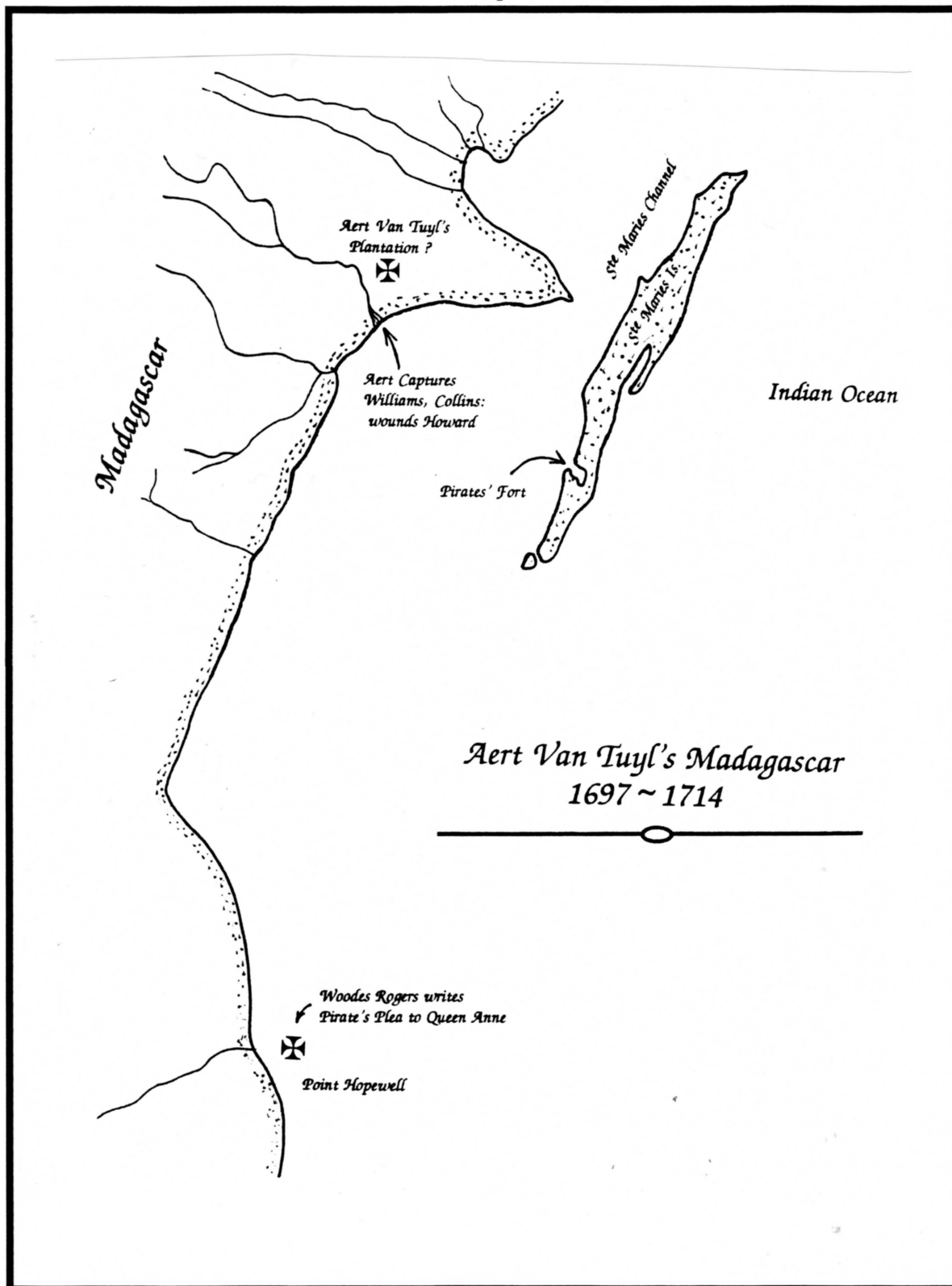
<sup>35</sup> See Baldrige Deposition and "Report of the Board of Trade on the Affairs of the Province of New - York," in *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, ed. by E. B. O'Callaghan, Albany, 1853-1887, vol. IV, pp. 385-389.

<sup>36</sup> Adam Baldrige's Deposition

<sup>37</sup> "Copy of deposition of Theophilus Turner June 18, 1699" in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series*, ed. J. W. Fortescue, vol. XVI, pg. 289, , item 530.

<sup>38</sup> Grey, pg. 182.

<sup>39</sup> Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th ed., pp. 168, 172.



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least some of the island's inhabitants, internecine warfare was almost the normal state of affairs. When Europeans arrived, one of the first bits of commerce undertaken was trade in slaves. In 1676, there were already substantial numbers of Malagasy slaves in Barbados, Jamaica, the Carolinas, and even Boston.<sup>40</sup> We can reasonably assume that the European slavers exploited the intergroup warfare among the natives to their advantage in the taking of slaves, and that the local chieftains would want to exploit the European weapons technology for their own benefit. A symbiotic relationship between European pirates and the Malagasy tribes seems to have arisen in the late 17th century. Some of the European pirates, often from poor, even miserable, backgrounds, joined the natives, to their mutual benefit. By the early 1700s there were as many as several dozen pirates living as princelings or village chiefs in little communities along the north-east coast of Madagascar, owing their positions to their martial reputations and their ability to act as agents between clans and European slavers. Often, they married the daughters of Malagasy chieftains.<sup>41</sup>

So Aert Van Tuyl sometime in 1697 [or early 1698] settled down to a life with a Malagasy tribe, married one or more of their women, and eventually fathered some children. He was probably motivated by a combination of business ambition and personal desires. He was, after all, only 22 years old, and life at sea offered few opportunities for female companionship. Here is Aert's story, as told by Daniel Defoe:<sup>42, 43, 44, 45</sup>

[Captain Howard and the 70-man crew of the *Prosperous*]...steer'd for the Island of St. Mary, where they heel'd [careened]their Ship, Water'd, wooded, and shipped some more Hands: Here they had an Invitation from one Ort Van Tyle,

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<sup>40</sup> Brown, pg. 96.

<sup>41</sup> Brown, pg. 95.

<sup>42</sup> The information we have about Aert's Madagascar days can at best be called hearsay...but fascinating hearsay it is, and fascinating, too, is the pathway it took getting to us. In 1724, Daniel Defoe published the supposedly non-fiction account *A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the Most Notorious Pyrates*, under the pseudonym "Capt. Charles Johnson". Defoe apparently learned of Aert Van Tuyl through stories passed from pirate to pirate and later told to seafarers and finally writers.

<sup>43</sup> Defoe, Daniel, "A General History of the Robberies and Murders of the most notorious Pyrates - by Capt. Charles Johnson," Manuel Schonhorn, editor, U. of South Carolina Press, 1972, pg. xxii. It turns out that Defoe published less than a dozen of the more than 500 works now attributed to him under his own name. Defoe was constantly in need of money to satisfy debts, and earned it by writing all sorts of works, from journalism to fiction to popular nonfiction, such as the "*General History*..." [Encyclopaedia Britannica, 15th edition]. He had a long-term fascination with sea stories, and frequently interviewed mariners for material about which to write. His most famous book, *Robinson Crusoe* [1719], was based on the adventures of real-life castaway Alexander Selkirk, who returned to England in 1711 after being rescued by British privateer Woodes Rogers. Rogers himself may have been a source of sea stories for Defoe.

<sup>44</sup> A major source of the Aert Van Tuyl legend may well have been Robert Drury, author of *Madagascar; Or, Robert Drury's Journal* [published in 1729]. Drury lived in Stoke Newington, the same village, now part of greater London, where Defoe had settled. Drury, immediately before his return from Madagascar to England in 1716, met on the coast John Pro, who had sailed with pirates Captain White and David Williams. [Defoe, pp. xxxix-xl.] Apparently, Williams had told Pro quite a story about a "...rigid, revengeful..." pirate named *Ort Van Tyle*.

<sup>45</sup> Defoe, pg. 492.

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who liv'd on the Main of Madagascar, to come to the Ceremony of christening two of his Children; they were kindly received and treated by him, but it having been reported, that this Ort Van Tyle had murdered some Pyrates, they in Revenge, tho' they had no Certainty of the Fact, took him Prisoner, plunder'd his House, and what Goods they could not take off in a great Canoe belonging to him, they threw into the River or burnt. Ort Van Tyle they design'd to carry on board, and hang at a Yard-Arm, but one of the Pyrates help'd him to escape, and he took into the Woods, where meeting some of his Blacks, he way-laid his Canoe, and Howard's Pinnace by the river-Side; besides what Goods they had on board of this Dutchman's, they had several Women and Children belonging to him, and some white Men, who had left them under his Care. The Pyrates set the Women to the Paddles, and the Canoe was over-set on the Bar; Ort Van Tyle fired on the Men, and shot one thro' the Arm and thro' the Thigh, whom with his Comrade, he took Prisoner, and kept with him: The rest of the Men got ashore on the South-Side of the River and escaped him; the Women on the North-Side, and returned home. When the Pinnace came down, he fir'd and shot the Captain thro' the Arm, but he got on board, where his Arm was set. After this, the Prosperous sail'd...

Who were the men taken prisoner by Ort Van Tyle? One was David Williams, who:<sup>46, 47</sup>  
...went on board the Prosperous, Captain Howard commander...and was one of the Men left behind when they had a Design to carry off Ort Van Tyle. This Dutchman kept him to hard Labour, as planting Potatoes, &c. in revenge for the Destruction and Havock made in his Plantations by the Crew of the Prosperous; he was here in the Condition of a Slave six Months, at the expiration of which Time, he had an Opportunity (and embraced it) to run away, leaving his Consort, Tho. Collins, behind him, who had his Arm broke when he was taken by the Dutchman

Williams' story eventually found its way to Defoe, who retold it with relish. Defoe also pointed the finger at Ort Van Tyle as the villain who directed the capture of a ship belonging to the heroic, but fictional, Captain Mission.<sup>48</sup>

...they sail'd to St. Mary's, where Captain Mission's Ship lay at Anchor, between the Island and the Main: This Gentleman and his whole Ship's Company had been cut off, at the Instigation of Ort Van Tyle, a Dutchman of New-York

It is possible that Defoe simply gathered convenient bits of "true" stories - including the exploits of

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<sup>46</sup> *ibid.* pg. 502.

<sup>47</sup> Defoe [pp. 502-3] traces Williams' path after his escape from Aert: "Having made his Escape from a rigid, revengeful Master [Aert], he [Williams] got to a black Prince, named Rebairarang, with whom he lived half a Year; he from hence went and kept Company with one John Pro, another Dutchman, who had a small Settlement on Shore, till the Arrival of the Men of War, commanded by Commadore Richards, who took both Pro and his Guest Williams, [and] put them in Irons (on board the Severn) till they came to Johanna...". Williams' and Pro's incarceration was only temporary. They soon escaped, and by a complicated route made their way back to Madagascar. They had plenty of time, no doubt, to entertain one another with tales of their adventures (and misadventures). Williams' tales of Ort Van Tuyl eventually found their way to Defoe. Richards is supposed to have visited Madagascar in 1703 [Brown, pg. 92]. Defoe stated that Williams was aboard the Speaker [Defoe, pg. 502], a pirate ship wrecked on Mauritius in 1702 [See: Lizé, Patrick, "The wreck of the pirate ship Speaker on Mauritius in 1702", in *The International Journal of Nautical Archaeology and Underwater Exploration* (1984), 13.2, pp. 121-132. This would seem to place the "Christening party" incident in about 1702-3.

<sup>48</sup> Defoe, pg. 475.

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Aert Van Tuyl - with which to weave his politically-motivated fable of "Captain Mission".<sup>49</sup> The genesis of this story may have been the actual "massacre" of 30 pirates by natives which took place in 1697 while Aert Van Tuyl was at St. Maries. We may speculate that Aert sided with the natives against his former comrades, but this is only speculation.

Whether Defoe's tales of *Ort Van Tuyl* are true or not, we do know for sure that Aert lived on Madagascar until at least 1714. That year, Captain Woodes Rogers was in Madagascar, buying slaves.<sup>50</sup> Rogers was evidently an ambitious man who sought to ingratiate himself with the Crown (He succeeded... being appointed royal governor of the Bahamas in 1717). In order to do so, he probably pressured his slave suppliers to sign a document which he felt would help him politically in England. Thus, Rogers penned a remarkable document: *To Her Most Excellent Majesty the Queen* [Anne]. This document interests us not for its content, but because it provides direct evidence that Aert Van Tuyl was alive and well in Madagascar as late as 1714:<sup>51</sup>

*Dated at the Point Hopewell in  
Lat: 17° . 40' South, on the East  
Coast of the Island Madagascar  
the 25th May 1714*

*Mark of Jeromo C. Barreer  
→Aert van Tuyl  
Joseph Davids  
Benjamin Bisloof  
George Howell*

*Mark of Patrik Drummond  
Thomas Elgar  
Robert Campbell  
Mark of Samuel T. Hutton  
James Bran*

*Mark of Thomas Collins<sup>52</sup>  
Mark of Zachariah Aroot  
Mark of Edward Roberts*

Whatever the reason for this document's existence, here is firm evidence that Aert Van Tuyl lived at least most of his adult life on Madagascar, probably farming, raising cattle, capturing slaves, and trading goods and slaves with the visiting ships. Here's how the business worked:<sup>53</sup>

*The head white men of each place where ships called to trade or slave, were the chief intermediaries through whom all business was arranged with the native chiefs, and for their services they charged the sum of £100 each ship, this being paid by the English slaver Eugenie to Arthur Gardiner in 1718, whilst others mention similar sums to Rivers, Collins and John Pro.*

<sup>49</sup> Scholars agree that this section of *The General history of the Pyrates* is pure fiction. This being the case, can we believe any of Defoe's stories about Aert Van Tuyl? Manuel Schonhorn, editor of Defoe's book states: "...Defoe's account of [pirate] activities is remarkably consistent with the more sophisticated and academic investigations of the present day" i.e. probably true. [Defoe, pg. xxxix.]

<sup>50</sup> Defoe, pg. xxix.

<sup>51</sup> "To Her Most Excellent Majesty the Queen-," typed copy of English translation of a Dutch-language copy of the English language original. The English translation is in the correspondence of Phillip Gosse (from Graham Botha) in the Maritime Library, Greenwich, England. The Dutch copy is in the Dutch East India Co. Archives, [https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/1.04.02/invnr/1857/file/NL-HaNA\\_1.04.02\\_1857\\_0081?eadID=1.04.02&unitID=1857&query=](https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/archief/1.04.02/invnr/1857/file/NL-HaNA_1.04.02_1857_0081?eadID=1.04.02&unitID=1857&query=)

<sup>52</sup> Probably the same Thomas Collins imprisoned by Aert ca. 1702.

<sup>53</sup> Grey, pg. 55.

The local chiefs were paid for their slaves with muskets, powder, flints, and balls. This may be a clue as to the condition of native life at the time: continuous internecine warfare in quest of slaves. Since we have no record of Aert ever returning to America, he probably died in Madagascar, either through violent means or disease. By 1722, most pirates had left St. Maries Island for the mainland, and by 1730 very few of the original pirates were still living in Madagascar.<sup>54, 55</sup>

### ***Encounter with Captain Kidd***

Captain William Kidd is the most famous of the Indian Ocean pirates, but hardly the most successful. We will digress to examine his story for two reasons: his case illustrates the interplay between politics and piracy, and although Otto Van Tuyl never sailed with Kidd, their stories are intertwined in a very important way.

The Indian Ocean pirates were causing no end of grief for the British East India Company and British Government. Muslim pilgrims travelling on ships exactly like those raided by the *John and Rebecca* complained to the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb about the depredations of these "English" pirates. The British East India Company, fearing loss of trading concessions, was surely sensitive, but had not yet, as of August, 1695, formally protested to their government.<sup>56</sup> When an ambitious but coarse New York sea captain named William Kidd arrived in London in 1695 seeking a *letter of marque* to engage in anti-piracy privateering, he hooked up with fellow New Yorker Robert Livingston, a noted merchant not above engaging in illegal trade. Together, they conspired with Richard Coote, Earl of Bellomont, a man anxious to get a colonial posting to help pay off his debts. They plotted to replace Governor Benjamin Fletcher with Bellomont and to have as the centerpiece of the new regime an anti-piracy campaign prosecuted by Bellomont and executed in the Indian Ocean by Kidd. Livingston, Bellomont, several Lords - and even King William - were to be given shares in Kidd's privateering venture. Kidd's expedition was authorized by Royal Decree on 26 January, 1696:<sup>57</sup>

*...to take prizes from the Kings enemies and otherwise to annoy them... [and to]  
...fight w<sup>th</sup> & subdue the s<sup>d</sup> pyrates...[who] comit spoyles and depredations  
against the laws of Nations in the Red Sea...<sup>58</sup>*

Kidd made his preparations, and on 10 April, 1696, sailed from London with a ship, the *Adventure Galley*, and 70 men.<sup>59</sup> These men not being sufficient for a privateering voyage, Kidd sailed to New York, where he recruited the rest of his 150-man crew. He set sail from New York

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<sup>54</sup> Grey, pg. 70.

<sup>55</sup> Brown, pg. 96.

<sup>56</sup> Ritchie, pg. 51.

<sup>57</sup> Grey, pg. 193.

<sup>58</sup> "Agreement between the Earl of Bellomont, Mr. Livingston and Captain Kidd," in *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, ed. by E. B. O'Callaghan, Albany, 1853-1887, vol. IV, pp. 762-765.

<sup>59</sup> Ritchie, Chapter 2.

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on 6 September, 1695, some 8 months after the departure of *John and Rebecca*. It took Kidd nearly 4 months to reach Madagascar, and after refitting his ship on the islands of Johanna and Mohilla in the Comoros (North of Madagascar), it was April before he was ready for action at last.<sup>60</sup>

At this time, Hore's crew lay sick and helpless on St. Maries. Remnants of Richard Glover's crew were there as well. Over the next few months, Pirate Dirk Chivers would come limping into the lagoon. All the "anti-pirate" Kidd would have needed to do was to proceed to St. Maries and raid these enemies of the British East India company, as he had promised he would. However, a less-risky plan, or so it seemed at the time, was to head north to pirate waters in hopes of capturing some weak vessel carrying French papers - fair game under his *letter of marque*. Unfortunately for Kidd, the easy pickings did not materialize, and he ended up plundering the *Quedah Merchant* - exactly the kind of ship he was supposed to be protecting! Like all the other pirates, Kidd then sailed for St. Maries, where he arrived in early April of 1698.<sup>61</sup>

Waiting for Kidd in St. Maries was an old shipmate, the notorious pirate Robert Culliford.

William Kidd had been a privateer in the West Indies some years before, in command of a 20-gun ship called the *Blessed William*. Robert Culliford had been one of the *buccaneers* serving with Kidd. He had led a mutiny and absconded with the *Blessed William* in 1690, when Kidd had refused to turn pirate. Culliford came to India in 1693, and had been *on the account* [engaged in piracy] ever since.<sup>62</sup> Now he was in command of the *Resolution* - actually the *Mocha* frigate of the East India Company, captured and renamed.<sup>63</sup>

Culliford now encountered his old captain, Wm. Kidd, at the harbor of St. Maries, by which time Kidd had lost all control of his crew. If Kidd still harbored any notion of apprehending a notorious pirate like Culliford, he was in absolutely no position to do so. Kidd was so overwhelmed by Culliford's show of force that he was heard "...swearing that his soul might fry in hell ere he harmed his old comrade, and new found companion."<sup>64</sup> In fact, Kidd claimed he had to defend himself forcibly against his *own* rebellious crew. Kidd's sole prize, the *Quedah Merchant* - which carried mostly cloth - had not been rich enough to satisfy Kidd's men, so some 97 of them deserted him at St. Maries to join Culliford in hopes of greater rewards.<sup>65</sup>

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<sup>60</sup> Ritchie, *passim*.

<sup>61</sup> Ritchie, Chapters 4-5.

<sup>62</sup> Hill, S. C., "Notes on Piracy in Eastern Waters," in *The Indian Antiquary*, May, 1926, pg. 107.

<sup>63</sup> "Examination of Edward Buckmaster, June 6, 1699," in *Privateering and Piracy in the Colonial Period; Illustrative Documents*, by John F. Jameson, pg. 198.

<sup>64</sup> Grey, pg. 146

<sup>65</sup> "Narrative of William Kidd, July 7, 1699," in *Privateering and Piracy in the Colonial Period; Illustrative Documents*, by John F. Jameson, pp. 205-213.

Otto Van Tuyl later testified that he had encountered Kidd on St. Maries, and that Kidd "...[had] goods on board besides Clouts [cloth]". Otto had probably gone aboard Kidd's prize ship because he was in the business of buying and selling pirated goods and wanted to do some business with Kidd, as he later did with Capt. Giles Shelley.<sup>66</sup> But Otto, who by now had been ashore on St. Maries for some 15 months, must have been tiring of the landsman's life. When the opportunity presented itself to once more go *on the account*, he took it, joining Culliford - and most of Kidd's former crew - for a pirate cruise to the Malabar Coast.<sup>67</sup>

### ***Cruising the Malabar Coast***

In late May, Culliford's *Resolution* left St. Maries, bound for the Malabar Coast of India. First, she called at the island of *Johanna*,<sup>68</sup> then headed north, to intercept shipping from the port of Surat in India to the Red Sea and Persian Gulf. Although Otto's shipmate, Edward Buckmaster, later testified that their voyage with Culliford from May to December, 1698 "...tooke no vessel dureing the voyage...", the truth was apparently quite the opposite. Another of Culliford's crew, testified that "...the said Culliford sayled with said ship upon the coast of India," where in the middle of August they joined up with Capt. Dirk Chivers' ship (the *Soldado*) and Capt. Powell in the *Pelican* with whom they cruised *in consort*.<sup>69, 70</sup>

*And about the End of September last [1698] they met off of suratt with a turkey ship belonging to Suratt, which Chiver's crew boarded; and the Quartermaster and some of Culliford's crew went on Board: she was laden with Pieces 8, Gold and Dollers, was reputed to the vallue of one Hundred and twenty or thirty thousand pounds. there were some shots made and several turks were killed and wounded and two or three of Chivers company; they put the men on shoare on the coast of India, sunck their own ship and took the turkey ship and then shared the money, about 700 or 800 l. a man in each ship...*

That was the pirate's point of view... "*Pieces 8, Gold and Dollers.*" By one report, the treasure on board was an enormous 2.5 million rupees,<sup>71</sup> with the share by another account given as £800 per man.<sup>72</sup> It was £500 or £600 according to Otto Van Tuyl.<sup>73</sup>

<sup>66</sup> Otto Van Tuyl's Deposition, in which he stated that "...he bought Shelleys Goods".

<sup>67</sup> "Examination of Edward Buckmaster..." pg. 199. Buckmaster directly implicated Otto Van Tuyl, saying that he "*belonged to [sailed with] Culliford*". Otto Van Tuyl never sailed with Kidd.

<sup>68</sup> "Deposition of Theophilus Turner, June 18, 1699," in *Privateering and Piracy in the Colonial Period; Illustrative Documents*, by John F. Jameson, pg. 200. *Johanna* is modern *Anjouan* in the Comoro Islands.

<sup>69</sup> Grey, pg. 147.

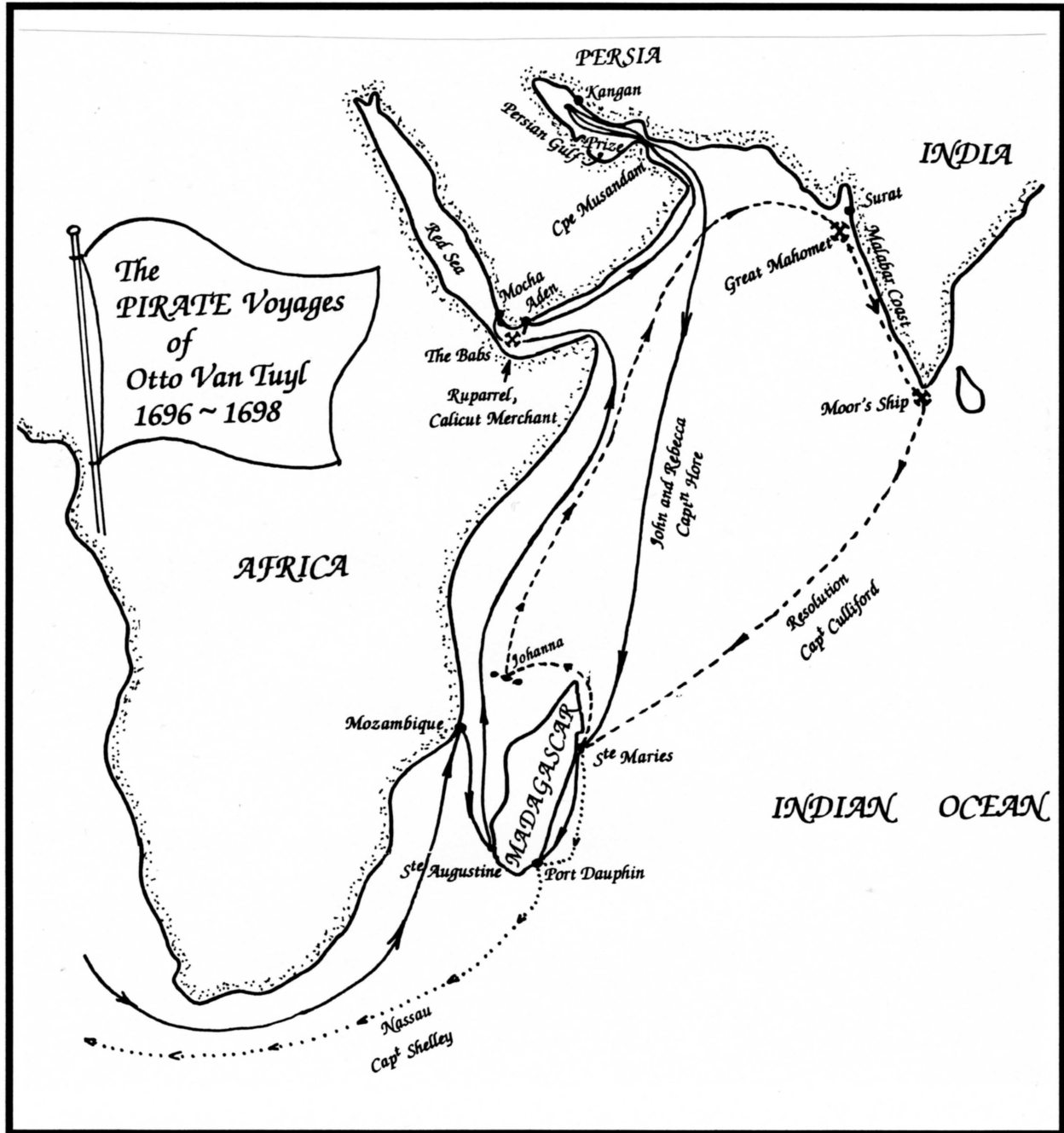
<sup>70</sup> Deposition of Theophilus Turner. Hill [pg. 123] gives the date of capture as 24 or 28 Sept., and the location as "...off *Daman* [South of Surat, north of Bombay] and seven leagues from *Cape St. John*".

<sup>71</sup> Grey, pg. 148

<sup>72</sup> Deposition of Theophilus Turner

<sup>73</sup> Otto Van Tuyl's Deposition





The amazing odyssey of Otto Van Tuyl began with his 1696 voyage to Madagascar aboard Captain Hore's *John and Rebecca*. They raided Arabian and Persian coastal towns and took two prize ships before returning to St. Marie's Island. It was there that Otto encountered Capt. Wm. Kidd and joined Kidd's rival, Capt. Culliford, for a cruise to the Malabar Coast to prey on gold-laden Indian shipping. Returning to St. Marie's at the end of 1698, Otto booked passage home aboard Capt. Shelley's *Nassau*, arriving home to New York in May, 1699.

Perhaps not surprisingly, the owner of this "turkey" ship gave a much more lurid account to the authorities:<sup>74</sup>

*About the middle of September [1698], they came up with a Surat vessel from Jeddah [at that time part of the Ottoman Empire, hence "turkey"] called the Great Mahomet which...had left the convoy under charge of captain Southby of the London on the 12th of September... According to the statement of... [the vessel's owner], who was on board, the action was very hard fought on both sides. He gives the number of pirates killed at 20 and many more wounded, whilst over 300 of the passengers and crew of the Great Mahomet were either killed, or cast overboard by the pirates after the action."*

This ship owner went on to say:<sup>75</sup>

*These dreadful villains tortured the Nakhoda [Captain], together with the merchants, and all whom they suspected of having hidden money or jewels, most cruelly. Not content with this even, when they had extracted a confession by such vile means they shot the poor wretches and threw them overboard, living or dead. They then put about 150 of the passengers into boats, without oars, sails, or even water, and cast them off, keeping about 60 women aboard. Fortunately the wind and tide favored those set adrift and they reached the shore in safety. The poor women who were kept on the ship were most barbarously treated by the Pirates in their usual manner. Some stabbed themselves to death and others threw themselves into the sea rather than endure the outrages they were subjected to.*

After capturing the *Great Mahomet* in late September, Culliford and Chivers, in consort with two other pirate vessels, sailed south along the Malabar coast towards Cape Comorin, at the southern tip of India. There, they "...engaged the Mary, interloper, Captain Knox...but were beaten off, and she got safely to Quilon on the 16th November...Thence, after taking a Moor Ship...they went to St. Mary's." <sup>76</sup> Culliford reached St. Maries in December, 1698,<sup>77</sup> to find the trading ship *Nassau*, commanded by Giles Shelley of New York, ready to sell supplies to the newly-rich pirates, and to offer passage to America for those who were willing to pay.

Edward Buckmaster and Otto Van Tuyl decided to return to their homes in New York, even though it meant they would have to face the authorities.

### ***The Homecoming***

Shelley had been "...fitted out from New York in 1698 by Stephen Delancey and others, [and] was suspected of piracy."<sup>78</sup> Shelley seems to have been using Philipse's method: pretending to be on a trading voyage to Madagascar for slaves and other items of value, and carrying just enough in the way of slaves and cargo to bolster this claim. Otto Van Tuyl testified that his cargo included "75

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<sup>74</sup> Grey, pp. 147-8

<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>76</sup> Hill, pg. 123.

<sup>77</sup> "Examination of Edward Buckmaster..." pg. 199.

<sup>78</sup> Jameson, pg. 198.

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*Elephants teeth*" and "20 Negros."<sup>79</sup> Shelley himself listed his cargo as "...*muslin, calicoes, a ton of elephants' teeth and 2 or 3 cwt. of opium...[and] some pigs of tooth and egg.*"<sup>80</sup> Having finished his trading, and finding himself presented with the business opportunity of carrying newly-rich pirates back to New York, Shelley shipped 50 paying passengers aboard (at a fare of 100 pieces of eight, and 35 extra dollars for a private cabin), and after a brief stop at Port Dauphin, headed for America.<sup>81</sup> Shelley made landfall at Cape May, New Jersey on 27 May, 1699, from where he wrote to his employer:<sup>82</sup>

*Giles Shelley to Mr. [Stephen] Delancie, or, in his absence, Mr. John Barbarie in New York...Most of the passengers design for Virginia and Horekills [NY] with Andrew Graverard [Andreas Gravenreadt of New York]. I have for their passages about 12,000 pieces of eight and about 3,000 Lyon dollars. I hear there is no man-of-war at New York, and design to come to Sandy Hook.*

These Madagascar pirates were being suitably covert about their re-entry into British America, given the nature of their crimes. The Earl of Bellomont was now governing New York, and he was out to get as many pirates as he could, especially Kidd, who had so badly embarrassed Bellomont by turning pirate. So most of Shelley's passengers either disembarked or switched here at Cape May to Andreas Gravenreadt's coastal boat, and blended in with the normal passengers bound for points from Virginia to New York.<sup>83</sup>

But Otto Van Tuyl and Edward Buckmaster were New York City men, and they decided on another strategy for re-entry.

Shelley reached Sandy Hook, south of New York harbor about June 2, at which time Stephen Delancey, the *Nassau's* owner, came aboard.<sup>84</sup> Edward Buckmaster, Otto Van Tuyl and some others went ashore on the east shore of Long Island at 7 O'clock that evening, and holed up in New Utrecht.<sup>85</sup> It is logical to think that Otto would have headed directly to either his sister's or his mother's home in New Utrecht. We can only speculate what these women's feelings must have been on seeing the long-absent Otto, and how they must have reacted upon learning that young Aert had "gone native" in Madagascar. Like most women waiting for their seafaring loved

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<sup>79</sup> Otto Van Tuyl's deposition.

<sup>80</sup> Shelley, Giles, in *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series*, ed. J. W. Fortescue, vol. XVI, pg. 281, item 512, June 8[?], 1699. This was Shelley's captured correspondence to the *Nassau's* owner Stephen DeLancey. "Tooth and egg" was probably *Tutenag*, a nickle-copper-silver alloy.

<sup>81</sup> Otto Van Tuyl's deposition.

<sup>82</sup> Shelley's correspondence. This captured missive was reported to London by authorities: "Representations to the Lords Justices from the Lords of Trade" in *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, ed. by E. B. O'Callaghan, Albany, 1853-1887, vol. IV, pg. 542.

<sup>83</sup> *ibid.* Of the 14 who disembarked, 6 were immediately captured by authorities.

<sup>84</sup> Otto Van Tuyl's deposition.

<sup>85</sup> Buckmaster's deposition and Otto Van Tuyl's deposition.

ones, they were probably just happy to know that these brothers were both alive - even if Otto was in jeopardy of the noose.

Buckmaster returned to Manhattan, was immediately apprehended, and by June 6 was being examined by the authorities. He admitted being with Kidd - clearly a tactical error - and was imprisoned on 7 June.<sup>86,87</sup> Kidd was then still at large, being number one on the governor's "most wanted" list. Any association with him was very dangerous, indeed. Association with Culliford was also a dangerous proposition, and Otto Van Tuyl must have carefully considered what he would say to authorities on this matter. Culliford and some of his men had surrendered to British Commodore Warren at St. Maries *under promise of amnesty*. They were returned to England and all (save Culliford, who had, or had bought, political influence from the English Bishops) were hanged - amnesty or no amnesty!<sup>88</sup> Captain Kidd was arrested by Governor Bellomont on 3 July. He was deported to England, where he was tried, and eventually hanged, in London.<sup>89</sup>

Otto Van Tuyl, and indeed Giles Shelley and his crew were in danger of imprisonment or worse. Bellomont informed his superiors in England:<sup>90,91</sup>

*That your Lordships may understand more of shelly I send the deposition of Edward Buckmaster (No. 10) he is now a prisoner at Yorke, went out with Kidd revolted from him to the Mocha Frigat [Culliford], and came with Shelly from Madagascar; also the Deposition of Otto Van Toyle an old Pirate (No. 11) which is neither signed by him nor the clerk of the Council tho' writ by the Clerk.*

Bellomont was at the time in Boston, so the interrogations of the pirates were handled by his Lt. Governor, a young man named John Nanfan, who just happened to be the nephew of Lady Bellomont.<sup>92</sup> We can imagine the contempt directed at Nanfan by all the seasoned colonial men in the room, prisoners and Councilmen alike, as he attempted to portray their friends and neighbors as criminals. Otto Van Tuyl, though he cleverly avoided mentioning his involvement with Culliford and denied any dealings with Kidd, did admit to committing piracy with Hore. His contempt for the English and for Nanfan comes through clearly in his boast about Dutch strength in the Indian

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<sup>86</sup> Buckmaster's deposition.

<sup>87</sup> "Earl of Bellomont to the Lords of Trade," in *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, ed. by E. B. O'Callaghan, Albany, 1853-1887, vol. IV, pp. 549-553.

<sup>88</sup> Grey, pg. 148.

<sup>89</sup> Ritchie, pg. 181, *passim*.

<sup>90</sup> "Earl of Bellomont to the Lords of Trade".

<sup>91</sup> Otto Van Tuyl's Deposition

<sup>92</sup> Bellomont had left specific instructions for Nanfan during his absence: *Do not pardon any pirates...* [1699 Colonial Correspondence, Public Records Office, Kew, Richmond, Surrey. CO5 1042, pg. 301, H30].

Ocean:<sup>93</sup>

*"The Examination of Otto Van Toyle before the Lt Governor and his Maj'tys Council for this province he being First Sworne on the holy Evangelists of Almighty God-to answer all such questions as should be demanded of him taken this 14th day of June 1699--*

*That he went to Madagascar in the ship John & Rebecca Capt. Hoar Comand.r a vessel of 15 Gunns and 120 odd men. That they mist the Island of Madagascar and went to Massoubook and from thence to Augustine in Madagascar where they stayed 24 days to Refitt and from thence to the Red Sea. -that they met with a Moors Ship about the Coast of Mallabar laden with Clouts [cloth] that they tooke her and Shared the Loading and about 16 pieces of Eight p man and then went to - Madagascar, where he Stayed with his Brother. That his Brother went in Hoars Ship the same time he did who now lives on the Island of St Maries and buys the privateers Goods of them and sells them to the Merch.ts. That he bought Shelleys Goods*

*Saith he was not wth Kidd but was at St Maries when Kidd was there. - that he did not meet Kidd in his way hither. but that Kidd has goods on board besides Clouts [cloth]. That he came in the ship Nassaw Giles Shelley Master from St Maries to this port, wth 50 other passengers. That Shelley had on board 75 Elephants teeth. That a Scotch boat came on board at Sandy hook, and John Vincent was also on board but carryed off nothing wth him. That Stephen Delancey came on board on Friday night last was seven night - That one Gravenreadt came on board them at Cape May, and that Kidds Doctor went wth him. That Shelley had six Gunns mounted and no More. That the deponent gave 100 pieces of Eight for his passage to shellely, and 35 Dollars for his Cabbin. That the money or most of it brought in Shelley came in a boat from the Ship to New Yorke in the day time and was landed at the Custom House Bridge. and that Shelley also brought about Twenty Negroes from St Maries with him - That Garret van Horn one of Shelleys Crew and an inhabitant of New Yorke won at one hand before he left the dice 2400 Dollars That Jonathan Evans, one Powche a Dutch man, Edward Buckmaster - and himselfe came on Shore out of Shelleys ship upon Long Island wch Buckmaster went out wth Capt Culliford from St. Maries in a ship called the Resolution of forty Gunns wch vessel shared about 5 or 600 Lb pr man.*

*That the Dutch are so Strong in the East Indies they can fitt out 100 Saile at any time. That there are above -170 privateers at St. Maries. That the Charming Marie went through the Gulfe of Mulacca*

*That the privateers have fortified themselves at the Island of St Maries wth palisadoes and great Guns and have built houses wthin them*

*a True Copy  
(Bellomont)*

Bellomont may not have cared much about Otto Van Tuyl, the man he called an *Old Pirate*, but Giles Shelley was an important merchant in New York, and Stephen DeLancey, who financed Shelley's voyage, was exactly the sort of colonial merchant he would have hoped to humiliate.<sup>94</sup> But young Lt. Governor Nanfan was out-manuevered, as we see from

<sup>93</sup> "Copy of ye Examination of Otto Van Toyle one of Hoar's men..." in *1699 Colonial Correspondence*, Public Records Office, Kew, Richmond, Surrey. CO5 1042, pg. 299 H22.

<sup>94</sup> Bellomont had allied himself with Robert Livingston [his partner in the Kidd fiasco] and the Whig party in England. Stephen DeLancey was perhaps the chief representative of the merchants of New York, who found themselves politically opposing Bellomont, and thus allied with the Tories. This nascent political rivalry spawned the "Livingston Party" and the "DeLancey Party", the two major New York City parties up to the Revolution.

Bellomont's lament to his superiors:<sup>95</sup>

*...I ordered my Lieutenant Governor to commit 'em [i.e. arrest Shelley's crew]. Upon receipt of my orders he called a Councill, Mr. Graham one of them being present; he writes me word that in the morning Mr. Graham was positive that by law Shelley and his men ought to be committed without bail or mainprise, but the Councill meeting again in the afternoon Mr Graham had quite changed his opinion and influenc'd the Council to be against comitting Shelly &c; as your Lordships will see by the minute of the 5th of July which goes (No 15) so that Shelly is upon bail only, and his Crew untouchd. My Lieutenant Governor makes a scurvy reflection in his letter of what he supposes might have been a prevailing argument with Mr. Graham in the afternoon, against Mr Graham in the morning.*

So Otto Van Tuyl slipped away along with Giles Shelley and his crew, after they "convinced" provincial Attorney General James Graham not to prosecute. We can only make a "...scurvy reflection..." as to how much they paid to influence him.

### ***Otto Van Tuyl, Privateer***

With hundreds of pounds worth of booty in his possession, the first thing Otto Van Tuyl did with his spoils was to purchase a new house. Prior to the voyage, he had lived on Broad St. in the North Ward, in an apparently modest house whose assessed valuation for tax purposes was £25.<sup>96</sup> By the time of the first tax assessment after his return, we see him in a home on Smith St. in the East Ward assessed at £90 in 1699, rising to £125 by 1703.<sup>97</sup> Otto had moved close to the East River, then a more desirable part of town. Ironically, he was now living in the same neighborhood, and in the same class of house, as that formerly occupied by the unfortunate Capt. Kidd.<sup>98</sup> Now Otto could enjoy a quiet family life in his new surroundings. Grietje presented him with a son, Dirck, just a little less than 9 months after his return from Madagascar. They had been married only 2 1/2 years when Otto had sailed away in 1695, and their marriage up to that time had produced one son, who died young.<sup>99</sup> Otto, who described himself as a "merchant" in his 1703 will, may actually have engaged in a certain amount of commercial trading in the years after his return. He imported, on at least two occasions, 94 gallons of rum from Barbados.<sup>100</sup> This was the sort of sideline business from which New York's merchant class regularly profited.

<sup>95</sup> "Earl of Bellomont to the Lords of Trade," pg. 551.

<sup>96</sup> "City of New York Tax Lists 1695 - 1699," in *Collections of the New York Historical Society for 1910*, pp. 23, 57, 75, 123, 153, 202, 241, 260, 303.

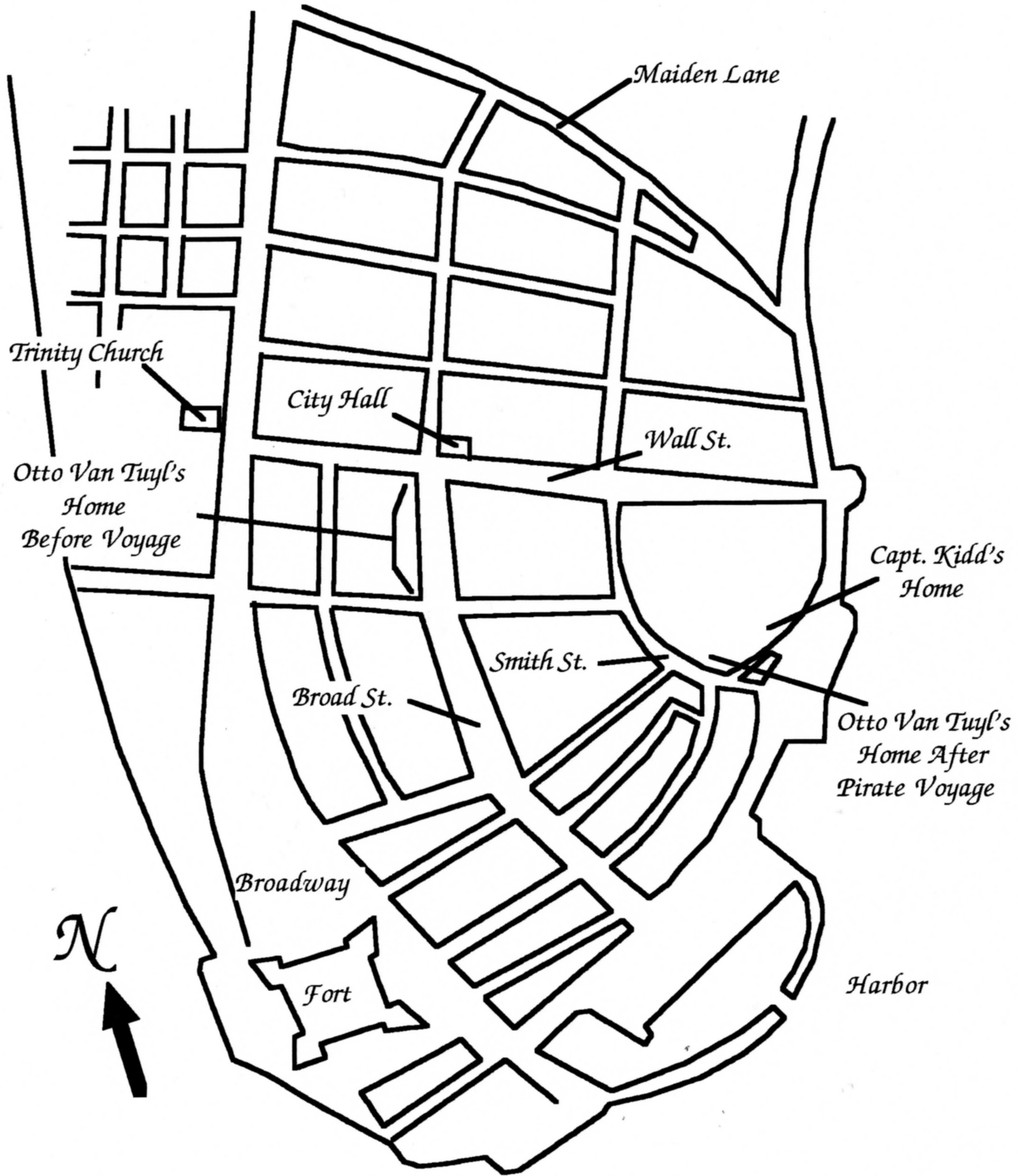
<sup>97</sup> "Assessment Record 1699-1734 from NYC Comptroller's Office," Klapper Library, Queen's College, Flushing, NY [microfilm].

<sup>98</sup> Kidd was assessed at £120 total for real and personal property in 1699. His house was a substantial brick affair, and his personal property was considerable. Otto's rise in assessed valuation over the next few years probably resulted from accumulated taxable personal property as he liquidated his booty.

<sup>99</sup> Cramer, pg. 2.

<sup>100</sup> "An account of Her Majesty's revenue in the province of New York, 1701-09. The customs records of early colonial New York," Bloch, Hershkowitz, Scott, and Sherman, eds., Gregg Press, Ridgewood, NJ, 1967, pp. 163, 175.

# Otto Van Tuyl's New York, 1695 - 1705



References: Map after Archdeacon. Residence Locations inferred from: Tax Lists, Domine Selyn's Records, Kouwenhoven, and Rothschild

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Otto had apparently not become so rich during his eastern voyage that he was able to retire from his profession.<sup>101</sup> Both world and local political conditions had changed since his pirating days, and private warriors were officially sanctioned, and their services were in demand. So, in January of 1704, while his wife was again pregnant, Otto obtained a commission to lead a commando raid against a French privateer which had been plaguing the colony:<sup>102</sup>

*To Otto van Toyle Greeting.*

*You are hereby Required and Directed to provide a sufficient boat, and to take with you Twenty five men Compleatly armed and you are therewith Immediately to sayle towards Sandy hook...to Discover ... a french Privateer...and you are likewise to ...take sieze burn or destroy any boat or Canoos belonging to the said French privateer or to Kill or take any of the persons belonging thereto...*

We don't know if Otto and crew were successful in this mission, but he had obviously established a reputation with the New York authorities as a man who would do their dirty work... for a price.

The British were now at war with the French. This was "Queen Anne's War" (1702-1713), and it pitted these two 18th century powers against one another for control of North America. The French had commissioned privateers to harass the port of New York, and in the years 1704-1707, thirteen New York-based raiders captured or destroyed 36 enemy vessels.<sup>103</sup> Governor Bellomont, the scourge of the privateers, had died in March, 1701, and his successor, Lord Cornbury (who arrived in May, 1702), seemed much more pragmatic about the privateer situation, and much more friendly to the New York merchant class who owned and operated these vessels.<sup>104</sup> Besides his anti-piracy campaign, Governor Bellomont had been politically allied with "Leislerian" politicians such as Robert Livingston, so the merchants of Manhattan were none too sorry to see him replaced. In December of 1702, a group of merchant-politicians in the General Assembly addressed an obsequious letter to Anne, the new Queen of England, upon the occasion of Governor Lord Cornbury's arrival. They complained that:<sup>105</sup>

*...from the arrival of the late Earl of Bellomont here your Majesty's English Subjects in these parts and those of Foreign Birth... have been misrepresented as Pirates...And those your Subjects had been destroyed and their families beggard, had not the arrival of his Excellency the Lord Cornbury very Seasonably prevented it.*

<sup>101</sup> James Lydon estimates that Otto may have had roughly £500-£600 net of expenses upon his return. This was hardly a fortune, but worth perhaps \$150,000 in 1990s US currency. [James Lydon, private correspondence, 1/25/93].

<sup>102</sup> Colonial document 52:7, New York State Archives, Albany, NY. Otto had given his wife, "Margaret", power of attorney on 26 Apr., 1700, as a precaution now that he had an estate of some value and was still engaged in hazardous employment [NY County Deeds, Liber 23, pg. 258]. In this document, he described himself as a "Ship Carpenter" by trade.

<sup>103</sup> Lydon, James G., "The Role of New York in Privateering Down to 1763", 1956, pg. 43. [Columbia U. Ph.D Thesis, University Microfilms, Ann Arbor, Mich.]

<sup>104</sup> "Lord Cornbury to Mr. Secretary Hedges, in *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, ed. by E. B. O'Callaghan, Albany, 1853-1887, vol. IV, pg. 1152.

<sup>105</sup> "Copy of an address from the Representatives of New York to her Majesty," in *1702 Colonial Correspondence*, Public Records Office, Kew, Richmond, Surrey. CO5 1048, pp. 8-11, V:31.



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As an example of how much the political climate had changed, consider this: Giles Shelley, Stephen DeLancey, and John Barberie, the principals in the *Nassau* voyage of 1698/99 - men who Governor Bellomont sought to imprison - were by 1705 *all* members of the Governor's Council!<sup>106</sup> Otto Van Tuyl, however, aligned himself with the Dutch residents of the city against the English (and Anglicized Huguenots like DeLancey and Barberie): Otto was a Leislerian.<sup>107</sup>

Cornbury, in fact, turned out to be one of New York's worst governors of all time. He was a cousin of Queen Anne who fancied so much his supposed resemblance to her, that he regularly dressed up in women's clothes to parade along the town's ramparts.<sup>108</sup> Another in the line of New York Governors more interested in personal gain than in good government, Cornbury soon learned how to "play ball". Also, there was another of the recurring wars with France to threaten the Colony, and Cornbury was having a hard time financing it - or, rather, getting the colonials to pay for it.<sup>109</sup> There were continual sightings - real and imagined - of French privateers off the coast, and the Governor begged for Navy protection.<sup>110</sup> But the Royal Navy, far from protecting the town, was impressing merchant seamen into service on their warships - eighty of them were pressed for service in early 1703 by one ship alone - the British Man of War *Jersey*.<sup>111</sup> Cornbury, given no alternative, turned to the local pirate establishment for protection. Surely, nothing could have pleased the piracy establishment more - from those like Stephen DeLancey who financed piracy to those like Otto Van Tuyl who actually did it - than the resumption of officially-sanctioned war against the French.

New York privateering was into high gear by 1703, with ships providing not only harbor defense, but also prowling the Caribbean. By far the most successful of the privateers during "Queen Anne's War" were Thomas Penniston's *Setty*, Reiner Tongrelo's *New York Galley*, and Adrian Claver's *Castel del Rey*.<sup>112</sup> The 120-ton *Castel del Rey*, a ship originally commissioned by the Dutch West India Company, was now owned by New Yorkers.<sup>113</sup> While Claver was on a Caribbean privateering voyage in early 1704, Otto Van Tuyl was in New York leading the

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<sup>106</sup> 1699 Colonial Correspondence, Public Records Office, Kew. CO5 1048B, pg. 294.

<sup>107</sup> "Minutes of the Common Council of the City of New York, 1675-1776," NY, 1905, vol II, pp. 175-178.

<sup>108</sup> Wilson, J.G., ed., "The Memorial History of the City of New-York," New York, 1892, pg. 86.

<sup>109</sup> "An Act for levying and Collecting the sums of Seventeen hundred Pounds for the defences of the frontier...", 3 July, 1705, Colonial Correspondence, Public Records Office; Kew. CO5 1048B, pg. 334.

<sup>110</sup> Colonial Correspondence, Public Records Office, Kew. CO5 1048B, pg. 328.

<sup>111</sup> Colonial Correspondence, Public Records Office, Kew. CO5 1048A, June, 1703.

<sup>112</sup> Lydon, pg. 359. Bank of the Manhattan Co. [pg.27] gives the name as "Regnier Tongrelo". Chapin speculates that he was either Dutch or French. We have adopted the standard modern spelling "Tongrelo", which is a very common family name in Brakel, near Gameren. The name "Reiner Tongrelo" suggests he was Dutch.

<sup>113</sup> Lydon, James G., "Castel del Rey, and Early New York Privateer", in *The American Neptune*, XVII, Oct., 1957, pp. 292-297.

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previously-mentioned commando raid against the French privateer.<sup>114</sup> Claver's *Castel del Rey* joined forces in early 1705 with a sloop commanded by Thomas Penniston, and together with another ship, they cruised for prizes off Venezuela.<sup>115</sup> The *Castel del Rey* returned to New York on 13 Aug., having captured a "...Spanish prize, which they took in a fight of the Havana..."<sup>116</sup> The total take for the voyage was estimated at £2700.<sup>117</sup>

The coastal anti-privateering patrols, such as those undertaken by Otto Van Tuyl, were less rewarding than privateering voyages to the West Indies. Having returned from his successful voyage to Havana, Claver was forced to take his obviously reluctant crew out of New York on 27 July 1704, where they encountered French privateer Captain David. Claver's men, however, refused to fight, causing their disgusted captain to return to the harbor the very next day empty-handed.<sup>118</sup> The risk apparently wasn't worth the reward in the crew's opinion. The Colony then offered a bounty of 2500 pieces of eight for the Frenchman's capture, enough to encourage an attack the next time out.<sup>119</sup> Although the Frenchman eluded Claver's second try, this bounty system apparently became the standard inducement for coastal defense. But when seamen failed to take one of these enemy ships, they still desired some compensation for their efforts. In 1705, after another coastal foray, Governor Cornbury addressed his council:

*The occasion of my requiring your attendance at this time is to acquaint you, that upon a french privateer coming upon this coast, and even to the very Mouth of the Harbour... I was advised to issue a proclamation promising a reward of 2500 pieces of Eight...provided the said privateer were taken or otherwise destroyed... [but the expedition having failed to do so]... I leave it to you to consider whether...it will be reasonable that some reward be given to the officers and men who have been employed in this service.*<sup>120</sup>

Having to pressure the Governor and his Council for pay was certainly a lot less appealing to the truly ambitious privateer than a lucrative voyage to the West Indies. So Otto Van Tuyl probably used every bit of influence he could muster among the local politicians and privateer owners to land what was to become the ultimate assignment of his career: that of replacing Adrian Claver as Captain of the *Castel del Rey*!

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<sup>114</sup> Colonial document 52:7, New York State Archives, Albany, NY.

<sup>115</sup> Lydon, *The Castel del Rey...* pp. 292-297.

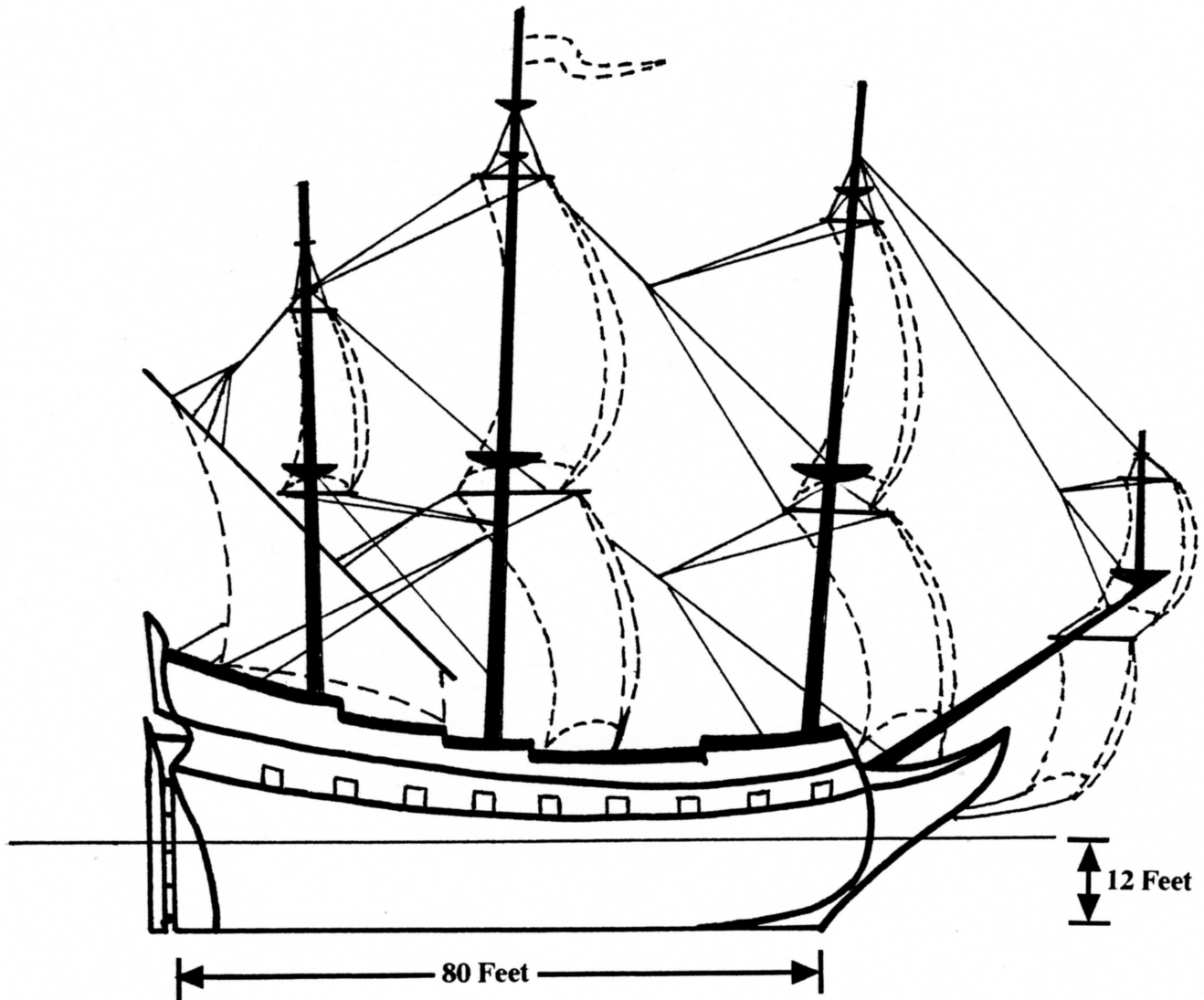
<sup>116</sup> "The Boston News Letter," #7 Aug 13-20, 1705. "NY Aug 13. On the 10th inst arrived here four privateers, viz. Capt. Clavar, in a Ship, Ginks in a Briganteen, DeWint and Willoughby in two sloops who brought with them a Spanish Prize, which they took in a fight of the Havana, bound in thither..."

<sup>117</sup> Lydon, "Castel del Rey...", pg. 296.

<sup>118</sup> Lydon, "Castel del Rey...", pg. 293. Chapin pg. 218.

<sup>119</sup> Lydon, "Castel del Rey...", pg. 293.

<sup>120</sup> "The Govrs Speech to ye: Assembly, relating to some vessels fitted out in search of a Privateer..." in *Colonial Correspondence*, Public Records Office, Kew. CO5 1049, pp. 44-45. 20 Nov., 1705.



A Dutch-Built Ship of about 130 Tons (unladen) *circa* 1700. The Castel del Rey may have looked much like this. When properly laden, she would have drawn about 12 feet of water, too deep to clear New York Harbor's shoals, which were some 6 - 8 feet deep. Amazingly, 145 men crowded aboard the Castel del Rey on her final voyage, probably overloading the ship and increasing the chance of grounding.

## ***Captain Otto Van Tuyl's Last Cruise***

To get an idea of the relative size of the New York privateering industry, consider the following: the four privateers which returned from Havana in 1705 - "*Capt. Clavar, in a Ship, Ginks in a Briganteen, DeWint and Willoughby in two sloops*"<sup>121</sup> probably carried over 300 men between them,<sup>122</sup> but the total population of New York City around this time consisted of just over 1000 men.<sup>123</sup> Even if we assume that seafarers were drawn from Staten Island and Long Island, this was a major fraction of the colony's able-bodied men engaged in the dangerous business of naval warfare! It was one thing to have hundreds of armed and rowdy privateersmen at sea, and quite another thing to have them back in home port, raising hell - which is exactly what happened in the fall of 1705, after the return of the four privateer ships from the Caribbean. Sailors from Captain Ginks' Briganteen *Dragon* rioted over some grievance, attacked the Royal garrison, and killed a British officer.<sup>124</sup> The political influence of such a mob can be understood by considering that the New York colonists:<sup>125</sup>

...[were] of three nations, English, Dutch and French; of these the Dutch are very much the most numerous, and these are not Dutch by nation only but by inclination...especially in Long Island most of the English are Dessenters...in no wise fond of monarchy...

Lord Cornbury also had limited military power to control the populace:<sup>126</sup>

*I found four Companys of Fusiliers posted in this Province, two in the fort at New York...they were not compleat...we yet want recruits, swords, and all manner of Stores of Warr...*

This tenuous balance of power between the Royal authorities and what must have amounted to a privateer's union, probably explains why an order was issued in November, 1705, which would protect the crew of the *Castel del Rey* (and presumably the other vessels accompanying her) from impressment into the Royal Navy.<sup>127</sup> This historical, though temporary, relinquishment of the *Royal Prerogative* must certainly have made it much easier for Captain Van Tuyl to recruit a crew for the *Castel del Rey's* upcoming voyage. Recruiting 145 men for a Caribbean voyage must not have been too difficult, given the record of the *Castel del Rey* on the previous trip. Cramming them and their necessary weapons and supplies on board an 80 foot long, 19-foot wide, 12-foot

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<sup>121</sup> "The Boston News Letter," #7 Aug 13-20, 1705.

<sup>122</sup> Lydon, "Castel del Rey...,"

<sup>123</sup> "Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York", ed. by E. B. O'Callaghan, Albany, 1853-1887, vol. IV, pg. 420.

<sup>124</sup> Chapin, pg. 225. The officer's name was Lt. Wharton Featherston-Hough.

<sup>125</sup> "Lord Cornbury to Mr. Secretary Hedge," in *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, ed. by E. B. O'Callaghan, Albany, 1853-1887 vol. IV, pg. 1155.

<sup>126</sup> "Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York", ed. by E. B. O'Callaghan, Albany, 1853-1887, vol. IV, pg. 1150.

<sup>127</sup> Lydon, "Castel del Rey...," pg. 295.

deep ship must have been no mean feat.<sup>128</sup> As it turned out, the *Castel del Rey* might have been departing New York overloaded and riding low in the water - a dangerous situation. The only way for this not to have been the case would have been for her to have gone out very light on supplies, water, and provisions.<sup>129</sup>

"I, Otto Van Tuyl of New York, merchant..." wrote Otto in his will of 2 December, 1704.<sup>130</sup> *Merchant* was a higher social class than even a ship's captain, but clearly a status to which Otto aspired, or which he wished to be remembered as by posterity. In all honesty, he was no merchant, but he *had* reached the pinnacle of his career, possibly something he had longed for all his life - the command of his own ship-of-war! It is hard to believe that monetary gain was the only motive for such a man. He had spent many years at sea, and certainly had experienced the pleasures of victory, and - probably quite literally - rape, pillage and plunder. The opportunity to command nearly one hundred-fifty men on a major voyage must have been quite a thrill to this *Old Pirate*.<sup>131</sup> Like many a modern "pirate", this nominally religious family man must have found some rationale to justify his unchristian behavior over the years. Maybe it was family. Maybe it was money. Who knows? His widowed mother was remarried to Teunis Van Pelt and living on Long Island. His wife was pregnant with their last child, conceived in October while the *Castel del Rey* was refitting for the voyage. His brother Aert was still in Madagascar, living the life of a "Pirate King". And Otto was about to sail on the voyage of his life....

### **The Catastrophe**

Boston Newsletter, Dec. 17-24, 1705:<sup>132</sup> "[New York]...*Capt. Pennistone, Tongrelow, and Van-Tyle in 3 ships, and also a Sloops Sails this week on privateering*".

Otto probably sailed first to the watering place on Staten Island, as was the standard procedure for ships setting out to sea, and then to "Jackques Bay" [Gravesend Bay, on Eastern Long Island, near New Utrecht], about 10 miles from New York.<sup>133</sup> There, he may have taken on provisions from the local (possibly Van Pelt) farms, then sailed off to meet his destiny:<sup>134</sup>

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<sup>128</sup> Lydon, James, private correspondence, Jan. 25, 1993. He estimates that the ship was of 130 tons "burden" [i.e. carrying capacity], which would be about 2/3 of its "measured" tonnage, from which shipwrights estimated total displacement using the "shipwright's formula":

$$\text{Measured tonnage} = 3/2 \times 130 \text{ tons} = (80' \text{ length} \times 19' \text{ width} \times 12' \text{ depth})/94$$

<sup>129</sup> On his previous Caribbean voyage, Claver had piled 120 men aboard this 130-ton ship. Otto would be carrying 145. *John and Rebecca*, it will be recalled, carried 120 men in a 180-ton vessel, albeit for a longer voyage.

<sup>130</sup> New York Historical Society Abstract of Wills, v. II, pg. 9. Original Will of Otto Van Tuyl, #186 of Klapper Library Collection, LDS film, reel 2, NYGBS and FHL collections [bears his crude signature].

<sup>131</sup> He was 44 years old in 1705.

<sup>132</sup> "The Boston News-Letter," Number 88, Dec. 17-24, 1705, pg. 2, col. 2.

<sup>133</sup> "A NEW MAP of the HARBOUR of NEW-YORK by a late Survey," 1734, New York Public Library.

<sup>134</sup> "The Boston News-Letter," no. 90, Mon. Dec. 31 - Mon. Jan 7, 1705/6, pg. 1 col. 2.

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*Boston Newsletter New-York Decemb. 24, 1705: ...On the 19th instant, The Private Ship of War call'd the Castle Del Key [sic] of 130 Tons, 18 guns, Capt. Otto Van Tyle Commander, Sailed from Jackques Bay (about 10 miles from hence) and in going down towards Sandyhook with an easy Gale of Wind, She struck upon the East bank and stuck there; They sent some of their men on Shoar in their Canoo for boats to assist them, but that night a hard Gale of Wind Sprung up between W. & N.W. and Froze very hard, the Ship began to fill with water: A Sloop and large Boat was sent down, but it Friezing and blowing so hard, they would not venture to relieve them, for fear of running the same fate of being a ground, and so Froze or Drowned:*

According to another account:<sup>135</sup>

*Mr. Cortelyew of the Narrows saw the disaster, manned his Pettiauger and sailed to the Vessell to relieve the unfortunate Crew. He luffed up near the Vessell twice and twenty two of the Crew dropped from the flying sheets on board of the Pettiauger.*

*Captain Van Tuyl did not attempt to leave the Vessell but sat in the shrouds and prayerfully sang the 130 Psalm in the Dutch language...*

*{ Uit de diepten roep ik tot U, o HEERE!  
HEERE! hoor naar mijne stem:  
laat Uwe ooren opmerkende zijn  
op de stem mijner smeekingen.}*

[Out of the depths I have cried unto thee, O LORD  
LORD, hear my voice:  
let thine ears be attentive  
to the voice of my supplications.]

*Mr. Cortelyew was obliged to leave the Vessell for his own safety as the wind arose and a violent snowstorm set in, by which the privateer was wrecked and Captain Van Tuyl and the residue of his crew were lost.*

The contemporary newspaper account summed up the result of this tragic wreck:<sup>136</sup>

*The next Morning the Gale continued hard all day, and the men were alive upon the deck and in the Shrowds the Sea beating over them: And on Fryday Morning the Wind abating, a boat went on board and found but 4 of the men alive; The Captain and all the rest being Froze and Drowned, there was 145 men on board when She Sailed, who all perished but 13, & 132 dyed in this deplorable manner. Here are Widows Lamenting the loss of their Husbands, and Parents their Children: Tis said about 80 or 90 of the men were English, Scotch and Irish, and the rest of Dutch parentage, most born in this Country.*

These two accounts, the contemporary newspaper story and the much later recollections of an old man, are all we know of *what* happened. But *why* did this catastrophe befall those 132 men, their

<sup>135</sup> This account, a copy of which is in the hands of Mr. Harold Van Tuyl of Richland, Washington, was written by 86-year old Jerimiah Johnson on Tuesday, March 30, 1851. Many of the details are wrong, including the date, which he puts at 1761. Johnson had apparently heard this story as a young man, and was attempting to remember it through the mists of time in 1851: "Jeremiah Johnson [was] a bilingual descendant of early Dutch Settlers and English Colonists...[He] lived in E. Brooklyn on an estate inherited from the Vanderbecks and Rapeljes. He had served in the State Legislature, risen to Major-General in the militia, and had been a judge. [He served as ] Mayor of Brooklyn 1837-40 [Listed as being 66 years old in 1832, which would make him 85 years old in 1851, as stated in the narrative]. Jeremiah Johnson translated the famous work "A Description of the New Netherlands", by Adrien vanderDonck". This biographical information was taken from the introduction to that work, edited by Thomas F. O'Donnel, Syracuse University Press, 1968.

<sup>136</sup> "The Boston News-Letter.", no. 90, Mon. Dec. 31-Mon. Jan 7, 1705/6, pg. 1 col. 2

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families, and the colony itself? Where did Captain Otto go wrong? Was he overloaded? Was he simply not a very good sailing master? He was obviously experienced in these waters, but was his crew competent? Or was it just plain bad luck? Was there an uncharted shoal?<sup>137</sup> The harbor had been notoriously treacherous since the days of its discovery, when Henry Hudson ran aground there.<sup>138</sup> During the American Revolution, the French Navy considered New York too dangerous to invade by sea, owing to the sand banks in the harbor, so chose the Chesapeake Bay instead of New York as the venue for their decisive show of force.<sup>139</sup> Whatever the reason for the grounding of the *Castel del Rey*, the real making of the tragedy lay in the appalling weather, and the fact that most 18th century sailors could not swim.

The personal tragedy of so many of the families, left without a man to support them, must have been the worst aspect of this debacle. But Otto's ship was not the only one to meet with disaster. The two other privateers, Tongrelo and Penniston, waited out the storm for a few days, until Christmas eve, when it was announced that:<sup>140</sup>

*...Capts. Tongrelo and Peniston Sailes this day [24 Dec.] on Privateering, and Capt. Joyner for Jamaica; all our outward bound Vessles will Sail in 2 or 3 days, the Winter being set in severely.*

Tongrelo had a very successful outing in the Caribbean, capturing several prizes with his *New York Galley*. He even mounted a second expedition a year later.<sup>141</sup> Penniston was not so lucky. His vessel was so badly damaged in a fight with a French convoy that he went down with all hands - 70 men - while trying to return to New York.<sup>142</sup> The Penniston and Van Tuyl disasters - occurring only half a year apart - reduced New York's supply of mariners by about one-half. Governor Lord Cornbury shed no tears over the loss of these coarse men, but did remark on the negative business implications of these losses in his report to the Board of Trade.<sup>143</sup> There is no record of compensation for the widows and orphans, who, like their counterparts in seafaring societies from time immemorial, were left to fend for themselves.

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<sup>137</sup> An examination of 1784 map of New York harbor [Library of Congress G1106 .P5E5] shows not only an East Bank and West Bank (submerged land less than about 3 fathoms deep), but a *Middle Bank* as well. However, the 1734 chart shows no "Middle Bank", either because it did not exist at the time, or because it was uncharted. Possibly, by departing from *Jackques Bay*, rather than the more conventional *Watering Place*, Captain Van Tuyl's reckoning was thrown off. Had he steered a course on the line between New Utrecht and the "Indian Trees" landmark - apparently the standard course - he would have passed directly over the *Middle Bank*. If his reckoning had been only slightly off, he would have steered into either the East- or West Bank.

<sup>138</sup> Kessler, H., and Rachlis, E., "Peter Stuyvesant and his New York," Random House, 1959, pp. 31-32.

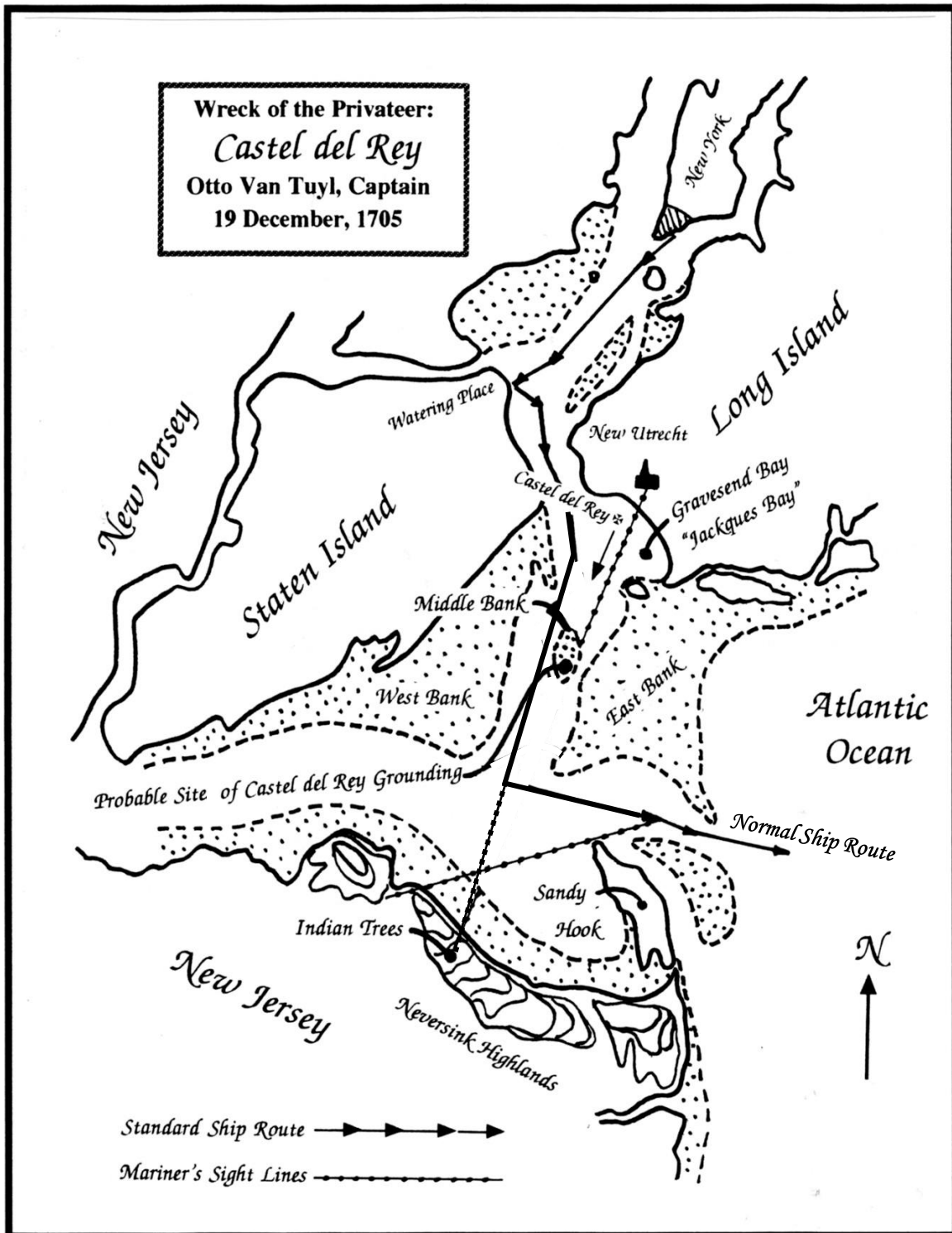
<sup>139</sup> Wertenbacher, T.J., "Father Knickerbocker Rebels," Scribner's, New York, 1948, ch. X.

<sup>140</sup> "The Boston News-Letter.", no. 90, Mon. Dec. 31-Mon. Jan 7, 1705/6, pg. 1 col. 2.

<sup>141</sup> Chapin, pp. 227 -228.

<sup>142</sup> Lydon [Thesis], pg. 44.

<sup>143</sup> Lydon [Thesis], pg. 45.



The standard ship's route was south from the City to the *Watering Place* on Staten Island, then south through the treacherously shallow New York Bay [solid line]. But Otto Van Tuyl's *Castel Del Rey* made her way south from *Jackques Bay*, probably using standard sight lines [dotted], based on alignment of landmarks, to help navigate through the poorly-charted waters. Otto probably went aground on the Middle Bank, which was apparently not charted at the time. Unorthodox routing, poor piloting, or overloading could all have been causative factors.



## Epilogue

Captain Otto's family presumably survived well enough on what he left them. Grietje , Otto's widow , lived long enough to see her daughter Anna married to John Lawrence in about 1721. Anna bore 5 sons and two daughters. Like her mother, she produced twin boys - Otto's grandsons Otto and Laurens Lawrence.<sup>144</sup> Otto's son Dirck owned property north of Wall St. in the 1730s or 40s.<sup>145</sup> No other record of him or his younger brother Jan is extant, so we don't know which, if any, of the Van Tuyls in America are descended from the *Old Pirate*.

What about Aert Van Tuyl's children?<sup>146</sup>

*Those [pirates] who settled in Madagascar...fathered numerous children who came to be regarded as a separate clan known as the Malata (mulattos) or Zana-Malata (children of the mulattos). Although no longer a cohesive group their descendants are still identifiable today, sometimes with reddish hair or blue eyes as visible evidence of their origin".*

Thus were the Van Tuyls of Madagascar added to the family of man. They are perhaps the most enduring legacy of the pirate voyages of Otto and Aert, the Van Tuyl brothers of New York.

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<sup>144</sup> Cramer, pg. 3.

<sup>145</sup> New York Historical Society Abstracts of Wills, 1895, vol. IV, pg. 62 [Liber 15]. The Will of Samuel Bayard [undated] proved 30 Jan, 1746.

<sup>146</sup> Brown, pp. 96-97.

132 men left Jamaica on Monday.

Vol. 90.

# The Boston News-Letter.

Published by Authority.

From Monday December 31. to Monday January 7. 1756.

New-York Decemb. 24. Rolland in a Sloop from Jamaica arrived the 13th. in 6 Weeks time.

On the 19th. instant, The Private Ship of War call'd the Castle Del Rey of 130 Tons, 18 Guns, Capt. Otto Van Tyle Commander, Sailed from Jacques Bay (about 10 Miles from hence) and in going down towards Sandyhook with an easy Gale of Wind, She Struck upon the East bank and stuck there; They sent some of their men on Shoar in their Cannoo for boats to assist them, but that night a hard Gale of Wind Sprang up between W. & N. W. and Froze very hard, the Ship began to fill with Water: A Sloop and large Boat was sent down, but is Friezing and blowing so hard, they would not venture to relieve them, for fear of running the same fate of being a ground, and so Frieze or Drowned: The next Morning the Gale continued hard all day, and the men were all alive upon the Deck and in the Shrowds the Sea beating over them: And on Fryday Morning the Wind abating, a Boat went on board and found but 4 of the men alive; The Captain and all the rest being Froze and Drowned, there was 148 men on board when She Sailed, who all perished but 13, & 132 dyed in this deplorable manner. Here are Widows Lamenting the loss of their Husbands, and Parents their Children: It is said about 80 or 90 of the men were English, Scotch and Irish, and the rest of Dutch Parentage, most born in this Country.

Capt. Tongrelow and Peniston Sailed this day on Privateering, and Capt. Joyner for Jamaica; all our outward bound Vessels will Sail in 2 or 3 days; the Winter being so severely.

The shocking announcement that 132 mariners aboard Captain Otto Van Tuyl's privateering vessel *Castel del Rey* had perished in a freezing storm in New York Bay on 19 Dec., 1705. This announcement is from the *Boston News-Letter*, a weekly journal of colonial and international news published in the days before New York had a newspaper. [American Antiquarian Society].