

LETTER OF JOHANNES BOGAERT TO HANS BONTEMANTEL, 1655

Noble and Mighty Sir:

Mr. Schepen Bontemantel:

THIS is to advise your Honor of what has occurred since the 5th of September, 1655, when we sailed with our seven ships,¹ composed of two yachts called the *Hollanse Tuijn* (Dutch Frontier), the *Prinses Royael* (Princess Royal), a galiot called the *Hoop* (Hope), mounting four guns, the flyboat *Liefde* (Love), mounting four guns, the yacht *Dolphijn* (Dolphin), vice-admiral, with four guns, the yacht *Abrams Offerhande* (Abraham's Offering), as rear-admiral, mounting four guns; and on the 8th arrived before the first Swedish fort, named Elsener.² This south fort had been abandoned. Our force consisted of 317 soldiers, besides a company of sailors.³ The general's⁴ company, of which Lieutenant Nuijtingh was captain, and Jan Hagel ensign-bearer, was ninety strong. The general's second company, of which Dirck Smit was captain, and Don Pouwel ensign-bearer, was sixty strong. Nicolaes de Silla the marshal's company, of which Lieutenant Pieter Ebel was captain, and William van Reijnevelt ensign-bearer, was fifty-five strong. Frederick de Koningh the major's company, of which Pieter de Coningckx was ensign-bearer, was sixty-two strong. The major's second company, which was composed of seamen and pilots, with Dirck Jansz Verstraten of Ossanen

¹ Six are named below. The seventh (or first) was the "admiral" or flag-ship *De Waegh* ("The Balance"), on which the writer sailed. The *Hoop* was a French privateer, *L'Espérance*, which had just arrived at New Amsterdam and was engaged for the expedition.

² Nya Elfsborg.

³ Rising states the total number of the force as 600 or 700.

⁴ *I. e.*, Stuyvesant's. In the military organization of that day, one or two companies were usually given a primary position as the "general's own" or "colonel's own." Of the persons mentioned below, Nicasius de Sille was a member of the Council, and De Koningh was the captain of *De Waegh*.

as their captain, boatswain's-mate Dirck Claesz of Munnikendam as ensign-bearer, and the sail-maker Jan Illisz of Honsum as lieutenant, consisted of fifty men; making altogether 317 men. The 10th, after breakfast, the fleet got under way, and ran close under the guns of Fort Casemier, and anchored about a cannon-shot's distance from it. The troops were landed immediately, and General Stuijvesant dispatched Lieutenant Dirck Smit with a drummer and a white flag to the commandant, named Swen Schoeten,¹ to summon the fort. In the meantime we occupied a guard-house about half a cannon-shot distant from the fort; and at night placed a company of soldiers in it, which had been previously used as a magazine. The 11th, the commander, Swen Schoeten, sent a flag requesting to speak with the general, who consented. They came together, and after a conference the said commander surrendered Fort Casemier to the general, upon the following conditions:

First, The commander, whenever he pleases and shall have the opportunity, by the arrival of ships belonging to the crown, or private ships, shall be permitted to remove from Fort Casemier the guns of the crown, large and small: consisting, according to the statement of the commander, of four iron guns and five case-shot guns, of which four are small and one is large. *Second*, Twelve men shall march out as the body-guard of the commander, fully accoutred, with the flag of the crown; the others with their side-arms only. The guns and muskets which belong to the crown shall be and remain at the disposition of the commandant, to take or cause them to be taken from the fort whenever the commander shall have an opportunity to do so. *Third*, The commander shall have all his private personal effects uninjured, in order to take them with him or to have them taken away whenever he pleases, and also the effects of all the officers. *Fourth*, The commander shall this day restore into the hands of the General Fort Casemier and all the guns, ammunition, materials, and other property belonging to the General Chartered West India Company. Done, concluded and signed by the contracting parties the 11th September, 1655, on board the ship *De Waegh*, lying at Fort Casemier. (Signed) Petrus Stuijvesant, Swen Schuts.²

The 13th, was taken prisoner the lieutenant of Fort Crist[ina], with a drummer, it being supposed that he had

¹ Sven Schütte.

² This agrees with the official text in *N. Y. Col. Dec.*, XII. 102.

come as a spy upon the army, in consequence of the drummer's having no drum. The 14th, the small fleet was again under sail with the army for Verdrietige Point,¹ where they were landed. The 15th, we arrived at the west of Fort Christina, where we formed ourselves into three divisions; the major's company and his company of sailors were stationed on the south side of the creek, by the yacht *Eendragt* (Union), where the major constructed a battery of three guns, one eight-pounder and two six-pounders; the general's company and the field marshal's were divided into two. The marshal threw up a battery of two twelve-pounders, about northwest of the fort. The general placed a battery about north of the fort, opposite the land entrance, one hundred paces, by calculation, from the fort, and mounting one eighteen-pounder, one eight-pounder, one six-pounder, and one three-pounder.²

The 17th, the flyboat *Liesde* returned to the Manathans with the Swedish prisoners. From the 17th to the 23d nothing particular happened. Then, when we had everything ready, the governor of the fort received a letter from our general, to which our general was to have an answer the next day. The same day an Indian, whom we had dispatched on the 13th to Menades, arrived, bringing news and letters to the effect that some Dutch people had been killed at Menades by the Indians,³ which caused a feeling of horror through the army, so that the general sent a letter immediately to the fort, that he would give them no time the next morning. Then the general agreed with the Swedish governor to come together in the morning and make an arrangement. The general had a tent erected between our quarter and their fort, and there an agreement was made, whereby the governor, Johan Risingh, surrendered the fort on the 24th of September, upon the conditions mentioned in the accompanying capitulation.⁴ On the

¹ On Augustin Herrman's excellent map of Maryland and Delaware, "Verdrietige Hoeck" (Tedious Point) appears as the name of a promontory about where Marcus Hook, Pa., now is. Rising, however, reports the Dutch as landing at Tridje Hoeck ("Third Point"), just north of Christina Creek.

² For a plan of the siege, derived from that made by the Swedish engineer Lindström, see Winsor, *Narrative and Critical History of America*, IV. 480.

³ A hundred were killed, a hundred and fifty taken prisoners.

⁴ *N. Y. Col. Dec.*, XII. 104-106.

28th of September the general left with the ships and yachts, and we were ordered to remain from eight to fourteen days, and let the men work daily at Fort Casemier, in the construction of ramparts.¹

The 11th of October, Governor Rijsingh' and Factor Elswijck, with some Swedes, came on board, whom we carried with us to Menades. We ran out to sea for the Menades on the 12th, and on the 17th happily arrived within Sandy Hook. On the 21st we sailed for the North River, from Staten Island, by the watering-place, and saw that all the houses there, and about Molyn's house,² were burned up by the Indians; and we learned here that Johannes van Beeck, with his wife and some other people, and the captain of a slave-trader which was lying here at anchor with a vessel, having gone on a pleasure excursion, were attacked by the Indians, who murdered Van Beeck and the captain, and took captive his wife and sister. We found Van Beeck dead in a canoe, and buried him. His wife has got back. The general is doing all that lies in his power to redeem the captives and to make peace. Commending your Honor, with hearty salutations, to the protection of the Most High, that he will bless you and keep you in continued health, I remain your Honor's

Obedient servant,

JOHANNES BOGAERT,

Clerk.

Laus Deo, Ship *De Waegh* (The Balance),
the 31st October, 1655.

Hon. Mr. Schepen Bontemantel,
Director of the Chartered West India
Company, at Amsterdam.

¹ Fort Casimir was made the seat of Dutch administration on the South River. In 1657 it was named New Amstel, and the colony there was taken over by the city of Amsterdam.

² The house of Cornelis Melyn, on Staten Island.