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### Lutheranism in the Region of New York Until the Time of Falckner

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I

**LUTHERANISM IN THE REGION OF NEW YORK**  
**UNTIL THE TIME OF FALCKNER**

The history of the Lutheran Church in the region of New York has its ~~beginning~~ contemporaneously with the beginning of the State of New York. Already at the time of the earliest explorations of that territory and the settlement of the first Dutch colony, we find traces of Lutheranism. True, the Lutherans never were a very large force; and, as a body, they had little to do with the shaping of New York's development; nevertheless, Lutheranism was present. There was also a number of ~~individuals~~ of whose secular work the Lutheran Church can well be proud.

In our discussion we shall attempt to follow the Church from its very first signs until the time of Justus Falckner who died in 1723. Actually, we shall proceed a little further in our story until 1750 where there is a logical stopping place.

The terminology, in the opening chapters especially, tends to be a bit ~~confusing~~ that reason we offer the following explanation of names. Wherever the "Consistory" is mentioned, it has reference to that body which was the head of the Lutheran Church in the Netherlands, particularly in Amsterdam. The "Classis", on the other hand, is the name given to the governing body of the church in the Netherlands. Both ~~the~~ respective churches in the New York ~~area~~ is the name applied to the whole Dutch settlement in New York

by  
**Eugene F. Helms**

June 1945

Approved by:

*N. G. Polack*  
*Th. Hoyer*



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# FOREWORD

first called "New Amsterdam" by the Dutch, after the city

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True, the Lutherans never were a very large force; and, as a body, they had little to do with the shaping of New York's development; nevertheless, Lutheranism was present. There was also a number of individuals of whose secular work the Lutheran Church can well be proud.

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State, while "Netherlands" is the name of the mother country in Europe. The city which later became New York City, was first called "New Amsterdam" by the Dutch, after the city of Amsterdam in the Netherlands. "The States General" was the head of civil authority in the Netherlands. Under their jurisdiction fell the governing of colonial affairs. However, the States General allowed a trading company, "The Dutch West India Company", to take care of most of the civil direction in the colonies. All laws and regulations imposed by the Dutch West India Company, naturally, had to be patented after the laws of the States General and subjected to the final approval of that higher body.

There was quite a bit of red-tape for the early Lutherans in America to go through when they began to appeal for religious recognition. They had to contend with the Governor-General of the colony, the Dutch West India Company who placed him in office, and the States General which was the ultimate board of appeal. That was for permission to have freedom of worship. In order to acquire a minister and support for their church, the Lutherans had to appeal to the Consistory in the Netherlands. It was a hard fight involving much legal<sup>procedure</sup> in which the Lutherans of New York struggled valiantly to attain religious liberty from the Dutch. They never did enjoy complete freedom of worship until Great Britain took over the colony. But that is a tale to be told in the body of this paper.



----- TABLE OF CONTENTS -----

Page

C. Call of J. Falckner

61

D. Ordination of J. Falckner

page

I. THE FOUNDING OF NEW NETHERLAND

1 - 8

A. Early Explorations and Settlers

1

VI. THE PALATINES AND JOHANN KOCKERTHAL

27 - 36

B. West India Co. & Permanent Colonists

3

A. First Immigration

27

II. LUTHERANISM UNDER THE DUTCH

9 - 35

A. Background and Limitations

9

B. Organization and Petitions

14

C. First Lutheran Ministers  
(Gutwasser and Zetskoorn)

26

VII. W.C. BERKHOFF

III. BEGINNING OF N.Y. UNDER THE ENGLISH

36 - 46

A. Call and Arrival

36

A. Religious Liberty

36

B. Division of Parish

39

B. Fabritius

39

C. Second Division and Pastor Sommer

42

C. Arensius

42

D. Rev. Knoll and N.Y.C. Congregation

93

IV. THE RISE OF CONGREGATIONS IN THE REGION OF N.Y.

47 - 56

VIII. THE FIRST LUTHERAN SYNOD

93 - 100

A. Albany

47

B. Athens

50

C. Kingston

51

D. Newburgh

51

E. New Jersey

52

F. Long Island

53

V. THE TIME AND LIFE OF JUSTUS FALCKNER

57 - 76

A. Pastor Rudman

57

B. Daniel and Justus Falckner

59



I. THE FOUNDING OF NEW NETHERLAND	page
C. Call of J. Falckner	61
D. Ordination of J. Falckner	62
E. Work of J. Falckner	65
VI. THE PALATINES AND JOSHUA KOCHERTHAL	77 - 86
A. First Immigration	77
B. Second Immigration	78
C. First Locations in New York	80
D. Schoharie Valley	82
E. Mohawk Valley	84
VII. W.C. BERKENMEYER	87 - 94
A. Call and Arrival	87
B. Division of Parish	89
C. Second Division and Pastor Sommer	90
D. Rev. Knoll and N.Y.C. Congregation	93
VIII. THE FIRST LUTHERAN SYNOD	95 - 100

1. Lars Qualben, The Lutheran Church in Colonial America, p. 123.

2. Jacobs, American Church History Series, IV p. 47 gives the date as 1612.

3. Karl Kretzmann, "Early Lutherans and Lutheran Churches in America", C.H.I.C. Vol. I., p. 59 gives the date as 1611.



## I. THE FOUNDING OF NEW NETHERLAND

Strange as it may seem, the Dutch were not the first to sail into the harbor of what is now New York City. In April of 1524, an Italian in the employ of Francis I of France dropped anchor in New York Bay. Giovanni da Verrazzano, for that was the Italian sea captain's name, intended to find a short cut to the East Indies. In vol. I, page 45 of the New York Historical Society's Collection (new series), his report may be found.<sup>1</sup>

The first real contact the Dutch had with this territory came in the year 1609. At that time Henry Hudson, an Englishman employed by the Dutch Indian Company to find a northwest passage, sailed up the river which later was named after him. He traveled as far as Albany. Hudson took possession of the territory in the name of the Dutch republic, and his reports inspired speculators from Amsterdam to send trading ships to that region of the New World. In 1611, or early in 1612, three merchants of Amsterdam pooled their efforts and sent two ships to the Hudson River section of the New World for trade with the Indians.<sup>2</sup> At this time, Henrich Christiansen (Hendrick Cortiansen) began to chart the region.<sup>3</sup> Christiansen was

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in all probability a Lutheran. He was a native of the German town of Cleve on the Rhine, and to him goes the credit for establishing the first dwelling on Manhattan Island. This early explorer was killed by an Indian in 1614 near what is now Albany. However, his work of three years included ten trips back and forth across the Atlantic Ocean, and the exploration of Long Island Sound and the Delaware River as far as Philadelphia. It was mainly because of Christiansen's work that the Dutch staked their claim on the New World.<sup>4</sup>

A very early name in New York Lutheranism is that of Van Loon. Tradition has it that a certain Pietre Van Loon, who had been driven out of the Netherlands by the Spanish, settled around the region of Lake Champlain in 1581 - after having made his way down from the St. Lawrence River.<sup>5</sup> His was more or less an isolated family and settlement at this time.

Nevertheless, in 1613, two more ships came over from Amsterdam. At this time Fort Nassau near Albany was built, and traders established posts along the Hudson River.<sup>6</sup> These early traders were more concerned with their business than they were about settling a colony, so they can not properly be termed "settlers". In exchange for animal skins, they gave glass beads, strips of cotton goods,

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With the arrival of these settlers in 1623, New

4. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q. vol. I, p. 59.

5. ibid.

6. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 47.



and other similar articles to the Indians. The trading ventures along the Hudson proved so successful that in 1614 the Amsterdam merchants organized the United New Netherlands Company. Also at this time the name "New Netherland" was officially given to the territory. From the States General this new company obtained a charter which gave them exclusive rights to trade for a period of three years. However, the company continued to function until 1621 when the Dutch West India Company was formed. Having signed the treaty of Tawasentha, the traders maintained friendly relations with the Indians. Most of the trouble that did come with the Indians was due more to shrewd bargaining than from acts of violence.<sup>7</sup>

When the Dutch West India Company was organized in 1621, its power was both mercantile and political. Under its auspices, the first real settlers came over in 1623. This group consisted of about thirty Dutch and Wallon families who intended to support themselves with farming and industry. The Wallons were Protestant exiles from the Spanish Netherlands. A little more than half of this group settled near Albany, while the others remained on Manhattan Island, a few also going south to the Delaware River.

With the arrival of these settlers in 1623, New

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7. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 47.



Netherland became a political entity. All legislative, executive, and judicial powers were held by the Dutch West India Company; but the States General held the right to confirm the appointment of officials and give them instructions. When special cases arose in the colony, the laws of the fatherland were to prevail. It is important to remember this political set up, because it figures in later on when the Lutherans begin their agitation for recognition.

the northern limit of New Netherland was the forty-fifth parallel; the southern limit was the South River (later called Delaware River); the eastern limit lay between the Hudson and the Connecticut Rivers; and the western never extended many miles west of the Hudson River.<sup>8</sup>

In 1625 another group of settlers arrived from Holland and settled on Manhattan Island, which they named New Amsterdam. During the summer of 1626, Peter Minuit purchased the island of Manhattan from the Indians for sixty guilders in beads and ribbons which was equal to about twenty-four dollars in gold. The Island is twenty-two miles in extent. Some time later it was discovered that the Indians from whom the Island had been purchased were not the rightful owners of Manhattan, but nothing further developed from the transaction. Minuit, who was then Director-General of the colony,

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*the Lutheran Church in America*, p. 81.  
*Qualben*, op. cit., p. 123.

8. Qualben, op. cit., p. 123.



built a large stone fort in New Amsterdam, and extensive fur trading was carried on with the Indians at this time.<sup>9</sup>

The first signs of religious life in New Netherland began in 1626 when there arrived two Comforters of the sick; Sebastian Jansz Crol and Jan Huyck.<sup>10</sup> Simple services were conducted as part of their work. The first real pastor in New Amsterdam was Jonas Michaelius of the Dutch Reformed Church. He arrived in the spring of 1628, and on August 11th of the same year he established the first Dutch Reformed church in New Amsterdam. The congregation, consisting of Dutch, Wallons, and French, was the first of its kind with Presbyterian polity in America.<sup>11</sup> In New Amsterdam the first church building was erected by this group in 1633, and a second in 1642.<sup>12</sup> Not until the year 1629 did this first congregation receive legal recognition under the "Articles for Colonization". Sections two and eight of the Articles deal with religion and read as follows:

2. Religion shall be taught and preached there, according to the Confessions and formularies of Union here publicly accepted

9. J. L. Neve and Willard Allbech, History of the Lutheran Church in America, p. 21.

10. Qualben, op. cit., p. 125.

11. ibid. p. 126.

12. Kretzman, C.H.I.Q. vol. I, p. 61.

in America, p. 303.

14. ibid. p. 304.

15. H. M. Schmucker, "The Lutheran Church in the City of New York", L.C.R. p. 205.



without, however, it being inferred that any person shall be hereby in any wise constrained or aggrieved in his conscience.

8. Each householder and inhabitant shall bear such tax and public charge as shall hereafter be considered proper for the maintenance of clergymen, comforters of the sick, etc.<sup>13</sup>

The States General changed the ruling about religion in 1630 to read:

No other religion shall be publicly admitted in New Netherland except the Reformed, as it is at present preached and practiced by public authority in the United Netherlands: and for this purpose the Company shall provide and maintain good and suitable preachers, school-masters, and comforters of the sick.<sup>14</sup>

Concerning the above mentioned change in the religious ruling, Qualben page 126, says it did not come about until 1640; however, we shall abide with the quotation and date as it is quoted from Cobb. the Dutch Domine Bogardius was the second Dutch Reformer minister to arrive in the Colony. Up to the time of his arrival in 1633,<sup>15</sup> it appears as though the religious restrictions were not forced at all. Beginning with Bogardius there is a movement for the exclusion of all other faiths except the Dutch Reformed. This movement, nevertheless, was relatively lax, as compared to the practical tyranny which reigned under the Reformed Domine John Megapolensis, who arrived in

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13. Sanford Cobb, The Rise of Religious Liberty in America, p. 303.

14. ibid. p. 304.

15. B. M. Schmucker, "The Lutheran Church in the City of New York", L.C.R., p. 205.



1649, and Domine Samuel Drisius who arrived in 1652. Those two men, Megapolensis and Drisius, are the ones who were instrumental in keeping down Lutheranism, as we shall see in the next chapter.

For the advancement of colonization in New Netherland, a system of patroons had been established in 1629. This system provided for a grant of land to be given to a patroon, providing he could bring over fifty families to settle it. New Amsterdam was incorporated in February, 1653; and in the same year a wall was built around the city. The site of this wall is memorialized in the name of Wall Street, New York City. Citizenship was granted to the inhabitants in 1657.<sup>16</sup>

In order to complete the overall picture of the Dutch in New Netherland (New York), and so that we will have a better understanding of the early situations from which Lutheranism in that territory arose, it must also be mentioned that the English took over the colony in 1664. In September of that year a fleet of English ships under Col. Richard Nicholls appeared in

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16. Qualben, op. cit. p. 125.

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ST. LOUIS, MO.  
17. Qualben, op. cit.  
18. Ibid. p. 125.  
19. Ibid.  
20. Neve, op. cit., p. 21, says there were 30 houses in New Amsterdam at this time.



the harbor of New Amsterdam. The colony was surrendered without a shot when Nicholls threatened to blow it apart with his naval guns. From that time on New Netherlands came to be known as "New York" in honor of James, Duke of York and Albany. At that time also the Lutherans were granted religious freedom, as we shall see in chapter three.

#### DIRECTORS-GENERAL OF NEW NETHERLANDS 17

Cornelius Jacobsen May .....	1624-25
William Verhulst .....	1625-26
Peter Minuit .....	1626-32
Sebastian Jansen Krol .....	1623-33
Wouter van Twiller .....	1633-38
William Kieft .....	1638-47
Peter Stuyvesant .....	1647-64

(Peter Minuit was the first to enjoy the title of Director-General, though his predecessors acted in the same capacity)

#### ESTIMATED POPULATION IN NEW NETHERLAND 18

1647 .....	1,500 people
1653 .....	2,000
1664 .....	10,000

#### ESTIMATED POPULATION IN NEW AMSTERDAM 19

1628 .....	270 people	20
1642 .....	1,000	
1653 .....	800 (pop. reduced because of Indian Wars)	
1660 .....	1,800	
1664 .....	2,400	

17. Qualben, op. cit. p. 124.

18. ibid. p. 125.

19. ibid.

20. Neve, op. cit., p. 21, says there were 30 houses in New Amsterdam at this time.



## II .LUTHERANISM UNDER THE DUTCH

Henrich Christiansen was the first Lutheran to have any connections with the territory now known as New York as far as we know (cf. page 1). During those early days of the explorations and the traders, religion played a small part in the growth of the colony, and the religious differences of the inhabitants was a negligible cause of friction.

Beginning in 1623, when colonization was speeded up, New Amsterdam (New York City) soon developed a cosmopolitan character. Huguenots, Lutherans, English Puritans, Mennonites, Quakers, Jews, and others came to the colony in increasing numbers.<sup>1</sup> Under the Articles for Colonization (cf. p. 5 & 6) these groups created a religious problem. During the course of years the laws concerning religion gradually became more stringent and more rigidly enforced. The first step toward this end we have already seen (cf. p. 6) when in 1630 the Reformed religion was officially made the religion of the colony to the exclusion of all others. That meant no ministers, other than Dutch Reformed, were allowed to officiate in New Netherland. Since there appears not to have been any other clergymen in the colony at this time, this new ruling did not cause much of a disturbance immediately.

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1. Qualben, op. cit., p. 126.



As time went on, the different religious groups within the colony became aware of their increasing numbers. They banded together and began to hold private services of their own. They objected to the necessity of submitting to the official acts of the Reformed Domines, and began agitating for their own ministers. Since our's is the story of Lutheranism, let us follow the religious problem through from their history.

With the first groups of permanent settlers in 1623 and 1625, there also arrived in New Netherland a number of Lutherans. This is not surprising, since the Lutherans were numerous in Holland about this time. The Lutherans of Holland were also people of influence and wealth, so it is very plausible why they should take a part in the colonization plans of the country.

At Amsterdam the Lutherans had at this time the largest congregation in the world, consisting of about thirty thousand souls, with two churches and six ministers. There was a Lutheran congregation at Leyden, Holland, with seven hundred members and two ministers. Powerful Lutheran congregations existed also in Rotterdam, Woerden and other Dutch centers.

Scandinavians were also represented in goodly numbers during the early days of New Netherland. They were Lutherans who had left their mother country for



religious reasons in order to seek permanent habitations in this country. Many of them came to America by way of Holland. Dr. John O. Evjen in his book, "Scandinavian Immigrants in New York" collected 188 biographies of Scandinavians who lived in New Netherland from the year 1630 through 1674.<sup>3</sup> We shall mention some of these The folks by name as we proceed in our story.

German Lutherans were likewise represented in New Netherland. In fact, the German and Scandinavian Lutherans seem to have been much more plentiful than the Dutch Lutherans in these early days of the colony; yet we speak of the first Lutheran congregations in New York as being Dutch. Dr. Evjen gives a list of 186 Germans who lived in New Netherland for that same period, 1630-75. (2) These Germans and Scandinavians were from the nobility as well as the peasant class. They played an important part in the settlement of New Netherland and engaged themselves in a wide variety of industries, businesses, and even political life. At which precise time the Lutherans first became conscious of their religious limitations in New Netherland, we do not know. Undoubtedly, the feeling began to grow very early. About the time of Domine Bogardus 1633, the Reformed church began to make itself his name is memorialized on the Borough of Bronx, N. Y. Bronx 3. Qualben, op. cit., p. 127.

4. Schmucker, op. cit., p. 805.  
5. Kretzmann, U.H.I.U. vol. I. p. 60.



felt as the state church, and took its first active steps toward keeping down all other religions. The Lutherans, being without a pastor, held services in private dwellings with sermons read by one of their number. All marriages, baptisms, and other official acts had to be performed by the Reformed ministers. The confession subscribed to at baptism was;

The doctrine contained in the Old and New Testaments, and in the articles of the Christian faith, and consequently taught in the Christian church, is the true and perfect doctrine of salvation.<sup>4</sup>

There was no other minister to whom the Lutherans might go for a baptism, so they had to comply with the Reformed practice. This was their main bone of contention. It is quite possible that the Lutherans also partook of the sacrament of Holy Communion after the Reformed fashion, although there is no evidence to this.

Among the earliest of these Lutherans, the records tell us of Jonas Bronck. He was the son of a Danish Lutheran clergyman who lived for a while of the Faroe Islands. The ship "De Brant van Troyen" brought Jonas Bronck to New Amsterdam in the year 1638 along with his family, servants, cattle, and a great library. Just north of the Harlem River, Bronck built a large home for himself, of stone and tile. He died in 1643, but his name is memorialized on the Borough of Bronx, Bronxville, Bronx River, etc.<sup>5</sup>

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4. Schmucker, op. cit., p. 205.

5. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q. vol. I. p. 60.



A Jesuit missionary by the name of Isaac Jogues was one of the first persons to make mention of Lutherans in New Amsterdam. Jogues had been rescued from captivity among the Iroquois by the Dutch, and he spent from August, 1642 to November, 1643 at the Dutch Colony. He writes:

No religion is publicly exercised but the Calvinist, and orders are to admit none but Calvinists; but this is not observed, for there are besides Calvinists, in the colony, English Puritans, Lutherans, Anabaptists, here called Minists.<sup>6</sup>

From the above testimony, we can see that the Lutherans were plentiful enough by the year 1643 to form a distinct group, particularly in New Amsterdam. About this same time there were groups of Lutherans scattered throughout the whole colony of New Netherland as far north as Fort Orange (Albany) and on Long Island. New Amsterdam (New York City) and Fort Orange (Albany) were the two chief centers of Lutheranism during these early days. From those two places branched out the various congregations in the states of New York and New Jersey which shall be discussed in a later chapter.

The cosmopolitan atmosphere of New Amsterdam had progressed so far by the year 1644, that eighteen different languages were spoken in the colony at that time.<sup>7</sup>

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6. E. J. Wolf, The Lutherans in America, p. 114.

7. George Wenner, The Lutherans of New York, p. 1.

8. Kretschmann, S.M.I.Q., vol. I, p. 61.  
9. 1814.



To the best of our knowledge, 1648 is the earliest date at which the Lutherans in New Amsterdam formed any kind of a tangible union. In that year "The Church of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession on Manhattan Island" sent a delegation to the Consistory of the Lutheran Church at Amsterdam with the request for a pastor.<sup>8</sup> Nothing was done for them, but this first request was the opening gun of a tedious battle for recognition by the Lutherans in New Netherland.

The very next year we find that the Lutherans followed their first request with a petition to the same Consistory at Amsterdam. In this petition they asked the Consistory to appeal before the Directors of the Dutch West India Company, in order that the Lutherans might be conceded the privilege of the public exercise of their religion in New Netherland. They again appealed for a minister.

The minutes of the Consistory on October 8, 1649 read as follows:

The petition of the members of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession of faith in New Netherland was read. They desire a pastor. The matter will be kept in mind.<sup>9</sup>

According to the minutes of the Consistory, the matter was kept in mind until October 19th of the same year when it came up for consideration again, but no

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8. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q., vol. I, p. 61.

9. ibid.



15.  
action was taken on it.

Not until 1653 do we find the Lutherans making their next concerted effort for religious recognition and freedom. This was the period when Peter Stuyvesant was Director-General of the colony (1647-64), and Domine Megapolensis (arrived 1649) was the leading clergyman. Both were staunch supporters of the Reformed Church, and they were bent on keeping all other religions out of the colony - as was their right according to the revised Article of Colonization. When Domine Driscus arrived in 1652, he immediately added his weight to the support of the Reformed Church. Present day writers and supporters of the Dutch Reformed Church frankly admit and criticize the attitude and actions of Megapolensis and Driscus.<sup>10</sup>

In the face of such hostile opposition, the Lutherans of New Netherland sent the following petition to the States General of the United Netherlands. It is dated October 1, 1653.

We, the members of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession of Faith, your loyal and obedient subjects, reside under the jurisdiction of New Netherland on Manhattan, at Fort Orange, and on Long Island. We number 150 families and come from all parts of Europe, some of us having been here longer than others. We have never enjoyed freedom of our religion according to the confession of Augsburg, and our souls are longing for a competent and faithful minister of the

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10. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 50.

11. Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 61.



### Confession of Augsburg.

We, therefore, humbly pray that you will grant us such freedom of religion, whereby the Church of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession of Faith may also prosper in these lands, as by your grace it prospers in the Netherlands.

We have no doubt that, after giving this matter due consideration, you will grant us this our petition, permit the free exercise of our religion and the service of a pastor of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession of Faith, whom we will ourselves support.

If we should be favored with the granting of this our request, we will continue to pray for your prosperity and happy government, as we have prayed in the past. etc.<sup>11</sup>

From this petition we can see that the Lutherans in New Netherland had progressed to a point where they, quite conscious of their faith, taking particular pains to point out by much repetition their support of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession. Indeed, they had advanced so far as to be willing to pay for the support of a minister.

Events happened quite rapidly in the next few days. On October 4th two more letters were written. One of these was a petition, similar to the above mentioned petition, which was addressed to the Dutch West India Company. Also on October 4, 1653 a letter was addressed to the Lutheran Consistory in Amsterdam. A pastor was requested. Since at this time, there were 150 Lutheran families in the colony, we can see that a pastor was really needed.

12. The pastor must be 'apt, a graduate of a university, learned, eloquent, single, and

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11. Kretzmann, op. Cit., p. 61.



in part blameless in his walk and conversation.'  
He must likewise be able to lead in  
singing. A salary of 800 guilders (\$320)  
and free fire-wood was promised for the  
entire year.<sup>12</sup>

This letter to the Consistory bore the signatures  
of Daniel Litscho, Hendrick Willemse, Chrystian Barendsen,  
Mattheus Capito, Volckart Jansen, and Harment Ende.

V. Jansen, as a note of interest, had arrived at  
New Netherland in 1638. At the time he signed the above  
petition he was a judge in Fort Orange (Albany).<sup>13</sup>

The Lutherans were set on appealing to every possible  
authority. Therefore, they showed Stuyvesant copies of  
the letters which they were sending to the States General  
and to the West India Company. Thereupon, the Director-  
General promised that he would be willing to grant  
religious liberty to the Lutherans, if it was allowed by  
the government in Holland.

The intentions of Stuyvesant can be seen from the fact  
that he immediately took The Reformed preachers Megapolensis  
and Drisius into his confidence and informed them of the  
Lutherans' Plan. Hence, we find a letter from the Reformed  
Domines addressed to the Classis of Amsterdam and dated  
October 6, 1653 - only two days after the Lutherans had  
made their requests known to Stuyvesant. The letter reads

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12. Kretzmann op. cit., p. 62.  
13. ibid. p. 60.  
14. Quaalen, op. cit., p. 128.



in part: West India Company, January 1, 1654. The Classis

We have hitherto enjoyed the full benefit of our religion in this province. But recently, on the 4th of October last, it happened that certain Lutheran residents here, prepared and presented a certain request to our Governor, asking for permission to call a Lutheran minister out of Holland, and also to organize separately and publicly a congregation and church. This would tend to the injury of our church, and the diminution of hearers of the Word of God, and the increase of dissensions, of which we have had a sufficiency for years past. It would also pave the way for other sects, so that in time our place would become a receptacle for all sorts of heretics and fanatics.<sup>14</sup>

It is quite evident from the above letter that the Reformed ministers did not have a high regard for the Lutherans, neither were they willing to be tolerant of any other religion but their own.

This letter from Megapolensis and Drisus traveled across the Atlantic on the same ship with the three letters of the Lutherans. Paulus Schrick, a German Lutheran, was the man who had been entrusted with the delivery of the Lutheran's letters. Schrick was a business man who had connections far beyond the boundaries of New Netherland.<sup>15</sup> He is referred to later on by Megapolensis and Drisius as being one of the leaders of Lutheranism in New Amsterdam.

When the Classis at Amsterdam received the letter from the Reformed Domines of the colony, they forwarded it

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14. Hugh Hastings, Ecclesiastical Records, State of New York, vol. 1, p. 317.

15. Qualben, op. city., p. 128.



to the West India Company, January 1, 1654. The Classis made it known that they thought it would be injurious to allow the Lutherans a pastor; also the Classis pledged themselves to opposition even if the Lutherans were allowed religious freedom. Such an attitude was hardly Christian for a church body to take.

On February 20, 1654, the Lutheran Consistory at Amsterdam decided in favor of sending a pastor to the colony in answer to the letter brought them by Schrick. Before they could do that, the Consistory needed the permission of the "High and Mighty West India Company". Three days later the High and Mighty West India Company refused such permission, much to the glee of the Classis. The Classis lost no time in informing Megapolensis and Drisius of the proceeding. In a letter of February 26, 1654, the Classis hopes that the Reformed religion in New Netherland would now "be preserved and maintained without the restrictions were made stronger by the Reformed Church hinderance from the Lutherans and other errors.<sup>16</sup>

Along with their orders and report to Stuyvesant on March 12, 1654, the States General wrote:

We have decided absolutely to deny the request made by some of our inhabitants, adherents of the Augsburg Confession, for a preacher and free exercise for their religion, pursuant to the custom hitherto observed by us and the West India Company, on account of the consequences arising therefrom: and we recommend

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16. Schmucker, op. cit., p. 206.  
17. F. Bente, American Lutheranism, I, p. 21-22.  
18. Schmucker, op. cit., p. 206.



to you also not to receive any similar petitions, but rather to turn them off in the most civil and least offensive way and to employ all possible, but moderate means to induce them to listen and finally join the Reformed Church.<sup>17</sup>

As an intersecting side light, we might add that just about one year after this action had been taken, people of the Jewish race were officially allowed in New Netherland because of their financial support given to the West India Company.<sup>18</sup>

In spite of the obvious failure of his mission, Paul Schrick, returned to New Netherland where he and his fellow Lutherans continued in their efforts to worship in the manner of their own consciences. Reading services with prayer and singing were continued in private homes. At the same time Stuyvesant and the Reformed preachers persisted in their efforts to keep down all religions but the Dutch Reformed. Instead of using "the most civil and least offensive way", the restrictions were made stronger by the Reformed Church in New Netherland with Stuyvesant's sanction. It was required that all those who were baptized in the Reformed churches should confess the doctrines of the Synod of Dort, 1619, and they were to receive religious education according to its catechism.<sup>19</sup>

In 1655 the Dutch took over the Swedish Lutheran

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17. F. Bente, American Lutheranism, I, p. 21-22.

18. Kretzmann, op. cit., p. 63.

19. Schmucker, op. cit., p. 206.



colony at New Sweden on the Delaware River. Even though the Dutch deported some of the ministers from this Swedish colony, yet services were permitted to continue:

According to the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, the council of Upsala, and the ceremonies of the Swedish Church.<sup>20</sup>

It was expedient for the Dutch to play ball with the Swedes, because of the Indian hostilities which were going on in that section at the time. Nevertheless, the Lutherans in New Netherland proper still were compelled to comply with the intolerant rulings of the government. Declaring that "Heaven was above law", the Lutherans carried on their private services quite openly and instructed their children in the Lutherans own catechism.<sup>21</sup>

On February 1, 1656, Governor-General Stuyvesant posted a severe placate against conventicles (private services). It ran:

Some unqualified persons in such meetings assume the ministerial office, the expounding and explanation of the holy Word of God, without being called or appointed thereto by ecclesiastical or civil authority, which is in direct contravention and opposition to the general Civil and Ecclesiastical order of our Fatherland; besides that many dangerous heresies and schisms are to be apprehended. Therefore, the Director-General and Council.... absolutely and expressly forbid all such conventicles and meetings, whether public

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<sup>20</sup> Qualben, op. cit., p. 130.

<sup>21</sup> Bente, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>22</sup> Bente, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>23</sup> Cobb, op. cit., p. 317.

<sup>24</sup> Kretzmann, C.M.I.Q., vol. I, p. 63.



or private, differing from the customary, and not only lawful, but Scripturally founded and ordained meetings of the Reformed divine service, as this is observed....according to the Synod of Dordrecht.<sup>22</sup>

The penalties which accompanied the above decree were: one hundred pounds Flemish (\$240) for conducting such a meeting, and twenty-five pounds (\$60) for attending such a meeting. Indeed the whole act was aimed particularly at the Lutherans, as we shall see, and some Lutherans were actually imprisoned; however, other different religions also came under the hammer blows of the conventicle.

Under this act, William Hallet, Sheriff of Flushing, was deprived of his office and fined fifty pounds for having allowed such a meeting in his house. Hallet was banished, because he defaulted payment of the fine. A certain Henry Townsend of Rustdorp was convicted of a similar crime for which he was sentenced to a fine of eighty pounds, failing payment of which he was to be whipped and banished.<sup>23</sup>

News of what was happening in the colony soon reached Holland, in a letter dated June 14, 1656 the Directors in Holland wrote a mild rebuke to Stuyvesant. The letter reads:

We would have been better pleased if you had not published the placard against the Lutherans and committed them to prison; for it has always been our intention to threaten them quietly and leniently. Hereafter you will therefore not publish such or similar placards without our knowledge, but you must pass it over quietly and let them have religious exercises in their houses.<sup>24</sup>

<sup>22</sup>.Bente, op. cit., p. 22.

<sup>23</sup>.Cobb, op. cit., p. 317.

<sup>24</sup>.Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q., vol.I, p. 63.



Indeed, the above is a mild rebuke, but it must have been a set back to Stuyvesant. We notice also in the above, documentary evidence that the placard was issued particularly against the Lutherans, and some Lutherans actually were put in prison as a result of it.

Just prior to the rebuke of Stuyvesant by the West India Company, we find a note of irony in a letter from the Classis at Amsterdam to the Reformed ministers Megapolensis and Drisius. The Letter is dated May 26, 1656; and it says, in effect, that the Classis has not heard any complaints or requests from the Lutherans ever since 1653. Because of this silence it is to be assumed that things in New Netherland were being handled in a Christian manner.<sup>25</sup>

It is not quite clear just what was going on over in Holland between the Dutch West India Company, the Classis at Amsterdam, and the Consistory of the Lutheran Church at this immediate time. The Consistory is strangely silent, yet it is evident that someone was pleading the cause of the New World Lutherans before the West India Company. The American Lutherans frankly admit this fact later on, as we shall see. However, who these friends were we do not know. Quite possibly they were connected with the Consistory at Amsterdam. Again, these friends of the

people in New Netherland addressed a petition to Stuyvesant

which 25. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q.? vol. II, p. 8.



American Lutherans seem to have had all their dealings with the West India Company and not with the Classis who were a begotod group, anyway. This is quite evident from the letter of the Classis to Megapolensis and Drisius, May 26th. It is further obvious that someone must have influenced the West India Company for the sake of the Lutherans because of the rebuke which had been sent to Stuyvesant on June 14th.

Eventually, the Classis got wind of the fact that an effort was being made to grant religious freedom to the Lutherans in New Netherland. On August 8, 1656, the West India Company denied to Classis upon investigation, that they had granted complete toleration to the Lutherans. Yet on October 3rd. of the same year, the Classis has reason to believe that the Lutherans, not only in New Netherland but in all colonies, would be allowed freedom of public worship. 26 Although no official notification of this freedom of worship seems to have been sent to either the Classis or Governor-General Stuyvesant in New Netherland, nevertheless it is certain that the West India Company was taking steps toward that end. For not only did a rumor of such action reach the Classis at Amsterdam, but the news spread all <sup>the</sup> way across the Atlantic ocean to the Lutherans in America. On October 24, 1656, these Lutheran people in New Netherland addressed a petition to Stuyvesant which reads as follows:

27. Jacobs, op. cit. p. 32

26, Kretzmann, op. cit. vol. II p.9



We the united members of the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, here in New Netherland, show, with all due reverence, how that we have been obedient to your Honor's prohibitions and published placards, unwilling to collect together in any place to worship our God with reading and singing, although we solicited our friends in our Fatherland to obtain this privilege, who, as our solicitors, exerted themselves on our behalf, by the noble Directors of the West India Company, our patroons. When, after their letters to us, containing their entreaties, they obtained from their Lordships, in a full meeting, a resolution and decree that the doctrines of the Unaltered Confession might be tolerated in the West Indies and the New Netherland, being under their direction, as is the practice in our Fatherland, under its excellent government. Wherefore, we address ourselves to your Honor, willingly to acknowledge you Honor, as dutiful and obedient servants, with prayer that you will not any longer interrupt our religious exercises, which we, under God's blessing, are wishing to make with reading, and singing, till, as we hope and expect, under God's aid, next spring, a qualified person shall arrive from our Fatherland to instruct us, and take care of our souls. 27

Notice how sure of themselves the Lutherans sound in this petition ! The fact that they expected a minister to be sent over in the spring, leads us to believe that the friends who were soliciting for them were members of the Consistory at Amsterdam.

Since Stuyvesant had heard nothing official from Holland, it is needless to say that he was surprised when the Lutheran petition of October 24th. was presented to him. The Governor-General took immediate steps to have the matter brought before the proper authorities; meanwhile he adhered

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27. Jacobs, op. cit. p.52



to his principle that:

The laws will be enforced against conventions and public meetings of any but those belonging to the Dutch Reformed Church. 28

On March 19, 1657, the Classis at Amsterdam took steps to get a definite opinion from the West India Company concerning religious freedom. The answer received by the Classis was evasive and a general reference to the decision of June 14, 1656, which allowed private worship in homes. 29 According to all present sources, it seems as though we have no testimony that the West India Company passed definite legislation granting religious freedom to the Lutheran colonists; that is, we have no testimony other than the petition of the New Netherlanders to Stuyvesant on October 24, 1656. From the records of the Classis we do have the many rumors of such a ruling; and on April 10, 1657 the Classis reports that a motion to grant religious freedom to the Lutherans by tacit agreement was raised, but not passed, in the West India Company. Again, on May 7, 1657 the Assembly of the city of Amsterdam made a judgement to the effect that if religious freedom was granted to the Swedes on the Delaware, it could hardly be denied to the Lutherans in New Netherland. 30

While all of this indefinite investigation was going on, the Lutheran Consistory at Amsterdam took the bull by the horns and called John Ernestus Gutwasser, S.T.M., to

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28. Jacobs, op. cit. p.52  
29. Kretzmann, C.H.I.C. vol.II p.10  
30. ibid.



become the first minister to the Lutherans in New Netherland. The call was extended April 3, 1657; and on April 10th.

Gutwasser was ordained and given sixty florins for traveling expenses. 31 The archives of the Lutheran Consistory at Amsterdam give this first pastor's name as "Goetwater". Documents at Albany, New York, give the name variously as "Gutwater" and Gutwasser". 32

The story of John Gutwasser as the first Lutheran pastor in New Netherland is a very interesting one - full of struggles and intrigues. His arrival in the New World early in July, 1657 was greeted with joy by the Lutherans, as can well be imagined. However, the Reformed group set to work immediately; and on the sixth of July they advanced six reasons, to the authorities in New Amsterdam, why steps should be taken to nip the Lutheran Church in the bud.

- 1) The Lutherans had many times been forbidden to hold separte conventicles.
- 2) Great discord would develope therefrom.
- 3) Public exercise of their religion was not allowed to the large numbers of Lutherans in the East Indies and in Brazil.
- 4) The number of hearers in the Reformed Church would be perceptibly diminished.
- 5) The poor-fund of the church would suffer.
- 6) If the Lutherans should be indulged in the exercise of their religion, the papists, Mennonites, and others would soon make a similar claim. 33

Gutwasser was summoned before the authorities in New Amsterdam as soon as he made port. He explained his position; - how he had been commissioned by the Lutheran Consistory in

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31. Kretzmann, C.H.I.C. vol. II p.10  
 32. Qualbern, op. cit. p.132  
 33. Kretzmann, C.H.I.C. vol. II p.11



Amsterdam and had obtained a passport from the West India Company. At the present time he was awaiting his credentials which were expected to arrive on the ship "De Waegh",<sup>35</sup> Nevertheless the authorities at New Amsterdam forbade Gutwasser to preach or perform any ministerial acts. This decision was backed up by Stuyvesant a few days later. Undoubtedly expecting that the situation would be changed when his credentials arrived, Gutwasser agreed to the decision of the authorities.<sup>36</sup> This protest of October 10, 1657. In the meanwhile, Megapolensis and Drisius, the Reformed Domines, were doing everything in their power to keep down Lutheranism. They worked to have Gutwasser deported immediately, and their whole demeanor was practically pagan as we can see from a letter which they sent to the Classis, August 5-14, 1657:<sup>37</sup>

In the meantime, however, we had the snake in our bosom. We would have been glad if the authorities here had opened that letter of the Lutheran Consistory to learn therefrom the secret of his mission, but as yet they have not been willing to do this. We then demanded that our authorities here should send back the Lutheran preacher, who had come without the consent of the Lord's Directors, in the same ship in which he had come, in order to put a stop to this work, which they evidently intend to prosecute in spite of, and against the will of our magistrates... But we do not yet know what we can accomplish.<sup>34</sup>

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34. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q. vol. II, p. 12.

35. Hastings, op. cit., p. 406.  
 36. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q., vol. II, p. 13  
 37. Qualben, op. cit., p. 128.



When the good ship "De Waegh" finally dropped anchor in New Amsterdam harbor, May 7, 1657,--it was found, much to the Lutherans' dismay, not to be bearing the necessary credentials for Reverend Gutwasser. This came about because the Classis over in Holland had prevailed upon the West India Company.<sup>35</sup> Immediately the Lutherans in New Netherland jumped into action and sent another appeal and protest to Governor-General Stuyvesant, for it was apparent that their minister would surely be banished. This protest of October 10, 1657 was signed by twenty-four men.<sup>36</sup> (Dr. K. Kretzmann maintains that according to the original copy in New Brunswick, New Jersey the protest was signed by only thirty-one men.<sup>37</sup> At any rate, among the signatures appear the names of sixteen Germans, five Scandinavians and three Hollanders.<sup>38</sup> The remainder are not identified.

The first signature is that of Matthew Capito, who was also the writer of the document. He had probably come to the colony in 1647 with Stuyvesant, for he was secretary to the Governor-General and also kept accounts for the Company. Later he became a municipal officer in Kingston. Another signature was that of Jochem Beekman who had come to America in 1638. Beekman had been a soldier, but later on took up the cobbler's trade. His

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35. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q., vol. II, p. 13.

36. Hastings, op. cit., p. 406.

37. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q., vol. II, p. 13

38. Qualben, op. cit., p. 128.



descendants were officers in the Lutheran Church for more than a century. The name of Laurens Andriessen (Van Boskerk) also among the signatures. Van Boskerk had come to New Netherland in 1642. Later on we find that his home after it has passed through the hands of other owners became the site of the first Lutheran church, Van Boskerk was also the father of Lutheranism in northern New Jersey. For three hundred years his descendants were prominent in the Lutheran church.<sup>39</sup>

Gutwasser himself protested to the officials of New Netherland five days after the Lutherans had submitted their group protest. He referred to his passport which had been issued to him by the West India Company as a token of their good will. Nevertheless, Stuyvesant, with the urging of the Reformed Dominies, ordered Gutwasser to return to Holland aboard the "De Waegh" when it returned to the mother country again. To this effect Stuyvesant notified his actions superiors in Holland in a letter which said that the Lutheran preacher was being returned together with two women of bad reputation.<sup>40</sup>

The Lutherans at Albany had collected one hundred beaver skins valued at eight hundred dollars for the support of the Lutheran minister.<sup>41</sup> With financial backing we find

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39. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q., vol. I, p. 60.

40. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 53.

41. Qualben, op. cit., p. 129.



that Gutwasser decided to go against the Governor-General's orders; so when the De Waegh sailed it was without the Lutheran minister. For the next year Gutwasser remained in seclusion on the farm of Laurence Noorman, a Norwegian, who was given six guilders per week for the minister's support.<sup>42</sup>

Eventually, the Lutheran minister was forced out of hiding when he became ill. The authorities allowed him to remain in the colony during his illness, but ordered him to return on the first ship possible. The Reformed ministers complained that Gutwasser was using his illness as a pretext to remain in the colony. Perhaps Gutwasser was, because by 1569 he admitted having become very familiar with the Lutheran members, and even preaching to them. When Stuyvesant heard of this, he warned the Lutheran minister again about preaching; but it seems as though Gutwasser paid little heed to the Governor-General and as a result was arrested a number of times.<sup>43</sup>

The Reformed Domines were vicious in their attacks upon Gutwasser at this time. In one of their letters they say:

This Lutheran parson is a man of a godless and scandalous life; a rolling, rollicking, unseemly curl, who is more inclined to look into the wine-can than to pore over the Bible, and would rather drink a can of brandy for two hours than to preach one.<sup>44</sup>

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42. Qualben, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

43. Kretzmann, *C.H.I.Q.* vol. II, p. 15.

44. Bente, *op. cit.*, p. 23.

47. Jacobs, *op. cit.*, p. 55.



20, 18 In the face of such opposition, Gutwasser put up a good fight, but it was a losing battle against overwhelming odds. So it happens that on June 19, 1659, the Lutheran pastor boarded the ship "De Bruynisch" and sailed for Holland, never again to enter the picture of Lutheran life in New Netherland. Bearing up under this set-back, the good Lutherans of America kept up the fight for religious freedom. Even before Gutwasser had left, another petition for a preacher had been sent to the West India Company. This was dated May 20, 1659, and the petition bore the signatures of seventy men.<sup>45</sup> On July 20, 1659, Hans Dreper and five other men were sent to the Lutheran Consistory at Amsterdam asking for a preacher.<sup>46</sup> The Re All during the time of Gutwasser's stay in the colony, and even after he left, the Lutherans kept up the fight against the Reformed manner of baptism. They protested to the Governor-General about it, and they protested to the Directors of the West India Company. Even though the Company gave its approval about the way Stuyvesant handled the affair concerning the Lutheran minister, yet they cautioned the Governor-General to be a little less forceful, because the Company wanted to maintain the good will of the Lutherans even though it did not approve of their religion.<sup>47</sup> In the same letter to Stuyvesant, May

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45. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q. vol. II, p. 15.

46. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q. vol. II. p. 54.

47. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 53.



20, 1658, it was advised that the Reformed Domines change back to the old formula of baptism.<sup>48</sup> Indeed, the Lutherans had objected to the old form of baptism (cf. p. 12), but when the new form was forced upon them (cf. p. 21), their objections had increased. The new form made it necessary for the parents to be present at the baptism of a child and testify that the child would be brought up in the doctrine taught "here in the church" <sup>49</sup> - which meant the Reformed doctrine according to the Synod of Dort. By way of showing their protest to this baptismal vow, the Lutheran parents would absent themselves from the baptismal ceremony of their children, and have someone else present the child, so that the parents would not have to take the vow. The Reformed Domines complained bitterly against this practice even to the extent of intimating that, not only the Lutherans but parents of other religions, were absenting themselves from the baptismal ceremonies in order to conceal illegitimate births. In a letter from Megapolensis and Drisius to the Directors, August 23, 1658 we read;

Indeed, it happened only last Sabbath, August 18th, while we were yet ignorant of the complaint of the Lutherans against us, that a child was baptized, neither of whose parents were present; but only two Lutherans, who presented the child, and stood god parents, viz., Laurence Norrman, who, they say was the host who concealed John Gutwasser, the Lutheran minister last winter, and Magdalen

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48. Schmucker, op. cit., p. 210.

49. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q. p. 53



in New Kallier, a Lutheran woman. We have thus given sufficient proof that no undue strictness has been used towards the Lutherans in the baptism of their children, but that their own perverseness has led them to make false representations to the Hon. Directors, and that they intend something else.<sup>50</sup>

The above letter is a masterpiece of understatement.

The Hon. Directors, realizing the seriousness of the situation, threatened to allow the Lutherans to have separate services unless the baptismal formula was changed. Finally, after such repeated threats and urgings, the Reformed Domines returned to the old formula so that, "certain stupid and hard-headed persons would in time be gained and the church be made to prosper".<sup>51</sup> But not long after that, the same Reformed Domines again complained that certain people did not like any form of baptism which might be used.

The efforts of Hans Dreper and his committee must have been successful, for on the 12th of October, 1662, Abelius Zetskoorn, a candidate of theology, arrived at New Amsterdam. However, the Reformed steamroller was in high gear, and it wasn't many weeks later, when this second Lutheran preacher was banished from the colony. Zetskoorn went to the Swedish colony on the Delaware, where he was ordained the following spring.

To show how rabid the religious oppression was getting from that date on we have a more cheerful story.

50. Hastings, op. cit., p. 430.

51. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q. p. 53

52. Schmecker, op. cit., p. 212.

53. Schmecker, op. cit., p. 212.

54. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q., vol. II, p. 45.



in New Netherland, we have a proclamation issued by Stuyvesant in 1662. This new proclamation was against the preaching of any other than the Reformed religion: -

either in houses, barns, ships, or yachts, in the woods or fields," under a penalty of a fine of fifty guilders for the first offense, "on each person found in attendance thereon, whether man, woman, or child, or who shall provide accommodations for heretics, vagabonds, or strollers." All seditious or seducing books, papers, or letters, were also forbidden to be imported or distributed under a fine of one hundred and fifty guilders on the receivers, with the confiscation of all such publications.<sup>52</sup>

A certain John Browne, Quaker, was caught under this new law and sent to Holland for final punishment. But Browne so aroused the people of Holland against Stuyvesant, that the Directors in a decree of April 16, 1663 put an end to such measures.<sup>53</sup>

To further show how the Reformed group was increasing the religious oppression at that time, we have the letter of one Hendrick Bosch dated August 19, 1663 in which he mentions the Lutherans in New Amsterdam as no longer daring to hold meetings or sign a petition for a minister.<sup>54</sup>

Perhaps the West India Company would have changed their tactics after they on April 16th forced Stuyvesant to revoke his latest law. But, before anything further happened to change the religious problem in New Netherland, the English took over the colony in September of 1664, and from that date on we have a more cheerful story.

52. Schmucker, op. cit., p. 212.

53. Schmucker, op. cit., p. 213.

54. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q., vol. II. p. 55.



the United **III THE BEGINNING OF NEW YORK** gation is a direct  
**UNDER THE ENGLISH**

descendant of the Lutheran body which had first organized  
themselves in New Netherland back in 1643.

When the Dutch surrendered New Netherland to the English in 1664, the eighth article of surrender contained a provision for freedom of worship. Colonel Richard Nicolls, who led the English fleet that captured the colony, became the first English governor of the territory which was renamed New York.

To make sure of their ground, the Lutherans appealed for a special charter of religious recognition. This was granted them on December 6, 1664; and it reads as follows:

Whereas several persons under my government who profess the Lutheran religion, have taken the Oath of obedience to his Majesty, his Royal Highness, and such Governor and other officers, as shall by their authority be set over them, and they have requested me for liberty, to send for one minister, or more of their own religion and that they may freely and publicly exercise divine worship according to their consciences; I do hereby give my consent thereunto, provided they shall not abuse this liberty to the disturbance of others and submitting to, and obeying such laws and ordinances, as shall be imposed upon them, by the authority aforesaid. Given under my hand and seal at James Fort in New York on the Island of Manhattan this 6th day of December Anno 1664.

Your very (signed,)  
Richard Nicolls 1

The original copy of the above charter is the most treasured possession of St. Matthew's Lutheran Church, New York City, which is the oldest Lutheran church in

2. Jacobs, op. cit. p. 55.

1. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q. vol. II. p. 55.



the United States. St Matthew's congregation is a direct descendant of the Lutheran body which had first organized themselves in New Netherland back in 1648.

Under the Duke's Laws, enacted in 1665, no persons were to be molested, fined, or imprisoned for differing in matters of religion who profess Christianity. Also, according to the same laws, no one was allowed to officiate as a minister who had not been duly ordained.

Being of a more impartial spirit than the Dutch Governor Stuyvesant, Nicolls took special pains to maintain and conciliate his subjects in every phase of their living, even to the extent of making a special appeal in behalf of the Lutherans on October 13, 1666. In a general letter to local officials, the Governor writes:

Gentlemen: I have received letters from the Duke, wherein it is particularly signified unto me that his Royal Highness doth approve of the toleration given to the Lutheran Church in these parts. I do, therefor, expect that you will live friendly and peaceably with those of that profession, giving them no disturbance on the exercise of their religion, as they shall receive no countenance in, but on the contrary strictly answer, any disturbance they shall presume to give any of you in your divine worship. So I bid you farewell, being

Your very loving friend,  
Richard Nicolls 2

Two days after their special charter had been granted, the Lutherans in New York issued a call for a minister,

to impose a fine of one thousand six dollars on a

2. Jacobs, op. cit.: p. 56.

S. Kretzmann, C.H.I.C. vol. II, p. 116 - has a complete translation of this license.



December 8, 1664. Naturally, the call when through the Lutheran Consistory in Amsterdam. Arnold Lendrichs, of Utrecht, considered the call for almost three years before declining it. A second man, Wolter Conradi, was given the call, but he also declined. Finally, Magister Jacob Fabritius, a pastor in Gross logau, Silesia, received and accepted the call to New York. Much to the joy of the Lutheran congregation, Fabritius arrived in this country in February of 1669, took the oath of allegiance to the English King, and received his license to preach from Governor Lovelace, who had succeeded Nicolls in 1667.3

Magister Fabritius was to serve the Lutheran congregations both in New York (City) and Albany, but the Lutherans joy soon changed to disappointment when this pastor turned out to be a hot-headed despot. Naturally, his arrival was opposed by the Reformed Domines; however, their prejudice could do little to affect the Lutheran Church under English rule. The opposition which eventually led to the removal of Fabritius came from within the Lutheran church itself.

Fabritius manifested his true nature from the very beginning. In April of 1669, this Lutheran preacher journeyed to Albany, in order to minister to the scattered groups in that section of New York State. Refusing to sanction civil marriage, which at that time was the law of the province, he proceeded, from what motives we do not know, to impose a fine of one thousand rix dollars on a

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3. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q. vol. II, p. 116 - has a complete translation of this license.



certain Helmer Olten whose marriage had been solemnized by a civil official. Olten complained to the Governor about this act; and as a result, Governor Lovelace suspended Fabritius from ministering in Albany for the period of one year.<sup>4</sup>

Upon his return to New York (City) Fabritius set about the business of obtaining a place of worship for the congregation. A house was bought. This building selected to be the first real church of the Lutherans in New York stood on the south west corner of Broadway and Wall Street. It was located right alongside of the city wall and next to the city gate, and it is the exact spot where Trinity (Episcopal) Church now stands in New York City. Asser Levi, a Jewish butcher, and Christian Pieters, a member of the Lutheran congregation, were the joint owners of the mortgage on this first church property.<sup>5</sup>

Within a year of his arrival, Fabritius married Annetje Cornelius, the widow of a tavern keeper; and because of this marriage the Lutheran pastor came into possession of much property in both New York and on the Delaware. Nevertheless, married life did not serve to curb the disposition of Fabritius. He was constantly quarreling with his congregation and his wife. Congregational affairs were neglected, and the dissatisfaction of the congregation

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4. Wolf, op. cit. p. 129.

5. Kretzmann, op. cit. vol. II. p. 118.



with their minister steadily increased. In April of 1670, Fabritius took time out from his pastoral work to make a trip to Delaware in order to look after some personal property in that section of the country. Finally, in August of the same year, the ire of the congregation was sufficiently aroused, so that they sent a letter to the Consistory in Amsterdam requesting a new pastor. Feeling against Fabritius was so intense that his parishioners said they would have nothing further to do with him, and they refused even to keep up their contributions on the newly acquired church property.<sup>6</sup> The financial problem created by this dissension caused the mortgage owners to call upon the civil authorities to step in and take a hand. Fabritius announced his intention to leave the congregation, and the authorities ruled that all pledges be paid up until that time when the minister had made his declaration.

In August 1671, the Reverend Bernardus Antonius Arensius arrived in New York, having been sent over from the Lutheran Consistory in Amsterdam in answer to the pleas of the congregation almost a year earlier. This gave Fabritius the opportunity to leave, as he had promised. Governor Lovelace gave Fabritius permission to depart for Delaware and also to install the new minister, as we find in a letter of August, 1671.

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6. A.T. Graebner, Geschichte der Lutherischen Kirche in America, p. 62

A. B. Fernow, Documents Relating to the Colonial History of New York, p. 518.



Fabritius. An answer to ye last petition of ye Lutheran Minister Mr. Jacobus Fabritius wherein he requested liberty to give his congregation a Valedictory Sermon, and to install the new Come Minister according to ye Custome used by those of their religion.

The contents of this Peticon being very reasonable, and as I am informed according to ye Custome of ye Augustine Confession, I do very well approve thereof and grant the petitioner's Request. Given under my hand at Fort James New Yorke, this 11th day of August, 1671.

Francis Lovelace 7  
After preaching his farewell sermon and installing the new minister, Fabritius severed all official connections with the congregation at New York. Nevertheless, this is not the last we hear of him. Fabritius moved out to the Delaware at which place he took care of a small Swedish congregation. In the winter of 1673-74 we find him back in New York again, probably to look after his personal property in that section; nevertheless, his presence in town did little to enhance the prestige of the Lutherans. On the 24th of February, 1674, the wife of Fabritius pressed a civil charge against him for cruelty. He was arrested, fined 100 pounds and ordered not to come to his wife again without her assent; he also had to pay the costs of the proceedings. On February 5th. he married Ralph Doxy without lawful authority, and without publishing the banns, for which charge the Lutheran minister was also hailed into court.<sup>8</sup> About the same time other charges were brought up against

7. Hastings, op. cit., p. 621.

8. B. Fernow, Documents Relating to the Colonial History of New York, p. 512.



42.

Fabritius. He was supposed to have been part of the one fourth of the town devoted to the houses which sold brandy, tobacco, and beer.<sup>9</sup> In 1675 he was charged with abetting a riot, and that same year Fabritius had to appear before the Governor and was divested of his power of the ministry within the British colony. Naturally, all of this was a spot on the name of Lutheranism in New York. But having weathered the trials under the first Dutch rule, the good Lutherans were able to live down the reputation of their first official minister, and the church progressed. Fabritius, himself, moved to Wicacoa Church, Pennsylvania, where, strange as it may seem, he had a change of heart and lived out the rest of his life in useful service to the church at that place.<sup>10</sup>

The new minister, Bernardus Arensius, was a man of a totally different nature than Fabritius. He soon obtained the good will of the people who had suffered so long under much hardship. The congregation assured Arensius of a steady salary, a parsonage (in New York City), and free firewood. Even though New York City was his main station, yet Arensius served the congregations scattered throughout the state as far as Albany. Of this man, Dr. A.L. Graebner says:

In Pastor Arensius, the Dutch Lutheran congregations on the Hudson had an excellent

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9. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 57.  
10. Schmucker, op. cit., p. 215.



preacher and pastor, a man of whom they had no cause whatever to be ashamed. Above all he was a sound Lutheran whose opposition to any and all church-fellowship with the Reformed was so decided that he abstained even from cultivating social intercourse with the pastor of the Dutch Reformed Church, although it would seem that the existing conditions called for it.<sup>11</sup>

Dr. K. Kretzmann presents a humorous account of how the Anglican Chaplain Wolley on Manhattan finally arranged to get Arenius and the Reformed minister to speak to each other after six years of unbroken silence between the Lutheran and Dutch clergymen. Wolley, arranged a dinner to which he invited both Arenius and the Reformed Domine unknown to each other.<sup>12</sup>

Perhaps, we will admit that Arensius was not doing the wisest thing by not even having social intercourse with the clergy of other denominations; nevertheless, from his record, we know that this minister was just what the Lutheran church in New York needed. One of his earliest jobs was to get the project of a new church under way again. For financial aid, the New York Lutherans appealed to the congregations of the Swedes along the Delaware. To this end a certain Martin Hoffman was given permission and a pass to journey to the Delaware in January of 1671. The permit reads in part:

Whereas the ministers and officers of the church of the Augustine Confession Lutheran

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11. Graebner, op. cit., p. 70.  
 12. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q., vol. III, p. 115.



14.  
wall. Congregation, in this city, under the protection of his Royal Highness, the Duke of York, have requested my license to build and erect a house for their church to meet in, toward which they do suppose all or most of their profession will in some measure contribute and there being diverse of them in ye South River at Delaware, to which a Sloope now bound a conveniency present, so that they have pitcht upon Martin Hoffman to negotiate there for them - etc.13

This This same Martin Hoffman was one of the early ancestors of the late President Franklin D. Roosevelt.14 The Hoffman family remains as an influential family in the affairs of New York down to this present day.

In the long run, this venture to finance a new church did not turn out to be very successful. The congregation did not collect enough money to put up a regular church building, but they did clear up money matters on the building which had been selected under the ministry of Fabritius.

In July of 1673 a Dutch Fleet recaptured the city of New York from the English. This second regime of the Dutch lasted only for about one year, and then the territory was returned by treaty to the British Crown. During this brief interim, the Dutch made a change in the fortifications of the city. The city wall, which had been to the north of the Lutheran church, was moved southward so that the Lutheran church was now outside of the fortified city. Because of this, the Church, along with all other buildings outside of the new

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13. Fernow, *op. cit.*, p. 494.

14. Kretzmann, "The Lutheran Ancestry of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt", C.H.I.Q., vol VI, p. 68.



wall, was ordered demolished; so as not to give shelter to the enemy in case of attack. The Dutch had a change of heart in regard to their colonial policies and religion at this time, for instead of preventing the Lutherans from worshipping altogether, they granted the Lutherans a new plot of ground within the city wall and 415 gulden in cash. This new location was also on Broadway near what is now Rector Street, a piece of property which is at present valued at millions of dollars. St. Matthews church, New York City, still possesses the original deed which is written in Dutch and signed by the Dutch Governor Clove, May 22, 1674.<sup>15</sup> On this spot a small wooden church with a parsonage was built in the same year. It was replaced by a stone church, built in 1729, exactly on the south west corner of Broadway and Rector Street.

Pastor Arensius continued to serve the Lutheran congregation in New York City and other places between there and Albany until his death in 1691. He spent the summer in New York City and the winter in Albany. His ministry of twenty years was a very fruitful one. He was careful to instruct his people in the particular teachings of the Lutheran church. Arensius took such pains to educate his people in doctrine, that common laymen of the church were able to defend themselves from doctrinal malpractices of

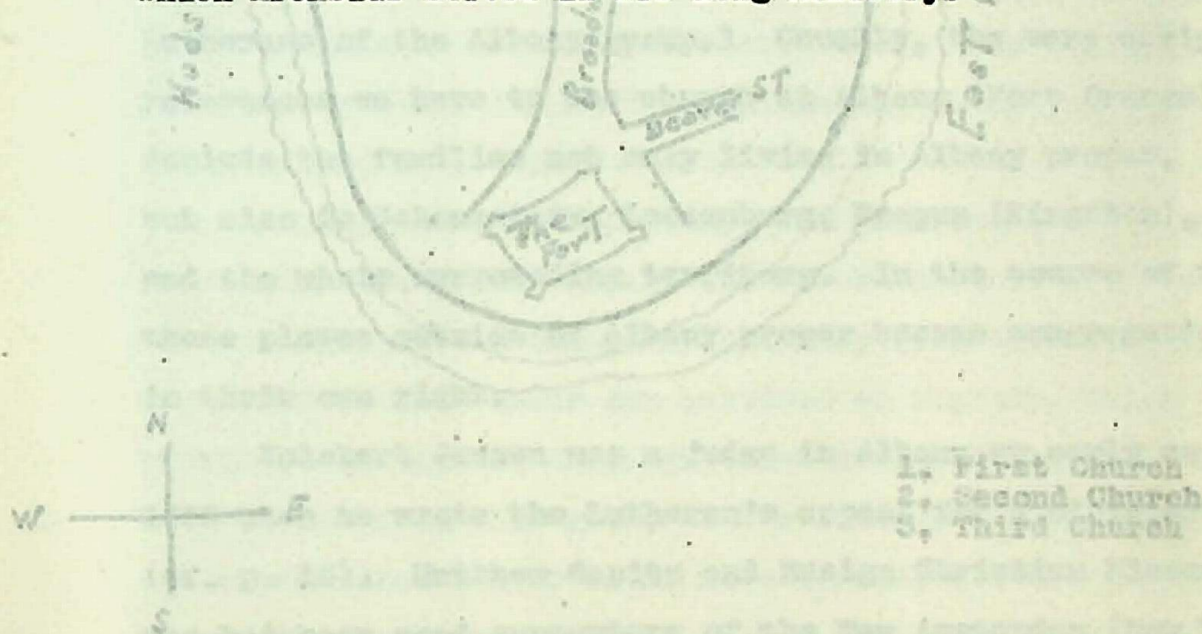
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15. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q., vol. III. p. 53.



SECTION OF OLD NEW YORK CITY SHOWING  
LOCATIONS OF LUTHERAN CHURCH

the Reformed church; i.e., recognizing and condemning sheep stealing as such, and maintaining the correct view on universal grace even to the extent of being brought into civil court because of their fervor in the defense of that doctrine.<sup>16</sup> Arensius' adherence to sound Lutheran doctrine, kept many groups of Lutherans which he served intact for the next eleven years after his death until the time when the fifth Lutheran minister came to New York. But before we take up that part of our story, let us briefly review the history of some of those small congregations and preaching stations throughout the vicinity of New York which Arensius served in his long ministry.




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16. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q. vol.III, p.55

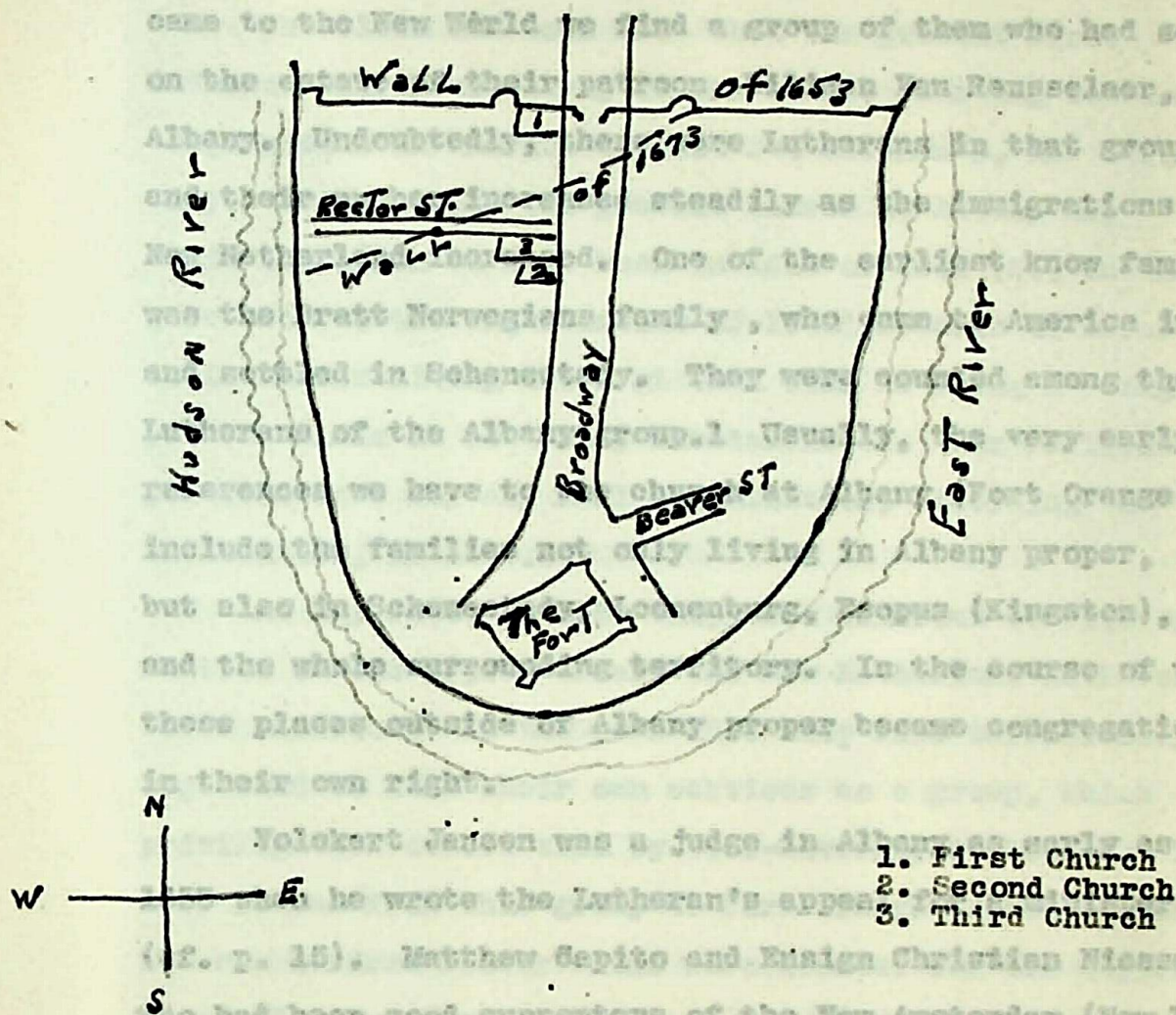


# SECTION OF OLD NEW YORK CITY SHOWING LOCATIONS OF LUTHERAN CHURCH

Albany (Ft. Orange)

Among the very early Germans and Scandinavians who came to the New World was a group of them who had settled on the site of their present-day Albany. Undoubtedly, there were Lutherans in that group and they steadily as the immigrations to New York increased. One of the earliest known families was the Pratt Norwegian family, who came to America in 1637 and settled in Schenectady. They were counted among the Lutherans of the Albany group. Usually, the very early references we have to churches at Albany (Fort Orange) include the families not only living in Albany proper, but also in Schenectady, Rotterdam, Booyus (Kingston), and the whole surrounding territory. In the course of time these places outside of Albany proper became congregations in their own right.

Volckert Jansen was a judge in Albany as early as 1640 and he wrote the Lutheran's appeal (p. 15). Matthew Sepito and Ensign Christian Niessen, who had been good supporters of the New Amsterdam (New York City) congregation, were sent up to Booyus some time before 1644. They too, became staunch supporters of the Albany



1. First Church
2. Second Church
3. Third Church



#### IV THE RISE OF CONGREGATIONS IN THE REGION OF NEW YORK

##### Albany (Ft. Orange)

Among the very early Germans and Scandinavians who came to the New World we find a group of them who had settled on the estate of their patroon, Kiliaen Van Rensselaer, near Albany. Undoubtedly, there were Lutherans in that group and their number increased steadily as the immigrations to New Netherland increased. One of the earliest know families was the Bratt Norwegians family, who came to America in 1637 and settled in Schenectady. They were counted among the Lutherans of the Albany group.<sup>1</sup> Usually, the very early references we have to the church at Albany (Fort Orange) include the families not only living in Albany proper, but also in Schenectady, Loonenburg, Esopus (Kingston), and the whole surrounding territory. In the course of time these places outside of Albany proper became congregations in their own right.

Volckart Jansen was a judge in Albany as early as 1653 when he wrote the Lutheran's appeal for a minister (cf. p. 15). Matthew Capito and Ensign Christian Niessen, who had been good supporters of the New Amsterdam (New York City) congregation, were sent up to Esopus some time before 1644. They too, became staunch supporters of the Albany

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1. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q., vol. III. p. 113.

2. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q., vol. III. p. 55.



group. A certain Benjamin Roberts, who had settled in Schenectady before 1662, was in all probability another member of the Lutherans of the Albany circle; for on his death in 1706 Roberts willed a sum of money to the Lutheran church at Albany.

The claim has been made that the present First Lutheran Church of Albany is the oldest existing Lutheran congregation in America and not St. Matthew's, New York City. Even though the present church at Albany may claim its birth to have been in 1642 or 1644 (St. Matthew's goes back to the organization of 1648) because of references to Lutherans living there at that time as being a "Congregation"; yet the claim is not fully substantiated. The earliest possible date for any real organization, according to authorities, is 1668.<sup>2</sup>

At any rate, by 1653 they were numerous to rate special mention in the appeal of all the New Netherland Lutherans for a minister. In the year 1656 they were sufficiently organized to hold their own services as a group, which privilege was denied them by Vice-Governor de Becker. In 1667 it was from this group at Fort Orange (Albany) that the one hundred beaver skins were donated for the support of Reverend Gutwasser.

The first Lutheran pastor to visit them was Fabritius in 1669, but he was not much of a help in getting things organized. During the twenty year pastorate of Arensius,

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2. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q. vol. III. p. 56.  
4. Nellie U. Wallington, Historic Churches of America, p. 195.



the Albany Lutherans enjoyed his ministrations as he journeyed back and forth from New York City. It was during the time of Arensius that the first Lutheran church building was built in Albany in 1674. It was only a small place, but the congregation also maintained a parsonage for the minister while he was visiting them. Neve in his "History of the Lutherans in America", tells us that the Congregation in Albany consisted of about only twelve families in 1695;<sup>3</sup> however, that number seems to be unusually small to be very accurate. in 1697. A considerable number of families had moved. The congregation at Albany maintained filiale connections with New York City until 1731 and then it was served by Reverend W.C. Berkenmeyer from Loonenburg, Reverend Peter Sommer from Schoharie, and a few itinerant and unofficial preachers. Not until the time of the Revolutionary war did the congregation have its own pastor. From 1712 through 1715 it opened its doors to the Loonenburg Episcopalians who had no other place to worship. Separate services were held.<sup>4</sup> In 1725 the church building fell into disrepair, and there was not sufficient interest or funds to rebuild it. Occasional services were held in private homes, and then the Lutheran congregation lost its identity when it united with the Episcopal Church. The present First Lutheran Church of Albany was incorporated in 1784 when there was a revival of Lutheranism in Albany and their official records go back

3. Kretzmann, C.R.I.C., vol. III, p. 58.

4. Kretzmann, The Atlantic District and Its Antecedents, p. 9.

3. Neve, op. cit., p. 24.

4. Nellie U. Wallington, Historic Churches of America, p. 195.



only that far.<sup>5</sup> A new church building was dedicated there October 22, 1786.<sup>6</sup>

### Athens (Loonenburg)

The first Lutheran settler in Loonenburg (the present town of Athens) was Nicholas Van Hoesen who came to this country in 1662.<sup>7</sup> In 1665 Jan Van Loon bought 17,500 acres of land from the Indians in that section and the territory was named after him. This Jan Van Loon was a direct descendant of the Pietre Van Loon who had settled around Lake Champlain in 1587. A considerable number of families had moved in and settled the land by the year 1669. This group formed the nucleus of the Evangelical Zion's Church of Loonenburg which is the second oldest church of the United Lutheran Synod of New York. Even though the earliest records of this congregation go back only to the time of Andrew Rudman in 1703, yet it is believed that Arensius also preached at that place. The congregation at Loonenburg united in the call of Justus Falckner who served the church in that place until his death in 1723. From 1726 until his death in 1751, the congregation was served by W.C. Berkenmeyer.

### Kingston (Esopus)

Matthew Capito, Christian Niessen, and Martin Hoffman had settled in Kingston before the English took over the colony in 1664. The Home of Hoffmann served as a place of worship for those early Lutherans.<sup>8</sup> As we know they were

5. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q., vol. III. p. 56.

6. Kretzmann, The Atlantic District and Its Antecedents, p. 9.

7. Qualben, op. cit., p. 149.

8. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q., vol. III, p. 114.



for the most part of this early time affiliated with the congregation in Albany and undoubtedly, enjoyed the ministrations of the early Lutheran pastors who journeyed between New York City and Albany. Newburgh

Nikolaus Emig was the first Lutheran settler in Dutchess county arriving there about 1685. Peter Lassing, another staunch Lutheran, was also an early settler of that section. Across the river, on the west side of the Hudson, Patrick McGregorie settled in 1686. These are the earliest known Lutheran families in the Kingston section. They too were served by the First Lutheran pastors who wended their long journeys between New York City and Albany. As we shall see presently, this group of Lutherans became identified with the Palatines who settled New burgh in 1709. The Reverend Kocherthal then became their first regular pastor. A patent was granted these humble Lutheran Palatines known as "The Palatine Parish by Quassik". The grant included some forty acres of land for highways and five hundred for a glebe. This land was an outright donation by the Governor of New York and today it lies in the center of the city of Kingston. Their first church, dedicated in the year 1730, was about twenty feet square, without a floor or chimney. The roof slanted up from each of the four sides, and upon the apex a small cupola was constructed to contain the bell which Queen Anne had give the Palatines.

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9. Wallington, op. cit., p. 94.  
 10. Kretschmann, G.S.I.C., vol. III, p. 114.  
 11. Qualben, op. cit., p. 154.



The congregation occupied this building until 1747 when the majority of Lutherans moved to Pennsylvania where they heard of better farming soil. The Episcopalians then gained possession of the church which until this day is known as St. George's Church.<sup>9</sup>

#### New Jersey:

There were other early Lutherans in New Jersey besides those who came over from New York City; however, we shall deal with only those who had their connections with New York. Laurens Andriessen, Van Boskerk, Harmen Smeemen, Caspar Steinmetz, and others of the Lutheran group in New Netherland were among the earliest to move across the Hudson River into New Jersey. For the most part they were Germans and Hollandized Germans, and were among the founders of Bergen (Jersey City). Van Boskerk acquired large tracts of land in the Greenville section of Jersey, the Constable's Hook section of Bayonne. In 1682 he also acquired 1,076 acres of land on the east side of the Hackensack River, near New Bridge. It is claimed that a Lutheran Church was in existence here as early as 1690.<sup>10</sup>

Prior to 1700 Lutheran services were held at the home of Van Boskerk on Constable's Hook. Lutheran families, like the Zabriskies, who settled in the Saddle River Valley before 1700, attended the Hackensack Church.<sup>11</sup>

It is certain that, beginning with 1703,

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9. Wallington, op. cit., p. 94.

10. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q., vol. III. p. 114.

11. Qualben, op. cit., p. 156.



Lutheran services were held here by the pastors of the New York Church, with which the Hackensack Church formed one parish: and that in 1716 a substantial stone church was erected on the land given by Laurens Van Boskere, who was a member of the Fifth Provisional Assembly of New Jersey. In this church services were held by pastors Justus Falckner, Wm. C. Berkenmeyer, Michael C. Knoll, H.M. Muhlenberg, John Albert Weygand, Bernard M. Housael, Wm. Graff, and others, up to the time of the American Revolution, when the congregation was scattered and the church fell into ruins.<sup>12</sup>

The first Lutheran Synod was also held in New Jersey in the year 1735. The Raritan Valley, which attracted settlers after the turn of the century, was the place where the Synod was held. This shall also be discussed in greater detail in a future part of this paper.

#### Long Island:

Very few early references have been found concerning the earliest Lutherans on Long Island. However, we know that a group of them lived there; for in the petition of 1653 they too received special mention. In all accounts, they must have been closely allied to the congregation on Manhattan Island. Another reference to Long Island is that Reverend Gutwasser addressed a letter to the Amsterdam Consistory in 1657 from Mispatkill (Maspeth Creek), Long Island.<sup>13</sup>

The aim of this chapter is primarily to bring our information up to date with the history of the Lutheran church where we left off with the death of Pastor Arensius in the Previous chapter.

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<sup>12</sup>. Kretzmann, The Atlantic District and Its Antecedents, p.2.  
<sup>13</sup>. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q., vol. II. p. 14.



Some of the ministers mentioned served after the death of Arensius, and we shall hear further about them. Also, as our story unfolds, we shall mention incidents which fill out the sketchy history of those churches and others which are soon to develop.

And so we see that by 1700 there were quite a few Lutherans in and around New York with a number of congregations and preaching stations. Among all of these the Dutch influence was predominant, because the majority of folks not only came to America by way of Holland, but they were also dependent on the Consistory at Amsterdam for support and for their ministers.

The Lutheran church in Holland at that period was very similar to the Dutch Reformed Church except in doctrine and a few points of liturgy. The Gospel and Epistle texts for the church year were used by the Lutherans as was also Luther's small catechism for the instruction of the young.

According to the Ecclesiastical Laws of 1577, published by William of Orange and states General, the Protestant churches of Holland-Reformed and Lutheran - were to recognize four classes of officers, namely pastors, professors of theology, elders, and deacons. The churches were to be served by duly called and ordained ministers only. The ministers of every city or section were to hold a pastoral conference every two weeks. The duties of elders and deacons were carefully prescribed and other regulations were given. On the basis of these laws, the Dutch Lutheran church constitution of 1597 was prepared. This constitution, as revised in 1614, 1644, and 1681, bound pastors to teach and preach the Word of God as found in



the Old and New Testaments and as expressed in the Unaltered Augsburg Confession, its Apology, the Smalkald Articles, the Formula of Concord, and Luther's two Catechisms. Each congregation was to be governed by a "consistorium", composed of the pastor, or pastors, and lay elders. The elders and the deacons were to be elected on the first Sunday in May. The elders, usually five in number, were held responsible for the pure teaching of the Word of God, the right administration of the Sacraments, the godly life and observance of the church regulations by the pastor. Hence, at least one elder had to be present at each service. The deacons, usually, six in number, were to collect and distribute alms and to urge the negligent to come to church. There was also a parish clerk who, besides keeping the records of the congregation, also was to act as "comforter of the sick", or Ziekentrooster as they called it. 14

The above quotation gives an idea of Dutch Lutheran church polity as it was in Holland at this time, and also as it was to a great extent practiced by these early Lutherans in New York. Toward the close of the seventeenth century some of the religious intolerance and separatistic attitude began to wear off in the colonies and among the Protestants over in America. The people had a virgin land to settle and it took cooperation to do it. Moreover, Catholicism was threatening to cut off the expansion of the colonies along the whole Atlantic coast line. Even the Duke of York had turned Catholic before he became King James II of England. Protestantism was in the minority in America. Up to the year 1688, the French-Catholic colonization of America went forward unimpeded. It is estimated that by that time France owned 80 percent, Spain 16 percent, and England only four percent of America. However, the



French and Indian Wars stopped the Catholic aggression on this continent, and the accession of William and Mary saved Protestantism in England.

After the death of Pastor Arensius, there was a vacancy of ten years in the pastorate of New York. During that time the number of Lutherans was depleted and the church Dutch and English. This figure includes some 800 negro slaves. The slavetrade and piracy were at that time considered legitimate businesses.<sup>15</sup>

As we again pick up the threads of our story concerning the Lutheran church in New York at the beginning of the eighteenth century, we find a large number of German Lutherans coming to this colony. They gradually gain the ascendancy over the Dutch Lutherans. However, our story leaves off just at the point where the real problem of languages and nationalities begins in New York.

Finally, in 1696 an appeal was sent to the Consistory in Amsterdam once again asking for a preacher and support. The answer was disheartening. For the Consistory was unable to supply a man unless the New York Lutherans could furnish his salary completely. In 1700, the congregation again wrote to the Consistory with the promise to furnish a salary of 350 Gulden if the Consistory could furnish the preacher. Still no minister was sent over from Holland.

In the long run, help came from America itself. The New York Lutherans turned to their brothers of the same faith on the Delaware. A letter, dated September 9, 1701, was sent to the Reverend Andreas Rudman, M.A. of Wicaco, Pennsylvania, asking him to come to New York and take up

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1. Kretschmann, *S.B.L.*, vol. X, p. 1.

15. Wenner, *op. cit.*, p. 5.



## V THE TIME AND LIFE OF JUSTUS FALCKNER

X After the death of Pastor Arensius, there was a vacancy of ten years in the pastorate of New York. During that time the number of Lutherans was depleted and the church building in New York City fell into disrepair. Nevertheless, the individual groups retained their identity in spite of their thinned ranks, thanks to the thorough indoctrination of Arensius. Services in New York City, were carried on in the home of Samuel Beekman after the church building got to look more like a cattle-shed than the house of God.<sup>1</sup>

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1. Kretzmann, C.H.I.C., vol. X, p. 1.



the work in that parish. Rudman had been sent by the Archbishop of Upsala as a missionary to the Swedish settlement on the Delaware.<sup>2</sup> Rudman declined, and a second letter was sent to him in March of 1702. Rudman was still disinclined to go to New York, even when Andreas Sandel arrived from Sweden to take his place in Wicaco. In fact, Pastor Rudman had made arrangements to sail back to his native country when he was finally prevailed upon to come to New York at least for a short time.<sup>3.</sup>

Arriving in New York about July of 1702, Rudman set to work immediately straightening out the chaos of ten years. He made a good attempt, but did not have too much success. Financial matters were the first things given major attention after the new pastor moved his family in to the parsonage on Broadway. Legacies, amounting to more than \$2,000 dollars, had been left to the church by such people as Jans Eggert, the widow of Caspar Steinmetz, and the widow of Pastor Arensius. The Albany congregation was asked to assume a share of the Pastor's salary; and in New Jersey the major load of looking after the Luthernas was placed on the shoulders of the Van Boskerks.<sup>4</sup>

In 1703 a Yellow Fever epidemic raged throughout New York City. The son of Reverend Rudman died of the dread disease, and the Pastor himself together with his daughter

brought his brother Justus, and a few ministerial students,

2. Wenner, op. cit., p. 5.

3. Schmucker, op. cit., p. 218.

4. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q., vol. X. p. 3.

5. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q., vol. X. p. 4.

7. Qualben, op. cit., p. 100.



also was afflicted with it. Two of the Swedish Pastors from Pennsylvania came to New York to assist Rudman during this trying times; but finally, Rudman decided the work was too much for him and he enlisted the services of Justus Falckner to take over the parish.

In studying the life of Justus Falckner it is necessary to mention his brother Daniel who also played a part in the Lutheranism of the New York area, however not until after 1721 - near the end of Justus ministry.

Daniel and Justus Falckner were the sons of a Lutheran Pastor who served in Langenreindsorf, Crimmitschau, and Zwickau, Saxony.<sup>5</sup> The grandfather of these two brothers also had been a Lutheran minister. Daniel was born in 1666 and studied theology at the University of Erfurt where he came under the influence of the Pietists. He was ordained in Germany, either before his coming to America in 1694, or during a visit in 1698-70. As a member of the Rosicrucian Brotherhood, a group of pietists, Daniel came to America in 1694 with the brethren under the leadership of Baron Johannis Kelpies and Bernhard Koester. The group settled in the backwoods near Germantown, Pennsylvania.<sup>6</sup>

In 1698 Daniel Falckner was sent back to Germany to report on religious and civil conditions in Pennsylvania.<sup>7</sup> It was on the return trip to America in 1700 that Daniel brought his brother Justus, and a few ministerial students,

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5. Bente, op. cit., p. 25.

6. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q., vol. X. p. 4.

7. Qualben, op. cit., p. 160.



to America. After one year of city and business life in America Justus had been born on November 22, 1672, the fourth son of his father and was the younger brother of Daniel. He, Justus, also studied for the ministry but at the University of Halle under Christian Thomasius and August Hermann Franke. As a student J. Falckner is credited with the writing of that still popular hymn "Auf, ihr Christen, Christi Glieder", (Rise, Ye Children of Salvation) - which first appeared in the Halle Hymn Book of 1697.<sup>8</sup> After completing his studies, Justus Falckner had no desire to enter the active ministry. This was probably due to the liberalism of Thomasius.<sup>9</sup> According to an authentic letter, we are told that Justus Falckner actually fled to America in order to escape the ministry which his parents and friends were urging upon him.<sup>10</sup> At any rate, he was persuaded to go to America in 1700 with his brother Daniel. Before leaving for America in 1700, the two brothers had also been commissioned by the Frankfort Land Company through Benjamin Furley, an agent of the company. They were to act for the company in Pennsylvania. Daniel was commissioned as official land agent to replace Francis Daniel Pastorius, and Justus was given the power of attorney. In 1701 the Falckner brothers were involved in a deal, according to their official capacity, in which Pastor Rudman and other Swedes bought ten thousand acres of land. This was probably how Rudman first came to know

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8. Schmucker, op. cit., p. 221.

9. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q. vol. X. p. 4.

10. Schmucker, op. cit., p. 219.



Justus Falckner. After one year of city and business life in America, Justus retired to a log hut along the Wissahickon Creek outside of Germantown, where he lived as a hermit among the pietists of whom his brother had also been a member. While living in the backwoods Justus Falckner, along with the other pietists, sometimes attended the Swedish Lutheran church at Wicaco.

It was to this man, Justus Falckner, that Pastor Rudman appealed for help in 1703 in order that the work in New York might be continued. A copy of that first letter from Rudman to Falckner written in Latin, still exists. A translation in part follows:

New York, September 21, 1703  
But only listen, I beg you; for I am going to give you some unexpected news for you to seriously and prayerfully ponder.

I have decided to leave this province, to dispose of my affairs in Pennsylvania for some time, and to revisit Sweden. What, you ask, are you going to desert your little flock?

Wherefore, as I look around, no one has occurred to me as a more suitable person to whom I can safely commit my sheep than you yourself. Only weigh the reasons:

1) The call will be plainly divine. Samuel, when called of God, thought, 'Shall I ask Eli whence is this? Whence can it be unless God has imitated the voice of Eli?' So, be assured, God is calling you through me. So far as I have heard from the people, all agree, and that too, with great delight.

2) In Europe you could have obtained greater and more lucrative churches; but I know that you have been averse to this on account of the



the abandoned life of courtiers and others. Here matters are very different: guileless scattered sheep, few, docile, obedient - thirsty and famished.

3) You seem to have a call from the womb. Will you bury your talent with a good conscience?

4) You have dignified me with the name of 'Father'; receive, therefore, the exhortation of a father. If I can persuade the Ministerium, you will be initiated into the ministry by our Swedish ministers.

If you decline, I will be compelled to leave my sheep without a successor, and this will be hard and difficult.

From the familiar tone of this letter, we can tell that Rudman and Falckner were well acquainted with each other by this time. Rudman's prophecy that Justus Falckner was a natural born preacher surely came true, as is proven by his future life and work. Nevertheless, Falckner turned down this first call to New York. Perhaps it was because he doubted if Rudman had the authority to ordain him. On that account, Rudman wrote another letter assuring Falckner of his (Rudman's) right to ordain a minister. On October 27, 1703 the New York church wrote to Falckner and invited him to preach a trial sermon. Three days later this letter was followed by a formal call. On November 3, 1703 Justus Falckner accepted the call to New York, but declined to preach a trial sermon. His acceptance was acknowledged, and Rudman returned to Pennsylvania to officiate at the ordination.

On November 24, 1703 Justus Falckner was ordained in the Gloria Dei Church of Wicaco (now the southern part of



Philadelphia). This service is of historic importance since it is the first ordination of a Lutheran minister in America. Just as an oddity, we think of the fact that Falckner was a German, ordained by the Swedes, to save the Dutch.

Justus Falckner arrived at the church for the ordination service in the company of a band of the Pietists from Wissahickon Creek. These brethren added their musical and vocal efforts to liturgy of the service. The service itself must have been an impressive one even though the church had only a bare earthen floor and unadorned walls and chancel.

To the strains of "Veni, Creator, Spiritus" played on the small church organ, the ordination service began as a small procession made its way through the crowded church to the chancel. The procession was led by two "Eldeste", They were followed by the candidate and the charge. Following Sandel, Reverend Rudman addressed a few words to Falckner; and then Pastor Bicerock advanced and read quite a number of Scripture passages - ten in all. The "Ordinator" continued with certain words of admonition to the candidate after which the Apostolic creed was slowly read by Pastor Sandel and repeated by the ordained. The following questions were then asked of the candidate by the Ordinator:

Do you, Justus Falckner, declare yourself willing to take upon yourself this holy ministerial office in the name of the Holy Trinity? The candidate answered in a clear voice, yes.



Will you solemnly promise that this office shall be worthily and rightly administered by you in all its parts to the glory of God and the salvation of souls? Again came the clear response: yes.

Will you always continue in the pure Word of God, flee all false and heretical teaching, preach Jesus Christ according to the Word of God, and administer the Holy Sacraments according to His institution? Response: I will.

Will you so regulate your life that it may be an example to the faithful and shall give offense to no one? The answer again was in the affirmative.<sup>12</sup>

After the oath had been administered by the secretary of the Consistorium, Rudman officially conferred the office of the ministry upon Falckner in the name of the Holy Trinity. While the brethren of the Pietistic group sang "Veni, Sancte Spiritus", Falckner was vested, following which Rudman laid his hands upon Falckner's head and repeated the Lord's prayer - which is the Swedish way of imparting the apostolic succession. An invocation was read by the Ordinator, and then the benediction was pronounced upon the newly ordained. The service closed with a recessional while the brethren sang the 115th Psalm.

From this brief outline of the ordination service we can see that the early Lutherans, at least the Swedes, were anything but unliturgical. As is the Swedish custom, Falckner was presented with a diploma of his ordination, which diploma was written in Latin. The original copy of this ordination certificate, or diploma, had been lost to history up until 1925 when it was discovered and now is in the possession of

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12. Kretzmann, C.H.I.L.Q., vol. X. p. 72.



*(Episcopal)*  
**St. James Church, New York City.**<sup>13</sup>

Within a week after his ordination, Justus Falckner arrived in New York to take up the work of the ministry. His talents, which had up to this time been hidden under a bushel, now burst forth with full brilliance. For the next twenty years of his life, the Reverend J. Falckner served a parish, which extended for almost two hundred miles in length, with a zeal and devotion that has rarely been equaled by any other clergyman. For the most part, his work was done in the language of the Dutch, but he also preached in German when the occasion demanded. The people he served were not only Holland Dutch, but also Germans, Scandinavians, Englishmen, Spaniards, Italians, Frenchmen, Negroes, and Indians. This devout preacher held services under all sorts of conditions: in churches, homes, barns, and fields. We have seen no record of his sermons; yet we know, from a book which he wrote at a later period of his ministry, that Falckner was thoroughly orthodox - and that not in a cold dogmatical way, but tinged with a warmth and love for souls which bound him close to his people. For the most part, Falckner performed all of the official acts of the ministry by himself. In his extensive parish, folks would wait with baptisms and weddings until the preacher made his periodic visit to their section of the country; and so we find Falckner performing as many as ten baptisms at one time. During the minister's absence from

<sup>12</sup> Kretzmann, C. M. I. G., vol. XI, p. 80.

<sup>13</sup> Kretzmann, The Atlantic District, etc. p. 6.



various places reading services were carried on by the laity. These services were conducted by "Voorleezers" who also performed emergency baptisms.<sup>14</sup>

At the very beginning, Falckner concentrated his work in and close to New York City. But as he got the work in each specific places well in hand, Falckner gradually expanded his efforts until we find him serving practically all of the Lutherans in New York and New Jersey. Much of his time was spent in traveling about on foot, horseback, canoe, and sailing vessels. At first Falckner lived at the parsonage in New York City. New York City and Albany became the two main points of his parish, but later on in his life we find that Falckner moved his parsonage permanently to Claverack so that he would be in a more central point for the whole territory.<sup>15</sup> The two hundred mile parish which Pastor Falckner served at the height of his ministry, extended from Albany to Long Island, and from the Raritan Valley in New Jersey to the Schoharie and Mohawk Valleys in upper New York State. He made regular trips to Hackensack (now Teaneck); to Constable's Hook (now Bayonne); to Elizabethtown (now Elizabeth); to Amboy, Remmerspach, and Ramapo (now Mahwah); to Piscataway and various places in the Raritan Valley. Along the Hudson River he served in Philipse Manor (now Yonkers); in Philipsburg (now Tarrytown); in de Lange Rack, Fishkill (now Beacon); on the Quassaick

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14. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q., vol. XI, p. 80.

15. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 120.



(now Newburgh); at Loonenburgh (now Athens); at Claverack, Coxsackie, Klinckenberg, Kinderhook; in Kingston, Roosendal, and Shawangunk. Trips to New Rochelle were also made by this ubiquitous parson.<sup>16</sup>

Some of these places served by Falckner were those settled by the Palatines in 1709 under the guidance of Reverend Kocherthal. They first came under Falckner's wing in 1710, for about one year's time, when Kocherthal returned to Europe to lead some more Palatines to America. However, after the death of Pastor Kocherthal in 1719, these groups - especially in the Mohawk and Schoharie Vallies - became a part of Falckner's regular parish.

To get a more vivid idea of the work done by this zealous servant of the Lord, we quote from a letter written by Falckner on September 28, 1715. He says:

In the Jerseys then I visit three small Lutheran congregations, living in a great distance one from the other; all these three consist of about 100 communicants, the most poor people and poor settlers. In the province of New York I serve four small Lutheran congregations, and all these four consist in all of about 100 constant communicants, besides strangers going and coming in the city of New York, so that in all I have seven congregations whom I must serve yearly traveling about 1200 English miles. Mr. Kocherthal resides as yet for the most part in one place on Hudson's River, but visiteth two places on the other side of the river, where particular Lutherans congregations meet. He has been as yet but once with those Lutheran Palatines that live in the Mohack's country.<sup>17</sup>

16. Qualben, op. cit., p. 165.

17. Schmucker, op. cit., p. 220.



When Falckner first arrived in New York, 1703, the church building was in a pitiful condition. It contained only two windows, and the floor was covered with loose boards. A good wind could have knocked the whole structure over, it was in such need of repair. The building itself was thirty years old, and during the ten year's vacancy between Arensius and Rudman nothing had been done to it. From the records, we summarize that very little, if anything, was even done during the short pastorate of Rudman.

The condition of the church building in New York City reflected the condition of the Lutherans in the whole parish. Many had gone over to the Reformed church, but a faithful group remained for the new pastor to work with. In spite of the promise that had been made to the Consistory in 1700, the congregation gave Falckner no assurance of a steady salary. Nevertheless, the minister went to work.

An appeal was sent out for money to erect a new church. The Lutherans on the Delaware were again asked for aid. However, in Delaware, the people were having a financial struggle to pay for their own newly erected church building. The brethren in St. Thomas were able to send some money, but not a great deal. Finally, in 1705 an appeal was sent to the Consistory in Amsterdam again imploring their aid. The condition of the New York Church is mentioned in this letter, which in part reads:

Our congregation here is very small



because its members are dispersed far and near throughout the country; the majority of them are poor and many, especially the young people, ignorant on account of the lack of Bibles, catechisms, psalm-and hymn books, and it would be of great service here to have a pamphlet in which, by means of short questions and answers, the difference between the Lutheran and the so-called Reformed opinions were exposed, every point thus concluding, "Therefore the Lutheran opinion is the better one".<sup>18</sup>

The above quoted letter was signed by Justus Falckner as Pastor Locci and four other men of the congregation. In spite of their manifold attempts to get on their feet again. Very little outside aid was given to the Lutherans in New York. Even while gathering funds they had to pay taxes in support of the Anglican State Church. Nevertheless, with the small amount sent from the St. Thomas Lutherans in the West Indies (300 hundred pieces of gold) and a few legacies, plus the meager subscriptions of their own poor members, the congregation did manage to scrape enough money together to have the church building repaired.

For the instruction of his people Reverend Falckner wrote and published his own book. For the most part it contained a series of questions on doctrine, and answers which quoted Scripture passages refuting false doctrine. The title page to this book reads:

Thorough instruction in certain outstanding chief parts of the true, pure, saving CHRISTIAN DOCTRINE built upon the foundation of Apostles and Prophets, JESUS CHRIST being the Chief Corner-stone expounding in simple yet edifying questions and answers

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<sup>18</sup>. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q., vol. XI, p. 84.



by JUSTUS FALCKNER, Saxo-German, Minister of the Christian Protestant Congregation, called Lutheran at New York and Albany. Psal. 119 v. 104. Through Thy precepts I get understanding, therefore I hate every false way. Printed in New York by Bradford 1708.19

This book was printed in Dutch and paid for by Falckner himself. He made no profit on the work, until seven years later when the congregation voted him a sum of money for his efforts. Falckner was only the second man to make use of the famous Bradford printing press in America. The only other man was Henrich Bernhard Koester who issued two books prior to this in his fight against the Quakers.<sup>20</sup>

Of Falckner's book, Valentin Ernst Loescher, the last great orthodox Lutheran in Germany says:

In the present booklet he has employed all diligence to warn the readers against the Calvinistic errors with passages of the divine Wor... Thus it is, as it were, a compendium doctrinae anti-Calvinism.<sup>21</sup>

In order to show the orthodoxy of this pious and willing Lutheran minister we quote a short section of his book which deals with the freedom of the will:

I conceive this doctrine of free will as follows: All the good which I will and do I ascribe to the grace of God in Christ and to the working of His good Spirit within me, render thanks to Him for it, and watch that I may traffic with the pound of grace, Luke 19, which I received, in order that more may be given me; and that I may receive grace for grace out of the fulness of grace in Jesus Christ. John 1:16. On the contrary, all the evil which I will

Two months later, Falckner records his first baptism

19. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q. p. 121.

20. Qualgen, op. cit., p. 165.

21. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q., p. 123.

22. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 122.



which and do I ascribe to my own evil will alone, which maliciously deviated from God and His gracious will, and becomes one with the will of the devil, the world, and sinful flesh. And I am persuaded that if only my own will does not dishonestly, wilfully, and stubbornly resist the converting gracious will of God, He, by His Spirit, will bend and turn it toward that which is good; and for the sake of Christ's perfect obedience, will not regard, nor impute unto me, the obstinacy clinging to me by nature.<sup>22</sup>

One of the first things which Falckner had done when he arrived at New York was to purchase a record in which he kept diligent accounts of all the official business of the church. This church record was begun "In Nomine Iseu", and it was kept in a very interesting and unique way. After every entry of importance it was Falckner's habit to write a brief prayer. The first entry was made on the second Sunday after Falckner had been in New York. He reports having preached three sermons in his first two weeks and being received as the pastor of this congregation. After the entry we find the following prayer: (in Latin)

God, the Father of all goodness, and Lord of great majesty, who hast forced me into this harvest, grant unto me, thy humble and very weak laborer, thy special grace, without which I must perish under the burden of temptations which frequently overwhelm me. In thee, O, Lord, have I put my trust; let me not be confounded. Render me fit for my calling. I have not run, but that Thou hast sent me; thou hast forced me into the office. Meanwhile, whatever, without my knowledge, a corrupt nature has introduced within me, forgive, and pardon me, humbly praying thee, through our Lord, yea through my Jesus Christ. Amen.<sup>23</sup>

Two months later, Falckner records his first baptism

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22. Graebner, op. cit., p. 91.

23. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 118.



which took place in a barn at Hackensack, New Jersey. On Easter of the same year, he baptized Antje, the daughter of Pieter Van Boskerk. She had been brought to the New York church for her baptism. Little Antje later became the wife of one of Falckner's successor, the Reverend Michael Kroll. After the record of Antje's baptism, Falckner writes:

O Lord, Lord, may this child, with the three above-recorded Hackensack children, be written and remain in the Book of Life, through Jesus Christ. Amen.<sup>24</sup>

Other prayers, which run in true collect form, are:

O God, may this child be and remain a child of everlasting salvation through Christ.

O God, let this child be inclined and remain in thy eternal favor, through Christ.

O Lord, we commend this child unto thee, for both temporal and eternal welfare, through Christ.

O my God, may this child be and remain a member of thy kingdom of grace and glory, through Christ.

Let this Child taste and enjoy thy sweet love and grace in time and in eternity. Amen.<sup>25</sup>

New York was indeed a cosmopolitan place at that time, and the good Lutherans of that early congregation joined in their worship with those of every race and color who would profess the same faith. In 1704 Falckner baptized a small colored girl by the name of Marie. Her father was one Are of Guinea who, with his wife, was a member of the Lutheran congregation. After the record of this baptism, Pastor Falckner has the following prayer:

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24. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 118.

25. ibid. p. 119.



Lord, merciful God, thou who regardest not the persons of men, but in every nation, he that heareth thee and doeth right is accepted before thee; clothe this child with the white garment of innocence and righteousness, and let it so remain, through Jesus Christ, the Reddemer and Sviour of all men. Amen.<sup>26</sup>

Falckner has been accused by some as being a pietist, probably because of his connection with that band of brethern in the swamp of Pennsylvania. However, his pietism surely did not keep him from preaching the pure Lutheran doctrine. Moreover, it may be due to Falckner's connection with the pietists that he manifested such a sincere and personal interest in the salvation of every person with whom he came into contact. If only more ministers of the Word could show forth the same pietistic spirit, the kingdom of God would certainly forge ahead today and blossom with comparative beauty and success as it did under the hand of Justus Falckner. Dr. A.L. Graebner says of him:

What a gifted and sincerely pious pastoral frame of mind appears in the entries of this noble man, whome God, in wonderful ways, led from far away Saxony to New York and here made a shepherd and teacher of the Dutch Lutherans.<sup>27</sup>

After recording the baptism of five children who were born to destitute Palatine emmigrants on their way to America, Falckner pleads their cause before the throne of grace in the words:

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26. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 119.

27. Graebner, op. cit., p. 94.

28. Kretzmann, S.B.L.G., vol. XI, p. 88.

29. Kretzmann, S.B.L.G., vol. XI, p. 128.



O Lord, Almighty God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, whose wonderful power has safely called these children into life even amidst the storms of the sea and guided them safely to shore, lead them also through the tempestuous sea of this world until they arrive safely in the harbor of the new heavenly Jerusalem where all tyranny and all false and tyrannical false mercy shall have an end, through Jesus Christ. Amen.<sup>28</sup>

Similar prayers are also found in Falckner's record book written after the notices of confirmations and weddings. After one marriage we read the prayer.

O. God, let also this marriage tend to the glory of thy holy name, the furtherance of thy kingdom, and the temporal and eternal welfare of those joined together in marriage, through Jesus Christ. Amen.<sup>29</sup>

Falckner himself married in the year 1717, and he records his marriage in his register even though the ceremony was performed by Mr. William Vesey, the Anglican minister in New York. Gerritge Hardick, Falckner's wife, was a native of this country, having been born in Claverack (now Columbus County) near Hudson, where later on Falckner made his home. Gerritge had been confirmed, by the man she married, in the year 1712. In the course of time, the Falckner household was blessed with three children. Anna Katherina, born in New York 1718; Sarah Justa, born at Loonenburgh 1720; and Benedictus, born at Claverack 1723. To this present day the descendants of Justus Falckner are members of the Lutheran church at Athens, New York.<sup>30</sup>

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28. Neve, op. cit., p. 31.

29. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q., vol. XI, p. 82.

30. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q., vol. XI, p. 125.



The work of taking care of such a large parish was indeed a strenuous task. In 1721 Justus turned over the congregations of the Raritan Valley, New Jersey, to his brother Daniel. Close up to this time Daniel had continued as an agent for the Frankfort Land Company. Finally, though, the Company had failed; and Daniel lost all of his money. He was even imprisoned because of it.<sup>31</sup>

Toward the end of Justus Falckner's ministry a certain Johann Bernhard von Dieren attempted to edge his way in as pastor of some of the congregations which Falckner was taking care of. Von Dieren was a tailor by trade, and he had married the daughter of a prominent deacon in the New York church. This ex-tailor had certain misdirected religious tendencies but no education for the ministry, neither did he have a call. Von Dieren even had the nerve to demand ordination from Falckner; and when he was refused, the ex-tailor sought ordination from a Dutch Reformed minister on Long Island, but was again denied it. To the end of his days, Falckner fought to keep Von Dieren out of the Lutheran churches. One of the last acts of Justus Falckner was to write to the congregation at Westcamp (on the Hudson) cautioning them not to call Von Dieren as their pastor.<sup>32</sup>

There is a mystery surrounding the death of Justus Falckner. It is assumed that he died in 1723 when his ministry in New York terminated and the congregation wrote another appeal to the Consistory at Amsterdam requesting a new minister. It is

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31. Qualben, op. cit., p. 165.

32. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q., vol. XII, p. 47.

33. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q., vol. XII, p. 47.



## VI THE PALATINES AND JOSHUA KOCHERTRAL

very probable that Falckner had died at that time and was buried in the church yard at Broadway and Rector Street; however, since there is no official record of his death we have no mention the suspicion that Falckner retired to New Jersey after 1723. This suspicion may have come about from the fact that the other Falckner, Daniel, was serving in New Jersey at that time. Daniel, also took charge of the Lutherans in New York State as best he could until the next regular minister was called.

At any rate, Justus Falckner made out his will on September 9, 1723, which fact indicates that he was aware of approaching death. He writes in his will:

Above all things having through the mercy of God my heavenly Father in Christ Jesus a full hope and confidence that I shall die as a faithful Christian, I commend my soul into the saving hands of God my heavenly Father and my body, after the immortal soul shall have left it, to a decent and Christian burial in a sure and full hope of the Resurrection to the life everlasting. Amen.<sup>33</sup>

Lutheranism had increased with rapid and steady bounds during the blessed ministry of Pastor Falckner, and according to continuity, the story of the New York Church follows with the ministry of W. C. Berkenmeyer who became the next called pastor after Falckner. However, before taking up that part of our review we must consider the interesting, and somewhat tragic, story of the Palatines who had come to New York during Falckner's ministry.

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33. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q., vol. XII, p. 47.



## VI THE PALATINES AND JOSHUA KOCHERTHAL

After the Thirty Years War, Germany was completely ravished and split up, left to the mercy of the spoiler. The accession of the Catholic house of Neuburg to the Palatinate throne spelled doom to the Protestants. A general spirit of intolerance prevailed. Churches and schools were taken over by the Catholics. Armies were sent against the Protestants by Louis XIV, and whole villages were burned. In one section, the Protestants were given only three days to leave their homes or else suffer complete destruction. As a result, people left the Palatinate by the thousands; many of them fleeing to London where the British government, in the interest of their colonial policy, promised to send the refugees to America and set them up with new homes in the colonies.

Such a group was that small band of Rhenish Palatines who fled to London in 1708, under the leadership of the Reverend Joshua Kocherthal. They numbered only forty-one and included fifteen Lutherans and twenty-six Calvinists. After some consideration, it was decided to send these refugees to New York and settle them along the Hudson where they would be a buffer against the Indians. For employment, and to repay the British government, the Palatines were outfitted to make naval stores for the English merchant ships. They were equipped with masts, ship timber, tar, pitch, rosin, hemp, iron and all sorts of

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1. Qualben, op. cit., p. 173.



fittings.<sup>1</sup> In October, 1708, the group, which had expanded to fifty-five due to some Germand joining them in London, set sail for New York. They spent the winter in the city, but next spring Governor Lovelane settled them fifty-five miles up the Hudson River. This settlement at the mouth of the Quassaick Creek, was the beginning of Newburgh.

These pioneers were well taken care of at first. They were given fifty acres of land per person and allowed nine pence per day for each one to obtain food and other necessities. However, soon after the death of Governor Lovelace, conditions began to change; but by May of 1709 the colony was actually in want of provisions. Trouble began to brew even from the religious side and some of the folks were accused of turning to pietism. In June of the same year, Reverend Kocherthal, who had been serving these people as minister, returned to London in order to seek relief. It was at this time that Falckner first took charge of the congregations.

While in London, Kocherthal came in contact with another large group of Palatines who had fled the persecution of their home lands. This was an extremely large group which numbered into the thousands. They were camped about the outskirts of the city and causing quite a problem to the British. Although the Palatines had become nationalized when they reached England, still the people of London were complaining, because this large

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1. Qualben, op. cit., p. 173.

2. Qualben, op. cit., p. 177.



number of immigrants was causing labor prices to go down and there was increased danger of contamination by contagious diseases. Something had to be done to get those people out of London. Some of them were sent to Ireland and others to Carolina. Very many still remained in London, until Queen Anne's government finally decided to send them to New York that they might join the other small group in making naval supplies. Kocherthal was made the leader of these Palatines also. A system of indenture was again worked out in which the British government supplied the Palatines with ships and equipment. Repayment could be made by the naval materials the colonists turned out. It was a shrewd deal, for the government regulated the whole affair and there was nothing to prevent them from keeping the Palatines in a condition of perpetual serfdom by changing more than the Palatines could possibly pay back.

The expedition was equipped with 600 tents, 600 firearms and bayonets, and a proportionate quantity of powder and shot, a quantity of hemp seed and other supplies, and ten ships were hired to take the Palatines to New York. The ships left London in December of 1709; but they did not leave Plymouth until April 10, 1710. One ship, the Herbert, was wrecked on the east coast of Long Island. The last ship arrived in New York on August 2, 1710. Of the 2,814 who started out from London, 446 died before the end of July and thirty children were born on the journey. The immigrants, nearly 2,500 were landed and encamped on Governor's Island. Many of the immigrants, weakened by the journey, were ravaged by typhus.<sup>2</sup>

The arrival of this multitude of immigrants again caused a problem, this time to the people of New York City. The Palatines had to stay there until a suitable tract of ground

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2. Qualben, op. cit., p. 177.



could be found on which to settle them. New York City itself had, at this time, less <sup>than</sup> five thousand inhabitants and almost a thousand slaves. A number of the Palatine children had to be apprenticed and separated from their families.

Among the apprenticed children was John Peter Zenger, who went to work for William Bradfon, the only printer in the colony. When Zenger grew up he became the editor of the "Weekly Journal", and a great defender of American liberty. The German Lutherans can well be proud of such a person.<sup>3</sup>

In the George Frederick Weiser was likewise separated from his family in such a manner. Weiser is another great name in the history of the Lutheran church and of America. Conrad Weiser, a brother of George, became a famous Indian agent in the French and Indians Wars.<sup>4</sup> John Conrad Weiser, the Father of these two boys, set the example for his sons, himself being a pious and devout Lutheran and servant of his people.

A tract of 6,300 acres located on the west side of the Hudson about ninety-two miles from New York City was decided on to settle this group of Palatines. In addition some 6,000 acres were also secured on the east side of the river. In June of 1711, 1,874 German Palatines moved to these locations, which are known as East Camp and West Camp, the rest remained in New York City, and a few moved on <sup>to</sup> the Pennsylvania and New Jersey.

The coming <sup>of</sup> all these German speaking Palatines, very many of them Lutheran, caused a language problem in the Lutheran

New York alone. The Palatines had never been taken care of any

too well. <sup>3</sup> Wenner, op. cit., p. 7.

4. Kretzmann, C.H.I.Q., vol. IX, p. 90.



church. At first, this situation was not acute; for Kocherthal took care of both groups of German speaking Palatine Lutherans, and Falckner took care of the original Dutch Lutheran congregation in New York.

At this point, the story of the earlier and the later Palatine immigrations to New York merges. As was mentioned, Kockerthal took care of the spiritual needs of the Lutherans among them. John Frederick Haeger, also came over with the second band of Palatines to minister to the Reformed members. In the beginning, Kocherthal preached in homes, making the rounds in East Camp, West Camp, and Newburgh. The first Lutheran church was built in Newburgh in 1730. After the death of Kocherthal in 1719, those Palatine Lutherans at the above mentioned places were served by Justus Falckner until 1723, then by Daniel Falckner until 1726. W.C. Berkenmeyer served next until 1731, and then Michael Christian Knoll was their pastor, 1733-49. By 1751 practically all of the Palatines had moved away from their original settlements, as we shall see, and Lutheranism dropped off.

The Palatines managed fairly well until 1712 when they were informed that due to a change of government in England it had decided to drop their project. They were entirely cut off, even their naturalization as British subjects was taken away from them. The whole affair was a political move on the part of the Tories in England, who, when they came into power in 1711, found that more than 100,000 <sup>pounds</sup> had been spent on the Palatines in New York alone. The Palatines had never been taken care of any too well; anyway. They even had some 20,769 pounds sterling from Governor Hunter of New York in order to subsist. Now that

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the Palatines were cut off from England, Governor Hunter was in a tough spot, and he wanted his money back. The Governor ordered none of the Palatines to leave their settlements in Newburgh, East Camp, and West Camp without official permission on the threat of imprisonment. But the people had to do something to live. They could not continue to make naval store, for the supply of materials had been stopped. They needed more room for farming, and freedom to earn a living at other jobs. Hence, we find the Palatines moving to Pennsylvania, New Jersey, New York City, and Schoharie within the next five years.

So it happened that in the autumn of 1712 we find a group of 150 Palatine families moving to Albany and Schenectady with the intent of moving on the the Schoharie Valley the following Spring. All of this was against the Governor's wishes. Nevertheless, a deal was made with the Indians to settle Schoharie. Some fifty of the families did not wait until the spring, but cut a road through from Schenectady to Schoharie in two weeks and spent the winter there. They were joined by the rest in 1713 as planned. Seven villages were founded as the result of this:

- 1) Knisherndorf, or New Heidelberg, located opposite the present village of Central Bridge, and nearly opposite the point where Cobleskill Creek empties into the Schoharie River.
- 2) Gerlachsdorf, or New Cassel, of which there are no remains.
- 3) Fuchsendorf, or New Hayesbury, later called Fox Town, where the Old Fort Museum of Schoharie now stands.
- 4) Schmidsdorf, or New Queensbury, later called Smith's Town, marked at present by a small railroad station.
- 5) Brunnendorf, or Fountaindorf, named from a large spring which furnished drinking



water, near the site now occupied by St. Paul's Lutheran Church in Schoharie.

6) Hartmannsdorf, or New Annesbury, the site of which is indicated by an iron marker.

7) Weiserdorf, or New Stuttgart, on the edge of the present site of Middleburgh. Oberweiserdorf was settled later.<sup>5</sup>

Life was not easy for the Palatines in that wild country. They were wanting in furniture, clothing, and implements with which to work. All together they had just enough money with which to buy an old gray mare, and the poor beast had to make the rounds of the settlers. Salt was brought from Schenectady, nineteen miles away, on shoulder. With the Indians as their only friends, the hardy Palatines managed to survive, and the first year they produced eighty-three bushels of wheat from the one bushel which they originally planted. Kocherthal managed to visit them twice each year. In the meantime they assembled every Sunday and held reading services and sang hymns.<sup>6</sup>

Being bitterly opposed to their settlement in Schoharie, Governor Hunter, in a spirit of revenge, deeded away the land the Palatines had settled on in the Schoharie Valley. (The Palatines had given the Indians \$300 for this same territory). In 1715, the Palatines were called upon to purchase or lease their land from the seven men to whom the Governor had deeded it - or else vacate. In a conference with John Conrad Weiser, 1717, Governor Hunter Promised to have the land surveyed in order that a fair price could be set on it, but the Governor never kept his promise. In 1718

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5. Qualben, op. cit., p. 182.

6. Wolf, op. cit., p. 181.

8. Hastings, op. cit., vol. III, p. 2106.



the colonists selected three men, John Conrad Weiser, William Sheff, and Gerhardy Walrath, to go to London and seek justice. These men suffered shipwreck on the way to London and lost all of their belongings. Weiser was put into prison as a result of the debts he incurred, and five years later he returned to America broken in health without having accomplished his mission.<sup>7</sup>

By 1722 the Palatines in Schoharie were somewhat divided. About three hundred of them chose to remain where they were. About sixty families, under the leadership of John Christopher Gerlach, settled in the Mohawk Valley, between Fort Hunter and Canada. On October 19, 1723, the Stone Arabia patent was issued, and a number of the Palatines settled at Palatine Bridge. A third group, at the invitation of Governor Keith, moved to Tulpehocken, in Pennsylvania.

Concerning the Palatines at Schoharie at this time we have a letter of Governor Hunter to the Board dated Nov. 21, 1722. In this letter, the Governor tells how the settlers were split and undecided what to do. He expresses his approval that the band of sixty families have moved to near Fort Hunter, for he says:

where they will be still more immediately a barrier against the sudden incursions of the French, who made this their road when they last attacked and burned the frontier town called Schenectady.<sup>8</sup>

It is easy to see how the British government was treating these people and for what purpose they had sent the Palatines

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7. Bente, op. cit., p. 3.

8. Hastings, op. cit., vol. III, p. 2186.



to America. The Governor's comment as to the character of those ill-treated immigrants is interesting:

1796.11 And indeed my dealings with those people I find very little gratitude for favors done them, and particularly that those who were best taken care of and settled on good lands by my predecessor, are the most apt to misrepresent him, and this is managed by a few cunning persons among them that lead the test as they please, who are for the generality a laborious and honest but a headstrong ignorant people.9

The few Palatines who remained in Mohawk Valley carried on, and eventually rebought their homes from the men to whom Hunter had deeded them. They continued worshipping in their own homes until 1729 when they dedicated their first house of God.

We have this description of their first church:

It was a rude structure built of logs, surrounded by a palisade for protection against the Indians, and lacking flooring and chimney. A roughly built pulpit and homely seats were all its furniture, but the people rejoiced in it at last as a building of their own, consecrated to the worship of God.10

Kocherthal continued to serve in the Mohawk and Schoharie Vallies until his death, even as he served at Newburgh, East Camp, and West Camp. After his death, the same successors who served in Newburgh also served in the two Vallies. The first recorded service in Schoharie is February 7, 1717; however, the real birth of St. John's Lutheran Church, Schoharie was not until the churches organization under Reverend Peter Sommer in 1743. The first church building, with a parsonage combined,

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9. Hastings, op. cit., vol. III. p. 2196.  
10. Wallington, op. cit., p. 135.



was dedicated in the same year, the second church building of stone was built in 1751, and a third building was dedicated in 1796.<sup>11</sup>

The ministry of Joshua Kocherthal was indeed a valiant one. While living, he even cooperated to a certain extent with Justus Falckner in serving all the Lutherans in upper New York State. After his death, 1719, the German Lutheran Palatines became part of the New York congregation served entirely by Falckner. Kocherthal lies buried at West Camp, New York where his tombstone reads:

Know pilgrim, that under this stone rests, alongside of his Sibylla Charlotte, a true pilgrim, who was the Joshua of the High Germans in America, and a pure Lutheran preacher to them, both on the west and the east side of the Hudson River. His first arrival was with Loré Lovelace, January 1, 1708. His second with Colonel Hunter, June 14, 1710. His journey to England intervened. The heavenly journey of his soul occurred on St. John's Day, 1719. If you would know, seek in the Fatherland of Melancthon, who was Kocherthal, who Horschias, who Winchencach. B. Berkenmeyer, S. Heurtein. L. Brevort. MDCCXLII.<sup>12</sup>

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11. Qualben, op. cit., p. 185.

12. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 116.



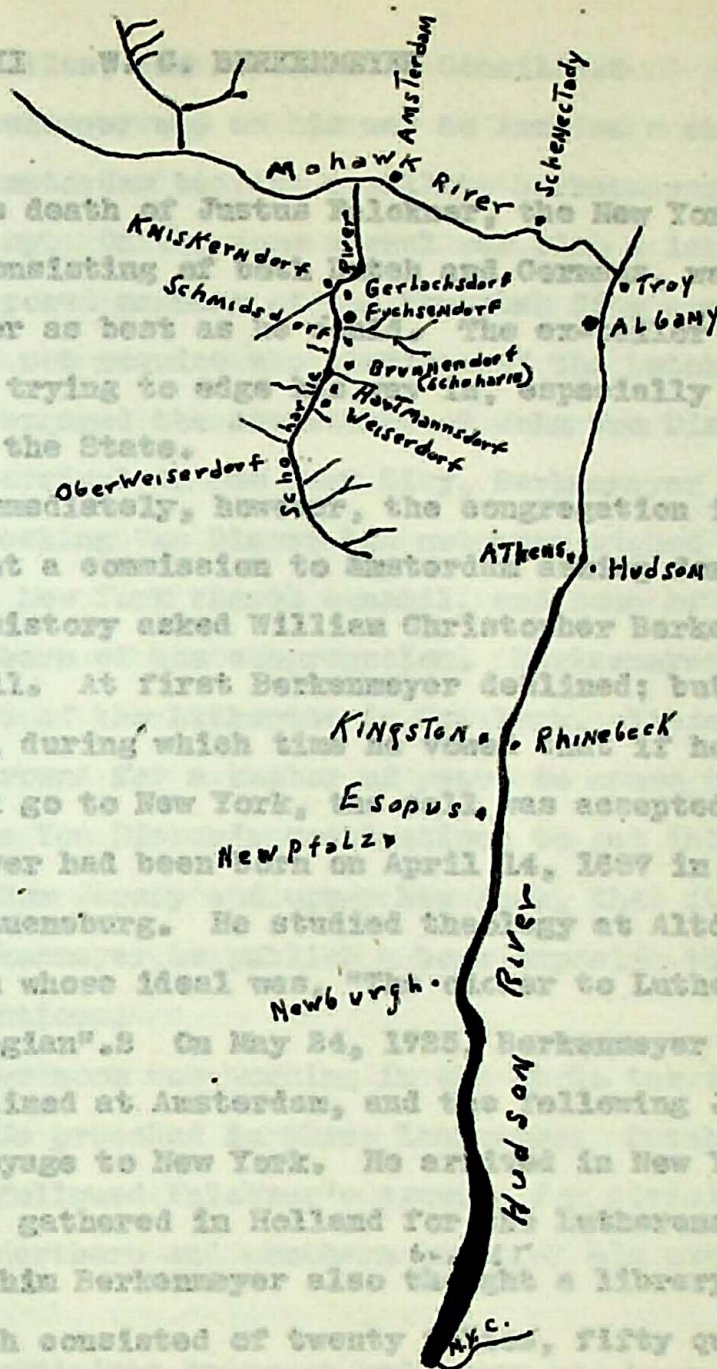
After the death of Justus Falckner the New York congregation, now consisting of the Dutch and German, was served by Daniel Falckner as best as he could. The original Von Dieran was still around trying to edge out the Dutch, especially in the upper regions of the State.

Almost immediately, however, the congregation in New York City and sent a commission to Amsterdam for a regular pastor. The Consistory asked William Christopher Berkenmeyer to accept the call. At first Berkenmeyer declined; but after a severe illness, during which time he thought if he ever got well he would go to New York, he was accepted.<sup>1</sup>

Berkenmeyer had been born on April 14, 1697 in Bodenteich in the Duchy of Lüneburg. He studied theology at Altdorf under Dr. Saurian, a man whose ideal was "to bring us back to Luther, the better the theologian".<sup>2</sup> On May 24, 1725, Berkenmeyer was examined and ordained at Amsterdam, and the following June he started on his voyage to New York. He arrived in New York with some funds he had gathered in Holland for the Lutherans of the New World. With him Berkenmeyer also brought a library for the congregation which consisted of twenty bibles, fifty quartos, twenty-three octaves, and six duodecimos - among which were such works as Luther's *Tablet*, *Small Catechism*, *Large Catechism*, *Commentaries*

#### EARLY PALATINE SETTLEMENTS IN NEW YORK

Map taken from Gualben, op. cit., p.180





## VII W. C. BERKENMEYER

After the death of Justus Falckner, the New York congregation, now consisting of both Dutch and Germans, was served by Daniel Falckner as best as he could. The ex-tailor Von Dieren was still around trying to edge his way in, especially in the upper regions of the State.

Almost immediately, however, the congregation in New York City had sent a commission to Amsterdam asking for a regular pastor. The Consistory asked William Christopher Berkenmeyer to accept the call. At first Berkenmeyer declined; but after a severe illness, during which time he vowed that if he ever got well he would go to New York, the call was accepted.<sup>1</sup>

Berkenmeyer had been born on April 14, 1687 in Bodenteich in the Duchy of Lueneburg. He studied theology at Altdorf under Dr. Sontag, a man whose ideal was, "The closer to Luther, the better the theologian".<sup>2</sup> On May 24, 1725, Berkenmeyer was examined and ordained at Amsterdam, and the following June he started on his voyage to New York. He arrived in New York with some funds he had gathered in Holland for the Lutherans of the New World. With him Berkenmeyer also brought a library for the congregation which consisted of twenty folios, fifty quartos, twenty-three octavos, and six duodecimos - among which were such works as Calovius, Biblia Illustrata; Baldwin's Commentaries

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1. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 121.

2. Bente, op. cit., p. 32.



of St. Paul's Epistles; and Dedekenn's, Consilia.<sup>3</sup> When Berkenmeyer was on his way to America a ship was going across to Amsterdam bearing a call to Berkenmeyer for the Lutherans at Albany. On the same vessel was also a letter signed by twenty-two supposed members of the New York City congregation saying that would not require the services of the Dutch minister, because they had engaged the assistance of John Von Dieren.

Upon his arrival in New York City, Berkenmeyer found that the letter backing Von Dieren had not been signed nor authorized by the New York church council, and some of the signers were not even members of the congregation. Berkenmeyer soon gained the support of the Lutherans in New York, although Von Dieren remained around for a number of years to cause trouble. So persistent were Von Dieren's machinations to get into the congregations of New Jersey and upper New York, that it was necessary for Berkenmeyer to publish a book exposing the ex-tailor's pretensions.

Berkenmeyer soon was working in the whole territory of New York State. He preached in three languages: Dutch German, and English. He followed Falckner's example for dividing the year between the northern and southern parts of his extensive parish. on Owl Creek, now called Whippany River, near Danover.

By 1729 sufficient interest and money had been gathered to tear down the old wooden church building in New York City, and it was replaced by a substantial stone church dedicated on

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3. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 122.



the fourth Sunday after Trinity. This building stood on the same spot as the old church, the corner of Broadway and Rector Street. It was made of stone, 36 by 46 feet, with a spire 58 feet high. It remained in use until 1776 when it was burned down in New York's great fire. After 1729 the New York City congregation became known as Trinity Church. Upon the completion of this new church, the Lutherans set to work gathering funds for the Albany church. The King of Sweden to be head of such a union. The work of such a large parish was too much for one man to handle, so in 1732 it was split. Michael Christian Knoll was called as pastor of the New York City congregation which he served with the surrounding territory as far north as Newburgh. Berkenmeyer retained the extreme northern section for himself. He made his home at Athens and served also the Germans in the Schoharie and Mohawk Vallies, at East Camp and West Camp, and the congregation at Albany which was fast turning toward the English language. Meanwhile Daniel Falckner had been serving the congregation of the Raritan Valley in New Jersey. They included the church near Plickemin; the church at Racheway, now Potterstown, and founded by the negro Are von Guinea; and a settlement on the uylekill or Owl Creek, now called Whippany River, near Hanover. Some time before 1734, the work in these New Jersey places had been taken over by the Reverend Johann August Wolf, because old age incapacitated Daniel Falckner for the work.<sup>4</sup>

4. Qualben, op. cit., p/194.



So we find that in 1734 there were three duly called and ordained Lutheran ministers working in New York and vicinity: Berkenmeyer, Knoll, and Wolf. Berkenmeyer was a Systematic man. He wanted a union of the Lutherans in America. Originally he intended to unite the Lutheran ministers in New York together with the Swedish Lutherans in Pennsylvania. This plan failed because of the polity of the Swedish church which would have made it necessary for the King of Sweden to be head of such a union. The next best thing was to unite the Pastors of the New York churches in a firm doctrinal bond. The opportunity for such a movement came in 1735. At that time the New Jersey congregations became dissatisfied with the ministrations of Pastor Wolf and they appealed to Berkenmeyer and Knoll for help. To iron out the difficulties, the three ministers met with representatives of the Jersey congregations at the church in Pluchamin, New Jersey. This is called the first Lutheran Synod in America. In reality, it was not actually a Synod as we know them today, but merely an attempt at closer harmony. For this occasion, Berkenmeyer drew up a confession and constitution which all three ministers signed. (We shall treat this matter in greater detail in the concluding chapter.)

In 1742, Berkenmeyer again divided his work. This time, a portion of his northern parish was entrusted to the Reverend Peter N. Sommer who served at Schoharie, Stone Arabia, Palatine Bridge, Cobleskill, and surrounding sections. Sommer married a daughter of Berkenmeyer, and was a man of similar devotion



to his father-in-law. He served until disabled by age, even through a twenty year period of his life when he became blind. At the close of his life, Sommer awoke one morning to find that his sight had been miraculously restored. Sommer died in 1795 at the age of eighty-seven, after a fruitful and faithful ministry with the people on the northern frontier of New York. It was during his time that the war with Canada was carried on, and many of his people suffered severely. The Reverend W.C. Berkenmeyer was a man of conviction and ability. Toward the end of his ministry the Reverend Hartwig began working in upper New York, and Muehlenberg began exerting his efforts in New Jersey. Berkenmeyer's associations with these men, and others of the Halle school were never too cordial. He like to think of himself as maintaining a stricter orthodoxy than anyone who was a product of Halle. Berkenmeyer continually warned his congregations against such men, and the little correspondence he had with them savored of theological controversy. Dr. A.L. Graebner characterizes Berkenmeyer as follows:

In a firm and faithful manner he preserved for himself and his congregation, both in doctrine and practice, a staunch Lutheran character, which banished the very thought of fraternizing with the heterodox. At the same time a German theologian and commanding as easy, flexible, and forceful Latin, he was a genial Dutchman among his Dutch parishioners, perfectly adapting himself to their manners.<sup>5</sup>

Nevertheless, Berkenmeyer could not have been the isolationist some historians paint him to be, in spite of his

Reverend in 1733 when Berkenmeyer first divided his parish.

5. Graebner, op. cit., p. 186.

6. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 130.

7. Schmucker, op. cit., p. 281.



firm Lutheran convictions. Toward the end of his life, Berkenmeyer had an interview with Muhlenberg in New York; but there is no record of that went on between them at that meeting. With ministers of other churches, this sincere Lutheran Pastor was very friendly. When Pastor Frelinghuysen, of the Reformed church in Albany, was taken ill with smallpox, Berkenmeyer risked the danger of infection to visit him.<sup>6</sup>

Beniga Sybilla, the daughter of Joshua Kocherthal, became Berkenmeyer's wife in 1727. The marriage ceremony was performed by Dr. Vesey, the same Anglican minister who had married Justus Falckner. For the marriage ceremony, Berkenmeyer offered Vesey an English translation of the Lutheran order, but Vesey insisted on using the Book of Common Prayer; and so the ceremony was carried on.

The ministry of W. C. Berkenmeyer terminated with his death in 1751 at the age of sixty-five. He lies buried in the church at Athens, New York, which church also has preserved in its narthex a memorial tablet that had been prepared by Berkenmeyer himself seven years before his death.<sup>7</sup>

To finish our story of Lutheranism in New York up to the year 1750, we naturally end with the death of Berkenmeyer; however, it is necessary to mention further a few things which occurred in New York City during the eighteen year ministry of Reverend Knoll.

It was Knoll, we remember, who had been sent by the Consistory in 1732 when Berkenmeyer first divided his parish.

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6. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 130.  
7. Schmucker, op. cit., p. 281.



Michael Christian Knoll came from Holstein, and had been ordained by the Lutherans in London before his coming to New York. It was during his pastorate that the language question came to a head. Knoll preached in Dutch, but the Germans had increased to such a great extent, mainly because of the Palatines and other immigrations, that they began to demand separate German service. The conflict between the language groups increased year by year. At first, a German service was held every three weeks; and then it was alternated - one week Dutch, and the next week German. By 1745 some of the Germans separated themselves from the Lutheran congregation and attempted starting a church of their own. The men they tried to engage as their ministers were low characters who were forbidden by the Governor of New York to act in the official capacity as ministers. The separatists again came back to the original congregation, but by 1750 they were appealing once more to the Governor for permission to start a new church. Permission was granted and the Reverend J.F. Reis was called as the pastor to these German Lutherans. Reis had studied both theology and medicine in Germany.<sup>8</sup> The use of a building, which had formerly been a brewery, was obtained for their services; and the congregation became known as Christ Church.<sup>9</sup> In spite of this split the majority of Germans seem to have remained with Trinity Church because in 1757 there were sixty-three German and eighteen Dutch communicants at the original Lutheran church.

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8. Jacobs, op. cit., p. 129.

9. Schmucker, op. cit., p. 282.



## VIII. THE FIRST LUTHERAN SYNOD

Knoll resigned his New York pastorate in 1750, and here we do end our story. Shortly thereafter, Muhlenberg came to New York and Lutheranism experienced a surge upward again, but that is a tale which is beyond the scope of this paper, and we shall leave it for some one else to tell.

Indeed, the Lutherans in New York had tough sledding concerning it. The following summary has been gleaned from his writings. In the spring of 1735 reports reached Berkenmeyer that there was trouble brewing in the Moravian churches of New York, and to continue the preaching of the pure Word even in New York. That was the location where Pastor J. A. Wolf had replaced Daniel Balckner upon the recommendation of Berkenmeyer himself. The story of such people deserved to be told, if only to prove that the Gospel and the Church will continue until the end, Wolf had barely taken over the pastorate when he became dissatisfied with the salary, the prerequisites, the parsonage; and the congregations claimed Wolf neglected the instruction of the children, would not use the forms prescribed in the agenda, and did not preach his sermons from memory.

We remember that Berkenmeyer, Knoll, and Wolf were the only three pastors in and around New York at this time. They arranged for a meeting to be held in Locnenburg (Athens) on June 10th. to adjust the matter of the Moravian churches. Wolf did not show up for this meeting, so the other two clergymen issued a formal call for a meeting to be held in New York City, July 14-20. During the writing of this call, Mr. Simon Voegt, the father-in-law of Wolf, showed up at Locnenburg with a letter of excuse from Wolf. Voegt was then made bearer of the notice for the future meeting to the churches on the Moravian.



## VIII THE FIRST LUTHERAN SYNOD

This chapter is added by way of an appendix, in order to include some interesting points of that meeting in 1735, which is known as the first synod. For our remarks on this meeting, we are particularly indebted to the information given by Dr. Karl Kretzmann, who has written quite an extensive report concerning it. 1 The following summary has been gleaned from his writings.

In the spring of 1735 reports reached Berkenmeyer that there was trouble brewing in the Raritan churches of New Jersey. That was the location where Pastor J.A.Wolf had replaced Daniel Falckner upon the recommendation of Berkenmeyer himself. Wolf had hardly taken over the pastorate when he became dissatisfied with the salary, the prerequisites, the parsonage; and the congregations claimed Wolf neglected the instruction of the children, would not use the forms prescribed in the agenda, and did not preach his sermons from memory.

We remember that Berkenmeyer, Knoll, and Wolf were the only three pastors in and around New York at this time. They arranged for a meeting to be held in Loonenburg (Athens) on June 10th. to adjust the matter of the Raritan churches. Wolf did not show up for this meeting, so the other two clergymen issued a formal call for a meeting to be held in New York City, July 14-20. During the writing of this call, Mr. Simon Voogt, the father-in-law of Wolf, showed up at Loonenburg with a letter of excuse from Wolf. Voogt was then made bearer of the notice for the future meeting to the churches on the Raritan.

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1. Kretzmann, "The First Lutheran Synod in America",  
C.H.I.Q. vol.VIII, and IX



against The date for the New York meeting was changed to August 3-10, when two men, Henrich Schmid and Laur, Rulofsen, arrived in Loonenburg on the thirteenth of July, the day after Knoll had returned to New York City. These two men were supposed to have been delegates from the Raritan churches to the meeting that was originally called in Loonenburg. Berkenmeyer was paid a visit by Wolf on July 23, 1735. An entry in Berkenmeyers journal under that date reads:

M. John Aug. Wolff has done me the honor of a visit from Raretan, but he departed the following day.<sup>2</sup>

As a result of this visit, the New York City meeting was changed a second time, and the date set for a week later than the first date.

In his desire for correctness, Berkenmeyer had credentials drawn up by the church councils of the congregations he served giving him power to act and represent him in such a meeting as was to be held in New York City.

After a trip by boat down the Hudson, which took four days because of contrary winds, Berkenmeyer arrived in New York on August 11th. and found everyone there except Wolf, who again had sent a letter via his father-in-law. It was decided to hold a preliminary hearing, in the absence of Wolf. The Raritan representatives showed much impatience with their pastor. The Jersey congregations had empowered their representatives Schmuaker and Rulofsen, to do anything they saw fit, and the congregation would back them up. These two men cited cases

In order that things might proceed in a more orderly



against their pastor, one of which Wolf was supposed to have told a father to baptize his own child. Nothing much could be accomplished at this preliminary meeting, so it was decided to move the assembly over to New Jersey. It was not until August 20th, that the meeting convened in the town which is now known as Pluckemin, New Jersey. Every one was there including Wolf, representatives of other New Jersey congregations, and practically the whole congregation of Pluckemin.

Berkenmeyer opened the Synod "In Jesus' name, Amen". First on the order of business was to be the signing of copies of the Amsterdam Church Order which Berkenmeyer had drawn up. The signing of this confession, or constitution, was part of Berkenmeyer's plan to cement the union of the Lutherans along the Hudson. There seem to have been four Dutch copies of the constitution, known respectively as the New York, the Loonenburg, the Hackensack, and the Raretan copy. There was also a copy in German, for the German congregations in New Jersey.

All of those present in New York City on August eleventh had signed the New York copy of the Amsterdam Church Councils. Wolf agreed, but the councils balked; they ran out of the church building thinking this was some sort of a trap to bind them to the pastor they no longer wanted.

When repeated argument and discussion failed to get the New Jersey people back into church, it was decided to let this matter of the constitution go to last. On that promised many of the people returned.

In order that things might proceed in a more orderly

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manner, it was deemed necessary to appoint a "Praeses and Scriba", which lot unanimously fell upon Berkenmeyer. The meeting got under way again but not without more trouble. Schmid and Schumaker would have nothing to do with Wolf. After a talking-to by Berkenmeyer and another discussion with their fellow congregation members outside of the building, Schmid and Schumaker agreed to take their places at the meeting with the same authority as the other delegates.

Then it was proposed that Pastor Wolf and the delegates of Raretan sign a promise that they would be subject to the resolution of the synodical brethren. Wolf again agreed, but the Raretan representatives balked a third time and withdrew from the church. The matter of signing such an agreement had to be dropped in order to get the delegates back in.

The synod next tried to solve the difficulties of Wolf and his congregations by discussing and reading the "Eight Points of Consideration", which seems to have been previously drawn up as a basis of possible agreement. Up to the seventh point, everything went fine; but then a heated argument began, and the Raretan representatives walked out for the fourth time. An amnesty was refused. Berkenmeyer was getting a bit disgusted at this point, but he controlled himself and kept up his efforts to reconcile Wolf with the New Jersey Lutherans. Discussions were carried on both within and without the church - and between the two. Wolf's salary, parsonage, the validity of his call, and his method of preaching were hashed through. Toward evening the people drifted back into church and an



agreement was reached. It said in substance: The Dutch copy

was written New Jersey money in place of New York money should be valid (for salary); a funeral oration should be 12 or 20 sh.; the Hackensack rate for prerequisites should be completely in force; Domine Wolf should diligently attend to the inspection of the school, to the confirmation and instruction of the catechumens; and that four weeks after taking possession of the Domine's house, he should preach from memory, on pain of losing and giving up his office in the congregation. 3

After Wolf tried in vain to wrangle an extension of three months time before preaching from memory, the agreement was signed. The copies of the Amsterdam Church Order were signed, and the synod closed with the singing of, "Now Thank We All Our God".

According to Berkenmeyer's official account as secretary, there were present at this meeting, besides the three ministers, nine official lay delegates. New York: Charles Bekman and Jacan Boss; Hackensack: Jan van Norden and Abraham van Boskerk; Uylekill: Pieter Friederich; Rareton: Daniel Schumaker and Henry Schmid; Racheway: Balthaser Bichel and Lawrence Rulofsen.

We can see, from the above account, that this one day affair can hardly be called a synod in our sense of the term. As a result of the meeting, the trouble with Wolf subsided for a while; but it was not many years later when the New Jersey people were raised against him again. At any rate, the first Lutheran Constitution of New York was signed. This constitution, or confession, was a fairly exhaustive work, doctrinally sound,



and drawn up entirely by Berkenmeyer himself. The Dutch copy was written on forty-nine pages of folio; and a complete English translation can be found in the first appendix of Qualben, The Lutheran Church in Colonial America page 272 ff. We wonder what Berkenmeyer would have thought of his Halle friends, if he knew that Muhlenberg and Hartwig later on added their own signatures to this very same confession of faith.

The Amsterdam Church Order contained two chief parts; the first which dealt with matters of doctrine, and the second with matters of practice. The following quotation, with which we end this paper, is a translation of the title page of the Amsterdam Church Order.

General Church Order for the Congregations  
Adhering to the Unaltered Augsburg (Confession)  
after Previous Comparison with The General Church  
Order by The Very Venerable Lutheran Consistory  
at Amsterdam Transmitted to Us and also by the  
Very Venerable Consistory Recommended to Us for  
our Christian Congregations in the Province of  
New York and New Jersey, made Applicable.

... each and every member of the classis, for example, preachers, elders, deacons, and all other consistorial (Members) representing a congregation, who now are or hereafter shall come, shall before the beginning of their function have signed this order without reservation and shall punctually conduct themselves according to it, so that under the aforesaid Amsterdam Consistory our congregations, being one in the pure doctrine, may by means of this church order establish good harmony, ... according as it was printed in 1681 and reprinted in 1735. 4

NEVE, J.L., and WILLARD ALLBERCK, History of the Lutheran Church in America, The Lutheran Literary Board,

POLACK, W., 4. Qualben, op. cit., p.272  
Publishing House, St. Louis, 1941



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