

Jacob Steendam, New Amsterdam's earliest poet, lived in this house (which had been built by Cornelis Arissen, from Utrecht) from July, 1653, till July 1, 1660, when he gave a bill of sale of his home and part of his garden to Cornelis Langevelt.—*Liber* HH: 42 (Albany); *Liber Deeds*, A: 284.[<sup>1</sup>] It was the first piece of property which he bought in New Amsterdam, and the last piece which he parted with before his return to Fatherland.

The Plan shows a fair-sized house, with a stable in the rear, and a trim garden with fruit-trees. Perhaps, not "A very Eden," but a comfortable home, unquestionably. Sometimes the neighbours proved uncongenial. When Jacob Steensen and his wife lived across the street, in 1655-6, they annoyed the poet, greatly.—See Block J, No. 8. But all the available records prove that Steendam led a busy, prosperous, life in the ten years of his stay here. The first deed recorded under the municipal government of 1653 was the one conveying a lot (Block O, No. 5) running through from the road to the river, sold by Cornelis van Tienhoven to Jacob Hendricksen Varrevanger, and immediately turned over to Steendam.—*Liber Deeds*, A: 1. On the next page, is recorded his purchase of Brian Newton's large grant (see Key to Dutch Grants, Block L, No. 5).—*Ibid.*, A: 3.

On the first named lot, he built, in 1655, the house which he sold in 1656 to Jan Cornelissen, from Hoorn. During its erection, he had many disputes with the city authorities. He insisted "that he could build on his lot as he pleased," but finally was forced to yield, and to "abide by the common laws of this place."—*Rec. N. Am.*, I: 275, *et seq.* (Now No. 61 Stone Street; Block O, No. 5.) [<sup>2</sup>]

Jacob Steendam was born in the year 1616, probably at Enkhuizen, in North Holland,

and was for fifteen years in the service of the Dutch West India Company. In 1641, he was sent, in the Company's employ, to the coast of Guinea, and, in February, 1642, was present at the taking of Fort Axem from the Portuguese. Upon his return to Amsterdam, he published a volume of verse, under the title *Den Distelwinck* (*The Thistlefinch*, or *The Goldfinch*). Soon afterward, he arrived in New Netherland. In 1659, he sent over, for publication in Holland, his poem, *The Complaint of New Amsterdam to Her Mother*. "This poem," remarks Mr. Henry C. Murphy, "is the first attempt of which we have any knowledge in verse, in the colony." *The Praise of New Netherland* appeared from Steendam's pen in 1661. He had left the colony before November of that year (*Rec. N. Am.*, III: 401)—possibly shortly after July, 1660.—*Liber Deeds*, A: 284.

In 1666, he left Amsterdam, this time for the Orient, having already visited Africa and America. The Amsterdam Chamber commissioned him as "Visitor of the Sick," at Batavia, in the island of Java. Arriving at Batavia, October 18, 1666, he continued, by his own request to the consistory, to Bengal. From thence he returned in January, 1668; in 1671, he is said to have been "Vader," or superintendent, of the orphan house at Batavia. The date of his death is unknown.

His wife's name was Sara de Rooschou, who was known as Sara Abrahams in the records of the Reformed Dutch Church at New York. On the margin of the page is the comment, "left for the East Indies." It is known that she accompanied the poet to Java, and died there before September, 1673.

Mr. J. H. Innes, in *New Amsterdam and its People*, has devoted a sympathetic chapter to New York's earliest poet.

In the preparation of these notes, the author is indebted to the delightful study of the poet's life and works to be found in Mr. Murphy's *Anthology of New Netherland*.