

The Fiscal's House on the Prince Gracht and his garden on the Tuyn Straet are so carefully drawn on the Plan that it requires but little imagination to see them as they were in July, 1660. The wide, comfortable-looking house faced the upper end of the canal, and the formal Dutch garden extended to the street, to which it gave its name—Garden Street, now Exchange Place. The triangular plantation left by the cutting through of this street belonged to the Van Tienhoven estate, but it is entirely probable that it was cultivated by De Sille, for its owners lived in quite another part of the town.

Nicasius de Sille, the first of his name in this country, arrived in the summer of 1653. In his commission as first counselor to Director-General Stuyvesant, he was described as "experienced both in law and war, of whose life and knowledge we have received the best testimony."—*N. Y. Col. Docs.*, XIV: 209. He was in middle life, having been born at Arnheim, September 23, 1610—a widower, with five children: Walburga, the eldest daughter, not yet fourteen years old, Anna, Gerardina, Laurens, and Petrus. (Information communicated by Mr. Laurens Adriaen de Sille, of Leersum, Holland, a descendant of Laurens de Sille.—*N. Y. Geneal. and Biog. Rec.*, XXXIV: 24.)

Such a family needed a mother's care, but de Sille's second wife, Tryntje Crougers, whom he married in May, 1655 (*Marriages in Ref. Dutch Ch.*, 19), was not the woman he had hoped to place in that capacity in his home. Their union was most unhappy. In December, 1659, he petitions for a divorce, alleging her "unbecoming and careless life, both by her wasting of property without his knowledge, as by her public habitual drunkenness." The court referred the matter to the director and council, "Regard being had to the quality of the petitioner."—*Rec. N. Am.*, III: 90. No divorce was granted at this time; the couple remained together for various reasons. She had brought him some money, which had helped to build the house, as she claimed, and the two elder girls were about to be married: Walburga to Frans Cregier, Anna to Hendrick Kip. The young couples procured their marriage licenses on the same day, February 29, 1660 (*Marriages in Ref. Dutch Ch.*, 25), and the house was the scene of a double wedding.

The fiscal himself had, in the meantime, become very much interested in New Utrecht, of which village he was one of the first patentees, and where Jacob Swart had built him a house in 1657-8. To quote his own words, "this was the first house in the town which was covered with red tiles." [1] De Sille's description of the founding of New Utrecht is contained in *Doc. Hist. N. Y.*, 8vo. ed., I: 633.

Possibly, his third daughter, Gerardina, kept house for him here: she afterwards married a Long Islander, Joannes van Couwenhoven (*N. Y. Geneal. & Biog. Rec.*, XXXIV: 24), but there seems little reason to suppose that Mme. de Sille ever left the house on the Gracht, where the fiscal himself continued in residence.

In 1669, Gerrit van Tright wanted an act of authorisation to sell his house, on which he had lent considerable money. De Sille had given him power of attorney to do so. His wife, however, interposed a strenuous objection, saying that the house belonged "particularly

to her.”—*Rec. N. Am.*, VI: 207, 210. All the old bitterness revived, and finally, on March 15, 1670, Governor Lovelace directed Mayor Steenwyck to appoint a commission to hear and examine their differences concerning the sale of their house and other things relating to their estate. Mme. De Sille produced a marriage contract, which would have thrown much light on the vexed question of whose money had paid for building the house, bringing up the children, “marrying off two daughters,” &c., but “the superscription expressly directed that it should not be opened until after the death of one of them”; and the five eminent citizens who composed the commission declared that “Mr. Sille cannot be counted . . . dead.” As Paulus Leendersen van der Grift said: “I refer to the judgement of the May^r whether Mr. Sille can be considered as dead or not” (*Rec. N. Am.*, VI: 227-8); and as Mr. de Sille, at this very time, had declared that he had “an Intent to resyde in y^e Towne of Midwout, alias Flatt bush,” the demise of that gentleman was rather less than a doubtful event. The pleasant little settlement wherein he now contemplated taking up his abode was a long way from the New York of that day; and that he was, without too much difficulty, discovered to be alive and in residence there, is proved by the fact that Governor Lovelace, “having conceiued a good opinion of y^e Capacity & fittnes of y^e said Nicasius de Sille,” appointed him “publique notary for y^e Towne of Mydwout alias Flatt bush & places adjacent,” April 25, 1670.—*Exec. Coun. Min.*, ed. by V. H. Paltsits, I: 329. A rather obscure position, after all the dignities that had gone before. He had been first councilor since 1653; he succeeded Van Tienhoven as provincial schout-fiscal, in June, 1656 (*Rec. N. Am.*, II: 121); and he was churchwarden at New Amsterdam (*ibid.*, II: 50) and schout at New Utrecht.—*Register of N. Neth.*, 43.

Several of his poetic effusions are to be found in the records of the latter place, and are reproduced in the *Anthology of New Netherland*.

The commission on the affairs of De Sille and his wife partitioned the estate, after paying the creditors. The house, garden, and orchard must have been adjudged to belong to the husband, for Nicasius sold them to Thomas Delavall, April 24, 1672, for 3,000 guilders.—*Liber Deeds*, B: 190; [1] cf. *Book of Records of Deeds & Transfers* (etc.), 1665-1672 (translated), 209. In this deed, he describes himself as of Long Island. Henry C. Murphy, in the *Anthology*, says he resided in New Utrecht “in 1659 and in 1674, and probably until his death, of which event, however, when and where it took place, we find no mention.” Nor has the author discovered any authentic statement on this subject. His will is not found of record. In 1686, Domine Selyns’s List contains the name of Catharina Cregiers, widow of Nicasius de Sille, as a resident of the Heere Gracht. She had purchased the small house just to the south of her old home, and here she continued to live until her death, late in 1694. Her will is in the N. Y. Surrogate’s Office, *Liber V*: 89. She left her entire estate to “my cousyn, Jacobus Croeger, for his attendance and true service done me this severall years.”