

layer is occasionally called “the master builder”. In the 1730s his daily wage was 10-24 sk., including food. Responsible for finding his own food and drink, he received 20 sk. in 1732, rising to 24 sk. in 1736. Two carpenters received 12 sk. plus food in 1736-37. A paviour received 10 sk. a day in 1742 and 1748, and presumably also food. In 1727-32 a bricklayer’s assistant received 12 sk. and probably also had to pay for his own food. That was the case in later years, when his pay had declined to 10 sk. a day. Occasionally the same person would receive 16 sk. a day. The thatcher was the highest paid among the tradesmen at 16-20 sk. a day. For the whole period 1727-42, eight persons share a total of 23 payments, and it seems that every five years they were exchanged in pairs. Most of the tasks were repairs, in a few cases denoted piecework.

11. Taasinge 1723-1800

The manor accounts of Taasinge are a very rich source for the history of prices and wages in the social and economic context, though the accounts are only preserved fully from the end of the 1760s. Apart from the ravages of time, this may be connected to the fact that prior to that period the economy of the estate left a great deal to be desired. Thus the accounts show that in the 1750s the owner of the *stamhus*, Niels Juel (1696-1766), would often reduce both the price of deliveries and the wages of local day-labourers. Apart from economic explanations we should look at the somewhat defenceless position of the local community on the island of Taasinge, where the estate of the same name was extremely powerful, economically, socially, and legally. It was very tempting for an owner like Niels Juel to misuse his position, to posture as a local king and hence to discipline his “subjects”.

Seen from his point of view, the wage bill and his generally recognised paternalistic responsibilities towards his peasants figured hugely, especially during the agricultural depression in mid-century. We do not know the actual length of the working day and the efficiency of the work force, but he may have had reason to think he did not get his money’s worth. Anyway, it is striking to see Niels Juel high-handedly reduce wages that are already low by contemporary standards.

The salaries and wages copied here are distributed over the whole spectrum, but with few examples of tradesmen from the market towns, who had vocational training and were paid rates fixed by their craft guild. Instead the estate employed local country tradesmen, who as kinds of jacks-of-all-trades would work in many different crafts, even as day-labourers. In Niels Juel’s “reign” the wage level was very low, and even thereafter it did not catch up with wages elsewhere.

Category 1

Salaried officials and other staff paid by the year

Men

The annual salary of the steward remains at 9,600 sk. plus a subsistence allowance of the same amount for the period 1768-1800. The latter amount rises to 14,400 sk. when it included provision for a boy to help the steward in the office. There are 31 instances of a gardener's salary for the period 1732-1800, and they remain at 4,800 sk. annually. The cook's salary is 5,760 sk. annually until 1765, when it declines to 4,800 sk. From 1792 he receives 396 sk. a month as a subsistence allowance. A shepherd who doubled as a pitch-man (*begmand*) during the winter received 1,536 sk. annually in 1754-1800, whereas a forest ranger's salary rose from 2,880 in the 1750s to 5,568 in 1777. On top of that he received an allowance for boots (*støvlepenge*) of 396 sk. and 576 sk. for a horse.

Women

Salaries for women were generally lower than the men's, though obviously it is difficult to compare levels for different types of jobs. In the period 1732 to 1772 a housekeeper usually received an annual salary of 1,920 sk., then 2,304, finally reaching 3,840 sk. in the 1790s. The maid's annual salary is a meagre 768 sk. to 960 sk. up to the 1790s, then rising in 1796 to 1,536 sk. Surprisingly the cook's salary was somewhat lower in the 1720s and 1730s at 448 sk. or 512 sk., then rising to 640 sk. or 738 sk. (and in one case even 1,056 sk.), and finally, in 1793, successively reaching 960, 1,344 and 1,632 sk.

The girl in charge of the hens received 384 sk. annually in the 1770s, in 960 sk. in the 1790s, while the milk maid's salary was steady at 512 sk. in the period 1725-1780, rising to 576 sk. or 640 sk. and then (in 1796) to 960 sk.

Category 2

Tradesmen

Paid by the day

There are 18 cases of master builders, but only in 1755 and 1766 are they trained master builders from a market town receiving official rates of 48 sk. a day. The rest are local country builders receiving 24-28 sk. In the 1790s their pay increases to 32-36 sk. a day. The same pay and development of pay is found with the bricklayers. In 1749 a bricklayer is paid 24 sk., but with the proviso that he pays for his own food, and one gets the feeling that when we find rates of 24-28 sk. in the 1750s, the bricklayer remains responsible for his own food.

The helpers get 6 sk. a day in the 1740s, in a few cases 12 sk., but without any indication as to whether the latter pay is without food. In the next two decades the daily pay for helpers is from 6-8 to 10-12 sk., but from 1752 usually 12 sk. In the 1750s Niels Juel begins his wage reductions of 5½-21%, in some cases up to 50%. In 1751 a bricklayer sent a bill claiming 12 sk. a day for building boxes and partitions, but only receives 6 sk., "as he arrives late and does noth-

ing". After the estate owner's death in 1766 the wage level is somewhat increased, and the helper reaches 16 sk. in summer and 14 sk. in winter. The wage level remains the same until the 1790s when it increases to 20 sk.

Carpentry is usually performed by the estate's own country tradesmen. There are 453 instances of wages for such carpenters in the period 1749-1800. They show fairly substantial pay differentials, especially in the 1750s, when daily wages are between 4 sk. and 12 sk. At the end of the 1760s wages stabilise around 12 sk. a day, and in the 1770s they fluctuate between 12 sk., 16 sk. and 20 sk. In 1793 wages rise to 24 sk., but the workers must buy their own food. If one is supplied with food during work, daily wages are 16 sk. Paviours receive 12 sk. a day in 1766-67, increasing to 16 sk. and in 1786-95 18-20 sk. a day, but without food and drink.

Category 3

Service work. Day-labourers

Men

There are 704 instances of day-labourers performing service work at the manor, especially in the garden. For the first 20 years the daily wage is 5-6-8 sk., then 12 sk., subsequently increasing in 1769 to 16 sk. in summer, 12 sk. in winter. These rates are maintained until the early 1790s, when 18-20 sk. becomes the norm. In the 1750s Niels Juel reduced wages in a number of cases. An example is provided in May 1752, when some workers in the garden had their daily wage reduced from 12 to 8 sk. with the remark in the accounts that "due to their bad work none of the above will receive more than 8 sk. a day".

Category 4

Agricultural work. Day-labourers

Men

In the 1730s a day-labourer would receive 4-6 sk. a day for threshing, which was certainly hard physical labour. In the next decade wages rose to 12 sk., in a few cases 15-16 sk. The 12 sk. level was maintained until the 1770s, when it was increased to 16 sk., but with individual cases of higher and lower wages. At the end of the 1780s the rate increased to 20 sk., and a decade later the average was 24 sk.

Category 5

Industrial work. Day-labourers

Men

There are only a few cases. In the 1780s baking bricks was paid at a rate of 12-16 sk.

Category 6

Estate staff in local administration

Most prominent here are the numerous schoolteachers. Their salaries, or rather fees, show large and unexplained fluctuations. Between 1747 and 1771 a schoolteacher received an annual salary of 3,840 sk., but then the rate is decreased in most cases to 1,920 sk. Presumably only part of the total salary is seen in the accounts.

12. Frederiksgave 1773-1800

In 1767 the rich Copenhagen merchant Niels Ryberg bought out the other heirs to his deceased father-in-law's estate of Frederiksgave, situated near the market town of Assens. He was faced with the need to make a number of substantial investments in order to create a modern estate. First and foremost, agriculture had to be modernised, and then the buildings themselves were to be made into a manor house equalling the other great manor houses of Southern Funen. In the years 1774-76 the architect Georg Erdmann Rosenberg built a new three-winged main building for Niels Ryberg, situated east of the farm buildings.

Unfortunately there are many holes in the preserved accounts, in spite of the extensive activity at Frederiksgave in Niels Ryberg's time; and even when accounts have been preserved, they do not fully represent the economy of the estate, because the merchant himself was in charge of the major decisions of the estate. In the accounts one mainly finds wages of day-labourers.

Category 1

Salaried officials and other staff paid by the year

Men

Steward, 1786-90. He received a money salary of 2,880 sk., plus 960 sk. for writing materials and another 960 sk. to pay a maid. On top of that he received an annual grain subsidy of 10 *tønder* of rye, 6 *tønder* of barley and 16 *tønder* of oats, paid out in money according to the actual sales prices.

The barn bailiff (*ladefoged*) was paid every 6 months from 1775 to 1781. The summer period extended from Easter to Michaelmas. His salary for this period was 1,152 sk. plus an allowance subsidy of 576 sk. and the estate paid the extra tax. His replacement received 1,920 sk. for one year (1780-81), an allowance subsidy of 2.496 sk. and 6 *tønder* of oats converted into money. Here there is no increase in salary. The shepherd, by contrast, did get one. He was originally paid 768 sk. every 6 months plus the supplementary tax paid for him, but in the 1790s his salary increased successsively to 864 sk. in 1796-97, 960 sk. in the next year and finally 1056 sk. in 1799-1800. This was an increase of about 40% over four years.