

A
SHORT HISTORY
OF
STATEN ISLAND



By
CORNELIUS G. KOLFF



SECOND EDITION
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DEDICATION.

This book is respectfully dedicated to

THEODORE S. OXHOLM

a Staten Island citizen who during a life time of unceasing activity as an administrator of public affairs has loyally skillfully and withall modestly and unselfishly devoted the best that was in him to the successful upbuilding of Staten Island.

CORNELIUS G. KOLFF.

Staten Island,

May 15, 1926.

INTRODUCTION.

In May, 1918, the undersigned published the first edition of "A Short History of Staten Island."

The object of this publication was to awaken in the minds and hearts of the growing generation of Staten Islanders an interest in and love for Staten Island and its history.

It is gratifying to be able to state that the continued demand for this little book appears to indicate that the effort has not been in vain.

This second edition—illustrated by Miss Helen F. Neilson—daughter of a Staten Islander, is presented to its readers, asking their kind indulgence for the many short comings of an author who is neither a literary man nor an historian.

For the list of old Staten Island families I am indebted to my life long friend Wm. T. Davis, President of the Staten Island Historical Society.

Staten Islands Obedient Servant,

CORNELIUS G. KOLFF.

April, 1926.



Early History of Staten Island.

At the time Christopher Columbus discovered America, in the year 1492, Staten Island was inhabited by Raritan and Hackensack Indians, branches of the Delaware Nation.

With the exception of the sandy beaches and the salt meadows, the Island was almost entirely covered with woods and owing to this fact and its hilly nature it was called by the Indians Eghquaons; Monocknong the Island of the Dark Woods on high sandy hills.

In the forests were many wild animals, such as bears and deers, and also wild birds. In the lakes, the creeks and waters surrounding the Island, were fish of many kinds, and in the waters along the shores were oysters and clams.

The Indians spent their time hunting the wild animals, fishing in the streams and the sea, and sometimes engaged in wars with neighboring tribes.

The Indian women cultivated the fields and grew corn, which they ground with stones in wooden or stone mortars, and made into mash. They also raised some tobacco, which the men smoked. Their food consisted of corn, venison, fish, oysters and clams. Their clothing was made of skins of wild animals.

Their weapons were mainly arrows, with points made of stone, and axes of stone, fastened to wooden handles by leather strings. Their fish-hooks were made of fish bones and the claws of birds. They lived in houses, called wigwams, made of the bark of trees.

The Indian money consisted of shells, with a hole in the centre, through which a string was passed. This money was called "wampum." Their religion consisted of the worship of good and evil spirits.

The Indian doctor was called the "Medicine Man." They used some herbs in curing the sick; but their principal "medicine" was the making of as much noise as possible, by howling and groaning, in order to drive the bad spirits out of the sick and the dying.

The Indian chiefs usually had several wives. These were called "squaws." The children were called "paposes."

The Staten Island Indians did not chop down trees, because they had no suitable tools; but they built fires around them, and when enough of the trunk was charred or burnt, the tree fell. Their boats were made of tree trunks by burning out the middle of the log.

In order to make a fire, they rubbed two pieces of dry wood against each other until they finally ignited. Whenever they wanted some good ground on which to plant corn or tobacco, they "girdled" the trees—that is, they cut away the bark with their knives, made of flint or shell. The trees then died, and later they burnt them and thus secured the ground.

They had clay pots in which they boiled their water. Their meals were very simple, and they drank nothing but the pure, clear water from the many fine springs which were found on the Island.

Just as we have weather prophets today, who tell us in advance what kind of weather we are going to have, so the Indians had a "weather priest," whom they called "Kitzinake." He had the queer habit of never eating any food prepared by married women.

Our New Year, as we all know, commences on the first of January, but the Indian New Year commenced in March, when the days and nights were of the same length, and they celebrated the New Year with feasts.

They smoked their tobacco in long pipes, made of clay and soap stone.

From time to time, they had great feasts, which were usually celebrated at some point near the Seashore. They evidently ate a great many fish, oysters and clams, as indicated by the large heaps of shells which can be seen to this day. At these feasts they sometimes amused themselves by torturing prisoners taken in their wars with neighboring tribes. They usually tied their prisoners to stakes, and then shot at them with arrows which had sharp points made of flint.

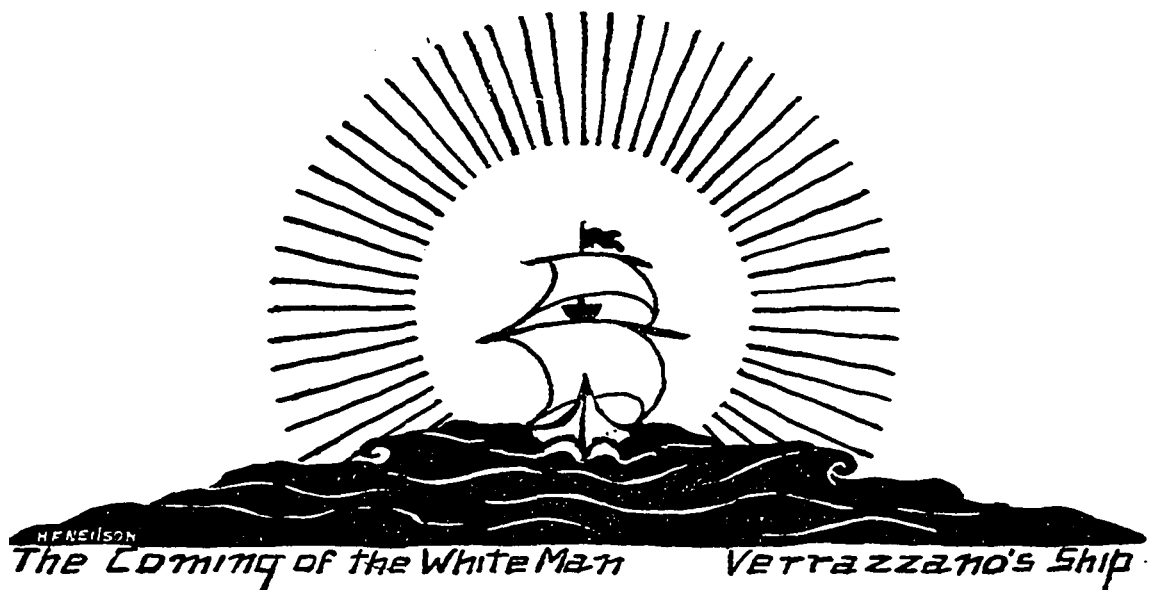
At one of the places where these feasts were celebrated, near Tottenville, the skeleton of a big Indian, nearly seven feet tall, was found, with arrows still sticking to his chest bone. He had evidently been taken prisoner, had been tied to a tree or stake, and then shot to death, after being used as a living target.

As both food and water were necessary, their villages were usually situated near the seashore, not far distant from good springs. We know that there were Indian villages at Tottenville, near the Southern end of the Island; at Holland's Hook, opposite Elizabethport;

at Green Ridge; at Giffords, and at West New Brighton. At the latter point was the "Council Place," where the Indians usually met the white men, to carry on peace negotiations after a war.

When the Indians died, they were buried in a sitting position on a log, and sometimes alongside of them was placed a pot of food, a spoon with which to eat, and some wampum, or money, so that they would be well supplied with necessities in the Spirit Land, or the "Happy Hunting Grounds," into which they passed at death.

* Aquehonga is the English for Eghquaons.



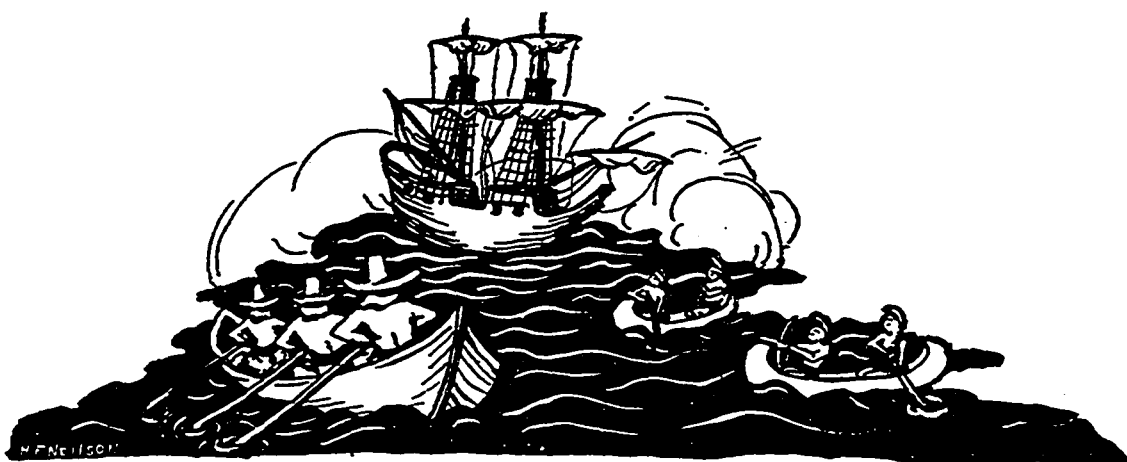
THE FIRST COMING OF THE WHITE MAN

Thirty-two years after Columbus discovered America, on a summer afternoon in 1524, the Indians living on the South Shore of the Island were greatly astonished at seeing, far out at sea, what looked to them to be a huge bird; but which, as it came nearer and nearer, proved to be a ship in full sail. They had never seen anything like it before, and as soon as the news of this wonderful thing spread, the Indians swarmed to the shore, where they hid behind trees to watch the strange visitor. It was a French ship, commanded by an Italian captain, called "Verrazzano." The first discovery of Staten Island by white men was thus made by an Italian.

The ship sailed into the Lower Bay, where it anchored. The Indians from their hiding places saw queer men with white faces and with beards, and heard them talk a language which they did not understand.

As frequently happens now, on hot summer afternoons, a sudden storm came up, and the captain, fearing that his ship might be driven ashore by the storm, hoisted his anchors, put out to sea, and disappeared as rapidly as he had come.

The Indians watched the ship until it faded away in the distance, and scarcely knew what to think or say. You may well imagine that it was discussed by them for years afterwards. They wondered whether it would return, and watched for it; but no ship came, and the strange incident was related around the camp fires of the rude natives, as we tell fairy tales today.



The Second Coming of the White Man Henry Hudson

SECOND COMING OF THE WHITE MAN OR “SWANNAKIN”

Finally, on the third day of September, 1609, eighty-five years after Verrazzano's discovery of Staten Island, and after all the Indians who had witnessed the first coming of the white man had gone to the Happy Hunting Ground, another ship was seen far out at sea, and word was rapidly passed along among the Indians that the story told by their fathers and grandfathers must be true, for the strangers were returning; and again the Indians swarmed to the point of land opposite The Narrows. This time it was a Dutch ship, the “Half Moon,” in charge of an English captain, Henry Hudson. He anchored near the same place at which Verrazzano had stopped, and the weather being fair he launched a boat with a few men, who rowed through The Narrows, and along the North Shore of the Island, through what is now called the Kill van Kull, as far as Holland's Hook, the Indians following along the shore, and watching every movement.

Thinking that these new comers must be enemies, some of the Indians, more courageous than others, set out in a large canoe. The white men turned back and when they reached a point about where West New Brighton is now located, the Indians in the canoe attacked them with their bows and arrows. John Cole-

man, who was in command, was shot in the throat with an arrow, and died while the boat was returning to the "Half Moon."

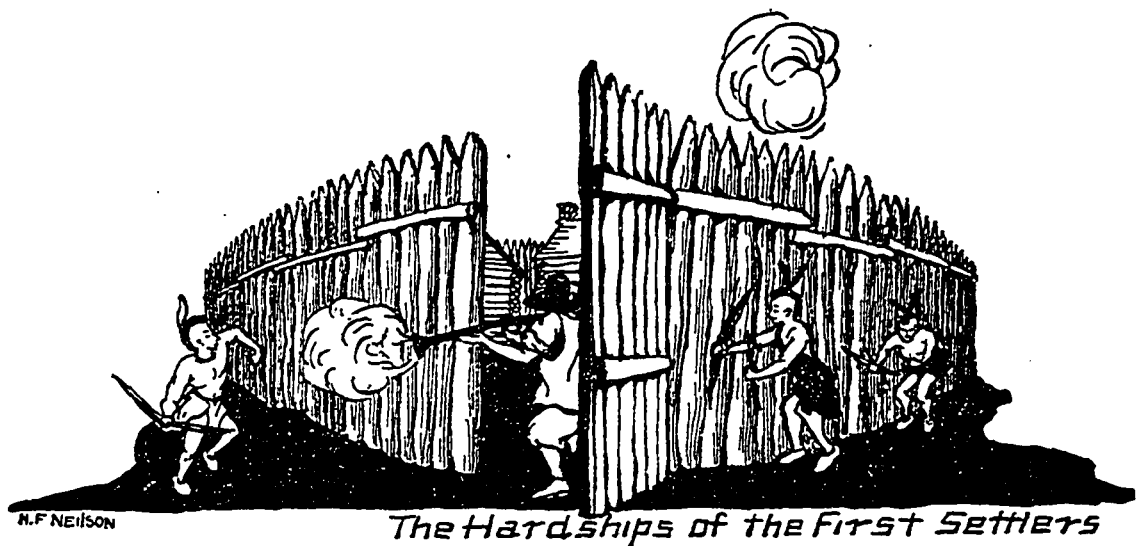
Finding, however, that the white men had evidently not come to fight, the Indians tried to make friends of them; and after some hesitation, they came on board the "Half Moon," and brought Indian corn and tobacco as tokens of friendship. Captain Henry Hudson detained two Indians, treated them well and gave them red coats to wear, which greatly pleased them. When, after a few days, he weighed anchor and sailed up the Bay and the great river (named after him, "The Hudson River"), he took them with him. On his sail up the river, Hudson had some fights with hostile tribes of Indians, and the two from Staten Island becoming frightened, jumped overboard, when the ship was near what is now West Point, swam ashore and traveled back to Staten Island, on foot, alarming the Indians on the way and creating a feeling of hostility against the white men.

Consequently, when Hudson returned, and named "Staaten Eylandt," in honor of the States General of Holland, on October 2nd, 1609, he met with a hostile reception. As he was not looking for trouble, Hudson weighed anchor, and sailed for Holland, to report the results of his discovery.

The Indians, as their forefathers had done eighty-five years before, stationed men on the high points of the Island, where they watched day and night for the return of the white men.

A year later another Dutch ship came, and on attempting to land the Indians again attacked the white men and forced them to leave.

After another year, in 1611, a third ship came; and two years later several ships passed through The Narrows, on their way up the Hudson, where they traded European goods for furs.



FIRST SETTLEMENT OF STATEN ISLAND

Up to 1613 no white men had settled on Staten Island; but about 1624 a number of immigrants from what is now Belgium, arrived at New Amsterdam. They were called Walloons, after the country from which they came.

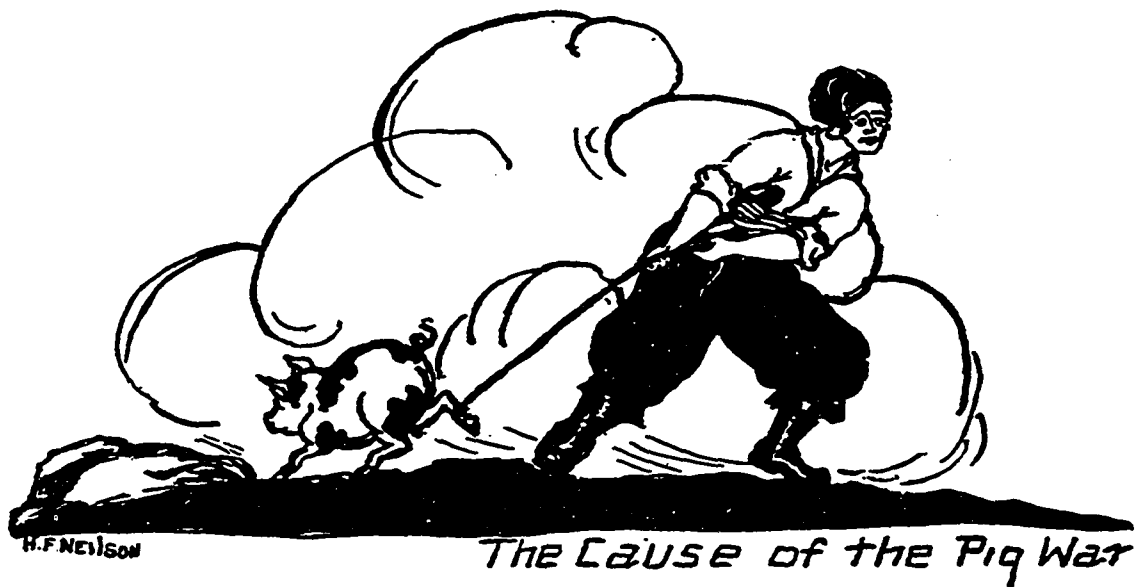
All of the Dutchmen, in passing up the Narrows, had, of course, seen Staten Island; and, attracted by its natural beauties, they decided to come over and settle here; and when a Dutchman makes up his mind to do a thing, he usually does it, thus originating the saying, "It is hard to beat the Dutch."

So the Dutch came to Staten Island in 1639, settled near what is now Tompkinsville. At that time it was called the Watering Place. From this time on serious trouble with the Indians commenced. The older natives were clever enough to understand that the white men wanted their land, and would take it from them by force; for the Indians with their bows and arrows were no match for the white men with their firearms, which created "lightning and thunder."

Consequently, the Indians, offered to sell their lands to the white men, and as the latter discovered that they could buy the whole Island for a few trifles, such as blankets, knives, hatchets, beads, and other things of little value, they bought the land; but as the Indians could not read or write, there were constant misunderstandings between the two races. Sometimes the Indians were to blame, and sometimes the white men were; but, whenever there was a misunderstanding, there was fighting, and it usually commenced by the Indians surprising the settlers at night; burning their homes, killing or stealing their cattle, and murdering the men, women and children. The Dutch would send soldiers from New Amsterdam, and they in turn would burn the Indian villages, kill as many Indians as possible, and force them to make peace. This continued for nearly fifty years.

In the meantime more white men settled on Staten Island, and so many Indians had been killed that those remaining wisely concluded to make peace for good and forever; and a great council was held in which the Indians finally sold their lands in 1670 for the last time, and to show that they intended to give up their lands and their woods, they handed the white men a piece of sod and a small twig of every kind of wood growing on Staten Island, except the hickory and the ash, which they reserved, presumably to make bows and arrows. The Indians received in pay some blankets, knives, axes and beads.

Among the many wars which were fought, three deserve special mention.

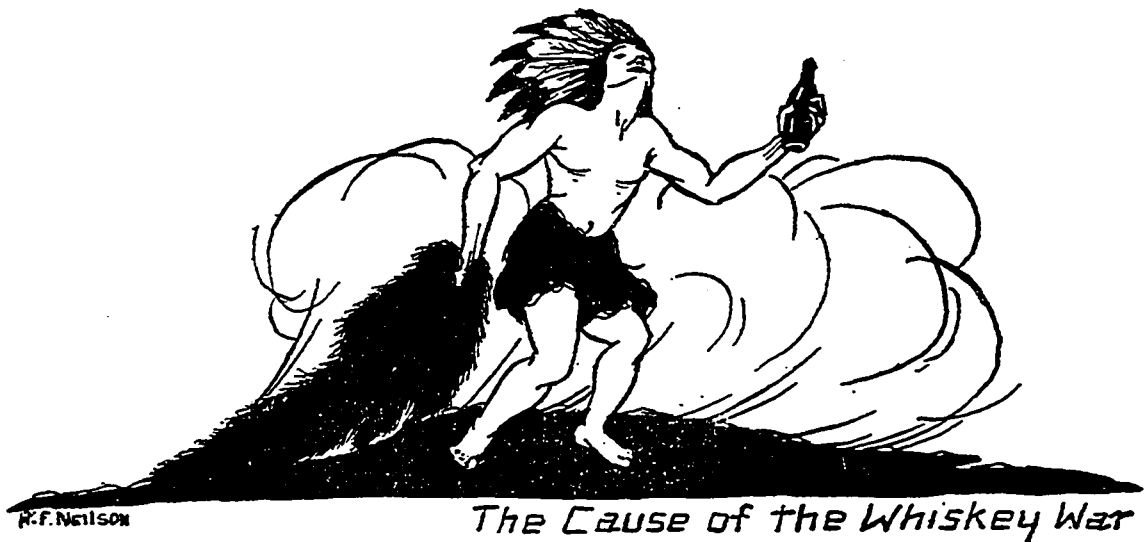


THE PIG WAR

At one time, some pigs were the cause of a war which caused much bloodshed.

It appears that a ship on its way from New Amsterdam to the Delaware, where there was a large settlement of Dutch, stopped at the "Watering Place," about where Tompkinsville is located, in order to take on board some fresh water from a spring which had an excellent reputation.

The sailors, seeing some pigs near the place where they went to get the water, stole them, took them on board and sailed away. The owners of the pigs discovering the loss, concluded the Indians must have stolen them, and accused them of the theft. This, of course, they denied; but the Dutch Governor at New Amsterdam, sent some soldiers to Staten Island to punish the Indians. The latter, when attacked, defended themselves, and after a number of them had been killed, they in turn attacked the farmers, burnt their dwellings and barns, ran off with their cattle, and killed as many settlers as they could, until they were compelled to make peace.

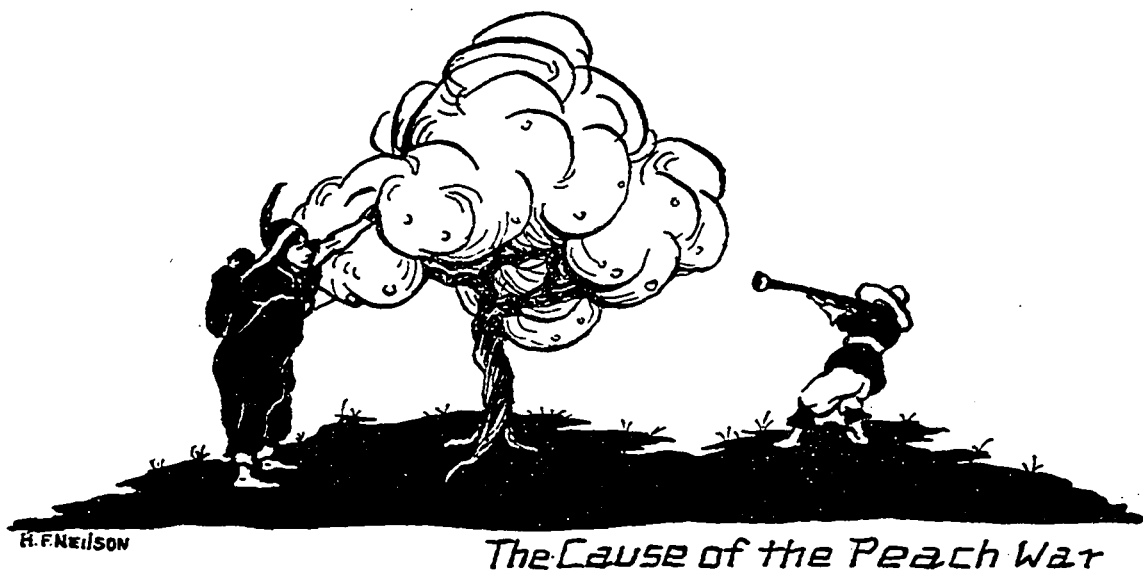


The Cause of the Whiskey War

THE WHISKEY WAR

Another time a war was caused by whiskey. A Dutch governor named Kieft had started a whiskey distillery at what is now New Brighton (the first in America). The Indians had learned to drink whiskey from the white men, and the Dutch traders having discovered, as many others have since, that they could take advantage of men when they were drunk, proceeded to get the Indians in that condition and then swindled them in an outrageous manner. When the Redskins became sober, they accused the Dutch traders of having robbed them of their furs, and when the Dutch refused to make good the losses, the Indians went on the war path and again murdered nearly all the Dutch farmers and burnt their homes to the ground, continuing until the soldiers again subdued them.

From this, it may be seen that to farm on Staten Island, with Indians as neighbors, was to invite hard times.



THE PEACH WAR

This war was caused by one Van Dyck, the Attorney-General of the New Netherland. Looking out of his window one morning, and seeing an Indian woman picking some peaches from a tree in his garden, he became enraged, took a gun from the wall and shot the woman dead. The Indians were very angry at this murder. They went to New Amsterdam and demanded of the Governor that Van Dyck should be delivered to them so he might be punished by them. As this meant the death of Van Dyck, the Governor refused to surrender him, and the Indians, now thoroughly aroused, came to Staten Island and murdered the Dutch settlers, burnt their houses and destroyed their crops. There were about sixty families.

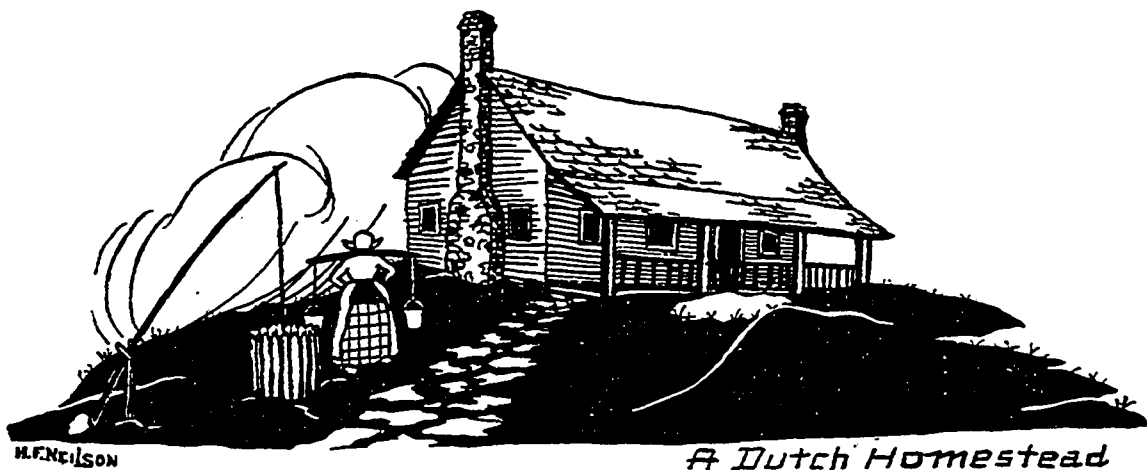


The Last of the Indians

THE LAST INDIANS

By these constant conflicts with the whites, and possibly by wars with other Indians, the Aquehongas dwindled in numbers until comparatively few were left.

The last pure-blooded Aquehonga Indians lived at Green Ridge in 1826, and were known as Sam and Hannah and their daughter, Nancy. They were buried in the graveyard at Green Ridge and thus ends the Indian history of Staten Island. Their silent resting place is located a few yards from the large dairy barn on the old Seaman estate, late the property of Mr. George W. White.



THE DUTCH PERIOD

After the discovery of America by Columbus, the Spaniards took possession of nearly all of South America, Central America and the West Indian Islands, and even a part of North America.

They found great wealth of gold and silver in Mexico and Peru. This attracted the attention of many European Nations and they soon had ships sailing the seas in almost every direction, trying to discover new lands which they might take possession of in the hope of finding treasure.

The next door neighbors of the Spaniards, the Portuguese, took possession of Brazil, in South America; the French conquered Canada; the English settled in Virginia and New England. Even the Scotch and Swedes made attempts to establish colonies in America—the former in Central America and the latter on the Delaware.

The Dutch were a very powerful Nation at that time, and they, like the rest of the nations, started out on expeditions to discover new countries which they might settle.

The main hope of all these nations was to find gold and silver; but they soon learned that Spain had already taken possession of the principal countries where the precious metals were to be found. Consequently, the only advantage which they could immediately derive from their discoveries, was from commerce with the Indians; and about the only thing the Indians had to offer in exchange for the European goods, were the furs of wild animals. Furs were then, as they are now, very valuable, and the fur trade continued for a long time to be the principal and most profitable article of commerce.

It has been told in the early part of this history that Henry Hudson on his ship, the "Half Moon," discovered Staten Island in 1609, and then sailed up the Bay to Manhattan, and thence up the Hudson. In exchange for the goods he brought along, he obtained quite a large supply of valuable furs, but no gold and silver. He took possession of the country in the name of the Dutch Government and called it "New Netherlands." When he returned to Holland and reported his discovery, and told about the Indians, the Dutch merchants in Amsterdam decided to fit out some more ships to engage in the fur trade; and the Dutch Government determined to establish a settlement or colony, in the country discovered by Hudson. The next year another ship was sent to New Netherlands, and by 1614 a trading settlement was established on Manhattan Island, and in honor of the Capital of Holland, the location was called New Amsterdam.

Later, another settlement was founded, far up the Hudson River, where Albany now stands, called Fort Orange, and gradually the whole country between the Connecticut and Delaware Rivers, was taken possession of by the Dutch, and was called New Netherlands and a large number of villages or settlements were founded by them. Most of them were given Dutch names,

such as New Amsterdam, Hoboken, Weehawken, Staaten Eylandt, Fort Orange (now Albany) Bruikelen (now Brooklyn), etc., and some of them received Indian names, such as Poughkeepsie, Nyack, etc. The Hudson River was called the North River, and the Delaware, along their Southern boundary, was called the South River.

Now, as the Dutch have been an important element in the early history of Staten Island, it should be remembered that Holland, at the time of the discovery of America and for a few hundred years afterward, was a very powerful nation, which had reached a high state of development in nearly all human occupations. They were skilful, and the leading manufacturers of Europe; they had men of great learning; they were great painters; their merchants were powerful, and they were the masters of the sea. Their fight for liberty against Spain had made them the heroes of their age. They were a most peaceful, but a most determined race of men, whose main characteristic, according to the famous Italian, De Amici, was "phlegmatic energy." Their coming to North America and the establishment of the New Netherlands had an important effect on the future development of our country.

Among the early settlers in New Amsterdam was Michael Pauw, who on the promise to establish settlements, obtained a grant, 1630, from the Dutch Government to land in New Jersey, where Jersey City now stands, and also on Staten Island, with the understanding, however, that he must pay the Indians for the land. He carried out his bargain with the Government. He established a settlement in New Jersey, which he called "Commune de Pauw," or in English, Village of Pauw. It still goes by the name of Communepau. He never established a settlement on Staten Island, evidently because he did not think it was worth the trouble and

expense. He accordingly abandoned his claim to it after paying the Indians.

The first real settler on Staten Island was Peter de Vries, who bought land from the Government in 1639, after Michael Pauw's abandonment.

De Vries established a village at what is now Tompkinsville, and a number of farms were started. He had trouble with the Indians, his blockhouse and buildings were destroyed, and his farms devastated by them.

In 1642 another Dutchman, Cornelius Melyn, obtained a further grant of land, and he also had his share of Indian warfare. His settlement was demolished, the houses were burnt and the crops destroyed, during one of the wars referred to in the "Indian period."

Not discouraged by constant failures, a fourth effort at settlement was made in 1661.

The next settlers were mainly French and very religious. They were a peaceful people, who understood better than those who had gone before them how to secure the good will and confidence of the Indians, and they consequently had the good fortune to live in peace with their Indian neighbors, with whom they did a profitable trade in furs.

At the same time a still larger number of Huguenots, or French Protestants, arrived and settled in the middle and southern parts of the Island, mainly in what is now known as Westfield, and around Richmond, New Springville, and Green Ridge.

At Green Ridge a church was built, where the Huguenots worshipped. A store was also built and also a court house and jail were built at Stony Brook. This was the first sign of an established government on Staten Island. The ruins of these buildings are still to be seen and the memories of the place were revived by the Hudson-Fulton celebration in September, 1909.

With the establishment of Stony Brook, a more peaceful development of Staten Island commenced. Farms were established in different parts of the Island by the Dutch and the Huguenots, and the Island gradually improved.

In the meantime, however, matters of great importance to the new settlements in New Netherlands were transpiring. Holland, the great sea power of the age, was at war with a growing maritime power—England.

The wars between European powers were usually transferred to their colonies in America, and sea-fights to wrest from each other their possessions, were carried on in American waters.

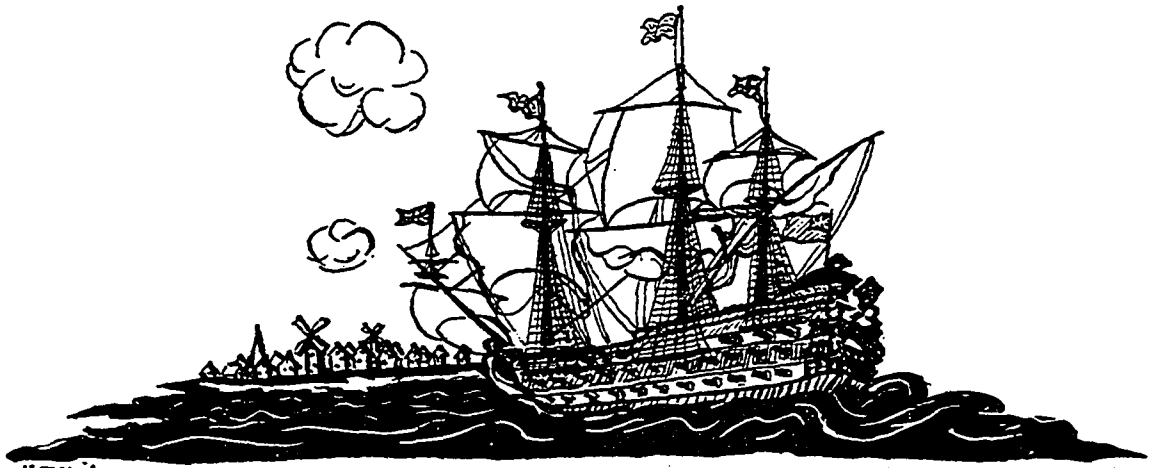
Thus in 1664, while Peter Stuyvesant was the Dutch Governor in New Amsterdam, a British fleet sailed through The Narrows, and demanded, at the mouth of its cannons, the surrender of the Dutch colony of the New Netherlands.

Unable to defend himself against an attack of the British men-of-war, Peter Stuyvesant was compelled to surrender the Dutch colonies in North America to the English, and Staten Island, together with the rest of New Netherlands, fell into the hands of the English, and became a part of the British colony, the name of which was then changed to "New York," in honor of the Duke of York, who became the master of the new English colony.

Nine years after this event, August 8, 1673, a Dutch fleet put in an appearance and took possession of the colony again, and the Dutch were once more masters of the New Netherlands; but when peace was declared between England and Holland, a short time later, the Dutch colonies were again surrendered to England by treaty; and thus ends the Dutch period of the New Netherlands, and also the Dutch period for Staten Island.

The Dutch and Huguenot settlers were fortunately treated with every consideration by their new masters; their customs, languages, and religious worship were not interfered with, and they were gradually absorbed after generations, by the Anglo-Saxon influence.

Our Dutch and Huguenot ancestors have plainly left the impression of their character upon the minds of those who have studied the history of our Island. The name of the Island remains the same; the names of many places, such as Great Kills, Fresh Kills, Huguenot, Achter Kill (corrupted into Arthur Kill), Kill van Kull, Robbens Reff (seal rock, corrupted into Robbin's Reef) and so on, remind us of them, and a long list of Dutch and Huguenot names, still numerousy represented by families living here, are evidence of their descent from those ancestors.



The Coming of the English

ENGLISH COLONIAL PERIOD

One of the first acts performed by the new English Governor, Richard Nicoll, in the name of the Crown of England, was to take formal possession of Staten Island. This was done, near the present Fort Wadsworth, overlooking The Narrows. He made a number of grants of land on Staten Island to settlers; and from these, called "Colonial Grants," some of the land titles derive their origin.

Governor Nicoll's successor was Governor Lovelace, and one of the important acts performed by him, connected with local history, was the last purchase of the Island from the Indians.

Staten Island, as has been shown in the previous pages, was purchased repeatedly from the Indians by the Dutch, in accordance with the requirements of the Dutch Government at home; but as there were always some Indians who claimed not to have joined in the sales, Governor Lovelace decided once and forever to settle

the native claims, and in making his purchase he made every Indian—men and women and even boys and girls of 12 to 15 years of age, sign the deed.

In payment, the Indians received wampum, 30 shirts, 30 kettles, 20 guns, some lead, powder, knives and axes. By this sale the Indians forever parted with their claim to Staten Island.

The English, on taking possession of the Island, established a regular form of Government, and Staten Island became the County of Richmond, in the Colony of New York, and Stony Brook, near New Dorp, was the County Seat.

The Colony of New York embraced all of New Netherlands, extending from the Delaware River, which was called the "South River," to Connecticut, and up the Hudson River, called by the Dutch the "North River."

About 1665, Lord Berkeley and Sir George Carteret received a grant from the Duke of York to all lands west of the Hudson River, which he called Nova Caesarea, or New Jersey, and at first Staten Island was considered as a part of New Jersey and paid taxes to that colony; but a dispute arising between the Duke of York and Lord Berkeley as to the ownership of Staten Island, and other islands in the mouth of the Hudson River, it was decided that all islands which could be circumnavigated in twenty-four hours should belong to New York, all others to New Jersey.

The task of sailing around Staten Island was assigned to Christopher Billopp, who, in his sloop, the "Bentley," circumnavigated the Island in a few minutes less than 24 hours, and thus saved the Island for the Duke of New York. Christopher Billopp was rewarded by a grant of about 932 acres of land at the extreme south end of the Island, and he there built a house which is still standing,

and which is called the "Bentley Manor," in honor of the ship owned by Billopp.

The agreement as to New Jerseys just claim to Staten Island was finally settled by a commission in 1833.

After Governor Lovelace came Governor Andros, and after him Governor Dongan, an Irishman, afterwards the Earl of Limmerick. Governor Dongan was very fond of Staten Island, and lived in his castle overlooking the Kill van Kull, at what is now known as West New Brighton, near the present Dongan street. He had a shooting lodge, near Castleton Corners, and the road which led from there to the Castle or Manor of Governor Dongan was and is still called "Manor Road."

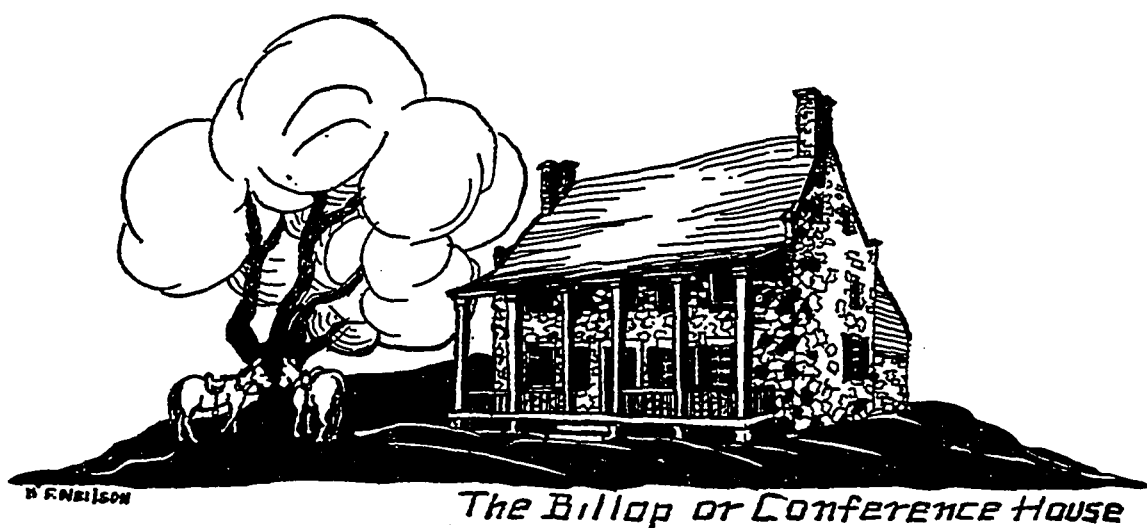
The Island was divided into four towns. That surrounding the castle or manor of Governor Dongan, was called Castletowne, embracing what was the village of New Brighton (now the first ward), Northfield (now the third ward), Southfield (now the fourth ward) and Westfield (now the fifth ward). (The town of Middletown, now the second ward, was not organized until 1866. It is composed of parts of Castleton and Southfield.)

In 1683 the inhabitants were counted, and it was shown that there were about 200 farmers and some Indians. The latter gradually died off, partly due to wars among themselves and partly due to disease.

In 1729 the County Seat was removed from Stony Brook to what was then called Cuckoldstown, which was later and now is called Richmond, in the centre of the Island, the main reason being that it could easily be reached from all parts, and because "there was a bell at St. Andrew's Church, which was thought to add dignity to the place."

In the meantime the Island continued to develop peacefully. The inhabitants were mostly farmers and numbered about 3,000.

Nothing of especial interest transpired on Staten Island, except such historical events as occurred in the Colony of New York; as for instance the wars with France, which from its possessions in Canada was more or less constantly trying to gain possession of the Colony of New York.



The Billop or Conference House



The Battle at St Andrew's Church

REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD

About the middle of the eighteenth century, a general feeling of unrest commenced to make itself felt in all parts of the American Colonies, owing to the oppression of the English Government.

Taxes of all kinds were imposed upon the Americans, and laws were inaugurated in England, which were not to the tastes of the Colonies, and when their protests received no attention nor consideration, a general spirit of rebellion against the mother country became more and more pronounced, until finally in 1774, a congress of the American Colonies assembled in Philadelphia, to determine what steps should be taken.

The King of England expected to crush the opposition by sending an army to America, and as was expected, the colonists prepared for armed resistance.

At Lexington, in the State of Massachusetts, the first blood was shed, and the battle of Bunker Hill, near Boston, where the Americans covered themselves with glory, was fought.

George Washington, of Virginia, was made commander of the American forces, by the Congress of the American Colonies, and a large army was sent to America from England to subdue the revolting colonies.

In 1776 over 100 English ships anchored in the Bay, and a large army of English and Hessian soldiers, under Lord Richard Howe and his brother General William Howe, took possession of Staten Island and fortified all the important points, such as Fort Hill, Richmond, Holland's Hook, Blazing Star (now Rossville), Bentley Manor (now Tottenville), and a number of other places, to protect themselves against the Americans, who assembled in large numbers on the New Jersey shore. For the purpose of making a last effort to bring about peace, after the battle of Long Island, Lord Howe met Benjamin Franklin, John Adams and Edward Rutledge, representatives of the American Congress, in the Billopp house, Tottenville; but nothing came of it and the war continued in earnest. On July 4, 1776 the Declaration of Independence was signed in Philadelphia, and was read by General Howe a few days later at his headquarters in the Rose and Crown farmhouse in New Dorp, where the British forces were encamped. He remarked that "That document has been signed by very determined men."

The Americans made frequent attacks on Staten Island, but owing to the large British force located here, they were unable to accomplish much, but committed acts of great bravery, such as for instance, battles in Richmond and the storming of old St. Andrew's Church, in the fall of 1776, and again in August, 1777, the English soldiers having fortified themselves in the church on both occasions.

Another determined attack was made by the American General, Sullivan, who came over from New Jersey with his command and fought gallantly; also by Lord Stirling, who engaged the Loyalists at Pelton's Cove, West New Brighton, and other points and then both returned to New Jersey, after having inflicted serious injury on the English.

Among other interesting episodes of the war, was the capture of Lieutenant Colonel Christopher Billopp, a Loyalist officer, who was taken prisoner in his own house at the Manor of Bentley by the Americans who had watched his house for days from the steeple of a church in Perth Amboy, across the Staten Island Sound (still standing)

In the meantime, within sight of Staten Island, the battle of Long Island was fought, in which the Americans were defeated and New York was taken possession of by the English. The courage and determination of General Washington and the American Army, in the end, won victory over the English. The great battles of Saratoga, and Yorktown, in which the English were defeated, finally won the liberty of the American colonies, and on November 25, 1783, the British army and navy passed through The Narrows on its way to England. In passing Staten Island, a last parting cannon shot was fired at the Americans, who had assembled on the Heights overlooking The Narrows at Fort Wadsworth, to see the English depart for good, and who in their demonstration of joy and happiness probably provoked a feeling of resentment on the part of the departing Englishmen.

THE MODERN PERIOD

After the English had left, the American colonies—now free and independent—set to work to organize the New Government. It was probably the most critical period in American History, owing to the many differences of opinion as to the form of Government which should be adopted. The American nation was brought to the brink of disaster, but in the end the good, common sense of the people prevailed, and the plan of Government, which has safely guided our destiny so far, was adopted.

Staten Island, known as the County of Richmond, organized its local government and continued to prosper as the most southerly county of the great state of New York.

The inhabitants of Staten Island were mainly farmers and fishermen, but about 1837, the many beauties of nature began to attract the attention of rich merchants of New York, and they bought land here for summer residences.

Thomas Davis purchased a large tract of land between the old Quarantine at Tompkinsville and Sailors' Snug Harbor, on the North Shore. He constructed a fine highway, called Richmond Terrace, erected a number of fine dwellings, mostly in the Colonial style of architecture, and built a large hotel which in later years became known as "The Pavilion." He named the new settlement "New Brighton," after Brighton, the famous seaside resort in England. Staten Island soon became the fashionable center for rich New Yorkers and

Southerners during the summer, and many beautiful and expensive homes were built. With the development of steam navigation, ferries were established between New York and different points on Staten Island and the population grew rapidly in numbers.

In 1858 an event took place which caused much excitement. It was the burning of the old Quarantine hospital at Tompkinsville by citizens of the county, who, after having protested in vain against the presence of a yellow fever hospital in their midst, took the law into their own hands and applied the torch. The State of New York thereupon built two artificial islands in the lower bay—called Hoffman and Swinburne Islands—and transferred the hospitals to these islands—charging the expense to the County of Richmond.

In 1860, Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt, a native of Staten Island and the owner of the ferries between New York and the East Shore, built a railroad from Clifton to Tottenville.

During the Civil War Staten Island furnished its share of soldiers, many of whom laid down their lives for the preservation of the Union.

About 1880, Erastus Wiman believing in the commercial advantages of Staten Island, secured control of the railroad between Clifton and Tottenville. He then built the Rapid Transit Railroad along the shore from South Beach to Holland's Hook, and in place of the many ferries, established one between St. George and New York. A large railroad bridge which spans the Sound, was erected through Mr. Wiman's influence, giving Staten Island direct rail connection with the railroad system on the Mainland.

In 1895, the present system of electric street cars was introduced.

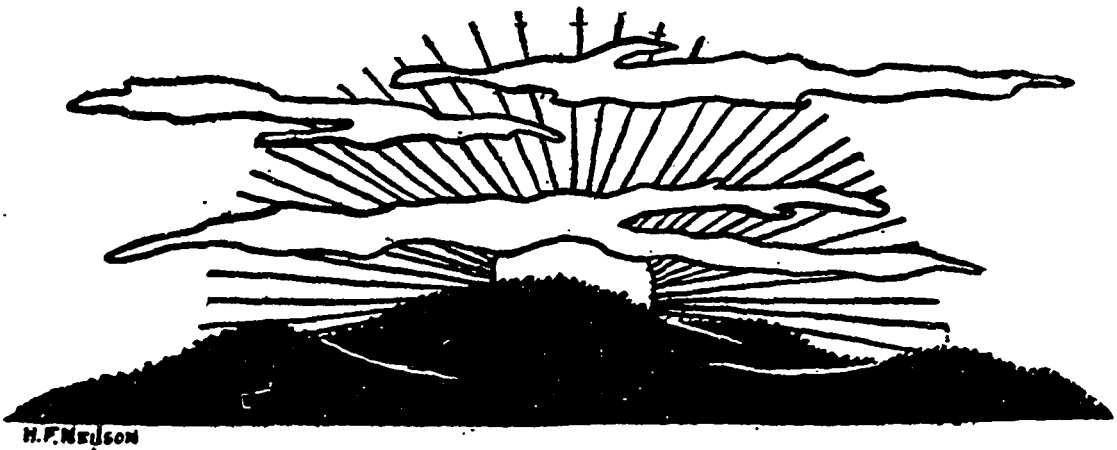
In 1898 Staten Island became a part of the City of New York, under the name of the Borough of Richmond.

In 1900, the Municipal ferry between St. George and Manhattan was started, and later another ferry between Manhattan and Stapleton, but this was finally abandoned.

There were many other important events on Staten Island which cannot be mentioned through lack of space.

Among the many prominent men who lived on Staten Island were Aaron Burr, Vice-President of the United States; Daniel D. Tompkins, Vice-President of the United States; Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt, the founder of the Vanderbilt family; Garibaldi, the Italian Liberator; Santa Anna, a former President of Mexico; Ralph Waldo Emerson, the great American philosopher; Nathaniel Hawthorn; George William Curtis, Erastus Brooks, and other literary men, Bill Nye, the great humorist; Erastus Wiman, commercial and industrial promotor; William Winter, the famous critic and others prominent in the history of our Country.





CONCLUSION

In conclusion let it be said that Staten Islanders may well be proud of their little island.

Where on the American continent is there a place more favored by nature than Staten Island? Its beautiful hills, commanding views of the ocean, its picturesque valleys, its magnificent forests, its pretty lakes, its sea shores, its climate, tempered by the proximity of the ocean, all combine to make it an ideal place for human habitation.

Those who live here love it, and the thoughts of those who have left it often turn with an affectionate memory to the happy days spent among its hills and its valleys—its forests and its lakes, or along its seashore.

SOME OLD STATEN ISLAND FAMILIES

Compiled by Wm. T. Davis

DUTCH

- BOGERT—Here in 1718.
BOWMAN—Census of 1706.
BRAISTED—Here in 1715.
BURBANK—Here in 1705. Census, 1706.
BUSH or BOSCH—Here in 1706.
CHRISTOPHER—Here in 1661. Census of 1706.
CHRISTOPHER, HANS—Land grant, 1685.
CORSEN or CORSON—Here in 1680. Land grant, census of 1706.
ARANTSE—Here in 1677.
CORNELIUS, JACOB—Land grant, 1680.
CRUSER—Land grant, 1677.
CROOSE—Census of 1706.
DE DECKER or DECKER—Here in 1655. Census, 1706.
DE GROOT—Here in 1729.
DE HART—Here in 1707.
EGBERT—Land grant, 1697. Census of 1706.
ENYARD—Land grant, 1697.
GARRISON, GARAETSON—Here in 1680. Census, 1706.
HOUGHWOUT—Census of 1706.
HOUSMAN—Here in 1726.
LISK—Here in 1701. Census, 1706.
LOCKMAN, LAKEMAN, etc.—Here in 1680. Land grant, 1686;
census, 1706.
LAURENS, LAURUS—Land grant, 1677.
MARTLING—Here in 1724.

POST—Here in 1650.
HENDRICK—Here in 1680.
PRALL—Here in 1694. Census, 1706.
PROLL, WOLFORD—Land grant, 1677.
RYERS—Here in 1791.
TUNISON—Here in 1680. Land grant, 1680; census of 1706.
TYSEN—Here in 1661. Land grant, 1676.
SIMONSON—Land grant, 1676; census of 1706.
VAN BUSKIRK—Here in 1780.
VAN CLIEF—Census of 1706.
VAN DUZER—1700.
VAN DERBILT—1718.
VAN NAME—Here in 1709.
VAN PELT—Here in 1696. Census, 1706.
VEGHTIE—Census, 1706.
WANDEL—Here in 1766.
WINANT—
WOGLAM, VAN WOGELUM—Here in 1696. Census, 1706.

SOME OLD STATEN ISLAND FAMILIES

FRENCH

ANDROVETTE—Here in 1699.

BODINE—Here in 1702. Land grant, 1708.

BILLIOU—Here about 1661. Land grants, 1686, 1692 and 1697.
Census, 1706.

BRITTON—Land grants, 1677, 1685; census, 1706.

CORTELYOU—Here in 1720.

CROCHERON—Here in 1682. Census, 1706.

CUSHRON, JOHN—Land grant, 1677.

DE PUY, DEPEW—Here in 1680. Land grant, 1680; census, 1706.

DISOSWAY—Here in 1681. Census of 1706.

DUSACHOY, MARK—Land grants, 1685, 1701.

DUBOIS—Here in 1737.

FOUNTAIN—Here in 1680. Land grant, 1685; census, 1706.

GUYON—Land grant, 1664.

JOURNEAY—Here in 1677, 1680. Census, 1706.

LUTINE, LUTEN—Here in 1661. Land grant, 1686.

LA FORGE—Here in 1738.

LARZELERE—Here in 1686.

LA CONTE, LA COUNT—Census, 1706.

LATOURETTE—Here in 1726.

MANEE—Here in 1699.

MARLETT—Here in 1662, 1680. Land grant, 1699; census, 1706.

MARTINO—Here in 1680. Land grants, 1693, 1694.

MERSEREAU—Here in 1685. Census, 1706.

MICHEAUX—1700.

PERINE, PERRIN—Here in 1666. Census, 1706.

SOME OLD STATEN ISLAND FAMILIES

POILLON—Here in 1677. Census, 1706.

PULLION, JACOB—Land grant, 1677.

SEGUINE—Here in 1725.

SHARROTT—Here in 1776.

CANNON—Here in 1680. Census, 1706.

CRIPS—Here in 1761.

COOL or COLE—Here in 1666. Land grant, 1685.

HILLYER or HILLIARD—Here in 1693.

JACOBSON—*Danish family*. Here in (?)

JOHNSON—Probably two families, Dutch and English. Here in 1680. Land grant, 1677.

NEW or NEVE, PETER—Land grant, 1685.

SWAIM, SWAIN, ETC.—Census, 1706.

SLEIGHT, SLATT, ETC.—Census, 1706.

SIGIN or SIGN—Census, 1706.

GOLDER or GOULDEN—Census, 1706.

SOME OLD STATEN ISLAND FAMILIES

BRITISH

ALSTON—Came here about the time of the Revolution.

ARROWSMITH—Land grant, 1680; census, 1706.

BARNES—Here in 1680.

BEDELL—Here about 1760. British?

BLAKE—Here in 1763.

BILLOP—Here in 1675. Census, 1706.

BUTLER—Here in 1732.

CLARKE—Here in 1680. Land grant that year.

CONNER—Here in 1760.

CUBBERLY—Here in 1769.

DONGAN—Here in 1684. Land grant that year.

DUXBURY—Here in 1693.

FROST—Here in 1774.

HATFIELD—Here in 1718.

HOLMES—Here in 1677.

HOLMES, OBADIAH—Land grants, 1677, 1685.

JONES—Here in 1682.

LAWRENCE, JOHN—As spelled in census, 1706.

LAKE—Here in 1670. Census, 1706.

MARSHALL—Here in 1680.

MERRILL—Here in 1675. Land grant, 1686; census, 1706.

METCALFE—Here in 1765. (Permanent resident in 1816.)

MORGAN—Land grants, 1677 and 1681; census, 1706.

RIDER, ROBERT—Land grant, 1680.

STILWELL—Land grants, 1677, 1680, 1691; census, 1706.

SMITH—Here in 1680.

SHOTWELL—Here in 1680. Land grants, 1680, 1685. Census, 1706.

SPRAGUE—Here in 1729.

STUART—Census, 1706.

TYLLYER, TILLIER—Land grant, 1696. Census, 1706.

TAYLOR—Land grant, 1680. Census, 1706.

TOTTEN—Here in 1765.

TURNER—Here in 1680.

WELLES, PHILIP—Land grant, 1680.

WALTON, THOMAS—Land grant, 1685.

WOOD, DANIEL—Land grant, 1685.

SOME NAMES FROM WALLING'S MAP, 1859,

CASTLETON, S. I.

HOUGHWORT

CRUSER

BRITTON

DR. S. M. ELLIOTT

F. G. SHAW

E. BEMENT

W. S. HOYT

J. C. HENDERSON

D. PELTON

PARKER

CRABTREE

C. K. HAMILTON

A. J. HAMILTON

C. STEBBINS

S. ELY

W. S. PENDLETON

J. C. GREEN

ERNEST FIEDLER

S. G. JONES

G. WETHERSPOON

A. PETTLER

P. P. IRVING

G. W. GRISWOLD

J. WHITTEMORE

B. DAWSON

J. C. THOMPSON

DR. WESTERVELT

D. R. HITCHCOCK

EGBERT

CONNOR or CONNER

MORGAN

R. GROTE

BARTON

WOOD

SHAROT

BURGER

VANDEBILT

DAVIS (Two or more families)

POST

BOGART

HALL

STANDRING

A. C. BRADLEY

TYSON or TYSEN

LORD

ELLINGWOOD

SIMONSON

A. CUNARD

MRS. GRIMES

J. P. NESMITH

WANDEL

BLAKE

A. DUNCAN

G. BECHTEL

NORTHFIELD

KETCHUM	BRAISTED
LA TOURETTE	BUSH
WYETH	LISK
KELLETT	CHRISTOPHER
HILLYER	BEDELL
DECKER (Many)	LAKE
MEISNER	DR. J. T. HARRISON
JONES (Old family)	MARTLING
DISOSWAY	PALMER
PRICE	MERSEREAU
WOOD	LAForge
CORSON	WRIGHT
SIMONSON	BODINE
DUPUY	SHARROTT
ALSTON	ZELUFF
MORGAN	BLAKE
CROCHERON	BUSH
VREELAND	VAN PELT
BRITTON	S. W. BOWMAN
WINANT	GEO. BOWMAN
VROOM	DE HART
J. RIDGWAY	POST
CAPT. J. TRAVIS	BARNES
CONNER	HATFIELD
CANNON	A. O. WILCOX (at Willow Brook)
CRUSER	VAN NAME (Many)
MERRILL or MERRELL (Many)	VAN PELT
CARY	BURBANK
SLEIGHT	DRAKE
HOUSEMAN	THOMPSON

(See book on North Shore by Hine & Davis
for many names, etc.)

SOUTHFIELD

F. L. OLMSTEAD	BARTON
E. J. ROBERTS	STEVENS
JOURNEY	PARKINSON
W. A. SEELEY	FLAKE
SEGUINE	KETTELTAS
COLE	FOUNTAIN
TYSON	CUTHBERTSON
DR. E. CLARK	BARRETT
LAKE	ASPINWALL
POILLON	FELLOWS
STILLWELL	TOWNSEND
CROCHERON	N. MARSH
GUYON	JANIN
JUDGE D. L. CLAWSON	C. GIGNOUX
WM. H. VANDERBILT	D. LOW
H. W. WEED	LUDLOW
J. DILL	DR. ANDERSON
MRS. H. LORD	W. H. ANTHON
BRITTON	H. LEAVITT
EGBERT	G. S. SCOFIELD
GARRISON	OSGOOD
BARNES	G. M. ROOT
WANDELL	BRAISTED
PERINE	VANDERBILT

“J. C. THOMPSON’s Reading Room” shown on the shore side of Bay
St., opposite Gore, now Broad St.

VAN TASSEL	S. R. BRICK
VAN DUZER	J. H. AUSTEN

WESTFIELD

TOTTEN
RECKHOW
SPRAGUE
CRONK
SLEIGHT
PRICE
DISOSWAY
STORER
WINANT (Numerous)
BUTLER
MANEE
LA FORGE
WOOD
LA TOURETTE
SEGUINE
ANDROVETTE
KREISCHER
WOGLOM
OAKLEY (Numerous)
COLE
POILLON

CROPSEY or CROPSY
JOURNEY
BEDELL
BRITTON
MERSEREAU
E. PERKINS
E. BANKER
G. W. SHEPARD
COMMANDER T. G. BENHAM
H. I. SEAMAN
I. K. JESSUP
S. W. BENEDICT
A. BENEDICT
CHRISTOPHER
CRONK
BOEHM
SHEA
W. W. ROSS
H. MASON (Rossville)
MEANS
ELTING