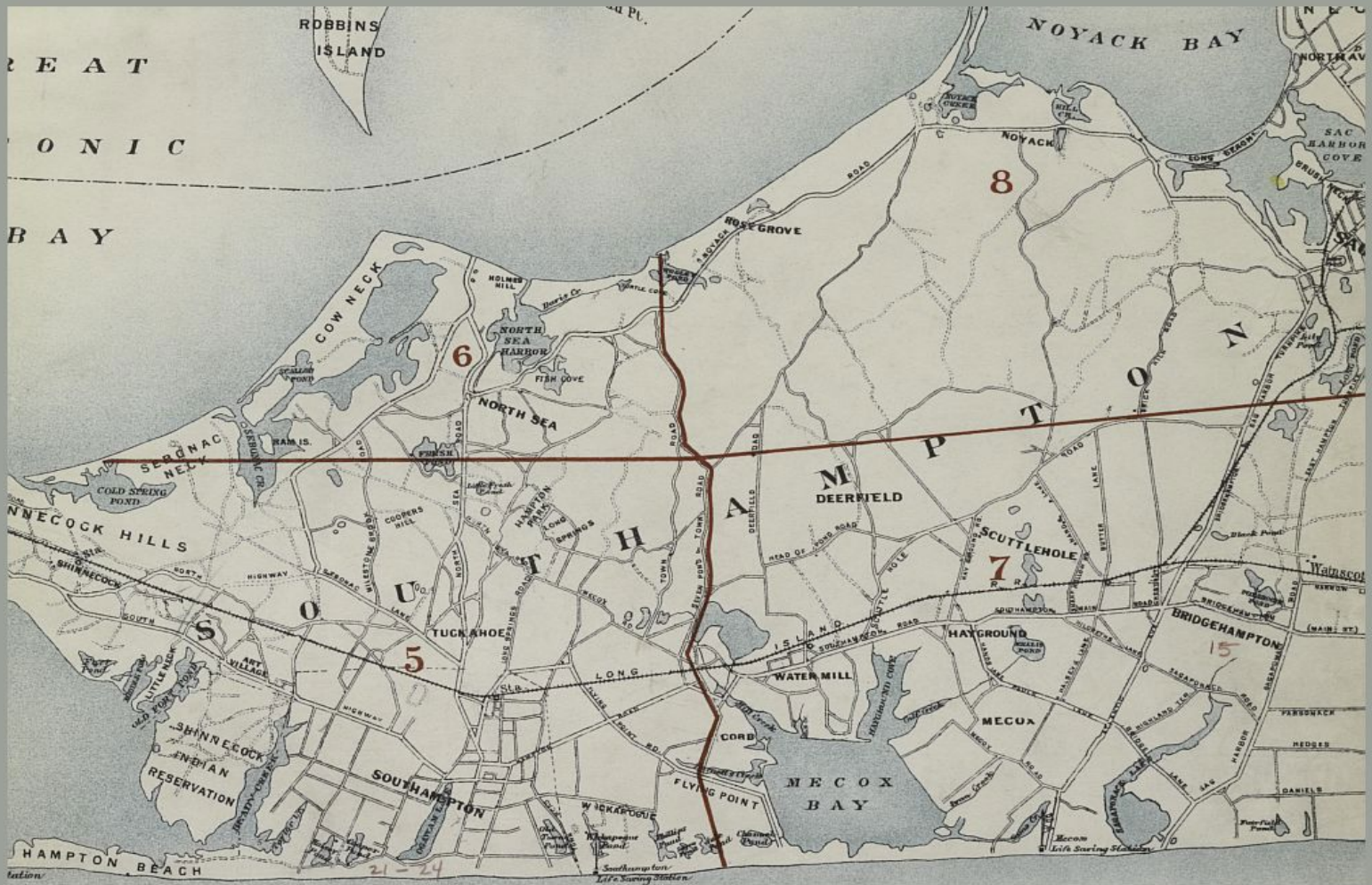


RICHARD MATHER BAYLES



HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE SKETCHES OF SUFFOLK COUNTY, NEW YORK

Historical and Descriptive
Sketches of Suffolk County,
New York

RICHARD MATHER BAYLES

*Historical and descriptive sketches of Suffolk County,
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Jazzybee Verlag Jürgen Beck
86450 Altenmünster, Loschberg 9
Deutschland*

ISBN: 9783849651732

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PREFACE.

When the author commenced work on this book, about two years since, he had become impressed with the idea that the time had arrived when some attempt should be made to bring forward the record of history from the time when Thompson and Prime wrote, to the present. During the thirty years that had elapsed since the writing of the last History of Long Island, a new generation of people had entered upon the field of life, and the greatly increased numbers of our population seemed to demand a more available history of the past. At the same time, those thirty years had developed many and important changes in the history of the Island or County. During that time we had made more history than for a century before, and the times seemed to demand the production of a work which should retain the principal historical items of the former period, to which should be added a continuation down to the present' day.

Then it appeared that a more complete effort in the matter of description than history generally received would add to the interest of the work. Lastly it appeared that to do justice to the whole field of Long Island would be an undertaking too great to be accomplished within a reasonable length of time, and would require a volume of such size and expense as to be beyond the convenient reach of the masses, and would thus prove a pecuniary failure. Acting upon these impressions the compiler set about the work, with but a very imperfect idea of the amount of labor, perplexity and time that would be required to carry it to a successful end. He has the satisfaction of knowing, however, that the work, though it has required a larger outlay than he anticipated, is more complete and more thorough than he intended at the outset to make it. At

the same time it is not perfect— not as nearly so as he would have been pleased to make it.

Nevertheless, a reasonable amount of pains have been taken to avoid mistakes, and to insure as far as possible correctness.

But in this point the compiler meets with numerous difficulties. He experiences perplexity at times for want of sufficient information, and at other times on account of too much information. In consulting different authorities on the same points there often appears such discrepancies that the inquirer turns away in disgust, and despairs of finding the truth. In these sketches very many important items have been omitted on this account—because the various authorities from whom they must be gathered, could not be reconciled. The author does not claim this work to be free from the power of criticism, by any means, but would ask in all seriousness that those who feel disposed to censure or criticize will first make sure that they know more of the items they question than the author does, before setting him down in error.

To relieve the monotony of digging, and searching, and solving contradictory problems, which this work has cost, the author remembers with a grateful heart the many favors he has received at the hands of his friends—generous deeds and kind words of encouragement, which have fallen at times like sun-beams across his path, and inspired him to persevere in the work he had set about.

Taking this means to return the most sincere thanks and heartfelt gratitude, to the scores of friends who have rendered him assistance in the enterprise of preparing these Sketches of Suffolk County he lays down the pen, and hands the book over to the public.

Port Jefferson, L. L, Dec. 20, 1873.

CHAPTER I.

THE DISCOVERY OF LONG ISLAND BY THE DUTCH—
THE SETTLEMENT OF THE WESTERN TOWNS—THE
DUTCH GOVERNMENT—AND THE GENERAL
DISCONTENT—FROM 1609 TO 1664.

In the early part of September, 1609, Henry Hudson, an Englishman, employed by the Dutch East India Company, in the vain search for a Northwest passage to India, discovered the West end of Long Island, at the time he explored New York Bay and the river which bears his name. He had been fitted out by the said Company in the early part of the same year, with a crew of twenty picked men, with a vessel called the "Half Moon." This expedition sailed from Amsterdam on the 25th of March.

While exploring the neighborhood of New York Bay, a party of men went ashore from the "Half Moon," and landed on that strand now known as Coney Island, being the southwestern extremity of Long Island. Here, we are told, they found plum trees and grape vines growing and bearing fruit in the midst of the untutored wilderness.

Thus it appears, Coney Island was the spot where the first white man ever set foot upon Long Island.

The members of this expedition also reported, that they found great numbers of birds of different kinds on the shores, and multitudes of fishes in the waters. A day or two later, as a party of Hudson's men were out in a small boat fishing, they were attacked by Indians and one of their number, John Coleman by name, was killed by an arrow from the latter. Hudson ordered him taken ashore and

buried. The spot of his interment was called Coleman's Point, to commemorate the event. This place is supposed by some to have been on Coney Island, but by others it is located on the opposite or New Jersey shore.

The first discovery of Long Island; having thus been made under the auspices of the Dutch, they laid claim to its ownership, as they did also of the island of Manhattan, or Manhattoes, as it was then called by the Indians.

In 1611, Dutch merchants came over and established a trading post with the Indians, upon the latter island.

In 1614 they erected a fort on Manhattan Island, which they named New Amsterdam, and refused to acknowledge the superior claims of the English to the neighboring territory.

The same year Adrian Block sailed down the Sound, on a voyage to Cape Cod, and was the first to discover that Long Island was entirely surrounded by water. On this voyage he also discovered and gave name to Block Island.

Four years later Thomas Dermer sailed up the Sound from New England, on his way to Virginia, and in describing his passage through Hell Gate he says:—" We found a most dangerous cataract amongst small rocky islands, occasioned by two unequal tides, the one ebbing and flowing two hours before the other."

The Dutch East India Company, under whose employ Hudson had discovered this part of the American Continent, was in 1621 merged into the Great West India Company, and to this organization the "States General" granted the exclusive monopoly of trading with the natives in the province of New Netherlands, for a term of twenty-four years.

In the year 1623, or 4, this Company appointed Peter Minuit to the office of director general, or governor of New Netherlands, under them. Previous to that time a few houses had been erected, and were occupied by the Dutch temporary settlers, on Manhattan Island.

It is evident that the matter of establishing permanent settlements here by the Dutch, received at first but little attention. The main objects which they sought, were the pecuniary benefits arising from a trade with the Indians.

The principal articles exchanged were guns, ammunition and mm, for which they received furs. In this way the early Dutch speculators enriched themselves, by placing in the hands of the Indians the instruments and destructive elements, which a few years later were turned with such fatal and distressing consequences upon the innocent white settlers.

The first settlements under the Dutch on the west end of Long Island were made by individuals, in a hap-hazard manner, just as circumstances might suggest, without any associated attempts at government.

The first white settler upon Long Island of which history gives any account, was one George Jansen de Rapalje, a Frenchman, who established himself during the administration of Peter Minuit, in the vicinity of Wallabout Bay, in the spring of the year 1625. His daughter Sarah Rapalje, born June 9th, of the same year, was the first child of European parentage born upon the Island. Permanent settlements were commenced on both ends of the Island nearly at the same time: on the west end by the Dutch, and on the east end by the English. Thus it will be seen Long Island was virtually claimed by three different powers,—the Indians, the Dutch and the English; though no very fierce measures were taken to establish the supreme rights of either in opposition to the others. The English allowed the Dutch to hold authority over the western part, and the Dutch allowed the English to hold authority over the eastern part. Both powers admitted the superior claims of the Indians to the lands, and neither attempted to force them away, but in all cases purchased their lands of them, at prices which seem to have been perfectly satisfactory. On the west J end large tracts were purchased by the

governor, and by him 'sold to individuals or companies of settlers.

The first regular settlement of the Dutch towns was made about the year 1636 or soon after.

Slaves were introduced by the Dutch very soon after their first arrival.

The towns settled by the Dutch are as follows, with the date of their settlement as near as can be learned:— Brooklyn, at first called Breuck-landt, meaning broken land, settled in 1636; Flatlands, originally called New Amesfort, after a place in Holland from which it is probable the first settlers came, settled in 1636; Flushing, named by the Dutch Vlissengen, after a place in Holland, first settled in 1645; Flatbush, first named Midwont or Mid-wood, probably signifying middle of the woods, settled in 1651; New Utrecht in 1657; and Bushwick, meaning Woodtown, in 1660. The following towns though in the Dutch territory and under the Dutch jurisdiction, were settled by the English.

Hempstead in 1643, Gravesend in 1645, Oysterbay in 1653, Jamaica in 1655, and Newtown in 1656. The territory of Oysterbay, though at first claimed by the Dutch, remained for many years in a sort of neutral position, and finally came under the dominion of Connecticut. The other four towns were under the control of the government of New Amsterdam, until the conquest of 1664. The original name of Newtown was Middleburgh; and that of Jamaica, Rustdorpe.

The Dutch allowed English immigrants to settle within their borders, on taking the oath of allegiance to the States General and the West India Company.

The English settlers on Dutch territory purchased their lands of the Indians, having first obtained license from the governor to do so. These lands were generally purchased by companies in large tracts, which were afterwards divided up among the individual proprietors.

The inhabitants of the English towns in the Dutch limits, were allowed to elect their own local officers and magistrates, which elections however were subject to the approbation or rejection of the governor. The common method seems to have been for the people to elect double the number of candidates required, and from these the governor made his choice of which should act. They had their town-meetings, and managed their own affairs, as near after the model of the towns on the east end of the Island as their circumstances would allow.

Unlike the English towns of Suffolk County, where the voice of the people was the sovereign power, the Dutch towns of the west end were, subjected to the whimsical domination of a bigoted tyrant, who held the prerogatives of granting lands to settlers—of making laws by which they were to be governed—appointing the officers to enforce and execute those laws—hearing and deciding such cases of disagreement as he chose to call from the hands of subordinate magistrates—ordering churches to be built—installing ministers, and dictating where and when they should preach—and in fact exercising unlimited authority over the people in all their characters—corporate and individual—civil, military, social and ecclesiastical. He employed the assistance of a council, but that body of professed associates, were simply his tools, among which as elsewhere in the province of New Netherlands, his own word was the highest law. The governor appointed magistrates and constables in each of the Dutch towns, and delegated to them power to act, subject to his discretion and pleasure. In some cases the people were allowed the privilege of suggesting measures, which if approved by the governor were carried into effect.

The Dutch government at New Amsterdam was thus but little less than an absolute monarchy. This burden of tyranny in addition to the perils of the wilderness, to which they were exposed, and the otherwise unfavorable

circumstances with which they were surrounded, in a wild, new country, far removed from the advantages of civilization, rendered the situation of the settlers under the Dutch jurisdiction, peculiarly unpleasant and discouraging. Discontent arose, and the pioneers sighed for the blessings of a more secure and liberal government. September 19th, 1650, four commissioners, two from the Dutch government, and two from the United Colonies of New England, met at Hartford, to settle if possible the disputes which had risen between the Dutch and English, respecting the boundary between the two powers on Long Island. They decided upon a line which should commence at the "westernmost part of Oysterbay" on the north side, and extend southward to the sea, as a proper division of the territory. This line however was not wholly regarded, for the Dutch governor still persisted in his claim of authority over the town of Oysterbay, which by that treaty belonged to the English.

In the Dutch settlements, the management of church affairs, like all other matters, was more or less subject to the pleasure of the governor. In 1654 he ordered the erection of a house for public worship at Flatbush. This was the first one erected under the Dutch rule on Long Island. Its dimensions were thirty-five by sixty feet, and twelve or fourteen feet high. In 1655 the governor directed the people of neighboring towns to assist in getting out timber for the church. It was probably completed some four or five years later, at a total cost of 4,637 guilders. A guilder was equal to forty cents of our money. The necessary funds for the erection of this church were raised by contributions from the people of Flatbush, and neighboring towns who were united with them in church relations. Assistance in the enterprise was also received from the settlements of Fort Orange (Albany), and New Amsterdam. Governor Stuyvesant himself contributed 400 guilders.

The Dutch settlers, as would appear most natural, brought with them the religious inclinations of the

Fatherland. The churches they established were under the care of the sissup of Amsterdam, and so continued for more than a century, before an independent union on the same model was organized in America.

The popular discontent which seemed all the time to be on the increase, was at last ventilated by a meeting of nineteen delegates, representing the people of New York, Brooklyn, Flushing, Newtown, Hempstead, Flatlands, Flatbush, and Gravesend, who met at New Amsterdam, December 11th, 1653.

They then drew up a remonstrance against the arbitrary measures and action of the government, in which they set forth their grievances, and prayed for a relief from the oppression I under which they groaned. This remonstrance was respectfully submitted to the governor and council, but they made no reply to it, beyond disputing the right of some of the towns to be represented in the delegation, and protesting against the meeting. Two days later the delegates presented a further remonstrance, in which they intimated an intention of appealing to the highest powers of the Netherlands, if they could not obtain redress for their troubles here. At this suggestion Gov. Stuyvesant became so indignant, that he peremptorily ordered the delegates to go home and never to assemble again on such an errand.

Thus the situation was made worse if possible than before.

No attempt appears to have been made to carry out the hinted intention of appealing to the Dutch authorities at home.

To fill the cup of discouragements and hardships under which the settlers labored, their dominion about this time was infested by "land pirates" and thieves, against whose incursions the government offered but a very feeble protection.

These parties were supposed to be wandering exiles, who had been banished from the colonies of New England for some misdemeanor or other.

In some of the towns, the people took the matter into their own hands, and organized military companies to protect their villages against the approach of these marauding vagabonds.

George Baxter and James Hubbard were the two delegates from Gravesend to the meeting of 1653, which presented the offensive remonstrances, and it was to the former that Gov.

Stuyvesant ascribed the authorship of those documents.

These two gentlemen were leading spirits, and charter members of the town of Gravesend. Baxter had been employed as private secretary to Gov. Kieft, and had also been appointed by Gov. Stuyvesant as a commissioner to the treaty of 1650 which denned the bounds between the English and Dutch jurisdiction on Long Island. In 1654 these men having been elected by the people for the office of magistrate, were set aside by the governor. It appears they had served before in the same capacity, and this action of the governor in ejecting from office those whom the people had tried and found faithful, gave rise to an ominous storm of indignation, which the wooden-legged veteran found some difficulty in quieting. He succeeded however by enlisting the influence of Lady Moody, a woman of prominent standing and popular connections with the settlement. Her influence among the people restored conciliation, and passive acceptance of the governor's decision.

Finding there was no encouragement to hope for better things under the Dutch rule, the English settlers determined if possible, to obtain a connection with the colony of Connecticut. In February, 1663, the people of the English towns under the Dutch (whether in a body or represented by delegates does not appear), held a meeting

at Hempstead, and there decided and agreed to dissolve their compulsory connection with the Dutch government, and unite with the newly organized colony of Connecticut. A new charter had been granted to that colony the year previous, which charter included the former colony of New Haven, and also, according to the construction placed upon its language by the General Court of Connecticut—whether that construction was the one intended or not—embraced the whole of Long Island. To this interpretation the eastern towns had gladly assented, and availed themselves of its benefits, and their English neighbors within the Dutch limits sought to do the same. It is evident that they, having long been burdened with the yoke of Dutch tyranny, saw in the new charter of Connecticut a glimmer of encouragement to strike for deliverance. The earnest wishes of the people as expressed by this meeting having been set before the General Assembly of Connecticut, March 10th, 1663, two commissioners, George Wyllys and Mathew Allyn, were appointed to go over and organize the government among the English towns on the west end of Long Island.

Whether these commissioners fulfilled their mission or not does not appear. The histories are silent on the subject of their further action in the matter. It is therefore probable, that either from the neglect of the commissioners, or the opposition of the Dutch governor, the project of annexation was abandoned.

Thus, no effort of the people to rid themselves of the yoke of bondage was successful, and the loose-jointed and unsatisfactory state of affairs seems to have continued till the conquest in 1664,

CHAPTER II.

SETTLEMENT OF THE ENGLISH TOWNS OF SUFFOLK COUNTY UP TO THE CONQUEST OF 1664.

In the year 1497 the English, through their representative, Sebastian Cabot, claimed to have discovered North America, from thirty to fifty-eight degrees north latitude. Voyages were made to different parts of the coast, by English navigators, before the year 1606.

In 1620 King James I. of England, granted a patent to the Plymouth Company for all the land lying between forty and forty-eight degrees north latitude, extending through from "sea to sea," or in other words from the Atlantic to the Pacific, though it is evident that in those times the people of the Old World had but a very imperfect idea of the distance through the "howling wilderness," or across the continent.

These bounds of course included Long Island. The territory thus granted was called New England, and the privilege of "planting, ruling, and governing" it was given to the Plymouth Company.

After granting the Plymouth patent in 1621, the Massachusetts patent in 1628, and the Connecticut patent in 1631, the Plymouth council on the 22nd of April, 1635, granted a patent for the whole of Long Island to William Alexander, Earl of Stirling. This was done in compliance with the request or order of King Charles I.

In June of the same year the company surrendered its patent to the crown.

April 26, 1636, the Earl of Stirling appointed James Farrett as his agent, to dispose of real estate on Long

Island, and authorized him to act by a power of attorney to that effect.

In consideration of his services Farrett was allowed to take up a certain amount of the land for his own benefit, wherever upon the island he might choose. In exercising this right he made choice of Shelter Island and Robbins Island.

Earl Stirling died in 1640, and was succeeded by his son, who also died a few months afterwards. His heir surrendered the grant of Long Island soon after, and it was embodied in the King's patent to the Duke of York in 1664.

During several years that passed between the time Stirling's patent was abandoned and the reception of the new charter of Connecticut in 1662, the eastern part of Long Island was not claimed by any power, consequently the settlers held the controlling power in their own hands, and disposed their governmental affairs according to their own wishes. During this interim they purchased lands of the Indians, without being obliged to obtain patents for the same from any other source.

Purchases were however regulated somewhat by the towns, and afterward subject to confirmation by the governors who presided over the Colony under the Duke.

The first English individual settlement within the bounds of Suffolk County, was made by Lyon Gardiner on Gardiner's Island in 1639. He was probably the first English settler within the territory now occupied by New York State.

The following towns were settled by the English, and held undisputed control over their own affairs, until the organization of the Duke's government in 1664. Southampton settled in 1640; Southold settled the same year; Easthampton in 1648; Shelter Island in 1652; Huntington in 1653; Brookhaven in 1655; and Smithtown in 1663. Oysterbay settled in 1653, as is also stated in another chapter, was on territory claimed by the Dutch, so

the freedom of its local government was in a measure restricted by the partial control which the latter were able to exercise over it.

The settlers were mostly Englishmen, who had emigrated, and after remaining a short time in the colonies of New England, came across to the Island in companies of eight to fifteen families each, and planted themselves here in independent colonies. Their numbers were speedily increased by other companies of immigrants joining them.

They were very zealous in their devotion to religious matters, earnest in cherishing and extending the genial influence of Christianity, and profound in their reverence for the Bible and its teachings.

Like the patriarch Noah, whose first act on emerging from the ark was to set up an altar and offer sacrifice to God, who had preserved him from the flood which had swallowed up a wicked world, so one of the first acts of the early settlers of Long Island, after landing upon the soil of a new world, was to set up their altars and offer up the sacrifice of thankful hearts to Him who had preserved them and brought them safely hither. Before the echoes of the Indian war-whoop had died away, or the camp-fires and hunting grounds and wigwams of the savages were supplanted by the paraphernalia of civilization, the pure principles of the Christian religion were established and cultivated here, on the wild shores of a new land. From religious persecution at home our fore-fathers had fled to this new country, to enjoy the exercise of their own liberal opinions.

The organization of churches, and provision for gospel preaching, and attention to the spiritual interests of the colonies, were to them matters of the first importance. The settlers of Southampton, and Southold, were organized into churches before coming to the island, and brought their ministers with them.

The churches and their affairs seem to have been regarded as being under the fostering care and legitimate charge of the people and officers of the town, in their organized capacity.

Each town was at first an independent government, the people in their assemblages making their own laws, and choosing their own executives, without any connection or allegiance whatever, with any other civil power on the face of the earth. Each little colony was a combination of civil, military, social, and religious government. Forts were built and garrisoned; companies of militia kept organized for protection; civil laws enacted and enforced; the social condition of the people guarded, and vices which threatened its welfare punished and restrained; churches and schools established, and ministers and teachers supported;—by one and the same authority—the people in their character as an organized town.

The expense of sustaining these various departments, including the salaries of ministers and teachers, was met by a tax upon the people. Assessments were made upon each individual in proportion to the amount of land he had taken up.

The towns kept a vigilant eye upon the character of their inhabitants. Individuals who proposed to join the settlements, were generally placed on probation for a term of from three to six months, and if at the end of the term, their behavior and character was approved, they were admitted to the privileges of freemen and allotted certain proportions of land, with a share in the rights of other settlers. Committees were appointed to investigate the character and reputation of those who proposed to become fellow residents and freeholders. Whenever the character of such candidates did not prove satisfactory to the townspeople or the committee, they were directed to leave the jurisdiction, generally within a specified time. No individual inhabitant was allowed to sell or lease real

estate, to a stranger not accepted by the town or investigating committee as a proper person to become a member of the colony. By enforcing these restrictions, society was kept measurably free from the presence of undesirable neighbors.

The judicial and executive functions of each town were exercised by two or three magistrates, a clerk, and a constable. These officers were elected by the people at their annual town meetings. In the town courts juries were drawn for the trial of a case, when either party desired it. Seven men were required for a jury, and a majority of them was competent to return a verdict. These town courts were not only entrusted with judicial power, but legislative also, and frequently passed laws and orders which were accepted and enforced, the same as those passed by the people in their public congregations.

These public congregations of the people of a town, were held annually, for the election of officers, enactment of such laws and regulations as the times required, and the decision of important cases of dispute between individuals, or the hearing of heavy criminal cases which might be referred to them from the subordinate town court. The people in this their sovereign capacity were called the general court of the town. Whenever important matters required attention, a special session of the general court was called.

The town at an early date adopted precautionary measures to guard their society against the spreading evils of intemperance. The unrestricted sale of intoxicating drinks was forbidden, and the few who were authorized to deal in them at all, were held responsible for their obedience to certain laws and regulations in the matter. The general courts prescribed the maximum quantity which might be sold to a single individual within a specified time, and a heavy fine, or forfeiture of his license, was the penalty imposed upon the vender who should disregard the

rule. Inn-keepers were not to allow anyone to become intoxicated, or to continue drinking, after a certain hour of the night, under penalty of being expelled from the position. Special regulations were prescribed for dealing out strong drinks to Indians. In some cases it was prohibited altogether.

Sabbath-breaking and profanity were crimes, for which most of the towns prescribed punishment.

Lying, slander, and drunkenness, were provided for by rigid enactments.

The stocks and the whipping-post were common instruments of punishment in those days.

There was no union or combination of these towns into counties, or "ridings," until the conquest of 1664, when the whole of Long Island fell under the English government of New York.

After managing their own affairs in an independent manner for a few years, the English towns of Long Island that were in possession of the power to do so, voluntarily placed themselves under the protection of the New England colonies.

This was done by the different towns at different times. Southampton, the first to take the step, sought the protection of Connecticut in 1644. In 1657 Easthampton followed suit. Brookhaven did the same in 1659, and Huntington followed in 1660. In 1648 Southold joined the colony of New Haven.

Shelter Island appears to have been united in its government with Southold. These were all the independent towns which had been settled previous to the year 1662.

It is not to be supposed that these towns placed themselves under the New England colonies because their efforts at self-government had not proved satisfactory. The alliances thus formed, were desired for the better protection of these exposed towns, and did not subject them to the control or taxation of the New England

colonies. The territory occupied by these towns, not having been claimed by any of the colonies, and as it appears to have been abandoned by the holder of Earl Stirling's patent, was in a poor condition for defense against invasion by hostile Indians or the Dutch.

In 1662 the colony of New Haven was united to that of Connecticut, and a new and more liberal charter granted to the united colony by King Charles EL On the strength of a clause in this new charter, including the "islands adjacent,"

Connecticut now claimed Long Island. This claim was seconded by the towns of Suffolk County. Seeing the provisions in the new charter, which allowed the people a voice in legislation as well as the election of their own officers, these towns were desirous to become a part of the Connecticut colony, and as such they were in a measure constituted. Each town was represented by deputies in the Colonial Assembly, and was required to contribute its proportionate amount of funds, from which to pay the general expenses of the government.

In 1662 the people of Oysterbay, who had previously maintained a sort of neutral position between the Dutch and English, expressed their preference for the authority of the latter, and voluntarily placed themselves under the jurisdiction of the government of Connecticut.

In the early part of 1664, the General Court proposed to perfect the new arrangements, by organizing and establishing courts of justice in the towns on the island. On this mission they sent the governor and two others, who called a meeting at Setauket in June.

It is needless to inquire into the arrangements which that commission may have made, for whatever they were, they were rendered inoperative by the opening of a new epoch in the history of the island. That epoch was the conquest of 1664, a revolution which left Long Island in the hands of a new power.

CHAPTER III.

LONG ISLAND UNDER THE COLONIAL GOVERNMENT —FROM THE CONQUEST OF 1664 TO THE REVOLUTION.

The year 1664 was the commencement of a new era, which burst upon the oppressed English towns on the western part of Long Island, like the light of better days to come. It brought a revolution of affairs, which revived the drooping spirits of a people, whose hopes were well-nigh crushed out beneath the tyrant's foot. We can imagine the light of gladness, and the glow of rising hope, that flashed across the worn faces of those pioneers, when they received the welcome tidings, that the scepter of New Netherlands had been surrendered to the Duke of York. Something like, it must have been, to that which sparkled in the eye of Israel's captive children, when Moses called them to go out from beneath the rod of their Egyptian task-masters. How free they breathed the pure air of heaven, as though a great burden, long carried, had rested from their shoulders. How the mist that had fogged their ideal picture of a good government vanished, and faith saw the beautiful details of peace, liberty and prosperity intensified, and brought nearer. The prospect was indeed "fair to look upon," and it inspired fresh hope and new energy in the desponding hearts of the inhabitants.

The English towns under the Dutch had held a mass-meeting at Jamaica, in November of the year previous, to devise if possible some means of relief, but that meeting seems to have been about as fruitful of good results as former demonstrations had been, and no more so. Both the

Dutch and English settlers were alike prepared to welcome any revolution which might promise to liberate them from the unjust and offensive rule of that government, whose insults they endured because they could not avoid.

On the 12th of March, 1664, Charles II. of England, by virtue of his claim to this part of the American Continent, as before stated, made a grant of land to his brother James, Duke of York, including within its liberal boundaries, the territory then occupied by the Dutch at New Amsterdam, with the whole of Long Island.

The Duke immediately fitted out an expedition, to take possession of the field covered by this patent. Richard Nicolls was commissioned Deputy Governor of this Colony, and Robert Carr, George Cartwright, and Samuel Maverick, were appointed to associate with him in governing the colony.

Under their command, four ships were sent, carrying nearly one hundred and fifty guns, and some six hundred men. The fleet arrived in New York Bay in August of the same year, and Col. Nicolls sent word to Gov. Stuyvesant, demanding a surrender of the premises and fortifications held by him.

Gov. Stuyvesant at first stoutly refused to comply with the demand, but after a few days spent in consultation with the burgomasters and people of the city, and finding the latter strongly in favor of such a course, he was forced to yield to the popular sentiment, and with much reluctance agreed to a surrender.

While the authorities on Manhattan Island were holding controversy over the subject of surrender, Col. Nicolls and the Commissioners landed at Gravesend, and held a consultation with the people of the island, and Gov. Winthrop of Connecticut. To the members of this meeting he exhibited the Duke's patent, also his own commission, and those of his associates. At the same time, officers were sent to the English towns, to recruit volunteers for service

in an attack upon New Amsterdam, should the obstinacy of the governor render such a measure necessary.

About this time, at least before the surrender was made, Col. Nicolls and his associate commissioners issued a proclamation, dated August 20th, directed to the people under their prospective jurisdiction, in which they promise to those who shall submit to "His Majesty's" government as good subjects, the peaceable enjoyment of "whatever God's blessing and their honest industry have furnished them with, and all other privileges with his Majesty's English subjects." By this means the people were led to suppose that a government was to-be established, in which they would be allowed to participate through their chosen representatives, and they hailed with gladness the installation of the new regime.

On the 26th of August, old style Gov. Stuyvesant agreed to surrender, and the governmental reins of the colony passed into English hands. He retired upon a farm in the neighborhood, which he continued to occupy until the time of his death, several years afterward.

It was with much unwillingness that the formerly independent English towns on the eastern part of Long Island, consented to the transfer of their political connection and patronage, from Connecticut, to the Duke's government Connecticut also at first insisted upon her claim to them.

Gov. Winthrop, however, endeavored by his influence and authority to reconcile both parties to the change.

Colonel, now Governor -Nicolls, and his associates, called together a few representatives from Connecticut and Long Island, on the 30th of November, 1664, and after listening to their reasons why the eastern towns of Long Island should not be separated from the allegiance of their choice, decided that Long Island Sound should be the boundary between that colony and the colony or province of New York. To this decision the colonial deputies, having really no

alternative, assented, and Long Island, for the first time united in its government, came wholly beneath the rod of English royalty.

In February, 1665, in order to establish the government uniformly in the towns, Gov. Nicolls issued a proclamation, directing the people of each town on the island to send two deputies to a meeting to be held at Hempstead on the first of March ensuing. When the deputies assembled, they were so much pleased by the prospects of better things than they had before enjoyed, that they drew up and signed a memorial of gratitude and loyalty, addressed to "His Royal Highness the Duke of York." In this address the signers express their humble acknowledgement of the honor bestowed upon them, in being made the subjects of His Majesty's government, and pledge themselves and their constituents to the respect and obedience of all such laws and statutes as shall be made by virtue of his Majesty's authority; naming this address as a memorial and record, to witness against them, should they ever fail in the discharge of their duties as loyal subjects; and praying for His Majesty's speedy consideration of their "poverties and necessities in this wilderness country," and soliciting further, his protection, favor, and encouragement, in their efforts for the improvement of His Majesty's western dominions. The deputies whose signatures are appended to this document, represent the towns of New Utrecht, Gravesend, Flatlands, Flatbush, Bushwick, Brooklyn, Newtown, Flushing, Jamaica, Hempstead, Oysterbay, Huntington, Brookhaven, 'Southold, Southampton, Easthampton, and Westchester. It is perhaps unnecessary to say that the latter town was not on Long Island.

This expression of the deputies appeared all very well at the time, but developments which immediately followed, proved it to have been premature. Not long were they permitted to enjoy the "dear delusion," under whose flattering influence they were prompted to make this

demonstration of submission and reverence. The fact soon became apparent, that the people were not to have a voice in the legislation of the colony, nor the privilege of electing their own magistrates.

When these facts became known to the people, they censured their deputies for signing the address to His Royal Highness, with such severity, that the court of assize in October, 1666, deemed it necessary to pass a resolution to the effect that whoever should use vindictive language against any of the said deputies should be arrested, and held to answer for slander before the court of assize.

At the Hempstead convention the boundaries of the towns were settled more definitely, and differences adjusted in real estate matters between individuals. The Governor furnished the deputies with duplicate copies of a code of laws which had been compiled at his dictation, and by which the colony was to be governed. These laws were similar in general to, and had probably been taken from those of other English colonies.

They were called the Duke's laws, and contained many of those regulations for the suppression of sabbath-breaking, drunkenness, profanity, and slander, which were so common among the enactments of the English towns of Suffolk county before the conquest.

The towns of Long Island were now for the first time organized into combinations. They constituted, in connection with Staten Island and Westchester, a political division of the government, called Yorkshire. This was again subdivided into three parts called "ridings." The East riding comprised the territory now occupied by Suffolk county. Hempstead, Flushing, Jamaica, and Oysterbay, were included in the North riding; and the towns at present belonging in Kings county, with Newtown, were set off in the West riding.

The ridings were established principally for the accommodation of courts, and the convenience of

apportioning taxes.

Each town had a justice of the peace, appointed by the governor; and at first eight, afterwards four overseers, and a constable, elected by the people, and charged with the duty of assessing taxes, holding town courts, and regulating such matters of minor importance in the government of the town, as should not be provided for by the laws or orders of the governor. The jurisdiction of the town court was limited to cases not exceeding £5.

A court of sessions, composed of the justices of the peace, was established in each riding. This court was held twice a year, and was competent to decide all criminal cases, and all civil ones where the sum of difference exceeded £5. Judgments rendered in this court, for sums under £20 were final; but in cases exceeding that amount, an appeal to the court of assize was allowed. Criminal cases involving capital punishment, required the unanimous concurrence of twelve jurors; but all other cases were decided by the majority of seven jurors. The high sheriff, members of the council, and the secretary of the colony, were authorized to sit with the justices in this court. The court of assize was held once a year, in the city of New York. It was composed of the governor, council, and an indefinite number of the justices. It entertained appeals from the inferior courts, and had original jurisdiction in cases where the demand exceeded £20. The governor appointed a high sheriff for the shire, and a deputy sheriff for each riding.

All the towns were now required to take out patents for their lands.

The court of assize was the nominal head of the government—legislative and judicial. It was in reality however, nothing more than the governor's cloak, under cover of which he issued whatever regulations his judgment or fancy dictated.

All its members held their positions during his pleasure, and were no doubt virtually obliged to sanction his views,

and second his opinions.

If therefore the English governors directly after the conquest, were less despotic in their rule than the Dutch had been before them, their leniency was owing more to disposition than the limitation of their power.

The political situation under the new regime was but little better than before. Many of the laws, amendments, and orders enacted by the governor through the name of the court of assize, were arbitrary, obnoxious, and oppressive to the people. October 9, 1669, several towns on the west end of the island petitioned the governor for redress of their grievances, but without producing the desired effect.

The early governors imposed duties on imported and exported goods, disposed of the public lands, and levied taxes on the people, for the support of the government. The financial department of the colony, like everything else pertaining to its government was under their control, and this power over the treasury was, no doubt, in many cases used to enrich their own pockets.

October 8, 1670, a special levy was made upon the towns of Long Island, to raise funds to repair the fort at New York.

In reply to this demand, Southold, Southampton, and Easthampton, in a joint meeting by delegates, expressed their willingness to submit to the tax, if they could be allowed the right of representation in the legislature, to which the latter town by the voice of her people added, "but not otherwise."

The towns of Huntington, Mushing, Hempstead, and Jamaica, in their town-meetings, refused to submit to the order, on the same grounds—because they were denied the rights of Englishmen, to a voice in the law-making of that government which they were thus called upon to support. Whether this tax was ever collected in these towns or not we do not know, but in their refusal to submit to the order,

we see the first fruits of that spirit of desperate resistance against "taxation without representation," which, a little more than a hundred years later, culminated in the war for independence.

This tax was ordered during the administration of Francis Lovelace, who succeeded Richard Nicolls in 1667. It was in keeping with his views on the subject of holding the people in submission, as expressed by himself in a letter to a friend, by imposing "such taxes on them as may not give them liberty to entertain any other thoughts but how to discharge them."

The administration of Governor Lovelace was brought to an unexpected end, by the surrender of the colony to its former masters, the Dutch. While England was engaged in war with Holland, the latter sent out two small squadrons, to destroy the commerce of the former with the West Indies.

These Dutch squadrons, after achieving a very brilliant success in the line of their original undertaking, capturing a hundred and twenty sail of French and English merchantmen, turned their attention to the re-capture of the former Dutch possessions in America. Arriving at Sandy Hook on

the 30th of July, 1673, they demanded the surrender of the fort and colony, which demand was yielded to without a word of opposition, or the firing of a single gun. The commandant of the fort, Captain Manning, was afterward tried for treachery and cowardice, and sentenced to have his sword broken over his head.

Anthony Colve was immediately appointed governor of the colony, and at once commenced the work of obtaining the submission of the people to his authority, and re-organizing the government according to his own notions. This was a comparatively easy matter in the towns which had been under the Dutch before, but with the towns of the East riding it was quite different. After modifying the