

FORT AND COURTHOUSE SITES  
AND STRUCTURES

Excerpts from the Sources

- 1661 • Peter Stuyvesant, Director **General** of New Netherland • for the West India Company - claiming that the Swedes had invaded Dutch territory by settling on the South River, came to the Delaware with ships and men and built Fort Casimir at the site of New Castle.
- 1654 • The guard of soldiers and others left at Fort Casimir by Stuyvesant in 1651 was joined by Dutch settlers from Manhattan, so that by 1654, when the arriving new **Gov-ernor** of the Swedes, Johan Rising, took the fort from the Dutch and named it Fort Trinity, Dutchmen had erected twenty-two houses near the fort.
- 1654 • Peter Lindestrom, Swedish civil engineer, who came to the Delaware with the Swedish Commander Rising, describes the land along the river **both** north and south of Fort Casimir as rich and fertile, and records that 21 Holland colonists had erected **their** dwellings at **Sandhook (New Castle)**, "... **"the** Hollanders have also fortified and built a fortress with four **bastions.....however** when we arrived in New Sweden, it had fallen into almost total decay.. .., the said fortress **was** built up anew (by Lindestrom et al) practically from the foundation, much stronger fortified and improved with **bastions."**  
Geographia Americae, p. 173 & p. 87 • translated by **Amandus Johnson**.
- 1655 • At the time Stuyvesant came to the Delaware and wrested from the Swedes the whole of the Delaware River territory, most of the **21** householders (who had been forced to remain and work for Rising for a time after his arrival) had returned to Manhattan, but came back with Stuyvesant or later. Stuyvesant repaired the fort and left soldiers and citizens there, including some Swedes and Finns who lived nearby.
- 1655 • Instructions for Vice-Director Jacquet at Fort Casimir: **"He** shall not grant building or farm lots on the edge of the valley of Fort Casimir, to wit between the **Kil** and the aforesaid Fort nor behind the Fort, but he **shall** reserve the land for reinforcements and outworks of the Fort; likewise in order to favor more the concentrated settlements on the south side of the Fort, he shall upon occasion clear a good street behind the houses already built and lay out the same in convenient order and lots of about 40 to 50 feet width and 100 feet length, the street to be 4 or 6 rods **wide."**  
Pennsylvania Archives, 2nd Series, Vol. **VII**, p. 523.  
N. Y. Documents **XII**, p. 116.

- 1656 - Report of the **Commission** (of **Dec. 25, 1665**) on the condition of the fort: "**We.....examined** and found the fort to be decayed in its walls and batteries and that the **same** fort, if a good work is to be made of it, must be run up from the ground, whereas the outwork has **already** for the greater part fallen under foot and what is still standing must necessarily fall, because it is burst and distended by **water.**"  
**Fernow, p. 135.**
- 1667 - August **22** - Vice-Director Alrichs to Director **Stuyvesant**: "**We** have no storehouse ready yet to store the goods" (sent from Manhattan.)
- September 16 - Alrichs writes to Stuyveeant for as many thousand bricks as Skipper Jacob **Jansen Huys** can carry in the "**galiot**" and 300 or 400 **boards.**  
)**Penna. Archives, 2nd Series, Vol. VII, p, 551-2.)**
- November 14 - The "**galiot**" had arrived with bricks and 250 boards, There were a good many bricks - and Alrichs gave 7000 or 8000 of them to the Commisary at Altena, who had been demanding supplies to repair that fort,  
**Archives, Vol. VII, p. 566.**
- 1658 - **March 18** - Director Alrichs had received about 300 boards from Fort Orange by the Skipper, Huys, "which I needed here extremely for carpenter-work in the store-house and for a dwelling house for the Commisary, also the house in the Fort, in which I live, which has been raised one third for a chamber and a **garret;.....I** have also been obliged to make a new guard house, as the old **one.....** was entirely decayed,"  
**Penna. Archives, 2nd Series, Vol. VII, p. 577,**

#### Fort and other buildings

- 1657-8** - By Jacob Alrichs: Fort repaired - and the following erected: A magazine and store house, a guard house, a "**bake** house in the **square**", (the square of the fort) a forge, residences for the clergymen and other public officers, atwo-story log house **20" x 20"** to be a city hall for the burghers - (on the **square?**), private houses, Total buildings standing in **1658**: 100,  
Sources: Holland Documents, **Vol. 15**, pp, 12, 213, **233, 252. Vol. 16, pp. 196, 200.**  
Colonial Records, **Vol. 2, pp. 234 para. 4; 337.**
- See references to **Fernow, Vol. XII** on following data,

- 1668 - March 30 - Alriche wrote to Stuyvesant, that the Captain of the soldiers had been so lenient with them that he (**Alrichs**) is criticised for "a tyrant over the soldiers, when I sometimes admonished them, that the square of the fort should be swept clean on **Sundays**."
- 1658 - June 26, New **Amstel** - Alrichs to Stuyvesant: 'In regard to the distribution of lots: first at the time of my arrival (April 1656) about eight days or more passed, before I could make progress in it, because there was scarcely one lot which could be disposed of, as one or the other or more laid claim to it; for further reasons and difficulties I refer to the decision on the petition of Jacob Elders, sent herewith, and henceforth they were distributed by drawing lots, Upon the arrival of the ship DeWaegh (with more colonists) I let Fabryk Spelen, now deceased, and **Andries** Hudde give out all by lottery **also.....and** now at the arrival of the ship DeSonne, the distribution and drawing of lots has been **referred** to Lieutenant **d'Hinojossa**.
- "**Hudde** with a work-master called Briant has last June surveyed for all and everyone, colonists, soldiers and officers as much as each has asked and signed **for**"; but so few carpenters, so **much** sickness - many ere still not finished making their houses,
- 1658 - July - Appointed by the West India Company: William **Beekman**, Vice-Director on the South River in New **Netherland** on behalf of the West-India Company, who is customs officer also for the whole river with special duty at **New Amstel** where most of the trade centers. **Beekman** reports to his superior officer, Director Peter Stuyveent at New Amsterdam,

### Population. Building Supplies

- 1658 - October 10 - Jacob Alrichs reported 600 souls in the town and no store from which merchandise could be bought; the brickmaker was dead, there was much need for quantities of **tile**. He requested sent to him: iron padlocks, scythes, sickles, thatcher's knives, **edges**, saws, crosscut saws, picks, iron pots and kettles, 6,000 pounds of iron, smith's coals, fire-brick, lime, steel, powder, and two-inch nails,

Fort and Courthouse

-4-

Bake House and other public buildings enclosed  
in the sauaere of the Fort

- 1659 • Letter of Director **Alrichs** at New **Amstel** to Burgomaster **deGraeff** in Holland • after describing other buildings erected by him in or near the fort, says: "**Afterwards** in the square of the fort, a bakehouse of about 18 feet wide, 31 or 38 feet long, the first story 10 feet, the second, seven feet high, with a garret under the roof which wae covered with borrowed **tiles.....Item** - had a burgher watch-house built of logs; it is about 20 feet square, the first etory 9, the eecond 8 feet, **and** covered with tiles. Other public lots were, likewise, set off in the **square**, so that thie settlement is now pretty **good-looking** and convenient."  
Documents - Col. Hist. of N. Y. Vol. II  
August 16, 1659.

Fort

- 1660 - February 80 - To Stuyvesant • **William Beekman**, Stuyvesant's Vice-Director at **Altena (Wilmington)** and **also** customs officer at New **Amstel**, writes: The **warehouse** or magazine at **New Amstel**, "**which** at present **is** very unfit and not tight, also filled with hay and straw, cattle and sheep, so that the goods are not at all protected, nor is it possible now to bring goods to the storehouse, on account of the high bank, **Mr. d'HinoJosea** has therefore to carry (the supplies sent him for the colony) **a long** dietance with cart **and** oxen; whereas no **carman (carrier?)** can **be** obtained, therefore the sailors must work 'it all up on the **Strand** from the boats, **Consequently** the discharging does not **progress.....besides** there-has been storm, wind, frost and snow-drifting, so that they have been compelled by the floating ice to haul her (the ship **dePurmerlander Kerck**) up on the bank,  
p, 720 Penna, Archives, 2nd Series **Vol. VII**

Court House - 2nd Floor of Fort

- 1660 - June 30 • **N. Y. Colonial Documents XII, p, 313**  
Vice-Director **Beekman** of **Altena (Wilmington)** quotes **Vice-Director d'HinoJossa** of New **Amstel** as **saying** that "**the** city (**Amsterdam owners** of New Castle) would take it very **ill** that their court room was so despoiled of chairs, books, pictures and other things."

Court House

1661 • Letter of William Beekman (The West India Company's Vice-Director at Altena and also) Customs Inspector for the Company at New Amstel - to Stuyvesant: Says he appeared at a hearing at Court in New Amstel as attorney for Cornelius VanGezel, "in the fort there" - he was ushered "upstairs into the court-room."

VanGezel had been "summoned under ringing of the bell."

Fort

1662 - June 8 - Beekman to Stuyvesant: Because of his "official position, honor and oath" Beekman finds himself bound to inform Stuyvesant and the council "how Mr. d'Hinojossa strips the fort of the palisades and burns them under his brew kettle." D'Hinojossa had built a brew-house in the fort.  
Penna. Archives, Vol. VII, p. 720 2nd series.

1662 - March 18 - Beekman to Stuyvesant: "Last Sunday, the 12th, in the forenoon it was announced by the Precentor, upon order of the Director and Council of New Amstel that a day of prayer and fasting should be held every three months, to begin on the 16th inst. Regarding this, no mention was made of your Honorable Warship's ordinance. The above was also published in the fort under ringing of the bell after the first sermon."  
Vol. VII, p. 722, Penna. Archives

1663 - February 1 - Beekman to Stuyvesant: D'Hinojossa offers to sell some buildings in the fort to Jan Webber - D'Hinojossa "has erected a brewery" in the fort. "He has lately sold his house where the schoolmaster Arent Eversen lived in to Jan Webber."

June 6 - "on the first of the month a letter was proclaimed at New Amstel under ringing of the bell."

1664-68 - The fort, repaired by the English after cannon had been shot into it from the ship of Sir Robert Carr, in taking New Amstel from the Dutch - but not properly restored - continued to deteriorate.

1669 - Governor Lovelace and his Council at New York establish "the form of holding court at the Fort in New Castle<sup>N</sup> - for the trial of "Long Finn."

Blockhouse - Courthouse

1670 - October - N. Y. Historical Records - **Fernow**, Vol. **XII**, p. 474

The magistrates at New Castle propose to the governor and council at New York that "a suitable place be selected to erect some **fortifications**," the "market place where the bell hangs" being in their opinion the best place for fortified block-houses - the citizens of New Castle to advance the money and help do the work. When not needed for defense against the Indians, the block-houses to "**serve** as council house, prison and other public **purposes**." Captain John Carr was the commander on the Delaware - whether the condition attached to the foregoing, "**provided** Capt. Carr shall cede forever the necessary ground thereto", means that the site was within the land granted to Carr by the Governor, or that as commander he would insure that the ground chosen remain public property (as the market-place is supposed to have been at the time) - is a question,

Capt. Carr writes to the governor and council that the cost of a new block-house will be "**no** great matter" and the inhabitants of the **town** will not be backward about contributing to it - also - the fort is beyond repair; the houses in it so decayed they cannot stand long - their tiles, brick, iron, and other materials can be saved to build new houses as opportunity permits.

1670 - Some time after the magistrates resolve to build the blockhouse provided Capt. Carr would deed the land to the town - Capt. **Carr** has a "**great** house, with block-house and kitchen" on the north side of Harmony Street opposite the Green, He may have built house and block-house earlier. He had the land soon after 1664.

Size of Block-house

1671 - March 9 - New Castle - Letter of the magistrates to the **Governor**: "**Our** intention here is to build a block-house 40 foot square with 4 (bastions?) at every end for flanks **.....will** be convenient for a **court-house**." Penna. Archives 2nd Series, Vol. VII, p. 790,

1671 - March 9 - William Tom and Peter **Alrichs** write again to the Governor describing in strong **terms** the danger from the **Indians** and the defenselessness of the town - and says: "**our** intention is to build a block-house 40 foote equare with 4 (bastions?) att every end for **flancks**, in the

middle of the **Towne**, the fort not being fit to be repaired " and if repaired of noe defence lying at the **extreme** end of the **town** and no garrison, therefore wee beg that we may (have) libty to pull itt downe and make use of the tiles, bricks and other materials for the use of our new intended fortification - **which** if we have no occasion for (as such) though I fear wee shall, will be convenient for a Court house. "

Penna. Archives 2nd Series, **Vol. VII**, p. 790.

New Block-house

1671 - June - Ibid - pp. 482-4

The **Governor** approved the building of the block house and authorized the officers to put through and finish the structure at once. He set "**one** guilder per **can**" on all strong liquors brewed, as a tax to help pay for the new block house or fort, or some other public work, and ordered the materials of the **fort** to be cared for so that they might be used for the new block house if needed.

**Fernow**, p. 482-4

1671 - **Breviate** - p. 266

In **June, 1671**, the governor and council at **New York** ordered a tax of one gilder per can on all distilled spirits at **New Castle** to go towards "the reparation of the new block house and fort."

1671 - November - **Fernow**, p. 487

As part of orders for defensive preparations **against the** Indians, who have murdered several white men, the Governor and Council send instructions that the officers **at** **New Castle** are to determine the place for block houses and places of defense to be erected in the town.

1672 - Proposals from Capt. Edmund **Cantwell** in behalf of the people:

1. "**That** his Honor would please to give his **instructions** about the finishing the block house.. **...which standeth** still in that posture his Honor left it; it is high **time** that some speedy order bee taken therein, in regard not only of the troubles now likely to ensue from the **wars** in Europe (England vs Holland) but that whet is already expended thereupon will be as good as thrown away by reason as **it is** now, it only stands and rota;

**Fernow XII**, p. 502

- 1672 - August - Oovernor **Lovelace** to Capt. **Cantwell** and the magistrates: "In answer to the first proposal about the new block houee at New Castle in Delaware; since my former orders concerning the finishing thereof have been no better observed; I do once more enjoin them..., the completing of it before the first day of November next and that under penalty of one thousand gilders **Seawant** in case of default, the way of raising money to be at the discretion of the officers<sup>n</sup>. Ordered: "That the great guns be **withall** convenient speed sent up to the block houses in Delaware River according to my former order." **Fernow XII, p. 501.**
- 1672 - October - A further strong order from **Lovelace** to fit **up** the fort; he says if **necessary** to aid in defense of the town he will come to New Castle "in person." **Fernow, p.504.**
- 1673  
July - 1674 - New Castle is under Dutch control again for a year and a half.
- 1673 - September - The Dutch Governor Anthony Colve and his council authorized the building of a fort on a suitable place **and** in view of the cost to the inhabitants of such a fort they are "hereby granted freedom from all ground taxes and from excise on beer, wine, and distilled waters consumed.. ..until May, 1676. † **Fernow XII, p. 508.**
- 1673 - Dutch rule - September - Peter Alrichs is made Sheriff and commandant on the South River - charged among other duties, with seeing that the provisions for defense are carried out.

## Port

- 1674 - November 6 - Oovernor **Edmund** Andros (the English in control again) authorizes Capt. **Cantwell** and **William Tom** "to take possession of the fort at New Castle.....as also the cannon and all other stores of war there.... " **Fernow XII, p. 616**
- 1674 - December (?) - The Oovernor has received word from Capt. **Cantwell** that he "**has** taken possession of the **fort**" and that the magistrates are settled at New Castle., ,...also the governor allows of **Cantwell's** "entertaining a man for the fort<sup>n</sup> (probably poor translation.) **Fernow XII, p. 616**

- 1675 - April - Governor Andros expects to visit New Castle in May,
- 1676 - May 13 - Governor Andros **and**the magistrates treat with the **Indians** at New Castle - a special court held that day and the next by the Governor - no mention of fort or block house in minutes as reported in **Fernow 525-27.**
- 1676 - August 15 - The magistrates at New Castle write to the Governor that they "desire the fort on the other side (of Capt. **Carr's** valley?) may be removed.. ..... (defective original copy),... .....**making** of a Court House **and**that some other convenience may be made by **itt** for a prison both being very necessary for thie town and river and where **it** stands rather detrimental than otherwise to the place.. ..."  
N. Y. Col. Doc. XII, p. 639
- 1676 - September 16 - Governor and Council at New York - "Ordered, that the Block-house at New Castle be removed and built on the back side of the town about the middle of **it**, at or near the old Block house wherein there may be a court house and a prison also...,  
Ibid. p. 640
- 3
- 1675 - December 10 - Governor Andros to Capt. **Cantwell** - "By Capt. **Creiger's** sloop I'll supply you with what is fit for a garrison in your **town** at this juncture for security of your parts and would have you take order fpr removing the block house, about the middle of your **town** above **it**, **into** the place I showed you when there, so to command both ends."  
Ibid. p, 542-3
- 1676 - November - Memorial from the **magistrates** at New Castle to Governor Edmond Andros:  
4, "There being no prison for securing of debtors, fugitives and malefactors, who often make their escape for want of **it**, we therefore desire his **Honor's** order for erecting a prison, which we imagine would be to stand in the **fort.....**" They request authorization to erect a public weigh house and store house for keeping merchandise,
- 1676 - November 20 - The Qovernor and Council authorize the building of a prison "**in** the Fort" -"**also** a weigh house."

- 1677 - February - The magistrates acknowledge the order to build prison and weigh house - "to be built with all possible expedition."  
**Fernow 655-66**
- 1677 - February 8 - Court Records I, 66  
According to the Governor's order - "It was this day resolved and concluded by the commander and court, that a prison with a dungeon under it be built in the fort with all expedition, also a weigh **houseto** be built with the like expedition in some convenient place near the water-side. The manner of building the same is left to the contrivance and ordering of Capt. Collier and **Mr. Moll.**"
- 1677 - June 8 - The magistrates write the Governor that there are no soldiers to watch the fort - they request that some be sent - for they think it "better to have no fort than a fort without some to keep it."
- 1677 - "The prison hole or dungeon<sup>n</sup> under the fort was in use. In September a special court was called by Capt. Christopher Billop to make legal his **commitment** of a prisoner there.  
Court Records I, p. 131
- 1677 - October 3 - The court resolved and desired of **Mr. Moll** that he would "**remburse** so much as for the making up of the Court Room in the fort fit for the court to sit in in the winter time, and that the same rembursement be paid him again out of the levy to be laid. The Court allows to the masons to finish the chimney in the fort as it must be, 250 gilders."  
N. C. Court Records I, p. 143
- The following March, the court is citing **Commander Billop** for stabling his horses on the ground floor of the court and filling the court room with hay.  
Ibid. p. 194
- 1677 - An order from Governor Andros "**was** published in court and a true copy thereof in English and Dutch fixed up at the fort gate in **New Castle.**"  
Court Records Vol. I p. 111
- 1678 - July 17 - Court at **New Castle** - In a list of **questions** prepared by the court to be submitted to **Governor Andros** for answer: No. 9: "**To** know hie Honor's will end pleasure, whether a levy or tax may be laid for paying the debts made during the time of this Government concerning the fort **and** the like."  
**Fernow XII, 607**

- 1678 • November 18 - Governor **E. Andross** writes Capt. Edmund **Cantwell** and **Ephraim** Herman at **New Castle** to **submit a** particular account of the rated **levyed** "the last year" toward defraying the "**public charges**" - "what **it** was, how raised, what **it** amounted to and how disposed of" - and a computation of what debts remain unpaid.....  
**Fernow** Vol. XII, p. 612
- 1679 • March 4 - Court Records I, 302  
Jacob **Vandever is** fined in court 200 guilders - which fine **is** assigned "**for** the use and repairing of the fort."
- 1682 • November - **William** Penn asked the magistrates to view and look over and report to him the vacant land available for **accommodating** and settling new-comers - traders and handcraftsmen therein for the general public good and encouragement.  
Court Records Vol. II, p. 24
- 1682 • November - In accord with a commission from **William** Penn, the justices resolved that every future Saturday be a market-day, "**when all** persons are desired to repair with their commodities to the fort **inthe** marked place at present appointed for the **same.**"  
Court Records **Vol. II, p. 26**
- 1682 • Weekly public market established at New Castle -  
"**This** market was a place known as the "Market Plaine".... at the upper end, about where **Immanuel** Church now stands, was the fort and improvements pertaining thereto. **In** 1689, the proprietor **through William Markham**, ordered the bounds of the square to be established, and five years later titles to the lot on **which** the fort stood were given to Robert French and later to Col. **William Markham**, who subsequently transferred it to Jasper **Yeates**, from whom title has **descended.**"  
Scherf, **Vol. II, p. 861**, footnote.