

Dutch Explorers, Traders and Settlers in the Delaware Valley 1609-1664

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Univ. of Pennsylvania Press

1961

remain in control of the Delaware, but dark clouds were beginning to gather on the horizon.

On March 12, 1664, Charles II granted to his brother James, Duke of York (who would later become James II), a patent conveying proprietary rights to the land in America from the St. Croix River in New England to and including the east side of Delaware Bay. The grant embraced most of New Netherland, as well as part of the New Albion tract granted Sir Edmund Plowden in 1634, but which he had not succeeded in colonizing. The grant to the Duke did not, however, include New Amstel, the Hoerenkil, nor the other territory occupied by Dutch, Swedes, and Finns along the *west* side of the Delaware. War was then in the making between England and Holland (it broke out April 20, 1665) and the Duke was not deterred by any fear of antagonizing the Dutch, with whom relations were already strained almost to the breaking point. Furthermore, he ignored Plowden's rights to New Albion, whose charter, incidentally, had been inherited by Thomas Plowden, Sir Edmund's son. Indeed, the Duke didn't seem concerned if he overlapped the territory of the Baltimores. Therefore, when he sent over a fleet from England to seize and exercise ownership over his grant, he instructed his officers to capture *all* of New Netherland, including the western side of the Delaware River.

Governor Stuyvesant surrendered New Amsterdam, as the Dutch then called their town on Manhattan Island, to the superior English force consisting of four warships. Colonel Richard Nicholls, "a groom of the Duke's bedchamber," who was in command of the expedition, was also the deputy-governor, appointed by the Duke as his chief administrator in the new territory. Assisting Nicholls were three commissioners, one of whom, Sir Robert Carr, an ambitious but impecunious nobleman, was to play an important part in bringing English rule to the

Dutch settlements on the western side of the Delaware.

The commission given to Sir Robert Carr on September 3, 1664, read in part as follows:

Whereas we are enformed that the Dutch have seated themselves at Delaware bay, on his Maty of great Brittaines territories without his knowledge and consent, and that they have fortified themselves there, and drawne great trade thither And by these do order & Appoint that his Maties ffrygotts, the *Guinney* and the *William & Nicholas* and all the Souldyers which are not in the Fort [at New York] shall with what speed they conveniently can go thither, under the command of Sr Robert Carr to reduce the same.⁹

The *William & Nicholas* was an armed merchant ship under command of Captain Thomas Morley. The *Guinney*, Sir Robert's "flagship," was a large, fully armed man o'war carrying forty guns, under the command of Captain Hugh Hyde.¹⁰ Lieutenant John Carr (promoted to the rank of captain before the campaign ended) and Ensign Arthur Stocke were two of the officers in charge of more than one-hundred foot soldiers transported by the vessels.

The Duke's objective was to effect a change of masters on the Delaware (as had been done at New York) with a minimum of bloodshed and as little disturbance as possible to the social and economic systems. Carr had been carefully instructed how to handle Charles Calvert, Cecil's son, who had succeeded Philip two years before as governor of Maryland, in the event he offered objection or resistance. Carr was to inform him that his majesty had, at great expense, sent ships and soldiers to reduce all foreigners in these parts; that he was instructed to keep possession of the place for his majesty's own behoofe; and "that if my Lord Baltimore doth pretend right thereunto by his patent (which is a

⁹ NYCD, 12: 458.

¹⁰ PA, 2nd Series, 5: 576, 580.

doubtfull case) you are to say that you only keep possession till his Majesty is informed and satisfied otherwise."¹¹

To reduce the Dutch, Nicholls had carefully planned the strategy that he outlined in the instructions issued to Carr: He would first make peace with the Swedes and Finns; next he would assure the Dutch farmers and burghers that if they submitted to English rule they would not be harmed and their lands, homes, and possessions would be unmolested. Carr knew that if he could win the support of the citizenry, Governor Alexander d'Hinoyossa, the thirty-five-year-old ranking officer in the City of Amsterdam's colony would be "disarmed of their assistance and left to defend his inconsiderable fort with less than fifty men."¹² Actually the garrison at Fort New Amstel, including officers, numbered only thirty, but Carr did not know this until the attack.

The shoals in the Delaware caused Carr's vessels difficulty, as they had arrested Hudson fifty years before, and would block another English invader, Sir William Howe, one hundred years later. Nevertheless, Carr carried out his assignment completely and efficiently. He remained aboard the *Guinney* during the early phases of the attack on New Amstel, but went ashore in time to commandeer the supplies and material in the fort. The fort, its equipment, weapons, and provisions, as well as the houses, arms, slaves, livestock, and personal possessions owned by the City's officers or soldiers—these were all legitimate spoils of battle belonging to the conqueror. Strictly speaking, all the pillage was the property of the Duke of York, but Sir Robert knew that the Duke had no patent for the west shore of the Delaware. As the commanding officer who had risked his life and the lives of his soldiers and officers in the engagement, he had his own ideas about the disposition of the spoils, as we shall soon see.

A number of versions of the English attack have been published

¹¹ NYCD, 12: 457-458.

¹² PA, 2nd Series, 5: 569

in secondary sources, some less accurate than others, but most are incomplete. The following eyewitness story gives the important details from the Dutch viewpoint. It was discovered by the historian van Laer in the notary records of Amsterdam and translated by him into English :

On this day, the 16th of June, Anno 1665, before me, Hendrick Rosa, notary public, etc., in the presence of witnesses hereinafter named, appeared Godefro Meyer van Cloppenburgh, about 40 years of age, formerly sergeant, Steffen Ottingh van Loo, about 29 years of age, and Jan Janss. van Loo, about 32 years of age, both formerly farm laborers, and all three of them having been in the service of the Hon. Commissaries of the South River in New Netherland, [i.e. commissioners of the city's colony] who, at the request and urging of the said Hon. Commissaries by true words, in place and under proffer of an oath deposed, declared and attested that [the following] is true and well know to the deponents.

First, they, Godefro and Jan Janss. van Loo [two of] the deponents jointly [declared] that on [the first day of] the month of October of last year, 1664, towards evening, while they, the deponents were staying at Fort New Amstel on the South River, there came and arrived a large warship of the King of Great Britain, mounted with more than forty guns, accompanied by an English merchant vessel with soldiers, and that immediately three members of the council from the fort [Peter Alricks, Gerritt van Sweringen were two of them and possibly Joost de Lagrange was the third] went on board the English ship to demand of the commander for what purpose these ships had arrived there, as they were not accustomed to see such flags in their country. The admiral or commander [Sir Robert Carr], showing them certain sealed letters from the King of England, said that they had come to take possession of the country for the King, either by agreement or by force, whereupon the said three members of the council returned to the fort and reported the same.

The next day, very early in the morning, the first deponent

[Sergeant Godefro Meyer] was sent by their governor, Alexander Innejose, to their gunner, Hans [Block], residing a gun shot's distance from the fort, to order him to roast immediately four chickens and to boil a ham, as the governor and the English commander, each accompanied by four soldiers, but without the presence of other people, were to meet on land, outside the fort, in order to come to an agreement. Accordingly, that morning, at nine o'clock, after one of our four soldiers had fired his gun, the English admiral came ashore and he, the deponent, fired a salute of nine guns from the battery. The governor of the fort and the English admiral, alone, then walked away a short distance from the fort and remained together for about an hour and a half. The English admiral then returned aboard and the governor returned to the fort, where he ordered the deponent to load the pieces with shrapnel and to supply the soldiers with muskets and double [side]arms. The governor also asked all the soldiers whether they were resolved to fight, to which they all said, Yes, as long as they could stand up."

The next day, about 8 o'clock in the morning, about one hundred and thirty English soldiers from the warship, as well as from the merchant vessel, landed, as they both declare, and marched around the castle to the rear of the farmhouse of the castle. At about three o'clock in the afternoon, some cannon shots were fired from the ship through the roofs of the houses in the fort and the soldiers who were on land climbed over the rear wall, whereupon Schout van Sweringen and Ensign Pieter Alderts, both of whom were of the council, jumped over the walls and began to run and when he, the deponent, asked the governor whether he should fire on the ship, the governor forbade him to do so and ordered him not to shoot. In climbing over the wall of the fort, the English in their fury cut down some of the people and wounded many. Thus, at four o'clock in the afternoon, the fort was taken by the English by storm and they, the deponents, and all the other people were plundered. They

"Of his conference with d'Hinoyossa the day before the battle, Carr wrote that d'Hinoyossa refused to accept his proposition for surrender (*ibid.*, p. 577).

also declare that there was then not a day's ration of bread for the people in the fort.

The two deponents further declare that eight or ten days before the loss of the fort, after word had been received that the Manades [Manhattan Island] had surrendered to the English, a general muster of the burghers and farmers and those in the fort showed that the burghers and farmers were ninety strong and that in the fort the number of officers and others was thirty.

The deponents also declare that the same afternoon that the two English ships arrived as above stated, the burghers and farmers who were outside the fort agreed with the English and retained their possessions, without being molested by the English in any way.

They also declare that at the time of the surrender of the fort, there was so much merchandise in the fort that the first deponent's house was filled with merchandise from top to bottom, so that no more could be stowed in it, including cloth, linen, wine, brandy, Spanish wine, stockings, shoes, shirts, and other goods.

The first deponent further declares that three or four months before the surrender of the fort, the aforesaid Governor Alexander Innejose traded with the English in Maryland Spanish wine, brandy, Rochelle [wine], linen, stockings, shoes, shirts, etc. for tobacco of the best quality, at two stivers a pound, which the English were to deliver at the proper season, and that thus he has sold some hundreds of guilders worth of merchandise to the English, for which as yet no payment has been received.¹⁴

The three deponents also declare that they saw in the *Virginis*,

¹⁴ D'Hinoyossa had been trading merchandise belonging to the City of Amsterdam in his own interests. See the reference below to his taking delivery of Maryland tobacco in London. Beeckman had written prior to the attack that although trade in peltries and tobacco was reserved for the City of Amsterdam, d'Hinoyossa was taking one-half of it (*NYCD*, 12: 450). He also accused d'Hinoyossa of selling the City's millstones for one-thousand pounds of tobacco and a brew kettle for seven-hundred to eight-hundred pounds (*ibid.*, pp. 375, 379). In 1662, van Sweringen went to Maryland, "to collect tobacco belonging to both of them which they bartered for the City's millstones, the galiot and other City property" (*ibid.*, p. 422).

and the last two deponents that they helped loading into the ship of Jan Telly for the aforesaid Alexander Innejose, fifty-nine elk skins, a chest and a trunk packed with some others and various sorts of peltries and two beggar bags full of raccoons and he, the deponent, Godefro, [declares] that with the aforesaid commander and his family and the carpenter and the secretary he arrived about fourteen days ago with the aforesaid ship and goods at London."

The deponent, Jan Janss, declares that he arrived from the *Virginis* in England on the ship *Coninck Salomon* ["King Solomon"] and that the said Mr. Innejose had some hogsheads of tobacco in her, as he was told by the crew; all three of the deponents declaring also that they heard from the Commander Innejose's own mouth at London that he had some hogsheads of tobacco in the aforesaid ship *Coninck Salomon*, saying that he must look after them.

The deponent, Steffen Ottingh, declares that he served on the island *Bommelerweert* as foreman of the farmhands when the English with a small vessel with soldiers came up the river and overpowered the inhabitants and that the English plundered and took everything, even the bedding from under the people's bodies, and carried away everything, except what they kept for their own needs. The said deponent arrived in England in the ship of Captain Gilmer and all the deponents together came last Saturday, a week ago, on the Ostend convoy ship from London to Ostend and thence hither. Done at Amsterdam in the presence of Johannes Basse and Johannes Outhuysen, as witnesses."

Van Sweringen in a later deposition stated that Carr also sent

"In an undated letter written from Thomas Howell's home in St. Mary's (present-day Annapolis) d'Hinoyossa asked Nicholls to restore his Delaware estate, which Carr had seized. He indicated he would remain in Maryland for two or three months and would then go to England. The above deposition indicates that d'Hinoyossa arrived in London early in June of 1665 (*PA*, 2nd Series, 5: 587). He returned to America from England, and he, his wife and children became naturalized citizens of Maryland in 1671 (*Maryland Archives*, 2: 282).

"This appears to be another name for d'Hinoyossa's Island (Burlington Island).

"The above deposition is given in *Iconography*, 6: 19.

a boat to the Hoerenkil, where the English soldiers pillaged that settlement, including the homes of Plockhoy and his followers (see Chapter 4). Whether the Dutch residents there resisted the invasion, and were punished by having their belongings confiscated, or whether the attackers considered everything there as the property of the City of Amsterdam, and thus legitimate spoils, is not made clear in the deposition. In any event, the Hoerenkil was taken and also fell under the Duke's rule.

The English surrender terms were more generous than the Dutch had reason to expect—the burghers, farmers, and other private citizens at New Amstel, who had cooperated with the attackers, were permitted to retain their homes and personal property. Any Dutchman who did not want to live under English rule was free to depart unharmed within six months; everyone was guaranteed freedom of conscience in church discipline; the Dutch magistrates were allowed to continue in office; all the magistrates and inhabitants, Swedes and Dutch alike, were told they must submit to the King and take an oath of allegiance to “his Majtie of great Brittain.”¹⁸ This seemed to impose no hardship on anyone, because there had been no strong loyalties to the deposed Dutch government. As a matter of fact, many of the citizens were doubtless glad to be rid of d’Hinoyossa, who had been a tyrannical, unprincipled administrator primarily interested in his own personal gain.

The plunder that Carr took from the Dutch was itemized as follows in van Sweringen’s deposition:

One hundred sheep & thirty or forty horses, fifty or sixty coves and oxen, the number of between sixty and seventy negroes, brew-house, stillhouse, and all materials thereunto belonging, the produce of the land for that yeare, as corne hay &c were likewise seized by Sr Robert Carr for the use of the King and likewise the cargoe that

¹⁸ NYCD, 3: 71.

was unsold, and the bills for what was sold. They also got in their custody, being all, to the value so neere as I can now remember of foure thousand pounds sterling, likewise arnes and powder and shott in great quantity, foure and twenty great guns were, in the greatest part, transported to New Yorke. The Dutch soldiers were taken prisoners & given to the merchant-man that was there, in recompence of his service, and into Virginia they were transported to be sold, as it was credibly reported by Sir Robert Carrs officers and other persons there liveing in the town. All sorts of tooles for handicraft tradesmen and all plowgeer and other things to cultivate the ground which were in the store in great quantity, as likewise a Saw Mill to saw planke ready to sett up, and nine sea buyes [buoys] with their iron chaines, great quantities of phisicall meanes besides the estate of Governor Debonissa and myself, except some household stuff and a negro I gott away and some other inoveables Sr Robert Carr did permit me to sell.¹⁹

Sir Robert’s account of the engagement is contained in a letter he wrote to Colonel Nicholls from Fort New Amstel, which he now called “Dellawarr Fort.” Essentially it tells the same story told by van Sweringen in his deposition. Carr adds that after d’Hinoyossa had refused to surrender

I landed my soldiers on Sondag inorning following & comanded ye shippes to fall downe before ye Fort withn inuskett shott, wth directions to fire two broadsides apeace uppon yt Fort, then my soldiers to fall on. Which done, the soldiers neaver stopping untill they stormed ye fort, and soe consequently to plundering: the sea-

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 345–346. Van Sweringen removed to Maryland after the attack and in 1669 he, his wife, Barbara, and his children, Elizabeth and Zacharias (both born at New Amstel) were naturalized as citizens of Maryland (*Maryland Archives*, 2: 205). Van Sweringen had arrived in New Amstel on the vessel *de Purmerlander Kerck* February 3, 1662, (*NYCD*, 12: 360). Since he was in office there for only two years, his children must have been born between the time of his arrival and the English attack in 1664. For names of other passengers on the vessel, see A. R. Dunlap, “Three Lists of Passengers to New Amstel,” *Del. History*, 8 (March, 1959), 310-311.

men, noe less given to that sporte, were quickly wthin, & have gotten good store of booty; so that in such a noise and confusion noe word of comand could be heard for some tyme; but for as many goods as I could preserve, I still keep intire. The loss on our part was none; the Dutch had tenn wounded and 3 killed. The fort is not tenable although 14 gunns, and wthout a greate charge wch inevitably must be expended here wilbee noe staying, we not being able to keepe itt. Therefore what I have or can gett shalbee layed out upon ye strengthening of the Fort. Wthin these 3 dayes Ensign Stock fell sick soe that I could not send him to you to perticularise things, but on his recovery I will send him to you, etc.²⁰

Sir Robert was very generous in dividing certain of the booty among the officers on his staff. He gave van Sweringen's house, servants, lands, and personal possessions to Captain John Carr; he rewarded Ensign Stocke, who was promoted to serve as commissary, with Peter Alricks' houses and possessions, including eleven negro slaves.²¹ He granted Captain Hugh Hyde and Captain Thomas Morley a large tract of land, near the head of the Delaware River, to be known as the Manor of Grimstead.²² This transfer leaves no doubt of Sir Robert's authority; it refers to him as "sole and chiefe commander & disposor of the affayres in the behalfe of his Majesty of Great Britaine, of Delaware Bay and Delaware River." Sir Robert kept the richest prize for himself, d'Hinoyossa's estate on the "best and largest island in the South River," i.e., Burlington Island, with its gardens, dykes, houses, cultivated fields, livestock, and servants. D'Hinoyossa had lived there in luxury with his wife and his Holland-born children, Alexander, Johannes, Peter, Maria, Johanna, Christina, and

²⁰ *PA*, 2nd Series, 5: 577.

²¹ *Ibid.*, p. 602. An Island seven miles below New Castle, owned by Peter Alricks, was given to William Tom, a member of the expedition (*DYR*, p. 26).

²² *Ibid.*, p. 575.

Barbara.²³ Among d'Hinoyossa's servants were a number of negro slaves that the city of Amsterdam had shipped over at his request. Carr reshipped all the negroes seized in the attack to Maryland to be sold to the English planters in exchange for "beefe, pork, corne & salt, etc."

Sir Robert did not bother to obtain from his superiors permission for his program of sharing the Dutch wealth. To him the spoils belonged to the victor in a very personal sense! Colonel Nicholls in New York was grieved to learn of Carr's actions, and he reported to his superiors in London that Sir Robert had reportedly said of the loot taken on the Delaware, "'Tis his owne, being wonn by the sword." In the same report, Nicholls added:

I cannot but looke upon it as a great presumption in Sr Robert Carr who acted there, or at least ought to have done, as a private Captain to assume to himself the power not onely of appropriating the prize to himselfe, but of disposing the confiscations of houses farms and stock to whom he doth thinke fitt.²⁴

Nicholls was so annoyed with Carr's actions that he added that he intended to go to Delaware to take charge and dispose of the plunder for his majesty's service, "and not for private uses." A few days earlier he had said he would send Captain Robert Needham to command there, but on October 24, 1664, a commission was drawn up and signed by two of the commissioners, ordering Nicholls to go to Delaware and take charge.²⁵ The records do not clearly state that he went to Delaware—if so, he did not take charge, for Carr remained there as the ranking English officer until February of the following year. Nicholls' communications reflected his doubt about the Duke's authority on the Delaware,

²³ *Maryland Archives*, 2: 282.

²⁴ *PA*, 2nd Series, 5: 569.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 579. Van Sweringen stated several years later that he was informed Nicholls had gone to Delaware "being on the way for Maryland" (*NYCD*, 3: 346).