

**NOTES GEOGRAPHICAL AND
HISTORICAL, RELATING TO THE
TOWN OF BROOKLYN, IN KINGS
COUNTY ON LONG-ISLAND**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649499359

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Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

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GABRIEL FURMAN

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ADVERTISEMENT.



THE Compiler offers these notes to the inhabitants of his native town, in the hope that they may be in some small degree useful and entertaining in discussions relating to the history and rights of this thriving place. He claims no merit for this performance, and neither does he write from the vanity of being considered an author, but is only actuated by a desire to rescue from oblivion such facts as may be interesting to his fellow-citizens. The Compiler would consider himself guilty of ingratitude, if he did not in this public manner, acknowledge the obligations he rests under from the kind assistance afforded him whilst collecting these notices, by Jeremiah Johnson, Abraham Vanderveer, Silas Wood, and John Doughty, Esqrs.

NOTES &c.
OF THE
TOWN OF BROOKLYN.



SITUATION.

This town is situated in Kings County, on the west end of Long-Island, in the State of New-York. It is bounded north by the City and County of New-York; east by the township of Bushwick; south by the township of Flatbush and New Utrecht; and west by New-York Bay; and contains the village of Brooklyn, which is about a mile square. This town formerly composed part of a powerful Indian Sachemdom; and with the other parts of the Island bore the Indian name of Matowcas.

This part of the Island, as far as Jamaica was inhabited by the Canarsee tribe of Indians. The old Dutch inhabitants in this county have a tradition, that the Canarsee Indians were subject to the Mohawks, as all the Iroquois were called; and paid them an annual tribute of dried clams and wampum. When the Dutch settled here, they persuaded the Canarsees to keep back the tribute; in consequence of which a party of the Mohawks came down and killed their tributaries wherever they met them. So great was the dread that these Indians afterwards entertained of the Iroquois, that when a party of the Iroquois, during the French war were taken prisoners and imprisoned in the Jail of this county, the Canarsees avoided them with the greatest care; and seemed to be afraid even to come where they should

see them. The Canarsee Indians are at this time totally extinct: not a single member of that ill-fated race is now in existence.

There was also a small tribe of the Nyack Indians near the Narrows.

In this town is also the United States Navy-Yard, containing about 40 acres; which was purchased of John Jackson, Esq. by Francis Childs, Esq. for \$40,000, and on the 23d day of February, 1801, was conveyed by said Childs to the United States.

ANCIENT NAMES AND REMAINS.

In 1667, this town was known by the name of Breucklen. In the act to divide the province of New-York into shires and counties, passed Nov. 1, 1683, it is mentioned by the name of Breucklyn. It is also called Broucklyn in the act to divide the province into shires and counties, passed, Oct. 1, 1691. The present name Brooklyn, does not appear to have been generally adopted until after the Revolutionary war.

Heads of Indian arrows, beds of oyster and clam shells denoting the former residence of the aborigines, are frequently found in different parts of this town.

Among the most ancient remains are two houses, one owned by the family of Cortelyou, built in 1699; the other standing on Fulton-street, in the village of Brooklyn. The last mentioned house was occupied by the Colonial Legislature as a Sessions house, during the prevalence of the small-pox in New-York, in 1752; and at this house on the 4th of June, 1752, 2541 Bills of credit issued by this Colony, amounting to £3602, 18, 3, were cancelled by the Colonial Commissioners. This house was also occupied by Gen. Putnam as his head quarters

during the stay of the American Army, on Long-Island, in 1776. But the oldest house in the town of Brooklyn is supposed to be the house known as No. 64 Fulton-street, in the village of Brooklyn, and now owned and occupied by Mr. Jacob Patchen. Mr. Charles Doughty, who has been dead about 25 years, and was about 85 years of age when he died, said that this was an old house when he was a boy. Mrs. Rapalye, the mother of John Rapalye, whose property in Brooklyn was confiscated during the Revolutionary war, says that this house was built by a family of the Remsens who came from Holland.

SOIL AND CLIMATE.

The soil of this town appears to be mostly alluvial, though some few primitive rocks are to be met with. Several years since, in digging a well on some of the highest ground in Brooklyn, a hemlock board was found at the depth of 30 feet, and again at the depth of 73 feet, oyster and clam shells were met with, which crumbled on being exposed to the air.

The shores of Brooklyn, where they are not defended by wharves, are undergoing continual and rapid changes, in consequence of the velocity of the current in the East River. The tide rises here about 5 feet.

There is very little doubt, but that Governor's Island was formerly connected with Red Hook point in this town. It is an established fact, that previous to the Revolutionary contest, cattle were driven from Red Hook to Governor's Island, which places at that time were only separated by a very narrow channel, which is called Buttermilk channel, and is now wide and deep enough to ad-

mit of the largest size of merchant vessels passing through.

The climate is very changeable, but cannot be called unhealthy. People in this town live to a great age, as in almost any other part of the United States; as instances of which, April, 1823, Mr. Tiebout died in this town, aged 100 years and 10 months. The same year, Mr. Schoonmaker died, aged 84 years; and in 1824, Mary Peterson, a colored woman died, aged 103 years. It is not an uncommon thing for the inhabitants to live beyond the "three score years and ten."

This town has at different periods been visited by the yellow fever. Between July 10th and September 10th, 1809, 28 persons died of that disease.— During the prevalence of the yellow fever in the city of New-York, in the summer of 1822, seven persons died of that disease in Brooklyn. In the summer of 1823, the yellow fever made its appearance in the village of Brooklyn, and nine persons fell victims to that dreadful pestilence, in the space of one month, during which time its ravages continued. Every year that this disease made its appearance amongst us, it could be distinctly traced to some foreign cause; as, in 1809, it was brought in the ship *Concordia*, Captain Coffin, on board of which vessel the first case and death happened. In 1822, it was introduced from the city of New-York—and in 1823, it was traced to two or three vessels which had arrived a short time previous from southern latitudes. Indeed the high and airy situation of Brooklyn almost precludes the idea of its being engendered among us.

ANCIENT GRANTS AND PATENTS.

In the year 1638, William Kieft, Director General and Counsellor for their high mightinesses the

States General, and his highness the Prince of Orange, granted to Abraham Rycken, a tract of land in the present town of Brooklyn.

September 11, 1642, William Kieft Director General, &c. patented to Jan Manje, a piece or parcel of land containing 20 morgan, or 40 acres, in the town of Brooklyn. A copy of which patent is hereto annexed as a specimen of those ancient instruments :

“ By William Kieft, Director General and Counsellor, about the high and mighty Lords, the States General of the United Low Country, and his highness of Orange, and the Lords Commanders of the privileged West India Company, residing in the New-Netherland, do ratify and declare by these presents, that we upon the date hereinafter written, did give and grant to Jan Manje, a piece of land, greatly twenty morgan stretching about south-east one hundred and ninety rods inward the woods towards to Sassians maise land—long is the limits of the said maise land fifty rod, and then again to the water side, two hundred and twenty rod, about north north-west, well so northerly and along the strand or water side, seventy rod. Which above-said land is lying upon Long-Island, between Andries Hudde and Claes Janse Ruyter.--With express conditions, &c. Dated at Fort Amsterdam, in the New-Netherland, the 11th day of September, 1642.

WILLIAM KIEFT.

By order of the Lord the Director General, and Counsellor of New-Netherland.

CORNELIUS VANTIENHOVEN, Sec'ry.

January 29, 1652, Pieter Linde, having married the widow of Jan Manje, transported or sold the

above tract of land to Barent Janse. August 23, 1674, before Nicasius de Sille, admitted Secretary of the Dutch towns appeared Jan Barentse, ⁽¹⁾ and Auke Janse, with Simon Hausen as Guardian of the other children of Barent Janse, deceased, "procured by his wife Styntie Pieterse deceased, all living within the town of Midwout Fflackbush," and declared that they transported the above tract of land to Dirck Janse Woertman.

September 12, 1645, William Kieft, Director General, &c. patented to Andries Hudden, "a piece of land lying upon Long-Island against over the fort, lying to the south-west to Jan Manje," containing 37 morgan. December 10, 1651, "Pieter Cornelissen by virtue of a procuratie of Andries Hudden," for the consideration of 400 guilders, transported to Lodewyck Jongh the above tract. July 19, 1676, Lodewyck Jongh transported to Jeronimus de Rapalje, eight morgan of the above tract. February 12, 1679, Harmatie Jansen relict of Lodewyck Jongh, transported to Dirck Janse Woertman, 12 morgan of the above tract. May 3, 1685, "Dirck Janse Woertman, transported to the heirs of Jooris Dirckse, a small stroke off land lying at the east side off the highway being all the claime they can pretende by virtue off the abovesaid Patent."

September 30, 1645, William Kieft, Director General, &c. patented to Claes Janse, from Naerder, a piece of land, containing 20 morgan, lying south-east, a little easterly, just over against the Fort, upon Long-Island. March 11, 1660, the above tract of land was transported by Claes Janse

1. The custom of changing the names of sons, or rather substituting the sur-names for the christian name, prevailed at this period; as in the above instance, the fathers name was Barent Janse, and the son was called Jan Barentse.