

**REMINISCENCES OF
OLD NEW UTRECHT
AND GOWANUS**

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Reminiscences of Old New Utrecht and Gowanus by Mrs. Bleecker Bangs

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MRS. BLEECKER BANGS

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By
MRS. BLEECKER BANGS

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

IN presenting "Reminiscences of Old New Utrecht," which has very naturally stretched into Gowanus districts, the writer has combined history, genealogy, biography—whatever relates to the old Township.

Starting the work some twenty years ago, as a post-script to the genealogical book "Our Ancestors," as well as to considerable newspaper work for various editors, data for this book was sought from many scattered points. Considerable was secured from the State Library at Albany, fortunately before the great conflagration there (1911). Much was obtained from local family treasure stores, in the shape of old documents of value (as relics go), while files and records have supplied data along other lines. There is doubtless much yet to be told of so historic a spot as New Utrecht. Many of the elderly narrators, whose facts and papers were carefully gathered by me years ago, have since passed from this world, but their histories are saved within these pages.

To the kind friends and helpers in this work of history, the author extends sincere and appreciative thanks. There have been so many of them it would be an impossible task to name them all.

To Mr. George B. Cortelyou, of Manhattan; Mr. Charles M. Higgins, of Brooklyn, N. Y., and Col. Ezra De Forest, of Manhattan, are due thanks for lending financial aid in the time of need—toward preserving, in book form, these valuable records of a part of the history of Brooklyn.

DEDICATION

TO my Editor-in-Chief, the late Mr. James F. Graham, of the New York *World*, whose discipline and training, at an early age, has been of inestimable benefit to me in preparation of the work—to memories of his useful, busy life, this book is very respectfully dedicated by the humble author. He allowed printing of tales of old New Utrecht and of Gowanus in his paper when history and old things were not fashionable; he had it told that at Gowanus existed a sacred battle ground.

I was just a pen scribe. He said, "Go ahead"—and I have gone, into the past to bring its wealth of memories into the present.

CHARLOTTE REBECCA BANGS,
(Mrs. Bleecker Bangs).

Brooklyn, N. Y.,
December, 1911.

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Books of reference have been principally,
Broadhead's; Colonial History of N. Y.;
Fernow's; Bergen; Documents at Albany (1906);
O'Callaghan; Johnson.

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Art Student's League, Manhattan; DuMond.

REMINISCENCES OF OLD NEW UTRECHT (AND GOWANUS)

NEW UTRECHT, named for Utrecht in Holland, was so wholly a settlement of Dutch pioneers that Holland is indeed the Mother country. The township formerly embraced the villages of New Utrecht, Bath, Narrows (Fort Hamilton) and Yellow Hook (Bay Ridge). Its history is one of interest and of national importance. "Narrows" soon became the outer defence line for New Amsterdam, later New York, with Fort Hamilton a village of Governmental importance in more recent years. The Colonial, Revolutionary, Civil War and later date periods are each filled with varying shades of human life and data. The characteristics of the Dutch lent itself almost entirely to the Township of New Utrecht.

THE ABORIGINES.

Records tell of the aborigines who were first occupants of the forested lands on Long Island. Research proves that the red man came from Asia via the Behring Sea. But whatever his origin, he was a distinct type of human being, whom the white man found here. Henry Hudson was the first to enter the Narrows, with his ship the "Half Moon" and its crew of 18 men, Sept. 3, 1609. Hudson came to "Three Great Rivers," meaning the Narrows, Staten Island and Rockaway Inlet. Long Island derives its name from the European settlers, however. During 1693 the name changed from Indian dialect to "Island of Nassau." The Island measures about 125 miles long and 20 wide. In earlier days Long Island had fine timber of white and red oak trees, walnut and chestnut. Its climate, being on the coast, was often described as "moist and foggy."

Regarding the Indians, there were originally thirteen tribes:

- First.—Canansie (Canarsie)—Inhabiting the territory of present Kings County and a portion of Jamaica.
- Second.—Rockaway—Located about Rockaway and the island nearby.
- Third.—Matinecock—They dwelt on the north side, from Flushing to Fresh Pond, east of Huntington.
- Fourth.—Nissequag—Neighborhood of Fresh Pond to Stony Brook.
- Fifth.—Setauket—From Stony Brook to Wading River.
- Sixth.—Corchang—Inhabited township of present Riverhead and South old district.
- Seventh and Eighth.—Mericoke and Marsapeagne—They dwelt on the south side, from Rockaway into Suffolk County.