

**ANNALS OF STATEN  
ISLAND, FROM  
ITS DISCOVERY TO  
THE PRESENT TIME**

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Annals of Staten Island, from Its Discovery to the Present Time by J. J. Clute

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From its Discovery to the Present Time.

BY

J. J. CLUTE.

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"If we look for a spot which forever is blest  
By Nature with her parental smile,

We never need leave our own green side."

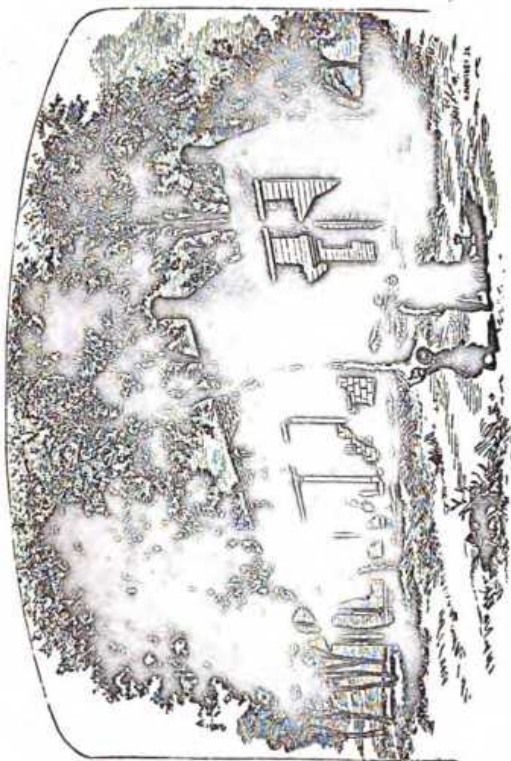
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1877.



OLD MORAVIAN CHURCH AND PARSONAGE ON STATEN ISLAND.



## PREFACE.

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This work was undertaken at the suggestion of several citizens of the county, who were aware that the writer, during a residence of between forty and fifty years, had accumulated a large amount of interesting materials relating to the history of Staten Island. These were collected from time to time, for the purpose of publishing them in our local journals in the form of historical sketches, and not with the ulterior view of giving them to the public in their present form. They have now, however, been arranged, so far as was practicable, in chronological order, and a large amount of new matter introduced. For the local anecdotes and personal incidents, which might be extended almost indefinitely, the writer is indebted to the memories of several old people who have now passed away, some of whom were almost centenarians when they died, but whose memories abounded in reminiscences, and with whom he was on terms of close intimacy. He has thus preserved the memory of many events of local interest, which otherwise would have passed into oblivion.

By far the most eventful period in the history of Staten Island was during the war of the Revolution, but the generation which was active then, has long ago disappeared,

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and many events in the local history of the community, made up of personal experiences, remain forever unwritten. It is undoubtedly true that at the commencement of the war, the greater part of the people of the Island were in sympathy with the enemies of the country; but the licentiousness and rapacity of the soldiery had inspired them with such enmity towards the British government, that at its close a revolution in the popular sentiment had taken place, and those who adhered to their loyalty, and followed the fortunes of their fellow loyalists, were probably not more than half a dozen in number, and these were they whose zeal for the royal cause had led them into the commission of acts, which, if they had remained on the Island, would have exposed them to public contempt, if not to public justice. Nevertheless, there were a few whose insignificance protected them, and who continued to "talk tory" as long as they lived, and grieved over the departure of the "times of the king when guineas were plenty." It has been the fortune of the writer to come in contact with two or three of these garrulous old mourners for royalty, the remnants of a class now totally extinct, whose reminiscences were not the less valuable, because they were tinged with toryism.

We acknowledge with gratitude our obligations to the Rev. Dr. Brownlee, the late Rev. Dr. Goddard, and the Rev. W. L. Lennert, for access to such records and documents as their respective churches, the oldest on the Island, possessed. The clergymen of several other churches have cheerfully furnished brief, but comprehensive data for historical notices of their respective churches. To the Hon. B. P. Winant, of Rossville, we are indebted for the original record of the es-

establishment of Methodism on the Island. We are also indebted to a gentleman well known in literary circles, for the historical part of the article on the Sailor's Snug Harbor.

Difficulties, in some instances insuperable, have been met in the effort to trace the genealogies of many of the oldest families on the Island. In very few can a correct or intelligible record of descent be found, and in some of these the records have been commenced at a date so recent as to be utterly useless for our purpose.

Were it not perplexing, it would be amusing to note the variety in orthography of many of the patronymics; for instance, the name of the Decker family is spelled as follows: Dekker, Deceer, Deceer, Decker, etc.; the Depews, as follows: Depuy, Depew, Dupue, Depeue, etc.; the Disosways, as follows: Dussauchoy, Desuway, Dusachoy, Dussoway, Dissoway, etc.; the Bodines, as follows: Bodoin, Boudoin, Boudin, and Bodin, which is probably the original orthography.

Another difficulty, and one entirely insurmountable, is found in a custom which obtained among the early Dutch, in an entire and unrecognizable change in the family name; thus, for instance, Hans Jansen may be described as Hans Jansen, van den berg, or John Johnson, from the hill or mountain, or Hans Jansen van de zant—that is, John Johnson from the sands or sea-shore—and his descendants, or some of them, would adopt the name of Vandenburg or Vanzant, thus annihilating at once all trace of their descent from the Jansen family.

In the few instances in which the writer differs from the published histories of individuals and families, he will be

found to be strictly correct, when the proofs which he has submitted are examined.

The limited area of Staten Island, about fifty square miles, its isolated position, and, in consequence, the isolated condition of its inhabitants, render it improbable that many important historical events have transpired upon it. Personal incidents and reminiscences might have been multiplied almost indefinitely, but sufficient have been given to enable the reader to form an opinion of the condition of society upon the Island, during the several periods of its history.