

**A CATALOGUE OF PLANS AND
VIEWS OF NEW YORK CITY FROM
1651 TO 1860; EXHIBITED AT THE
GROLIER CLUB FROM DECEMBER
10 TO DECEMBER 25, 1897**

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THE GROLIER CLUB

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Plans and Views of
New York City
from 1651 to 1860 ❖



Exhibited at
The Grolier Club
Twenty-nine East Thirty-second Street, N. Y.
from December 10 to December 25,
M.D.CCC.XCVII

72.4.
1897.

INTRODUCTION.

PLANS and pictures of our city executed within the century which followed the purchase in 1626 by Director Peter Minuit of the Island of Manhattan are few in number. All told, there are not more than seven that we can regard without suspicion as having been engraved from original surveys and sketches. The same view turns up again and again like a Jack-in-the-box. We imagine for a moment that we have made a fresh and important discovery, but closer examination reveals the old familiar figure in a new guise, masquerading in a new costume, an elaborately designed border, or an arrangement of accessories we had not previously encountered.

The famous little print entitled "t' Fort nieuw Amsterdam op de Manhatans" in Joost Hartgers "Beschrijvinghe," published at Amsterdam in 1651, is commonly regarded as the earliest picture in existence of the poverty-stricken hamlet from which sprang the proud city of New York. Whether this picture was engraved from an original drawing, or was made up in Hartgers's editorial rooms at the back of his little book-shop on the Dam, under the shadow of the Stadt-Huys of our foster city of Amsterdam, is

a mooted question, the pros and cons of which we cannot now stop to consider.

The priority of appearance of the *second* view of New Amsterdam is also a matter in dispute. Some cry up Nicolas Joannes Visscher, others Adriaen Vander Donck, both of whom issued about the same time (1656) maps of the province of New Netherland, *et al.*,— with this view of New Amsterdam at the foot. Convincing arguments are brought forward in support of both sides of this controversy, and the settlement of the question promises to remain for some time in abeyance. The preponderance of evidence thus far discovered is, however, in favor of Visscher.

The Visscher-Vander Donck, or Vander Donck-Visscher, view was copied in a number of later maps, either by the use of the original copperplate retouched, or of one newly engraved therefrom. As time went on, and the geography of the country materially changed, the maps received numerous emendations, but the view of New Amsterdam remained the same throughout.

According to G. M. Asher, the most frequently quoted authority upon the subject of Maps, Charts, and Views relating to the New Netherlands, the *third* view of New Amsterdam first appeared upon Hugo Allard's second Map. This picture was copied extensively; in fact, it remained the standard picture of New Amsterdam with the Dutch map-makers for a quarter of a century. We find it appear and reappear constantly at the foot of maps subsequently issued, and also as a separate engraving. It is

popularly known as the "Recapture of New Amsterdam Picture," and the date ascribed to it is 1673. It is supposed to have been engraved by the celebrated Romeyn de Hooghe.

This engraving seems to have been the last which owed its origin to the Hollanders. No other picture of "Neu Jorck, sive Neu Amsterdam" made its appearance — so far as we know — until 1717, when a native engraver, William Burgis, produced, undoubtedly from an original drawing, a panoramic view of New York, two yards in length — the most interesting, and we think the most important, picture in the pictorial annals of our city that ever has been produced. Unfortunately, we are not able to place on exhibition a copy of this print, as only one is known to exist, and that is in a condition that demands careful treatment, and as little handling as possible. The New York Historical Society is the sole possessor of a copy of this priceless engraving.

From the date of issue of the Burgis print until the Popple view of New York (which we believe was based upon the Burgis engraving) was published in 1733, a complete blank exists in the iconography of our city. The Popple engraving is succeeded by another gap which extends to Revolutionary times. Interest in the matter then suddenly revived, and pictures of New York began to multiply. In the interval between the Revolutionary and the Civil Wars, general views of the city and of street scenes, engraved in mezzotint and in line, and often printed in colors, were supplied in comparative profusion by both native and foreign artists. Since the War of the

Rebellion to the present day few pictures of our city (which during that period has been virtually re-built) have been made except by photography, an agency in the production of pictures which we do not recognize in this connection.

In our belief, the day for making pictures of New York has passed away, never to return. There is no alchemy in art sufficiently powerful to transmute into things of beauty towering piles of bricks and mammoth gas-holders. New York as an entirety, and under the garish light of day, has lost irrevocably the quality of picturesqueness it once possessed; but when night falls, and the great city sinks into a dimly outlined mass, overarched with the halo formed by its myriad lights, the scene changes as by magic into one of mystic beauty, and the lines of one of our own sweet singers are verified anew:

Still wert thou lovely, whatso'er thy name,
New Amsterdam, New Orange, or New York,
Whether in cradle sleep, on sea-weed laid,
Or on thine island throne in queenly power arrayed.



CATALOGUE.

In the following list, the year of dated prints is given ; an approximate date for the others, given in brackets in some cases, is usually indicated by the numerical order of the exhibits, which are arranged, as closely as possible, in chronological order, the date of execution, and not necessarily the date of publication, being followed.

1 **T** FORT NIEUW AMSTERDAM, OP DE MANHATANS.

(In "Beschrijvinghe van Virginia . . . Amsterdam, by Joost Hartgers, 1651.") This is supposed to be the earliest view of the Island of Manhattan. The same view appears also in the first edition of Adriaen vander Donck's "Beschryvinge van Nieuwv-Nederlant" (1655).

2 **N**IEUW AMSTERDAM, OP T EYLANT MANHATTANS.

At foot of map of "Nova Belgica sive Nieuw Nederland," in Adriaen vander Donck's "Beschryvinge van Nieuwv-Nederlant" (2d edition, Amsterdam, 1656).

3 NIEUW AMSTERDAM, OP T EYLANT
MANHATTANS.

Same view as the preceding. Colored. At foot of map "Novi Belgii novæque Angliæ nec non partis Virginie tabula multis in locis emendata a Nicolao Joannis Visschero." This is a copy of, or a re-impression from, the plate of the map of Claes Janszoon Visscher, father of Nicolaes. The date of issue of his original map is supposed to lie between 1651 and 1656. C. J. Visscher, draftsman, engraver, and printseller (born 1587, died about 1660), was the son of Jan Claeszoon Visscher, and we are told that the works of father and son are difficult to distinguish. C. J. Visscher's son Nicolaes succeeded his father and grandfather in art-publishing, issuing especially maps of European cities and countries, and also practised artistic engraving. He died at Amsterdam, Dec. 9, 1709.

4 — [Same.]

At foot of the map "Novi Belgii novæque Angliæ nec non partis Virginie tabula multis in locis emendata per Nicolaum Visscher. Nunc apud Petr: Schenk Iun:"

5 — [Same.]

Colored.

6 "THE DUKE'S PLAN." A Description
of the Towne of Mannados or New Amsterdam as it was in September, 1661, lying in Latitude 40⁶⁰ and 40³⁰: Anno Domini 1664. 1664. Lith. for D. T. Valentine's Manual, for 1859, by Geo. Hayward, N. Y.