

**A BRIEF HISTORY
OF THE CITY OF
NEW YORK**

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A Brief History of the City of New York by Charles B. Todd

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BY
CHARLES B. TODD

*Member of the New York Historical Society,
Author of "The Story of the City of New York,"
"The Story of Washington, the National Capital," etc.*



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PREFACE.

THIS volume was written at the suggestion of public school teachers and members of the City History Club, as a text-book for use in the public and private schools of New York, as well as for all others interested in the study of the city's striking and romantic history. It has been the author's aim to present this history concisely, accurately, impartially, and at the same time to weave into the narrative such romantic and picturesque incidents, such details of manners, customs, and domestic life, as would lend it local color and render the picture clear and complete. The causes which led to the founding of the city, and the men and the agencies responsible for its wonderful growth, have not been forgotten.

In a work so condensed it was impossible to notice all the events in the city's history. For these the reader is referred to the larger and more elaborate histories of the city by Mary L. Booth, David T. Valentine, Martha J. Lamb, William L. Stone, Benson J. Lossing, the "Memorial History of New York," edited by General James Grant Wilson, and the author's larger work, "The Story of the City of New York." For material the author has drawn on the large store gathered for his "Story of the City of New York," first pub-

lished in 1888, together with important data collected since that work was issued. His principal sources have been "The Documentary History of the State of New York," the publications of the New York Historical Society, the "Manual of the Corporation," the newspaper files, diaries, scrapbooks, broadsides, and pamphlets contained in the libraries of the New York Historical Society, the New York Public Library, and the library of Columbia College, to all of which he has had free access. Where conflicting accounts of the same event were given, he has chosen that which seemed the more probable. Above all things he has endeavored to write impartially and without bias.

As before stated, the book is intended primarily for the young. Events with us move rapidly. In twenty years, if present conditions continue, New York will surpass London, and the school children of to-day will then hold in their hands the destinies of the greatest city in the world. If they become familiar with the history of their city in youth, they will love it, will take an interest in its affairs, and will be far more likely to guide its destinies aright.

But although it is intended for the young, the author hopes that his little book will appeal to the great mass of citizens who have but little time for reading, and to whom the larger histories are sealed books.

C. B. T.

NEW YORK, September 1, 1899.

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I. INTRODUCTORY.

ALL things must have a beginning, and our city of New York, now so rich and great, began in a very small way indeed. If we had been at the Battery on the eighteenth day of March, away back in 1524, we should probably have seen there a group of savages clad in skins, with bows in their hands, and a quiver full of arrows slung over their shoulders, intently watching a white speck that became larger every moment. Very soon it grew into a birdlike thing that swept on as gracefully as a swan. It was the first white man's sail the Indians had ever seen—that of the *Dolphin*, belonging to his Majesty Francis I., King of France, and sailed by a brave sailor and discoverer, Jean Verrazano of Florence.

The discovery of America by Columbus, thirty-two years before, had aroused the cupidity as well as the curiosity of the seafaring nations of Europe,—the English, Spanish, Dutch, French, and Portuguese,—and they were now sending out ships and sailors to discover, explore, and take possession of the new land. They thought, in their ignorance, that this land was a part of India, and that all the treasures of India were hidden in its savage and unknown interior.

Verrazano was one of these discoverers who had been