

I

The Founding of Schenectady

During the sixteenth century, the seven provinces that became the United Provinces of the Netherlands were only one part of the extensive empire of Charles V and Philip II. Armed resistance against Habsburg rule began in 1566, but not before 1648 would the Netherlands achieve political and religious independence from the Spanish crown and the Roman Church. These eighty years of conflict witnessed both the reduction of Spanish power and the expansion of Dutch worldwide commerce.¹

In the 1590s, Jan Huighen van Linschoten published an *Itinerario*, a geography of the world including his own observations of the East derived from several years of service at the Portuguese colony of Goa on the west coast of India. The first Dutch fleet to use van Linschoten's directions sailed in 1595. Others followed, and by 1598 at least thirteen Dutch ships representing several companies of merchants were trafficking in the region. Four years later, in 1602, the Dutch States General determined to combine these companies into one national concern, the Dutch East India Company. The Company was given a monopoly of trade extending from the Cape of Africa to Magellan's Strait. It could make war or peace, capture foreign vessels, found colonies, establish forts, and coin money.²

Initially, Dutch experience in the Americas was as limited as it had been in the East. The success of the East India Company, however, suggested a pattern for profit in the Western territories claimed by

1. Pieter Geyl, *The Revolt of the Netherlands, 1555-1609* (New York, 1958), 79-99; Charles R. Boxer, *The Dutch Seaborne Empire, 1600-1800* (New York, 1965), chap. 1; Violet Barbour, *Capitalism in Amsterdam in the 17th Century* (Ann Arbor, 1966).

2. J. H. Parry, *The Establishment of European Hegemony: 1415-1715* (New York, 1961), 87-89.

Spain and Portugal. The sugar region of northern Brazil, the natural salt pans at Curaçao in the West Indies, and the fur trade of the North (Hudson), South (Delaware), and Fresh (Connecticut) rivers, all attracted Dutch merchants and ship owners, especially during the years of truce with Spain between 1609 and 1621.³

Apprehension of renewed conflict after 1621 served as a catalyst for the creation of a Dutch West India Company during that year. As its first large-scale undertaking in the Americas, the Company wrested control of the sugar-producing region of northeast Brazil from the Portuguese. Elsewhere, in 1634, a Dutch fleet seized Curaçao off the coast of Venezuela. This island soon became the focus of Dutch commerce in the West Indies. At the same time, a third center of Dutch trade emerged on the North American mainland between the Connecticut and Delaware rivers.⁴

Brazil, Curaçao, and New Netherland—these holdings constituted the extended domain of the Dutch West India Company in the Western hemisphere. Although commercially important because of its fur trade, New Netherland attracted only a fraction of the Company's efforts and resources. In 1647, when Petrus Stuyvesant arrived as the colony's director-general, its population stood at no more than 1,200 persons. New Netherland continued to survive until 1664, but Indian hostilities, expansive pressures from both Maryland and Massachusetts, and the declining state of the fur trade all suggested the tenuous hold of the Dutch West India Company on its North American colony. It was at the end of this period of Dutch rule, however, and as a direct response to the troubled condition of the colony's fur trade, that a community was founded at Schenectady on the Mohawk River.⁵

The beginnings of the fur trade in New Netherland extended back at least as far as 1609. When Henry Hudson's *Halve Maen* entered New York Bay in September 1609, Robert Juet, an English crew member, recorded that local Indians who boarded the vessel were clothed in "divers sort of good Furrer." Hudson himself traded for

3. *Ibid.*, 110–114; Thomas J. Condon, *New York Beginnings: The Commercial Origins of New Netherland* (New York, 1968), 39–51.

4. Oliver A. Rink, *Holland on the Hudson: An Economic and Social History of Dutch New York* (Ithaca, 1986), chap. 2 and 3; Condon, *New York Beginnings*, 52–55; Parry, *Establishment of European Hegemony*, 112–113.

5. Rink, *Holland on the Hudson*, 156–171; Parry, *Establishment of European Hegemony*, 116–119; Ronald D. Cohen, "The Hartford Treaty of 1650: Anglo-Dutch Cooperation in the Seventeenth Century," *NYHSQ*, 53 (1969), 311–332.

beaver and otter pelts in the region of present-day Albany and was presented with “stropes of Beades,” possibly a belt or belts of wampum.⁶

Hudson’s voyage demonstrated the existence of a readily available source of fine quality furs and of native peoples who were eager to exchange such peltry for European-made goods. This knowledge figured prominently in the commercial calculations of Dutch merchants who previously had depended on Russia as a source for furs. The Russian trade was burdened by a 5-percent tax imposed by the czarist government on all imports and exports. Offered an opportunity to acquire duty-free furs, Dutch merchants responded immediately. Each year after 1609 one or more Dutch ships were trading on the Hudson River. Hendrick Christiaensen, Adriaen Block, and others plied the waterway, and in 1614 a fortified trading post, Fort Nassau, was constructed on an island with Hendrick Christiaensen in command. This structure, near present-day Albany, was subject to yearly flooding, however, and was soon abandoned. In 1624 the newly established Dutch West India Company erected a more permanent post, Fort Orange, on the west bank of the river to the north of the now derelict Fort Nassau.⁷

By accident, the Dutch had located their trading operations on the Hudson River at the juncture of two similar, if conflicting, native cultures. At least three Mahican villages were situated north and south of Fort Orange between Catskill and Cohoes. During his brief stay upriver in 1609, Hudson had traded with these Algonquian-speaking people. The nearest Iroquoian-speaking group, the Mohawks, had settled some thirty or more miles to the west, near modern Canajoharie. Although Johannes de Laet recorded in his *Nieuwe*

6. NNN, 18, 22–23; Lynn Ceci, “The Effect of European Contact and Trade on the Settlement Patterns of Indians in Coastal New York, 1524–1665: The Archeological and Documentary Evidence” (Ph.D. diss., City University of New York, 1977), 170–176. See also Christopher L. Miller and George R. Hamell, “A New Perspective on Indian-White Contact: Cultural Symbols and Colonial Trade,” *JAH*, 73 (1986), 311–328; Elizabeth Shapiro Peña, “Wampum Production in New Netherland and Colonial New York: The Historical and Archaeological Context” (Ph.D. diss., Boston University, 1990).

7. Donald Lenig, “Of Dutchmen, Beaver Hats, and Iroquois,” in Robert E. Funk and Charles F. Hayes, III, eds., *Current Perspectives in Northeastern Archeology* (Albany, 1977), 77. For the role of the private traders and for the formation of the Dutch West India Company, see Rink, *Holland on the Hudson*, chap. 1 and 2. For Fort Orange, see Paul Huey, “Archaeological Excavations in the Site of Fort Orange, a Dutch West India Company Trading Fort Built in 1624,” in Boudewijn Bakker, ed., *New Netherland Studies: An Inventory of Current Research and Approaches* (Utrecht, 1985), 68–79.

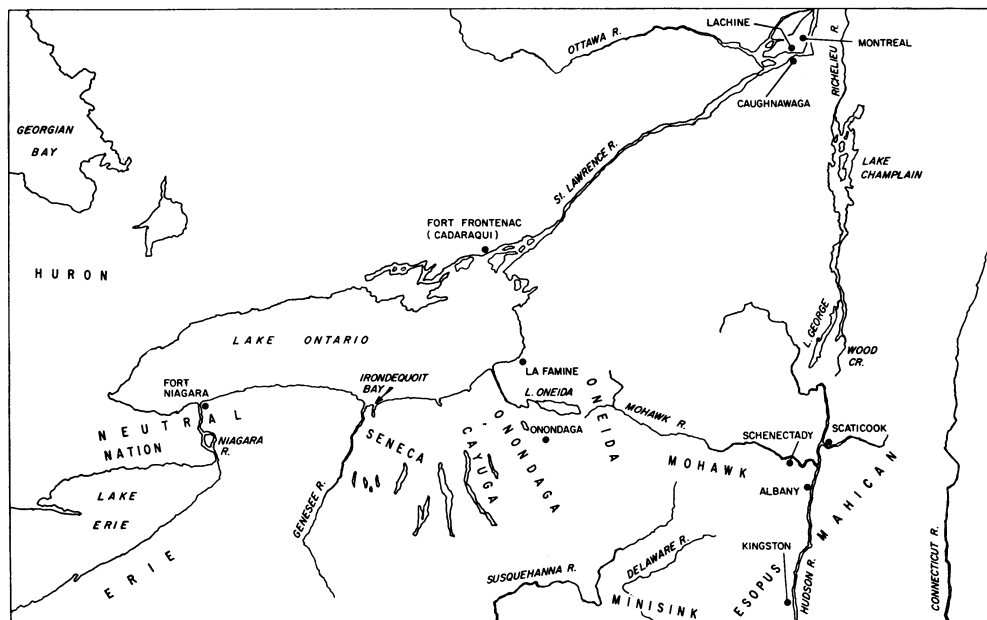
Wereldt ofte beschrijvinghe van West-Indien (New World or Descriptions of the West Indies) that the Mohawks lived west of the Hudson River and their enemies, the Mahicans, lived to the east, in fact, not until 1628 or 1629 were the Mohawks able to force the Mahicans to vacate land to the west of the river. Perhaps the clearest indication of the Mahicans' diminished power was the agreement, concluded on August 13, 1630, between the tribe and the director and council of New Netherland by which a substantial body of land to the west of the Hudson River was purchased for the benefit of the patroon, Kiliaen van Rensselaer.⁸

Until the events of 1628–1629, the position of the Dutch at Fort Orange was analogous to that of the French under Champlain at Quebec. Like the French, the Dutch were in contact with local Algonquian-speaking tribes with whom they carried on the bulk of their trade in furs. The Iroquois, in particular the Mohawks, were a peripheral and disruptive element in that trade. At Quebec, Champlain eventually assented to Algonquian requests that he join their war parties against the Mohawks. So too did the Dutch commander at Fort Orange, though with more tragic results. In 1625 Nicolaes van Wassenauer reported that Daniel van Kriekenbeeck, together with six of his men and a party of Mahicans, were ambushed near Fort Orange by the Mohawks, “who peppered them . . . with a discharge of arrows . . . leaving many slain among whom were the Commander and three of his men.”⁹

With the exception of the unfortunate van Kriekenbeeck, the Dutch refused to become enmeshed in local Indian rivalries. Unlike their French competitors on the St. Lawrence, the Dutch at Fort Orange found that they could have ready access to, and maintain trading relations with, both Algonquian and Iroquoian groups. That

8. Lenig, “Of Dutchmen, Beaver Hats, and Iroquois,” 78; Allen Trelease, *Indian Affairs in Colonial New York: The Seventeenth Century* (Ithaca, 1960), 14–15; T. J. Brasser, “Mahican,” *HNAIN*, 198; T. J. Brasser, *Riding on the Frontier's Crest: Mahican Indian Culture and Culture Change* (Ottawa, 1974). For Johannes de Laet, see Rink, *Holland on the Hudson*, 30. For the Indian war, see Bruce G. Trigger, “The Mohawk-Mahican War (1624–1628): The Establishment of a Pattern,” *CHR*, 52 (1971), 276–286. For the land acquisition of 1630, see Trelease, *Indian Affairs*, 48–49; *VRBM*, 29, 166–169.

9. For Champlain's 1610 and 1615 forays against the Iroquois, see Samuel E. Morison, *Samuel de Champlain, Father of New France* (Boston, 1972), 117–120, 153–161. For Champlain and the French in Canada at this time, see Samuel de Champlain, *The Works of Samuel de Champlain*, ed. H. P. Biggar, 6 vols. (Toronto, 1922–1936), II and III. For Wassenauer, see Rink, *Holland on the Hudson*, 70; concerning van Kriekenbeeck, see *DHNY*, III, 43–44.



The lands of the Iroquois. From Trelease, *Indian Affairs*

the Mohawks were as willing to trade as to fight was made clear in the aftermath of the van Kriekenbeeck affair. When visited by Pieter Barentsz, a local trader, the Mohawks complained “that they had never injured the whites and asked the reason why the latter had meddled with them.” Realizing that little else could be done, Barentsz accepted the protest as an apology. As of yet, however, the Mohawks enjoyed no favored status as trading partners. According to Wassenaer, “this Pieter Barentsz . . . [was] conversant with all the Tribes thereabout; he traded with . . . the Sinnekox, Wappenox, Maquaes and Maikans, so that he visited all the Tribes . . . and traded in a friendly manner . . . for peltries.”¹⁰

During the 1620s and 1630s, the Dutch West India Company sought to control the New Netherland fur trade and to prohibit private traders at Fort Orange and throughout the colony. Kiliaen van

10. *DHNY*, III 44, 46. In the wake of the events at Fort Orange there was a new focus on settlement at Manhattan. Rink, *Holland on the Hudson*, 86–87. This early period of settlement and trade sponsored by the Dutch West India Company is examined in A. J. F. van Laer, ed., *Documents Relating to New Netherland, 1624–1626*, in the *Henry E. Huntington Library* (San Marino, Calif., 1924).

Rensselaer also instructed his settlers at Rensselaerswyck that no one employed by him or living in his colony “shall presume to barter any peltries with the savages or seek to obtain them as a present.” But official prohibitions, whether by the Company or by the patroon, proved fruitless. New Netherland’s inhabitants quickly became competitors for both furs and wampum (seawan). Indeed, as early as 1626, Isaac de Rasiere, the Company secretary, admitted that he was buying wampum from the inhabitants at Manhattan. That same year, settlers at Fort Orange sought to outbid each other and the Company for furs.¹¹

Until 1639 Fort Orange was officially the exclusive trading post of the Dutch West India Company. Yet the Company was forced to contend with smuggling by its servants and settlers, the increasing sophistication of native traders, and the efforts of patroons such as Kiliaen van Rensselaer who sought to exploit the fur trade in order to finance the operation of their domains. In that year the Company opened its upriver trade to private individuals provided that they pay a duty on all goods imported to or exported from the province. Soon van Rensselaer was bragging that “the fur trade begins gradually to get into our hands.” Finally, in 1644, the Dutch West India Company closed its trading house at Fort Orange. The fort continued to be maintained as a Company outpost, but it became increasingly a place of rendezvous and settlement for private traders who congregated in the village of Beverwyck located to the north of the wooden structure.¹²

Father Isaac Jogues, the Jesuit missionary to the Mohawks who was at Beverwyck and Rensselaerswyck in 1643, has provided one of the earliest accounts of those settlements in the period immediately after the opening of the fur trade to private individuals. According to

11. *VRBM*, 209. For the Dutch West India Company’s efforts to control trade, see *LONN*, 10–12; Oliver A. Rink, “Company Management or Private Trade: The Two Patroonship Plans for New Netherland,” *NYH*, 59 (1978), 5–26. The commercial history of New Netherland is treated in Rink, *Holland on the Hudson*; Condon, *New York Beginnings*; and Van Cleef Bachman, *Peltries or Plantations: The Economic Policies of the Dutch West India Company in New Netherland, 1623–1639* (Baltimore, 1969). For the illegal trade in furs, see Ceci, “Effect of European Contact and Trade,” 195–196; Trelease, *Indian Affairs*, 50.

12. *VRBM*, 520. For Company developments during the 1630s and for the transformation of Fort Orange into a center for private traders, see *VRBM.*, 247–248; Rink, *Holland on the Hudson*, 134–135; Ceci, “Effect of European Contact and Trade,” 188; Trelease, *Indian Affairs*, 49, 60–61, 112–113; Donna Merwick, “Dutch Townsmen and Land Use: A Spatial Perspective on Seventeenth-Century Albany, New York,” *WMQ*, 3d ser., 37 (1980), 57.

Jogues, trade was “free to all; this gives the Indians all things cheap, each of the Hollanders outbidding his neighbor, and being satisfied provided he can gain some little profit.” Adriaen Van der Donck, a resident at Rensselaerswyck during the 1640s, concurred, complaining that New Netherland suffered from a “superabundance of Petty Traders and . . . a want of Farmers and Farm servants.” For the local inhabitants, the easiest way to “gain some little profit” was through bartering with the Indians. The result, however, was an economy severely sensitive to the state of that trade.¹³

During the same year that Father Jogues visited Beverwyck and Rensselaerswyck, Arent van Curler reported to the patroon on the success of the annual fur trade: “The residents have shipped fully 3,000 to 4,000 skins from above. There has never been such a big trade as this year.” Contemporary records suggest a steady increase in volume in New Netherland’s fur trade during the three decades after 1624. In that year, 4,700 beaver and otter skins were exported from the province. Between 1625 and 1640 Fort Orange alone may have returned over 5,000 skins each year. At a later date, Adriaen Van der Donck estimated that 80,000 beavers were killed annually between 1644 and 1653 in the whole of New Netherland. The high point of the trade at Beverwyck came in 1656 and 1657, when as many as 40,000 beaver and otter skins were shipped to New Amsterdam each year. Within two years, however, the situation had altered dramatically. In 1659 Governor-General Stuyvesant reported to the directors of the Dutch West India Company that at Beverwyck neighbor complained against neighbor “because of the decline of the trade, which grows worse from year to year.” Stuyvesant noted the high prices that now had to be paid for skins as well as the extravagant quantity of presents demanded by the natives.¹⁴

13. *NNN*, 262; *NYCD*, I, 259. See also, Rink, *Holland on the Hudson*, 87–88. Jogues’s description of Fort Orange and Rensselaerswyck should be contrasted with that provided by Arent van Curler during the same year in his correspondence with Kiliaen van Rensselaer. See A. J. F. van Laer, ed., “Arent van Curler and His Historic Letter to the Patroon,” *DSSAY*, 3 (1927–1928), 18–29.

14. Van Laer, ed., “Van Curler and His Historic Letter,” 29; *NYCD*, XIV, 444. For a brief biographical entry on Arent van Curler, see *VRBM*, 817. In 1628 two ships reached Holland with 10,000 pelts from New Netherland. Lenig, “Of Dutchmen, Beaver Hats, and Iroquois,” 80. For additional information on the early fur trade in New Netherland, see *NNN*, 76–83. For the yearly return from Fort Orange for the period 1625–1640 and for a list that includes most of the years between 1624 and 1635, see *VRBM*, 483; *Historical Collections: Consisting of State Papers and Other Authentic Documents*, ed. Ebenezer Hazard, 2 vols. (Philadelphia, 1792–1794), I, 397 (hereafter

Obvious explanations for the decline of the fur trade after 1657 include exhaustion of the supply of fur-bearing animals within native hunting territories as well as intertribal warfare, which disrupted the trade in furs from regions not yet depleted to the west. Overhunting and -trapping may have contributed to the record volume of furs traded at Beverwyck during the 1650s. If so, a decline in the population of beaver, otter, and other pelt-producing species could have followed. Additionally, in July 1660, the Senecas admitted to Director-General Stuyvesant that warfare had indeed interrupted their trade for furs with other, more distant, tribes. This meeting, the first formal diplomatic appearance of the Senecas at Beverwyck, was itself a signal that, of necessity, the trade in furs was exploiting ever more westerly sources of supply.¹⁵

In 1657 some 37,000 beaver skins were shipped from Beverwyck to New Amsterdam between June 20 and September 27. For the community's Dutch traders, a year's profits had to be made within the three- or four-month period between June and September by the exchange of merchandise, clothing, food, and liquor for skins. Increasing competition among the traders led to a greater dependence on Indian and white "brokers." Such persons were Dutchmen or natives hired for a fee by the local traders. Their job was to intercept Indians bringing furs overland from the Mohawk River to Beverwyck and to offer presents (often shirts or coats) in the name of the trader for whom they worked. If the gifts were accepted, it was expected that the Indians would stop at that trader's house on reaching Beverwyck.

Not surprisingly, it was a system open to abuse and difficult to

cited as *State Papers*). For Van der Donck's estimate, see *AVDD*, 111. In 1688 Symon Groot of Schenectady testified that as a youth, "in one year ye Deponent hath help to Trade & Pact up 37 thousand Bever." *LIR*, 143-144. For the fur trade in the 1650s, see Trelease, *Indian Affairs*, 131; Edmund B. O'Callaghan, *History of New Netherland*, 2 vols. (Spartanburg, S.C., 1966), II, 310n; *NYCD*, XIII, 27n.

15. For the July 1660 Indian conference, see *FOB*, II, 284; Trelease, *Indian Affairs*, 127-128. There is disagreement as to how rapidly the Mohawks and other Iroquois depleted the peltry resources within their own territories. George T. Hunt argued that the depletion had occurred by 1640, but Thomas Norton is not convinced that it was this early. Bruce Trigger concludes that 1670 was the date by which beaver had been hunted to extinction within the Iroquois heartland. He suggests that as early as 1640 the number of furs that could be taken from this territory was insufficient to meet the Iroquois demand for European trade goods. George T. Hunt, *The Wars of the Iroquois: A Study in Intertribal Trade Relations* (Madison, Wisc., 1940), 33; Thomas E. Norton, *The Fur Trade in Colonial New York, 1686-1776* (Madison, Wisc., 1974), 9-11; Bruce G. Trigger, "Ontario Native People and the Epidemics of 1634-1640," in Shepard Krech, ed., *Indians, Animals, and the Fur Trade* (Athens, Ga., 1981), 27-28.

control. Any disruption of the trade, however momentary, could lead to distrust and dissatisfaction on both sides. Because of the first Anglo-Dutch war, between 1652 and 1654 a smaller than usual amount of merchandise was shipped to New Netherland. As a result, the price of goods available for trade was inflated. Dutch explanations of the law of supply and demand failed to relieve Mohawk suspicions that they were being cheated, and members of the tribe responded by killing cattle at Rensselaerswyck. In an effort to prevent the further destruction of livestock and to renew the now strained alliance with the Iroquois, the Beverwyck court determined "to send a present to the Maquas" and to promise that "when the ships come here . . . to let them have the goods cheaper, on the old basis."¹⁶

The reduction of trade also escalated the pressures of competition among the local traders. In July 1655, after the court issued an "ordinance against going into the woods to trade," the magistrates were accused "in scandalous, villanous and contemptuous terms . . . of . . . trying to reserve the entire trade to themselves." The court members swiftly handled this challenge to their authority, their accuser being forced to beg forgiveness on his knees. After 1657, however, the use of brokers gained added significance as each trader sought to improve his advantage in the competition for a declining number of furs. In the face of such acquisitive pressures, the ability of the court to regulate the use of brokers eroded rapidly.¹⁷

By 1659 the troubled state of the fur trade was creating division and dissension within the community at Beverwyck. In June, as in previous years, the court granted permission to employ Indian brokers, but with the added restriction that they be sent "into the woods without any presents." Almost immediately, charges were made against traders who continued to violate the ordinance. One individual, Philip Pietersen Schuyler, admitted "that he gave a present to the Indians and if he did wrong in that, he says that not a single beaver is bartered in the Fuyck [Beverwyck] but it is done contrary to the ordinance." Other defendants were equally unrepentant, one declaring "that the magistrates were a lot of perjurers and that he did not care a thing about the magistrates."¹⁸

In seeking to enforce its ordinances, the court and its members were becoming an object of abuse within the Dutch community. The

16. *FOB*, I, 170.

17. *Ibid.*, 223–224; *LONN*, 190.

18. *FOB*, II, 189, 191.

strained state of Dutch-Mohawk relations only added to the troubles of the local authorities. Between September and October of 1659, a series of meetings were held at Beverwyck and the first Mohawk village, Caughnawaga. The Mohawks complained of beatings received at the hands of Dutch traders, and the court members were forced to acknowledge that they had received complaints “about the insolent treatment of the savages in beating them and throwing things at them.” In response, they forbade “all residents of this jurisdiction to molest any savage . . . on pain of arbitrary correction.”¹⁹

The passage from one trading season to the next failed to abate either dissension within the Dutch community or disputes between the Dutch and Mohawks. In May 1660, twenty-five persons (later identified as the community’s “principal traders”) petitioned the court, announcing that they awaited the start of another trading season and warning “that the Christians are again about to run into the woods as brokers in order by . . . improper ways to get the trade entirely into their hands.” The petitioners claimed that this would result in the “decline and utter ruination of Fort Orange and the village of Beverwyck.” They urged instead “that every one may be free to employ Indian brokers.” In response, on May 31, the magistrates voted four to two that “no brokers whether Christians or Indians, shall be employed, but that the Indians without being . . . solicited shall be allowed to trade their beaver where they please.” Permission was granted, however, “to every one to go on the hill, as far up as the houses stand, to inquire where the Indians wish to go.”²⁰

The most complete explanation of the state of affairs at Beverwyck was presented in a June 1660 letter from Vice-Director Johannes La Montagne to Director-General Stuyvesant. According to La Montagne, Beverwyck was divided into “two directly opposite parties, one asking to be allowed to employ Indian brokers and no Christians, and the other Christians and no Indians.” Subsequently, at the court’s request, the entire community of traders assembled in the fort. Heard individually, they “expressed a different opinion [from that of the May petition] . . . that it would be better, to give the enormous amount of brokerage, which went now yearly into the pockets of the Indian brokers . . . to Dutchmen.” The use of Indian

19. *Ibid.*, 218–219. For the September and October meetings, see 211–223. During the fall of 1659, for the first time, a defensive plank wall was erected around the community at Beverwyck. *Ibid.*, 226.

20. *Ibid.*, 255–256.

brokers was expensive. La Montagne estimated that each year fifty thousand guilders in fees were funneled into their hands. By urging the use of only Indian brokers, the “principal traders” must have realized that at a time of declining profits from the fur trade many small traders would be hard pressed to afford the fees demanded by the native woods runners.²¹

Eighty of the small traders made the clearest statement of their situation in an appeal to the court in late June. They claimed that the May petition had been presented by persons “who, being moved by excessive greed . . . make themselves believe . . . that they thereby increase the trade.” In reply the small traders charged that this was only “a pretext invented for no other purpose than to divert the trade to themselves.” The petitioners declared that they were not a “rabble” and urged the magistrates not to “tolerate that the community be oppressed, considering that the least [of the citizens] has as much right as the most [important one].”²²

The continuing complaints of the Mohawks to the local court at this time provide further testimony to the fierce competition for furs at Beverwyck and to the abuses that could result. The Mohawks requested that no Dutchmen on horseback or on foot be allowed to roam in the woods. They would surround an Indian with skins and “drag him along saying: ‘Come with me, so and so has no goods,’ thus interfering with one another,” which the Mohawks feared would “end badly.” Such self-interested pursuit of profit violated the natives’ concern for communal well-being. In conference with Governor-General Stuyvesant at Beverwyck during the summer of 1660, members of the tribe urged instead that “each house ought to have something. . . . The brokers, pull one hither and thither. . . . That should not be tolerated, but each house ought to have something.”²³

The court’s May ruling reduced neither the number of petitions nor the bitter divisions within the community of traders. It also proved difficult to enforce, as Vice-Director La Montagne frankly admitted: “Since that time I have been obliged to go into the woods with soldiers to prevent mishaps and to see that the ordinances are observed. It comes very hard upon me . . . and . . . I must frequently

21. *Ibid.*; *NYCD*, XIII, 175. The standard account of the events at Beverwyck at this time provided by Allen Trelease is incorrect. Trelease confuses the positions of the two groups of traders, claiming that it was the principal traders who urged the use of Dutch brokers. Trelease, *Indian Affairs*, 134.

22. *FOB*, II, 266–268.

23. *Ibid.*, 269, 285.

remain over night in the woods." Recognizing that its resources of enforcement were limited, the court soon abandoned the effort to regulate the use of brokers and acceded to the request that both Dutchmen and Indians be allowed to enter the woods. This was a victory for the small traders, but the court members warned of the "dangerous consequence" and the magistrates protested "their innocence of all mischief that may result therefrom."²⁴

Divisions within the Dutch community were expressed not only by petitions presented to the court but also in complaints of slander and defamation of character. During June, Cornelis Teunissen Bos and Jacob Tyssen Van der Heyden brought suit against William Teller, charging that he had "called them a rabble and injured their reputation." In his defense, Teller claimed that he had stated "that it would be a miserable thing if I or the common people or rabble should rebel against the law of the public authorities." Testimony was presented, however, which suggested that Teller's remarks had been more candid, that he had actually declared, "If the principals of this place listened to this rabble, they would be crazy." One of Beverwyck's "principal traders," Teller had signed the May 25 petition urging the sole use of Indian brokers; his opponents, Bos and Van der Heyden, were among those who signed the subsequent appeal of the "small traders." Both men were vocal opponents of the large traders, and each seems to have been an individual whose status had fallen with the decay in trade.²⁵

For the small traders, the decline of the fur trade after 1657 proved increasingly troublesome. During July 1658, Jeremias van Rensselaer (then patroon at Rensselaerswyck) wrote his mother in the Netherlands that "the common traders get no beavers . . . which is a great loss." By fall 1659, little improvement had been recorded and van

24. *Ibid.*, 268; *NYCD*, XIII, 175. For additional ordinances against trading in the woods issued at Beverwyck and Rensselaerswyck in 1660 and 1661, see *LONN*, 381, 394.

25. *FOB*, II, 260; *CHMD*, XVI, 159. The suit against William Teller was initiated June 8, 1660, only two weeks after presentation of the May 25 petition and nine days before the petition of the small traders. The charges and countercharges continued throughout the summer. On September 28, Teller brought suit against both Bos and Van der Heyden, asking "of the defendants reparation of honor." *FOB*, II, 267-268, 300. Although included among the small traders in 1660, six years earlier, both Bos and Van der Heyden had been counted among "the most prosperous and loyal citizens" at Beverwyck. Bos had served as a community magistrate during 1653-1654. *FOB*, I, 126, 162-163.

Rensselaer reported, “Many persons here are now so deeply in debt that I would rather keep my goods than to extend credit to them.”²⁶

What did it mean to be a large or a small trader? In 1657 almost 40,000 beaver and otter pelts were shipped from Beverwyck between June and September. During that year, Abraham Staats, one of the large traders, shipped 4,200 skins; Jan van Bremen, one of the small traders, shipped only 300. Taken together, the May 1660 petition of the “principal traders” and the June petition of the “small traders” provide the best picture of the fur-trading community at Beverwyck at this moment of crisis. In all, sixty names can be identified from the two lists—twenty of the principal traders and forty of the small. As a group, the latter individuals had resided in the community for a shorter period of time. Over half had not been at Beverwyck before 1655. They were less likely to be property holders or heads of families, and within another half decade, many (over one-third) would no longer be found in the community. In contrast, the principal traders were more established and less transient. Almost all were heads of families, most were property owners who had been in the community for over a half decade. Moreover, many would remain at Beverwyck (Albany) after the English conquest. Finally, fully half of those who can be identified as principal traders had acted as magistrates at one point or another during the 1650s. The small traders were rarely chosen as magistrates.²⁷

For the Dutch, the depressed state of the fur trade was further complicated by the threat of English competition and intervention in that trade. As early as 1640, Kiliaen van Rensselaer expressed his fear that the English on the Connecticut River would employ Mahican Indians living below Fort Orange as emissaries to the Mohawks and in this manner “draw everything away from us over land.” In fact, the English had a long-standing interest in the New Netherland fur trade. As early as 1634, John Winthrop estimated that the Dutch trade amounted to nine or ten thousand skins a year. Thomas Mor-

26. *CJVR*, 104, 175.

27. *ÉRAR*, I, 244. It is likely that Staats and van Bremen dispatched both their own furs and those received from other community traders. Additional work on this subject is being done by Martha Shattuck of the New Netherland Project at the New York State Library. For the 1660 petitions, see *FOB*, II, 255, 266–268. Information on community residence, family relations, office holding, and property ownership can be found in *ÉRAR*, *VRBM*, *FOB*, and *FS*, as well as in *New York Historical Manuscripts: Dutch, Land Papers*, ed. Charles T. Gehring, vols. GG, HH, II (Baltimore, 1980) (hereafter cited as *Land Papers*).

ton, in his *New English Canaan*, calculated the annual value of the Dutch beaver trade at twenty thousand pounds, and urged that the English waste no time in seizing this profitable commerce.²⁸

During the 1630s, the Dutch competed unsuccessfully with traders from Plymouth Colony and settlers from Massachusetts for control of the fur resources of the Connecticut River region. After 1636 William Pynchon's settlement at Springfield cut off supplies from above and effected a near monopoly of trade on the river. Plans to tap the western fur trade by an overland route from the Connecticut River to the Hudson were soon proposed, and in 1645 a company of adventurers organized for that purpose. Although granted a twenty-year monopoly of trade by the General Court of Massachusetts, the group accomplished nothing. In 1659, however, two of the original members, William Hawthorne and William Paine, joined John Pynchon, the son of Springfield's founder, to form a new company devoted to the development of the western trade.²⁹

All three were men of influence. William Paine of Ipswich was one of the wealthiest individuals in the Massachusetts Bay Colony. William Hawthorne served as a commissioner of the Confederation of New England. Meanwhile, John Pynchon had taken over his father's affairs at Springfield after the elder Pynchon's return to England in 1652. By this date, the trade in furs on the Connecticut River had been so reduced that there was hardly any profit to be made. For this reason, the designs of the previous decade were given new consideration. The journey of both Hawthorne and Pynchon to the Hudson River in the summer of 1659 indicated that this was to be a more serious attempt against the Dutch trade. At Beverwyck on August 4, the two Englishmen explained their visit as an attempt "to supply the place with cattle." For this purpose, they asked permission to settle a

28. *VRBM*, 483–484; John Winthrop, *Winthrop's Journal, 1630–1649*, ed. James K. Hosmer, 2 vols. (New York, 1908), I, 131. Thomas Morton wrote: "And, therefore it would be adjudged an irreparable oversight to protract time, and suffer the Dutch (who are but intruders upon his Majesties most hopefull Country of New England,) to possess themselves of that so pleasant and commodious Country of Erocoise [Iroquois] before us." Thomas Morton, *The New English Canaan*, ed. Charles Francis Adams, Jr. (Boston, 1883), 240.

29. Arthur H. Buffington, "New England and the Western Fur Trade, 1629–1675," *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, Transactions*, 18 (1915–1916), 160–192. John Pynchon, *Letters of John Pynchon, 1654–1700*, ed. Carl Bridenbaugh, *Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, Collections*, 60 (1982), 30.

village to the south, near the Hudson River, “east of the Wappengers’ kill.”³⁰

Upon receiving notice of Pynchon’s and Hawthorne’s arrival, Governor-General Stuyvesant wrote to the directors of the Dutch West India Company, warning that English settlers near Fort Orange would “ruin and cut off our beaver trade, as they have done . . . on the Fresh river.” The governor’s suspicions were further aroused by the official correspondence he soon received from the New England authorities. The Commissioners for the United Colonies offered no apology for the recent English transgression into Dutch territory: “Wee presume you have heard from . . . Orania That some of our English have bin lately in those partes . . . the Government of the Massachusetts have granted libertie to some of their people to erect a plantation in those partes . . . yett without entrenchment of the Dutch Rights.”³¹

Stuyvesant had in fact long feared that the fur trade at Fort Orange

30. *FOB*, II, 208. For the commissioners of the Confederation of New England and for William Hawthorne, see *State Papers*, II, 26, 145, 174, 203, 227; Herbert L. Osgood, *The American Colonies in the Seventeenth Century*, 3 vols. (New York, 1904–1907; reprint, Gloucester, Mass., 1957), I, 399–403. For John Pynchon, see Pynchon, *Letters*, xv, xxxii–xxxv. For the fur trade on the Connecticut River as well as for information about William Paine, see Pynchon, *Letters*, xxxviii–xxxix; David Grayson Allen, *In English Ways: The Movement of Societies and the Transfer of English Local Law and Custom to Massachusetts Bay in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill, N.C., 1981), 119, 133; Buffington, “New England and the Western Fur Trade,” 177n; Ruth McIntyre, “John Pynchon and the New England Fur Trade, 1652–1676,” in John Pynchon, *Selections from the Account Books of John Pynchon, 1651–1697*, ed. Carl Bridenbaugh and Juliette Tomlinson, Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts, *Collections*, 61 (1985), 3–70, especially 55–60. For Pynchon’s previous trade with the Dutch at Fort Orange, and for his continued dealings with William Hawthorne in an effort to exploit the western fur trade, see Pynchon, *Account Books*, 139, 140, 142–144. The most recent work on the Pynchon family and the community at Springfield includes only a brief reference to Pynchon’s interest in the western fur trade. Stephen Innes, *Labor in a New Land: Economy and Society in Seventeenth-Century Springfield* (Princeton, 1983), 31–32.

31. *NYCD*, XIII, 126; *State Papers*, II, 408. In November 1659, Stuyvesant received the following statement of English territorial rights from the General Court of Massachusetts: “The patent granted to the Colony of Massachusetts by the late King Charles . . . is to extend . . . from Sea to Sea; and we are very well assured that some part of Hudsons River . . . is within our patent granted . . . and although the Dutch may have intruded within the said Limits . . . we conceive no Reason can be imagined why we should not improve and make use of our Just Rights . . . and should our enjoying our Right be some damage to your trade and profit, we would suppose that argument so unbecoming the professors of Christianity that those that do but pretend to common Justice and Honesty could never allege it seriously without blushing.” *PA*, XXX, 281–282.

would be seized by a foreign power. As early as 1649, he accused Swedish settlers on the Delaware River of designs against the Dutch trade similar to those of which he now suspected the English. In 1655 the director-general dispatched a force to the Delaware to remove the threat posed by the Swedish colony. This military action was followed by the creation of New Amstel, a community sponsored by the city of Amsterdam. These steps to reassert Dutch control over the region had barely been taken, however, before the Delaware settlements were placed at risk by the nearby Maryland colony. In September 1659, at the same moment that Stuyvesant sought to alert the directors of the Dutch West India Company to the danger at Fort Orange, he also dispatched an embassy headed by Augustine Heerman to treat with the English of Maryland.³²

Facing encroachments on both the Hudson and the Delaware rivers, Stuyvesant perceived his colony to be the victim of an enveloping movement of English population and military power. That he did not isolate his troubles geographically but treated them as part of an overall larger concern is clear. In a letter to the directors of the Dutch West India Company written in April 1660, Stuyvesant formulated his response to the English threat then confronting New Netherland: "Experience has taught . . . in regard to the invasions . . . of the English, that the forts . . . erected formerly on the South and Freshwater rivers, did not prevent the usurpations . . . of this nation . . . it is certainly beyond question, that, if . . . New Amstel, had not been erected there, that country and with it the whole Southriver would have been stolen." Stuyvesant concluded by praying, "God grant, that such means may be adopted, as will preserve not only the Southriver, but also this Northriver against . . . the English." To protect the economically and strategically vital Hudson River, the governor proposed that "the best and safest plan would be to forestall the English, by peopling and settling the lands with some good and clever farmers."³³

32. For the geographic extent of New Netherland, the relations of the Dutch and Swedes on the Delaware, and the difficulties of the Dutch with the English of Maryland, see Trelease, *Indian Affairs*, 54–59, 108–111; Christopher Ward, *The Dutch and Swedes on the Delaware, 1609–1664* (Philadelphia, 1930); C. A. Weslager, *The English on the Delaware, 1610–1682* (New Brunswick, N.J., 1967), 154–175; *PA*, XIX, 495–497, 533–543, 571–572, 574, 579–581, 597–598, 623, 626–628; *New York Historical Manuscripts: Dutch, Delaware Papers, 1648–1664*, ed. Charles T. Gehring, XVIII–XIX (Baltimore, 1981), XVIII, 37–47, 84–97, 143–161, 211–222, 273–274 (hereafter cited as *Delaware Papers*).

33. *PA*, XIX, 631–632; *NYCD*, XIII, 107–108. In 1657 Philip Pietersen Schuyler

Stuyvesant may already have been approached by a group of proprietors headed by Arent van Curler who were seeking permission to establish a new community on the Mohawk River on property then controlled by the Iroquois. During the period 1659–1661, van Curler had several opportunities to introduce the project to both the Mohawks and the director-general. Not only was he among those persons who met with the Mohawks at Beverwyck and Caughnawaga in the fall of 1659, but when Stuyvesant journeyed to Beverwyck for a conference with the Iroquois in July 1660, it is likely that van Curler also was in attendance. Subsequently, in April 1661, he was at Manhattan where he met with the director-general on at least one occasion.³⁴

The strategic requirements discerned by Petrus Stuyvesant coincided with a growing demand for agricultural lands outside the bounds of Rensselaerswyck. Years before, Father Isaac Jogues had remarked on the poor quality of the terrain at Rensselaerswyck, where there was “little land fit for tillage, being crowded by hills which are bad soil.” In addition, the colony suffered from winter ice flows and periodic inundations of high water. During June 1660, the current patroon, Jeremias van Rensselaer, admitted, “Daily I must listen . . . to the murmuring of many people who request to buy of the Indians this or that island or small piece of land, for which they will pay rent.”³⁵

of Beverwyck was granted permission to acquire Half Moon (now Waterford, N.Y.) from the Indians to prevent “those of Connecticut” purchasing it. *ERAR*, I, 2n; George W. Schuyler, *Colonial New York: Philip Schuyler and His Family*, 2 vols. (New York, 1885), I, 152. The need to promote population growth and settlement as a deterrent against the English had been emphasized by Adriaen Van der Donck. *AVDD*, 11. During the 1650s, both the directors of the Dutch West India Company and the government of New Netherland sought to further the establishment of new agricultural villages. In 1654 the directors wrote to Stuyvesant of “our zeal in increasing the population” and urged him to “think of promoting the cultivation of the soil.” Ordinances were passed for the formation of such communities in 1656 and 1660. *NYCD*, XIV, 264; *CHMD*, VIII, 56, IX, 53; *LONN*, 368–370.

34. For van Curler’s status within New Netherland and his influence with the Iroquois and other tribes, see Van Laer, ed., “Van Curler and His Historic Letter,” 15–16. For van Curler’s influence with the Indians, see Trelease, *Indian Affairs*, 115. Concerning the fall 1659 meetings between the Dutch and Mohawks, see *FOB*, II, 211–219, 222–223. For Stuyvesant’s July 1660 visit to Beverwyck and van Curler’s April 1661 meeting with the director-general, see *FOB*, II, 281–287; *CJVR*, 251.

35. *CJVR*, 225; *NNN*, 262. For the problems that plagued Rensselaerswyck, see Samuel G. Nissenson, *The Patroon’s Domain* (New York, 1937), 46, 47; *CJVR*, 156–157, 321; *CMVR*, 27–30. In 1661 heavy rains that flooded the countryside and made travel difficult delayed the Mohawk grant of land at Schenectady to Arent van Curler

The attractiveness of a settlement at Schenectady was further enhanced by the increasing demand for produce within New Netherland as a whole. The soils were of excellent quality and the village was to be located “upon a good flat, high enough to be free from the overflowing of the water of the river.” Not only would a community at Schenectady forestall the English and secure the beaver trade for the Dutch, it would provide a badly needed expansion of the colony’s agricultural production. In 1659 Director-General Stuyvesant wrote to Jeremias van Rensselaer, informing the patroon of the shortage “of bread and grain to help ourselves and others.” Stuyvesant also included a request that van Rensselaer “accommodate us with as much bread grain and pease as can possibly be obtained before the winter.” Although the community at New Amstel protected Dutch possession of the Delaware Valley, it placed additional burdens on the colony’s agricultural resources. Everything was “scarce and in short supply” and the authorities at New Amsterdam were urged to forward “grain, peas and bacon.”³⁶

Finally, it is possible that by the late 1650s the growth of population at Beverwyck also created pressure for outward expansion. As early as 1654 the local court proposed to Governor-General Stuyvesant that new ground be allowed for construction “as all the formerly allotted ground has been built on.” Whether similar demographic factors influenced events at Rensselaerswyck is less certain. In 1643 Father Jogues had estimated that there were about 100 persons in the colony. A decade later there were at least 230. Only four farms were under cultivation in 1640, but by 1651 there were eighteen, although the number may have declined after this. Certainly for the province as a whole, the 1650s marked a significant period of population expansion. In 1647 New Netherland’s population approached 1,200 inhabitants. Within a decade this figure tripled as the result of immigration. Most newcomers settled on Long Island, but in 1652 Esopus

by a month, from June to July. George R. Howell and Joel Munsell, *History of the County of Schenectady, N.Y., from 1662 to 1886* (New York, 1886), 3.

36. *JD*, 213; *CJVR*, 187; *Delaware Papers*, XVIII, 134. In response to the director-general’s request, van Rensselaer sent Stuyvesant 200 schepels of wheat. *CJVR*, 188–189. On occasion, Stuyvesant also sought to acquire supplies from New England, *NYCD*, II, 373. In later years, in defense of his administration, Stuyvesant wrote: “Admitting, however, that the fertility of the country was such as never to necessitate us to import provisions . . . which abundance, however, the Province frequently could never attain, in consequence of the so numerous invasions and massacres on the part of the Indians within, and the continual vexation of the neighbors without.” *PA*, XVII, 811.

(modern Kingston) was founded and in 1661 another community (Wiltwyck) was established nearby, suggesting that the increase in population also had an impact on the Hudson Valley.³⁷

On July 27, 1661, Arent van Curler and three Mohawk sachems signed a deed signaling the formal transfer of land at Schenectady from the Mohawks to a group of fourteen proprietors, individuals drawn from the communities at Beverwyck and Rensselaerswyck. One month before, van Curler had written Petrus Stuyvesant, reminding the director-general, "When last at Manhatans I informed your honor that there were some . . . who were well inclined . . . to take possession of and till the *Groote Vlackte* (Great Flats)." According to van Curler, "six or eight families" were ready to remove to the Mohawk River flats. Unfortunately, there exist no records of the negotiations that must have occurred between van Curler and Governor-General Stuyvesant, van Curler and the Mohawks, and among those individuals and families interested in the venture. Arent van Curler, however, was the ideal person to achieve consent for his proposal. His political and familial connections within New Netherland were impeccable, and his influence with the Iroquois has been compared to that of Sir William Johnson in the 1700s.³⁸

In his June 1661 letter, van Curler addressed the director-general as a "lover of agriculture," and it was in this context that permission was granted for the establishment of the new community: "The letter of Arent Van Curler being presented and read . . . containing . . . a request . . . for the large plain situated to the back of Fort Orange . . . for the purpose of cultivation . . . the Director General and Council resolved to consent to it." Although this document makes clear that farming was expected to be a primary activity at the village, it makes no mention either of the extension or prohibition of the right

37. *NYCD*, XIV, 299. For the growth of population at Beverwyck, see Merwick, "Dutch Townsmen and Land Use," 60. For Rensselaerswyck, see Nissenson, *Patroon's Domain*, 80; *NNN*, 261–262; *VRBM*, 732–743; *CJVR*, 461–462. For the growth of New Netherland's population after 1647, see Oliver A. Rink, "The People of New Netherland: Notes on Non-English Immigration to New York in the Seventeenth Century," *NYH*, 62 (1981), 34–39; Trelease, *Indian Affairs*, 86. For Esopus, see Marius Schoonmaker, *The History of Kingston, New York, from Its Early Settlement to the Year 1820* (New York, 1888), 5–6, 31.

38. *SP*, 9–10. Besides van Curler, only one of these earliest settlers can be identified, Philip Hendricksen Brouwer. Brouwer transmitted van Curler's June 1661 letter to Governor-General Stuyvesant. *SP*, 10. Six of the fourteen proprietors could not write and used marks to sign their names. *ARS*, III, 494; *ERAR*, I, 26. For van Curler's significance, see Trelease, *Indian Affairs*, 115; Van Laer, ed., "Van Curler and His Historic Letter," 15–16.

to trade. There is evidence, however, that Stuyvesant did grant trading rights to several of the original Schenectady proprietors. This privilege may not have been extended to the rest and, in any event, the liberty was soon withdrawn. Within a year, Stuyvesant had determined that Schenectady would not become a center for the fur trade. The settlers were ordered to sell no liquor to the Indians and their lands could not be surveyed until the proprietors promised to avoid all "trade with the savages." Indian troubles at Esopus and elsewhere during this period may have caused Stuyvesant to reconsider his initial grant of trading privileges to the Schenectady settlers. Certainly, the Beverwyck authorities were quick to protest that the new village's remoteness made it an unfit site for trade.³⁹

To enforce the prohibition on trade, Stuyvesant ordered the provincial surveyor, Jacques Cortelyou, to depart for Schenectady in the spring of 1663 but to refuse to measure off any lands until the residents signed a bond promising that they would "not carry on, nor cause to be carried on, on the said Flat . . . any trade . . . with any of the savages." In response, on May 18, 1663, the "proprietors of Schenectady" addressed a lengthy petition to Stuyvesant protesting their willingness to obey his authority but noting that "the land was bought out of our own purse, . . . taken possession of, built upon and stocked with horses and cattle at great expense." Having invested so much in the new community, they deemed it injurious to be "treated differently . . . than other subjects, all their work would be in vain and they would be totally ruined."⁴⁰

Arent van Curler also wrote to Stuyvesant, informing the director-general that the settlers were discouraged "and I have much trouble with them on that account." Van Curler still hoped to alter the governor's decision and placed the onus for the prohibition of trade not on Stuyvesant but on those persons who sought to maintain a monopoly of trade at Beverwyck: "As far as I can see, it seems that the honorable general and council in proposing the aforesaid resolution and bond were induced thereto by some jealous persons . . . under pretext that they fear that a few beavers be traded there [Schenectady] and that therefore they would have less." Van Curler denied that

39. *SP*, 10, 13. For the possibility that Stuyvesant granted trading privileges that were later withdrawn, see *SP*, 14; *ARS*, III, 493-494; Ruth L. Higgins, *Expansion in New York with Especial Reference to the Eighteenth Century* (Columbus, Ohio, 1931), 15. For the 1662 prohibition and the 1663 ordinance against trade, see *SP*, 12-14; *LONN*, 442-443.

40. *ARS*, III, 492-494.