

## THE EARLY SETTLEMENT OF OYSTER BAY

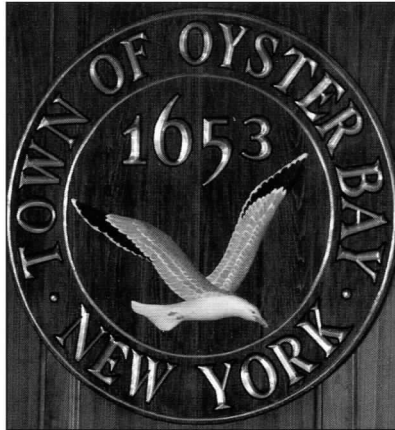
by John E. Hammond

Aside from the words "Town of Oyster Bay," the significant devices on the town seal are a stylized seagull and the date 1653. The seagull was created by Oyster Bay artist Alfred J. Walker who graduated from Oyster Bay High School and Pratt Institute and then went on to become an artist with the Walt Disney Studios. The date 1653 comes from the first purchase by Samuel Mayo, William Leverich and Peter Wright, but this was not the first European settlement at Oyster Bay. Mayo, Leverich and Wright purchased the land from the Matinecock sachem Mohannes.

The original settlers of the area were the Matinecock Indians, so called from the Indian word Matinecock which meant "at the hilly ground." Historians and other researchers differ in opinion as to when these first settlers arrived on Long Island but it is safe to say that they were here more than a thousand years ago.

The Matinecocks occupied lands on Long Island as far west as Flushing and as far east as Setauket, running south to the center of the island. They were part of the Algonquin language and cultural group but had no written language. When the first Europeans arrived in the early 1600s the total population of the 13 chieftaincies on Long Island was estimated at about 6,500.

The arrival of the first Europeans had a great impact on the Indians; many were decimated by diseases which the Indians had no resistance to. Writing in 1670, Daniel Denton believed that this was due to Divine Intervention when he wrote that:



It hath been generally observed that where the English come to settle a Divine Hand makes way for them, by removing or cutting off the Indians either by Wars one with the other, or by some raging mortal disease.

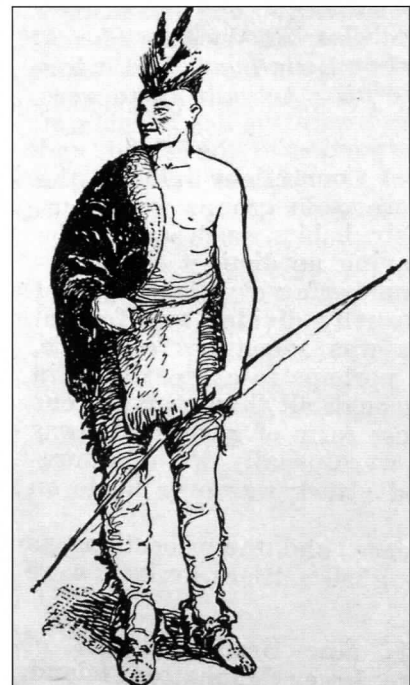
When Denton wrote these words there were only two remaining Indian villages on Long Island.

Denton also tells us that the Indians subsisted by hunting and fishing while the Indian women tended the fields of corn. They lived in small moveable tents which they moved two or three times each year. Their leaders were called sachems and were shown great respect by the other members of the community. Denton tells us that the sachems sought the opinions of the other members of the community while sitting in council before rendering their decision on any subject; the sachem's decision was always final.

Among the various Indian communities, paying tribute by the weaker groups to the more powerful ones was a common custom. The mainland groups were generally the more powerful and the Matinecocks often tried to resist paying tribute to them but were usually unsuccessful. When the Dutch and the English settlers

arrived and began buying up the Indian lands the Indians believed in many cases that this was just another form of tribute; many did not believe that they were actually selling off all their rights to the land.

By the year 1685, the last piece of Indian land was bought by the European settlers. Historian John H. Morice wrote that by 1709, "there were no Indians on the Island except small remnants of a few scattered communities." With the loss of their land the remaining Matinecocks moved to join with the Poospatucks, Shinnecocks and Montauks who by the late 1600s had negotiated for some of their own lands which later became reservations. Those that chose to stay on their ancestral land settled within small hamlets near the sites of their earlier villages and sought work on the new English plantations. In



*A late 19th c. artist's conception of the appearance of a typical Long Island Indian.*

1732, Judge William Smith wrote that those Indians still living usually bound themselves in service to the white settlers. By that date the last remnants of any Matinecock villages disappeared from western Long Island.

In 1791, future United States Presidents Thomas Jefferson and James Madison visited General William Floyd at Mastic. Jefferson and Madison tried to locate Indians in order to record for posterity the Indians' native language but they could only find a couple of old women who still remembered any of their people's language. Their research resulted in the recording of 162 words of the native language.

Much of what we know of the first settlers comes from *A Brief Description of New York, Formerly Called New Netherland*, written by Daniel Denton of Hempstead. It was published in London in 1670, but was greatly embellished as its intent was to interest English traders and settlers to come to the new colony.

The first history of Long Island was a 66 page pamphlet written in 1824 by Congressman Silas Wood of Huntington. Published



Henry Hudson's ship,  
the "Half Moon."

by Alden J. Spooner of Brooklyn, it was entitled *A Sketch of the First Settlement of the Several Towns on Long Island*. Wood researched all the existing records in the various villages on Long Island. From those records he established the dates of the first settlement of each of the English towns on Long Island. In his listing he showed Oyster Bay as having been first settled in 1653, based on the First Purchase Deed.

There were many English settlements on Long Island, both at the English end (present day Suffolk County) and within the Dutch territory (presently Nassau, Brooklyn and Queens Counties). The Dutch allowed the English to make settlements within their territory provided the English settlers swore an oath to the Dutch Directors and paid their tithes; one tenth of all their crops were taken by the Dutch as taxes. The settlement at Oyster Bay was by a group of traders from Plymouth who neither swore any oath to the Dutch nor had any political connection with the Hartford or New Haven colonies. The Oyster Bay settlement was under no government and was therefore the center of a long dispute between the Dutch at New Amsterdam and the English in New England. But the dispute began centuries earlier.

In 1497 the Venetian mariner Giovanni Caboto sailed from Bristol, England, aboard the ship *Mathew* with a commission from the English King Henry VII. Many history books identify Giovanni Caboto as the English explorer John Cabot. Cabot made a second voyage in 1498 and sailed as far north as Greenland

and south to the Chesapeake Bay. The English thereafter claimed all the territory between 35 and 48 degrees North Latitude.

In 1609 the Englishman Henry Hudson, sailing for the Dutch, entered New York Harbor and sailed up the North River, now known as the Hudson River, as far north as Albany. Adrian Block and Hendrick Christiansen followed with another exploration two years later. In 1614 Block's ship, the *Tiger*, burned in New York Harbor while loaded for a return trip to Holland. Block built a new ship named the *Orrust* or in English the *Restless*, a vessel of sixteen tons burden and about 44 feet in length. With the *Orrust* Block explored the East River and into Long Island Sound. It was probably during this voyage in 1614 that Oyster Bay received its name. In June 1639, David Pietersz DeVries wrote in his diary that he "came to anchor in Oyster Bay...There are fine oysters here, whence our nation has given it the name Oyster Bay." If Block didn't give the name to Oyster Bay then it was done in the expedition of 1621, when some Hollanders sailed along the east coast between Delaware and Cape Cod trading with the Indians. After their journey they published a map of the area which gave Dutch names to many of the rivers, bays and land areas.

The Dutch had no particular desire to establish any colonies as they were more interested in setting up trading posts such as they did at Fort Amsterdam (now Manhattan) and Fort Orange (now Albany). The Dutch were aware of the English claims to all the territory between the 40th and 48th parallels but they believed

that since the English had not actually established settlements throughout the territory it was fair game for them to claim part of the territory. The English also were involved in trading and established the Virginia and Plymouth Companies in 1607. The establishment of the English and Dutch trading companies set up a territorial dispute and commercial competition that would last until Pieter Stuyvesant left New Amsterdam in August 1664. Oyster Bay played a major role in that territorial dispute.

The Virginia Company established an early English settlement at Jamestown followed by the Dutch establishing trading forts in Delaware, New Amsterdam and Fort Orange. English trappers began trapping in Maine and the Maritimes for the Plymouth Company, which was followed by the Plymouth Company's settlement at Plymouth, Massachusetts, in 1620. A few years later Winthrop came to the Boston area with his large fleet of settlers. Each group was trying to establish their rights to the territories along the eastern seaboard.

In 1632, the Dutch Director at Fort Amsterdam sent out a settlement expedition into Long Island Sound. This resulted in a settlement at Red Mountain, the present New Haven, Connecticut, and at Oyster Bay in 1632. Writing of the 1632 Dutch settlement at Oyster Bay, Pieter Stuyvesant said, "This was the first settlement on Long Island by any nation." The settlement by the Dutch at Oyster Bay in 1632 did not last but the Dutch did leave their "Arms" there, marking it as their claimed territory. The Dutch Arms consisted of a plaque con-

taining a representation of the company director in Holland and was usually mounted on a tree to identify the area as belonging to or claimed by the Dutch West India Company.

In January 1639, David DeVries, along with Dutch West India Company Secretary Cornelis van Tienhoven, negotiated a deed of purchase from the Indians on Long Island. The deed identified the purchased lands as

from Rehouwacky (Rockaway) to Sicketeuwacky (Massapequa) and from Sicketeuwacky in width to Martin Gerritsen's bay (West Harbor) and thence in length westwardly along the East river to the kil of the Flats.

Later that same year 1639, Matthew Sunderland of Lynn, Massachusetts, bought from James Farret, agent for the Earl of Sterling, two necks of land called Horse's Neck and Hog Island. Horse's Neck is the present Lloyd's Neck and Hog Island is the present Centre Island. Sterling had been granted all of Long Island under the patent issued to the Plymouth Company in 1621 and confirmed by them to Sterling in 1635.

In 1640 a group from Lynn,



*A period engraving of Dutch explorer David Pietersz De Vries.*

Massachusetts, organized an expedition to settle at Long Island on the land bought by Matthew Sunderland the prior year. The group from Lynn devised a document called "The Disposal of the Vessel" in March 1640. The terms of the document stated that they would turn over to Daniel Howe their shares in the vessel that had brought them to Lynn from England. In exchange Howe was to transport them to Long Island where they would establish a settlement. Howe was also to make several more trips over the ensuing two years to bring additional settlers.

The group from Lynn arrived on the shores of Oyster Bay Harbor or Martin Gerritsen's Bay as the Dutch called it, in April 1640, and immediately began building shelters. The Indian Penhawit, who had sold the land to the

Dutch in 1639, went in to Fort Amsterdam and notified the Director William Kieft that some group had settled on the land that he had sold them and that they had torn down the Arms of the High Mightiness used to mark their territory. Kieft sent Secretary van Tienhoven along with 25 armed soldiers to investigate the matter. Van Tienhoven and the soldiers arrived at the Oyster Bay settlement on May 15, 1640, and found eight men, two women and one child there. One house was already completed and another was under construction. Van Tienhoven arrested six of the men and brought them back to Fort Amsterdam where they were given a hearing.

Aside from the illegal settlement the major concern of the Dutch appears to have been the question of who had torn down the Arms of the High Mightiness. In his Journal Governor John Winthrop wrote of the event and stated that it was an Indian that had torn down the arms and replaced them with a fool's head. In their hearing before the Dutch Council in Fort Amsterdam the six men claimed that it was not they who had torn down the arms of the High Mightiness but someone else; one of them claimed it was the Scotsman who was then at Red Mountain, referring to James Farret.

On Saturday, May 19, 1640, the six men were released under the condition that they agree to leave the Dutch territory and never to return. The men signed the agreement and then went to New Haven where they met with James Farret. Farret then gave them the rights to settle at the east

end of Long Island between Peconic and Montauk Point. Matthew Sunderland, who had been the original purchaser of the land for the 1640 settlement, was a witness to the conveyance of the new land between "Peconic and the easternmost point of Long Island." The group then sailed to the east end and began what has come to be known as Southampton. Thereafter Sunderland appears to have dropped his claim to the title for Hog Island.

While the original group from Lynn were making arrangements with James Farret to settle at Southampton, a second group of settlers from Lynn came to settle at Oyster Bay. This second group was headed by Captain Edward Tomlins and his brother Timothy and was also quickly dispatched by the Dutch. Farret went in to Fort Amsterdam to try to meet with Kieft and clear up the matter but he was arrested. Farret was released by Kieft upon agreeing to make public apology. James Farret wrote a lengthy letter of apology to the Dutch and had it also endorsed by Governor John Winthrop. Farret claimed he had no knowledge of the second group of settlers.

Although David DeVries and Cornelis van Tienhoven had purchased from the Indians in 1639 all the land that comprises the present Nassau County, a group of English settlers from New England purchased land at Hempstead in 1643. So now we have a group of English settlers buying land from the Indians which is within the Dutch claimed territory and which the Dutch had previously bought from the Indians four years earli-

er. Nevertheless, the Dutch Director William Kieft gave a patent to the group for the land on November 16, 1644. Kieft was a rather poor administrator, which led to many territorial problems for the company directors in Holland.

In 1646 Director Kieft was recalled by the Directors in Holland and was replaced by Pieter Stuyvesant. Kieft sailed for Holland but never arrived as his ship was lost at sea. Stuyvesant had previously served as the Director of the Dutch West India Company's successful operations in Curacao and it was felt that he would be better able to handle the problems at New Netherlands than the timid and inept Director William Kieft.

The Dutch had difficulty in populating the territory they claimed in New Netherlands and freely accepted English settlers within their territory. In the decade of the 1640s several English villages were settled within the Dutch territory including Flushing, Hempstead, Newtown and Jamaica plus the settlements at the east end, which were also claimed by the Dutch. There were also some squatter type settlements by small groups of individuals who had neither purchased the land nor obtained any permission from the Dutch. One such group included Nicholas Simkins, William Smith and John Titus who settled at the Oyster Bay Town Spot sometime in the 1640s. The exact date of their coming is not recorded but they were living there when the first purchasers arrived in 1653.

Because of these rogue settlements and what the Dutch con-



sidered encroachments on their territory, Pieter Stuyvesant became constantly involved in efforts to control the territory of the company. The concern of the Dutch West India Company was not so much with the settlements as it was with smuggling and the evasion of the Dutch duties on goods entering and leaving the company territory by these groups. The question of the boundary between the English and the Dutch became a hot issue as more and more English settlers arrived. The Dutch were greatly outnumbered even in their own territory. Long before Stuyvesant arrived William Kieft had all but given up the Dutch claims to the land at the east end of Long Island.

In an effort to firmly establish the eastern boundary of their territory, three members of the Council at New Netherlands, Govert Lockermans, Cornelis van Ruyven, and Jacobus Backer, purchased Hog Island (now Centre Island) from the Indians in 1650. A few months later Stuyvesant dispatched two of his English speaking deputies, Thomas Willet and George Baxter, to meet at Hartford with representatives of the New England colonies to settle the boundary dispute. The dispute focused on the boundary between the territory claimed and settled by the Dutch, and that claimed and settled by the English. At the core of the dispute was the control of the waters at Oyster Bay, which had been used for smuggling and evading the Dutch entry and exit duties.

After five days of negotiation agreement was finally reached on

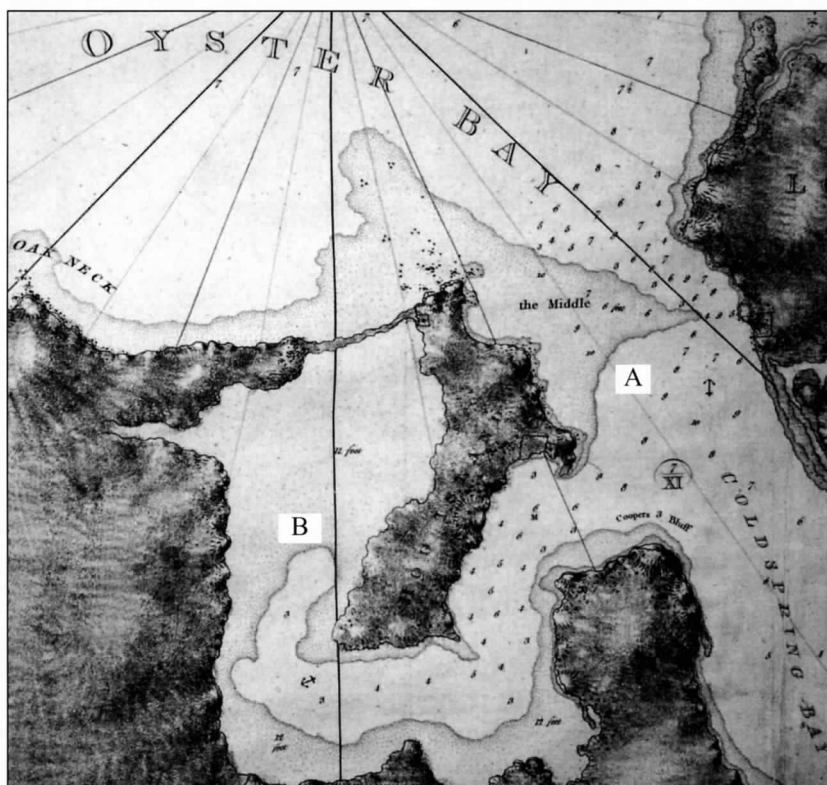
September 15, 1650. The result of their efforts was the Treaty of Hartford, which stated,

That upon Long Island, a line run from the westernmost part of Oysterbay, and so in a straight line to the sea, shall be the bounds between the English and Dutch there, the easterly part to belong to the English, and the westernmost part to the Dutch.

Although Stuyvesant felt that he was betrayed by Willet and Baxter he believed that his boundary problems were now history and that he could thereafter devote his efforts to other matters. What Stuyvesant didn't realize was that while he had the authority from the company Directors in Holland to negotiate treaties, the English colonial representatives

had no such authority; any actions they agreed to needed ratification in England. To complicate matters England was now a republic and under the control of Oliver Cromwell who was busy with much more important matters, including a war between England and Holland. The Dutch however did not recognize Cromwell's government, which further complicated things for Stuyvesant.

Stuyvesant also believed he had been dealing with the representatives of all the colonies of New England when in fact only the Hartford and New Haven colonies were involved; Massachusetts, Plymouth and Rhode Island did not participate in the



*Much of the confusion over the boundary lines between the Dutch and English territories stemmed from the fact that, to the English, the area encompassed by "Oyster Bay" meant the harbor (including the area marked "B" above) as well as that marked "A." To the Dutch, Oyster Bay was strictly that of "A," while "B" was known as Martin Gerritsen's Bay.*

conference. Rather than resolve some boundary problems for Pieter Stuyvesant, the 1650 Treaty of Hartford intensified the boundary dispute that would consume Stuyvesant and the Directors in Holland for more than a decade.

The 1620 settlement at Plymouth, Massachusetts, was organized in the same manner as the Dutch settlement at New Amsterdam, as a commercial trading venture. The Plymouth venture was organized by the Plymouth Company in 1607. After an unsuccessful first venture, it was renewed in 1620 with a charter from King James I to the New England Council at Plymouth, England. The charter included all the territory between the 40th and 48th parallels, from the Atlantic to the Pacific. The commercial venture at Plymouth was in direct competition with the commercial venture of the Dutch West India Company with its operations in New Amsterdam and at Fort Orange (Albany), both of which lay in the middle of the King James charter territory.

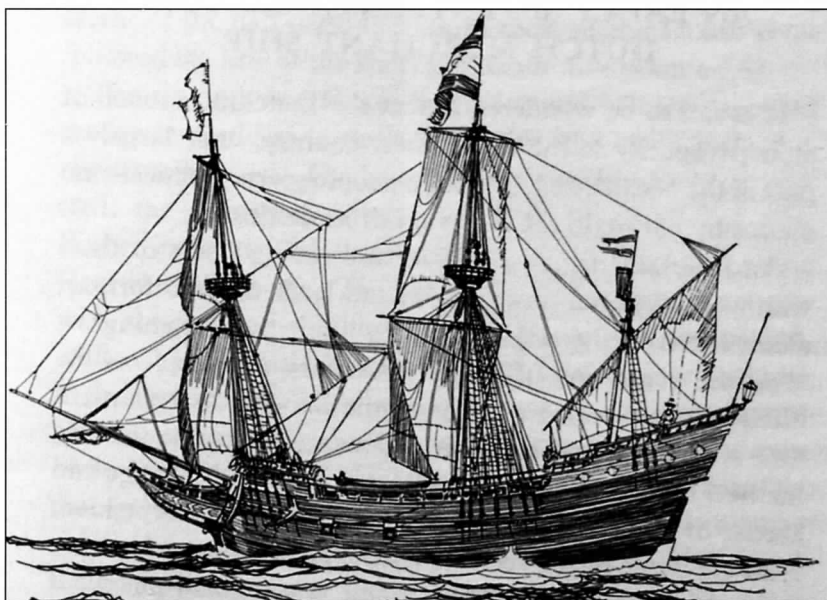
In 1627 the Dutch Director Pieter Minuit exchanged letters with Governor Bradford at Plymouth and then sent a representative, Isaac de Rasiere, to Plymouth to negotiate an agreement on trading terms and territories. Governor William Bradford of the Plymouth Colony agreed to the conference but warned Pieter Minuit by letter dated August 14, 1627, that his representative had better be cautious in his travels to Plymouth lest his ship be seized, particularly if it was caught trading in the territory. In the conference Bradford affirmed

that they should have friendly relations but the trading competition continued. Dutch traders from New Amsterdam continued to sail to Narragansett Bay and Buzzard's Bay to trade with the Indians there. Governor Bradford of the Plymouth Colony tried to persuade the Indians not to trade with the Dutch. When Pieter Minuit was recalled to Holland in 1632, his ship was seized and he was arrested at Plymouth, England, and charged with illegal trading in the King's overseas dominions. He was later released and allowed to continue on to Holland.

In the mid 1630s, the Plymouth Colony began expanding by establishing settlements to the south along the shores of Cape Cod; these settlements included Sandwich and Barnstable. One of the prominent traders at Sandwich was Samuel Mayo, whose ships regularly traversed Long Island Sound and into New Amsterdam. In 1653 Mayo joined with Peter Wright and Reverend

William Leverich to expand their trading territory by establishing a settlement at Oyster Bay. Oyster Bay presented many attractions to the traders; it had a deep sheltered harbor and it was controlled neither by the Dutch nor the English. It was a perfect spot for trading and evading the duties of both the English and the Dutch.

Samuel Mayo owned a vessel named the *Desire*, which had been built at Marblehead in 1636. The *Desire* was the third vessel to be built in the Massachusetts colony and at 120 tons was large by the standards of the day. In her early days the *Desire* had been used in trading in the West Indies bringing cargoes of salt, cotton and tobacco. She was also recorded as having brought the first slaves from the West Indies to the Massachusetts colony. The captain of the *Desire* was John Dickinson, a very experienced trader and mariner. In the spring of 1653 the *Desire* sailed out of Barnstable, Massachusetts, bringing Mayo, Leverich and



A 17th century Dutch merchant vessel

Wright to Oyster Bay.

Immediately upon arrival they met with the Indian sachem Mohannes. The chief negotiator was Samuel Mayo, but Reverend William Leverich handled the dialogue with the Indians. Rev. Leverich was originally a preacher in the pure Anglican tradition, having been educated at Emmanuel College in Cambridge, England. After coming in 1633 aboard the ship *James*, he took a pastorate in New Hampshire but soon became disenchanted with the Church of England and joined the non-conformist Puritan movement. He later went to Boston, then Duxbury, and finally to Sandwich on Cape Cod, in the Plymouth Colony. The people of the Plymouth Colony were becoming indifferent to organized ministries at this time and Rev. Leverich found himself a preacher without a pulpit. He turned to preaching to the Indians and became proficient in the Indian languages.

Mayo, Leverich and Wright purchased a large tract of land from the Indians. The land was

Scituate upon Oyster Bay & is bounded by oyster River to ye east side, & Papaguatunk river on ye west side....with all ye Islands lying to ye Sea ward excepting one Island commonly called Hog Island and bounded Southward by a point of trees called Canteaiug.

Hog Island was excepted because it had been bought by the Dutch in 1650. The eastern boundary of the Oyster River was the stream that flowed into the southernmost end of Cold Spring Harbor; the westernmost boundary was the Papaguatunk River,

presently known as the Shu Swamp or the Kaintuck, which flows into Beaver Dam.

The purchase deed was signed by Assiapum or Mohannes on behalf of the Matinecock Indians and was witnessed by William Washburn, Anthony Wright and Robert Williams, who had earlier settled in Hempstead. Williams had purchased land at Jericho in 1648. On the back of the deed the original purchasers added the names of Thomas Armitage, Daniel Whitehead, John Washburn, William Washburn, Anthony Wright, Robert Williams, and Richard Holbrook as being joint purchasers with them. Some of the group of purchasers led by Rev. William Leverich then traveled over to Huntington and made a similar purchase of land there in April 1653.

Captain John Dickinson then sailed the *Desire* back to Sandwich to bring the chattels and personal goods of the settlers. During this period of original settlement some of the first purchasers stayed at Hempstead with families that had settled there earlier, while others set about constructing houses at the Town Spot, the site of the present hamlet of Oyster Bay. Captain Dickinson made several such voyages, bringing both the goods of the settlers and some additional settlers. During one such voyage in the fall of 1653, the *Desire* was forcibly captured by Thomas Baxter while in Hempstead Harbor. Baxter then took the *Desire* to Fairfield, Connecticut. Samuel Mayo, the owner of the *Desire*, complained to the court at New Haven and the court ordered the arrest of Thomas Baxter.

Baxter was arrested on the streets of Fairfield after putting up a considerable fight. At his trial at New Haven Baxter claimed that he was acting legitimately under a letter of marque issued at Rhode Island which allowed him to prey on any ship trading with the Dutch. Baxter claimed that Captain John Dickinson was reported to have been running the blockade through Hellgate to trade at New Amsterdam, and was therefore fair game under his letter of marque.

The court at New Haven did not agree with Baxter and found him guilty of illegally taking the *Desire*. The court ordered Baxter to return the ship along with a fine of £150 to be paid to Samuel Mayo, owner of the *Desire*, but if Baxter returned the sails, the two guns and the ropes along with the ship, he would be credited £18 on his fine. In addition the court fined him £70 for disturbing the peace and put him under a bond of £200 to prevent him from causing any further disturbances.

After concluding the purchase at Oyster Bay, Samuel Mayo returned to Sandwich and resumed his trading endeavors until his death in 1670. Reverend William Leverich went over to Huntington where he built the first mill there. He engaged himself in missionary work with the Indians of Long Island before removing to Newtown, where he died in 1677. Of the three original first purchasers only Peter Wright remained; many descendants of Peter Wright still live in the village.

*continued on p. 18*

## The Early Settlement of Oyster Bay

*continued from p. 9*

Peter Wright and the other settlers who were endorsed as joint purchasers set about the task of building their village. They first laid out the highways from the Mill River at the west to the Cove Hill at the east, plus the street from the harbor to the south of the Town Spot which we now call South Street. They next laid out home lots of six acres to each settler plus an interest in the common grazing lands; more than twenty home lots were initially laid out. Settlers who arrived later were given home lots of five acres.

The very first houses were probably very crude structures, similar to those described by the Dutch Secretary van Tienhoven in 1650. Square pits about six feet deep dug as wide and broad as the owner deemed suitable for his needs. The walls of the pits were cased with timbers and lined with tree bark to prevent

cave-ins. The floor was planked and a roof was made of rough logs covered with bark and sod. These rough shelters served the settlers while they went about building more substantial houses.

Peter Stuyvesant was furious about the settlement at Oyster Bay but was powerless to do much about it as the Dutch were at war with the English in Europe and no additional military resources were available to him. The Oyster Bay settlement was within what Stuyvesant believed to be Dutch territory. The terms of the 1650 Treaty of Hartford stated that the Dutch-English boundary was the westernmost point of Oyster Bay; this meant one thing to the Dutch and something different to the English. To the Dutch, Oyster Bay was the body of water between Centre Island and Lloyd's Neck, but to the English, Oyster Bay wound around through Oyster Bay Harbor into Mill Neck Creek and up to the Shu Swamp. To the Dutch the area we call West Harbor was Martin Gerritsen's Bay.

In May 1654, peace was finally concluded between the Dutch and the English in Europe and Stuyvesant was emboldened to send soldiers out to Oyster Bay to get the settlers to remove but nothing came of it. In October 1654, Stuyvesant wrote to Governor Eaton and the Council at Connecticut complaining about the encroachments of the English at Martin Gerritsen's Bay. His plea fell on deaf ears howev-

er, as the Connecticut colony had nothing to do with the Oyster Bay purchasers who were from the Plymouth colony. In November of that year the Directors in Holland wrote to Stuyvesant, telling him that they were continuing their efforts with the Republic at England to gain compliance of the Treaty of 1650; in the meantime Stuyvesant must protect the lands within the jurisdiction of the company.

Stuyvesant then left New Amsterdam for an extended trip to the West Indies; during his absence his duties as Director were handled by Secretary Cornelis van Tienhoven, with Nicholas deSille taking over the duties of Secretary. Van Tienhoven delayed taking any action regarding the settlement at Oyster Bay due to bad weather. In April 1655, van Tienhoven sent a lone messenger out to "proceed to Mattinnekonck Bay, also called Martin Gerritsen's Bay, where some Englishmen have settled, because the same is west of Oyster Bay and to direct there Mr. Levent and all whom it may concern, to remove."

In the meantime the Directors in Holland wrote a letter to Stuyvesant in April 1655, telling him to build a fort at Oyster Bay to protect the jurisdiction of the company there. Stuyvesant was still in the West Indies at the time and van Tienhoven took no action on the request to build the fort. When Stuyvesant returned from the West Indies he found a Dutch man-o-war, the "DeWaugh," at New Amsterdam. The man-o-war had brought a letter from the Directors in Holland chastising Stuyvesant for not



*Pieter Stuyvesant*



sending over the detailed text of the 1650 Treaty of Hartford. The letter also demanded again that Stuyvesant begin erecting the fort at Oyster Bay to protect their interests and to help put an end to the smuggling taking place at Oyster Bay. The Directors in Holland even went so far as to include lists and inventories of materials needed to build the fort.

In March 1656, the Directors in Holland showed their displeasure with the way van Tienhoven handled the affairs of the company during Stuyvesant's trip to the West Indies by removing him from office and prohibiting him from any further employment or office within the company's jurisdiction. They also removed van Tienhoven's brother, Adrian van Tienhoven, who had been the Inspector of Imported goods and merchandise.

Later that year Stuyvesant personally made several visits to Oyster Bay with the intent of determining a place to build the fort but also to meet with the settlers there; he was continually criticized by the Directors in Holland for not having begun construction of the fort. He obviously made some unfulfilled promises or commitments to the settlers at Oyster Bay, as they wrote to him in January 1657, saying "Since your last being at Oyster Bay, we have received neither line nor letter from you, we doubt not but you still bear in mind the propositions then made."

Poor Peter Stuyvesant was caught between a rock and a hard place; he did not have the necessary military power to throw out the settlers at Oyster Bay while receiving constant criticism from

the Directors in Holland telling him what he must do. All the while the smuggling continued and the settlement kept growing while Stuyvesant considered what to do.

Peter Stuyvesant and the Directors in Holland continued to exchange letters, each criticizing the other, but in the end the fort at Oyster Bay never did get built and Stuyvesant never did get the settlers to move. In 1660 King Charles II was restored to the throne in England. Believing that all the English villages on the western end of Long Island were now theirs, the General Court at Hartford ordered on October 23, 1662, that all English towns on Long Island send representatives to the General Assembly at Hartford. This was the first time that the settlement at Oyster Bay came under the protection of any government other than themselves. Peter Stuyvesant protested vehemently, referring to their actions as the "Unrighteous, stubborn, impudent and pertinacious proceeding of the English at Hartford." He continued to protest and after a year the Court at Hartford agreed to assert no authority over the English towns on Long Island, as long as the Dutch would do the same.

With the relinquishing of control by Hartford, Captain John Scott tried to take control of the English towns and to proclaim himself President of the English on Long Island. Scott claimed he had the authority of King Charles II. Scott gave new names to the English Towns: Flushing became Newark, Middleburgh became Hastings, Jamaica became Crawford and Oyster Bay became



*James, Duke of York*

Folestone. Scott even negotiated an agreement with Peter Stuyvesant which would fully empower Captain John Scott to act as President until King Charles should establish a government for the English towns. The entire matter was resolved on March 22, 1664, when King Charles gave the entire territory to his brother James, Duke of York, and Oyster Bay then became part of the North Riding of Yorkshire. In August 1664, Peter Stuyvesant was forced to relinquish all control over New Amsterdam.

Fort Amsterdam then became Fort James, as New Amsterdam was renamed New York. The Duke's Laws to govern the new Colony were issued in 1665, and in 1667 the settlement at Oyster Bay received its charter from the new colony and thereby formally began the political entity we know today as the Township of Oyster Bay.