

there was a sharp and conniving mind. When the good ship *De Zoutberg* brought Van Twiller and his hundred soldiers from Holland in 1633, he at first gave no indication that he owed his gubernatorial appointment to the political influence of his uncle by marriage. The immensely powerful landowner Killiaen Van Rensselaer, had plucked him from his job as a clerk in the Amsterdam offices of the West Indies Company and sent him on two highly successful fur-trading trips to America.

At first glance, it was evident that Governor Van Twiller was a conscientious administrator, who was dedicating himself to a regime of municipal improvement for the public good. He was correspondingly popular, until it was discovered that the windmills had been thoughtlessly placed in the lee of the fort, where no wind could reach them, and that the fort's renovation had unobtrusively included a large and elaborate mansion for the governor.

Shortly thereafter, the growing suspicions among the New Netherlanders that the new governor was not the exemplary leader he had at first seemed received added proof. Late in 1633, an English vessel sailed suddenly into the bay on its way up the Hudson to trade with Native Americans. Van Twiller loftily refused permission for it to pass the fort. To give official emphasis to his refusal, he raised the Dutch flag on the fort's staff and fired three guns. But the Englishmen were totally unimpressed. Politely, they ran up the English flag on their vessel and fired three guns in return. Then, to settle the argument, they calmly upped anchor, and sailed serenely past New Amsterdam, while the governor danced in impotent rage on the fort's bastions. But Van Twiller's frustration did not last long, thanks to his concocting a solution to the problem, which was completely characteristic of the man. Hastily summoning all the town's inhabitants to the fort, he tapped a great keg of beer and mounting it, glass in hand, called on the others to drink with him to their mutual protection. The keg was soon emptied and nothing more was done about the impudent Englishmen, but by that time, everyone had ceased to worry about the incident.

Van Twiller, in 1637, was perilously close to being ordered home in disgrace, and he knew it. But, before he went, he was determined to exercise the immemorial right of all grafting politicians and insure his future as a man of wealth and property.

Raising his pudgy hand for silence, the governor haughtily motioned two of the Native Americans to stand near him — but not too near — and then nodded an order to Schoolmaster Rolandsen. The scholar, unrolled a scroll of embossed parchment he had been clutching, cleared his throat nervously, and began to read. The impos-

ing phrases were an impressive mixture of Dutch and legal Latin: "The Director Government of their High and Mighty Lords, the States General of the United Netherlands ... to declare that on this day ... appeared and presented themselves Cakapetayne and Pehiwans" — the two Native Americans who have been listening, but not comprehending a word of what was being said, started at the sound of their own names and grunted gravely — "and in consideration of certain parcels of goods ... ceded ... to the behoof of Wouter Van Twiller, Director General of New Netherlands, the Nooten Eylandt, in the Native American tongue called Pagganck" — the Native Americans recognized that too, and grunted again — "situate over against the Island Manahatas between the North and East Rivers of New Netherlands ... this sixteenth day of June in the year One thousand, six hundred and thirty-seven ... Undersigned by Jacobus Corler, Andrius Hudde, Jacobus Bontyn and Claus Elslant."

An interpreter was explaining matters to the Native Americans and asked if they agreed to the provisions of the deed that had just been read. They said they did and demanded that there be forthcoming the "certain parcels of goods" as specified. A councilor stepped up and handed the braves two ax heads, a string of beads, and a handful of nails. They counted them over solemnly, raised their right hands in a token of acceptance, and stalked off. The drums beat the "Recall," the soldiers marched back into the fort, and Wouter Van Twiller had become the first and only private owner of "Nooten Eylandt," or "Nuttan Island," which, as "Governors Island," will go down through the centuries as one of the oldest and most historic of American sites.

Fifteen years before, the West India Company had been formed and received a charter from the States-General of Holland, to colonize the American lands reported by Hudson, before anyone else got them. Two hundred settlers came out to this new colony, which they called New Netherlands. The new land extended from eastward of the Hudson River, south to the Delaware River. Early traders were wont to identify these boundaries of their province as the North and the South Rivers, respectively.

The capital of New Netherlands was established at the mouth of the North River, on the tip of Manahatas Island (later to be "Manados," before it became and remained "Manhattan"), and called New Amsterdam. To provide for the sustenance of its hardy Dutch pioneers, 103 head of cattle were sent over to New Amsterdam from Holland in 1625. They were landed on neighboring Nutten Island and, except for occasional Native Americans, it is