



*The surrender of Fort Amsterdam*

courts of justice were established to safeguard their interests. Although more than 250 of the exiles died and were buried on the island, the contagion of their plague never reached New York. Months later, the Palatines were permitted to leave their quarantine, and most of them settled further up the Hudson in Greene and Columbia Counties, where their descendants still live. One of their number, John Peter Zenger, later found fame as publisher of the *New York Weekly Journal*, and was the first champion of freedom of the press in this country.

With Governors Island having been used as a lumber stand, pasture, recreation ground, governor's residence, and quarantine station, it remained for Governor William Cosby in 1732 to give it a new role — that of a game preserve. He stocked it with half a dozen pairs of English pheasants, which increased so rapidly and in such numbers that the flock spread to Long Island. The legislature, perhaps not unmindful of the desirability of these birds as a table delicacy, decreed that none of the pheasants should be killed, nor their eggs taken for one year, in the hope that they might stock the entire colony.

(This appetizing ideal was never fully achieved, but at least it helped maintain Governors Island's creditable reputation for interest in animal

husbandry, starting with the cows and goats of the early Dutchmen and reaching its climax with the squirrels which were introduced to the island in 1895, under the official protection of Lieutenant General Nelson A. Miles.)

The propagation of valuable game birds was not, however, the limit of official concern with the island during the early eighteenth century. There was also the constant and increasing threat of war with France. Governor Clarke told the legislature in 1738, that Governors Island should be fortified, and three years later he openly declared, "There is great cause to apprehend a speedy rupture with France. Your situation ought thereto awaken you to see the importance of erecting batteries in proper places ... to prevent the enemy landing upon Governors Island." Clinton, who followed Clarke, also urged that something be done to prevent enemy infantry and artillery from being put ashore on the island.

And finally in 1755, something was done. It was not the building of the much-discussed fortification for which the Council in 1745 had authorized a lottery to raise the sum of 3,375 pounds, but it was the placing upon Governors Island of the first armed force ever to be stationed there — the 51st Regiment of the British Colonial Militia, command-