

Transcript of Lecture Delivered by  
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The Empire Strikes Back - On the East End in 1674

The military and political contest for dominion of the East Riding Townships during the Third Anglo-Dutch War

Francis Lovelace was an affable fellow, noble of mind and tolerant of most religious creeds. As the governor of New York, however, he was, as one chronicler aptly put it, "a follower in beaten paths, rather than a trail blazer." And as a military commander, he was totally incompetent. By the summer of 1673, Lovelace had been chief executive of the former Dutch city of New Amsterdam, and the colony it dominated, for five years, but during that time his accomplishments were as limited as his leadership was insipid. When major issues of substance arose, he was but a shuffler content to fall back on established political protocol and the tactics of procrastination.

In 1669, his first crisis in office erupted, incredibly enough not among the predominantly Dutch population of New York City, but among the English towns of Long Island. The most serious problem arose when various townships asserted in unison that they possessed the right to annually elect their own legislators. Some even challenged the very commission by which Lovelace held his office. The issues of taxation, representation, and land ownership formed the core of conflict. In 1670, that contention was nearly brought to a head by a tax levied to pay for needed repairs to Fort James, the main defense works for New York City. Lovelace was soon fending off serious opposition from such towns as Jamaica, Flushing, and Hempstead, which had declared the assizes to be in direct conflict with British law and the citizenry's right to elected representation. By 1672, and the outbreak of war with the United Provinces of the Netherlands, the fort still lacked the necessary repairs. The governor, who had begged off meeting the dissension head on, was again moved to secure funds. This time, however, he compromised and requested not a tax, but a voluntary contribution from each town to pay for the needed work. The English settlers of Long Island were disgruntled that their moneys were to be used almost entirely for the improvement of the defenses for the city of New York, whose population was primarily Dutch and who did little to support the war effort. Predictably, their response was negative. The towns of Long Island complained that they were taxed more heavily than those of their New England neighbors—and without benefit of representation in court by deputies. Many claimed that they were forced to comply with unfair laws imposed by haughty officials who insulted and threatened them. Some towns even indicated they would rather be transferred to the jurisdiction of neighboring Connecticut or to be made free corporations rather than continue in their present harness. And throughout the maelstrom of discontent, Francis Lovelace and the English citizenry of the colony of New York, wrapped up in their own bickering, failed to tend to their defenses.

The Declaration of War against the United Provinces was not published in English America until May 26, 1672, and Governor Lovelace, fearing upheaval amongst the

Dutch citizenry of New York, would delay publishing the proclamation until June 27. Yet, for the next six months the colony continued on as normal: no Dutch army or navy appeared to wrest control of the colony from England, and a false sense of security enveloped the office of the chief executive. Then, on January 22, 1673, Lovelace informed Governor John Winthrop of Connecticut that reports from Virginia had come in stating that the Dutch had dispatched upwards of 40 well fitted ships to the West Indies. If such information was to be relied on, he suggested, "it will be high time for us to buckle on our armor." Despite his manful talk, however, Lovelace still did little to improve defenses.

Throughout the early months of 1673, the colony suffered from frequent invasion scares. Though he displayed little fear of the Dutch, Lovelace prudently summoned to New York 350 English troops stationed at outposts on both the North River and on the Delaware—only to dispose of them when the purported crisis was over. Fort James was now garrisoned with only 80 soldiers. Yet, Lovelace's confidence in the colony's safety was apparently total. Indeed, he saw no harm in leaving New York to visit with his neighboring governor of Connecticut, John Winthrop. In late July 1673, he set off for Hartford to confer with Winthrop on business related to a recently established postal route between New York and Massachusetts Bay. He could not have picked a more inappropriate time to leave the colony, for it was precisely at that moment, when New York was militarily defenseless and without its chief executive, that Commanders Cornelis Evertsen the Youngest of Zeeland and Jacob Benckes of Amsterdam appeared off Sandy Hook with a strong fleet, and a desire for reconquest of the former Dutch colony of New Netherlands.

The Evertsen expedition had its origin in a plan conceived by the hard-pressed government of Zeeland, nearly bankrupt by the war in late 1672. According to the plan, a small squadron of warships would sortie with the secret mission of seizing the island of St. Helena, off the coast of Africa, as a base from which to attack ships of the English East India Company as they returned from India around the Cape of Good Hope. The purpose of the expedition was to obtain as much profit with the least cost to Zeeland, and at England's expense. As a secondary alternative, should the first objective become impossible to achieve, the squadron was to inflict as much damage as possible upon the English and French colonies in the Western Hemisphere as possible, commencing with the Guianas in northern South America and extending through the Caribbean and along the North American coast to Newfoundland. Evertsen sailed with six ships on December 5, 1672, but unexpectedly encountered a British squadron, coincidentally sent out to intercept the homeward bound Dutch East India Company fleet. After a short battle off the Cape Verde Islands, Evertsen elected to pursue his secondary mission. After bringing his fleet to Fort Zeelandia, at Paramaribo, Dutch Surinam for refitting, by May 1673 he was ready for his raid on the Americas. As Dame Fortune would have it, off the island of Martinique, the Zeelanders encountered another Dutch squadron, this one under the command of Captain Jacob Benckes, from Amsterdam, that had been preparing to conduct its own sortie against the enemy colonies. Joining forces, the two commanders were soon raging through the Windward Islands, attacking English and French forts, settlements, and merchant fleets as they went. With varying success, they attacked

Montserrat, St. Christophers, Nevis, and St. Eustatius before turning their prows northward. In early July, they entered the Chesapeake Bay, defeated a British Navy squadron, captured seven rich tobacco ships and destroyed ten more. Among the prisoners taken had been Captain James Carteret and Samuel Hopkins of New Jersey, who had been connected in quarrels with the Lords Proprietors of New Jersey. The dissident Carteret and Hopkins, expelled from the colony, readily divulged information regarding the weak state of New York and the poor condition of Fort James and its garrison. Evertsen and Benckes acted swiftly. New York would become the next target of their terrible swift swords.

The approach of the Dutch fleet was discovered on July 28, well before it had come to anchor off Staten Island. Indeed, it was Thomas Lovelace, the governor's brother, who had scurried "against tide, through a swelling sea" in a log canoe to bring the terrible news to Fort James. There he found, in his brother's absence, one Captain John Manning in charge as acting governor. Half a dozen large ships, it was reported, had been sighted from Sandy Hook. And there was every reason to suspect that more were coming up. The arrival of the enemy caught Manning at a particularly bad moment: The fort was without sufficient manpower, tools, or arms. Many of the heavy guns mounted on the walls were pointed toward land, not the sea, and the platforms and carriages of most were broke or beyond repair. Beyond perhaps half a dozen guns, effective firepower was almost nonexistent.

All available troops in New York City, approximately 90 in number, were ordered into the fort. All seamen in port were directed to board their ships in the harbor. Provisions, beer, liquor, and "other necessarys" to withstand a siege were brought in. Warrants were issued to the officers of the various militia units on Long Island, primarily among the English towns, "to get their companies together and immediately repair to the garrison." At the same time another order was issued "to press Horse and man to go to Hartford" to inform Governor Lovelace of the situation. If the governor could be warned and the neighboring province of Connecticut stirred to come to New York's assistance there might be a fair chance of holding out. By the morning of July 29, a total of 21 sail could be counted in the lower bay. Morale in the tiny garrison plummeted.

In the afternoon, when several giant frigates glided through the Narrows and came to anchor under Staten Island, the entire town stood enthralled "in a strange hurly-burly" by the waterside. Some townfolk spent the time in moving their goods out of the city, while many English citizens thought "no place so safe for their storage as the fort." Beacons were fired to warn those still unaware of the impending danger. Apparently, Manning failed to attend to the protection of other areas of the city defenses, preferring to reserve his limited manpower for the walls of Fort James. That night, a party of Dutch saboteurs from the city spiked the guns in a battery known as the rondeel near City Hall.

On the following morning, the garrison at Fort James prepared to meet the enemy, though the fleet spread before them under the red, white, and blue flag of the United Provinces of the Netherlands was the largest ever seen in the harbor. Rumors had been freely circulating about the fort, but by far the most chilling story was that there were as many as 3,000 men aboard the warships.

Across the waters, the Dutch fleet awaited the flood tide to carry it within firing range of the fort. Six hundred troopers were selected for the landing, a mixture of Dutch and expatriot English marines well-seasoned and capable of working efficiently together. Their commander was Captain of Marines Anthony Colve, a most competent soldier of considerable experience on both land and sea. The delay caused by the tides provided the expedition commanders with an appropriate moment to formally extend the official demand for surrender to the governor of Fort James or suffer the consequences of "immediate action on both water and on land." Within a short time, a flag of truce had boarded the Dutch flagship Swaenenburgh. "What ship are you and by whose order have you come into the river that belongs to the Duke of York?" the English envoys demanded. "You can see very well from the flags and ships who we are," replied the Dutch commander with severity. "We have come to bring the country back under obedience to their High Mightinesses the Lords States General, and his Serene Highness the lord Prince of Orange under whose government this once was." Evertsen then informed the envoys stiffly that his commission "was stuck in the muzzle of the cannon, which they would quickly learn if the fort was not handed over." If surrender was not forthcoming within a half hour, the fort would face a violent assault by land and sea. Then, even as the envoys departed, the Dutch cleared their decks for action and began the disembarkation of the 600 marines for the final assault. Ashore, the five-score defenders of Fort James locked the gates and stood to their defenses. Theirs was a forlorn hope at best.

The half-hour passed without incident. Then two guns were fired to leeward as warning shots to announce that the grace period was over. Suddenly, the flagship opened with a broadside, an action soon imitated by every ship in the fleet. The cannonade was instantly returned in kind by the fort. Amid the choking smoke of gunfire, Colve's landing boats picked their way across the river like so many bugs upon the water. As the exchange of fire continued, it became apparent that the fort's guns were not well-served, even though after the initial broadside they had managed, by one report, to shoot Swaenenburgh "through and through." For an hour, however, both sides continued the fight, though one by one Manning's guns collapsed on their platforms. Many of the defenders began to consider their position hopeless, although a few maintained a staunch determination to resist to the end. One brave soldier, flourishing his sword in defiance, leaped upon the wall by the English flag, fully exposing himself to the heavy Dutch fire, promptly had his head shot off and collapsed into a bloody heap. Outgunned, outmanned, and fearful of an uprising of the Dutch burghers of New York, Manning ordered up the flag of truce and "beat a parley" even as Colve's hardened veterans bumped ashore on the banks of the North River, just above Governor Lovelace's gardens and orchards near the site of present Trinity Church. The town's Dutch citizenry flocked to the river's edge "to welcome them with all the demonstrations of joy they could make." As the troops marched down the Broad Way, they were encouraged to storm the fort by no less than 400 ebullient burghers, many of whom were themselves armed and eager to join in the fray.

At the appearance of the powerful enemy land force beneath his battlements on one side, and with the already proven devastating power of the Dutch fleet on the other, Manning had little choice. The fort was surrendered with the full honors of war.

Evertsen and Benckes had soon taken control of the works, which were renamed Fort Willem Hendrick, and in so doing had secured the keys to the colony of New York. The two Dutch commanders moved quickly to consolidate their military control over New York, which was promptly renamed New Orange on July 31.

Even as the garrisoning of the fort was carried out, Evertsen moved to prepare for another operation—an attack on the great English Newfoundland [Terre Neuf] fishing fleet, which Zeeland authorities had included in the secret instructions months before. Four ships, were immediately provisioned for the operation.

As the days and weeks that followed would attest, Cornelis Evertsen and Jacob Benckes were increasingly viewed by the majority of Dutch inhabitants of New York, and even those in New Jersey and Delaware, as liberating heroes. Yet most Dutch citizens, true to their oaths of nine years earlier that they would bear no arms against any nation, had awaited the outcome of battle before making their true sentiments known. That their oath of loyalty to England contained the clause "whilst I live in any of his Majesty's territories," however, permitted all to absolve themselves of charges of violations of good faith. New York, and soon New Jersey and Delaware, could no longer count themselves as belonging to his majesty's territories. Evertsen and Benckes were well aware that the Dutch citizenry's support would be imperative in the days to come if their victory was to take hold and particularly if it were to be implemented over the strategic towns of eastern Long Island.

The weeks following the surrender of Fort James and New York were filled with hectic activity for the Dutch victors who moved quickly and resolutely to consolidate their immediate gains. They were well aware that if they were to secure their flanks to the north, east, and west, they would be obliged to extend their activities and influence well beyond the confines of the city. The initial step would have to be political, beginning with the total dismemberment of the English administration of Francis Lovelace. To accomplish this, they required the allegiance—or at least the tacit neutrality—of the citizenry, first of New York and then of the surrounding areas.

The two Dutch commanders, their confidence soaring, now boldly resolved to restore not only New York to its founding masters, but indeed all of The Netherlands' former dominions on the Mid-Atlantic coast—and more. A 70-man expedition was dispatched up the Hudson to Fort Albany to retake the settlement there (Beverwyck during the former Dutch administration), and the so-called "colony" of Rensselaerswyck as well. Despite its originally limited objectives, Evertsen's raid on America had become something far greater than anticipated. It had become, almost overnight with the recapture of New York, a mission of liberation of all former Dutch American dominions from English rule.

The establishment of a provisional Dutch government became the paramount goal of Evertsen's and Benckes's agenda during the first days of August. If New Orange were to remain in Dutch hands, it would require a stable Dutch government. Thus, on August 2, the able Captain Anthony Colve was appointed military governor-general pro tem of the province and commander of Fort Willem Hendrick. A Council of War moved quickly to re-establish the province's mainland boundaries as they had been defined by the English's Hartford Treaty of 1670 between Connecticut and New York. But now they boldly added to that claim all of Long Island as well as the proprietary of New Jersey and Delaware, which had formerly been part of The Netherlands' American holdings.

The Council was methodical in its institution of a Dutch form of civil government in New Orange and the dismantling of the former regime. The old city magistrates and municipal officers were formally released from their oaths of allegiance to King Charles II and the Duke of York taken nine years earlier under duress of conquest. The city seal, mace, and magistrates' gowns were duly surrendered by Mayor John Lawrence. An election was scheduled to select candidates for the offices of burgomasters (magistrates), schout (sheriff), and schepen (aldermen).

There were still the many towns surrounding Manhattan to the south, to the east on Long Island, across the North River to the west, and on the mainland to the north to be dealt with. Staten Island, the settlements of New Jersey, and those on the Delaware had to be attended to as well, lest a nucleus of opposition be formed to challenge the renewed Dutch presence on the North American mainland. The five Dutch towns on Long Island—New Utrecht, Brooklyn, Bushwick Inlet, Amersfoort, and Midwout—and the single English town of Gravesend, had welcomed the conquerors of New York almost from the moment of their arrival. The English towns of Easthampton, Flushing, Hempstead, Jamaica, Newtown, Oyster Bay, Southampton, Setauket, Huntington, and Southold on Long Island, West Chester and East Chester on the mainland to the north, and Staten Island to the southwest, were another matter. The Council of War ordered these places to send two deputies each to tender formal submission to The Netherlands. Each of the deputations from these enclaves of potential resistance, particularly from the towns to the east of Oyster Bay, such as Easthampton, were then directed to nominate by general election candidates for schout, secretary, and schepen, from which the Council would make the final selection. By August 29, even the most recalcitrant English village, Southampton, which had pleaded in vain with New England for help, had delivered up its constables' staves and English flag and submitted nominations for the prescribed offices.

Dutch authority was easily imposed over the flanking English colony of New Jersey with equal aplomb and remarkable celerity. The rights and privileges guaranteed to New Jersey were also accorded Flushing, Hempstead, Jamaica, Middleboro, and Oyster Bay on Long Island and West Chester on the mainland, and eventually all of the towns, including Easthampton, lying within the now substantial Dutch orbit. They too were obliged to accept allegiance to The Netherlands and to nominate a slate of schouts, schepen, and burgomasters. On August 19, the Council learned that all of the towns along the Hudson Valley as far as New Albany, including the vast wilderness establishment of Rensselaerswyck, had submitted to Dutch rule. Two weeks later, on September 2, a deputation from the Delaware, or South River, region presented its credentials to the Council and readily offered submission. It was an almost flawless and orderly transition from English civil government to a traditional Dutch form, and without a drop of blood being shed.

The Council of War, of course, refused to extend its good will or largess to The Netherlands' foes, the kings of England and France, or to their subjects who continued to "injure, spoil, damage and inflict all possible loss and obstructions" upon the subjects of the Prince of Orange and the Lords States General. They were to be treated with an iron fist and, from the Dutch point of view, justifiably so. Reparations and satisfaction for losses incurred in the transfer of government from the Stuyvesant administration nine years before, had long been sought, but in vain. Now that would all be rectified.

Needless to say, the nearly bloodless conquest of New York, and the submission of the surrounding territories, created considerable consternation in the neighboring colonies to the north. But in nearby Connecticut, the concern was borne not so much out of fear of attack as for the loss of territory that Governor Winthrop had been laboring to annex to his own colony. For quite some time he had nurtured hopes of securing a toehold on the eastern end of Long Island, where long smoldering dissension against the Lovelace administration had all but exploded in open rebellion even before the Dutch invasion. Winthrop had gone so far as to conduct discussions on the matter with numerous key figures, and towns such as Southampton were inclined to support his efforts. Now, he realized, if the invaders successfully extended their authority over the whole of Long Island, under treaty terms at the end of the war it might revert back to the crown and the Duke of York. With the weak Lovelace regime certain to be replaced, any hopes of annexing, or receiving the region through intercolonial or proprietary treaty, would likely evaporate.

On August 17 Winthrop summoned his government into an emergency session at Hartford. The governor's best intelligence estimates, supplied by his son Fitz-John Winthrop, suggested that "the Dutch had landed 3000 men upon Manhatas Island." Such estimates, although far from accurate, nevertheless greatly influenced Connecticut's attitude in dealing with the foe. As all were probably aware that the colony could not hope single-handedly to confront such a powerful enemy on such short notice.

Connecticut needed time to organize and time to secure assistance from her more powerful and populous neighbor to the northeast, the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Thus, Winthrop's strategy was one of preparing for war while winning time in the name of peace. A Grand Committee was appointed with powers to recruit troops and requisition ships, animals, or other means of transport. Simultaneously, the Assembly dispatched two deputies, James Richards and William Roswell, to New Orange to lodge official protests with the invaders on behalf of the "united colonyes of New Englant," and to assure the invaders that peace was their only desire.

Significantly, one of the major thrusts of the unilateral protest—though it was not couched as such—did not concern the conquest of New York at all, since "the chiefe trust of those parts reside in other hands," but the submission of the lands east of Oyster Bay, including Easthampton. The principal occasion for discussion was provided by a minor protest concerning the Dutch seizure of a vessel belonging to a Connecticut citizen close to one of that colony's harbors. It was intended, however, only as an excuse for Connecticut to assume the mantle of an injured party in the negotiations that followed. Richards and Roswell had arrived late on August 13 at Fort Willem Hendrick and dutifully presented Connecticut's formal letter of protest drafted by colony Secretary John Allyn. They informed

the Commanders that, as they [Connecticut] had remained at peace in the time of the previous Dutch government, even in a season of war, they, on their side were equally disposed thus to continue without molesting this Province, or making use of any act of hostility against it. On condition that nothing be undertaken to the prejudice of their Colony from this side [New Orange], it certainly will not first attempt anything hostile; in case such should be committed against them by this Province, they thus protest themselves guiltless of the blood that may be shed in consequence.

Incredible as it may have seemed, the colony of Connecticut appeared to be offering the

peace of a neutral state, unilaterally and without consulting the crown, with The Netherlands. New Jersey and Delaware, were one thing, but Connecticut was another matter, though it now appeared on the surface of it all that she wished only to be left alone. When the envoys were requested to provide the proposals in writing, however, they refused, claiming they lacked the authority. The negotiations were almost instantly terminated.

On the following day, the delegates were given a short and uncompromising reply drafted by Secretary Nicholas Bayard to be carried to Hartford. Evertsen and Benckes, the terse note read, were authorized by the States General of the United Netherlands and the Prince of Orange "to doe all manner of damage" to their enemies on land and sea. Long Island, formerly an English dominion, now belonged to The Netherlands and would thus revert to Dutch administration. As for the matter of the villages of that island, which lay east of Oyster Bay, they had been directed to take a loyalty oath "to prevent certain unpleasantries." Those failing to do so would be subjected to force of arms, as would those (such as Connecticut it was implied) who "urged" them to do so.

The warning to Connecticut was clear. Hands off the East Riding townships.

Evertsen and Benckes worked tirelessly to bring New Orange into a state of military readiness and to strengthen the backbone of defense, Fort Willem Hendrick. With the departure of the Newfoundland squadron, there were four warships, a fireship and a *snaauw* left at New Orange. Only after the fort was in an advanced state of readiness would the two commanders sail to rendezvous with the Newfoundland squadron at Fayal in the Azores and return home. On August 22, the small pinnace *St. Joseph*, a prize taken in the West Indies, was dispatched for Europe with Evertsen's report and a list of arms and materials needed for the fort and the defense of the colony. But it was imperative that the fleet soon follow before the winter gales threatened the completion of their missions.

By late August, as word leaked that the fleet was preparing to leave, many in the city became disturbed over the prospect of abandonment. On August 27, a city delegation met with the two commanders at Fort Willem Hendrick to plead with them to remain. The two commanders agreed to leave Captain Colve behind as commander, and the 25-gun ship *Suriname* and the *snaauw* *Zeehond* until help arrived. The citizenry nevertheless, penned a petition to the government of Zeeland, outlining the commercial value and virtues of the colony to the fatherland, and requesting assistance for the loyal Dutch citizens. Evertsen reinforced their plea with a letter of his own. Both letters were sent home aboard a prize bus called *Expectation*, under the command of Captain Maerten Jansse Vonck, a former privateersman. Unfortunately, neither *St. Joseph*, which had been sent home a few days earlier with news of the capture of New York, New Jersey and Delaware, or *Expectation* would ever reach The Netherlands.

Then, on September 11, the combined Dutch fleet finally departed, much to the sadness and considerable anxiety of the loyal citizenry of New Orange.

Colve's situation was one of some discomfort, and certainly one filled with uncertainty. The possibility of attack from New England or even England was undoubtedly uppermost in his mind. Fort Willem Hendrick and the harbor batteries were in a forward state of repair thanks to the efforts of Evertsen and Benckes. However, he could not long concentrate solely upon the improvement of the defenses of New Orange, for the governmental house of cards established with such ease by Evertsen and Benckes,

backed by the big guns of their ships, had already started to wobble. Upon the departure of the fleet, several of the villages on the eastern end of Long Island, or the East Riding of Yorkshire as the region was then called, had begun to vigorously reassert their disdain for Dutch rule. Several, such as Easthampton, displayed a marked disaffection for the New Orange administration, nurtured in no small measure by Connecticut in their increasingly rebellious attitudes. In late September, Colve received the first of a series of unwelcome intelligence reports concerning the East Riding towns, and several even closer to the central Dutch orbit. An agent provocateur sent from Connecticut with orders from that government "to raise men for their acts in the sd towne, etz, and the Like Seditious Words tending to Meuteny," was discovered in Hempstead. As a consequence, the town's inhabitants were refusing to take the oath of allegiance. The failure, in fact, of many of the inhabitants of the East Riding towns to swear allegiance, and the proclivity of some to temporize, posed considerable danger to the Dutch administration. Disaffection and incitement to rebellion, sowed by Connecticut, might well result in appeals for intervention. Immediate address was imperative. On September 21, the governor commissioned Captain Willem Knijff (Knyff), Lieutenant Antonij Malepart, and clerk Abraham Varlett to travel to the villages east of Oyster Bay, call town meetings at each place visited, and administer oaths of fidelity to the inhabitants. That there be no grounds for contention, provisional instructions were dispatched to the schout of the East Riding district and to each town's magistrates. The instructions were to be posted and detailed the manner in which civil government was to be carried out.

On October 9, a dejected delegation returned to New Orange from the East Riding towns. For Colve, their report was depressing, if not unexpected. The commissioners visited all of the towns east of Oyster Bay as ordered, including Easthampton, called for town meetings, and tried to administer the oaths of allegiance. But with the exception of Oyster Bay, where the oath was taken, and Huntington, where the inhabitants requested to be exempted from the oath but promised fidelity in writing, all of the towns refused to cooperate. Southampton, the seat of opposition, outright refused Colve's instructions. The inhabitants now refused to acknowledge any sovereign but the king of England, but promised to live in peace "Soe long as wee are not Molested by them [the Dutch] nor any other from or vnder them Vnlesse Called thereunto by his Ma[jes]ties Power of England." Southampton's stance was at least consistent in its vigorous opposition. Soon after having been summoned by Evertsen and Benckes to submit to the new Dutch government, the town had appealed to Hartford for aid. While Connecticut listened, Southampton "received no Incouragement to stand out of our-selves although they favored us so farr as to consider our Condition." The town had then appealed to the Boston General Court in a message delivered by one John Cooper, "a resolute man," who proposed that with but 100 armed men, all of the towns of Long Island could be brought back into the English fold. The New Englanders "wholly refused to engage the country in the undertaking." Failing to garner support, the town issued a declaration, addressed to all of the English colonies, explaining their situation and why they were being forced to acquiesce to the Dutch. Now, with a breath of support from Connecticut, Southampton had gained new resolve.

The citizens of Southold also refused to follow Colve's directives, claiming that they thought the oath was only intended for the schout of the East Riding and the magistrates

of every town, and that for each of the inhabitants to be required to take it would deny them freedom of conscience. They were upset by the orders to seize all debts belonging to the subjects of the king of England. But of equal import, the town had been obliged to dismantle its former government as they had initially agreed to after the conquest, yet in the interval had not instituted a replacement and was without any form of protection. The town, claimed the inhabitants, was vulnerable "to the Invasion of those who threaten dayly wth ye spoiling our goods." They informed the commissioners that Southold was willing to submit "during the prevelince of your Power over us" only if a firm and peaceful government was permitted, which would provide protection from "ye Invasion of those wch Dayly threaten us." Though the inhabitants of Southold did not identify just who might conduct such an invasion, it was undoubtedly apparent to Colve that they feared reprisals from Connecticut or their neighboring bastion of anti-Dutch sentiments, the town of Southampton.

Easthampton refused outright to accept Dutch authority, preferring to be "regulated by our fformer Lawes and that authority is resident amongst us." Though unwilling to recognize Dutch sovereignty over itself, this town too, requested to live only in peace. Like Southold, Easthampton feared English reprisals should it enter the Dutch fold. The inhabitants informed the commissioners that they could not "but bee Sensable of the great danger wee are in boath from those that are neere home So well as those abroad of Our owne Nation." Indeed, the town's own security depended upon maintaining its former allegiance. Significantly, Colve learned soon after the receipt of Easthampton's official response that it had been sent to New Orange by a messenger who had passed through Southampton. There, the letter was intercepted, opened, and examined by opponents to the Dutch regime. The document was then read "wth severall Railing Expressions," whereupon the messenger suggested that another be sent in its place, which was done, and which Colve had accepted as the authentic reply. Late on the evening of September 23, having learned of the interception, Easthampton constable Thomas Dymont and Recorder Thomas Tallmage dispatched a second letter, informing the New Orange government that it was "not the first time wee have had our letters opened & stopt at Southampton and many threatening Expressions have proceeded from severall disaffected persons there wt Respect to our Submission to your governmt that we have yeilded Unto."

Setauket also claimed only a strong desire to live in peace, but was equally intimidated and could not "bear eup alone against the prevaling sense of Neighbouring Townes." Thus, at a town meeting held on September 27, the inhabitants voted to preserve their allegiance to the king of England.

Huntington's citizens requested that they be excused from taking the oath on the grounds that they had never been under the Duke of York's authority in the first place, had never sworn an oath to him, or, for that matter and with few exceptions, to the king of England. The Netherlanders had but two enemies, they said, England and France, "& against ye Frensch wee are Resolved . . . to defend our Selves against there tierry." But if the English arrived, they would remain neutral "till forced to doe other waijes." The town asked for a trial period of one year of independence under their own laws. If in that time Colve saw "Cause and Cleer fount" in their peaceful relations, they would swear allegiance. They wished neither allegiance with their neighbors of the East Riding country, they stated, nor with the Dutch to the west, but sought only to "Stand of our

Selves."

Perceiving that the attitude of English Long Island ultimately could readily degenerate into military confrontation, Colve sought to determine exactly where the government of New Netherlands stood with the Dutch population there, most of whom lived quite close to his base of power. He summoned the schepens from Midwout, Bushwick Inlet, New Utrecht, Amersfoort, Brooklyn, and Gravesend. Would they observe the oath of allegiance which they had taken, asked the governor? Would their patriots be willing to come to Manhattan in case of attack to resist the common enemy? "They had no doubt," replied the schepens, "but it will be done by the entire people."

Colve, reinforced by the support of the Dutch citizenry, now ordered that another delegation be sent to call upon the Long Island towns of Huntington and Setauket to try and secure the oath of allegiance from the inhabitants. Three days later the envoys returned to New Orange in triumph, for both towns had reconsidered their positions and complied. Distant Easthampton, Southampton, and Southold, the triumvirate of dissension, would be far more difficult. On October 20, Colve commissioned Councilor Cornelis Steenwyck, Captain of Marines Carel Epesteijn, and Lieutenant Carel Quirinssen to travel to the three towns and secure their obedience and allegiance, "to the End I may not be forced to use such meanes as would tend to the ruine & greatest Damage of some of them."

This time the commissioners employed the warship Zeehond to make the trip swiftly, and to remind the settlers of the military force available to the Dutch at New Orange. On the issue of allegiance, Colve was now prepared to bend slightly. If "great objections were made to the oath" the inhabitants of the three towns were to be permitted to merely promise obedience, although magistrates would be required to swear allegiance. In the event that there was obstinate refusal to both oath of allegiance or promise of obedience, the inhabitants were to be publicly informed that "they will be the cause of their own ruin." The commissioners were advised to collect the names of the chief mutineers in writing and return without delay to New Orange.

In the meantime, across Long Island Sound, Connecticut prepared to contest the Dutch efforts head on.

On October 21, the governor and General Court of Connecticut wrote Colve a scathing and accusatory letter. It was not, the Connecticut government haughtily wrote, "the manner of Christian and Civill nations to disturb ye poore people in Cottages & open Villages in times of warr or to impose oaths upon them." Having heard of late efforts in the East Riding country urging his majesty's subjects to take an oath contrary to their allegiance to their actual sovereign, and "to use many threatning Expressions towards them in case of the Refusall of such an oath," Connecticut expressed disbelief that Colve could have commissioned such actions. He could only have done so, they assumed, "to attaine some plausible pretence for Plundering & pillaging." If such were indeed to occur, they warned, it would be the Dutch farms and villages that would suffer. If Colve continued to pursue the issue of forcing allegiance on the Englishmen of Long Island, they threatened, the English colonies would "not make it their worke to tamper wth your peasants about sweareing but deale wth your head quarters."

Colve indignantly replied that the Long Island towns had first submitted to the new Dutch regime upon favorable conditions, surrendered the English colors and constable staves, and selected new magistrates. Had "evilly disposed" persons from Winthrop's colony

not interceded, they would have peaceably taken the oath of allegiance. It was well known to everyone, he added scornfully, how much more gently the Dutch treated vanquished enemies than the English.

Undismayed, the Steenwyck Commission set off on their perilous mission to Southold, Southampton, and Easthampton aboard Captain Eewoutsen's Zeehond on October 21. Their voyage would be fraught with many disappointments, storms, and dangers. Finally, at daybreak on October 27th, after having survived a hurricane at sea, a near shipwreck, and repeated delays, Plum Gut, on the eastern end of Long Island, was sighted as was a sail to leeward. Supposing it to be a West Indiaman, and thus fair game, Captain Eewoutsen raised English colors to mislead her, set his courses, and hoisted his topsails. The tide being against the unidentified ship, she quickly came to anchor near Shelter Island. Zeehond came to also, having cornered her prey in shoal water, lowered the English flag and hoisted the Prince's colors, whereupon the second vessel instantly lowered her own in submission.

It was soon discovered that the vessel had come from New London bearing none other than Governor Winthrop's own son, Captain Fitz-John Winthrop, and one Samuel Willys. It was then learned that they bore commissions from the government of Connecticut, which they promised to later show the Dutch, and a letter addressed to Governor Colve. Steenwyck, Epesteijn, and Quirinssen displayed their own commissions, together with evidence of the initial petition and agreement between the East Riding towns and the Dutch government of New Orange.

During this unexpected parlay, Winthrop and Willys argued that because a single article in the surrender agreements, regarding the freedom of the East Riding towns to procure weapons for the whaling industry, had been refused, all articles of the agreement between the Dutch provisional government and the Long Island towns "had been rendered null & void."

The following morning, October 29, Winthrop and Willys dispatched a copy of their commission, as promised, to the Dutch. It could not have failed to excite concern among the members of the Steenwyck Commission. The commissioners had been ordered to go over to Long Island or Shelter Island to treat with whatever forces they might meet there, and endeavor to divert the Dutch from any hostilities against the inhabitants. They were authorized to warn the Dutch that if they continued to proceed, "it will provide us to a due Consideration what wee are Nextly obliged to doe."

The letter for Colve was also delivered to the Dutch commissioners. In it, Connecticut requested that the Dutch abandon their voyage and all efforts to persuade the English of Easthampton, Southold, and Southampton to take the oath. The Dutch commissioners responded that they were duty bound to carry out their commission. Both Dutch and English commissioners would now vie directly for the support of the inhabitants of Southold.

The Steenwyck Commission set off for Southold late in the morning, somewhat behind their English counterparts. About 2:00 P.M. both boats neared the town about the same time. The Dutch commissioners, however, were dismayed to hear drum beats and a trumpet sound, and to observe a salute with muskets fired when Winthrop and Willys passed. Fearful of landing, but obliged to go ashore owing to low water and the turn of the tide, the Dutch discovered a troop of cavalry riding back and forth along the beach in front of them. As their boat bumped ashore, four of the horsemen rode toward them and

offered them mounts. The commissioners accepted and were soon met by Willys and Winthrop and a troop of 26 to 28 men on horseback. Together they rode toward Southold, passing, en route, a company of 60 menacingly armed men. Entering the village, they proceeded to the house of one Thomas Moore. Steenwyck quickly called for a town meeting to inform the citizens of the reason for his visit and to present the commission from the Dutch government.

Winthrop and Willys presented their case first, stating that the citizens of Southold were subjects of the king of England and had nothing to do with any orders or commissions of the Dutch. "Whosoever among you will not be faithful to his Majesty of England," they challenged, "your lawful Lord and King let him now speake."

The Connecticut commissioner's challenge was answered by a wall of silence.

Steenwyck then spoke, reminding the citizens that they were the subjects of the Lords States General and the Prince of Orange, as evidenced by their colors and constable staves, by the nomination of their magistrates presented to the governor, and the election of said magistrates afterwards. The elected officials from Southold were called, but only one appeared, but only to resign from office. The schout for the East Riding district was then summoned, but also resigned his commission, "having been already threatened by the inhabitants that they would plunder his house." Dismayed, Steenwyck turned to the assemblage and asked them directly if they would remain faithful to the States General and take the oath. Again, a dead silence pervaded the meeting.

The commissioners now directed that Colve's orders be read, that there be no mistaking the potential consequences of the course they were taking. Winthrop and Willys interceded, loudly stating that the inhabitants were subjects of the king and had nothing to do with a commission from the Dutch. The Steenwyck Commission, it was quite clear, was faced with overwhelming and intractable opposition, skillfully led by the Connecticut Commissioners, and enforced by the fear of reprisals against those who dared support the Dutch. Nothing further could be done. The Dutchmen resolved to leave Southold and visit Southampton the next morning.

As the Dutchmen prepared to depart, they were verbally accosted by a group of English inhabitants of the East Riding country led by a firebrand named John Cooper (the same that had served as Southampton's emissary to Boston). Cooper warned Steenwyck, in no uncertain terms, that he "take care and not appear with that thing at Southampton."

What was meant by the word "Thing?" questioned Steenwyck.

"The Prince's Flag," spat Cooper.

Did he speak for himself, or on behalf of the authority of the inhabitants of Southampton, asked the Dutchman.

"Rest satisfied," retorted the Englishman, "that I warn you and take care that you come not with that Flag within range of shot of our village."

What village did they intend to visit the next morning, queried the Connecticut Commissioners? It mattered little what answer was given, however, for Governor Winthrop's men quickly informed the Dutchmen that they would also be in attendance, "as they intended to be present at every place the Commissioners should visit."

Intimidated, rejected, and dismayed by the obvious influence of the Connecticut men over the Long Islanders, the Steenwyck Commission, perhaps wisely, resolved that a visit to either Easthampton or Southampton would prove fruitless, if not dangerous, and returned to New Orange.

The atmosphere of crisis in New Orange was all pervasive, but kept in check only by the stern leadership of Governor Colve and the hope that reinforcements might soon arrive from the Fatherland. Unfortunately, the crisis was destined to degenerate even further before it got better. The most serious news was that of the stranding in enemy territory of Expectation, one of the two vessels sent out for home in the fall of 1673 with dispatches and appeals for help. Indeed, the wreck of the ship not only caused Dutch morale in New Netherlands to plummet, but also set in motion a chain of events that further threatened the security of New Orange.

The seeds of the new crisis were planted in early November 1673, when the city learned that the little vessel that had departed for the Fatherland on September 2, lay dismantled and helpless near Nantucket, Massachusetts. Colve immediately sent Captain Eewoutsen in Zeehond to aid the crippled bus. He returned with disheartening news but also with four English prizes in hand. The stranded Expectation had been captured on November 3 by a Boston privateer brigantine commanded by one Captain Thomas Dudson. Captain Vonck and his crew were safe but being held prisoner in Boston. In reprisal, Eewoutsen seized the first New England vessels that crossed his path and returned with them to New Orange.

The capture of Expectation and the enemy's interdiction of the letters and the emissary she carried meant much to the potential survival or collapse of the colony. And unbeknownst to Colve, the second vessel sent out to the fatherland, the St. Joseph, had also been taken by an English privateer. The English colonies, and the home government in England were now informed of the state of Dutch morale, strength, and the condition of the colony, but the Fatherland was still blissfully unaware that New Netherlands was even in Dutch hands.

Boston was stung by the ship seizures. The New Englanders had long been jealous of the successful Dutch burghers in New York, and after the fall of the city had feared an attack on their own colony. Yet, the New Englanders, to avoid reprisals while a powerful Dutch fleet was on the coast, cautiously refrained from entering the fray when the town of Southampton requested armed assistance soon after the conquest. Some prominent Bostonians, such as Richard Wharton, however, were well aware of the danger if the Dutch were permitted to remain unmolested and to flourish. He urged, early on, that an "expedition to unkennel the enemy" be undertaken.

Boston had refrained from acting against the Dutch regime as much from hatred of the former Lovelace government as from fear, even when offered support by His Majesty's man of war Garland, to attack and reduce New York to submission. The New England magistrates replied that they would contribute to the expedition only if the province could be annexed to their government. Otherwise, they would rather the possession of New York remain with The Netherlanders "than to come under such a person as Colonel Lovelace who might prove a worse neighbor."

Massachusetts appeared content to let sleeping dogs lie. Now, with the Expectation incident, the situation changed radically. The seizure of the four New England ketches, they felt, demanded redress. The Boston government dispatched a protest and to demanded the release of the vessels. If the vessels were not released, the government threatened, "We doe declare our Selves bound & Resolved by ye help and assistance of god to Endeavour a full Reparation by force of Armes."

The gauntlet had been tossed, but the unwavering Colve refused to blink. New

Netherlands would not yield.

Following the New Englander's ultimatum, Colve's administration of New Orange grew more strict with every passing day. With resolve, he authorized another effort to inform the States General, Zeeland, and Amsterdam of the situation. On January 1, 1674, the ketch Hope was dispatched with orders to sail for home as soon as wind and weather permitted. The governor then attempted to turn his full attentions to the dissident towns of the East Riding of Yorkshire.

Throughout the winter Massachusetts blustered mightily about action against New Netherlands, but could not decide upon a course. It was, in fact, Connecticut, spurred by the prospect of finally securing the East Riding country, that caused Colve the greatest discomfort. During the winter, Fitz-John Winthrop had finally been directed by his father to raise a force to physically secure and occupy the East Riding towns for Connecticut. Accompanied by several Massachusetts observers, Major Winthrop secured ready assistance at New London and Stonington for his mission across the Sound. Finally, in late February 1674, he sailed for Long Island, which was now fully prepared to accept Connecticut's dominion with open arms.

With a fair wind behind him, the major soon arrived at Shelter Island and then pressed on to Southold. He had no sooner landed there than a breathless post rider from Setauket arrived with an urgent dispatch intended for the local militia commander. The major was immediately informed that Zeehond, a ketch, and two sloops, then anchored near White Stone, were waiting the first fair wind to sail for Southold "to reduce or destroy" the towns on the East end of Long Island. Colve, it appeared to the English, was at long last going to attempt to make good his threat to punish the towns of the East Riding with fire and sword.

Winthrop quickly dispatched an express to the chief officer at Easthampton and to Captain Howell, the commander of the Southampton militia, to inform them of the impending danger, and to convene a council of war at Southold "for the preservation of these towns." Within hours, the three officers and the several observers from Boston were immersed in conference, discussing the best way to defend the provisions, which, it was learned, the Dutch intended to take on at Shelter Island. After due consideration, the Bostonians suggested that the officers totally ignore the provisions and concentrate their attention on the defense of Southold.

Howell was ordered to raise 40 soldiers from Southampton. This force was to be ready to march at an hour's warning. The lieutenant at Easthampton was to raise an additional 20 men. With these mobile forces, Winthrop hoped to be in a condition to give the Dutch a warm welcome wherever they might land.

At 7:00 A.M., Sunday, February 23, Fitz-John Winthrop was informed that the snaauw, a ketch, and two sloops were within gun shot of Plum Gut, with a fair wind and tide to bring them in. The sudden appearance of the Dutch warships managed to startle everyone, especially the local inhabitants. They soon recovered their composure and the major immediately summoned the 60 militiamen from Southampton and Easthampton to Southold. The diminutive Dutch squadron did not press toward the town, but came to anchor off Shelter Island, landed 50 men and demanded provisions from Captain Sylvester, the proprietor of the island.

Captain Eewoutsen's flotilla remained anchored off Shelter Island throughout the night. The next morning, the fleet hove to off Southold. Eewoutsen anchored his flotilla in "an

handsome order," and brought all of his great guns to bear, while preparing his men for a landing in force. Fearful of the bloodletting that appeared imminent, Sylvester beseeched Eewoutsen for permission to personally deliver the Dutch surrender terms to Winthrop. The captain agreed. Winthrop was soon informed that the enemy had come to demand "subjection" of the East Riding towns to the States General and the Prince of Orange. Upon surrender, it was promised, Southold would enjoy the same privileges that had been conferred upon the other towns of New Netherlands. Refusal would only bring swift and total destruction.

Upon receipt of the terms, the major quickly drafted a tart reply refusing surrender. Immediately, Eewoutsen began filling his sloops with men for the landing. Watching the Dutch motions, the major prepared to meet the enemy with an advance guard of 50 men. As the sloops prepared to press for shore, Zeehond opened the engagement with cannonfire. The English quickly replied in kind, the ball splashing harmlessly in the water near the snaauw's bow. Then commenced a flurry of small arms fire from both sides, accentuated now and then by cannon. The Dutch fire, "which fell thick" upon the English, however, did no damage, and the English fire accomplished little more than to splinter the sides of the warship. But for troops in open boats, Eewoutsen considered, the defender's fire was all too hot. Thinking better of conducting a costly assault on a town that would only continue to refuse subjugation, he called off the attack. Soon afterwards, he ordered anchors raised and all sail made for New Orange.

The Battle of Southold was to be the high water mark of Dutch efforts over the East Riding towns of Long Island, indeed, of the last days of Dutch empire on the American continent.

The battle at Southold, though preserving, perhaps strengthening, Connecticut's hold on east Long Island, had been for Major Winthrop a harrowing experience. But his dispatch, telling of the successful repulse of the Dutch, reached Hartford on March 1, giving his father and the Council much more about which to rejoice. The major was ordered to remain on Long Island "till at least these present motions of the Dutch be over." Reinforcements, he was told, were on the way. In fact, Connecticut had recently requested that the Massachusetts Bay colony send a man-of-war to clear the coast of the enemy's ships once and for all.

The governor of Connecticut's appeal to the Massachusetts Bay Colony for once did not fall on deaf ears. Unlike some in his government, Governor John Leverett had, from the outset, been a strong advocate of action to secure the East Riding towns. Yet the colony he governed was still mixed in its sympathies. Even after word of the skirmish at Southold arrived in Boston, Leverett was obliged to apologize to Winthrop for his colony's indecisiveness. On March 14, however, he informed Winthrop that help was on the way. The General Court had ordered two vessels to be outfitted as men-of-war. They were to secure the passage through Long Island Sound and "repress the present insolency of the Dutch." The court had further resolved that the ships would transport 200 soldiers for the defense of navigation and "to Joyne with our Confederates as matters may present." Two weeks later, Massachusetts was ready to field the two vessels, both fully outfitted and furnished with ammunition and provisions. The first of these vessels was the 60-ton ketch *Swallow*, of Salem, with 12 guns and 60 men, and commanded by Captain Richard Sprague. The eight-gun, 40-man ketch *Salisbury*, similar in burthen to *Swallow*, was commanded by Captain Samuel Mosely. Massachusetts eventually

surpassed its own objectives, for within a short time, a force of 560 foot soldiers and two troop of horse had also been raised. The Plymouth settlement followed with an additional 100 men for the cause of country and king.

The failure of the Southold expedition and the preparations of Massachusetts and Connecticut only added to the siege mentality of the Dutch. Colve no longer suffered any illusions as to which side the English of Long Island would take, even among those villages that had declared their allegiance. The walls of Willem Hendrick now bristled with 180 great guns, and by English accounts, the garrison numbered nearly 800 regulars and militiamen. New Orange would not be easily subdued. Colve informed the Dutch "out people" from the surrounding towns that they were to retire to the city on notice of the enemy's approach, but this time they were directed to come "provided with proper hand and side arms." Those who failed to come in at the first alarm would be considered traitors and enemies, and would be punished by death and the confiscation of their property. Departure from the city during such an emergency was to be punished in a like manner.

Colve labored tirelessly. But even as rumors circulated, the long feared attack on New Orange failed to materialize. Though many said Charles II was determined to retake the province by force, there were also whispers of a different kind in the air—whispers of peace. By the spring of 1674, however, few public officials placed any credence in the recurrent rumors of peace that filtered in from New England and Virginia, including Colve.

In an effort to keep the New Englanders, who were moving to dispatch their own naval force, off balance, Colve continued to field Eewoutsen's Zeehond as frequently as possible, sending her on patrols in Long Island Sound and along the coast of New England. In May the *snaauw* was sent into the sound specifically to raid enemy shipping. Sailing eastward along the north coast of Long Island, Captain Eewoutsen descended on the unsuspecting English like a fury taking many New England ships within sight of land, much to the dismay of Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts.

While the Colve administration pressed on with defensive preparations and aggressive naval patrols, New England was beset and confused by contradictory rumors. On March 30, Governor Leverett informed Winthrop of the most recent account to reach his colony directly from London, which was a letter dated October 28, 1673—five months previously. By mid-April, hopes for the arrival of a naval reinforcement from England to retake New York had begun to falter, and New England's aggressive stance was noticeably calmed by mutterings that peace was in the offing.

Then, on May 7, a vessel arriving at Boston after a month's passage from Scotland, delivered the first positive news and a copy of the peace treaty between England and the United Provinces. New Netherlands was to be returned to English authority. Long Island and its myriad towns were to remain under the old regime. Furthermore, it was said that a frigate and four ships would shortly bring a new governor to New York. Colve was obliged to learned second hand of the peace when he inspected a packet of seized letters. Yet, by mid-June, news of unquestionable veracity concerning the peace arrived in New Orange from New England. Coolly and methodically, the Governor General of New Netherlands prepared for the inevitable transition. On July 1, the same day that Governor Anthony Colve read the Treaty of Westminster in New Orange, James, Duke of York, an ocean away, officially commissioned Major Edmund Andros "to bee my

Lieut and Governour" of New York.

On October 9, 1674, Captain Hendrick van Tholl came to anchor before the austere walls of Fort Willem Hendrick, with instructions direct from the Raden of The Netherlands for Colve to surrender and vacate New Netherlands. On October 22, Edmund Andros arrived. Eight days later, on October 31, Anthony Colve formally relinquished the province of New Netherlands to Governor Major Edmund Andros in behalf of His Majesty of Great Britain, Charles II.

New York would remain under English dominion for the next 109 years. An the East Riding towns of Long Island would continue in their independent-minded ways for ever after.