

Philip Lea, *A new map of New England, New York, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Maryland, and Virginia*, ca. 1690, detail including New York City, the Hudson River, and "New Albany" (top)

GOV. THOMAS DONGAN

REPORT to the Committee of Trade & Plantations (London) on the Province of **NEW YORK**

22 February 1687__Excerpts

In 1687 New York had been an English colony for over twenty years, having been the Dutch colony of New Netherland from 1624 until its defeat by the English in 1664. In this report, the governor answers a series of questions posed by the English noblemen of the committee for overseas colonies.

What are the principal towns &c. The principal towns within the Government are New York, Albany & Kingston at [the town of] Esopus.

All the rest are country villages. The buildings in New-York & Albany are generally of stone & brick. In the country the houses are mostly new built, having two or three rooms on a floor. The Dutch are great improvers of land. New York and Albany live wholly upon trade with the Indians, England, and the West Indies. The returns for England are generally Beaver, Peltry, Oil & Tobacco when we can have it. To the West Indies we send Flour, Bread, Peas, Pork & sometimes horses; the return from thence for the most part is rum which pays the King a considerable excise & some molasses which serves the people to make drink & pays no custom. . . .

What number of English, Scotch-Irish, or Foreigners have come to inhabit &c. I believe for these 7 years last past, there has not come over into this province twenty English, Scotch, or Irish families. But on the contrary on Long Island the people increase so fast that they complain for want of land & many remove from thence into the neighboring province. But of French there have been since my coming here several families come both from St. Christopher's [St. Kitts in the Caribbean] & England & a great many more are expected, as also from Holland are come several Dutch families which is another great argument of the necessity of adding to this Government the Neighboring English colonies [Connecticut, Rhode Island, East Jersey, West Jersey], that a more equal balance may be kept between his Majesty's natural-born subjects and foreigners which latter are the most prevailing part of this Government . . .

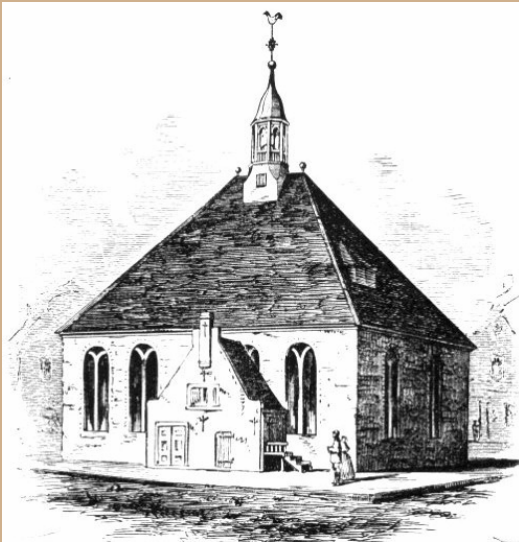
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Gov. Thomas Dongan, n.d.

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Dutch Reformed Church, Albany, late 1600s

What rates and duties &c.

. . . It's a very hard thing upon me that coming over hither in troublesome times, finding no revenue established and yet having three garrisons to look after and the forts in the condition before mentioned, and finding such contest between the government of Canada and this about the Beaver Trade, the Inland Country, and the Indians, to purchase, as I was obliged by my instructions, sixty odd miles upon Hudson's River, 17 or 18 into the land in one place from the Indians. In another place up the River 16 miles. . . .

What revenue there is is with the ease and satisfaction of the people and paid without grumbling, though as much as modesty can be put upon them.

So that if Connecticut be not added to the Government [of New York], it can be hardly able to support itself. But if it be added, the revenue will be sufficient to keep the King wholly out of debt. . . .

What persuasions in Religion &c.

Every Town ought to have a Minister. New York has first a Chaplain belonging to the Fort of the Church of England; Secondly, a Dutch Calvinist, thirdly a French Calvinist, fourthly a Dutch Lutheran — Here be not many of the Church of England; few Roman Catholics; abundance of Quakers, preachers, men & Women especially; Singing Quakers, Ranting Quakers, Sabbatarians; Antisabbatarians;¹ Some Anabaptists, some Independents; some Jews; in short, of all sorts of opinions [denominations] there are some, and the most part of none at all.

The Church

The Great Church which serves both the English & the Dutch is within the Fort which is found to be very inconvenient; therefore I desire that there may be an order for their building another, ground already being laid out for that purpose & they wanting not money in store wherewithal to build it.

The most prevailing opinion is that of the Dutch Calvinists.

What course &c.

It is the endeavor of all Persons here to bring up their children and servants in that opinion which themselves profess, but this I observe that they take no care of the conversion of their Slaves.

Every Town and County are obliged to maintain their own poor, which makes them be so careful that no Vagabonds, Beggars, nor Idle Persons are suffered to live here.

But as for the King's natural-born subjects that live on Long Island and other parts of the Government I find it a hard take to make them pay their Ministers.

THO. DONGAN

¹ Denominations, including the Seventh-Day Baptists, with opposing views regarding sabbath observance.