

The Esopus Wars: Dutch Aggression against Lenape Natives

By Gerard Foley

The Dutch have a storied history in the Hudson River Valley. A small but significant piece of this history revolves around a series of local conflicts between the Dutch settlers and the Esopus tribe of the Lenape people. The Esopus Wars, as they came to be known, had consequences that would shape European settlement of the region for future decades. These wars lasted from late 1659 into late 1663, and though there were transitions from peacetime to wartime, tension and distrust persisted between the Dutch and the natives. While both sides showed aggression towards one another during the years leading up to the initial conflict, it was the Dutch who triggered these wars through their fear and suspicion of the Esopus people. Largely unprovoked, they instigated a struggle that would cause the Esopus to retaliate and, ultimately, lose most of their native land.

Troubles between the Dutch and the Esopus tribe began when the Dutch settlers built a fortified stockade in an area near present day Kingston in 1658.¹ This was done so the Dutch could farm the fertile land by the Esopus Creek without being driven out by the natives, as they had been in the years prior. The settlement was called Wildwyck and provided a safe place where the Dutch could leave in the morning to work in the fields and retire to at night. Its walls were fourteen feet high and constructed of tree trunks that were set into the ground and converted into palisades. The Esopus allowed the existence of this stockade because they believed a small

¹ *Dutch Colonies*. National Park Service U.S. Department of the Interior.

sale of land would curtail the Dutch desire for land expansion in the region. Some natives even worked as hired hands during the day near Wildwyck, often being paid in brandy. This would be the cause of the first Esopus War, as a reckless Dutch action would provoke the Esopus into open violence.

On September 20, 1659, a small number of the Esopus became very drunk off the brandy they were paid for their day labor. They received payment once it became dark and ventured off not very far from the walls of the stockade to celebrate. They lit a fire and stayed long into the night, creating a commotion that frightened the Dutch. The settlers feared it was an attack on Wildwyck by the Esopus and the Ensign Smith sent some men to investigate, with orders “not to molest anybody.”² A sergeant reported back that there were indeed “savages” outside the walls. Afterwards, another group of settlers went out to confront the natives. When this group came upon the revelries of the inebriated Esopus, they fired upon the natives, killing one and capturing another. The rest fled into the night. Some of the Dutch claimed that they heard a shot ring off in the air, and the mob claimed that when they went to see what was going on, the “savages had shot first.”³ Sources vary on the exact details, but there is no evidence to support any of these claims, as the natives would have no reason to fire upon any Dutch or Indian. Paranoia had seized the settlers and caused them to assault the Esopus without reason. This caused an immediate retaliation by the Esopus.

The next day, over five hundred Esopus natives laid siege to Wildwyck. This number of men was likely rallied so quickly by the survivors of the shooting the night before. Before they arrived, Ensign Smith had dispatched a man named Christopher Davis with an escort to inform

² Smith, Philip. *Legends of the Shawangunk (Shon-Gum) and its environs, including historical sketches, biographical notices, and thrilling border incidents and adventures relating to those portions of the counties of Orange, Ulster and Sullivan lying in the Shawangunk region*, (Pawling, Smith & Company, 1887), 22.

³ *Ibid*, 23.

Governor Peter Stuyvesant of what had recently occurred.⁴ Davis came safely to the river, but the escort was ambushed on their return to the village and most were captured. Following this ambush, the Esopus were able to burn several barracks, stacks, and barns during their initial assault. Failing to breach the palisades protecting the settlement, they slaughtered all the livestock that remained outside the walls. For three weeks the Esopus sieged Wildwyck, until they could achieve nothing more and lifted the siege, returning home.⁵ The force that Governor Stuyvesant had mustered, around 160 men, arrived in the defense of the settlement a day late, and could not follow the Esopus to their homes.⁶ For the next few months, there was no open conflict, as the winter likely made fighting too difficult for both sides. Hostilities continued the following spring, as an Esopus fort was ransacked and captives were taken.⁷ Before peace was reached, the Dutch sent some of their captives to the island of Curacao as slaves.⁸ Soon afterwards, the Susquehannok and the Mohawk were able to broker a peace between the Dutch and Esopus, but the peace was destined to fail. There was never any trust between the two peoples, and the Dutch often demanded greater land for their settlers. These troubled relations did not disappear, instead they reemerged as a much larger conflict three years later.

The outbreak of the second Esopus War occurred on June 7, 1663. This time the Esopus natives were responsible for the triggering incident. They entered the settlement of Wildwyck around noon in small groups and spread around the village, acting as merchants to disarm the Dutch.⁹ The Esopus seemed to bide their time and only sprang their attack when “some people

⁴ Ibid, 23.

⁵ Ibid, 23.

⁶ Ibid, 24.

⁷ Ibid, 24.

⁸ Ibid, 24.

⁹ Kregier, Martin. *JOURNAL OF THE SECOND ESOPUS WAR*, (1663), 1.

on horse back rushed through the Mill gate from the New Village, crying out: ‘The Indians have destroyed the New Village.’” This new village was called Nieuw Dorp, which is present day Hurley.¹⁰ The natives in the village then abandoned their secrecy and began to attack, “murdering our people in their houses with their axes and tomahawks, and firing on them with guns and pistols.”¹¹ They took women and children as captives, ransacked the houses, and set fire to what buildings they could.¹² The attack was even more successful because many of the men “were abroad at their field labors, and but few in the village.”¹³ Many villagers did not even realize they were under attack until they crossed paths with the wounded on the street.¹⁴ Once an alarm was raised by the wounded Captain Thomas Chambers, the Esopus were driven out of the village, the gates were secured, and a watch was kept all through the night.¹⁵ It was an attack that took the Dutch completely by surprise, and would be called the “Massacre at the Esopus.” We know in great detail what happened on that day because a written report was sent to the Council of New Netherland by the Court of Wildwyck on June 20. The authors gave their signatures and the names of the dead, wounded, captured, and homes burnt were listed. In total, there were 21 killed, 8 wounded (one dying from his wounds), 44 taken prisoner, and 12 houses burnt.¹⁶

Though this attack was instigated by the Esopus natives and resulted in a greater loss of life than any encounter in the first war, the Dutch cannot be viewed as blameless victims. The settlers constantly encroached upon Esopus lands, offering no compensation or payment. The initial sale of land was just about all the natives were willing to offer, but the Dutch would never

¹⁰ History of Hurley, NY.

¹¹ Kregier. *ESOPUS WAR*, 1.

¹² *Ibid*, 1.

¹³ *Ibid*, 2.

¹⁴ *Ibid*, 2.

¹⁵ *Ibid*, 2.

¹⁶ *Ibid*, 3-6.

be satisfied with their terms. The Dutch had sown the seeds of aggression with their unwarranted attack on the Esopus in September 1659. The opening of the Wildwyck report states the “Indian Sachems” were “notified on the 5th of June” that there would be a renewal of the peace.¹⁷ This likely refers to the peace treaty established after the first Esopus War, and perhaps the natives decided to attack at this time because they were no longer content with the terms. While we cannot know their exact motives, the Esopus felt this was the opportune time to strike a severe blow against the Dutch.

There is less speculation on the unfolding of events in the second Esopus war. The journal of Captain Martin Kregier sheds greater insight into the daily activities of the Dutch and their campaign against the Esopus. A burgomaster from New Amsterdam, Kregier was entrusted leadership in this campaign by Governor Stuyvesant, who invited “the colonists about Manhattan to enlist, offered them the pay of a soldier, what booty they took, and a pension of from four hundred to one thousand guilders if they were disabled.”¹⁸ Kregier’s narrative begins on July 4th when he entered the Esopus Kill with two yachts.¹⁹ The first few days were spent transporting supplies from the river side to Wildwyck. Before a week passed, Kregier detained two Wappingers that came to the village with fish and deer.²⁰ The Dutch clearly did not trust any native in the vicinity of Wildwyck, for they feared any of them could be an enemy waiting to attack.

After five natives came to inquire about the two detainees the following day, patrols were sent out to keep watch over the cattle, and this would become a daily operation, not just to look after livestock, but farmers in the field as well. Following this precaution, the Dutch questioned the

¹⁷ Ibid, 1.

¹⁸ Schoonmaker, Marius. *The history of Kingston, New York*. (New York, Burr printing house, 1888), 34.

¹⁹ Ibid, 7.

²⁰ Ibid, 7.

older of the two Wappingers for information regarding the Esopus; he complied after the promise of a “present”.²¹ The first assault under Kregier’s command began on July 9th when he sent Christiaen Niesen and Peiter Wolfertsen, with a company of men and Indians, as well as the old Wappinger as guide, to surprise some 28 Esopus on Magdelen Island.²² This party returned on July 12th, with four prisoners in tow and the hand of the slain Esopus captain.²³

Kregier wasted no time, and the next day he pressed a captive Esopus woman for more information. From this inquiry, in addition to the questioning of Mr. Gysbert’s wife (who was taken prisoner but escaped) and the second Wappinger detainee, revealed to the Dutch that the Esopus had a fort about 80 warriors strong with three rows of palisades.²⁴ Plans were made immediately to deal with this new threat, and the war council decided to send out two detachments, one to scout and the other on expedition, though they found nothing. In the meantime, more ambushes were laid and more provisions were brought up to Wildwyck. Only two weeks Kregier had been in command and he had already detained prisoners, attacked an Esopus camp, and learned of his enemy’s strength in the area. He treated the Esopus with caution but also with viciousness.

We can learn from the first few entries of this journal that the Mohawks were often in league with the Dutch during this time. The Mohawks served both as warriors and mediators for the Dutch against the Esopus. On July 16th, a few of them were sent to the Esopus fort to negotiate the exchange of prisoners.²⁵ This would result in an exchange of three prisoners for three prisoners. For the rest of the summer, the Mohawks would prove vital for the safe release

²¹ Ibid, 8.

²² Ibid, 8.

²³ Ibid, 8.

²⁴ Ibid, 10.

²⁵ Ibid, 11.

of Dutch prisoners, as the Esopus threatened violence on any Dutch who approached them. The Dutch were not the only people who received help from other natives. The Esopus were aided by the Wappinger, the Hackensack, and the Manissing, to list a few tribes. While it is not clear how many men of these tribes fought with the Esopus, they relayed messages to the Esopus and helped them keep track of Dutch activities.

On July 25th, the council of war decided unanimously to send an expedition against the Esopus in their fort.²⁶ The next day, the largest force yet assembled left from Wildwyck,

This following troops set out against the Esopus Indians, having as a Guide a woman who had been prisoner among them, to wit - of Captain Lieutenant Cregier's Company, 91 men; of Lieutenant Stilwil's, 30 men; Lieutenant Couwenhoven with 41 Indians (These Indians were of Long Island); volunteers from the Manhatans, 6; volunteers from the Esopus 35 men, of whom 11 were horsemen, and 7 of the Honorable Company's negroes, with two pieces of cannon and two wagons, the whole party provided each with one pound of powder and a pound of ball. 2 pounds of hard bread and 1/2 a soft loaf, with 2 pounds of pork and 1/2 a Dutch cheese; left in garrison at Wildwyck 36 soldiers and 25 freemen.²⁷

When they arrived at the fort they found it abandoned, and discovered the Esopus had fled to the mountains. On the morning of the 28th, the council of war convened and agreed to send a company of 140 men to search for the Esopus in the mountains.²⁸ After finding no signs of them, and then failing to capture a band of nine natives who had spotted them, the company returned to the fort. It was then decided to burn the crops and the fort so the Esopus would starve should they return to this place. This was done over the course of three days, and the Dutch returned to Wildwyck on the 31st.²⁹ No more large assaults were undertaken by the Dutch for several weeks.

The month of August was a largely uneventful time during this war, as open conflict seldom occurred. Kregier spent most of this time establishing martial law in Wildwyck. On

²⁶ Ibid, 13.

²⁷ Ibid, 14.

²⁸ Ibid, 14.

²⁹ Ibid, 16.

August 4th, the captain and the council of war enacted an ordinance that ordered that no one may leave the village without their permission, and that no one could unnecessarily discharge their gun.³⁰ The punishment would be a fine, and if anyone were to break the first part of the ordinance and be captured by “barbarous Indians,” there would be no attempts at rescue. Another ordinance was enacted on the 13th, which reads as follows:

That none of the military... presume to sell or to pawn for any strong drink any of the stores advanced to him by the Honorable Company on his monthly wages... under a fine of one month's wages... No one, whether military or freeman, following the business of selling strong drink, shall presume to take in pledge or endeavor to embezzle any property belonging to the military in exchange for strong drink, under the forfeiture of the tapped drink and to return to the owner free of cost and charges the received property and pay in addition a fine of twelve guilders as often as he is discovered so doing... All those who follow the trade of selling strong drink are further warned not to sell nor furnish any strong drink on the Lord's Rest and Sabbath day much less entertain any clubs, whether before or after the sermon on pain of forfeiting the strong drink tapped on that occasion, and in addition a fine of five and twenty guilders as often as they shall be caught in the act... Those who sell strong drink are also further warned they take heed not to sell any to the military either on credit or on account... on pain of not being paid therefor, unless on order of his superior officer.³¹

These laws were no doubt strict, but they were created to protect the people of Wildwyck and allow for a more efficient campaign against the Esopus. This was, after all, a time of war and Kregier had the authority to pass any law he saw fit to the defense of the village.

Most of the days spent between the enacting of these ordinances were spent protecting the workers in the fields and laying fruitless ambushes. Supply wagons were often sent to the burnt village to fetch grain for Wildwyck, and encounters with natives were minimal. By late August, however, this decline in military action would change. On the 19th, a letter was brought to Kregier from Pieter Couwenhoven, who lay with the sloop in Danskamer, which warned of an impending attack by the Esopus, Manissings, and Wappingers on the village in two days.³² This

³⁰ Ibid, 17-18.

³¹ Ibid, 20.

³² Ibid, 21.

supposed attack did not happen, and Couwenhoven was given instruction to go on the sloop and exchange three prisoners for the release of Dutch captives. Also, if the Esopus refused to cooperate, he should try to capture as many Esopus as he can.³³ He returned on the 30th with less Christian captives than he had hoped, as there was disagreement in the negotiations.³⁴ On the same day, it was decided to launch an attack with 120 men against the Esopus in their newly built fort, “about four hours farther than their first fort which we had burnt.”³⁵ A request was made by Kregier that the people of Wildwyck should furnish 20 horses for the attack on the Esopus, but the people could not meet this request as their horses were needed for the harvest. The following day Kregier asked the sheriff and commissaries in person if any horses could be spared. He was only given six, but received many more harsh and spiteful words, as one was recorded as saying, “let those furnish horses who commenced the war.”³⁶ The weather was also disagreeable, as he had to wait several days before he could march due to the rain.

On September 3rd they finally set out against the Esopus. This expedition would result in more bloodshed than the first. Kregier again records those who left Wildwyck,

About one o'clock in the afternoon we started from fort Wildwyck, having of my company two and twenty men; of Lieutenant Stilwil's company, four and twenty men, and seven freemen, with two of the Honorable Company's Negroes. We took as guide the young Wappinger Indian, and Christoffel Davids as Indian interpreter, and promised the Indian his freedom with a cloth coat, on condition that he brought us truly to the Esopus Indians.³⁷

The number of men appears to be far less than the 120 that was decided on, and much less than the first assault in July. They came upon the Esopus fort on the 5th and were able to deal a decisive blow to them. Splitting their forces in two, with Kregier and Lieutenant Couwenhoven

³³ Ibid, 23-24.

³⁴ Ibid, 26.

³⁵ Ibid, 26.

³⁶ Ibid, 27.

³⁷ Ibid, 28.

leading the right wing and Lieutenant Stilwil and Ensign Niessen leading the left wing, they proceeded to advance toward the fort.³⁸ They were soon seen by a squaw who alerted the Esopus to their presence, but the Dutch acted swiftly and attacked.³⁹ The natives retreated into the creek and reached the opposite side of the kill, where fire was exchanged on both sides, and by the end of the fighting the Dutch drove them away. The Esopus lost their chief, 14 warriors, four women and three children, with many more wounded.⁴⁰ The Dutch lost three of their own with six wounded, but they were able to release 23 Christian prisoners and take 13 prisoners for themselves.⁴¹ After the victory came the spoils. The Dutch plundered the houses within the fort, taking with them anything valuable and destroying everything else. Being satisfied with the booty and placing the wounded on the horses, they set out to Wildwyck.⁴² They did not burn the fort nor cut down the maize as they did previously. The following day they passed beyond the Esopus Kill, where an Esopus child died, which they threw into the creek.⁴³ On September 7th they returned to Wildwyck.

Following the successful assault was another period of respite for the Dutch at their fort. Both Lieutenants Stilwil and Couwenhoven left on the 9th with some wounded and sick for the Manhatans.⁴⁴ Several uneventful days passed as a constant rain was present. Another ordinance was enacted on the 15th, which read as follows,

That no one shall presume to quit his post or station without permission of the Sergeant or Corporal in command, under the penalty of twenty stivers for the first offence, 40 stivers for the second, and arbitrary punishment for the third... No person shall presume to take or steal another's gun, powder or lead in any manner whatsoever, on pain of corporal punishment... Neither shall any person... commence or begin any quarrel on

³⁸ Ibid, 29.

³⁹ Ibid, 29.

⁴⁰ Ibid, 29.

⁴¹ Ibid, 29.

⁴² Ibid, 29-30.

⁴³ Ibid, 30.

⁴⁴ Ibid, 30-31.

*guard, much less come drunk or to drink there, under a penalty of twenty stivers for each offence... Every one shall hold himself in readiness with his gun... to appear immediately... wherever he may be required, then to await further orders, and whoever acts contrary or disobeys herein shall be arbitrarily punished according to his deserts... No one shall go from one guard or post to another without taking with him his proper hand and side arms, so that he may be immediately prepared to defend himself in case of alarm, under a penalty of twenty stivers for each offence.*⁴⁵

Despite the Dutch victories in the war and the apparent absence of danger to Wildwyck, as it had not been approached by the Esopus with any force since June, the council of war still deemed it necessary to enact another strict law on the people. An increase in the defense of the village was not the only requirement. On the 18th, learning about the deployment of “additional soldiers and a party of Marseping Savages,” Kregier requested that the village court “be pleased to allot two or three houses in this village to lodge... the aforesaid force whenever it shall arrive.”⁴⁶ He received the answer that the court “have induced Pieter Jacobsen to give his mill for 40 or 50 soldiers, and the W. Court will do its best to find out quarters for the Savages.”⁴⁷ The Dutch were constantly preparing for an offense, and the council of war used of resource of the village they could. Lieutenant Couwenhoven returned to Wildwyck with the Marseping Savages on the 26th.⁴⁸ This month of fortification and resupply would end with a decision to organize another expedition against the Esopus.

Once the necessary preparations were made, the expedition set out from Wildwyck at the start of October to the Esopus fort they attacked less than a month before. This would be the last large scale attack on the Esopus under Kregier’s command. True to his careful, daily record, Kregier writes,

1st October being Monday, we marched from Wildwyck with these following troops; of the Military 102 men; of the Marseping Indians 46 men; of the freemen 6; with 14 horses

⁴⁵ Ibid, 31-32.

⁴⁶ Ibid, 32.

⁴⁷ Ibid, 33.

⁴⁸ Ibid, 34.

*obtained from the farmers of Wildwyck for the use of the expedition so as to be able to accommodate the wounded, should we have any.*⁴⁹

The following day, they came upon a grisly scene of the dead Esopus thrown into pits, some bodies rooted up and devoured by the wolves and ravens. The fort and the surrounding area had been abandoned by the Esopus. On October 4th the Dutch set fire to the fort and destroyed the maize plantations.⁵⁰ The expedition promptly returned to Wildwyck the following evening. With this easy success, the council of war resolved to send Couwenhoven with the Marseping and about 40 soldiers back to the Manhatans.⁵¹ It was also resolved to send all Indian prisoners to the Manhatans, though it is not clear if they departed in the same yacht. Aside from a failed ambush by three Indians on a lone ploughman and an unfounded warning that Fort Orange would be attacked by 500 Indians mustering on the east side of the river, nothing much occurred.⁵² This threat of attack did stir worries among the Dutch, and the council of war requested a repair of the palisades protecting Wildwyck as soon as possible. The request was sent on the 15th and answered by the court on the 18th with full compliance.⁵³ In the meantime, another ordinance was enacted that prevented any military from leaving the redoubt for Wildwyck without consent of the captain.⁵⁴ The rest of the month was spent in mundane routine.

The months of November and December would see a decline in the war. Greater attention was placed on the exchange of prisoners. On November 7th, Couwenhoven negotiated a ten day's truce with an Esopus Sachem so a Christian women could be exchanged for two Esopus.⁵⁵ This was confirmed by Kregier and the council of war the following day upon speaking to a

⁴⁹ Ibid, 35.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 36.

⁵¹ Ibid, 37.

⁵² Ibid, 37-38.

⁵³ Ibid, 39-41.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 40.

⁵⁵ Ibid, 44.

Wappinger Sachem. On the 13th and 14th, the Wappinger Sachem was accommodated, the prisoners were returned to their respective sides, and then the following was said:

*The Chief then requested that we should live with him in friendship, which should be preserved by him. He gave us, in token thereof, a bow and arrow and said, I will not make war against the Dutch, but live in peace with them. We promised him Likewise; gave each other the hand, and the said chief promised us to do his best to obtain back for us all the prisoners from the Esopus Indians that a mutual exchange should be made;*⁵⁶

While this truce had not ended the war between the Esopus and Dutch, it did show that open conflicts were dying down, and the Wappinger at least did not want to suffer any more loss. Kregier left for the Manhatans with some of the military on the 17th, leaving the record of the journal to Ensign Niessen.⁵⁷ With the approaching winter and the departure of Captain Kregier for a month, not much occurred at Wildwyck for the remainder of November. There was on the 28th and 29th a Wappinger Sachem who arrived at the river near the redoubt wanting to sell venison, and more importantly, “promising us positively that he should restore all the Christian prisoners to us in the course of three days.”⁵⁸ This was done on December 3rd, though not all prisoners were exchanged at the meeting. Kregier resumes the journal on December 19th, with no account of the lost days. He returns to Wildwyck on the 22nd and conducted small governmental matters in the village over the next few days.⁵⁹ The celebration of the New Year was reined in due to the heightened sense of defense within the village. An ordinance was passed on the 29th forbidding anyone from discharging their gun on New Year’s Day, as it would be a waste of gunpowder and danger to the people.⁶⁰ Once the weather was fair enough for a yacht to sail, Kregier left Wildwyck for the final time. He arrived back in the Manhatans on January 3rd, 1664,

⁵⁶ Ibid, 45.

⁵⁷ Ibid, 46.

⁵⁸ Ibid, 47.

⁵⁹ Ibid, 50-51.

⁶⁰ Ibid, 51-52.

and his journal concludes.⁶¹ Though his involvement in the affairs of the Esopus had come to an end, the war did not end until May 1664 under the Dutch, and then in 1665 under the English.

At the turn of this year, less attention was given to the war with the Esopus as the English were constantly encroaching on the Dutch colony. During the spring, the troubles for the Dutch reached a crisis point. On March 19th, “the lords directors and the council of the New Netherlands... summoned a general assembly of delegates from the several towns in the province... to meet at New Amsterdam 10th day of April.”⁶² It was decided that Thomas Chambers and Gysbert Van Imbroeck would be sent as delegates from Wildwyck, as Chambers had become captain of the militia.⁶³ The delegates discussed many important issues at the convention such as the debt of the West India Company, the war with the Esopus, a possible war with England, and a new tax. It was decided on April 22nd that peace should be made with the Esopus immediately.⁶⁴ Preparations were made and the warring sides met on May 15th in Fort Amsterdam. In attendance were “the sachems of several tribes... chiefs of the Esopus... the director-general and the various Dutch officials, including Thomas Chambers,” and after friendly negotiations, “the treaty was concluded, ratified, and signed the next day, May 16th, amid general rejoicing and salvos of artillery.”⁶⁵ Even with this celebration, the treaty strongly favored the Dutch in its stipulations. The terms were summarized as follows:

*The land already given to the Dutch as an indemnity, including the two forts belonging to the Indians, became the property of the Christians. The Indians were not permitted to visit the village nor any remote Dutch settlement... The lands in the vicinity of the forts by right of conquest were to belong to the Dutch... In any case of murder by a Dutchman of an Indian, or the reverse, the guilty party was to be punished as a murderer... All damages for the killing of cattle were to be paid for.”*⁶⁶

⁶¹ Ibid, 52.

⁶² Schoonmaker, *Kingston*, 44.

⁶³ Ibid, 44.

⁶⁴ Ibid, 45-46.

⁶⁵ Ibid, 46.

⁶⁶ Ibid, 46.

After almost a year of constant conflict and mistrust, peace was established between the Dutch and Esopus. This peace would be largely unnecessary, however, because just a few months later the English would take control of the Dutch colony in the Hudson Valley.

In August the Duke of York sent Colonel Richard Nicolls, with four ships and 450 soldiers, to conquer the New Netherlands.⁶⁷ On the 27th, Nicolls forced a successful surrender of New Amsterdam from a reluctant Stuyvesant.⁶⁸ A new peace would be established between the English and the Esopus. In the months that followed the takeover of the Dutch colony, the English drew up a new peace treaty that dealt with the Esopus more fairly. On October 7th, 1665 at Kingston, Richard Nicolls, along with his witnesses, met with several Esopus sachems and agreed on an amicable peace.⁶⁹ The stipulations in the treaty included full compensation for any damages done to property in the future, equal justice for the murder of a Christian or native by the other party and that the peace will not be broken if this happened, fair payment for purchasing lands, and clearly defined boundaries for land purchased.⁷⁰ It was also agreed that the Esopus would come every year to renew the terms of the treaty. This treaty acknowledged the rights of the Esopus people far more than any Dutch treaty did. The lasting success of this treaty can be seen as the Esopus return to renew the treaty until at least 1681.

With the presence of English authority replacing the Dutch in the Hudson Valley, the Esopus wars had finally come to an end. Though the Dutch did make peace with the Esopus in May 1664, it clearly valued the Dutch more and there is no way to determine if it would have lasted long. The treaties the Dutch made in both Esopus conflicts always appeared to be uneasy

⁶⁷ Ibid, 47.

⁶⁸ Ibid, 48.

⁶⁹ *An Agreement made between Richard Nicolls Esq. Governor under his Royal Highness the Duke of Yorke and the Sachems and People called the Sopes Indyans.* (Ulster County Clerk's Records Management Program – Archives Division, 2002), 18.

⁷⁰ Ibid, 18.

truces rather than secure peace. The English treaty, however, had longevity. While the English probably did not give the natives any more respect than the Dutch had, they made better use of diplomacy and compromise. The Dutch never fully trusted the natives in any capacity and were very quick to turn hostile. An impulsive and fear-driven attack on drunken Esopus in the night sparked the first war in 1659. While the massacre at Wildwyck in 1663 cannot be justified, the cause can certainly be traced back to the prejudiced behavior of the Dutch as they constantly encroached upon native lands. Aside from this surprise attack, the Dutch throughout the second war were always on the offensive. They were ruthless in their attacks on Esopus forts, and also pressured the citizens of Wildwyck to commit every resource to the war effort. Throughout the turbulent years of the Esopus Wars, The Dutch were not warranted in their aggression towards the natives surrounding their settlements. A more peaceful and cooperative approach to living with the natives would likely have led to less violence and strife.

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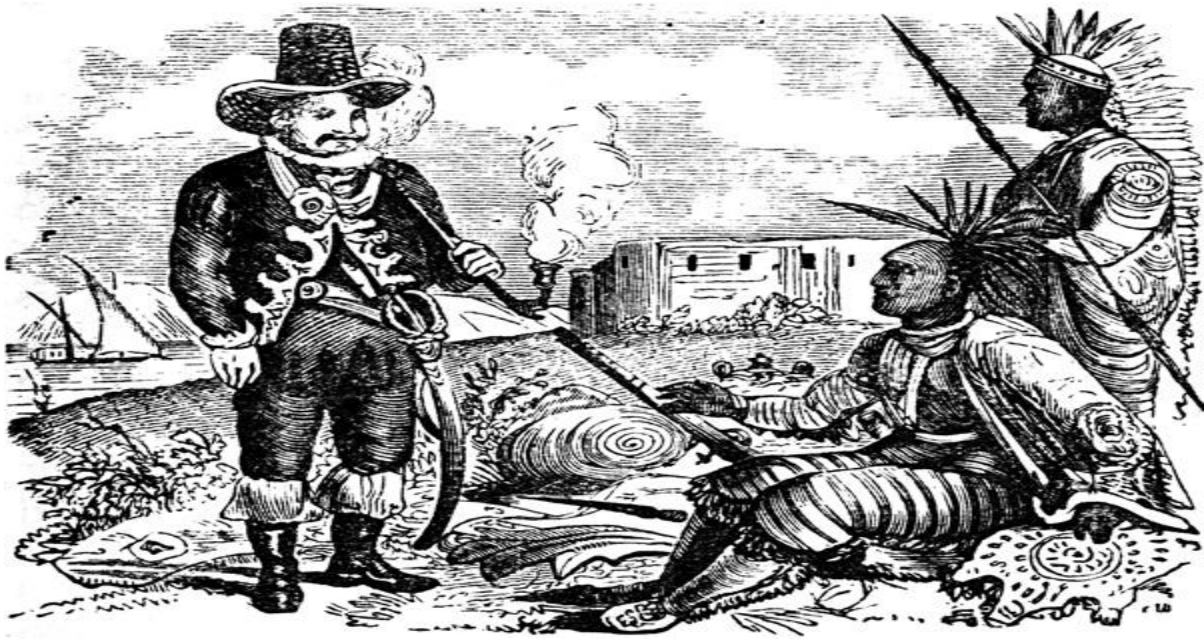
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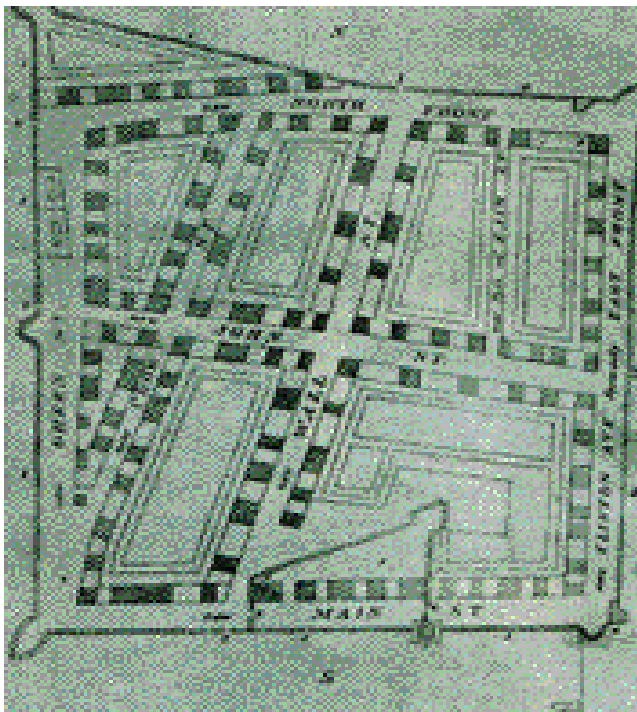
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Original layout of the Kingston Stockade.

<https://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/kingston/colonization.htm>



Page I. (Top)

An Agreement made betwixt
 Richard Nicolls Esq. Governour under
 his Royall Highness the Duke of York
 and the Sachems and People, called the
 Indians.

1. That no Act of Hostility shall at any
 time be committed on either part, or if
 any damage shall happen to be done by
 either Party, to the Corn, Cattle, Horses,
 Hogg, Houses, or any other Goods
 whatsoever, of the other Party ^{if such}
will satisfaction shall be given upon demand
 for the same.

That if any Christian shall wilfully kill
 an Indian, or any Indian a Christian,
 he shall be put to death, And the said
 Sachems do promise on their parts to
 bring any such Indian to y^e Officers
 heife at the next to receive his
 full shewment thereof.

3. That a convenient House shall be built
 where the said Indians may at any
 time Lodge without the Ports of the
 said Towne, in which House y^e Indians
 are to leave their Armes, and may
 come

page I. (Bottom)

Recd from Richard
 Nicolls Esq. Governour
 of the Province of
 New York
 1722

First page of Richard Nicolls Esopus Indian Treaty.

http://www.jrbooksonline.com/PDF_Books/EsopusIndianTreaty.pdf