

CHAPTER I

THE FIRST CONTACT, TENTATIVE SETTLEMENT, AND COMPETITION FOR OWNERSHIP -- 1614-1681

In 1609 Henry Hudson, sailing for the Dutch, explored the coasts and the river mouths of the present states of Delaware, New Jersey, and New York. The Dutch returned in 1614 with five ships, one of which explored the Delaware as far as the Schuylkill, where Captain Hendrickson landed and traded with the natives; beads and kettles for three Indian captives.¹ This was the first contact, and until the abortive settlements of 1626 and 1630, all trade was of the same nature; irregular and infrequent visits by ship.²

The period between 1626 and 1681 was marked by international rivalry for control of the coast and trading settlements, in which the English were ultimately successful.

¹ Johnson, Swedish Settlements, p. 168.

² Fernow, N.Y. Col. Hist. Docs., XII, 111.
Johnson, Swedish Settlements, pp. 168-9.

Although the lives of the coastal tribes of the Delaware were considerably altered during this period it was no disaster from the Indian point of view. In fact the Indians almost universally welcomed the new goods and services offered by the white traders in return for furs and skins, and often took advantage of the competitive situation among the Europeans to increase the amount of goods they were receiving.³

The influence of fur trade and of manufactured articles, particularly of iron and cloth, spread rapidly along the Indian trading routes. Like his diseases, the white man's goods raced

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"Two chiefs of the Minquaas....in token and for the continuance of friendship and mutual trade gave a small present and declared in our presence, that the Commissary of Johan Prints, the Swedish Governor, residing at the Southriver of New Netherland, had said to them, that he could sell them powder, lead and guns enough, but the Netherlanders, being poor tatterdemalions, could not do so..." Interview between Director Stuyvesant and Two Minquas Chiefs. 13th July, 1647.

"..one of their statements was, that they were divided in two (parties) in the Minquase land, one half for the Swedes, he and the other for us and our nation; they came therefore here, to make these presents to me, that they might be provided therewith. This has given me a good opportunity, to request your Honor, to satisfy them." Report to Stuyvesant, 16th July, 1650.

Fernow, N.Y. Col. Hist. Docs., XII, 40, 67.

ahead of his advance and upset the aboriginal culture. Not only were the goods and instruments more effective than their native predecessors, but the possession of them carried great prestige, and in the case of firearms it meant the ability to hunt and fight better than "the competition."

With this flow of new goods into the Indian trade circles there arose a demand for more exchange medium among the Indians, who frequently preferred to be paid in their own money of shell strings, or wampum, rather than in trade goods. This was because they could judge better the value of the medium they knew, and could then buy trade goods from other Indians without the danger of being cheated.⁴ The result of this was European

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"The articles of trade between the Indians and the Christians consist of fish, birds, deerskins, and the furs of beavers, otters, foxes, etc. They usually exchange these things for liquor or else for their own kind of money, which they call wampum, and consists of red and white seashells, which are neatly prepared, and strung like beads. These strings of wampum they make use of to decorate themselves with. Their king wears a crown made of the same.

"Twelve strings of the red are valued as much as twenty-four of the white ones. They like this kind of money much better than our silver coin, because they are so often deceived by it, not being able to distinguish the counterfeit for the genuine, and, as they cannot well calculate the difference in its value, they do not much wish to take it."

Francis Daniel Pastorius, Description of Pennsylvania, 1700, pp. 8-9. See also Speck, "The Functions of Wampum Among the Eastern Algonkian," Memoirs of the American Anthropological Association, Vol. VI, No. 1, 1919. pp. 56-64.

manufacture of wampum, with runaway inflation following in the Indians' economy.⁵ This weakening of their own economic system eventually made the Indians rely even more upon trade with Europeans, so that many interior tribes were dependent upon white men decades before they saw them.

The first Dutch settlement was Fort Nassau, near Gloucester point in the present State of Delaware. It was a trading post built in 1623 and abandoned within a year.⁶ The small garrison withdrew to the larger settlement at Manhattan, which had been commenced two years earlier and was already well established by 1637.

The second Dutch settlement met a fate like that of Roanoke. In 1630 a colony was settled at Zwannendale, a site on the coast of Delaware at the mouth of Delaware Bay. When the chief Patroon,⁷ Captain David de Vries, returned on December 6, 1632, he found only bones. The Dutch reestablished

⁵ W. C. Orchard, "The Technique of the Belts," in Speck, "The Penn Wampum Belts," Leaflets, Heye Foundation, No. 4, p. 19.

⁶ Fernow, N. Y. Col. Hist. Docs., XII, iv.

⁷ The Patroon was granted certain rights of trade and land, provided he planted and sustained a colony of fifty people there. Fernow, N. Y. Col. Hist. Docs., XII, 69, 70 1629-30.

trading contact with the Indians and remained there only a short time, but in August of 1635 they ejected a small party of Englishmen from Virginia who had occupied the abandoned Fort Nassau, and placed a new garrison there.

The next attempt to plant a self-supporting colony was made by the Swedish New South Company, with the support of some Dutch merchants who had been in unsuccessful individual competition against the Dutch company. The Swedish party landed at what is now Wilmington, Delaware, in 1638, built Fort Christina, and purchased from the Indians some of the same land they had earlier sold to one of the Dutch Patroons.⁸

The Swedes ignored Dutch orders to stop work, and even planted a colony of Dutch settlers under Swedish control further upstream. Now there began serious competition for the patronage of the Indians, as the Swedish traders lowered their prices. The Swedish governor, Johann Printz, erected a series of blockhouses up the river at the site of Chester (then Upland) and one across the Delaware from the mouth of the Schuylkill.

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Both sales included Cape Henlopen.

Fernow, N. Y. Col. Hist. Docs., I, 43, XII, 16-17.

Johnson, Swedish Settlements, p. 184.

In 1648 the Dutch Director, Peter Stuyvesant, built a fort facing this, beside the Schuylkill in present day Philadelphia. The Swedes set fire to this twice, but the Dutch held it and in 1651 built the more substantial Fort Casimir down river from New Sweden (the colony surrounding Fort Christina) and so controlled the river. The Swedes took this by trickery and provoked Stuyvesant to retaliation. He raised men and supplies, and appeared before Fort Casimir in September 1655 with seven ships and over six hundred men. The overawed Swedes there surrendered, as did the Swedish Governor at Fort Christina a few days later.⁹

It had taken the Dutch seventeen years to gather the power to seize the Swedish settlements, partly because of Swedish prestige in Europe, but more because of Dutch difficulties in the Hudson valley. The Indian wars there with tribes of the lower valley from 1641 through 1645 were finally settled largely through the influence of the Mohawks, who desired the Dutch trade and dominated the Indians lower down the valley.¹⁰ A treaty was signed establishing

⁹ Fernow, N.Y. Col. Hist. Docs., I, 578, XII, 98-111.
Johnson, Swedish Settlements, pp. 182-221, 405-450.
Ward, New Sweden, pp. 114-29.

¹⁰ Fernow, N.Y. Col. Hist. Docs., XII, 18.

peace on August 9th, 1645. The Dutch inaugurated both the system of land purchases and the use of treaties to ally and pacify Indian tribes.¹¹ For a century after this the Mohawk and other Iroquois were to become increasingly active in acting as brokers for settling disputes, when it was to their advantage.

The Dutch were then delayed by the task of resettling upper Manhattan and Long Island, and establishing a modus vivendi with the expanding English colonies of New England. It was this combination of forces which prevented the Dutch from establishing unchallenged rule in the Delaware country until 1655, and since they lost that in 1664 there was only nine years of Dutch trading monopoly. At the mouth of the Hudson, where the Dutch had a monopoly from 1626 until 1664 there were Indian wars in 1641-45, 1658, and 1663-64. With the exception of the massacre of Zwannendale in 1632 there were no such troubles around the Delaware Bay, largely due to the competition among Europeans and their consequent currying of Indian favor.

¹¹ "Just, Free and True Property.." "owners and Proprietors of their respective parcels of land" "Lawful Owners." 1630.

Fernow, N.Y. Col. Hist. Docs., I, 43, 44, XII, 17. "...in 1618 the United New Netherlands Company made a treaty with the Iroquois Confederation of New York."

MacLeod, Indian Frontier, p. 195, citing Edmund B. O'Callaghan, History of New Netherlands, p. 78. See also Fernow, N.Y. Col. Hist. Docs., XIII, iv-vi., and MacLeod, Indian Frontier, pp. 194-97.

This provides a good example of the difference between the Indian and the European view of their relationship. Before the white man arrived the tribes of the Atlantic states ebbed and flowed as pressure dictated, over a broad field of maneuver. The loose systems of alliance usually had some linguistic, ethnic, and cultural basis, but distinctions were not clear-cut. Allegiances were only a season or two, and then not very binding. Even within one tribe a hard-pressed village might have trouble soliciting aid.¹²

There existed, then, an ever-shifting diplomatic struggle, carried on at council fires by means of messengers and orators offering or refusing the calumet, the hatchet, the black wampum belt and the white, symbols of truce, military alliance, war and peace. When the first small European trading settlements were placed among them, the Indians simply adopted them into their diplomatic world as if they were new tribal powers, with especially desirable weapons. Examples are the famous Huron use of Champlain against the Iroquois,¹³ or the Conestoga use of Dutch and Swedish muskets and cannon in their

¹² Hewitt, "Conestoga," Hodge, Handbook, I, 336.
Hunt, Wars of Iroquois, p. 8.

¹³ Hunt, Wars of Iroquois, p. 20.
Morgan, Iroquois, I, 10, II, 192. This was in 1609.

war with the Onondago.¹⁴ There are similar cases in the early history of New England and Virginia.¹⁵

Opposed to this is the role assigned to the Indian tribes by the Europeans in their competition for fur trade and empire. The Europeans used the Indians to further European ends, as the Indians had used the Europeans, but there was a considerable difference. The Indian tribes received the Europeans into their midst, while the white men distinctly did not let the Indians share in their contests. They might be happy to have the Indians fight for them, occasionally beside them, but never "with" them.¹⁶

The Swedes made use of the Indians in this manner when they safely brought a ship-load of settlers past the guns of the Dutch at Fort Casimir by taking on board some Indians. The Dutch did not dare fire for fear of touching off a war with

¹⁴ Fernow, N.Y. Col. Hist. Docs., XII, 419.
Hunt, Wars of Iroquois, p. 140-41. This was in 1667.

¹⁵ MacLeod, Indian Frontier, pp. 172-92, 209-33.

¹⁶ e.g. "Report made by P. W. van Couwenhoven of Information Respecting intrigues of the English with the Wappings and Esopus Indians." 1664. Fernow, N.Y. Col. Hist. Docs., XIII, 336.

the Delawares, thereby losing their affection and trade to the Swedes.¹⁷ It was because of the same pressure that the Dutch at Albany discouraged the Mohawks from making war on the "Canadian savages" who supplied most of the French fur. If the war was stopped, this fur would come down the Hudson instead.¹⁸

The white men's shifts of orientation and alliance, dictated by events in Europe,¹⁹ seemed as arbitrary and groundless to the Indians as the Indians' alliances seemed ephemeral to the Europeans. Neither understood the other's system, and neither realized the role they were allotted in it.

The colonists of the New England Confederation did not make war upon New Netherlands during the First Anglo-Dutch War (1652-54) because they could not be sure of support from

¹⁷ Fernow, N.Y. Col. Hist. Docs., XII, 125-26. May 1, 1664.

¹⁸ "Letter of the Directors to Petrus Stuyvesant, Governor, 6 June, 1653." Fernow, N.Y. Col. Hist. Docs., XIII, 35.

¹⁹ e.g. At the end of the Third Dutch War (Treaty of Westminster, Feb. 9, 1674) the middle colonies were returned to England, although the Dutch had successfully reoccupied them. At the end of the Revolutionary War the Northwest was awarded to the United States, although the British and Indians had succeeded in undoing Clark's work and driving the Americans east of the Ohio.

England, but in the Second Anglo-Dutch War (1664-1667) the Duke of York, who had been deeded the middle colonies by Charles II, sent Colonel Richard Nicholls with a fleet. Nicholls outgunned and overawed the Dutch as Stuyvesant had the Swedes, and the area passed under English control. For a few months during the Third Anglo-Dutch War (1672-74) the Netherlands regained the settlements, but the peace treaty returned them to England. The Duke of York owned the colonies, but little change occurred in government. The Swedes, who outnumbered the Dutch in the Delaware valley, had more self-government than before.²⁰

From the Indian point of view the final settlement meant several things. First, it ended, at least for the coastal tribes and for the time being, the competition which had made it possible for them to play one side against the other. Second, the English adopted and continued the Dutch practices of buying lands with trade goods, making treaties, and using the Iroquois League, not only to expand fur trade, but to control other tribes. Finally, since it was the English government, and not the Dutch trading company, which won, the victors now attempted to rule the land and its inhabitants, native and white, and not just to do business with them. The situation remained relatively unchanged until the establishment of Pennsylvania in 1681.

²⁰ Fernow, N.Y. Col. Hist. Docs., XII, 457, 463, 506-07, 529, 539.

MAP I

DISTRIBUTION OF INDIAN TRIBES OF THE CENTRAL ATLANTIC AREA IN 1641

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