

HISTORY OF VERPLANCK'S POINT.

Purchased from the Indians August 24, 1683,
for Wampum, Rum, Beer, Knives,
and Trinkets.

SING SING, N. Y., March 7.—About eight miles above this village a pretty point of land juts out into the Hudson River for a mile or so, and is known to all river men and those who reside in the vicinity of the Hudson River as Verplanck's Point.

Its history has been traced a long distance back, and it is known that Stevanus Van Cortlandt, the first American-born Mayor of New-York City, on Aug. 24, 1683, purchased from the Indians this identical point of land. It was then called Meanagh, and the adjacent lands Appamagliopogh, which is more easily looked at than pronounced.

The deed of conveyance to Mr. Van Cortlandt was signed by seven of the native chiefs with their marks. Their names are such unpronounceable collections of letters that no particular information would be derived by giving them, but, nevertheless, they were signed in the following order in the deed: Sieckam, Pewimme, Oskewaus, Turhum, Querawighint, Highres, and Prackytt.

This ancient document was signed in the presence of Francois Rombouts and Guiliam Ver Planck as witnesses. The original instrument, in a handsome frame and covered with glass, is now in the possession of Philip Ver Planck of Yonkers, who takes a pride in showing it to those who are interested in antiquities. Some of the words are now almost illegible on account of the fading of the ink and former frequent handling.

The consideration named in the deed and the schedule annexed is typical of the time before the silver dollar was in vogue. The price was "twelve pounds of wampum, eight guns, nine blancets, five coats, fourteen fathems of duffels, fourteen kettles, forty fathem of black wampum, eighty fathem of white wampum, two ankers of rum, five half vats of strong beer, twelve shirts, fifty pounds of powder, thirty barrs of lead, eighteen hatchets, eighteen saws, fourteen knives, a small coat, six fathem of stoutwater cloth, six pair of stockings, six earthen jugs, and six tobacco boxes."

In explanation, the wampum was the currency of the Indians, and it was strung on threads which, in the vernacular of the time, were called fathems.

Old Mr. Van Cortlandt died in New-York Nov. 25, 1700, leaving eleven children. By his last will and testament, which was proved Jan. 17, 1701, and recorded in the New-York Surrogate's office, he devised to his eldest son, Johannes, in fee, "all that Neck and part of my Land on the east side of Hudson's River at the entering of the high Land over against a certain place called Haverstroo, and is known by the Indians by the name of Meanagh, being to be separated and divided from my other lands on that side of the river called Appamapogh by a certain creek called Meanagh, and bounded on ye other side of the creek that runs between my land and the land of Rick Abrames and others, together with the Meadows that lies on ye sd Neck and other improvements made or to be made on the said land."

Johannes Van Cortlandt married Maria Van Schaick in 1695. As he died intestate, all of his real property, including Meanagh and the equal undivided one-tenth of the other lands in the Van Cortlandt manor, descended to his daughter, Gertrude, his only child.

This daughter married Philip Ver Planck on April 10, 1718. He then lived in Albany, and it was from this Mr. Ver Planck that the "point" under consideration received its present name of Verplanck's Point, being written in one word.

This Philip was the second son of Jacobus Ver Planck and Margaret Schuyler. He was born June 26, 1695, and died Oct. 13, 1771, aged seventy-six years, three months, and fifteen days.

He was an educated man, and possessed considerable influence. He was a farmer and surveyor, and held many public offices. Among the latter was that of Sheriff of Albany County. From 1734 to 1768 he represented the Manor of Van Cortlandt in the Assembly of the Province of New-York, which was a term without parallel in the history of the Province or State of New-York, the nearest approach to it being that of the late James W. Husted, better known as "the Bald Eagle of Westchester," who represented in his, the Third, district, this same Manor of Van Cortlandt for twenty-two years, and his son, of the same name, represents it in the present Assembly.

Mr. Ver Planck was one of the best surveyors in the province. The manor comprised 87,469 acres, taking in the towns of Cortlandt, Yorktown, Somers, North Salem, Lewisborough, and a part of Poundridge. This was divided subsequently among the heirs of Stevanus Van Cortlandt.

Mr. Ver Planck was appointed, April 12, 1746, by George II., one of the Commissioners to confer with the Commissioners from Massachusetts, New-Hampshire, Connecticut, and Rhode Island to take measures "for the annoyance of the enemy and for securing and preserving the Six Nations of Indians and for engaging them to enter with us into the war against the French."

He was subsequently, in 1755, commissioned by Lieut. Gov. James De Lancy the sole agent to view the places proposed to be fortified, and to draw plans of the works necessary to be erected. The places named were Albany, Schenectady, and Kinderhook. Both his sons took part in the French and Indian war. James was a Captain of a militia company from the Manor of Van Cortlandt, and John was Lieutenant. John's commission was signed by George Clinton, Captain General and Commander in Chief of the Province of New-York and Rear Admiral of the Red Squadron of his Majesty's fleet.