

CITY ISLAND

Its History and Growth

By ALFRED FORDHAM

You will recall, from the previous article, that City Island was included in the grant of land made to Lord Pell, by Governor Nicolls, on October 6, 1666.

It was known by the name of "Mulberry Island" and also by the name of "Great Minniford Island".

You will also recall that the land included in that grant of land was to be an "entire enfranchised Townshipp Manor and Place of Itself" under the terms of that grant and the Lord of the Manor, Lord Thomas Pell, was responsible for its government and the keeping of the peace under the "English Law".

It is unfortunate that the original grant to Thomas Pell is not recorded in the office of the Register of Westchester County or any other County office near at hand. This is undoubtedly due to the fact that the system of County records was not established until the year 1685, when a county government was set up, and it is interesting to note that one of the earliest documents recorded is that wherein the appointment of Justices in the County of Westchester is set forth.

That document is dated October 20, 1685 and is recorded in Liber A at page 43, in the office of the Register of Westchester County and is, in part, as follows:

"To our well beloved John Pell, John Palmer, William Richardson, Joseph Horton, Senyor, Joseph Theale, Esqs.; Know Ye that We have assigned you and every one of you, during our pleasure joyntely and severally, Our Justices to keep our Peace in the County of Westchester and to keep and cause to be kept Our Laws and Ordinances for the good of the People—and for the quiet rule and government of our People—"

It is interesting to note that the John Pell mentioned in that appointment is the John Pell in whom we are so interested, as the "Lord of the Manor of the Manor of Pellham"; that John Palmer was the grantee from the Crown of England of lands in the Town of Westchester and was later to be the owner of "City Island" or "Great Minniford Island".

The appointment and commission above set forth came from the King of England, James, the Second, and was issued by Thomas Dongan, Governor of the Province of New York, and by its terms those Justices had both Civil and Criminal Judisdiction throughout the County of Westchester, of which City Island was a part, and also by its terms the Justices might act singly as Magistrates or any three of them were empowered to 'sit' as a "Court of Sessions".

The earliest document recorded in the Office of the Register of Westchester County, effecting the change of ownership of "City Island", is a conveyance (deed) wherein John Pell conveyed "Mulberry Island" or "Great Minniford Island" to John Smite on December 11, 1685, as is recorded in Liber A at page 65, in the Office of The Register of the County of Westchester, and is, in part, as follows:

"John Pell, of Annhookes Neck, to John Smite of the Towne of Brookland in Kings County on Long Island, Yeoman,

All that, his, Island or tract of land, seitate, lying or being within the County of Westchester before the neck of land called Annhookes Neck, aforesaid, commonly called or known by the name of Mulberry Island or Great Miniford Island, lately in the

possession or occupation of William Pate and Robert Godfrey, together with all the houses and barnes, edifices, buildings, gardens and all other conveniences and appurtenances to the said Island belonging _____”.

From the above conveyance it is established that City Island was inhabited at the time of this conveyance by William Pate and Robert Godfrey and probably sometime prior thereto for the conveyance indicates that they were established residents of City Island at that time.

The above conveyance was undoubtedly given as security for a loan in the sum of “100 pounds current moneys of New York” which sum was repaid for the reason that we find a later conveyance of City Island by the same John Pell to Gabriel Mumviel on April 13, 1701, recording in Liber C at page 85 for the sum of “108 pounds current moneys of New York”. This later conveyance was given as security for a loan in that amount for the reason that on May 10, 1713, John Pell conveyed to his son, Thomas Pell, “Mulberry Island or Great Minniford Isand” (City Island) and “Lesser Minniford Island” (High Island), on conditions that he pay to the Estate of Gabriel Mumviel, merchant, the amount of consideration stated in the deed to Gabriel Mumviel. This was apparently paid by Thomas Pell for we find that, later, Thomas Pell, on July 24, 1729 made the following conveyance to his son, Thomas Pell, Junr., as recorded in Liber F at page 235, in the Office of the Register of Westchester County, which is in part as follows:

“Thomas Pell, Senr., of the Mannor of Pellham, inye County of Westchester, Collony of New York, Esq., _____ in consideration of 500 pounds, current lawful money of New York paid by Thomas Pell, Junr., of ye Mannor afforesaid, Yeoman _____ grants _____

(Continued on Page 4)

CITY ISLAND — It's History and Growth

(Continued from Page 2)

“All those lands, meadows & Beaches lying upon & adjoining to a certain Island which is lying, situate and being within ye bounds and limits of the Mannor of Pellham aforesaid & lyeth to the southeastward of yet part of the Mannor of Pelham _____ said Island is commonly called & known by the name Menefors Island or ye Great Isand and also one other small Island which aforesaid & is commonly called & known by ye name of High Island.”

**MATERIALS SUBMITTED
BY JORGE SANTIAGO**