

# CITY ISLAND

## *Its History and Growth*

By ALFRED FORDHAM

I have shown, in prior articles, how history records the "acquisition and possession" of this section of the "New World" and the establishment of "English Rule" over it.

The man who "spearheaded" the recovery of the lands claimed and held by the Dutch was Thomas Pell, gentleman and soldier, who had migrated to the Massachusetts Bay Colony in its earliest days and who later migrated to the Connecticut Colony and helped to establish it and settled in "Onckway", later called "Fairfield", in that Colony.

It was he, who was the first to go into that territory claimed by the Dutch and establish an English settlement in 1655 on land purchased from the Indians and enter into a treaty with them on November 14, 1654.

This was done, it is claimed, at a place now in Pelham Bay Park which is located on Pelham Road opposite the "Golf House" between the Road and the old "Bartow Mansion" and is enclosed by an iron fence which formerly surrounded the "Pell Oak" under whose broad branches the treaty signing and purchase took place.

Thomas Pell was later to be granted this tract of land by the Governor of the Province of New York on November 14, 1666, and it is recorded that Lord Thomas Pell, the First Lord of the Lordship of Pelham, died in late September or early October, 1669, at Fairfield, Connecticut and is buried there.

At the death of Lord Thomas Pell, his nephew, Lord John Pell became the owner of the lands set forth in the grant to his uncle, Lord Thomas Pell, and a subsequent grant of the same lands was made to him by Thomas Dongan, governor of the Province of New York and may be found recorded in Liber A at page 240 in the records in the office of the Register of Westchester County, White Plains, New York, and is as follows:

"Thomas Dongan, Capt. General and Governor in Chief in and over the Province of New York and the territories depending thereon, in America, under his most sacred Majesty, James the Second, by the Grace of God, King of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, Defender of the Faith, etc.,

To all to whom these presents shall come, sendeth Greetings, whereas Richard Nicolls, Esq., late Governor of this Province, by his certain deed, in writing under his name and seale, bearing date the sixth day of October in the eighteenth year of the Reigne of our Late Soveriegne Lord Charles the Second ——— and in the year of Our Lord God, *One Thousand Six Hundred sixty and six*, did give grant, confirm and rattyfy by virtue of the comition and authoryte given unto him by his (then) Royal Highness James, Duke of York, etc., (his now Majesty) upon whom by lawful grant a patent from his majesty, the propriety and Government of that part of the Maine land as well as Long Island and all Islands adjacent, among other things, was settled unto Thomas Pell of Onckway, alias Fairfield, in his Majestyes Collony of Connecticut, Gentlemen,

All that certain tract of land upon the Maine lying and being to the eastward of Westchester boundary to the west with a river called by the Indians "Aqueconouck", commonly known to the English name of "Hutchinsons River", which runneth into the bay lying between "Throgmortons Neck" and "Annehookes (Rodmans) Neck", commonly called "Hutchinsons Bay" bounded on the east by a Brooke called "Clear Tree Brooke" or "Gravelly Brooke", on the south by the sound which lyeth between Long Island and the Maine land, *with all the islands in the Sound not before that time granted*, lying before that tract of land so bounded and northward to run into the woods about eight english miles. The breadth to be the same as it is along the sound—

*And to be entire infranchised Townshipp Manor and Place of itself* ——— but in all cases, things and matters be deemed, reputed, taken and held as an *absolute entire infranchised Townshipp* ———."

The above patent was approved and passed at a council held at Fort James, in New York on October 25, 1687.

I have set forth above those portions which are of importance for us to know in order to get the historical facts setting forth the boundaries and the fact that a separate township and Manor was set up under its terms in this grant as well as in the original grant to Lord Thomas Pell.

The original grant to Lord Thomas Pell is not recorded in the archives of the Registor of Westchester County.

In the next article I shall develop the colonial period and its establishment of government in the township and manor and the growth of City Island as the facts are shown in a study of further historical facts and documents.

I hope and trust that the facts shown so far have been interesting and enlightening and that we begin to realize that City Island is a place with a history that is tied in with many events dating from the early settlement of the New World.

**MATERIALS SUBMITTED  
BY JORGE SANTIAGO**