

Adriaen van der Donck, A Dutch Rebel in 17th Century New Netherland



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The young legal activist Adriaen van der Donck (1618–1655) is an important yet understudied figure in the Dutch colony of New Netherland (now New York), whose fight to secure the struggling colony made him a controversial but pivotal figure in early America. From his war-torn seventeenth-century childhood and privileged university education in the Dutch Republic, he became embroiled in the New World politics of Manhattan as he attempted to make his mark on the fledgling fur trading settlement. Taking the complaints of the colonists against their Dutch West India Company administrators to the highest level of government in the Dutch Republic, he was denounced and detained, but not deterred. His 1655 landmark book, *Description of New Netherland*, stands as a testament to his vision for the country, as the changes he set in motion continued long after his early death. Van der Donck's determination to stand by his convictions offers a revealing look into the human spirit and the strong will that drives it against adversity and in search of justice.

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