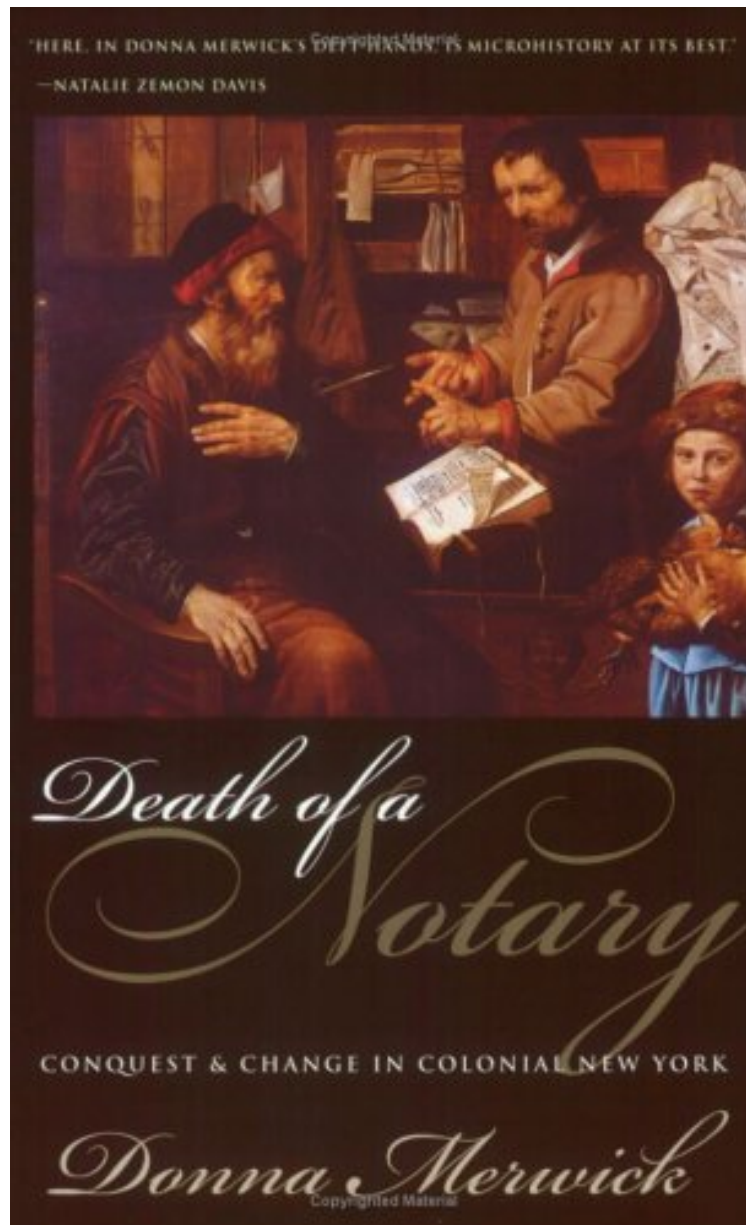


(Read now) Death of a Notary: Conquest and Change in Colonial New York

Death of a Notary: Conquest and Change in Colonial New York

Donna Merwick

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Donna Merwick : Death of a Notary: Conquest and Change in Colonial New York before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Death of a Notary: Conquest and Change in Colonial New York:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Illuminates daily life of the periodBy Long term customerWhile focusing on the life of a relatively obscure individual, this book reveals many details about daily life in the new colony that are not seen elsewhere. Although the subject apparently left no progeny, descendants of early Albany residents will find their ancestors mentioned repeatedly here. The used price is a great value, highly recommended for the family historian.0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy James L.Thanks for an efficient transaction; product as described.3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Tragedy of ConquestBy Nash BlackDonna Merwick's "Death of a Notary" is history/biography of the one person who committed suicide in Albany, NY during the 1600's. Adriaen Janse van Ilpendam was a man who lost his identity as a respected officer of the court when the English conquered the Dutch colony of New York. He was without a country and a language of communications. It was the ending of a writing career, hence an ending of life. New rules prevailed in the courts. "The humiliation of Janse and others as they experienced the loss of language competence and cultural fluency under English rule was real." p. 185. The first fatalities of any military conquest are the private citizens whose lives are destroyed.My early American ancestors were settlers of the original New York colony under their feudal land development system. We have always been grateful for the exact records kept by the notaries that were so important to the members of the new colony; a part of the culture of their homeland which they brought to the new world. Yet one must admire the new government, which allowed those records to survive. The English couldn't read them, but they respected the evidence of the rule of law and the stability it engenders.Ms. Merwick's work is scholarly, yet readable. It opens a window to the everyday lives of our ancestors. The bibliography is extensive and detailed. She steers clear of revisionist history with her careful historical searches among the fodder for the nuisances of truth that paint a clearer picture of our past for our descendants.Nash Black, author of "Qualifying Laps" and "Sins of the Fathers."

"He was the only one. He was the only man to have committed suicide in the town's seventeenth-century history." So begins Donna Merwick's fascinating tale of a Dutch notary who ended his life in his adopted community of Albany. In a major feat of historical reconstruction, she introduces us to Adriaen Janse van Ilpendam and the long-forgotten world he inhabited in Holland's North American colony. Her powerful narrative will make readers care for this quiet and studious man, an "ordinary" settler for whom the clash of empires brought tragedy.Like so many of his fellow countrymen, Janse left his Dutch homeland as a young adult to try his luck in New Netherland. After spending a few years on Manhattan Island, he moved on to the fur trading settlement today known as Albany. Merwick traces his journey to a new continent and re-creates the satisfying existence this respected burgher enjoyed with his wife in the bustling town. As a notary Janse was, in the author's words, "surrounded by stories, those he listened to and recorded, the hundreds he archived in a chest or trunk." His familiar life was turned upside down by the British conquest of the colony. Merwick recounts the changes brought about by the new rulers and imagines the despair Janse must have felt when English, a language he had never learned, replaced his native tongue in official transactions. In any military adventure, truth is alleged to be the first casualty. Merwick offers a poignant reminder that the first casualties are in fact people. As much a musing on what history obscures as what it reveals, her book is a superior work by a master practitioner of her craft.

"This outstanding contribution to Colonial social history is highly recommended for all undergraduate and graduate history collections."Choice"A thoughtful examination of the roles played by writers and researchers, ruminating on the pawns that such average citizens can become both of history and of historians."Library Journal Academic Newsletter"Merwick presents a complex and fascinating account of van Ilpendam's career and daily life in late 17th-century Albany. . . A major work of scholarship."AB Bookman's Weekly"A gem of a book. . . The author describes Janse's notarial career as a matter of 'hindsight work. And the metaphor applies to her own efforts as well . . . as Death of a Notary is a strikingly successful example of . . . microhistory. Merwick is, at the same time, an expert storyteller, one who can piece together her admittedly fragmentary evidence in compelling, sometimes surprising ways."John Demos, Washington Times"Ms. Merwick's careful, moving reconstruction of Janse's life and death shows what happens when a person who lives by words finds those he knows no longer suffice."The Chronicle of Higher Education"Not only will specialists find the book useful in the debate over Dutch-English influence in New York, but it is a good beginning for the general reader seeking to understand the state. Above all, however, Death of a Notary is a rare commodity for a history book a good story told well."Don Roper, History: s of New Books"This is a beautiful book. Donna Merwick has written an intimate history of a sort of man few American historians have encountered, since almost none of us reads Dutch or has bothered to care about the Dutch in the New World. But mainly this is the work of an artist-historian, lovingly crafted to bring an obscure person (and profession) to life. What a triumph of historical sensibility!"Stanley N. Katz, Princeton University"Adriaen Janse van Ilpendam, notary of Albany, committed suicide in 1686, several years after the English had taken over New Netherland from the Dutch. In this fascinating book, Donna Merwick brings him to life again, and through him, the busy and sometimes troubled world of the Dutch settlers on their own and under conquest. In Merwick's vivid prose, every letter and notarized act is made to speak anew, carrying us across the ocean to Janse's childhood in Leiden through his years as schoolteacher and then

notary in New Netherland. His melancholy end gives new insight into old age in a changing colonial society. Here, in Donna Merwick's deft hands, is microhistory as its best." Natalie Zemon Davis, author of *The Return of Martin Guerre*"Death of a Notary compellingly evokes the vanished Atlantic world the seventeenth century Dutch inhabited. Through Donna Merwick's amazing reconstruction of the life of a humble man, notary Adriaen Janse van Ipendam, we understand his Dutch sense of place, both in the physical landscape and in his context of books, reports, and carefully crafted legal documents. Merwick allows us to comprehend the magnitude of change felt in all the minute details of daily life when conquered New Netherland became New York. All the certainties became uncertain as English practice replaced Dutch, and ordinary men and women found in countless daily ways that their assumptions and arrangements were now worthless. . . . The English and their historians reduced Dutch concerns to caricature and the caricature is repeated still. Donna Merwick's *Death of a Notary* makes such repetition impossible."Karen Ordahl Kupperman, New York University