



... while much of New York State is still wilderness.

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How America's Lands Were Robbed and Ravaged

As soon it became apparent that the wilderness in the New World could be tamed, that Native Americans were usually friendly and cooperative with white settlers, and that great potential wealth could be garnered from the North American continent, aristocratic buccaneers and "respectable" men of wealth came pouring in from all corners of Europe — from Spain, Holland, Sweden, France, and especially from England.

With royal grants in hand they took over vast sections of the rich valleys and plains of the eastern seaboard. Names familiar to every schoolchild are included in this list. William Penn, besides seeking religious freedom for his Quaker band in the wilds of Pennsylvania, also acquired an enormous private estate, the greatest on the continent, for himself and his heirs; George Washington, along with other officers received 200,000 acres, and did so well with this and other investments he became the richest man in America soon after the Revolution; John Jacob Astor, with Aaron Burr acting as his attorney, fraudulently seized some 40,000 acres in the state of New York.

Hundreds more, using bribery, chicanery and the connivance of corrupt officials grabbed a great deal more than had originally been granted by royal decree.

As a result, most of the earlier settlers who had fled from European poverty were pushed into the rocky hills and sub-marginal areas, where farming was much more difficult. Those who stayed behind paid high rents to their new landlords and taxes to the Crown.