

In 1659, about sixty people were settled there, having "nine hundred and ninety *schepels*¹ of grain in the ground," and employing a layman "at their own expense" to read to them, when assembled on Sundays for religious services, the liturgy of the Reformed Protestant Church and selected sermons.

In the summer of that year, having decided to become a settler at Esopus, Roeloff Swartwout determined to make a voyage to Holland in order to provide himself with needed agricultural implements and to secure the service of several young and robust farmers. Requiring money adequate for his outlays, he sold, on August 15, 1659, "a garden lying in the village of Beverswijck," previously the property of Antoine de Hooges; and on the following day he mortgaged his dwelling, and the lot on which it was standing, for "the sum of one hundred and forty-seven guilders in good whole merchantable beaver skins," which debt he promised to pay on July 1, 1660.²

While at Amsterdam he was frequently questioned by the different lords-directors of the West-India Company regarding affairs in New Netherland, and particularly concerning the prospects of the colonists settled at Esopus. Learning that it was the intention of the company to establish a local court there, he solicited the lords-directors to appoint him *schout* of the settlement. Perceiving that he was in many ways highly qualified to discharge the duties of the office, and finding that his relatives and friends in the city eagerly vied with one another in bearing personal testimony to his fitness, they, on the day of his sailing to New Netherland, made known to him the following appointment:

"The directors of the Incorporated West-India Company, department of Amsterdam, being especially directed and authorized to manage the affairs of New Netherland, make known, that whereas it is necessary for the promotion of justice in the village of Esopus that a suitable person perform the duties of a provisional sheriff, for which one Roeloff Swartwout has been proposed to us, who has been in that country a long time, therefore placing confidence in the capability, piety, and fitness of the said Roeloff Swartwout, we have provisionally appointed and commissioned him sheriff in the aforesaid village, on the Esopus, giving him full power, order, and authority to occupy this position in the said place, and in that district, to attend to and perform the duties according to the usages of the sheriffs here in this country, and the instructions given him or which may in future be given him, to bring to trial all who obstruct and break political, civil, and criminal laws, ordinances and edicts, and sue all delinquents in the said village and its jurisdiction according to his aforesaid

¹ *Schepel*, a bushel.

² Albany County records. Munsell's collections on the history of Albany, vol. iv., pp. 271, 273, 274.