

before the occupation by the Dutch of that part of the territory of New France, is mentioned in a letter written in Amsterdam, Holland, on April 22, 1659, by the Commissioners of the Delaware Colony to Vice-Director Jacob Alrichs, who speak of Claes de Ruyter, an early colonist, as having dwelt there with the Indians.

“We have indirectly heard that there is a great probability of minerals being discovered in New Netherland, and even some copper ore, which has come from there, has also been shown to us. In order, then, to inquire further about it, we have examined Claes de Ruyter, an old and experienced inhabitant of that country, from whom we have learned thus much, that the reported copper mine does not lie on the South River, but that a crystal mountain was situated between that colony and the Mannhattans, whereof he himself had brought divers pieces and specimens; furthermore, that the acknowledged gold mine was apparently there, for he, having kept house some time with the Indians living high up the river [the Delaware], and about Bachom’s Land, had understood from them that quicksilver was to be found there. Of the truth of this matter we can say nothing, but this is generally believed for a certainty, that minerals are to be had there. You are therefore hereby recommended to inquire into the matter there, and, if possible, to employ for that purpose the aforesaid de Ruyter, who is returning to New Netherland, in order that you may be able to ascertain the truth of the report. In such case, you are not to neglect sending us specimens, both of the ore and the other, to be tested here, which we shall then, at the proper time, anxiously expect.”¹

The diversion of the “peltry trade” from Kingston and Albany by the Jersey frontiersmen cultivating farms along the west and north branches of the Delaware River was regarded by Governor Thomas Dongan as highly detrimental to the interests of the fur-merchants having stores in the two places. In a report to the committee of the Lords of Trade, dated February 22, 1687, he advised the construction of a fort near the confluence of the Delaware and Neversink (Maghaghkemeck) rivers, designated on “a chorographical map of the province of New York,” made in 1779,² as the site of the fort of the Jersey colony, at “Mohockamack Fork,” where the agents of the New York fur-traders might more successfully compete with those of East Jersey for the beaver and other skins possessed by the Indians hunting and trapping along the western frontiers of Orange and Ulster counties.³

¹ Holland Documents, vol. xvi., p. 80. New York colonial manuscripts, vol. ii., p. 63.

² A chorographical map of the province of New York, compiled from actual surveys deposited in the patent office at New York, by order of his Excellency Major-General William Tryon, by Claude Joseph Sauthier, Esqr. London, January 1, 1779.

³ Documents relating to the colonial history of the state of New York, vol. iii., p. 575. Documentary history of the state of New York. 8vo ed., vol. ii., p. 155.