

# ROELIFF JANSEN - *Upstate*

**R**oeliff Jansen (1602-1637) is an almost legendary figure for whom the **Roeliff Jansen Kill** (River) is named. In fact, five towns along or near the river are considered part of what's has long been known as the **Roe Jan Region**. Many organizations, including this Historical Society, parks, institutions, businesses also have his name. But who was he?

According to a number of histories, Roeliff Jansen was actually Scandinavian, rather than

Dutch as had been thought.

In 1602, Jansen emigrated with his wife, Anneke Jans, whom he had married in Amsterdam.

They arrived in

New Netherlands on May 24, 1630, by way of a great ship called the "Eeendracht." Jansen's purpose in sailing to the New World was to work on the Rensselaerswyck Manor (near what is now Albany), the colonial estate of Dutch patroonship, managed long distance from Holland by Killaen van Rensselaer, one of the original directors of the Dutch West India Company - the company that had earlier employed the famous adventurer and sailor, Henry Hudson.

Ultimately, in 1632, Roeliff was awarded the title *schepen*, a law enforcement officer responsible to the patroon. The job required surveillance of the river fronts along New Amsterdam. The story is told that one winter night, while returning to Albany in Jansen's small boat, became trapped in the ice. Miraculously, Roeliff and his party were able to walk ashore where they met a group of Natives camping at the mouth of a river, then called the *Sank-he-nak*. A major tributary of the Hudson, the river also served as traditional boundary between the Native American *Mahican* and the *Wappinger* tribes. It seems that Jansen's party decided the river needed

a more European name. Ultimately, it was called the **Roeliff Jansen Kill** (River), after their senior official. The river's new name is known to have been in common use by 1680.

The source of the Roeliff Jansen Kill is in the town of Austerlitz, New York, and its mouth at the Hudson River at *Linlithgo* in the town of Livingston. The river is 56.2 miles long, and most of the watershed is located in Columbia County. The river flows near or through Gallatin, Taghkanic, Ancram, Copake and Hillsdale - hence, the five towns of what has long been known as the Roe Jan Region.

In 1636, Roeliff Jansen and his wife, Anneke Jans, returned to New Amsterdam on the Island of Manhattan, where he was employed by the Dutch West India Company. The company gave him rights to 62 acres in lower Manhattan along the shores of the Hudson River. Roeliff Jansen died the following year.

Jansen's widow then married Rev. Everardus Bogardus, a leader of the Dutch Reformed Church, and their properties were combined. Widowed again in 1647, the seemingly unproductive 62 acres were sold by Anneke and her children to New York's English Governor, Francis Lovelace. In payment of debt, Lovelace gave it to the Duke of York, who, in turn, gifted it to the Parish of Trinity Church. Later, Anneke's desendents, seeing how much the value of the land had grown, challenged the original sale's legitimacy. The subsequent litigation lasted 150 years - the longest lawsuit in New York real estate history.

The family ultimately lost the case, but in 1795 a segment of the original 62 acre lot became the first land purchased by New York City specifically for use as a public park.



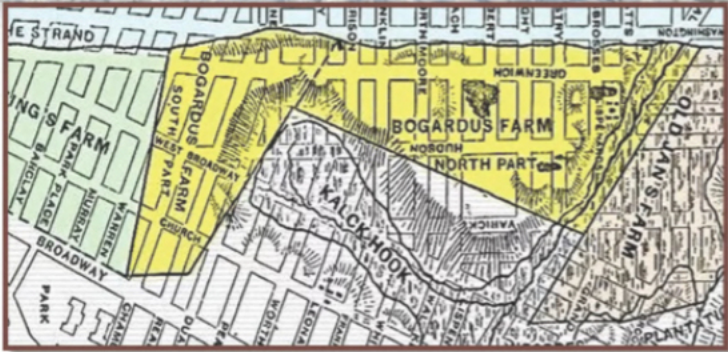
Rensselaerswyck near Albany



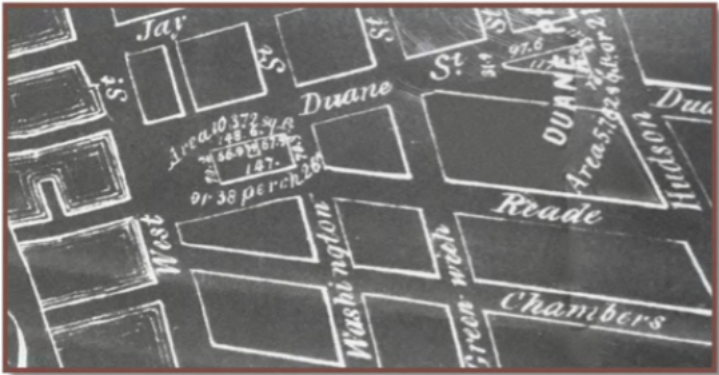
New Amsterdam in 1673



# ROELIFF JANSEN - Downstate



JANSEN/BOGARDUS FARM IN LOWER MANHATTAN



DUANE STREET PARK 1838

**D**uane Park, at Hudson and Duane Streets in Manhattan, was the first public space acquired by the City specifically for use as a public park. It was purchased by the City of New York in 1795 from Trinity Church for five dollars. This park, and the adjacent street, take the name of **James Duane** (1733-1797), New York's first mayor after the Revolutionary War. Duane was also an important parishioner of Trinity Church.

Originally an open commons, the park was later enclosed by an iron fence. Around 1887 many buildings sprouted up in the area, and as part of a citywide effort to improve public access to enclosed parklands, the park was redesigned by landscape architect **Calvert Vaux**. Along with **Frederick Law Olmsted**, Vaux had created The Central Park in in Manhattan, and Prospect Park in Brooklyn.

In 1999, a plan by landscape architect **Signe Nielsen**, sponsored by the Friends of Duane Park, replaced much of the paved area with plantings to evoke the 1887 design. Large bronze plaques detailing the park's history were also installed. Almost incredibly, one of them reads:

*The park is the last remnant of the greensward of the Annetje Jans farm, granted in 1636 by Governor Wouter Van Twiller to Roeloff and Annetje Jans. After the death of Roeloff Jans, his widow married the Reverend Everardus Bogardus, second minister of the Dutch Church of New Amsterdam, and the farm became known as the Dominie's Bouwery (Minister's Farm).*



DUANE ST. PARK MARKER

During the 1840s, Greek Revival buildings were torn down and Italianate cast-iron buildings began to be built. Not far from Duane Park, the first of the city's many cast-iron buildings, designed by James Bogardus, was erected in 1848. **James Bogardus**, credited with innovating and popularizing cast-iron architecture (structures with cast-iron facades) was a direct descendent of the Reverend Everardus Bogardus.



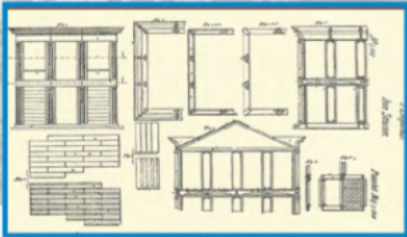
Anneke Jansen Bogardus 1605 -1663)  
Roeliff Jansen's widow



Rev. Everardus Bogardus 1607 - 1647  
Annik's second husband



Inventor and entrepreneur  
James Bogardus (1800 - 1874)



19th Century Plans and cast-iron architecture by  
the descendent of Annike Bogardus, James Bogardus