Description Of The New Netherlands
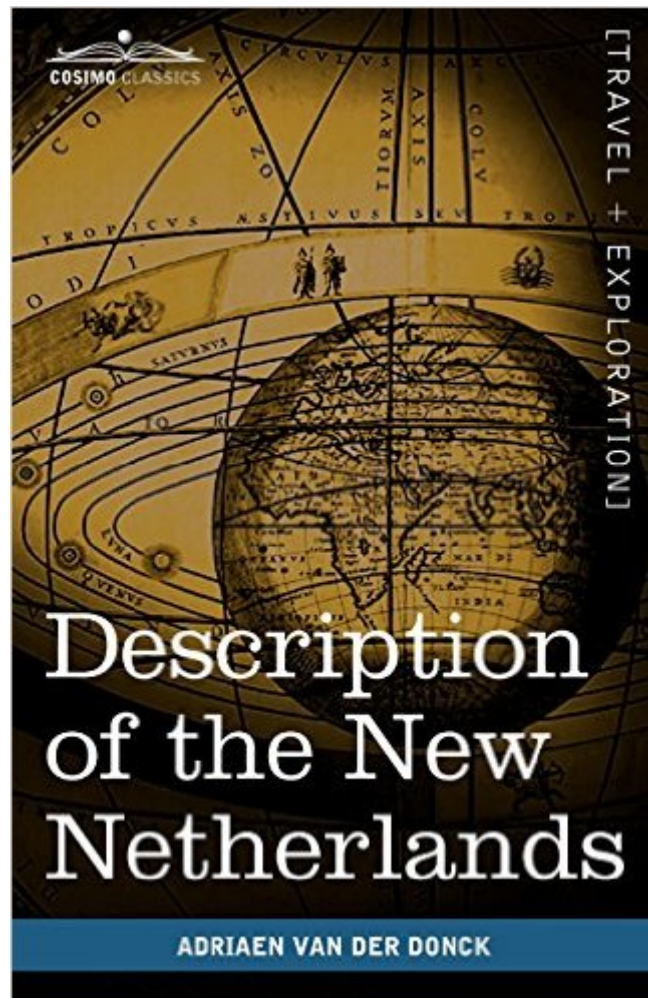
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Description of the New Netherlands

ADRIAEN VAN DER DONCK

Synopsis

Description of the New Netherlands was written in 1653 by Adriaen van der Donck, just two years before his death. After living for years in a Dutch Settlement near what today is Albany, New York, van der Donck wrote the description of the land, peoples, vegetation, animals, and beauty of his new home. Included in his description are observations on animals such as the beaver, and on the customs and languages of the Native Americans in the area, particularly the Mohawk and Mahican tribes. Van der Donck's authority on Native Americans was unprecedented at the time, and his descriptions of their lifestyle is one of the most detailed accounts of Indian laws and customs from the 17th century. Adriaen van der Donck (1618-1655) was born in Breda in the Netherlands, but became a settler in "the New World" in 1641. He graduated as a law student from the University of Leiden, and was the first lawyer to settle in New Netherlands. While there, he became a landowner and adept scholar in the ways of the local Native Americans, befriending them, eating with them, and learning their languages. He helped to negotiate deals between colonies and the natives, but a disagreement with governor Peter Stuyvesant in 1949 concerning settler's rights sent him back to the Netherlands with a petition to encourage economic freedom. Van der Donck returned to the colony before his death in 1655, where his nickname "Jonkheer" inspired the name for Yonkers, New York.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This is based on an 1841 translation that was abysmal. It's an important document, so you had to put up with the garbled text when this was the only English version available, but in 2008 a new

translation was published. Go for that one. A Description of New Netherland (The Iroquoians and Their World)

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