**Virginia, 1640–1649 — “War news on the tide; routines on the river”**

**The world as they hear it (from English and Irish mouths)**

* **England collapses into civil war (1642–1651). By decade’s end, news reaches the Chesapeake that Charles I has been executed (Jan 1649) and a Commonwealth rules in his place; Virginia—Anglican, planter-led—leans Royalist and will proclaim Charles II when the word gets across the ocean. Expect tavern arguments and toasts, not mass musters. (**[**Encyclopedia Britannica**](https://www.britannica.com/event/English-Civil-Wars?utm_source=chatgpt.com)**)**
* **At home in Virginia: Sir William Berkeley becomes governor (1642), a courtly Anglican who steadies planters and parishes; the colony stays Royalist in tone throughout the 1640s. (**[**The Library of Congress**](https://www.loc.gov/collections/thomas-jefferson-papers/articles-and-essays/virginia-records-timeline-1553-to-1743/1640-to-1699/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)**)**

**What’s on the ground (and how many)**

* **Colonists: early-1640s low thousands, thickest along the James; by late-1640s, several thousand more—still a string of river hamlets, not a hinterland society.**
* **Powhatan world: still many thousands across 30+ polities—*bigger* than the English presence.**
* **Africans: arrivals are small in count but now continuous; bondage is routine on riverside plantations.**

**The decade as they lived it (tight, with the sizes)**

* **1642: Berkeley in; county (shire) routines take firmer hold—vestry taxes, militia musters, ferry licenses.**
* **April 18, 1644: Opechancanough launches a new coordinated strike (the Third Anglo-Powhatan War). ≈400–500 colonists are killed, a smaller fraction of the now-larger English population than in 1622; the fighting runs until 1646, when Opechancanough is captured and killed. (**[**Encyclopedia Virginia**](https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/opechancanough-d-1646/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)**)**
* **1646–1649: Back to guarded normal—tobacco exports resume, courts hum, patrols continue. On court days you can still name half the men in the room.**

**What it feels like to *your* people**

* **Harris & Hoare (Adria/Audrey) at Neck of Land/Curles (Henrico/Charles City). Court minutes and Burgesses turns put them in the middling-planter/magistrate groove: fencing disputes, debts, ferry traffic—neighbors by boat-name.**
* **Grace (Neale/O’Neill) Waters, now wife of Col. Obedience Robins (Eastern Shore). An Irish-born woman in a Royalist-leaning shore society; Berkeley’s rule fits her husband’s world—vestry, militia, county court—even as war news from England filters through merchant captains.**
* **Robins (burgess/councillor). A fixture of Accomack/Northampton through the 1640s: the county-founder archetype, steadying routines amid distant upheaval.**

**Crowd-size snapshot, c. 1646–1649: English = several thousands (a narrow river people); Powhatan towns = many thousands; African labor = small numbers rising. The colony sounds like parish bells, hogsheads rolling, sentinel calls at dusk.**

**New Netherland, 1640–1649 — “Markets in many tongues; a war at the water’s edge”**

**The world as they hear it (from Dutch sailors, Walloon kin, a Norwegian carpenter)**

* **Europe’s long wars end: in 1648, the Peace of Westphalia ends the Thirty Years’ War *and* Spain recognizes the Dutch Republic’s independence—great news for Dutch merchants and shipwrights in the Atlantic. A carpenter like Dirck Volckertszen hears it first from a quarterdeck mouth: *peace means more cargoes*. (**[**Lumen Learning**](https://courses.lumenlearning.com/atd-herkimer-westerncivilization/chapter/the-peace-of-westphalia-and-sovereignty/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)**)**
* **England’s Civil Wars are gossip on the wharf; New Englanders back Parliament, but here the concern is: will English privateers or Swedes (downriver since 1638) upset trade? (The Swedish piece explodes next decade.)**

**What’s on the ground (and how many)**

* **New Amsterdam (Manhattan): still small—hundreds early in the decade, on a path to ~1,500 by 1655 and ~2,500 by 1664. Streets you can walk in minutes; a fort, warehouses, a mill, a modest church, and a babel of tongues. (**[**Wikipedia**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Amsterdam?utm_source=chatgpt.com)**)**
* **Upriver: Fort Orange is a counter with a few dozen Dutch men at most; the Mahican and Mohawk traffic there is hundreds in season.**
* **Indigenous neighbors (Lenape/Munsee, Wappinger, Hackensack/Tappan): thousands across dozens of villages—the everyday crowd of the estuary.**

**The decade as they lived it (tight, with the sizes)**

* **Early 1640s: Trade hums; Company farms push north of the fort; private plots notch the East River rim, including the marshy lane called Smit’s Vly (Smith’s Valley).**
* **Feb 25, 1643 — Night of blood. Under Director Willem Kieft, Dutch forces and auxiliaries massacre Munsee families at Corlears Hook and Pavonia, triggering Kieft’s War (1643–1645). Dutch sources reckon ~80–120 killed that night; total Indigenous deaths across the war are often summarized around ~1,600. A witness, David de Vries, wrote of hearing the screams from his hearth in the fort. (**[**Gotham NYC History**](https://www.gothamcenter.org/blog/dutch-american-stories-mass-murder-on-manhattan?utm_source=chatgpt.com)**)**
* **1643–1645: Two years of reprisals and siege-like fear; outlying farms abandoned; tiny garrisons hold palisades; trade constricts.**
* **1645: Peace; Peter Stuyvesant arrives 1647 to restore order. By decade’s end, New Amsterdam is back to fences, deeds, fines—and boats thick on the tide.**

**What it feels like to *your* people**

* **Dirck Volckertszen (“de Noorman”) & Christina (Vigne) at Smit’s Vly + Noorman’s Kill (Bushwick). He is exactly the person the decade turns inside-out: a ship’s carpenter/commuting farmer. Before 1643, he rows across the East River to work his Long Island acres; during Kieft’s War he keeps a weapon by the door and sleeps inside the palisade when rumor runs. After 1645, he’s back to hulls, fences, and ferrying produce.**
* **Volkert Dircks (their son) is baptized 1643—a child literally born into the war years; he spends the later 1640s between the Smit’s Vly lanes and the Bushwick flats.**
* **The lane itself: Smit’s Vly is a mud-edged market—horses shod, grain bargained, gossip in Dutch, French, English, and Munsee—a place small enough that everyone knows your surname.**
* **African neighbors: By mid-century the mixed community includes enslaved and half-free Africans; the “Land of the Blacks” just outside the core forms in the 1640s, a militia-front buffer whose produce and labor your family knows firsthand. (This grows into the 1650s.)**

**The “crowd size” that anchors your essay**

* **New Amsterdam, mid-1640s: still hundreds of Europeans, not thousands; Indigenous people remain the majority in the harbor’s day-to-day human landscape.**
* **By 1649: colony-wide, non-Native headcount is climbing toward the ~4,301 counted for 1650 (NY–NJ–DE region), a reminder that even “growth” here still means small towns and short lists of surnames. (**[**Wikipedia**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Netherland?utm_source=chatgpt.com)**)**

**Where the two theaters rhyme (for your decade-by-decade essay)**

* **Both are tiny European nodes inside large Native geographies.**
* **Both fight mid-decade wars (1643–45 in the Hudson, 1644–46 in Virginia).**
* **Both hear European war news on ships’ decks (Westphalia 1648; England’s Civil Wars and 1649 regicide). But the local sound remains oars in creeks, hogsheads thumping, palisade gates.**

**Handy citations for footnotes**

* **Peace of Westphalia (1648)—ends Thirty Years’ War; Spain recognizes the Dutch Republic. (**[**Lumen Learning**](https://courses.lumenlearning.com/atd-herkimer-westerncivilization/chapter/the-peace-of-westphalia-and-sovereignty/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)**)**
* **English Civil Wars & Virginia’s stance—Royalist lean, 1649 regicide news and colonial reactions. (**[**Encyclopedia Britannica**](https://www.britannica.com/event/English-Civil-Wars?utm_source=chatgpt.com)**)**
* **Opechancanough’s 1644 assault & scale—~400–500 colonists killed; smaller fraction than 1622. (**[**Encyclopedia Virginia**](https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/opechancanough-d-1646/?utm_source=chatgpt.com)**)**
* **Kieft’s War & the 1643 massacres—Corlears Hook/Pavonia, ~80–120 killed that night; war 1643–45. (**[**Gotham NYC History**](https://www.gothamcenter.org/blog/dutch-american-stories-mass-murder-on-manhattan?utm_source=chatgpt.com)**)**
* **New Amsterdam crowd sizes—mid-century ~1,500 (1655), ~2,500 (1664); never majority “Dutch” by origin. (**[**Wikipedia**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Amsterdam?utm_source=chatgpt.com)**)**
* **Colony totals (non-Native)—New Netherland ~4,301 by 1650. (**[**Wikipedia**](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/New_Netherland?utm_source=chatgpt.com)**)**