



# **The Women of the House: How a Colonial She-Merchant Built a Mansion, a Fortune, and a Dynasty**

*Jean Zimmerman*

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The remarkable Margaret Hardenbroeck Philipse arrived in New Amsterdam from Holland in 1659, a brash and ambitious twenty-two-year-old bent on making her way in the New World. She promptly built an empire of trading ships, furs, and real estate that included all of Westchester County. The Dutch called such women "she-merchants," and Margaret became the wealthiest in the colony, while raising five children and keeping a spotless linen closet.

Zimmerman deftly traces the astonishing rise of Margaret and the Philipse women who followed her, who would transform Margaret's storehouse on the banks of the Hudson into a veritable mansion, Philipse Manor Hall. The last Philipse to live there, Mary Philipse Morris—the It-girl of mid-1700s New York—was even courted by George Washington. But privilege couldn't shelter the family from the Revolution, which raged on Mary's doorstep.

Mining extensive primary sources, Zimmerman brings us into the parlors, bedrooms, countinghouses, and parties of early colonial America and vividly restores a forgotten group of women to life.



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