



# Picturing New York

*Gloria Deak*

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## **Picturing New York** Gloria Deak

As every reader knows, New York defies any single attempt to take its measure. Here is a unique approach: a single-volume, thematically organized history of the city filled with prints, paintings, and photographs?many in full color?that make the book a feast for the eye.

The book consists of fourteen mini-histories, each of which can be read independently of the others. The author explores the city's multiple birth (it was named and renamed five times, and was originally known as Angoulême, not as New Amsterdam as most people believe). Deak covers the religious pluralism the city enjoyed as a scruffy Atlantic trading post, the marketing and merchandising that propelled its development, and the rise of the arts, literature, architecture, and sports. Throughout, the author attempts to answer the beguiling question: Was New York unique from the beginning?

Readers will find:

- The map recording the visit of the explorer Giovanni da Verrazzano to Manhattan Island, circa 1540
- The print depicting the defensive barricade, built in 1653 by Dutch governor Peter Stuyvesant, which gave Wall Street its name
- Artists' renditions of a bucolic nineteenth-century Brooklyn?before bridges transformed it into an extension of the Manhattan megalopolis
- An 1892 planning sketch of the Grand Concourse, the Bronx's principal boulevard, intended to simulate the grandeur of Parisian roadways and ultimately to outclass Manhattan.

Comments from observers as diverse as Alexis de Tocqueville, Frances Trollope, Fanny Kemble, Charles Dickens, Sarah Bernhardt, Leon Trotsky, Fernand Leger, and W. H. Auden create an immediate sense of time and place and animate an already lively work.

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