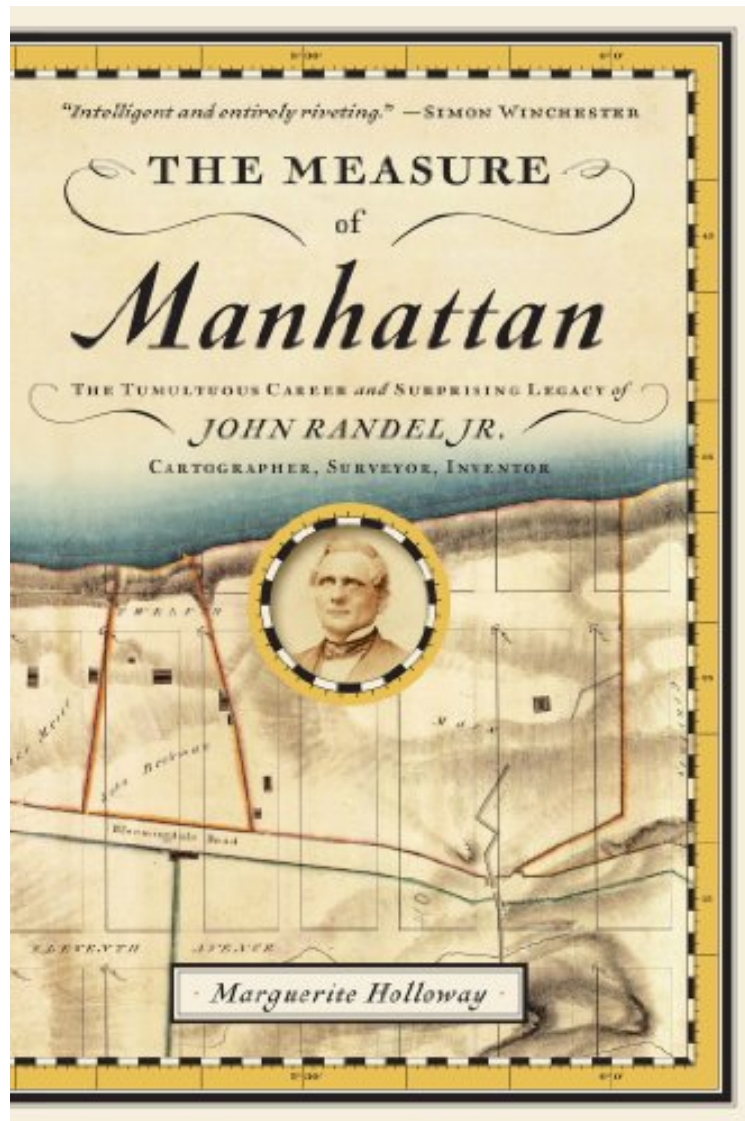


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The Measure of Manhattan: The Tumultuous Career and Surprising Legacy of John Randel, Jr., Cartographer, Surveyor, Inventor

Marguerite Holloway

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Marguerite Holloway : The Measure of Manhattan: The Tumultuous Career and Surprising Legacy of John Randel, Jr., Cartographer, Surveyor, Inventor before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised *The Measure of Manhattan: The Tumultuous Career and Surprising Legacy of John Randel, Jr., Cartographer, Surveyor, Inventor*:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Early Manhattan, Wonderfully Explored By mahagonythor From a hilly tree-filled forest to the most amazing city on the globe, this lovingly written book takes us on a very detailed journey through the evolution of Manhattan. The star of the book is the brilliant and eccentric cartographer and surveyor John Randel Jr. who plotted Manhattan's well-known grid. Holloway details Randel's amazing life story and in doing so, reveals the engrossing history of Manhattan's transformation from an island filled with hills, enormous rocks, and densely forested areas to highly functional and precisely grided urban metropolis. The writing is both scholarly and inviting, yielding a book rich in information and data, and with the feel of a great adventure unfolding with each page. This is history with a heart. A wonderful read, well recommended.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A Different Side of History By DFBrown This was recommended by a friend and gave me a different view of how New York City was laid out on the grid. It personalizes the actual process of the grid being measured and the hardships that were involved. The later part of the book deals more with John Randel's life and works in Delaware and Maryland. His participation on the CD Canal was my primary reason for reading this novel. I would definitely recommend this to anyone who is interested in the history of Delaware or who is interested in the surveying and layout of New York.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Interesting book By Customer I like books about old technology and this book is very interesting about surveying in general as well as surveying old Manhattan.

"Randel is endlessly fascinating, and Holloway's biography tells his life with great skill." — Steve Weinberg, USA Today

John Randel Jr. (1787–1865) was an eccentric and flamboyant surveyor. Renowned for his inventiveness as well as for his bombast and irascibility, Randel was central to Manhattan's development but died in financial ruin. Telling Randel's engrossing and dramatic life story for the first time, this eye-opening biography introduces an unheralded pioneer of American engineering and mapmaking. Charged with "gridding" what was then an undeveloped, hilly island, Randel recorded the contours of Manhattan down to the rocks on its shores. He was obsessed with accuracy and steeped in the values of the Enlightenment, in which math and science promised dominion over nature. The result was a series of maps, astonishing in their detail and precision, which undergird our knowledge about the island today. During his varied career Randel created surveying devices, designed an early elevated subway, and proposed a controversial alternative route for the Erie Canal — winning him admirers and enemies.

The Measure of Manhattan is more than just the life of an unrecognized engineer. It is about the ways in which surveying and cartography changed the ground beneath our feet. Bringing Randel's story into the present, Holloway travels with contemporary surveyors and scientists trying to envision Manhattan as a wild island once again. Illustrated with dozens of historical images and antique maps, The Measure of Manhattan is an absorbing story of a fascinating man that captures the era when Manhattan — indeed, the entire country — still seemed new, the moment before canals and railroads helped draw a grid across the American landscape.