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The New Netherland Institute, an organization that promotes awareness of the Dutch history of colonial America, produced this exhibition to celebrate the quadricentennial of Henry Hudson's exploration under the direction of Charles W. Wendell, PhD President/ Chair of the Board of Trustees; Jippe Hiemstra, Chair 2009 Committee; Project Coordinator, James F. Sefcik; Exhibit Curator, Robert E. Mulligan. Historical paintings reproduced in the exhibit were provided through the courtesy of Len Tantillo.

Light on New Netherland



**An exhibit highlighting the
presence of the
Dutch in colonial America**

New Netherland — the Dutch province that stretched from today's New York State to parts of Delaware, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut — existed for 55 years and its legacy lives on. Just two years after the founding of the first permanent English colony at Jamestown in 1607, and eleven years before the Pilgrims landed at Plymouth Rock, the Dutch were in New Netherland. And, although their hold on that part of North America was tenuous and brief, the influence of the Dutch was both impressive and long term.

The New Netherland Institute (NNI) invites you to join NNI and to learn more about the Dutch presence in early America in this exhibit.

Light on New Netherland consists of 14 two sided panels arranged in 7 units that trace the history of the Dutch in New Netherland beginning with Henry Hudson's exploration in 1609. These units cover:

Patria — the era from 1598 to 1648 was the golden age of *Patria*; a time of greatly increased wealth from trade, manufacturing, and from plundering; a time of Dutch political and military power in all quarters of the globe.

Atlantic World — in 1607 a major Spanish fleet was destroyed by the Dutch at Gibraltar. By 1609 Spain had to agree to a "Twelve Year Truce". The truce allowed a remarkable expansion of Dutch "peaceful" commerce. It is no coincidence that Hudson's great voyage of exploration began in 1609.

West India Company — mirrored the state which gave it birth: a decentralized, federal structure. Day to day business was not cumbersome as each province had its distinct tasks, its responsibilities, its quotas.

Patroons — the adoption of the patroon system by the West India Company and the establishment of patroonships in New Netherland were well thought out "business decisions," although failures.

Sewant — once a consumer has satisfied his immediate needs and wants, continued barter demands some item of universal desire and standard value. To Indian tribes inland, particularly the Iroquois, this item of desire was sewant.

Agriculture — the forty percent of males who were farmers fed not only New Netherland but exported much food to Dutch plantation colonies in the Caribbean.

Fur Trade — after the West India Company ended its monopoly of the fur trade in 1639 anyone could trade for pelts, and own this form of wealth. Beaver pelts actually became the de facto currency of the colony.

Relations with the Indians — were at once guarded and open and, on occasion, violent.

People of New Netherland — only half the population of New Netherland was "Dutch"

Religion — the Dutch maintained a tradition of toleration for all law abiding citizens of whatever faith.

Slavery — the slaves of New Netherland had several privileges, including the right to own moveable property and to be paid wages for work done in their free time.

Family Life — important networks between families and friends from New Netherland to the Dutch Republic helped to increase the family migration.

Education — the child's obligation was to obey, work, and learn. The wise child endured this period and developed a network of future business associates.

Dutch Legacy — until recently, the Anglo centric bias of many historians and the satire of Washington Irving has obscured the existence of the Dutch presence in North America. Between the founding of Jamestown, Virginia in 1607 and the beginning of the Puritan colony of Massachusetts Bay in 1620, what we today call New York was settled, not by the English but by the Dutch.

In addition, the communities of **New Amsterdam, Beverwijck, Wiltwijck, Schenectady, Long Island, New England** and **New Sweden** are explored. Each panel contains 2-3 graphics as well including many by Len Tantillo, the preeminent artist for recreating historical images of New Netherland.

In conjunction with this exhibit the New Netherland Institute is responsible for other projects which may be of interest to those who would like to know more about the significance of the Dutch in colonial America.

- **Dutch Renaissance: the Story of the New Netherland Project**, by Peter Douglas published by the New Netherland Institute and the NYS Library, 2008, recounts the story of the New Netherland Project, established in 1974, in the Project's objective to transcribe, translate, and publish the official records of the Dutch West India Company in the seventeenth-century colony of New Netherland in America. Prior to the availability of these records in English, historians were unable to access the primary source materials for this period. Consequently, until now, the Dutch colonial period has largely been ignored, shortchanged, or misrepresented.
- **Explorers, Fortunes, and Love Letters: A Window on New Netherland**, Mount Ida Press, 2009 contains 12 essays based on original research by New Netherland authors including Russell Shorto, Joyce Goodfriend, Jaap Jacobs, Janny Venema among others, edited and introduced by Martha Shattuck, a member of the New Netherland Project staff.
- **Uncovering America's Forgotten Colony: The New Netherland Project**, is a 30 minute documentary DVD film, produced by Mogul One Productions 2009, on the New Netherland Project, the transcription, translation, and publication of the 12,000 official records of New Netherland, led by Dr. Charles Gehring since 1974. A portion of this film is shown with the exhibit.

Items on New Netherland may be found on the New Netherland Institute website at <http://www.newnetherlandinstitute.org>