

De Nieuw Nederlansche Mercurius

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"De Nieuw Nederlansche Mercurius"

September 2004

Upcoming Events

September 30, 2004. A "Discussion and Conversation" with Russell Shorto, Janny Venema, and Charles Gehring at 6:30 in the Key Cultural Center of the Albany Institute of History and Art. Open to the public, free of charge, the event will be a casual discussion of recent publications about New Netherland.

October 9, 2004. The 27th-Rensselaerswijck Seminar at Siena College: This year's seminar will be part of Siena's annual conference in medieval studies program, the **Convivium**, a multi-disciplinary, multi-cultural academic center focused on the study of medieval and early modern life. The theme of both Convivium and our Seminar will be the Dutch heritage of the Capital District. Speakers will be Paul Huey (NY State Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation, Cohoes): "Some Early Rensselaerswijck Farms: A Documentary and Archaeological Review," Jim Bradley (ArchLink, Charles-town, MA): "Visualizing Arent van Curler: Documentary and Archaeological Investigations at the Flatts," Len Tantillo (Artist): "Picturing Schuyler Flatts. An

Artist's Interpretation of Historical and Archaeological Data," Henry Miller (Historic St. Mary's City, St. Mary's City, MD): "Tobacco, Manors and Furs: The Archaeology and History of Lord Baltimore's Colony of Maryland," and Janny Venema (New Netherland Project): "Farmers and Traders: A Seventeenth-Century Dutch Community on the Hudson River." As usual, the



Admiral Michiel Adriaensz de Ruyter
1607-1676

seminar will be followed by the annual Fundraising Dinner. This year the dinner will also take place at Siena College. Dutch archaeologist Jan Baart will speak about his recent visit to Brazil in conjunction with the 350th anniversary of the loss of the WIC possession to the Portuguese in 1654.

November 11-13, 2004. The Huguenot Historical Society will hold a two-day conference on issues of religion, ethnicity and lifeways in the Hudson Valley during the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Through performances, papers, and tours, the conference participants will explore this transitional period that was no longer dominated by European perspectives, nor was it yet distinctly American in its bearing, but was instead in the process of defining its own unique cultural identity. The premise for the conference lies on the assumption that the cultural products (art, religion, language, institutions, lifeways, etc.) of a given group serve to express the ideals, morals, values, and beliefs of that group, and that both values and expressions change over time. Studying these forms of cultural expression offers historians insight into the motivations and ideas that served to shape the lives of individuals of earlier times. Presenters are encouraged to draw from the wide variety of religious and ethnic groups who lived within the Hudson Valley during the Colonial Period. Some of these groups included French Hugue-

nots, Dutch Protestants, German Lutherans, Scottish Presbyterians, English Anglicans, as well as European Jews, Catholics, Quakers, Shakers, Atheists, Africans, Amerindians, and others. In addition, the conference is intended to be interdisciplinary in nature, and potential presenters are encouraged to draw upon a wide variety of subjects and disciplines. Thus, professionals from fields such as history, archeology, anthropology and social studies, linguistics, religion and theology, decorative and fine and performing arts, gender studies, ethnic studies, agriculture, political science, and architecture are all welcome to submit their papers for review. For more information, contact: Eric J. Roth, Archivist/Librarian Huguenot Historical Society Library and Archives 88 Huguenot Street, New Paltz, NY 12561 library@hhs-newpaltz.org or www.hhs-newpaltz.org.

News

The Friends of New Netherland announces that **Dr. Simon Middleton** is the winner of the 2004 Hendricks Manuscript Award. Dr. Middleton is lecturer in American history in the School of American Studies, University of East Anglia. He holds an MA from Harvard and a PhD from the City University of New York, Graduate Center. Articles by him have appeared in *New York History*, *The Historical Journal*, and *The William and Mary Quarterly*. The article in *WMQ* "How it came that the bakers bake no bread: a struggle for trade privileges in 17th-century New Amsterdam," was awarded the 2001 Library company of Philadelphia, Program in Early American Economy and Society (PEAES) prize for best journal article in early American economic history. His work in progress includes a study of economic and legal culture in 18th-c. NYC and an anthology of essays, edited

with Professor Billy G. Smith, on the theme of class and class struggle in the early modern Atlantic World. *Privileges and Profits: Tradesmen in Colonial New York 1624-1750*, is his first book and now winner of the 2004 HMA. Dr. Middleton will receive the HMA at the dinner following the Rensselaerswijck Seminar on October 9th.

September 16-19, 2004, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania will be the site of the 78th annual meeting of the Association of Blauvelt Descendants. Contact person: Doris A. Blauvelt, 303-438-7267; ABDsec@aol.com. For more information go to: www.Blauvelt.org

Huguenot Historical Society unearths 1,500 Colonial-era manuscripts in Dutch and French! Seeks historians and contributors for four-year translation project. Scattered throughout the archives of the Huguenot Historical Society in New Paltz, New York, are approximately 1,500 pages of manuscripts written in Dutch and French between 1677 and 1834. Consisting primarily of church records, community legal and financial records, student educational workbooks and family genealogical registers, these documents provide a wealth of information about the early history of this Hudson Valley community. Despite the significant historical value of these manuscripts, their composition in French and Dutch stands as a barrier to the American historical and genealogical communities. But thanks to a generous seed grant provided by New York State Assemblyman, Kevin Cahill, the Huguenot Historical Society, with the help of Dr. David William Voorhees, completed a preliminary inventory and assessment of the approximately 1,200 pages of Dutch-language manuscripts in July 2004. The Society's library staff completed a similar inventory of 320 pages

written in French. Beginning in 2005 the Society will embark on an ambitious four-year project to translate these valuable historic records for the purpose of making them more accessible to researchers. Historians interested in contracting with the Society to translate portions of these collections, and individuals or organizations interested in contributing financially to this effort, should contact the Society's archivist, Eric Roth by phone at (845) 255-6738 or by email at library@hhs-newpaltz.org.

Books

Russell Shorto's bestseller, *The Island at the Center of the World* is now available in Dutch. This edition by Forum of Amsterdam is entitled *Nieuw Amsterdam, Eiland in het Hart van de Wereld*. It should be noted that there is also a German translation by Rowohlt entitled *New York-Insel in der Mitte der Welt*, which carries the *stabweimend* subtitle: *Wie die Stadt der Städte entstand*. Russell tells me that a Portuguese translation is also about to appear.

Has the short distance across the Channel ever made you wonder about the influence of the Low Countries on England? Wonder no more. Christopher Hanson-Smith has written a book entitled *The Flemish Bond. East Anglia & The Netherlands-Close & Ancient Neighbours*. Each chapter is dedicated to one particular influence, be it art, architecture, commerce, farming, shipping, warfare, etc. Robert Brooke of the Anglo-Netherlands Society writes: "Of all the foreign influences that have been brought to bear on English life, few have been more power-

ful, more profound and more lasting than those of the Dutch and Flemish. Nowhere are these historic ties more noticeable than in East Anglia; but as yet little has been written to make the layman aware of them." The book launch date is 22 September 2004. ISBN: 0-9527141-4-0. For more details: eye.press@btinternet.com

Most of what we read about the 80 years' war is either filtered through Dutch or non-hostile English eyes. But what about the Spaniards? How did they view their enemy to the north? The question is considered in detail by Yolanda Rodríguez Pérez in her book *De Tachtigjarige Oorlog in Spaanse ogen. De Nederlanden in Spaanse historische en literaire teksten (circa 1548-1673)*. Vantilt, 2003.

FNN News

The Friends of New Netherland are planning for the 2006 exhibit at SUNY Central (the former D&H building) featuring the Dutch heritage of the Capital District. If our members own a Dutch or Belgian artifact that is transportable and that you would like to display, we would be happy to hear from you. Contact either Greta Wagle, at : ghwagle@nycap.rr.com, or the FNN office at: hnewhous@mail.nysed.gov.

The annual Alice P. Kenney Award event was held this year on June 12 at The First Church in Albany. Len Tantillo, the winner of the Award, grew up in the Hudson Valley and is an internationally recognized marine artist. His gallery is located at the corner of Broadway and Pine Street in downtown Albany.

The FNN staff is now preparing for the October 9 Seminar and dinner. Cost for the Seminar is \$35 or \$40 at the door; the dinner \$60. Not all 2004 dues have come in. To run

even a small office is expensive (we had to buy a new copy machine this week because the old one could no longer be repaired), so we would greatly appreciate your check.

Annual Giving – Donations of private donors, corporations, organizations, foundations and institutions. We would like to extend our gratitude to all supporters who have generously contributed to the New Netherland Institute. The following list recognizes your gifts received between July 1st, 2003 and June 30th, 2004. Foundations, corporate donors, organizations and institutions appear in italics.

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Totidem Verbis

From time to time I'm at a loss for words and have to rely on material I wrote some years ago. The following is a talk that I delivered for the Netherlands Society of Philadelphia at the Ethical Society in Philadelphia on November 14th 1998. As it won't fit in the available space it will be continued in the following issues. I added the first paragraph to make it coincide with the upcoming anniversary.

De Ruyter and New Netherland

September 9th is the 340th anniversary of the surrender of Manhattan and eventually all of New Netherland to the fleet financed by James, duke of York and Albany, brother of King Charles II. Today most people consider the event a foregone conclusion and Dutch acquiescence to English might. However, the people of Manhattan and other possessions considered it only a temporary situation. When news spread of Admiral de Ruyter's successes against the English in the Atlantic, expectations for the re-conquest of New Netherland must have risen. In a letter to Gerard van Tright, merchant of New Netherland, dated 19 April 1665, Domine Wilhelmus Volckering expresses these very feelings from his vantage point on Curaçao:

"One speaks here with sadness and fear of the animosity which is supposedly arising between us and the English, and has already broken out into open warfare. We expect confirmation from the fatherland any day now. We have received no letters from there in eight months; nevertheless, we have learned with sadness from your honor's letters and verbally from Mr. Stuyvesant [Baltazar] about the unhappy and at the same time damaging change caused by the English with the seizure and takeover of the Manhattans. Without a doubt it shall be a serious blow and cause an unwilling displacement for many. The same evil also threatens us unless the arrogance of the English is not soon stopped by the wise leadership of the High and Mighty States and the mercy of God. Whereupon we are still expecting and hoping that just as they were driven from Capo Verde and the entire coast of Guinea by Vice-Admiral de Ruyter, they shall also be forced to return New Netherland to its lawful owners." [*Curaçao Papers*, p. 216.]

Who was this De Ruyter? Recently a book appeared entitled *The Great Admirals* by Jack Sweetman of the Naval Academy. Of the 19 admirals considered from Francis

Drake to William "Bull" Halsey, two are Dutch from the 17th century: Maarten Tromp and Michiel de Ruyter. He was born in Vlissingen, Zeeland in 1607 of humble origins. He went to sea at age eleven as a boatswain's boy; steadily rising through the ranks until he was appointed lieutenant admiral of Holland and commander in chief of the Dutch navy in 1665. De Ruyter exploits during the three Anglo-Dutch wars are legend, including an attack on the British fleet in the Medway which forced an end to the second war with Great Britain. When his body was brought home by ship after falling in action against the French near Sicily in 1676, Louis XIV ordered all ports along the coast to salute his passing. He is rightly called "the ornament of his age."

News of the fall of New Netherland probably was not as much of a shock as the fall of Recife in Dutch Brazil ten years earlier but nevertheless it must have been a cause for alarm; especially as it was seized during a time of peace.

England never recognized the Dutch claim to New Netherland. The closest the two countries ever came to an agreement was the Hartford Treaty of 1650, which was never ratified. England based its claim on the charters of James I, which granted the region to New England and Virginia trading companies. The Dutch countered English rights to the land by referring to Spanish rights of discovery in the sixteenth century, which were transferred to the Dutch by the Treaty of Westminster in 1648. The English were so distracted during their civil war in the 1640s that their overseas colonies were neglected or remained royalist, allowing the Dutch to solidify their position in the New World. New Netherland came closest to invasion by the English colonies during the First Anglo-Dutch War.

In April of 1653 a delegation from New England visited New Amsterdam to complain of purported Dutch depredations in Connecticut. Dissatisfied with Director-General Stuyvesant's denial of the charges, the New Englanders returned to Boston to urge the conquest of New Netherland. All the New England colonies agreed to contribute to the venture except for Massachusetts Bay. Without Massachusetts's financial and

military support, the enterprise was called off. The following year Cromwell supplied Robert Sedgwick with four warships to take New Netherland; however, the plan was aborted when news of peace with the Dutch Republic reached the English naval force in mid Atlantic.

After the restoration of Charles II to the throne of England, New Netherland once again became a target for English attempts to diminish Dutch commercial interests. In 1663 Charles granted all the land from the Penobscot River in Maine to Delaware Bay (excluding the New England colonies) to his brother James, duke of York and Albany. In addition to this huge gift of land, which included New Netherland, Charles gave his brother £4000 to defray expenses incurred while taking possession of his new holdings. James commissioned Richard Nicolls in 1664 to lead a force of four ships carrying 250 soldiers to reduce New Amsterdam and bring the entire Dutch colony under English control.

If it is not already a maxim of war, it should be: That a well executed attack during time of peace will probably succeed. Nicolls was able to surprise Petrus Stuyvesant, the director general of New Netherland, as he was unprepared for such hostile actions in peace time. Although rumors had reached Stuyvesant of the possibility of such an attempt, English diplomats had assured the Dutch government that Nicolls's objective was to correct matters in New England. The defenses on Manhattan were in poor shape. They had suffered the ravages of time since being repaired and strengthened during the first war with England a decade before. The officer in charge of the fort's cannon later testified that if he had begun firing at the English ships in the morning, it would have been over by the afternoon. Added to the poor condition of the city's defenses was a "fifth column," the English settlers on the western end of Long Island. Although living within the jurisdiction of New Netherland, they were prepared to exploit the situation with the hope of acquiring more self government and the right to plunder New Amsterdam if the city was stormed. [*To be continued.*]