The New Netherland Institute supports the New Netherland Research Center (NNRC) through fundraising and programs that tell the story of the Dutch colonial history of America. Created in 1986 as the Friends of the New Netherland Project, NNI gives significant financial assistance to transcribe, translate, and publish these early Dutch colonial materials which constitute the world’s largest collection of original documentation of the Dutch West India Company and its New World colonies.

Flanders House aims to be the gateway to Flanders (Belgium) and the United States. Its mission is to promote a better understanding of the region of Flanders, including its culture, history, government, research, education, and innovation. Flanders House is a source for information on Flemish cultural activities in New York and the US, on educational and scientific exchange on Flanders.

The New-York Historical Society, is dedicated to fostering research, presenting history and art exhibitions, and public programs that reveal the dynamism of history and its influence on the world of today. Founded in 1804, New-York Historical is the oldest museum in New York City. New-York Historical has a mission to explore the richly layered political, cultural and social history of New York City and State.

Consulate-General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands in New York supports and promotes art, culture and history from the Netherlands, including the Caribbean territories, in the United States.
In 1568 a revolt began in the Low Countries against the Habsburg Empire. It was a brutal struggle fought for political and religious reasons that would last 80 years. During this tumultuous time there was a great displacement of people, some fleeing the ravages of war, others were fleeing religious persecution. A disconnect from the Empire meant a disruption in normal commercial activity. Markets and waters once friendly turned hostile. Trading companies eventually replaced the former commercial routes and exploration for new routes and markets was undertaken. Five speakers will relate the effects of the revolt on the Low Countries and the settlement of New Netherland. A special feature will be a profile of Govert Loockermans of Turnhout whose correspondence as a private trader will appear in translation for the first time.

Speakers, Program Titles, and Biographies:

Guido Marnef (University of Antwerp): “People on the move: migration movements from the Southern to the Northern Netherlands in the time of the Dutch Revolt.”

Guido Marnef studied history at the University of Antwerp and the Catholic University of Leuven. He is professor of early modern history at the University of Antwerp and a member of the Center for Urban History. His research focuses on Reformation and Revolt in the Low Countries, the Catholic Reformation, and early modern urban culture. He is the author of Het Calvinistisch Bewind te Mechelen (1580-1585), Kortrijk: UGA, 1987, and Antwerp in the Age of Reformation: Underground Protestantism in a Commercial Metropolis 1550-1577, Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1996 (also published in Dutch). He was a research fellow at the School of Historical Studies of the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, at the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study at Wassenaar, and at the Flemish Academic Center of the Royal Flemish Academy (Brussels). At present, he is working on a book about the ‘Calvinist Republic’ in Antwerp (1577-1585).

Kees Zandvliet (Amsterdam Museum, University of Amsterdam): “Flemish cartographers of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and the mapping of North-America.”

Kees Zandvliet (1953) has worked at the Amsterdam Museum since 2008 and has been professor of early modern Amsterdam history at the University of Amsterdam since 2012. He started his career as curator and later manager of the collection of maps and drawings in the National Archives in The Hague. Between 1996 and 2008 he was curator and later manager of the Department of History of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. He obtained his doctorate with his study Mapping For Money. His most recent book, published in 2012 (co/authors Hans Goedkoop), is The Dutch Golden Age: Gateway to our Modern World.

Wim Vanraes (independent translator/researcher/linguist): “Govert Loockermans. A personal look at source material from a 17th century Flemish settler.”


Davidt Baeckelandt (Independent Scholar, President, De Gazette van Detroit): “The Flemish Contribution to European Settlement in America.”


Maarten Prak (University of Utrecht): “Antwerp = Amsterdam? Migration and trade between two commercial centers c. 1600.”

Maarten Prak has been Professor of Social and Economic History at Utrecht University since 1992. He also teaches at its English-language University College, and was a visiting professor at the University of Exeter (UK) in 1996 and 2002. He has published widely on the political, social and economic history of the Netherlands and Europe during the early modern period. The Republic of the Seven United Netherlands was the land of Rembrandt, Vermeer and Frans Hals, where Descartes and Spinoza were also able to work out their ideas in peace and tranquility. The economic and cultural flowering of this small country bordering on the North Sea has been an endless source of fascination down the ages. Prak’s The Dutch Republic in the Seventeenth Century: the Golden Age, Cambridge University Press (2005) provides a modern, concise, and thorough history of this complex and intriguing state.