

De Nieuw Nederlandse Mercurius



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Sept. 2013

Events of interest

September 26–28, 2013. “Traces of Early America: An Interdisciplinary Graduate Student Conference” hosted by the McNeil Center for Early American Studies in Philadelphia. Scholars encounter early America through its traces, the vestiges and fragments left behind. And in reconstructing the fleeting and ephemeral, scholars also attempt to trace early American encounters. This conference will bring together graduate students from a wide variety of disciplines to explore the various meanings of traces—as material objects, cultural representations, and academic practices. Presentations and discussions will explore how people deliberately and unwittingly left traces as they moved through space and time; what traces or remnants of the past get privileged while others are marginalized or occluded; how written, visual, and other texts are both material objects and traces of lives and experiences; and where we look for the traces of different communities and conflicts in early America. More generally, this conference seeks to address tracing as a method of historical inquiry, one that both uncovers and constitutes objects and archives, as

well as the methodological traces that have reconfigured early American studies, such as Atlantic history, diaspora studies, hemispheric studies, and circum-Caribbean and Latin American studies.

For more information about the conference (including the program and registration links), please visit: <http://bit.ly/1acy003>.

September 28–29, 2013. The Native American Institute of the Hudson Valley hosts the 2013 “Algonquian Peoples Conference.” The two-day event will present historical discussions and hands-on interpretive activities about the Algonquian speaking people of the Hudson River Valley. Presentations will be held at the Huxley Theater in the CEC at the Empire State Plaza, beginning with registration at 9:00; on Sunday public interpretation and displays will take place at the replica ship *Half Moon* at the south end of the Corning Preserve from 11:00am to 4:00pm.

For the complete program and registration information go to our website at www.nnp.org and look under Conferences.

October 2 – January 19, 2014. “Masterpieces of Dutch Painting.” The Frick will present fifteen paintings from the Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis, The Hague. Entrance to the exhibition is included with museum admission, but time tickets are required and purchasing them in advance is strongly advised. To purchase timed tickets call Telecharge at 212–239–6200. Tickets may also be purchased at the Frick. Members receive priority access to the special exhibition and do not need to pre-purchase timed tickets. To become a member call: 212–547–0709.

October 5, 2013. The 36th annual New Netherland Seminar will be held at the New–York Historical Society. “The Dutch Revolt and New Netherland” will explore the period of time when the Low Countries began a break with 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 fleeing religious persecution. A disconnect from the Empire meant a disruption in

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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.

Program

9:30 Registration
10:00 Welcome
10:30 Morning Session

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";

Kees Zandvliet (Amsterdam Museum, University of Amsterdam): "Flemish cartographers of the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries and the mapping of North-America";
Maarten Prak (University of Utrecht): "Antwerp = Amsterdam? Migration and trade between two commercial centers c. 1600."

12:45 Lunch on your own (OYO)
2:15 Presentation of the Hendricks' Award
Presentation of NN Article Prize
2:45 Afternoon Session

Wim Vanraes (independent translator/researcher/linguist): "Govert Loockermans. A personal look at source material from a 17th-century Flemish settler";
David Baeckelandt (Independent Scholar, President, De Gazette van Detroit): "Flemish Contributions to European Settlement of America."

4:00 Reception at N-YHS
7:00 New Netherland Dinner (prepay)

Sunday, October 6, 2013.

10:00 Optional tour of lower Manhattan (prepay)
11:30 Meet for Brunch at Frances Tavern (OYO)

For additional information contact the NNI at: 518-474-1195 / 518-486-4815 or email: nyslfn@mail.nysed.gov.

The New-York Historical Society is located at 170 Central Park West at 77th Street in NYC.
212-873-3400

October 26, 2013. The Holland Society's "Patroon Branch" president, Robert van Vranken, announces its annual meeting at Grooms Tavern (a historical site in the Town of Clifton Park, Saratoga County). Following a short business meeting (2:15-2:30) Dr Firth Fabend will discuss her most recent book *New Netherland in a Nutshell: A Concise History of the Dutch Colony in North America*. The title of her program is: "The People of New Netherland: Roughnecks, Grandees, Multi-Taskers or All of the Above." Refreshments and conversation will follow her talk from 3:30 to 4:00. There is no charge for this event. Books will be available for purchase and signing by the author.

Take exit 8A (Grooms Road) on the Northway. Head west. Grooms Tavern is on the left just beyond 2 stop lights and the intersection of Grooms Rd and Sugar Hill Rd.

Please contact President Robert van Vranken no later than October 21 if you will be attending. Email: rvanv@rvvlaw.com or telephone: 518-399-2588.

November 8-10, 2013. The 13th Annual New Sweden History Conference (NSHC), "Encountering 'Others' in the Atlantic World: Perspectives from the Material World," will be held at Clayton Hall, on the University of Delaware's Newark campus and at Lund University in Sweden. The conference will meet jointly with the annual meeting of the Council for Northeast Historical Archaeology (CNEHA) and NSHC registrants will be able to attend CNEHA sessions. A special feature of this year's NSHC is the transatlantic component—scholars will also convene at Lund University on the theme, "Encountering the 'Other'—Understanding Oneself: Colonialism, Ethnic Diversity and Everyday Life in Early Modern Sweden and New Sweden." Joint US-Sweden sessions will be presented at both venues via real time video conferencing, and all Sweden and New Sweden papers and sessions will be recorded for later viewing.

Cost: Approximately \$50 per person for the two-day conference. Additional fees for field trips and meals. Program and registration information, and online registration will be posted at <http://cneha.org/conference.html>, or contact the American Swedish Historical Museum, 215.389.1776, info@americanswedish.org; Craig

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Lukezic, Delaware Division of Historical and Cultural Affairs, craig.lukezic@state.de.us; or Lu Ann De Cunzo, University of Delaware, decunzo@UDel.Edu.

News

The NNRC has chosen Artyom Anikin as the recipient of this year's "Student Scholar Research Grant." Anikin, a U.S. citizen and PhD candidate at the University of Amsterdam in the Netherlands will be researching New Netherland in the decade following the British invasion (1664–1674).

Go to: <http://bit.ly/1dYo7aL> for information on the oldest surviving house in Albany.

Publications

The Memory of All Ancient Customs: Native American Diplomacy in the Colonial Hudson Valley by Tom Arne Midtrød. Cornell University Press 2012.

Midtrød's work examines the complex patterns of diplomatic, political, and social communication among the American Indian peoples of the Hudson Valley—including the Mahicans, Wappingers, and Esopus Indians—from the early seventeenth century through the American Revolutionary era. By focusing on how members of different Native groups interacted with one another, this book places Indians rather than Europeans on center stage.

The 328 page book retails for \$35.00.

This book is also available as an ebook from Amazon/Kindle, Google Ebooks, and Kobo.

Crucial Years in Anglo–Dutch Relations (1625–1642) by Anton Poot. This book analyses the relations between the young Dutch Republic and the England of King Charles I, in particular during the earlier years of his reign (1625–1629) and the period of his personal rule (1625–1629), as perceived and interpreted by both sides. The Republic had gradually developed into an independent state with an increasing self-confidence. Nevertheless, in those years the Republic still needed foreign support against Spain, particularly from England and France. At the same time however, the Dutch were fully aware that the monarchs of both countries were primarily supporting their own policies and only provided support when it served their own interests. Anton Poot shows that their dependence on foreign political vicissitudes forced the Dutch to find their own ways. Their successes against Spain also provided more and more resolve and form: by 1640 this was clearly demonstrated by the Republic's relations with England.

To order go to: www.verloren.nl. Easy payment available via PayPal.

NNI News

Our website now features video presentations thanks to the energy

of our webmaster Steve McErleane. Go to "Essays and Talks" under RESEARCH for interviews with Janny Venema and Charles Gehring. Two were produced during the 2009 Hudson anniversary and another recently done by WNYT in Albany.

Totidem Verbis

"Manhattan and the \$24 Myth"
by Peter Douglas

One of the immortal myths associated with the Dutch "purchase" of Manhattan is that they bought the island for \$24. Let's ignore for now the meaning of "purchase" in this context, for this is yet another myth that needs busting. Let's forget too for now that Manhattan was not acquired by the Dutch parting with hard cash, though the constant reference to the \$24 seems to imply this.

The persistent misconception about the \$24 originates innocently enough with the famous memo written by Peter Schaghen in 1626. Schaghen was a representative of the States General in the Assembly of the Nineteen of the West India Company, and he reported the arrival of the ship *Wapen van Amsterdam*, recently arrived from New Netherland. Here in a single tantalizing sentence he refers to the acquisition of Manhattan: *t'eylant Manhattes van de wilde gekocht, voor de waerde van 60 guld: is groot 11000 morgen.* Translation: "They have purchased the Island Manhattes from the Indians for the value of 60 guilders. It is 11,000 morgens in size."

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From Schaghen's reference to 60 guilders comes the subsequent \$24 nonsense, though it wasn't his fault. The sum of 60 guilders (actually the value of trade goods, not actual money) was converted to dollars at the prevailing rate in the mid-nineteenth century when Schaghen's letter was discovered in the Netherlands. Edmund O'Callaghan wrote in his 1855 history: "The island of Manhattan, estimated then to contain twenty-two thousand acres of land, was therefore purchased from the Indians, who received for that splendid tract the trifling sum of sixty guilders, or twenty-four dollars."

Thus the myth was born. It made no sense in 1855 and it's even more absurd to use this dollar sum today, when its value is so much less. It has never accurately reflected the value of the goods that Peter Minuit traded, and it certainly doesn't indicate anything of the intrinsic value of the goods as understood by the Indians. For over a century and a half the \$24 has remained curiously fixed in the popular mind. Moreover, the price has remained unhelpfully frozen at this misleading figure, and it is usually not even adjusted for inflation. This is the fallacy that is generally swallowed, and many early historians have done little to help, embroidering Schaghen's account ever since, either ignorantly ensuring that the price of \$24 is kept alive or doing little to get across accurately what few bare facts are known. In an informal survey I found that while few people knew much at all about the

Dutch Manhattan deal, many had heard of the notorious \$24 purchase price. This is often accompanied by the related assumption that, because of the small sum, the wily Dutch clearly took advantage of the naïve Indians (fodder for future myth-busting, in fact).

With the \$24 having taken hold, popular imagination went mad. For some reason, there grew a popular but essentially futile pastime to try to illustrate the power of compound interest (as if the Indians could have invested the \$24) and calculate the current return on the original investment—how many million or billion dollars it now translates to, the sum that the Indians were, by inference, gypped out of. Some people also love trying to make comparisons and creating bogus relevance for this original sum in the modern economy, generally and wrongly assuming that the 60 guilders was nothing much (saying, for instance, how these days \$24 would get you a parking space in Manhattan for only a few hours). In fact, in 1626 this was no small sum, and it doubtless translated into a generous quantity of trade goods. Sixty guilders was the price the West India Company would pay for thirty beaver skins or for twelve fathoms of wampum; it was three or four months' wages for a sailor or an artisan back in the Netherlands, so Minuit's party would have been well aware that the goods they traded were actually worth quite a lot of money.

The sort of meaningless investment whimsy described above, usually dreamed up for the benefit of the Indians, not Minuit,

has sometimes been advanced, apparently seriously, to allow the Dutch to seem munificent, and thereby dodge the common accusation that their action in 1626 was fraudulent. What it does even better, of course, is underline (as if it needs to be stressed) the intrinsic difficulty of realistically evaluating business deals between dissimilar cultures (and cultures now very dissimilar to our own) that took place almost four centuries ago.

Unfortunately, and to its shame, even so august and supposedly erudite an institution as the Museum of the City of New York is one of the entities responsible for spreading this ridiculous myth. It achieves this with its annual "\$24 Award." Since 1971, the Museum has presented this annual award, a plaque holding twenty-four silver dollars, to individuals who have made lasting and significant contributions to the lives of the people of New York City. The award is, said the New York Times, "symbolic of the price the Dutch paid the Indians for Manhattan," though some newspaper references to the award have the good grace to refer to the sum as "legendary." The award is handed out on May 6, the date in 1626 when, supposedly and according to the Mayor's Press Office, "...Peter Minuit purchased Manhattan island from Native Americans in exchange for goods worth \$24." With this sort of publicity it's no wonder that sum is fixed in our heads. Well at least no one said anything about the island being bought for \$24 worth of beads, baubles, and trinkets. But that's another myth.