

De Nieuw Nederlansse Mercurius



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Upcoming Events

Until January 11, 2009. The New York Botanical Garden has kicked off the holiday season with its annual "Holiday Train Show." As described in the Botanical Garden's own words: "Wrapped in the glow of twinkling lights, model trains and trolleys zip along over bridges and on winding tracks past scaled replicas of New York landmarks made by award-winning designer Paul Busse. Orange slices, cinnamon sticks, poppy pods, pine cones, and other plant parts are used to create the more than 140 architectural reproductions." See how many Dutch-related houses you can spot! For more information about tickets etc. go to: www.nybg.org.

Until January 11, 2009. Currently, the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC has an exhibition devoted to Jan Lievens entitled "A Dutch Master Rediscovered." Lievens was one of the most fascinating and enigmatic of the 17th century Dutch artists. He was a daring and innovative painter, printmaker, and draftsman, who created a wide range of memorable works, from religious and allegorical subjects to landscapes and

formal portraits. On January 11 this exhibition will move to the Milwaukee Art Museum, and then on to the Rembrandt House Museum in Amsterdam from May 17 through August 9.

February 1 until May 3, 2009. Visitors to the National Gallery of Art can also travel back in time when they visit the exhibit entitled "Pride of Place: Dutch Cityscapes of the Golden Age." The booming economy of the Dutch Republic in the *Gouden Eeuw* fostered a new genre of painting: the "cityscape." Images of towns and cities expressed the enormous civic pride of the era.

The exhibition consists of 46 paintings representing the work of more than 40 artists, including Jacob van Ruisdael, Jan Steen, Carel Fabritius, Gerrit Berckheyde, and Jan van der Heyden. Of particular interest is Jan van Goyen's 15-foot-long "View of The Hague from the Southeast" (c.1650–51), which he painted for the town hall.

Also included in the exhibition are 22 maps, atlases, and illustrated books offering an impressive survey of the Dutch cityscape, from wide-angle panoramas depicting the

urban skyline with its fortifications, windmills, and church steeples, to renderings of daily life along the canals, in city streets, and town squares. Cities depicted include Amsterdam, Haarlem, Delft, Dordrecht, Middleburg, Hoorn, Utrecht, Nijmegen, and Rhenen. The exhibition was organized by the National Gallery of Art and the Royal Picture Gallery Mauritshuis in The Hague, where it is now on view until January 11, 2009.

The National Gallery of Art is located at 4th and Constitution Avenue NW, Washington DC 20565. Call 202-737-4215 for more information.

Until February 15, 2009. On the 4th floor of the New York State Museum, "Light on New Netherland," a traveling panel exhibit produced by the New Netherland Institute, consists of 14 two sided panels arranged in 7 units covering such topics as *Patria*, the Dutch Seaborne Empire, Ships and Sailing, the Atlantic World, the West India Company, New Netherland, New Amsterdam, Beverwijck, Wiltwijck, Schenectady, Long Island, Patroons, New England, New Sweden, Sewant, Agriculture, the fur trade, relations with the

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Indians, the people of New Netherland, religion, slavery, family life, education, and the Dutch legacy. Each panel contains 2–3 graphics as well, including many by Len Tantillo.

News

The Royal Netherlands Embassy and the New York Historical Association have collaborated on the creation of the New York State Quadricentennial Essay Contest. New York State students in grades 4 to 12 are invited to celebrate New York's 400th birthday by investigating its colonial history and developing an engaging historical essay. Students are encouraged to explore New Netherland and learn how the Dutch have made a lasting impact on America's culture and heritage.

Three essay titles have been set for different grade levels. Students are required to conduct original research and use their findings to develop their essay, interpreting their discoveries and drawing their own conclusions about the Dutch influence on New York State. The deadline is March 1, 2009.

Detailed information about the submission requirements and an entry form can be obtained from New York Historical Association, Statewide Programs, PO Box 800, Cooperstown NY 13326, and on their website: www.nyshistoryday.org/EssayContest2009.htm

Save the Dates

The 22nd Annual Meeting of the New Netherland Institute will be

held on Saturday, January 31, 2009 beginning at 12:00 noon. The venue this year is the Mansion at Cedar Hill, 1016 River Road (Rt. 144 between Albany and Selkirk). There will be a luncheon, election of new members to the Board of Trustees, and a short business meeting. David William Voorhees, director of the Papers of Jacob Leisler Project at NYU will give a talk about the journal, *de Halve Maen*, a quarterly scholarly journal devoted to New Netherland studies, of which he has been editor since 1990. The title of his talk is: "A name dear to every American of Dutch descent": the story of the Holland Society's journal *de Halve Maen*.

The 32nd Rensselaerswijck Seminar, October 1 through October 3, 2009 will focus on the "Settlers of Rensselaerswijck, 1629–1687." Thursday evening, will feature a reception and lecture by a noted historian/author. The programs on Friday and Saturday will focus on the history of Rensselaerswijck and genealogical resources for tracing one's Dutch ancestors both here and in the Netherlands. There will be an opportunity to tour the replica ship *Halve Maen*, visit Albany's First Dutch Reformed Church, and other Dutch-connected sites in the area. We hope many family associations will consider having their reunions at this time. We have booked a block of rooms at the Hampton Inn and Suites in downtown Albany for this event. If you would like more information or have questions or comments, please contact Marilyn

Douglas at 518–408–1212 or email at mdouglas@mail.nysed.gov

Publications

Everyone who reads this newsletter by now must know the name Russell Shorto, author of *The Island at the Center of the World*. Shortly before going on tour for his new book Russell sent us the following message: "My new book appears in the U.S. on October 14. As many of you know, *Descartes' Bones* follows the trail of the actual skull and bones of René Descartes, and also their metaphoric trail, and in so doing sketches what you might call a nonstandard pathway through the modern centuries. The book is part philosophy, part forensic science, detective story, history, love story... I suppose the ultimate idea was to remind myself, in the midst of the warring fundamentalisms of our era (Islamic, Christian, neocon, atheist), how modern society came to be, and what its strengths and limitations are. A pretty ponderous notion in itself, you will say, which is maybe why I found the exotic approach appealing."

Amazon offers the 299-page book for \$17.16. Its site features an abundance of reviews and commentary, including a short video of Russell himself talking about Descartes.

Thomas E. Burke Jr.'s 1991 book *Mohawk Frontier: The Dutch Community of Schenectady, New York, 1661–1710* has been reprinted by SUNY Press. Amazon is offering a pre-publication price of

\$14.93 before its release date on 2/5/09. The ISBN of the 280-page paperback is: 1438427069.

The Dutch Down Under: 1606–2006. Co-ordinating Author—Nonja Peters. This 400th anniversary publication provides illuminating commentary from twenty-three academics and historians on the socio-economic and cultural impact of Dutch migration “Down Under” for both Australia and the Netherlands. Amazon lists the book for \$42.80 with used copies available from \$25.49. **Tgo go dgt 'vq'ceeguu Co c| qp'xlc'qwt 'y gd'ulsg'ev**
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The 31st Annual Rensselaerwijck Seminar was attended by more than 110 people. The theme of the September 13 conference was “Neighbors in the New World: New Netherland and New France.”

An international team of scholars compared the way the two nations, France and the Netherlands, carried out their plans to colonize in North America and their relationship in the New World.

José António Brandão of Western Michigan University, Kalamazoo, Mich., opened with “An Unreasonable Offer: Iroquois Policy towards their Huron and Mahican Neighbors,” pointing out the relationship of the government of New France and its Indian allies.

James Bradley of ArchLink, Boston, Mass., described the state of the region as he spoke of “In Between Worlds: New Netherland

and New France at Mid Century.”

A personality analysis of Samuel Champlain was given by Conrad Heidenreich of York University, Ontario, Canada, who revealed facts about Champlain’s personal and professional life to examine “The Skirmish with the Mohawk on Lake Champlain: was Champlain a ‘trigger-happy thug’ or ‘just following orders’?”

The winner of the Hendricks Manuscript Award, Willem Frijhoff of the Free University of Amsterdam, The Netherlands, treated the subject of “Jesuits, Calvinists, and Natives: Attitudes, Agency, and Encounters in the Early Christian Missions to the North.”

At the award ceremony Joyce Goodfriend of the University of Denver introduced Professor Frijhoff who spoke about his award-winning book, “Fulfilling God’s Mission: The Two Worlds of Dominie Everardus Bogardus, 1607–1647.”

During the dinner following the seminar, Consul General H. Gajus Scheltema of the Dutch Consulate in New York City received thanks of the New Netherland Institute for being a major sponsor of the seminar. He spoke about the role of the Dutch government in supporting Quadricentennial projects of the New Netherland Institute and other organizations up and down the Hudson River, in the area then known as New Netherland.

A DVD of the talks is available for sale from the NNI.

Notes from the October 18 meeting: Syracuse University Press has

scheduled the next volume of the Fort Orange Records for release in the Spring of 2009; a second volume of “A Beautiful and Fruitful Place” is nearing completion.

• The New Netherland Project has moved to the 10th floor of the Cultural Education Center Building, but for the immediate future Janny Venema will remain on the 8th floor along with the New Netherland related book collection. Marilyn Douglas and Bonnie Urso now have separate offices on the 10th floor, as well as Charles Gehring. All phone numbers remain the same.

• The *Liber Amicorum* collection of essays: *Explorers, Fortunes, and Love Letters, A Window on New Netherland* is scheduled for a press run of 1250 copies. The book will contain 8 color illustrations and is due to be released on August 20, 2009.

• The first 10 years of the Marcurius and a Guide to Dutch Documents in American Repositories is being scanned for eventual posting on the NNI website.

The New Netherland Institute continues its work of supporting the New Netherland Project and underwriting the 2009 Project. To do so, foundations, businesses, governments, and especially individuals are all encouraged to [donate](#). These contributions come in the form of cash, checks, stocks, bequests, IRA distributions, etc. But also please keep in mind, when you are planning your year end giving, the matching gift opportunity that your company might offer.

Thank you for your support!

Totidem Verbis

As the 400th anniversary of the founding of the Exchange Bank of Amsterdam approaches, our contributing editor, Peter Douglas, offers the following to commemorate the event and underscore its significance.

The Amsterdamsche Wisselbank

January 31, 2009, is the 400th anniversary of the founding of the Amsterdamsche Wisselbank (Exchange Bank of Amsterdam), and with it the idea of a national bank, modeled on such a bank in Venice, reached northern Europe. It was the first major public bank in Europe outside Italy. For most of the 17th century, until the founding of the Bank of England in 1694, its only northern counterpart was the Hamburg Bank, founded in 1619. The Wisselbank grew into the preeminent financial institution of the 17th and 18th centuries, and it received praise from Adam Smith in his *An Inquiry into the Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations* (1776).

The Wisselbank was created to provide stability and to facilitate payments in Amsterdam's rapidly growing foreign trade. After the siege and fall of Antwerp in 1585 in the Eighty Years' War, more trade was handled by Amsterdam. In the early 17th century the Amsterdam municipal authorities, aware that commercial activity there was being hindered by the uncertainties created by the circulation of various currencies of differing quality, decided to take action. In 1609 the Wisselbank was established as a corrective action, the idea being to insulate foreign merchants from the degradation of domestic coins. Foreign merchants suffered when commercial credits were repaid with debased coins, and when foreign trade suffered, Amsterdam suffered. The Wisselbank protected foreign creditors by settling debts through the bank and offering depositors its own coins that

were not debased. It was required to uphold a high level of stability by maintaining its reserves of coins and precious metals at close to 100 percent of its deposits. The bank did not make loans to the public but mostly operated as a service to merchants who were trading in different currencies. Its main contribution to banking innovation was a system of transfers by checks and direct debits similar to how it works now.

The Wisselbank's most vital feature was that it was a civic bank, not a privately owned or managed institution. Central to the bank's success was the strong political support that it enjoyed, and confidence in it rested on the fact that it was controlled by the burgomasters and guaranteed by the city. It was also protected by the power of the Dutch state. While private banks sought profit at every opportunity, the overall objective of the Wisselbank was to stabilize the monetary and banking system with a view to strengthening Amsterdam as a center for foreign trade. With its reputation for integrity it acted as a stabilizing influence by minting high quality coins that had a firm purchasing power. Its high creditworthiness and liquidity created great confidence. The bank attracted foreign and Dutch capital and boosted the Dutch national financial interests.

Because of the dominant position of Amsterdam in international trading, and the city's requirement that all payments exceeding a certain amount were to be settled via accounts in the Wisselbank, the bank's clearing and settlement system quickly gained a dominant position in

international payment systems. By the late 17th century the Amsterdamsche Wisselbank was one of the biggest commercial banks in existence, and its notes of exchange were recognized as valid tender everywhere.

The Wisselbank retains a place in history because it proved to be the key to the success of the 17th-century Dutch economy. It provided the motive power by giving credit to the city of Amsterdam (which also derived considerable revenue from the bank), and to the Province of Holland. One of its great achievements was the furthering of trade through its heavy financing of the Dutch East India Company; this was founded in 1602 and developed into the world's largest commercial enterprise in the 17th century. In safeguarding a working credit system the Wisselbank thus became a critical component of Dutch power throughout the "Golden Age" of the Netherlands. It became a model for similar institutions in Middleburg (1616), Delft (1621), and Rotterdam (1635), as well as abroad. The role of the Wisselbank diminished after 1650; this was because London took over Amsterdam's position in international trade, and because the ban on private banks was lifted, after which private banks regained their share of payment handling. However, the Wisselbank's success continued well into the 18th century even after Amsterdam's ascendancy came to an end. It survived until 1819, having provided the Republic with over a century of stable prices—then as now, an enviable accomplishment.