

CHARLOTTE WILCOXEN, 1905-2006

It's with much sadness that we announce the death of Charlotte Wilcoxen, a good friend of the New Netherland Institute and a good friend to many of us associated with NNI. Charlotte died in Albany on August 27, 2006, at the age of 101.

Since her first acquaintance with New York State, Charlotte was interested in Dutch Colonial architecture and history, especially 17th century ceramics. Established with her family in her house, Bozenbrow, a 17th century Dutch tenant farmhouse in Altamont NY, Charlotte started collecting and became an expert in Dutch Delft and Chinese export porcelain, a passion that was to last her lifetime, and one that many scholars and historians were able to benefit from. She lectured widely in this country and Europe, and published many articles on the subject, as well as writing two books that are often quoted in historical and archaeological publications. These books were published by the Albany Institute of History and Art, where she worked for many years as a volunteer and researcher in the curatorial division. The books are: *Dutch Trade and Ceramics in America in the 17th Century* and *Seventeenth Century Albany: A Dutch Profile*. Charlotte made several visits to the Netherlands to study Dutch ceramics and to speak at conferences. Interestingly for us, Charlotte was also personally acquainted with A.J.F. Van Laer (1869-1955), the first translator of the archives of New Netherland.



Charlotte's life was long, full, and active; she married twice and had seven children, and lived in such places as Detroit and Santa Fe. It's an energetic life that this brief recounting cannot satisfactorily portray. For additional details of Charlotte's life and career, as well as her influence on her world of scholarship, we suggest other sources. There are tributes and biographical appreciations in *Through an Antiquarian's Eye: The Writings of Charlotte Wilcoxen*, available through the NNI. Her obituary is in the Albany Times Union (www.timesunion.com) and we also refer you to Paul Grondahl's article that appeared in this newspaper on September 1, 2006. This piece avers that Charlotte attributed her longevity, in part, to sipping a Manhattan each evening. As a native of Cadiz KY, she naturally insisted that this be made with Kentucky bourbon.

Tributes to Charlotte unfailingly refer to her genuine warmth, her gentility, and her gracious southern charm as much as to her dedication, scholarship, and steadfast commitment that allowed her to continue her research and writing well into her 90s. As the late Friends of New Netherland President Rev. William Lydecker wrote in 1995, "In an age when the informed and intelligent amateur is not often given her due credit, Charlotte Wilcoxen stands as a wonderful example of someone whose achievements are indeed recognized by professional colleagues, not because she demands it but because the quality of her work does."



--Peter Douglas--