

De Nieuw Nederlansche Mercurius



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“De Nieuw Nederlansche Mercurius”

June 2009

Upcoming Events

May 20–October 12, 2009. The Museum of the City of New York presents: *Mannahatta/Manhattan: A Natural History of New York City*, which reveals the island of Mannahatta at the time of Henry Hudson’s arrival—a fresh, green new world at the moment of discovery. Through cutting edge multi-media and historical artifacts and maps, Mannahatta/Manhattan will re-imagine the quiet, wooded island at the mouth of a great river that was destined to become one of the greatest cities on Earth. Moreover, Mannahatta/Manhattan will challenge visitors to view the city of today as a place where the relationship between nature and people is at its most important and to understand that the principles of diversity, interdependence, and interrelativity operate in a modern mega-city much as they do in nature. In doing so, the exhibition will contribute something new to the history of New York—a view of its ecological origin—and in that contribution, shape the future as well. For more exhibit information go to: www.mcny.org; for much more information on the Mannahatta Project and a link to a NY Times review of the Project’s

incredible publication go to:
www.themannhattaproject.org.

June 5– September 27, 2009: Exhibition *Scripture for the Eyes: Bible Illustration in Netherlandish Prints of the Sixteenth Century* will be the first major exhibition to explore the central role played by printed illustrations of subjects from both the Old and New Testaments in one of the most dramatic artistic and religious transformations in European history. The exhibition consists of about 80 engravings, woodcuts, and illustrated Bibles and books by Lucas van Leyden, Maarten van Heemskerck, Philips Galle, Hendrick Goltzius, Hieronymus Wierix, and others; the biblical prints are shown to have been a dynamic force both in the transformation of Northern European art between Albrecht Dürer and Rembrandt van Rijn and in the intensified attention to Scripture in the religious turmoil of the Reformation and Counter-Reformation. The exhibition will be organized according to the diverse functions of the prints rather than according to a chronology of their production or a biblical narrative. *Scripture for the Eyes* is accompanied by a fully illustrated

catalog. The Museum of Biblical Art celebrates and interprets art related to the Bible and its cultural legacy in Jewish and Christian traditions through exhibitions, education and scholarship. It is located at 61st Street on Broadway, New York, NY. www.mobia.org.

June 13, 2009–January 10, 2010. The Hudson Valley Museum presents: “Dutch New York: The Roots of Hudson Valley Culture.” The exhibition looks at New York’s Dutch roots, spotlighting five key moments of the Netherlands’ influence in New York’s history: 1609, when Henry Hudson came up the river; 1709, when Dutch culture continued to thrive under English rule; 1809, when Washington Irving’s popular writings began to romanticize the Dutch heritage; 1909, when the Hudson-Fulton Celebration created a common Dutch past for a rapidly growing nation; and 2009, when the very concept of historical “celebration” is increasingly debated. These themes are illustrated with a rich assemblage of paintings, prints, photographs, furniture, maps, decorative arts, and ephemera from the Museum and other collections, including the Smithsonian, the

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Brooklyn Museum, and the National Gallery of Art. The Museum is located at 511 Warburton Avenue, Yonkers, NY 10701, (914) 963-4550, www.hrm.org.

June 23, 2009. *The Native response to Henry Hudson*, panel discussion with a o. Shirley Dunn, moderated by John Ring Adams. The indigenous reaction to Henry Hudson's visit 400 years ago varied sharply. The panelists will examine the strategies and perspectives of the three main groups of Native Americans that Hudson encountered. Program starts at 6:30pm at the Museum of the City of New York, Fifth Ave/104 St. For tickets: 212-534-1672 x3394.

July 14, 2009. The Museum of the City of New York will host a panel discussion and book signing for *Explorers, Fortunes and Love Letters* scheduled to begin at **6:30**. The panel will consist of the following contributors to the publication: Noah Gelfand, Peter Rose, and David Voorhees, and will be moderated by Charles Gehring. For more information contact the program coordinator Laura Bintzer at lbintzer@mcny.org.

July 31, 2009: *Dutch Colonial Architecture and Material Culture*, a special tour of the Luykas Van Alen House and site, Kinderhook, NY, from 4-5pm. Registration required. For more information: 518-758-9265.

Until September 27, 2009.

Amsterdam/New Amsterdam: The Worlds of Henry Hudson, presented in collaboration with the New Netherland Institute, Albany, and the National Maritime Museum Amsterdam/Nederlands Scheepvaartmuseum Amsterdam, will employ rare 16th- and 17th-century objects, images, and documents from major American and Dutch collections to bring the transatlantic world to life and reveal how Henry Hudson's epic third voyage of exploration planted the seeds of a modern society that took root and flourished in the New World.

For more information go to: www.mcny.org

Save the Date!

The NNI has scheduled the 32nd Rensselaerswijck Seminar "Kiliaen van Rensselaer's *Colonie*: Beginning of European Settlement of the Upper Hudson" from October 1- Saturday October 3, 2009. The Seminar will begin Thursday evening with a lecture by Russell Shorto followed by book signings and a reception. The programs on Friday and Saturday will focus on the Rensselaerswijck patroonship and genealogical resources for tracing one's Dutch ancestors both here and in the Netherlands. Speakers include Stefan Bielski, Peter Christoph, Jan Folkerts, Henry Hoff, Nico Plomp, Oliver Rink, Martha Shattuck, Len Tantillo, Janny Venema, and Charles Gehring. As an added attraction, many of the authors of *Explorers, Fortunes, and Love*

Letters: A Window on New Netherland will participate in a roundtable discussion of their current research activities. William 'Chip' Reynolds, captain of the Half Moon will be the featured speaker at the New Netherland dinner Saturday evening. In addition to the seminar programs, there will be an opportunity to visit Albany's First Dutch Reformed Church, participate in an AquaDuck tour of Albany, a guided tour of *Hudson River Panorama: 400 Years of History, Art, and Culture*, an exhibition at the Albany Institute of History and Art, and view an orientation film on the city of Albany. 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. A preliminary program, registration form, room reservation details will be available shortly online and sent by mail to NNI members. 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

"Without being aware of it, the inhabitants of New Netherland helped to spawn something new. We are their heirs, their future. They are our fathers and mothers. I can't think of a grander achievement for a historical venture than to kindle the awareness of such a familial connection between the present and a forgotten moment in

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the past.” (From Russell Shorto’s essay “Three Conversations”). Today, four hundred years later, the influence of the Dutch still remains in America. *Explorers, Fortunes and Love Letters: A Window on New Netherland* presents the fascinating story of this diverse and enterprising colony and its enduring cultural impact. The twelve essays in the book cover a wide array of topics and historical perspectives, immersing the reader in the day-to-day life of the settlers and tracing the influence of the Dutch from the seventeenth century to the present. These topics range from Henry Hudson’s navigational methods, the pursuit of fortune in the New World, child-rearing practices, and the love letters of Kiliaen van Rensselaer to the interactions between Dutch settlers and the Mohawks, Jews, and barber surgeons in New Netherland. Other essays cover the transformation of St. Nicholas into Santa Claus, the significance of bread baking, New York factional politics, and why New Netherland matters today. Readers will find this compilation brimming with fresh and varied perspectives on the origins of American culture and society, opening many truly new windows on the colony of New Netherland. Edited by Martha Dickinson Shattuck, *Explorers, Fortunes and Love Letters: A Window on New Netherland*, is published by the New Netherland Institute and Mount Ida Press. Distributed by SUNY Press. 184 pages, 8 color and 1 black and white illustrations, map, index. 7" by 10". Hardcover. ISBN 978-0-9625368-5-4. \$29.95.

Kees-Jan Waterman, co-winner of the 2007 Hendricks Manuscript Award, announces publication of his manuscript on the fur trade in Albany. The book consists of a translation of Evert Wendell’s account book of fur trade with Indian customers between 1695 and 1726. An introduction, detailed index and CD with the transcription of the original Dutch text make for an attractive package. Information on *To Do Justice to Him and Myself: Evert Wendells Account Book of the Fur Trade with Indians in Albany, N.Y., 1695-1726* can be found on the website of the publisher, the American Philosophical Society (Philadelphia), www.aps-pub.com/lightningrod.htm (scroll to bottom of page). Price: \$50.00 [ISBN 978-1-60618-912-2]. Orders may be placed through the form available at https://secure.dca.net/amphilsoc.org/order_form.htm. Shipping charges to foreign countries can be verified before ordering, by emailing fulfillment@amphilsoc.org. The publisher is working to make the volume and its separate parts (translation, transcription) also available through a printing-on-demand option. Kees-Jan Waterman can be reached at keesjw@hotmail.com.

Dutch New York: The Roots of Hudson Valley Culture is the companion to the exhibition of the same name opening at the Hudson River Museum on 12 June (see above). The paperback book consists of thirteen essays and many

illustrations, delving into four hundred years of the Dutch role in America’s growth and development. The 450-page book is to be published on June 12 and may be purchased from Amazon.com for \$19.77. (Don't forget to enter Amazon through our website.)

Amy Chu’s *Day of Empire: How Hyperpowers Rise to Global Dominance—and Why They Fall*, focuses on eleven “hyperpowers” ranging from Persia and Rome to America. In a middle section called: “The Enlightening of Tolerance” is a chapter on “The Dutch World Empire.” It’s an original analysis of Dutch commercial dominance in the 17th c. with a thought-provoking common thread shared by every empire, ultimately causing their rise and demise. Anchor Books paperback, 2007. 396 pages, \$16.95. [ISBN:978-1-4000-7741-0].

Learn Dutch

Leuven University in Belgium announces its intensive Dutch summer course: intended for beginners or learners wanting to improve their knowledge of the language. There are 5 levels: Elementary, Intermediate A, Intermediate B, Advanced A, and Advanced B. The teaching language is Dutch. Passive knowledge of English and/or French is an advantage. A level test on the first day will determine your knowledge of the Dutch language. For more information visit: ilt.kuleuven.be/summercourse.

Totidem Verbis

The Native Place of Manhattan: Where Did the Manhattan “Purchase” Take Place?

by Peter Douglas, contributing editor

Doubtless because of paucity of facts, numerous myths and misapprehensions have developed around the so-called Dutch “purchase” of Manhattan. Discussed below is just one of these hazy areas: where did it take place?

While it is generally agreed now that it was Peter Minuit who instigated the acquisition of Manhattan, who actually participated, both on the Dutch and native sides, is unclear. Similarly, the location of this famous transaction is not known. Two have been proposed. One, and by far the more likely, is at the southern tip of Manhattan, at Peter Minuit Plaza, where South and Whitehall Streets meet near South Ferry and Battery Park, or perhaps the space in front of the Custom House in the Bowling Green area. Being close to the original settlement on Nut Island and in the rudimentary town on Manhattan, this location would certainly have been convenient. While no confirmation exists in any record, it would have been a very handy venue for such a meeting.

The other site put forward is certainly curious, and has more of the flavor of a myth and wishful thinking about it. Legend has it that the site of the meeting with the Indians was in what is now Inwood Hill Park in the far northwest corner of Manhattan. Here in the park, on a level with West 218th Street, there is an inscribed lump of rock called the Shorakkopoch or Skorakopock rock. Local legend says that this is the site of Minuit’s transaction with the Indians, “near a knoll on the Spuyten Duyvil Creek.” The rock bears a bronze plaque and an inscription, as follows:

SHORAKKOPOCH

According to legend, on this site of the principal Manhattan village, Peter Minuit in 1626, purchased Manhattan Island for trinkets and beads then worth about 60 guilders.

This boulder also marks the spot where a tulip tree (*liriodendron tulipifera*) grew to a height of 165 feet and a girth of 20 feet. It was, until its death in 1932 at the age of 220 years, the last living link with the Reckgawawang Indians who lived here.

Dedicated as part of New York City’s 300th anniversary celebration by the
Peter Minuit Post 1247, American Legion
January 1954

Any statement that begins “According to legend” should be viewed as fishy, and it’s pretty much this boulder’s tablet alone that makes the claim that this is the site—and the mere claim all too readily becomes the legend. Inwood Hill Park contains the last old-growth forest and salt marsh in Manhattan, and is said to be the last 196 acres of how Manhattan looked before the Indians “sold” it to the Dutch. It was known during the colonial period as Cock or Cox Hill, perhaps from “Shorakapok,” “Shorakapkok,” or “Skorakopok,” the Indian name for the area, translating perhaps as “the wading place” or “the waiting place,” i.e. to cross the Harlem River, as it is now called, when the tide is low. Throughout the seventeenth century the Lenape tribe lived here.

It is not at all clear why this implausible place at the extreme northern end of the island, practically *terra incognita* at the time, should have been chosen as the site of the purchase (or, more accurately, is said to have been chosen), and we should firmly note that the plaque does hedge its bets by saying that this is the site “according to legend.” It has been reported that Walter Cubita, one of the last remaining members of the Peter Minuit Post and a 24-year-old veteran at the time the plaque was made, is baffled too, saying bluntly, “I don’t know why the hell we put it up in Inwood.” (*to be continued*)