

De Nieuw Nederlandse Mercurius



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“De Nieuw Nederlandse Mercurius”

Sept. 2010

Events of interest

September 25, 2010. “The Company Strikes Back,” will be the NNI’s 33rd New Netherland Seminar (né the Rensselaerswijck Seminar). It will focus on the restoration of New Netherland, 1673–1674. It is well known that Stuyvesant surrendered the Dutch colony to the English in 1664. What isn’t as well known is that during the third Anglo-Dutch war a combined Zeeland and Amsterdam squadron recovered most of what had been lost nine years earlier. Following is the program which will offer perspective to this mostly neglected period in New Netherland’s history:

8:30 Registration and coffee

9:15 Welcome and remarks

9:30 Morning Session

Joyce Goodfriend, “Looking Backward, Looking Forward: The Dutch Restoration of 1673/74 and the Narratives of 17th-Century New York History”

Dennis Maika, “‘We shall bloom and grow like the Cedar on Lebanon’: Dutch Merchants in English New York, 1664–1673”

Donald G. Shomette, “Raid on America, the Dutch Naval

Campaign of 1672–1674”

12:00 Lunch (box lunches available prepay)

1:45 Hendricks Award Presentation

2:15 Afternoon Session

David Voorhees, “A Provisional Government: The Dutch Administration of Governor Anthony Colve”

Daniel Richter, “New Netherland’s Restoration in the English Imperial Context of the Stuarts’ Restoration”

Len Tantillo, “The Appearance of Change: New York’s Melting Pot 1660–1720.”

The entire program will take place in the Carole Huxley Theater, West Hall, New York State Museum on Madison Avenue in Albany, NY. Check our website for additional information.

September 11, 2010. Firth Fabend will speak on “Plowmen, Politics, and Pietism: Dutch Settlers in the Hudson Valley” at the Fishkill Historical Society at 2 p.m. For more information, go to: www.bit.ly/clagik. Dr. Fabend will offer the same talk on September 29th at 1:00 pm at the Emanuel United Church of Christ in Woodhaven, NY. For more information go to: www.bit.ly/cf49Zh.

September 11, 2010. Peter Rose will speak on “Art in Food and Food in Art,” a lusciously illustrated slide-talk on food and drink seen in the 17th-century Dutch Masters and their relevance to the American kitchen today, at 5:30 at the annual (fundraising) dinner of the Rhinebeck Historical Society; Rhinecliff Hotel, Rhinecliff, NY. Ms. Rose will offer the same talk on September 25th at 11am at the Association of Blauvelt Descendants; Henry A. Wallace at the FDR Mus. & Lib., Rhinebeck, NY.

October 15–16, 2010. “Faces of Schenectady Seminar.” Because of the interest generated by “Faces of Schenectady: 1715–1750” as well as brand-new research, support from the First Reformed Church of Schenectady, and generous grants from the New York Council for the Humanities, and Schenectady County, the Schenectady County Historical Society is offering a two day seminar this October. Participants will be able to experience, first hand, new research related to eighteenth-century art, politics, and culture in Schenectady County. Along with one-of-a-kind lectures, SCHS is also offering a one-on-one gallery talk with

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co-curator Ona Curran and a 17th-century Dutch Luncheon made possible by the Glen Sanders Mansion. Take this opportunity to delve into the history of Schenectady County. For more information or to register: 518-374-0263 or www.schist.org or office@schist.org.

November 19, 2010. The 29th Peter Stuyvesant Ball, held for the benefit of the Netherland–America Foundation, Inc., will take place at Pier Sixty on the Hudson. For additional information contact Age B. Diedrick at 212–355–6363 or age.diedrick@rcn.com. For more on the Ball visit: www.thenaf.org.

Publications

Records of The Reformed Protestant Dutch Church of Flatbush, Kings County, New York. Volume 2 Midwood Deacons' Accounts 1654-1709, translated and edited by David William Voorhees. This second volume in the *Flatbush Church Records* series consists of deacons' accounts of the Flatbush (called by the Dutch *Midwout*, or Midwood), Long Island, Dutch Reformed congregation for the years 1654–1709. The volume is available for \$60.00. Send check or money order payable to: The Holland Society of New York 20 West 44th Street New York, NY 10036. Tel: 212–758–1675; fax: 212–758–2232; hollsoc@aol.com; www.hollandsociety.org; The Society is a tax-exempt, nonprofit organization; no sales tax is required.

NNI News

A reminder that applications for the Senior and Student Scholar grants are due 9/15 and 10/1 respectively. Go to: www.nnp.org for further information.

Len Tantillo on the Evertsen portrait on p. 3: “When it was determined that the NNI Seminar would focus on the exploits of Admiral Cornelis Evertsen and his raid on New York in 1673, I thought it would be an interesting challenge to try to recreate his face in a contemporary drawing style as opposed to using the traditional and somewhat unrealistic engraving of Evertsen that was made in his time. Taking the basic facial features that were suggested in the engraving I set about building a digital model of his head and hair style. Once I was satisfied with the results I made a few studies and then the final pencil drawing which is now being used to promote the NNI Seminar. The lighting and angle of the pose were intentionally designed to give him the stature of the heroic naval commander he seems to have been.”

Website(s)

For the New Netherland researcher one of the first places to look for information, whether it be the text of New Amsterdam's 1653 charter as a municipality or a curiosity about what was happening in the colony on your birthday in 1639, Stokes' *Iconography* is probably the first source you reach for. Now

you can access the chronology in vol. 4 and the index in vol. 6 via the following site: www.bit.ly/a4Tf96

Totidem Verbis

Because Cornelis Evertsen is central to this year's Seminar, our contributing editor, Peter Douglas, offers this profile of him. “The Voyage of Pieter de Lint, 1598–1603” will be concluded in the next issue.

Cornelis Evertsen the Youngest, 1642-1706: The Man Who Took Back New Netherland

Anyone searching for information about Cornelis Evertsen must be careful; there are three seventeenth century Dutch admirals with this name, and they are all related. Our interest lies in Cornelis Evertsen the Youngest (1642–1706). He was the second son of Admiral Cornelis Evertsen the Elder (1610–66), nephew of Admiral Johan Evertsen (1600–66), and cousin of the latter's son, Admiral Cornelis Evertsen the Younger (1628–79), with whom he is often confused. Cornelis was thus a member of a distinguished dynasty of naval heroes, though evidently one with little imagination when it came to naming babies. His nickname was *Keesje de Duivel*, or “Kees the Devil,” both for his bravery and for being ever in the thick of a fight, as well as for his hot-tempered and cantankerous nature.

Like a surprising number of Dutch admirals, including De Ruyter, Cornelis was born in Vlissingen, and had already had experience on his father's ship by age ten. When the Second Anglo-Dutch War broke out in

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1665 he became a privateer, and it wasn't long before an encounter with three enemy ships led to his capture. Because of his famous father and uncle he received special treatment and came to the attention of King Charles' brother James, Duke of York, then Lord High Admiral. Samuel Pepys' diary records what happened when James met Cornelis on April 17: "*And Everson, when he was brought before the Duke of Yorke, and was observed to be shot through the hat, answered, that he wished it had gone through his head, rather than been taken.*" Luckily for his country, the ball had only gone through his hat.

Following his release and return to the Netherlands, Cornelis went on to serve with distinction and participated in numerous sea battles. That June he was part of the decisive English victory at Lowestoft, and he fought in the Four Days Battle in 1666, where he was flag captain of his father's ship. Cornelis also took part in the St James Day Battle in 1666, and the following June he had a role in the raid on the Medway. In 1672 Cornelis was in command of one of the men-of-war that repelled the English attack on the Smyrna fleet, a convoy of Dutch armed merchant ships and their escorts, returning from the Levant. The following May he commanded the *Zwanenburg* against the English-French fleet at the Battle of Solebay.

With the war against England still ongoing, the authorities of Zeeland gave this battle-hardened 30-year-old veteran command of a daring and ambitious expedition to

capture and plunder England's homeward-bound East India fleet while victualling at St Helena in the South Atlantic. Success would mean the financial salvation of Zeeland. If the mission were to founder, the fleet was to proceed to the Cayenne and the Caribbean to prey on the enemy's ships and destroy and pillage its colonial outposts. No one could know that this voyage would write Cornelis' name in the history books.

The Zeeland Squadron, consisting of six ships, with



Cornelis Evertsen de Jongste

This sketch of *Keesje de Duivel* was developed by Len Tantillo from existing portraits of the Admiral. See NNI news.

Cornelis commanding the *Zwanenburg*, left the Netherlands in late 1672. An encounter with a superior English fleet at the Cape Verde Islands forced him to abort the raid after learning that, by an uncanny coincidence, the enemy fleet was also bound for St. Helena to intercept the Dutch VOC fleet. Not wishing to run into the more

powerful English fleet again, Cornelis turned to Plan B. His ships reached South America by March 1673, after which he set course for the Caribbean. After failing to find prizes in Barbados, he made for Martinique.

Here by chance he encountered the Amsterdam squadron under Jacob Benckes (1637–77), sent out in December to prey on the enemy's colonies and trade in the West Indies. The two squadrons joined to create a formidable naval force, and sailed northwards during the summer months, running up a list of spectacular successes. They captured or destroyed as many as 200 ships, attacked and burned the Virginia tobacco fleet in the Chesapeake, and amassed much booty.

The combined fleet arrived at the English colony of New York in July 1673. The English had taken over New Netherland in 1664, and the sight of the impressive armada with Dutch flags fluttering awoke the smoldering loyalty of many of the inhabitants. While the fleet was lying at anchor off Sandy Hook a contingent of disgruntled Dutchmen went aboard. They grumbled about life under the English, and provided valuable intelligence about the shabby state of the city's defenses and the poorly garrisoned Fort James. They also indicated that Governor Lovelace was absent from the city. All this kindled the interest of Cornelis and Benckes, and gave them a crazy idea: what if they were to actually *retake* New Netherland?

The decision made, Cornelis sent a letter to the citizens of New York, advising them of his

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intentions and requesting support for such an action, or at least their neutrality. He then demanded that the governor of Fort James should surrender. How Cornelis treated the English authorities gives rich insight into the personality of *Keesje de Duivel*. When the Englishmen demanded to see Cornelis' commission he replied that it was "stuck in the muzzle of the cannon," as they would soon find out if they did not hand over the fort.

Following a brief exchange of fire and the landing of 600 marines under Captain Anthony Colve, the English surrendered. It was an easy victory. New York became New Orange, Fort James became Fort Willem Hendrick, and Captain Colve was appointed military governor-general. During the transition to a new provisional government, Cornelis and Benckes made a further attack on English interests, this time targeting the Newfoundland fisheries fleet. In October, four ships under Nicholas Boes were sent on this mission and had great success, causing much destruction. After this, Boes was to rendezvous with the Zeeland fleet at Fayal in the Azores.

Cornelis and Benckes left New Orange in mid-September and reached the Azores on October 27, where they encountered a huge storm that caused the loss of several ships. The remnants of the fleet arrived at Cadiz in December, in sore need of repairs and refitting. It was here that Cornelis received orders from home, and he arrived back in Vlissingen on June 23, 1674.

For all the efforts of Cornelis and Benckes, the new Dutch rule at New Orange was short-lived, and in November 1674 the colony reverted to England under the Treaty of Westminster, a bargaining chip in the peace process, and the Dutch empire in the New World finally came to an end.

Cornelis did not get a happy reception. Despite many successes, it was his failures that the Zeeland officials chose to examine. While his companion in arms, Jacob Benckes, was promoted to Vice Admiral of Amsterdam, as his reward Cornelis was accused of disobedience and summoned before the Assembly to answer charges. It didn't help that Cornelis had little to show for his travels, most of his prizes having been lost to storms. His superiors couldn't overlook his failure to carry out his primary mission at St Helena, whose success would have brought huge profits.

As for his escapades in New York, this was an impulsive action on Cornelis' part and one not sanctioned in his instructions. While it may be regarded as his greatest achievement of that voyage, this was not how the Zeeland officials saw it. Short of cash, they were looking not for territory but for prize ships and rich cargoes to replenish the depleted provincial treasury. To them this sideshow in New York was minor and incidental; it had created more problems and responsibilities, and, worse, more expense. Cornelis' feat was not so much a grand patriotic thrill, merely a new economic burden.

Nevertheless, Cornelis had a famous name and supporters who were not armchair admirals and knew well the numerous risks and uncertainties of the sea. In the end the charges were dropped, and neither his ambition nor his upward progress was hindered by his failures. He was appointed Rear-Admiral of Zeeland the following year, and in 1677 he commanded a blockade against the Dunkirkers, commerce raiders in the service of Spain operating from Flemish ports. In 1679 he replaced his deceased cousin, Cornelis the Younger, as Vice-Admiral of Zeeland, and he continued to receive promotions and fight battles. He commanded the vanguard of the invasion fleet of William Prince of Orange when he landed in Brixham in November 1688 to begin the "Glorious Revolution," and was involved in an expedition to Ireland. In 1690 at the Battle of Beachy Head Cornelis led the Dutch squadron, this time fighting with the English against the French as Europe continued its political turmoil. Admiral Van Almonde replaced him as commander of the Netherlands fleet in 1690, and he was never to command a major fleet again.

Cornelis died on November 16, his birthday, in 1706 and was buried in St Peter's Church in Middelburg. The tomb was moved to the Nieuwe Kerk in 1918. In 1940 the church was damaged but the tomb survived and can be seen today, "a modest memorial to the man whose raid on America nearly altered the course of history."