

# De Nieuw Nederlandse Mercurius



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“De Nieuw Nederlandse Mercurius”

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## Events of interest

**January 4, 2015.** “New Perspectives on Dutch New York: An Interdisciplinary Approach to Understanding New Netherland and Its Atlantic Connections,” at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association in NYC. New York Ballroom East (Sheraton New York, Third Floor) 2:30–4:30. Chair: Dennis Maika, New Netherland Institute.

### Papers:

“The ‘Ideal City’ of New Amsterdam: Seventeenth-Century Netherlandic City Planning in North America,”

Jeroen van den Hurk, Coastal Carolina Research;

“Each and Every One Must Refrain from Adulterous Intercourse, The Dutch West India Company and Marriage,”

Deborah Hamer, Boston College;

“All the World’s a State: The Life and Poems of Jacob Steendam, Seventeenth-Century Dutch Traveler,”

Danny Noorlander, State University of New York at Oneonta;

“Reconstructing a Slave Ship Voyage: The Gideon and the Dutch Slave Trade into New Amsterdam,”

Andrea Catharina Mosterman, University of New Orleans.

Comment: Wim Klooster, Clark University.

### Session Abstract:

Although North America’s Dutch colonial history has received increasing attention in recent years, this part of Early American and Atlantic history requires closer investigation. Through analysis of building instructions, marriage and sex regulations, poetry, and slave trade records, this panel presents new ways to examine New Netherland’s history and its Atlantic connections. In so doing, this panel hopes to generate a broader dialogue concerning the colony’s history and its place in colonial American and Atlantic history.

Jeroen van den Hurk’s paper analyzes the role city planning played in the construction of New Amsterdam. In particular, his paper examines how the building instructions for New Amsterdam reflected ideas about city planning in 16th- and 17th-century Europe. His paper demonstrates, however, that the city’s actual construction was more reminiscent of the organic growth of medieval towns in Europe. Deborah Hamer uses

traditional sources to examine a not-so-traditional topic: sex and marriage in New Netherland. Her paper argues that marriage and sex regulations not only provided the foundation for social order in the colony, as they did everywhere in the Atlantic world, but also supported the West India Company’s claims to political authority. Danny Noorlander uses the poetry of the Dutch colonist Jacob Steendam to study the common man’s view of Dutch expansion. Although known primarily for his descriptive verses about New Netherland, Steendam’s other more voluminous works included personal reflections on his experiences in Africa and Asia. Noorlander’s paper places Steendam’s lesser-known work in relation to his New Netherland poetry to reveal a unique personal view of the Atlantic world. Finally, Andrea Mosterman’s paper reconstructs the voyage of a slave ship to obtain new insights into the Dutch slave trade into New Amsterdam. In her paper, she shows that while there are only few sources that record specifics of the slave trade into this city, by piecing together micro-histories of the places and people involved in the

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trade it is possible to write a history of the Dutch slave trade that extends beyond the statistics.

Together, these presentations will offer new interpretations and diverse methodological approaches to understanding New Netherland history and its place in colonial America and the seventeenth century Atlantic; as such, this panel should appeal to scholars of New Netherland, the Early Modern Atlantic, Early American history, as well as those interested in exploring different ways to reconstruct history.

For more conference information go to: <http://bit.ly/1w12fpG>.

### News

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#### The Whitehill Prize in Early American History

The Colonial Society of Massachusetts announces the 2014 Walter Muir Whitehill Prize in Early American History.

This prize of \$2,500, established in memory of Walter Muir Whitehill, for many years editor of publications for the Colonial Society and the moving force behind the organization, will be awarded for a distinguished essay on early American history (up to 1825), not previously published, with preference being given to New England subjects. The Society hopes that the prize may be awarded annually.

A committee of members of the Colonial Society will review the essays. Their decision in all cases will be final.

By arrangement with the editors

of the New England Quarterly, the Society will have the winning essay published in an appropriate issue of the journal.

Essays are now being accepted for consideration. All manuscripts submitted for the 2014 prize must be postmarked no later than 31 December 2014. The Society expects to announce the winning candidate in the spring of 2015.

Entries submitted for consideration should be addressed to: Whitehill Prize Committee c/o The New England Quarterly Meserve Hall, 2nd Floor Northeastern University Boston, MA 02115.

For a list of prize specifications please visit: <http://bit.ly/1B9hfmA>

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Hudson, New York—The Jacob Leisler Institute for the Study of Early New York History is excited to announce the opening of its office at 46 Green Street in Hudson, New York, on November 3. The Jacob Leisler Institute is a study and research center devoted to colonial New York under English rule, as well as a permanent home to the Papers of Jacob Leisler Project. At its organizing meeting recently in Albany, Dr. David William Voorhees was elected Executive Director of the Institute and Dr. Firth Haring Fabend its President.

From its inception in 1988, the Papers of Jacob Leisler Project has been housed at New York University. Its move to Hudson signals the Project's intention to make these materials available in a

centrally located place in the Hudson River Valley accessible both to scholars of early New York and to local historians seeking to study the background of their communities during what historians term the "long" eighteenth-century.

In the years spanning 1664 to the American Revolution, New York Province's diverse European settlers and Native American and African populations were transformed by contact with each other and by the geographical, climatic, and economic conditions of the Americas into a cosmopolitan colonial territory with ties throughout the Atlantic World. The Institute is named for Jacob Leisler (1640–1691), whose ill-fated 1689–1691 administration of New York is the period's focal point. Leisler's administration colored New York Province's political, economic, and cultural life until the outbreak of hostilities with Great Britain in the 1770s.

The Institute is an independent, nonprofit organization. As a study center, its aim is to serve scholars and students of the period as well as teaching the necessary skills in order to preserve and interpret the period's vast manuscript and material sources. Students of all historical disciplines, including archaeology, material culture, and folklore, are encouraged to use and contribute to the Institute as an educational and archival resource, as well as prepare papers, book length manuscripts, and lectures from its holdings.

Located in Hudson, New York, a small historic city in the bucolic

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Hudson River Valley, the Institute is easily accessible from New York City, Boston, and Albany by road and rail. Hudson, with a dynamic contemporary culture, and the surrounding countryside provide a wealth of resources relating to the period, such as the Luykas Van Alen House, the Claverack Reformed Dutch church, numerous seventeenth- and eighteenth-century architectural and archeological sites, and the extensive Van Rensselaer and Livingston manorial landholdings.

For additional information, email: [info@jacobleislerintitute.org](mailto:info@jacobleislerintitute.org).

### Publication(s)

*Indian Slavery in Colonial America*, edited by Alan Galloway, examines the complicated dynamics of Indian enslavement. How and why Indians became both slaves of the Europeans and suppliers of slavery's victims is the subject of this book. The essays in this collection use Indian slavery as a lens through which to explore both Indian and European societies and their interactions, as well as relations between and among Native groups.

European enslavement of American Indians began with Christopher Columbus's arrival in the New World. The slave trade expanded with European colonies, and though African slave labor filled many needs, huge numbers of America's indigenous peoples continued to be captured and forced to work as slaves. Although central to the process of colony building in what became the United States, this

phenomena has received scant attention from historians.

Nebraska University Press; hard-cover 448pp, \$60; paper \$30 in July of 2015.

### Peter G. Rose

Author and food historian Peter Rose will be presenting "Joyful Traditions: St. Nicholas, the Saint who became Santa" on these dates and at these locations:

Dec. 10 at 7:00: Chappaqua Library, Chappaqua, NY;

Dec. 13 at 2:00: Guilderland Library, Guilderland, NY;

Dec. 14 at 3:30: Irvington Historical Society, at the Irvington Library;

Dec. 18 at 7:00: Philipse Manor Hall, Yonkers, NY.

All talks are sponsored by the New York Council for the Humanities.

### Summer Seminar

NEH is sponsoring a five week Summer Seminar for school teachers from 28 June to 31 July 2015. The theme will be "The Dutch Republic and Britain: The Making of Modern Society and a European World Economy." The seminar will be offered by Professor Gerard M. Koot (University of Massachusetts/Dartmouth) in London, England and Leiden, The Netherlands. NEH will provide a \$3,900 stipend for expenses. The application deadline is 2 March 2015. For more information, go to:

<http://bit.ly/1w12DEx>; or email [gkoot@umassd.edu](mailto:gkoot@umassd.edu).

### NNI News

The Annual Hendricks Award is given to the best book or book-length manuscript relating to any aspect of New Netherland and its legacy. The Award carries a prize of \$5,000 as well as a framed print of a painting by L. F. Tantillo. In 2015 only recently published books will be considered for the award.

For criteria and submission requirements go to our website under Programs/Awards/Hendricks. Deadline is 1 February 2015.

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The *Online Publications* page on our website continues to grow. The posting of all of the published NNP/NNRC translations is nearly complete, with the final three volumes being processed for posting in the coming weeks. For an overview of these translations see the compilation of introductions under "Guides and Finding Aids." Also being processed is A.J.F. van Laer's three volume translated set *Minutes of the Court of Albany, Rensselaerswyck and Schenectady*. Recent additions include a translation and transcription of Govert Loockermans's correspondence at the New-York Historical Society and scans of Dr. Charles Gehring's handwritten transcriptions (ca. 1980) of the *Delaware Papers (Dutch Period)*. A companion piece to Govert Loockermans's correspondence is a translation of Dr. Willem Frijhoff's article

“Govert Loockermans (1617?–1671?) and His Relatives: How an Adolescent from Turnhout Worked His Way up in the New World,” which is also on our site. None of this material is available elsewhere online.

### **Totidem Verbis**

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#### A *Château* on the Hudson?

by Stephen McErleane

The 400th anniversary of Albany’s first documented European settlement gives us an opportunity to clear up some inaccuracies surrounding its history. In particular, it is time to roundly debunk the stubborn myth that the French built the first European structure in Albany.

Several Wikipedia pages—“Albany,” “Castle Island,” “Fort Nassau”—claimed (now edited) that Albany’s first European structure was a fort on Castle Island built by French traders in 1540. The “Castle Island” page called it a *château* and claimed that the Dutch rebuilt the French fort, “which they called a castle[,] giving rise to the name of the island.” This is silly. There is no credible evidence of a French fort on Castle Island or anywhere in the region, and any account of a structure resembling a *château* is particularly absurd. So where did this myth come from?

The “Albany” page cited the *Chronicles of Albany* by Cuyler Reynolds. Reynolds—an early 20th-century Albany City Historian—did not cite his source, but its origin appears to be A.J. Weise’s

1884 book *The Discoveries of America to the Year 1525*. Weise began his argument for the French castle with a discussion of *Norumbega*, a mythical North American settlement that captivated New World explorers in the 16th and 17th centuries. According to Weise, the French appellation *La Terre de Normeberge* is a corruption of *La Terre de Anormèe Berge*, a reference, he claimed, to the Palisades along the Hudson (349). Weise then turned to a 1545 manuscript in the National Library of France in which explorer Jean Alfonse described the *Riviere de Norenbegue* as salty to the height of forty leagues or eighty-eight miles (353). According to Weise, this “satisfactorily established” said river as the Hudson because it is brackish to a similar height. Modern scholarship, however, has largely refuted Weise’s claim.

It is now generally believed that the river often referred to as *Norumbega* was the Penobscot in Maine. David B. Quinn—a contemporary historian of the voyages of discovery and colonization of America—wrote that in 1542 the aforesaid Alfonse piloted a colonizing fleet to the St. Lawrence River (45). Sailing southward on his return voyage, Alfonse produced a sketch of the Penobscot River that he labeled *Riviere de Norenbegue*. Weise’s claim that Alfonse sailed up the Hudson is highly questionable.

Even if we accept his claim that Alfonse sailed up the Hudson as high as Albany, Weise failed to present any credible evidence of a

French fort on Castle Island. He makes several specious claims to support his argument. For example, like the “Castle Island” Wikipedia page, Weise claimed that the Dutch did not build Fort Nassau. “[B]y naming it Fort Nassau,” he wrote, “[the Dutch] permitted historians to infer that they had constructed it...” (363). But it beggars the imagination to think that the Dutch went to great lengths to fool everyone by renaming the fort, then inexplicably named the island after the fort whose presence they were trying to conceal! As New Netherland Research Center Director Charles Gehring has surmised, the most likely origin of the name Castle Island is not a French *château*, but the Indian palisaded villages for which the Dutch used the word *kasteel*.

One final point: the castle that Weise described was substantial—fifty-eight feet wide between its walls. It is difficult to believe that such a sight would not have been noted by Robert Juet, Henry Hudson’s crewmate, as he sailed by in 1609. But his journal makes no mention of the structure.

As mentioned above, I have edited the Wikipedia pages describing the French fort. Instead of deleting all references to the French fort, I have noted their apocryphal nature. This will allow both the myth and the truth to remain in the historical record for posterity.

