

De Nieu Nederlandse Mercurius

Vol. 34, No. 1

“De Nieu Nederlandse Mercurius”

March 2018

Events of Interest

March 11, 2018. The Friends of Clermont announce a lecture by Travis Bowman on “Slavery and the Palatines.” Bowman will examine how slavery evolved in New York under the Dutch, British, and American systems of government and how the institution was used at the local and personal level among the Palatine immigrants and their descendants in the Hudson and Mohawk Valleys. The event starts at 1pm at the Clermont State Historic Site in the Columbia County community of Germantown. Admission is \$5.

March 29, 2018. Culinary Historian Peter G. Rose will give a talk on “Manuscript Cookbooks as Documents of Social and Family History” (in Dutch) at the Special Collections Library of the University of Amsterdam. Using her knowledge of Dutch customs and food history, she will discuss examples of such Dutch/American recipe/scrap-books that contain Dutch recipes dating as far back as the late 17th century and ranging to the 20th century. They show the continued identification with the forebears, but also the gradual assimilation into American life.

Until May 6, 2018. Upon the occasion of the publication of the book *Verzwegen zeeheld, Jacob Benckes (1637–1677) en zijn wereld*, the Frisian Maritime

Museum in Sneek has organized an exhibition on Benckes. See PUBLICATIONS for information on the book. Also, for the museum go to: friesscheepvaartmuseum.nl.

In Memoriam

Martha Dickinson Shattuck
1930–2018



Martha began working as a researcher at the New Netherland Project in 1988. She received her PhD in history from Boston University in 1993 and received the coveted Hendricks Award in 1994 for her dissertation, “A Civil Society: Court and Community in Beverwijck, New Netherland, 1652–1664.” Well and truly ensconced in the work of the New Netherland Project, she soon became Assistant Editor of the *New York Netherland Documents* series with the publication of Council Minutes, Volume 6, (SU Press, 1995). She published many articles on New Netherland, served as an adjunct professor at the State University at Albany, the College of St. Rose in Albany, and Marymount College in

Tarrytown, NY. For many years and until she moved to Tucson, AZ, she hosted the speakers’ dinners prior to the seminars. She gave papers at Rensselaerswijck Seminars/New Netherland Conferences, as well as the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, and several universities in the Netherlands. She was the New Netherland and Colonial editor for *The Encyclopedia of New York State* (Syracuse University Press, 2005). She was the editor of *Explorers, Fortunes and Love Letters: A Window on New Netherland* (2009) and, as our first Quinn Library Research Resident, she edited and annotated the “New Netherland Papers” in the Bontemantel Collection at the New York Public Library for publication on our website. She also served as the list administrator for New Netherland Bibliography, a comprehensive list of scholarly, nonfiction publications related to the seventeenth-century Dutch colony and its legacy in America, which is also on our website. Martha was passionate about the study of New Netherland and willing to mentor newcomers in the field; she was a delight to know, had a quick wit, and was never at a loss for words. We’ll miss her. R.I.P.

[MED]

New Netherland Institute, Box 2536 Empire State Plaza Station, Albany, NY 12220

Voice: 518-486-4815 | Fax: 518-473-0472

nyslfnn@nysed.gov | www.newnetherlandinstitute.org

Save the Dates

The 31st Annual Meeting of the New Netherland Institute will be held on Friday, May 4th at the University Club in Albany beginning at 5:30 pm with a business meeting, followed by the Alice P. Kenney Memorial Award presentation, and a talk by the 2017 Hendricks Award winner Kenneth Shefsiek, author of *Set in Stone: Creating and Commemorating a Hudson Valley Culture*. A reception will follow the program.

For the third time in as many “summers,” we are taking the NNI and NNRC on the road. On June 1st and 2nd (Friday night and Saturday) we will be at the Old Stone House in Brooklyn. Friday night will feature a talk by Russell Shorto, who will emcee Saturday’s program of talks on New Netherland. Keep an eye on our website for more details.

Museum News

New Netherland Historical Archaeology Collections at the New York State Museum

Over 3 million artifacts in the Historical Archaeology collection at the NYSM document New York’s past from the earliest Dutch settlements in the seventeenth through the mid twentieth centuries. Unique in the collection are the roughly 100,000 artifacts dating to the period between 1624 and 1664 when New York was part of the Dutch colony of New Netherland. This collection is the largest example of its kind in the world and a rich source of information on the development of New York as a center of world commerce. Most of these artifacts were recovered during large excavations in Albany (Beverwijck) and New York City (New Amsterdam) between the 1970s and early 2000s. Artifact collections from Manhattan include those from Augustine Herrman’s 1640s warehouse, the privy of New Netherland secretary Cornelis van

Tienhoven, and the household of the surgeon, Hans Kierstede. Albany collections include artifacts from a brick maker’s house and brickyard, an illegal trading hut, the Volkert Jansen Douw house, Arent van Curler’s 1640s house at Schuyler Flatts, and the 1624 West India Company trading post of Fort Orange. These artifacts are regularly made available for exhibition, research, and educational programing.

The New York State Museum is currently preparing an exhibition on Fort Orange scheduled to open in May of 2018. This new exhibit will tell the story of Fort Orange from the Native Americans who lived at the site for thousands of years to the Dutch who came to trade European objects for beaver pelts. Artifacts uncovered during the 1970 excavations directed by former New York State Parks and Recreation archaeologist Dr. Paul Huey will be featured in the exhibit. Look for selected artifacts from the New Netherland collections at the New York State Museum in future issues of the *Marcurius*. [MTL]

Call for Papers

We are now accepting presentation proposals for our 41st Annual Conference, which will convene in Albany at the New York State Museum on the 22nd of September 2018. The program committee welcomes paper proposals on any aspect of New Netherland. Proposals that highlight the legacy of New Netherland are also encouraged. Submissions are due by April 15.

Research News

This section should actually be called RESEARCHER BEWARE; or, at least prefaced by the caution, if a translation seems odd, impossible, or illogical, check the original. The following example is appropriate because it involves an attack of the

combined squadron of Benckes and Evertsen on English shipping in the James River of Virginia in 1673, one month before their recapture of New Netherland. The translation in question is published in the Addenda to the Chronology of volume four of Stokes’ *Iconography of Manhattan Island* (page 959). Under the date July 1673, it reads: “A list of ships captured and burned by the Dutch squadron in the James River of Virginia shows seven captured with 5,750 head of cattle and five burned with 3,050 head of cattle.” The source is “The Evertsen Papers” at the New York Public Library. If you do the math, the seven captured ships each would have averaged 821 head of cattle and the five burned ships 610. Red flags should have gone up. Even Noah’s ark would have been challenged. The word that causes the problem is *oxhouften*. The translator even inserts the word in parenthesis after the first occurrence of “head of cattle” without a question mark, indicating that the phrase was a solution rather than a conjecture.

In the 17th century the James River was an assembly area for the English tobacco fleet, not for cattle round-ups. *Oxhouften* is the Dutch word for hogsheads or containers in which tobacco was packed for shipment to Europe. With the addition of the seven ships, carrying 5,750 hogsheads of tobacco (not head of cattle), the combined squadron had grown to 19 ships. New York would soon become New Netherland again.

Publications

In 1673 Cornelis Evertsen, commander of a Zeeland squadron accidentally met up with an Amsterdam squadron commanded by Jacob Benckes off the coast of Martinique in the Caribbean. Their combined fleet became the most formidable in the Americas at that time. Its strength would make the retaking of New Netherland a piece of cake. Much has been written about Evertsen; however, until now, Benckes has escaped attention.

With the publication of *Verzwegen zeeheld, Jacob Benckes (1637-1677) en zijn wereld* by Jan de Vries he has been brought out of hiding. Although little is known of his personal life, he was involved in many conflicts at sea, including the famous 1667 raid on the Medway. The book also sheds new light on the 1673 recapture of New Netherland. Order at: walburgpers.nl. ISBN9789462492745; 384 pages, €29.95.

Researching Your Dutch Ancestors: A Practical Guide 2017 has been compiled by Maria A. Dering at the request of the Society of Daughters of Holland Dames. As former Directress General of the Society, Elbrun Kimmelman, writes in her introduction, "It is a most helpful guide to identifying some of the earliest founding families of America and their generational growth over the past 400 years. It is also a guide to help you, the reader and student of genealogical history, discover the many rich resources, people, and institutions who can help you on your journey of self-discovery."

The publication of the new 2017 edition of *Researching Your Dutch Ancestors* is available through the Daughters of Holland Dames website www.hollanddames.org under the heading: SHOP. The cost is \$24 plus \$10 for shipping and handling.

Shorto News

Russell will be appearing at the following places for readings and book signings of his latest book *Revolution Song: A Story of American Freedom*.

March 6, Mount Vernon, VA
April 12, Stonington Historical Society, Stonington, CT
April 14, Haddam, CT
April 15, Brentwood Library, Brentwood, NY
May 11, Friends of Port Washington Library, Manhasset, NY

June 14, Des Moines Public Library, Des Moines, IA

NNI News

NNI News Alice P. Kenney Award: Applications are due April 1, 2018. This grant now enables the NNI to award an annual prize of \$5,000 to an individual or group that has made a significant contribution to colonial Dutch studies and/or has encouraged understanding of the significance of the Dutch colonial experience in North America by research, teaching, writing, speaking, or in other ways. For more information: <http://bit.ly/1MaJCYJ>

Clague and Carol Van Slyke Article Prize: Applications due April 1, 2018. The New Netherland Institute now offers an annual \$1,000 prize for the best published article relating to the Dutch colonial experience in the Atlantic world, with a special sensitivity to New Netherland or its legacy. Articles must be written in English and be published for the first time no earlier than three calendar years before the deadline, e.g. no earlier than 2014 for the 2017 prize. For information, go to: <http://bit.ly/2ERRH6F>

NNI/NNRC Student Scholar in Residence Research Grant: Applications due June 1, 2018. The grant covers a period of up to three months in residence and provides a stipend of \$5,000. A time frame for fulfilling the grant requirements will be established in consultation with the Director of the NNRC. No housing, travel funds, or health insurance are provided. Scholars beyond the undergraduate level and actively working on a thesis, dissertation, or scholarly article are invited to apply. Research must be conducted at the NNRC, New York State Library, and the New York State Archives, Albany, NY, in the field of New Netherland history and

the Dutch Atlantic world, using the Records of New Netherland. More information: <http://bit.ly/2GKo7wl>

New on our Website

"New York's Colonial Dutch History: An Education Resource from the New York State Archives" uses documents and paintings to explore both the global nature of the Dutch colonial experience and life in New Netherland, specifically Rensselaerswijck, Beverwijck, and Fort Orange.

For our tenth podcast "New Netherland *Praatjes*," best-selling author, and usual host of this series, Russell Shorto sits down with "Praatjes" producer Steve McErleane to discuss Shorto's latest book, *Revolution Song: A Story of American Freedom*. The conversation also covers Shorto's insights into the interpretation of historical evidence, his thoughts on the craft of writing, and his experiences as an author. For "New Netherland *Praatjes*," go to: <http://bit.ly/2CkMT0D>

"The Dutch Among the Natives: American Indian-Dutch Relations, 1609-1664," a digital exhibit by Dr. William Starna, is a series of vignettes that reflect something of the shared experiences that took place between the Dutch and the original inhabitants of the region that would be called New Netherland. As historian James Axtell once put it, European invaders had encountered Native defenders. Yet the intent of the Dutch to control the lucrative trade in furs forced a partnership with Indians that, for the most part, presented advantages for both parties, although it sometimes lost its way. The outcome for many was often tumultuous amid misunderstandings, violence, and death. But compromises and accommodations were made and life went on, for better or worse. The colonial venture had begun.

Totidem Verbis

Zijn Daden Bennen Groot
Piet Heyn and the Capture
of the Silver Fleet
by
Peter A. Douglas

There can't be many events from the seventeenth century that can still stir the soul of the Dutch, but the capture of the Spanish "Silver Fleet" by Piet Heyn is certainly one of them. The fame of Piet Heyn, dead for nearly 400 years, vividly lives on in song. It may be heard at a choral society performance, a concert, a soccer game, or some other event of national significance. Even at a lively Dutch party someone may start singing *Een Triomfantelijk Lied van de Zilvervloot*—the Triumphant Song of the Silver Fleet. Its chorus goes, in part: *Piet Heyn, Piet Heyn / Piet Heyn zijn naam is klein, / Zijn daden bennen groot, / Hij heeft gewonnen de Zilvervloot.* [Piet Heyn his name is short, his deeds are great, he has captured the Silver Fleet.] The *Lied* is hugely popular.

The song is not contemporary with what it celebrates but dates from the mid-nineteenth century, the words written by Jan Pieter Heije (1809-76) and the music by Joannes Viotta (1814-59). It grew to be so popular that it has been called "the unofficial Dutch national anthem." Clearly Piet Heyn's feat echoes down the ages to what may seem a surprising degree to anyone struggling to come up with their own indelible historic episode from four centuries ago. Whatever we might have in mind, its communal and national significance is probably nothing like that generated in the Netherlands by Piet Heyn and the Silver Fleet, an event that has inspired long-lasting patriotic emotions.

Piet Heyn (also spelled Hein, and originally Pieter Pieterszoon) was born in 1577 in Delfshaven, now a borough of Rotterdam in South Holland. He was the son of a sea captain and went to sea as a teenager. In his twenties he was twice captured by the Spanish and served as a galley slave from 1598 to 1602, when he was traded for Spanish prisoners. He was again a prisoner in

Cuba for two years. In 1607 he joined the VOC and served in Asia, returning with the rank of captain. He settled in Rotterdam and married a well-off widow, and by 1622 had been elected as a city alderman.



In 1623 Heyn joined the WIC. He was appointed Vice Admiral and second in command of a fleet that captured Bahia, Brazil, in 1624. Other impressive victories followed—raids on Portuguese settlements, and capturing their ships. In 1627 alone he took 38 vessels and an enormous amount of booty. It was fitting, then, that the Company next gave him command of 31 ships with instructions to intercept the Spanish treasure ships.

As the lifeline of its Atlantic empire, Spain sent two fleets a year to Veracruz and Cartagena, bringing European goods to re-supply its colonies in the Americas. On the return trip, the ships were laden with treasures for the homeland, notably a huge amount of silver and other valuable cargoes from Mexico and Peru. Books and films have tended to create the perception that privateers captured numerous Spanish treasure galleons laden with "pieces of eight," but in reality few fleets were actually lost to such predations. Of the hundreds of Spanish colonial shipwrecks from the sixteenth through the eighteenth centuries, only a few were "treasure ships" containing significant items of value. And only Piet Heyn succeeded in capturing the famous Silver Fleet and brought its rich cargo to the Dutch Republic.

After the twelve years' truce ended in 1621 the United Provinces' war with Spain recommenced, and privateering became one of the WIC's purposes, with the aim of draining the Spanish coffers and filling its own. Merchant ships were armed and manned with soldiers to defend themselves against

(and to plunder) Spanish ships. The Dutch were active in the Caribbean, and the great prize that the WIC sought was the Spanish Silver Fleet.

The WIC was serious about this goal, and in 1627 it equipped two fleets with the intention of seizing the Silver Fleet. The first consisted of twelve ships under Pieter Adriaenszoon Ita, who had already established himself as a formidable corsair during his years fighting against the Spanish during the Eighty Years War. Ita's ships returned home with several rich prizes, but no Silver Fleet, which had left Veracruz and had been scattered by a storm. When the Spanish commander of this fleet, Juan de Benavides Bazán, saw Ita's ships leaving the Caribbean he thought the seas were safe, although Heyn's fleet of 31 ships still cruised undetected in the Florida Straits. Even when Benavides spotted Heyn's fleet, including his flagship, the *Amsterdam*, he erroneously thought that they belonged to Ita's departing fleet. His mistake would be his downfall.

Heyn's spectacular capture of the Silver Fleet in September 1628 was a result of his own decisive leadership combined with sloppy Spanish seamanship, confusion, and miscommunication. Further, fickle winds prevented Benavides from bringing his ships into Havana on Cuba's north coast, so to evade Heyn's fleet he ran for the Bay of Matanzas some fifty miles to the east. Here several of the heavy ships ran aground, their guns uselessly pointing the wrong way. Heyn's forces met little resistance, and his victory was comparatively peaceful. He gave orders that any Spaniards who surrendered should be given quarter, and did not take prisoners. He gave the Spanish crews ample supplies for their march to Havana. Spanish accounts tell of Heyn's charitable treatment and of his ability to keep discipline among his own crews. Such descriptions only enhanced Heyn's reputation at home—not only was he an effective and successful commander who had severely wounded the enemy, but he was also a virtuous and modest man of faith as well.

[to be continued]