

De Nieuw Nederlans Mercurius



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March 2007

Events

Until April 8, 2007. The Hyde Collection in Glens Falls, NY presents: “Rembrandt: the Consummate Etcher and other 17th-century Printmakers” in the Charles R. Wood Gallery. Rembrandt is widely considered one of the most important figures in western art history. The 400th anniversary of Rembrandt’s birth in 2006 was honored by exhibitions worldwide. While the majority of these exhibitions were in Europe, The Hyde Collection is pleased to present its own tribute to this master printmaker with an exhibition of his etchings from the collection of the Syracuse University Art Collection, on view in the Charles R. Wood Gallery from January 14 to April 8, 2007.

March 24–December 2007

“Full Steam Ahead: Robert Fulton and the Age of Steamboats” This new installation at the Albany Institute of History and Art will commemorate the 200th anniversary of Fulton’s first steamboat voyage of the Clermont in 1807 from New York City to Albany. The exhibition will highlight Fulton’s improvements on steam transportation, and the outcome of his efforts to establish the first

viable commercial steamboat service on American waterways. The Institute is located on 125 Washington Avenue in Albany. Call 518-463-4478 for information or go to: www.albanyinstitute.org.

May 6, 2007. The annual meeting and spring 2007 seminar of the Connecticut Ancestry Society will be held at the Greenwich Public Library at 101 West Putnam Ave. in Greenwich, CT. Frederick C. Hart, Jr., CG will lecture on “Cruising Long Island Sound: Tracing its Early Families With a Regional View,” beginning at 2:00. For more information go to www.greenwichlibrary.org or to our NNP site under conferences.

Until May 27, 2007. “Clay Connections: Four Centuries of Ceramics and their Stories” at the Albany Institute of History and Art. The Institute will showcase its rich collections of Dutch majolica and English faience, Chinese export porcelains, and English transfer-printed tablewares. These material objects speak to us about the past, about distant civilizations and foreign cultures. The exhibition also offers a look at the trade and commerce of Albany from the seventeenth century to the present and

the ceramic materials that have flowed into and out of the city, often quite literally on the Hudson River, which connected Albany to the New York City and the rest of the world. See contact information above.

June 7–9, 2007. “The Conference on New York History” will be held in Cooperstown, NY at the Farmers’ Museum and the Fenimore Art Museum. For complete program information go to: www.nyhistory.com/cnysh/CNYSH2007Program.htm

September 15, 2007. The 30th annual Rensselaerswijck Seminar will be held at the Carole Huxley Theater of the Cultural Education Center in Albany. The theme will be “The Truce, 1609–1621.” Five speakers will explore the ramifications of this period of peace with Spain on developments in New Netherland.

Publications

“The Archaeology of New World Slave Societies: A Comparative Analysis with Particular Reference to St. Eustatius, Netherlands Antilles.” This is the doctoral dissertation of R. Grant Gilmore III granted by the Institute of

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Archaeology, University College London. It can be downloaded at: www.secar.org.

If you've always wanted to know more about the author of *Rip van Winkle* and *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow*, Andrew Burstein's biography of Washington Irving, entitled *The Original Knickerbocker*, might be just what you've been waiting for. Basic Books. 420 pages. The \$27.50 list price is deeply discounted at Amazon. Remember, when ordering to enter Amazon through our website by clicking on **<books and more>** on our homepage.

News

It is with deep regret that we announce the death of **Charles L. "Chuck" Fisher**. Chuck finally succumbed to his battle with melanoma on February 8, 2007 at the age of 57. The NNP had the good fortune to know Chuck in his capacity as archeologist at the New York State Museum.

Websites

Following are only a few of the many sites relating to Admiral de Ruyter in celebration of this the 400th anniversary of his birth: <http://michielderuyterjaar.nl>; www.michielderuyter.com; www.admiraelderuyter.nl; www.deruyter.org/english_section.html.

News from the NNI

The annual general meeting of the New Netherland Institute was held on January 27, 2007 at the Pruyn mansion in Newtonville, NY. Caspar Pruyn was the rent collec-

tor for the van Rensselaers in what is now Colonie. His mansion is now the community cultural center for the town. President Charles Wendell gave his annual report on the Institute's activities in 2006. The nominating committee proposed for Board membership E. James Schermerhorn of the Dutch Settlers Society of Albany and William de Witt of the Holland Society and these were unanimously approved. Elisabeth Paling Funk is the new interim Treasurer and John van Schaick the financial advisor.

Jippe Hiemstra reported on the work of the 2009 Hudson celebration and exhibit committee. Contracts have been signed with Adirondack Scenic, Inc. for work on the Traveling Exhibition and with Robert E. Mulligan, Jr. as curator.

Charles Gehring reported on progress of the translation work including another volume of Fort Orange records sent to the publisher. The 2007 Rensselaerswyck seminar will be held in September at the New York State Museum and will focus on the 1609–1621 truce with Spain, the immediate background for the settlement of New Netherland.

After adjournment, Noah Gelfand, the Quinn Foundation fellow for 2006-07 spoke on his doctoral research on "Jews and the Atlantic World".

The next Board meeting was held on February 12, 2007 at the Albany Visitors Center. The slate of officers for 2007 was presented: Charles Wendell, President, Marilyn Douglas, Vice President, Elisabeth Funk, Acting Treasurer, John van Schaick, Assistant Treasurer (Finances), Theodore Wright, Secretary. William DeWitt

was nominated for Board membership to finish the unexpired term of Anneke Bull until 2009.

President Wendell appointed committee chairs for Finance and Ways and Means Committees (Funk), the Ad hoc 2009 committee (Hiemstra) and Personnel and Administrative Oversight (future Executive Director to chair) and Nominating (Schermerhorn) committees.

A treasurer's interim report was presented by Elizabeth Funk. John Van Schaick discussed a proposal for a committee to review New Netherland subject matter in the on-line Wikipedia for accuracy. The retirement of Mary Redmond, the Institute's liaison with the State Education Department was noted with thanks for her participation on the Board. *T. Wright, Secretary*

Focus on New Netherland and the Dutch: A 2009 Project of the NNI

In celebration of the Henry Hudson Quadricentennial in 2009, the New Netherland Institute has embarked on a four-part project, coordinated by James F. Sefcik, Development Officer, NNI:

- **Light on New Netherland**, a traveling exhibition on the Dutch colony in North America to be available throughout the former New Netherland area and beyond. Museum exhibits present history far more effectively than any other medium. This exhibit of 24–26 panels totaling some 1,500 sq. ft. will introduce the general public and children to important but not well known aspects of American history and culture and reach an audience greater than that of a lecture series, catalog, or book.

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The exhibit will travel beyond Albany and New York City and ultimately become a part of the permanent exhibits at the New Amsterdam History Center in NYC. No other institution to our knowledge is developing an exhibition on the scope of the 17th century Dutch in the New World, from Connecticut to Delaware, including Beverwijck and New Amsterdam.

• **Discovery and Invention: the Worlds of Henry Hudson**, a non-traveling exhibit being developed by the Museum of the City of New York with the New Netherland Institute as a co-sponsor. NNI involvement includes the assistance of Dr. Charles Gehring, Director of the NNP, as well as support with funding and content.

• **Illuminating New York's Dutch Past**, a documentary film focusing on the NNP for presentation on TV and by DVD. This video will make clear why New Netherland documents are unique and important; explain the importance of using documentary evidence; relate the journey the documents took from 1674 to the present; explain the translation process and describe the skills necessary for translation; give examples of some of the fascinating information found in these early records; and dispel some of the Dutch folks myths and misrepresentations of the Dutch frequently found in literature and history.

• **Reflections on Dutch America**, a publication or liber amicorum in praise of the Dutch-American heritage as initiated in New Netherland. It will include an introduction by Russell Shorto followed by a series of 10-12 chapters by prominent writers and historians on a variety of topics germane to

the Dutch experience in the New World and its relationship to modern times.

Funding for the 2009 project, "Focus on New Netherland and the Dutch" is currently being sought with support already garnered from the Consulate General of the Netherlands in New York, the New Netherland Institute, the Netherlands America Foundation, the Bender Family Foundation, Broughton Charitable Private Foundation, Inc., Hollee Haswell, Lucius Littauer Foundation, Philips North America, Prins Bernhard Cultuurfonds, Rabobank, the Wright Family Foundation, and members of NNI. All contributions will be suitably acknowledged by all four components of the project. Gifts may be made to the New Netherland Institute, PO Box 2536, Empire Plaza Station, Albany, NY 12220-0536.

Kenney Award

Nominations are still being accepted for the 2007 Alice P. Kenney Award: www.nnp.org/nni/Awards/kenny.html). The Award will be presented as part of our spring program at the Ten Broeck Mansion in downtown Albany on June 9 beginning at 1:30 pm. Following the award ceremony there will be a talk given by a noted scholar in the field of New Netherland studies. NNI members will receive further information in a mailing in early May. It will also be posted on our website.

Estate planning—it's not just for the wealthy

All too often, when we see the term "estate planning," in the newspaper or a favorite magazine,

our eyes glaze over or we dismiss it as not for us or we cringe at the thought of our own mortality. But the plain fact is that too many of us don't have a simple will thereby exposing ourselves and our loved ones to the vagaries and intrusions of state law rather than determining how we wish to dispose of our savings, investments, property, and other items regarded as important to us as individuals.

Estate planning can be as simple as a will which can be drafted by a qualified attorney, knowledgeable in federal and state law, for very little money for such an important document. Surely, you want to be the one to determine who will receive the results of your lifetime of hard work and not by some impersonal arbiter bound by laws enacted some time ago and not necessarily reflective of your wishes. Perhaps you want to provide for a child or grandchild requiring special care or reward someone whom you find deserving for whatever reason. Of course, you want your spouse provided for when you are no longer there to do so. A properly written will can guarantee these things will happen.

When you are planning the terms and conditions of your will or when you are reviewing the document, as you should periodically to reflect possibly changed circumstances, please consider leaving a sum certain to the New Netherland Institute so that the work of this fine organization, with which you are familiar, can continue well into the future. You will then have the satisfaction of knowing you have made a difference.

Thank you for your consideration. *James F. Sefcik*

Totidem Verbis

2007 has been declared “**Admiral de Ruyter Year**” in the Netherlands. As our contribution to the celebration of this extraordinary man we offer an account of his life by our contributing editor Peter A. Douglas. The portrait of De Ruyter was done by Ferdinand Bol in 1667.

Michiel de Ruyter, *Held van Nederland*

March 24, 2007, is the 400th anniversary of the birth of Michiel Adriaenszoon de Ruyter (1607–1676), perhaps the most renowned admiral in Dutch history. Much of his fame derives from his battles with the English in the first three Anglo-Dutch Wars, where he scored several major victories. He has been described as not only a military genius but also as a charismatic leader, and an honest, modest, and devout man. He is certainly the man upon whom the fledgling Republic of the United Provinces relied at a crucial time in its history, defending its newly gained independence and assuring its future.

A master tactician, De Ruyter has been described as the man who built the Dutch Navy and made it into a powerful national fighting force. Much of his success comes from improvements in the conditions aboard his ships, an attitude that earned him the loyalty and respect of his fleet. While he insisted on strict obedience, he also encouraged his captains to express their opinions in a council of war before each engagement. He trained his men to outperform other contemporary navies, and raised the status of the Dutch seaman from a loose rabble of mercenaries and pressed semi-criminals to a respected body of men who well deserved the gratitude of their countrymen.

In Bol’s three-quarter portrait below we see De Ruyter in a black coat with gold buttons worn over a long-sleeved brocaded waistcoat. His expression is pensive and serious, but his moustache is jaunty.



His gold-hilted hanger, presented to him by the Admiral of Amsterdam, is on an elaborate sword belt. Behind a ruffle of lace he wears a steel gorget, below which hangs the French Order of St. Michael. In his oddly delicate and feminine right hand he holds a baton. The man’s profession is clearly nautical for he is leaning on a celestial globe, surrounded by navigational charts and dividers. The scene in the background beyond the drapery shows his flagship, the 80-gun *De Zeven Provinciën* (built 1665–66) and other ships of the fleet.

De Ruyter was born in 1607 in Vlissingen, a major port for whalers, privateers, and merchant ships, so a career on the sea seemed most natural if not inevitable for the young Michiel. Little is known about his early life,

but it is thought that became a sailor around the age of 11 as a bosun’s apprentice on a merchant ship bound for Brazil. In 1622 he fought against Spain as a musketeer in the Dutch army under Maurice of Nassau during the relief of Bergen-op-Zoom. That same year he rejoined the Dutch merchant fleet and steadily worked his way up. At that time he referred to himself as “Machgyel Adriensoon”, his name in the Zeelandic dialect he spoke, not having yet adopted the name “De Ruyter”. The origin of the name may be that he took the name of his maternal grandfather, Ruyter, in 1632 or 1633 at age 25 or 26. And then there’s the story deriving “De Ruyter” from his cavalryman uncle who had assumed the surname “De Ruyter” (“horseman,” “rider”). He may have started using the name to honor this uncle, whom he greatly admired.

In 1631 he married a farmer’s daughter named Maayke Velders, but the marriage was not long lived for in that same year Maayke died after giving birth to a daughter, who died three weeks later. From 1633 to 1635 De Ruyter served as first mate in a whaling fleet, and set sail for Jan Mayen Island in the Arctic Ocean. In 1636 he married Neeltje Engels, daughter of a wealthy burgher, who would give him four children. One of these died shortly after birth, the others were named Adriaen (1637), Neeltje (1639) and Aelken (1642). *(to be continued)*