



New Netherland Institute
Exploring America's Dutch Heritage

THE VOYAGE OF PIETER DE LINT, 1598-1603

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In the March 2009 edition of the Marcurius (vol.25 no.1) we told you of the adventures of Olivier van Noort, the first Dutch explorer to circumnavigate the world. Among those accompanying Van Noort on this voyage of discovery and privateering was Pieter De Lint, originally captain of the Eendracht and subsequently as Van Noort's Vice-Admiraal aboard the Hendrick Frederick.

If Van Noort's feats have been little heralded among non-Dutch historians, those of De Lint must of necessity be even less known, and the evidence of his achievement remains scattered and fragmentary. Separated from the rest of the fleet in the Strait of Magellan, De Lint sailed north along the Pacific coast of South America then struck out across the ocean to arrive in the Spice Islands. De Lint's voyage and the major role he played in ensuring the financial success of the mission have, until recently, never been properly documented.

Fred Swart, a descendant of Pieter De Lint, working from primary sources in both Dutch and Spanish, has reconstructed the route and events of De Lint's little known voyage and the negotiations that followed his arrival in the Moluccas. Mr. Swart's article "The Circumnavigation of the Globe by Pieter Esaiasz. de Lint, 1598-1603" in the Journal of the Hakluyt Society (January 2007) allows De Lint's achievement to take their deserved place in history. This Totidem Verbis is based on Mr. Swart's article.

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The decade 1590-1600 saw the worldwide expansion of the Dutch Republic and they had the ships and captains to achieve it. The Dutch coveted Portugal's place in the East Indies and in their struggle with Spain saw the latter country's ships and ports as fair game for attack. Olivier Van Noort was fired by the lure of fame, Spanish gold, and the riches of the Spice Islands to join the ranks of these freebooters. In 1598 he joined with three other merchants and many shareholders to form a company of trader-adventurers. The States General granted authority for the undertaking and letters of marque were issued authorizing the expedition to wage war on Spanish and Portuguese vessels and possessions.

Four ships were fitted out; largest and Van Noort's flagship was the 275-ton *Mauritius*, named for Prince Maurice. Also in the fleet was the 350-ton *Hendrick Frederick*, named for the Stadtholder's brother; and two 50-ton yachts, *Eendracht* (Concord) and *Hoop* (Hope). The investors elected Van Noort as Admiraal of the enterprise. On the *Hendrick Frederick* was Vice-Admiraal Jakob Claesz. van Ilpendam. When the fleet sailed from Goeree on September 13, 1598, Pieter Esiasz. De Lint, a 30-year-old from Rotterdam, was captain of the *Eendracht*.

The relatively straightforward voyage across the Atlantic was complicated by scurvy, ship fever, poor rations, insubordination, cruel punishments, inaccurate navigation, terrible storms, worse calms, and desertion. Along the way, De Lint's ship was abandoned as unseaworthy, and her crew, equipment, and stores were distributed throughout the fleet. De Lint was not long without a command for Jakob Jansz. Huidekoper, captain of the *Hoop*, died of scurvy and De Lint was named captain in his stead. The *Hoop* was renamed *Eendracht*. This would not be the last time that De Lint was promoted and given a new ship. The fleet finally reached the Strait of Magellan after more than a year in the Atlantic.

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Vice-Admiraal Jakob Claesz. had difficulty submitting to Van Noort's authority. He was haughty and sneered (with good cause) at Van Noort's seamanship. He may have flirted with mutiny, but this is unclear as only Van Noort's side of the story survives. The articles issued by Prince Maurice required absolute obedience to the commander.

Jakob Claesz. was arrested on Christmas Day 1599 and subsequently found guilty of conduct prejudicial to good order and discipline. He was sentenced to be abandoned on a desolate island in the strait with a few weeks' supply of food and wine; nothing is known of his fate. De Lint was appointed *Vice-Admiraal* in his place and transferred to command the *Hendrick Frederick* January 26, 1600. The sailing master at his side after his promotion was Arend Klaesz. Callebuys.

The three remaining ships of Van Noort's fleet entered the Strait of Magellan on the fifth attempt on November 25, 1599. It was an arduous passage, though rare favorable winds blew the ships out into the Pacific on February 29. The weather was stormy and the visibility poor, and on March 12 at latitude 46° S. the *Hendrick Frederick* lost sight of the other ships and was never to see them again. A plan had been agreed upon to cover this eventuality, for it was well known that progress through the strait was difficult and separation likely. Stragglers were instructed to make their way to the island of Santa Maria, well north along the coast, and wait at this rendezvous for two months for the fleet to reassemble. De Lint did exactly what the plan called for and arrived at Santa Maria on March 25, 1600.

Van Noort also arrived at Santa Maria on March 25 but considerably earlier than De Lint. Upon approaching the island Van Noort saw a ship that he initially took to be the *Hendrick Frederick* but it turned out to be a Spanish ship, the *Buen Jesus*, on picket duty to watch for intruders making their way through the strait. Always hungry for prizes, Van Noort pursued the *Buen Jesus* into the following day, finally capturing her. However, the chase took him far to the north and as the prevailing winds were from the

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south Van Noort decided that he could not attain the Santa Maria rendezvous. In Van Noort's defense, the square-rigged ocean ships of the period could not easily make way against headwinds, though he could have found northerly winds out to sea.

Towards the end of May, De Lint, abandoning his watch for the rest of the fleet, began his northward course, and by June 18 had reached Arica at the northernmost point of Chile where the continent begins its bulge westward. Here he sent out two ship's boats to capture a small bark at anchor in the harbor, but the hot reception from the Spanish gunners forced a hasty withdrawal. This episode is also related in Pomp's diary, and is all that is known from Dutch sources about De Lint's voyage along the coast of South America. As for Van Noort, having continued to sail north and having given up any attempt to link up with the *Hendrick Frederick*, he turned westward into the Pacific on May 10, well before De Lint had left the vigil at Santa Maria.

De Lint made his way north up the coast of Chile and Peru, pursuing hostile ships. By July 1 he had proceeded as far as Camana, Peru. Standing out to sea to avoid detection he sailed unnoticed by the Spanish, who, with no clear idea of the size of the force they faced, scraped together two squadrons to search, in vain, for the Dutchmen. De Lint pursued his northerly course and reached the island of Coiba, just off the thumb of Panama, in early August, where he landed to take aboard plantains, water, and wood. Back at sea, on August 11 near Caño he captured a small ship carrying a cargo of maize. From this vessel the Franciscan friar Augustin de Cavallos was taken aboard and would remain De Lint's captive for more than two weeks.

This was a lucky event for future historians for while aboard the *Hendrick Frederick* the friar made many acute observations about De Lint's ship and its crew. He subsequently sent these in the form of a letter to officials in Guatemala. The document survives, and is reproduced in full in English translation in Mr. Swart's article.

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The route that De Lint took across the Pacific must remain conjectural, though some historians make the case that he prepared for the crossing at Isla del Coco off the coast of Costa Rica. This would have been a good place to careen the ship, take on supplies and water, and rest the crew for the punishing voyage ahead. This was Van Noort's intention, though he failed to locate the island in three weeks of searching. The island had good anchorages and excellent water, wood, fish, and birds, and, moreover, an abundance of coconuts (hence the name) that, if taken aboard for the crew, would help stave off scurvy. The equatorial route across the ocean affords few landfalls, but the north equatorial current, coupled with favorable trade winds from autumn into spring, suggests that a three-month crossing can be made on that route.

While De Lint's route across the Pacific is speculative, we do know that he ultimately reached Ternate in the Spice Islands of eastern Indonesia, with his remaining crew, numbering possibly forty out of fifty-nine after entering the South Sea, in good shape. Apparently De Lint and Callebuys found their way to Ternate with little difficulty, but upon their arrival the ship stuck fast aground. They had navigated the vast ocean with no mishaps that we are aware of, so weather or equipment failure was probably to blame for the calamity. De Lint and his crew immediately set about to salvage and protect the ordnance and trade goods aboard the ship. With the cooperation of the sultan (the town and island of Ternate are ancient Islamic sultanates with a long history of bitter rivalry) nearly everything was saved and secured ashore. De Lint's friendly reception from the sultan of Ternate was in part due to Francis Drake's visit to the island many years before when the English explorer had cemented alliances and treaties with the sultan's father for trade and for protection from the Portuguese.

Safely ashore, De Lint was greeted by a Dutchman, Franck van der Does, representing the Old Company of Amsterdam. Van der Does had been a factor, or agent-representative, in Ternate since 1598 having been in a fleet of eight ships sent that year

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under the command of Jacob van Neck. When the ships left, he had been left at Ternate to purchase and warehouse cloves and obtain contracts for future purchases from the sultan in anticipation of the return of the Dutch trading fleet. (Ternate was the world's major producer of cloves.) Two Dutch ships returned on June 2, 1601 to load the cloves purchased by the factor, and Van Neck warmly welcomed De Lint aboard the *Amsterdam*. When Van Neck ultimately left Ternate, heading for Patani, via China, he took with him some of the crew of the *Hendrick Frederick* to replace unexpected vacancies.

The sultan of Ternate, seeking protection from the Spanish and the Portuguese, elected to buy the guns, powder, and ammunition from the wreck of De Lint's ship. Others eagerly bought the salvaged trade goods, including silks, velvets, and other cloths. A price for all these goods was agreed upon in cloves, some to be delivered in the future as the cloves were harvested. In the meantime, De Lint could sell the cloves locally, essentially making him the sultan's exclusive agent. After De Lint's departure, Wolphert Hermansz., arriving at Ternate on February 17, 1602, with the *Amsterdam* and the yachts *De Wachter* and *Duyfken* (destined in 1606 under Willem Janszoon to be the first ship to encounter and explore Australia), noted that he had stripped the island of cloves.

Now De Lint oversaw the construction of a small seaworthy bark, large enough to bring himself, his crew, and his cargo to Bantam, the trading post at the northwestern tip of Java. If such a feat seems remarkable, it was no great accomplishment for mariners of the period, who were experienced in the construction of small vessels. No doubt De Lint's crew benefited from the use of shaped planks from the wreck of their ship. The construction was probably completed between September 1601 and January 1602, and, after about eleven months in Ternate, De Lint sailed sometime that February, arriving at Bantam on April 20. This was reported by the skipper of the *Duyfken*, Willem van

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Westzanan upon his arrival in the Netherlands, stating that Van Noort's Under-Admiral had been lost in the Strait of Magellan more than a year before, "their admiral not having the weather to search and find them."

Meanwhile, Olivier Van Noort returned to the Netherlands in August 1601 with little to show for his three-year expedition. Only one of his four ships, the *Mauritius*, made it back and with a much-depleted crew. He returned with almost nothing to offer as saleable goods – just a little pepper and mace, the least of all the spices – in his hold. The expedition was a financial disaster for the commander and for the company formed to outfit the fleet. Van Noort was, however, the first Dutchman to circumnavigate the globe, and in the process brought the war against Spain to the west coast of South America and to Manila Bay. Despite the economic failure of the voyage it was an achievement that captured the imagination of his countrymen and was the inspiration for more such expeditions.

De Lint arrived at Texel on April 13, 1603. He and his remaining crew, divided among the various ships of a returning fleet and crowded into any available space, departed from Bantam on May 11, 1602, in the *Amsterdam*, *Hoorne*, *Enkhuisen*, *Zwarte*, and the *Groene Leeuw*, under the flag of Admiral Hans Schuurmans, staying for two months at the island of Mauritius, then on to St Helena before making landfall in the Netherlands. We can only estimate how many of the crew of the *Hendrick Frederick* survived the expedition. The crew's strength was some sixty men in the South Sea; some were lost on the voyage, and some remained in Ternate. Only thirteen clearly identifiable as crewmembers, including De Lint, are specifically named among the living.

When news of his return was known, the expedition's backers were thrilled to learn that, unlike his leader, De Lint had brought back a very rich cargo – all the cloves from Ternate that he had carried to Bantam on his newly constructed vessel. Moreover, the contracts that De Lint had negotiated with the sultan of Ternate for future delivery of

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cloves continued long after his death. Shareholders of the company and their heirs filed lawsuits for reparations due to them for the abrogation of these contracts by the Dutch East India Company (founded in 1602, the States General granting it a monopoly to carry out colonial activities in Asia). Final settlement was reached in 1635 for the significant sum of 117,000 guilders, far more than the value of the few bags of pepper and mace carried home by Van Noort.

What befell De Lint after returning to his home country is not known, though we do know that he found his father in dire straits, owing money and his possessions sold at auction. We also know that De Lint's achievements have been unjustly overshadowed by those of his commander. For 400 years Van Noort has enjoyed renown for his arduous voyage, about which he took great pains to inform the world in his popular self-serving autobiographical journal. Sadly, the recognition of his second-in-command, Pieter De Lint, has not been forthcoming. De Lint's masterly seamanship, his leadership and commitment to the welfare of the men under his command, had brought him and his crew safely across the Pacific, where others before and after met with tragedy. Furthermore, his unwavering commitment to the objectives of the company led him to the ultimate financial success of the enterprise.