

De Nieuw Nederlanse Mauricius



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“De Nieuw Nederlanse Mauricius”

August 2003

Upcoming Events

September 20, 2003. The 26th annual Rensselaerswijck Seminar will be held in NYC in the hall of the New York Genealogical Society. This year’s theme will be: “Nieuw Amsterdam: A Dutch City in the New World,” in commemoration of the 350th anniversary of the city’s charter. Speakers will be: Jaap Jacobs “‘To Favor this New and Growing City of New Amsterdam with a Court of Justice.’ The 1653 Municipal Charter of New Amsterdam”; Leo Hershkowitz “Chance or Choice: New Amsterdam 1654, a Jewish Contact”; Dennis Maika “The Struggle for New Amsterdam’s Charter in an Atlantic Context”; Mark Peterson “Cities on the Margins: Boston and New Amsterdam in 1653”; Joyce Goodfriend “Petrus Stuyvesant and the Failed Calvinization of New Amsterdam”; and Martha Shattuck “... Back under Obedience to Their High Mightinesses the Lords States General’: From New York to New Orange 1673–1674.”

While making plans for this year’s conference, we decided that the annual dinner should be held in an extraordinary place. What better way to celebrate the City’s 350th

birthday than a narrated cruise around lower Manhattan aboard the private yacht *Empress*? Reservations can be made on our website or by calling the Friends office at 518-486-4815.

October 25, 2003. “Bread: Staff of Dutch Life in the Old and New World” at the Wyckoff Farmhouse Museum. Food historian Peter G.



World Yacht’s *Empress*

Rose will explore the meaning of bread in the Dutch colonial world with a slide lecture and open hearth cooking demonstration. 1-4pm, rain or shine. Admission is free. The museum is located on 5816 Clarendon Road at Ralph Avenue, E. Flatbush, Brooklyn, NY 11203. Tel: 718-629-5400; email: info@wyckoffassociation.org.

October 26, 2003 – January 18, 2004. “Rembrandt’s Journey: Painter | Draftsman | Etcher” at the

Museum of Fine Arts in Boston. No further exhibit information is available at this time. Tel: 617-267-9300; web: www.mfa.org.

News

At the Friends of New Netherland Annual Meeting, President Van Schaick announced the formation of the **New Netherland Institute** as an unincorporated subsidiary of the Friends of New Netherland, with Dr. Charles Gehring as Executive Director and the Friends’ president as its Executive Secretary. The New Netherland Institute will centralize all auxiliary activities that promote an understanding of the role New Netherland played in the development of America. The Institute will be under Dr. Gehring’s supervision while he continues as chief translator of the New Netherland Project (NNP). Functions and activities of the New Netherland Institute will include:

- Indexing and preparing NNP translations and other materials for publication.
- Organizing the Rensselaerswijck Seminar and meetings.
- Presenting the Hendricks, the Kenney, the Hageman, and other recognitions.
- Developing syllabi for teaching schoolchildren about New Netherland.
- Publishing *De Nieuw Nederlanse Mauricius* and providing a speakers bureau.
- Maintaining the New Netherland Institute web site.

Annual Giving - Donations of private donors, corporations, organizations, foundations and institutions.

We would like to extend our gratitude to all supporters who have generously contributed to the New Netherland Institute. The following list recognizes your gifts received between July 1st, 2002 and June 30th, 2003. Foundations, corporate donors, organizations and institutions appear in italics.

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We also wish to thank all of you who have shared your interest in the New Netherland Institute through annual membership contributions and other kinds of support. We are truly grateful for your dedication. All gifts to the annual giving campaign and membership contributions are 100% tax-deductible.

- ° Establishing relations with academic institutions for New Netherland coursework.
- ° Accepting interns and providing a senior scholar's position.
- ° Providing a data base and clearinghouse for New Netherland resources.

The primary responsibility of the Friends of New Netherland (FNN) will continue to be funding the NNP and supporting the publication of its translations. To achieve this, the Friends will maintain a contributing membership and seek donations from foundations, corporations and historical and genealogical associations.

The latest issue of the *Journal of American History*, a publication of the Organization of American Historians, features an exhibition review of Historic Cherry Hill's tour, "The Rankins of Cherry Hill: Struggling with the Loss of their World." The tour has also been honored with an Award of Merit from the Upstate History Alliance. **Cherry Hill** is located at 531½ S. Pearl Street, Albany. The historic site is open April-December; closed Mondays and major holidays. For tour hours call: 518-434-4791;

web: www.historicherryhill.org.

The *Golden Re'al*, a hundred year old Dutch sailing barge is lying at anchor in Athens, NY from 14 through 24 August and is open for visits during the New Netherland festival in the village. From Athens the *Golden Re'al* will sail to Amsterdam, NY.

Reunion

The Association of Blauvelt Descendants announces its 77th annual meeting. It will be held September 19-20 at St. Thomas

Aquinas College in Sparkill, NY. For further information go to: www.blauvelt.org.

News from the FNN

The Board of Trustees of the **Friends of New Netherland** met on Saturday, June 14, 2003 at the Slingerland House in Feura Bush, NY. Much of the meeting was devoted to matters pertaining to the Rensselaerswijck Seminar and the Dinner. Nominating Committee chair and vice-president Charles Wendell reported that Greta Wagle has consented to serve on the Board of Trustees and moved to appoint her to an interim term, effective immediately, until January 2004. The motion was passed unanimously. Ms. Wagle, who for many years has assisted the Project and the Friends, notably in Seminar preparation, administration, and fund raising, presented a detailed proposal for a historical exhibit on Dutch heritage at the State University Plaza Gallery in 2005 or 2006. A motion to support a joint effort of the New Netherland Institute with SUNY Central to mount such an exhibit on Dutch

heritage was passed unanimously. Charles Gehring as executive director of the Institute will form a committee.

After lunch about 40 members of the Friends of New Netherland gathered in the living room for the presentation of the Alice P. Kenney Award to Howard L. Funk, volunteer webmaster for the New Netherland Project and the Friends of New Netherland/New Netherland Institute. Established in honor of the distinguished scholar of the early period of American history and the Dutch contribution to American society, this annual Award recognizes significant contributions to colonial Dutch studies. Dr. Charles Gehring, expressed his appreciation for Mr. Funk's design and maintenance of the website, especially for his creativity and technical support in installing Russell Shorto's Virtual Tour of New Netherland, an important and educational addition to the site, and for his constant availability to render advice and assistance regarding the Project's technical issues. John van Schaick, President

of the Friends of New Netherland, presented the Award. The ceremony was followed by a reception and the opportunity to tour the Slingerland house—a rare historic treasure.

Elisabeth Funk | 7 Diane Court | Katonah, NY | epf@hlfunk.com

Publications

Historian **Dr. Joyce D. Goodfriend**, who is chair of the Hendricks Award committee and speaker at our Rensselaerswijck Seminar this September, has an article entitled "The Souls of African American Children: New Amsterdam" in the on-line journal called *Common-Place*. In the article Goodfriend poses the question: "Why would clergymen of the Reformed church use their office to baptize the offspring of men and women claimed as property by the Dutch West India Company, the premier slave-trading company of the 17th century?" To access the article go to www.common-place.org; then simply find Nieuw Amsterdam on the map and click.

Totidem Verbis

As in 2001 our weekend Seminar program will take us to the South Street Seaport Museum for Sunday morning activities. In addition to breakfast at the SSSM and a narrated walk along Wall Street (which is also celebrating its 350th anniversary) we will tour the historic buildings called Schermerhorn Row, which make up a significant part of the SSSM complex. In order to prepare you for the tour, following is an article by Glenn Collins entitled "New Body for a Seaport's Soul, At Maritime Museum's Remade Home, Old Walls Talk," published in the Metro Section of the New York Times, July 3, 2003. [Special thanks to our Friend Richard Mooney for making this reprint possible.]

Call it the city's original world trade center.

Nearly two centuries ago, the merchant Peter Schermerhorn began constructing a row of commercial buildings in a speculative Fulton Street development that was to house Manhattan's first collection of traders, importers and counting houses only steps away from the city's busiest piers.

Now those original Federal style brick commercial buildings of Schermerhorn Row as well as tantalizing, venerable remnants of the thriving businesses that inhabited them are being reclaimed as components of a \$21 million new South Street Seaport Museum complex. Construction crews are toiling to make the buildings' hidden spaces and artifacts visible to the public for the first time when

the museum opens this fall.

Peter Neill, president of the museum, said it would display "not only firsthand evidence of the maritime enterprise that built American trade, but also the acculturation process for immigrants, which established the diversity of our population."

Thomas Bender, professor of history at New York University, said that in the early 1800's, the seaport was nothing less

than “the heart of a worldwide trading empire,” adding, “It’s fair to say that New York’s economy was born there.”

The riverward wharves of Schermerhorn Row were not only important to New York, but also the nation, because in those pre-income-tax days, Professor Bender said, the customs tariffs paid at New York’s port were “supplying 70 percent of the national income by the time of the Civil War.”

The new museum space, between Front and South Streets on Fulton Street, will offer salt-scented breezes and views of the harbor, and more important, walls and windows that were witnesses to the city’s vibrant maritime saga.

Only yards from the Schermerhorn buildings, with their handmade bricks and raked slate roofs, the first American ships sailed to China to open trade. Whalers and packets arrived, as did boatloads of coffee, tea, molasses and, yes, immigrants.

Professor Bender said the Seaport was the place “where immigrants got off the boat, and found employment, and even the most unskilled could get their shot.” That influx of new Americans, and the way of life of the working people of the wharves, will also be a focus of the new museum.

“We don’t have the great collections of the historical societies uptown,” Mr. Neill said, “which are basically the heirlooms of the great families that no one wanted to keep. This museum is about the working people downtown, where the value was created. This is the beginning of the story. The uptown museums are the end of the story.”

Schermerhorn Row was saved after a group of spirited citizens fought for years against its demolition. They created the museum, which was chartered in 1967. The row and its block were declared landmarks in 1968 and incorporated, along with the museum, in the mall created by the Rouse Company in the 1980s.

John H. Beyer, the partner in charge of the museum project for the architectural firm Beyer Blinder Belle, which also renovated Ellis Island and Grand Central Terminal, said the Seaport Museum “has never had a real gallery presence.” The museum, which has a full-time staff of 39

and 300 volunteers, has exhibition space in three small galleries on Water Street to display its collection of nautical memorabilia. It also has exhibitions in three of its classic restored ships at Pier 16.

After entering at 12 Fulton Street (or 165 John Street at the other side of the museum), visitors will tread a newly installed corridor of greenish Louisiana bluestone on their way to the admissions desk, and ascend via an escalator to an atrium revealing the original buildings’ backyard. Then visitors will tour a warren of lofts, store-rooms and offices in what Mr. Beyer said were “the mercantile high-rise buildings of their day.”

Mr. Neill said the goal was not to tear out the soul of the old structures to create exhibition space. “Like our sailing ships, the buildings themselves are artifacts,” he said, “and we didn’t want to turn them into white boxes.”

The museum’s circuitous exhibition route on upper floors was the answer to a real-estate conundrum. The arrangement of the Rouse Company with New York City gave the developer the rights to the retail space in most of the Seaport’s ground floors and second floors, so the museum was carved out above.

The museum raised money for the new galleries from donors like the Starr Foundation, the J. Aron Charitable Foundation, Goldman Sachs and the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, and won a \$5.3 million construction grant from the New York City Economic Development Corporation. The museum is also raising an additional \$20 million for an eventual six-story extension adjacent to the museum at the corner of South and John Streets.

In the congeries of rooms in the new museum — at points the space is barely seven feet high — visitors will be able to see original mercantile offices, lofts and warehouses. Hoists and elevators have been preserved. Charred beams and scorched ceilings will serve as lessons on the prevalence of fire in early maritime businesses.

Visitors will also be able to see the original chimneys, door frames, plaster walls and wallpaper — all of it greatly de-

composed by time — of the Fulton Ferry Hotel, the one made famous in Joseph Mitchell’s “Up in the Old Hotel,” first written for *The New Yorker*.

“We’re leaving this as a ruin,” Mr. Neill said, “leaving it inhabited by the ghosts of immigrants and sailors and young women just off the boat.”

In the hotel, visitors will be able to view rooms where generations of immigrant girls attended to the laundry, and witness some startling examples of workingmen’s graffiti, like the signature of one William Sinclair from Sept. 16, 1847.

But the Lascaux cave of Schermerhorn graffiti is a 10-foot-wide by 8-foot-tall relic in the former Bennett & Becker tea and coffee importing company. Under old wallboard, workers found 130-year-old graffiti written in Gaelic, displaying the words to a popular revolutionary song, the drawing of a Gaelic harp, and a caricature of the owner, James P. Bennett.

“This is quite a discovery,” Mr. Neill said, “because we’ve so far been unable to find any actual portrait of Bennett for our exhibition.”

A crucial element of the reconstruction has been the replacement of original rotted floors. More than 200,000 square feet of ancient pine boards rescued in Massachusetts by the Mountain Lumber Company of Ruckersville, Va., are being installed. “It contributes to the museum’s authenticity, replicating the original flooring,” said Willie Drake, the company’s president.

Not unlike the immigrants who originally worked in the same warehouse room, one of the floor installers, Terence Chow, is also a new American — he arrived from Burma in 1972. The installation of the boards is challenging because “the floor is so uneven,” he said on a recent afternoon, pointing to the eccentrically settled old walls.

“It makes you seasick just looking at it,” he added, smiling. “The original workers had it easier.”

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