



## ***NEW AMSTERDAM YESTERDAY AND TODAY***

**New Amsterdam History Center Newsletter - Vol. I, No. 1**

LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Dear Friends of the NAHC,

We are delighted to offer this, our first newsletter, to our members and friends. Founded in 2005, NAHC has continued to evolve and grow. Our website, launched in 2012, and the database linked to it, contains a wealth of information on the Dutch in New Amsterdam in the 17<sup>th</sup> Century. You can take a short stroll down Stone Street or watch video recordings of some of our lectures and panels. Beginning with a small book signing in 2012, our events have grown and become more varied, from panels on different aspects of New Amsterdam history and culture, to a docent-led visit to the Dutch horticultural collection at the New York Botanical Garden, a private tour of the Rembrandt exhibition at the Morgan Library, and a visit in the snow to the Bowne House in Flushing, New York.

Our membership continues to increase, and our goal is to double it before the end of this year. With your help we will continue to offer more and varied events and activities to inform the public about the importance of the Dutch period in our city, state, and surrounding areas and the long-lasting influence it has had on our country.

We hope you will enjoy the book review in this newsletter by historian Frank Sypher, and that you will take advantage of the membership form to join the NAHC family. We look forward to seeing you at our next event!

With kind regards,  
Esmé E. Berg

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## NAHC EXPLORES THE BOWNE HOUSE

By Susan Brydon Golz, Ph.D.

On March 10, 2017, about 20 members and friends of the New Amsterdam History Center enthusiastically braved their way through the chilly and snowy neighborhood of Flushing, Queens to the historic Bowne House. They eagerly anticipated experiencing the best-preserved example of Anglo-Dutch vernacular residential architecture in the country that was built around 1661 by John Bowne. It is the oldest house in Queens and is noted for its connection to the principle of religious freedom in America.

In 1656, Director General Petrus Stuyvesant passed an Ordinance prohibiting Quaker Meetings in private homes and vessels from bringing Quakers into New Netherland. Quakers already living in Flushing wrote a letter of protest (known as the Flushing Remonstrance) to Director General Stuyvesant since the town charter provided by former Director Kieft allowed them liberty of conscience to worship in their homes. Stuyvesant ignored the protest and when John Bowne allowed Quakers to worship in his home, he had Bowne arrested. Bowne went to the Netherlands to plead his case and the States General decided against Stuyvesant and agreed that residents of New Netherland should be allowed to worship in their homes. Thus, a great step for religious freedom!

Esme E. Berg, the Vice President of NAHC, arranged for an excellent educational experience that included a presentation by Elizabeth Martin, Ph.D., the Director of Education at Bowne House. Dr. Martin described the life and history of the Bowne family and significance of the Flushing Remonstrance. In addition, the program included a special "Dutch Treat", a greeting by the new Consul General of the Netherlands, Dolph Hogewoning. Lastly, the group was led on a tour of the house to relate the architecture to its history.

The Bowne House is listed on the National Register of Historic Places and is designated a New York City landmark. It has operated as a museum since 1947 and has recently undergone significant renovations.

## FEATURED BOOK ON DUTCH-AMERICAN HISTORY



***New Netherland in a Nutshell: A Concise History of the Dutch Colony in North America, by Firth Haring Fabend, Ph.D***

*In eleven succinct chapters, the reader gets it all: the background, the beginnings, the Indian wars, the turbulent Kieft and Stuyvesant directorships, the people, their desire for their needs and wants to be met, and the legacy the Dutch left behind.*

*The story of New Netherland is thus told in a highly readable fashion suitable for anyone unfamiliar with this important chapter in U.S. colonial history.*

*From the exploration of Henry Hudson in 1609 to the final transfer of the Dutch colony to the English in 1674, this book introduces key aspects of New Netherland: the multicultural makeup of the population, the privatization of colonization, the ability to survive with meager means against overwhelming odds, and the transfer of distinctive Dutch traits, such as toleration, free trade, and social mobility, all of which persisted long after New Netherland became New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and parts of Connecticut and Pennsylvania. New Netherland in a Nutshell will satisfy the questions: who were the Dutch, why did they come here, and what did they do once they got here?*

*Illustrated with the paintings of artist L. F. Tantillo, this "handy, richly packed resource gives the reader the background, the actors, the action, and the legacy. In clear prose, it covers a lot of history in a few pages." Russell Shorto, author of Island at the Center of the World.*



## BOOK REVIEW by FRANK SYPHER

*Wim Klooster*

*The Dutch Moment:*

*War, Trade, and Settlement in the Seventeenth-Century Atlantic World*

*Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2016. Pp.*

*[viii], 419. 7 illustrations, 4 maps, 3 tables. Hardcover.*

*Price: \$35.00.*

Mare nostrum ("our sea") is how the Romans referred to the Mediterranean, indicating the Roman imperial reach across its waters and along the entire length of its coastline, from the Pillars of Hercules to Alexandria and the Dardanelles. The term could with almost equal appropriateness be applied to the Atlantic from the point of view of the European maritime powers a century and more after the so-called "discovery" in 1492 of the American continents. Spain and Portugal at first had a virtual monopoly over the New World, but soon they were challenged by France, England, and the Netherlands for territory and trade along the sea lanes between Europe, Africa, and the Americas.

The "Dutch Moment" of the title of Wim Klooster's excellent book, refers to the period from about the 1620s until the 1670s, when, as he writes in his introduction, "the Atlantic world underwent a profound transformation," referring to the major entry of the French, English, and Dutch into the competition. In impressive detail he shows how the Dutch at this time played a role in virtually every theater of the great contest for mastery of the Atlantic and its surrounding "new" lands.

The Chartered West India Company—Geocroyeerde West-Indische Compagnie (WIC)—was in charge of Dutch trade and colonization efforts in the Western Hemisphere. In Asian territories such as Batavia (present-day Jakarta, Indonesia) a similar role was played by the United East India Company—Vereenigde Oost-Indische Compagnie (VOC). The WIC directors were not primarily motivated by policy considerations, such as devotion to spreading the Gospel, although they did encourage missionary efforts, and they certainly would have taken political satisfaction in facing down Spanish power in the area. Neither were the Dutch interested in founding utopian communities of godliness, as with certain English Puritan settlers of North America. Also, since the Dutch economy was relatively strong at this time, there was little urgency among average Netherlanders to leave the Dutch Republic in search of a better life overseas. Similarly, there was no large Dutch refugee population in need of resettlement, as with the French and Walloon Huguenots, or the German Palatines fleeing the devastations of the armies of Louis XIV.

Rather, since the WIC was a private enterprise whose first responsibility was to provide shareholders with returns on investments, the directors most of all sought major sources of revenue. Their hope was to discover gold or silver mines, or suitable locations for raising cash crops such as sugar, which sold at a high price and generated substantial revenues for France from Saint-Domingue in the West Indies.

At the same time that the Dutch sought wealth in the new lands of the Atlantic World, they also, with their well-fitted ships, participated in privateering. Seizing Spanish treasure vessels was considered prime sport, and a good haul could bring home literally tons of gold and silver. Along the way, Dutch sea-adventurers were ready to take advantage of any other business opportunities that might be encountered, as for example in trading with the Native Americans in the Hudson Valley for valuable beaver pelts, or taking part in the slave trade out of African posts such as Gorée (Senegal), Elmina (on the Gold Coast, now Ghana), São Tomé (off the coast of Gabon), and Luanda (Angola). An example of the documentary detail that Klooster supplies throughout his study is his presentation of specific voyages of individual Dutch slave-trading ships to Martinique, Guadeloupe, and other destinations in the French Caribbean from 1650 to 1675, and to Spanish Empire ports such as Cartagena or Buenos Aires from 1649 to 1677 (Appendixes A and B).

Because the activities of the "Dutch Moment" were essentially a matter of finding and taking advantage of a variety of commercial opportunities wherever and whenever they might arise, there are many different strands in the story of the Dutch presence in the Atlantic World. Consequently, Wim Klooster was faced with a difficult task in mapping out a narrative, and he has done an admirable job of presenting the complex picture. Readers familiar mainly with the Dutch colonization of New Netherland and of sites in the West Indies will be fascinated to see how these ventures were paralleled by major efforts in Africa and especially in Brazil, where the Dutch originally had their highest ambitions. Klooster's book is clearly destined to take its place as a major work, as pointed out by Dennis Maika in his excellent review *De Halve Maen*, Winter 2016-17, pp. 67-68. His extensive notes and bibliography are especially valuable for researchers.

In the end, the enticing tales of El Dorado and an American land of gold turned out to be mythical, and Dutch attempts at developing tropical cash crops were also ultimately unsuccessful. In 1654 the Dutch had to abandon Recife, their principal post on the massive shoulder of the South American continent, although they retained territory at the island of Curaçao and elsewhere in the West Indies, as also in Guiana. There Jesse de Forest had hoped to found a permanent settlement for his group of Walloon colonists, who eventually came instead to Manhattan—an outcome that most of their many present-day descendants probably have no cause to regret. It is ironic that the obscure little fur-trading post of New Amsterdam (New York since 1664), which the Dutch during the period of exploration and settlement regarded as one of their lesser activities in the Atlantic sphere of action, has turned out to be one of the greatest cities in the world.

*NOTE: Wim Klooster will be one of NAHC's guest speakers at its November, 2017 lecture.*

*The New Amsterdam History Center is very pleased to welcome a new member to the Board of Trustees, Suzanne Roff, Ph.D. Suzanne is a member of the Society of Daughters of Holland Dames and was recently elected as its Directress General.*

*We look forward to a new synergy between the two organizations.*

## CALENDAR PAST & FUTURE EVENTS

### NAHC MILESTONES

**May 9, 2017**

Private curator-led tour of the 17th Century Dutch Collection at the Metropolitan Museum of Art (SOLD OUT).

**June 9, 2017**

*The Archaeology of New Amsterdam and Its Environs*

Archaeologists Anne-Marie Cantwell, Emerita Professor of Anthropology at Rutgers University, and Diana diZerega Wall, an historical archaeologist and professor of anthropology at City College and the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, will offer a lecture and slide show about the archaeology of New Netherland in the greater New York area.

**November 2, 2017**

*New Amsterdam in the Dutch Atlantic: A Dialogue About Trade and Entrepreneurship on the World Stage of the Seventeenth Century*

In a dialogue, Historians Wim Klooster and Dennis J. Maika will exchange perceptions on such topics as the operation of state-sponsored commercial monopolies and private entrepreneurship, the impact of "sustained warfare" in the seventeenth century, and the Dutch commercial legacy in the Atlantic World, with special reference to New Amsterdam and early New York.

## MEMBERSHIP PROGRAMS

Please support our programs or become a sponsor of one of our events. Members will receive invitations to special members-only events as well as open events.

NAHC is a 501(c)(3) corporation. All contributions are tax-deductible.

Annual Membership Levels:

**Friend**                    **\$50 - \$100**

Invitations and discounts for all NAHC events and special Member-only events.

**Contributor**                    **\$250**

Receive a complimentary copy of *Exploring Dutch New York*

**Donor**                    **\$500**

All of the above plus a signed copy of *New Netherland in a Nutshell* by Firth Haring Fabend

**Benefactor**                    **\$1,000**

All of the above, plus a signed copy of *The Island at the Center of the World* by Russell Shorto

**Founder**                    **\$5,000**

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