



NEW AMSTERDAM YESTERDAY AND TODAY

New Amsterdam History Center Newsletter - Vol I No 4

www.newamsterdamhistorycenter.org

Dear Friends of NAHC,

As we approach the completion of our 14th year of operations, the Trustees of New Amsterdam History Center send warm greetings and appreciation to our many contributors and supporters.

We are encouraged by the growth in our membership. We count on our members to support our programs through their dues. If you are able to make a financial commitment to our mission, please refer to the bottom of the newsletter and choose a membership level that matches your interest in NAHC. Your financial support is essential and will help us to continue to bring enriching programs to you.

We are excited about our upcoming events and offerings in 2019. Look for further announcements about:

- **A trip to the Albany region in May for the Spring Tulip Festival**
- **An updated website with expanded educational content and historical data**
- **A private curator-led tour of the Metropolitan Museum Exhibition, *Dutch Masterpieces at the Met*.**
- **Tours of historical sites, including lower Manhattan (New Amsterdam)**
- **New programs in cooperation with other Dutch-American heritage organizations**

Thank you for your generous support, and well wishes for the holidays.

**Casey Kemper
President**

HOW DUTCH IS NEW YORK? THE NEW AMSTERDAM TOUR

Susan Golz
NAHC Board of Trustees



On Wednesday, June 13, 2018, at 5 pm the NAHC launched the first bilingual walking tour of lower Manhattan created by Dutch Heritage World Tours in its series of audio tours on smart phones titled ***How Dutch is New York?***

Twenty-eight NAHC members and friends gathered outside the Beer Garden at Battery Park near Peter Minuit Plaza and met the creators of the tour: Mariska Hammerstein and Anco Nanninga. We were previously advised to download the "izi.TRAVEL" app on the App Store or Google Play Store, available free of charge, and to make sure our phones were completely charged! The walking tour of fifteen historic sites is called ***"How Dutch is New York, the New Amsterdam Tour"***. The significance of each site is fully described and explained as the participant arrives at the location.

Our enthusiastic group eagerly inserted earphones to begin the tour at the impressive Dutch American Friendship

HOW DUTCH IS NEW YORK? THE NEW AMSTERDAM TOUR

Mariska Hammerstein and
Anco Nanninga
Founders of DHWT

On June 13th Dutch Heritage World Tours from Amsterdam, the Netherlands, launched its first multilingual audio tour, 'How Dutch Is New York? – The New Amsterdam Tour'. The launch was organized by Esmé Berg of the New Amsterdam History Center, official partner of DHWT. This tour was the pilot for a larger project of audio tours in English and Dutch, focused on the shared Dutch-American heritage in the City and the State of New York.

With 28 participants we walked the streets of Lower Manhattan, smart phone in the hand. We listened to the stories and looked at the inserted images of old maps and buildings at each of the 15 stops in this tour. This way we have tried to make the invisible visible, because none of the original structures built by the Dutch between 1626-1664 have survived.

Today it may be hard to imagine, but Manhattan used to be a green island of trees, bushes, brooks, swamps and a few indigenous villages with their cornfields. The name of Manhattan came from the original name of Manna-hatta, meaning 'island of many hills'. But it could also mean 'the island where we all got drunk', referring to the initial contact the indigenous people of the island had with the alcohol Dutch traders brought with them.

The first buildings that were constructed



View of the "Graft," or Canal, in Broad Street, and the Fish Bridge, 1659. Source: New York Public Library

Monument commemorating the Dutch settlement of Manhattan in 1626. Among the other significant historic New Amsterdam sites we enjoyed experiencing on the tour were:

- Custom House (location of Fort Amsterdam)
- Whitehall Street (home of Petrus Stuyvesant)
- Pearl Street (the eastern shore line of New Amsterdam, named for the hills of oyster shells left by Native Americans, site of the first church)
- Stone Street (location of many taverns, the Dutch introduced beer to Manhattan)
- Wall Street (named for the wall of tree trunks erected to protect the settlement from the English)

The tour was followed by a complimentary drink and an optional dinner at Fraunces Tavern, where George Washington bid farewell to his officers in 1783.

The tour is described online at <https://izi.travel/en/0444-how-dutch-is-new-york-the-new-amsterdam-tour/en>

were soon followed by sawmills and gristmills for building more homes and milling grain.

The original buildings that once lined the streets of New Amsterdam may not have survived, however, the streets still follow, more or less, the old layout which explains the somewhat haphazard outline of the streets in Lower Manhattan. Their names reveal a lot of the Dutch presence and we have inserted old maps, drawings, and paintings to help portray the old city of New Amsterdam as it once was. On one of the maps you can see how incredibly small New Amsterdam really was. Its northern border was a protective palisade, a wall. Along it ran a path called 'Langs de Wal' which means 'Along the Wall'. Today, that path is still called... Wall Street.

Battery Park

In Battery Park – in the 17th century still part of the 'North River', now the Hudson – is the Dutch-American friendship monument. It commemorates the Dutch establishment of New Amsterdam in 1626 and the purchase of Manhattan from Native Americans by the then Director of the colony of New Netherland, Peter Minuit. He did so by trading goods with the Lenape Indians with a value of 60 Dutch guilders. The Lenape had a different understanding of this deal; they considered it more as compensation for the temporary use of the territory rather than a sale for eternity. On the monument you'll notice parts of the seal of New York City which go back to the Dutch colony: two beavers, because of the beaver trade which had brought the Dutch to this part of the world, the wings of a Dutch windmill and barrels of flour.

The tour takes us to the Custom House, once the location of Fort Amsterdam. Within the walls of the fort there was housing for the Director and Secretary of



the colony, as well as the soldiers who lived in barracks here. It was nicknamed a 'molehill' because its earthen walls were crumbling and worn away by the free-roaming goats, sheep and pigs

Original Dutch street names

Other stops are among others Bridge Street, a translation of the Dutch 'Brug Straet', which lead to an actual bridge which crossed the "Heeren Gracht" or "Gentlemen's Canal", what is now Broad Street.

Coenties Alley and Coenties Slip are names referring to the Dutch master shoemaker Conraet ten Eyck, who owned a tannery and had several shoemakers working for him. They were expected to make 10-12 pair of shoes per week. He also made the leather buckets used by the city to extinguish fires. They were needed in a place with predominantly wooden houses. Even the chimneys were made of wood, causing many fires in the city.

Stone Street was originally called Brouwer Straet, meaning Brewer Street because of the breweries located here. Along with other customs and fare, the Dutch also introduced beer to Manhattan. And when there are breweries you will also find taverns. Reportedly there were many taverns in New Amsterdam. A tavern was usually no more than the front part of the owner's home. Because Brewer Street became the first street to be paved in New Amsterdam it was renamed Steen Straet, and later anglicized into Stone Street.

William Street is named after the Dutch colonist Willem Beeckman. Beeckman was a brewer and served more than once on the council of the City of New Amsterdam.

William Street more or less follows the old street plan where Slijk Straet (meaning Mud Street) or Slick Steegje (meaning Mud Alley) used to be. Enslaved Africans



Photos courtesy of Kate Lynch

lived in a house on Slijck Straet. The Dutch-West India Company used enslaved Africans almost right from the start of the colony of New Netherland. Beginning in 1637 the West-India Company got actively involved in the slave trade.

Another street name that refers to an old Dutch name is Broadway, a translation of the 17th century Dutch name “Breede Weg”. Following a trail used by the native people, it ran from Fort Amsterdam northward over the entire length of Manhattan Island. Today Broadway still follows the slightly meandering Indian pathway.

The last street name I’d like to mention is Maiden Lane – just because I like the explanation so well. Maiden Lane is the translation of ‘Maegden Paatje’, which refers to the custom of Dutch colonial women who walked along this path on their way to a little brook where they did their laundry.

If you want to learn the names of all the streets with a Dutch past, and discover the Dutch roots of New York City for yourself, just download the izi.TRAVEL app and the tour called “How Dutch Is New York? – The New Amsterdam Tour”. Other tours include, *The Stuyvesant Tour*, *The Historic Richmond Town Tour*, *The Kingston Stockade Tour*, and the



FEATURE ARTICLE***Black Bondage, and Freedom, in New Amsterdam/New Netherland*****Patricia U. Bonomi, Ph.D**

In 1644, eleven New Amsterdam blacks bound in service to the West India Company petitioned for their liberty, having served for “18 or 19 years” and long “been promised their freedom.” The petition was granted, with the eleven men and their wives set free “on the same footing as other free people here in New Netherland.” Similarly, Jan Francisco, Jr., was manumitted in 1646 after “long and faithful service,” as had been promised by the Dutch Reformed Church. Such freedoms, though often slow in coming, were not rare in the Dutch colony, where about forty percent of Africans had received their liberty by around 1660.

New Netherland’s high percentage of manumissions stands in sharp contrast with the English colonies, where but a small fraction of blacks was liberated in the 17th-century. Nor has this difference between Dutch and English dealings with their African populations received much attention, probably because the higher proportion of Dutch freedoms has long been obscured by an over-count of the colony’s blacks. That figure often includes the 290 slaves on the ship *Gideon*, which arrived in New Amsterdam on August 15, 1664. Yet it was only twelve days later, with the *Gideon* barely docked, that a squadron of English ships attacked and overcame the Dutch colony. Thus the 290 newly-delivered slaves were never truly subjects of the Dutch, but instead came under English rule.

Excluding the *Gideon* cargo, it is likely that no more than around 175 blacks may have populated New Netherland, with some 70 to 75 of them (approximately 40%) having been manumitted by Dutch authorities. To be sure, there was a major caveat to the freedoms of 1644 noted above, as those eleven slave families were released “on condition that their children serve the [West India] Company whenever it pleased.” However, a “Remonstrance” sent to the States General of the Netherlands by the colony’s white residents protested this clause, on the ground that it was “contrary to all public law, that any one born of a free Christian mother should, not withstanding, be a slave.” To date, no evidence has turned up indicating that the clause restricting children was ever repeated in subsequent manumissions. Moreover, the reference to black Christian parentage in the Remonstrance provides a clue to the colony’s practice regarding its black population – considering that all eleven families freed in 1644 are listed in the records of the Dutch Reformed Church. Was religion perhaps at the heart of New Netherland’s more permissive notions about black bondage and freedom?

Most Africans in New Netherland had last as well as first names, with surnames often revealing geographic origins – as for example “Emanuel van Angola,” “Simon Congo,” and “Pieter St. Thome.” Angola, Congo, and nearby islands like St. Tomé form the very region of West Central Africa where Portuguese colonizers had made a determined effort from the late-15th century to Christianize local African kings and peoples. And it is evident from the frequency in New Netherland of West Central African names, especially “d’Angola,” that a good portion of the blacks eventually carried to the colony, usually by privateers, originally had connections with this Portuguese-African area. Many of these Africans were baptized before, during, or after their

shipment to the Americas. And this in turn created a dilemma for white officials in the American colonies, given the long-standing precept that a Christian should not enslave a fellow Christian.

Though Africans were present in New Netherland from the 1620s, it is not clear that they were always classed as slaves. No law was passed there declaring that baptism did not free a slave, as occurred in the English colonies. Nor were blacks legally defined as heritable property in the Dutch colony, though it is apparent that they often remained in servitude to the West India Company or private owners far longer than did white indentured servants. Further, Dutch Reformed Church records show that many of the colony's black parents presented their children for baptism: between 1639 and 1655, for example, fifty-eight black children were baptized – with such Biblical names as Jacob, Isaac, Adam, and Eva. The parents also stood as witnesses at baptisms for relatives and black neighbors; they attended church services; and a number of black marriages are listed in the church records. Indeed, half or more of New Netherland's African families are recorded as having these sorts of connections to the Dutch Reformed Church.

In view of the Remonstrance's explicit acknowledgment that making slaves of Christians was wrong, as well as the high percentage of manumissions – unique in the northern mainland colonies, how should we view bondage in New Amsterdam/New Netherland? There can be no doubt that blacks were seen as different and of lesser status than whites. They were regularly set apart with the label "Negro," none ever held positions of public power, and only a few were listed in Dutch Reformed records as full church members. At the same time, black children were catechized by the Reformed clergy; blacks sued in defense of their property in court, in some cases successfully; they were given arms during wartime to help defend the colony; and no provincial laws permanently restricted their civil rights, as occurred in several English colonies.

Yet, always bearing on this subject is that slavery everywhere in North America was still evolving in the 1600s, with a number of ambiguities unresolved. Regulations tightened everywhere in the latter part of the 17th century, certainly in English New York. Can we be sure that the same would not have happened under a Dutch government, as the slave trade strengthened and expanded throughout the Americas? It is such questions that drive current research into slavery and the black experience in the early colonies, and will continue to attract new audiences to the increasingly lively and fascinating field of New Netherland Studies.

Sources

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- Maximize our story-telling capacities
- Further develop our website as an information-rich and dynamic educational portal
- Organize events and substantive public programs
- Further develop a virtual experience that reveals the multifaceted history of New Amsterdam
- Help us achieve our ultimate goal – creation of a physical center of exploration and learning about New Amsterdam.

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Thank you,
NAHC Board of Trustees

NAHC EVENTS AND MILESTONES

NAHC is very pleased to welcome Andrew Terhune, President of the Holland Society, as the newest member of the Board of Trustees. Andrew is as dedicated, as we are, to promoting Dutch history and culture in the U.S.

We bid farewell to longtime Board member, Everett Zabriskie, who has decided to move on to other ventures. We look forward to continuing to see him at our events.

Last May, Members and friends of the New Amsterdam History Center enjoyed a wonderful tour of the Vander-Ende – Onderdonk House in Flushing, Queens and a talk by Archeologist & Historic Preservation Specialist, Alyssa Loorya, President of Chrysalis Archeology entitled, *Gone but Not Forgotten: The Dutch of Western Long Island*.

Our members will soon receive an invitation for a private tour of the current exhibit at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, *Dutch Masters at the Met*, which will take place in late January. The tour will be led by the curator of the exhibition, Adam Eaker.



Alyssa Loorya with NAHC at
Onderdonk House

*****MEMBERSHIP*****

PLEASE JOIN THE NAHC FAMILY and support our mission to inform the public about the history of New Amsterdam & New Netherland during the short period of Dutch rule in the 17th Century. MEMBERSHIP benefits include invitations to members' only events and free admission to general events.

Membership Program

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 to the extent permitted by law.

Annual Membership Levels:

<u>SELECT</u>	<u>LEVEL</u>	<u>AMOUNT</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>
_____	Friend	\$50 - \$100	Invitations and discounts for all NAHC events and special Member-only events.
_____	Dual/Family	\$75	Admission for two people at above events.
_____	Contributor	\$250	Receive a complimentary copy of <i>Exploring Dutch New York</i>
_____	Donor	\$500	All of the above plus a signed copy of <i>New Netherland in a Nutshell</i> by Firth Haring Fabend
_____	Benefactor	\$1000	All of the above, plus a personalized signed copy pf <i>The Island at the Center of the World</i> by Russell Shorto
_____	Founder	\$5000	Event Sponsorship
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New Amsterdam History Center, c/o Collegiate Church Corporation, 500 Fifth Avenue, Suite 1710, New York, NY 10110, attention Casey R. Kemper.

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