

A photograph of a narrow, historic stone hallway. The walls are made of rough-hewn stone, and the floor is composed of large, flat stone slabs. On the left, there is a wooden lattice structure. At the end of the hallway, a red door is slightly ajar, leading to a brighter area. The lighting is dramatic, with strong shadows and highlights.

Seaport

NEW YORK'S HISTORY MAGAZINE

FALL 2001

New Amsterdam on the Hudson **A SPECIAL ISSUE**



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NEW YORK'S HISTORY MAGAZINE

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Dutch influences in the Hudson River Valley survived into the eighteenth century, as evidenced by the split door in the cellar of the 1766 Cornelis E. Wyncoop house in Stone Ridge, New York.
Photo by Geoffrey Gross from a forthcoming book on early-American Dutch architecture to be published by Rizzoli.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE by Peter Neill

Hope, Rebirth, and Rebuilding

As I write this message, I can look out my office window onto a peaceful nineteenth-century courtyard embraced by ancient brick walls bathed in autumn sunshine. This room, on the top floor of a 1797 building, feels worlds away from the skyscrapers of modern Manhattan and the tragic events of September 11, 2001. But all I have to do is exit this building and look west to be reminded that although the Seaport is very different in character from the modern city, it is one with it. In fact, I have been reminded many times in the ensuing days and weeks since the terrorist attack, that this district — quaint though it appears to modern eyes — has everything in common with the World Trade Center. In fact, it once *was* the world trade center of its day, with all that that implies.

Here, at South Street, modern commerce was born. Here at South Street, merchants of daring and genius devised new ways to conduct business and revolutionary ways to communicate with each other and the world. The district not only gave birth to modern commerce, it also gave rise to New York's enduring spirit as a place where people came, often with nothing but courageous hearts, and risked everything in the hope of reaping great rewards.

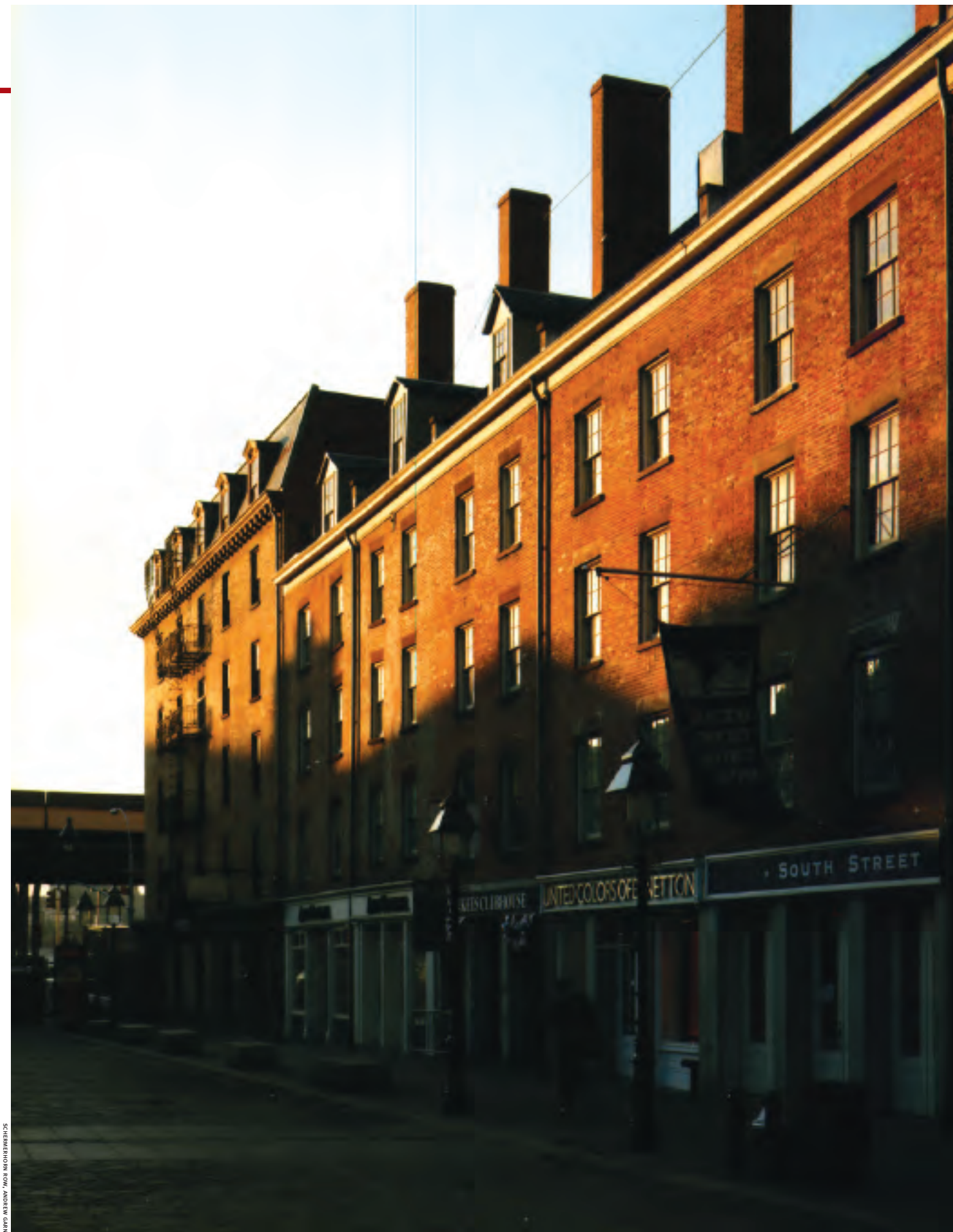
Schermerhorn Row, the early nineteenth-century structure that will soon be the home of our core exhibit, World Port New York, was built in that spirit. On the eve of the War of 1812, the merchant Peter Schermerhorn, a descendant of the early Dutch settlers celebrated in this issue of *Seaport*, hurriedly threw up a commercial building for one purpose: to make money. In a break with typical practice of that time, this building would not combine residential and commercial tenants; it was a structure intended for business only. Schermerhorn took a tremendous risk — the district at the time was far “uptown,” away from the main docks and markets. But, in a short time, Schermerhorn's risk paid off: Soon, the new Brooklyn steam ferry approached him about landing at the foot of his wharf. Because of the ferry, Fulton Street — named for the New York visionary responsible for that ferry — was created and soon became one of the city's busiest thoroughfares.

In the days following September 11th, people began to filter down to the South Street docks and the historic district. Soon the trickle became a flood. Some came, like Herman Melville's “water gazers,” to be healed by the ever-flowing river that runs past South Street. Others came to walk the narrow cobblestone streets, to enjoy the sensation of stepping back into a gentler time.

My message to them — and to all of you who I hope will visit us as we move forward with our regular exhibit and program schedule — is yes, this is a gentler place, but it also is a place that has seen the uncertainty and tragedy that is the necessary outgrowth of what makes New York great: the willingness to set sail for the unknown; the curiosity to try something new; the strength to risk reputation, wealth, even life to build a city and a nation.

The streets around the Seaport were once the haunt of one of America's greatest poets, Walt Whitman. In his own life, he risked greatly, by defying convention and creating new forms of expression, as New Yorkers have been doing for centuries. I would like to close with one of Whitman's great messages of hope, rebirth, and rebuilding, a poem entitled “The United States to Old World Critics”:

*Here first the duties of to-day, the lessons of the concrete,
Wealth, order, travel, shelter, products, plenty;
As of the building of some varied, vast, perpetual edifice,
Whence to arise inevitable in time, the towering roofs, the lamps,
The solid-planted spires tall shooting to the stars.*



New Amsterdam on the Hudson

An ice-free harbor and a central location secured Manhattan's selection as the "middelpunt" of the New Netherland colony.

With the advantage of hindsight it is obvious that New York City has become such an influential megalopolis because it fulfills the three basic requirements of all successful real estate: location, location, and location. The island of Manhattan offers not only a natural ice-free harbor midway along the coast of North America, it is also situated at the mouth of the Hudson and Mohawk river systems—for years the sole access to the interior of the continent below the Saint Lawrence River, the main artery of New France. | BY CHARLES GEHRING

Despite these obvious advantages, the island was at first ignored by early explorers and traders. Henry Hudson anchored his ship the *Half Moon* along the shore of "Manna-hata" upon his return from upriver in October of 1609. However, he was searching for a passage to the Orient and had little interest in the island. Soon after Hudson's explorations, Dutch traders began to visit the area. In 1613 Adriaen Block's ship *Tijger* was accidentally burned while anchored at Manhattan. Block and his crew built a replacement ship called *Onrust (Restless)* — a foreshadowing of Manhattan's shipbuilding industry.

A view of the Dutch colony of New Amsterdam, ca. 1650-1653. Fort Amsterdam is visible behind the houses. The hoisting crane on the shoreline is for handling cargo.

Activity increased in the area after 1614 with the formation of the New Netherland Company, a monopoly licensed by the States-General of the United Provinces of the New Netherlands to regulate trade to this new region and prevent the violence associated with increased competition for furs. Although Manhattan most likely served as a base of operations more than once during the trading season, it was the smaller island off the tip of Manhattan — Nooten Eiland (“Nut Island,” today’s Governors Island) — that probably attracted the most Dutch traders possibly because it was smaller and easier to secure against attacks by natives.

When the Twelve Year Truce with Spain expired in 1621, the States-General chartered the West India Company (WIC) to carry on the war against Spain in the Atlantic theater of operations. Modeled on the earlier East India Company, the WIC soon sent out expeditions to Africa, Brazil, and North America. New Netherland, which extended from the Connecticut

River to Delaware Bay, was to become the company’s northernmost operation. The colony was expected to supply enough natural resources, especially furs, to sustain itself and to turn a profit for the company.

In 1624, as soon as the company had raised sufficient operating capital, it sent over some thirty families, including eight men to Manhattan, to secure its holdings in New Netherland. Most were Walloons, French-speaking Protestants from the southern Netherlands, now Belgium. In the beginning, Governors Island continued as the central base of operations. The following year, when large shipments of livestock arrived, Governors Island proved too small to pasture the animals, so the livestock were moved to more spacious Manhattan. Nevertheless, Manhattan still did not attract settlers. In fact, Willem Verhulst, director of New Netherland from 1625 to 1626, was instructed to concentrate on strengthening his southern settlement (Fort Wilhelmus on High Island in the Delaware) and consider making this

the center of the colony. Interest in the Delaware probably stemmed from the need for an ice-free harbor. However, it soon became apparent that the Delaware could and did freeze over, while Manhattan’s harbor remained free of ice.

It was an event far to the north that finally determined that Manhattan would become the center of the colony. In the spring of 1626 the Mahican Indians, who lived near Fort Orange on the upper Hudson near present-day Albany, persuaded Daniel van Kriekenbeeck, the Dutch commander, to support them in an attack on their archenemy, the Mohawk Indians, who lived farther to the west. A few miles from the fort, the Mahican war party and their Dutch allies were ambushed by the Mohawks and soundly defeated. When Verhulst’s replacement, Peter Minuit, arrived in the colony in May he immediately sailed to Fort Orange to assess the situation. Minuit decided that matters had become too dangerous to maintain families in remote settlements. His solution

was to purchase Manhattan Island, upon which he planned to consolidate all of the colony’s scattered families from Fort Orange, the Connecticut, and the Delaware. Although trading personnel remained at the remote posts, the Mohawks were apparently satisfied by the withdrawal of the families and caused the Dutch no further trouble.

Soon after the purchase

of Manhattan Island, work began on Fort Amsterdam, which was intended to protect the inhabitants of the new settlement. In the fall of 1626 the ship *Arms of Amsterdam* landed in the fatherland with news from New Netherland. Peter Schagen, representative of the States-General to the WIC, sent a report of the ship’s arrival to the directors with a brief account of the situation in the colony. This letter, now in the Royal Archives in the Hague, is as close as one can come to a birth certificate for New York City:

High and Mighty Lords,

Yesterday the ship the Arms of Amsterdam arrived here. It sailed from New Netherland out of the River Mauritius [Hudson] on the 23d of September. They report that our people are in good spirit and live in peace. The women also have borne some children there. They have purchased the Island Manhattes from the Indians for the value of 60 guilders. It is 11,000 morgens in size [about 22,000 acres]. They had all their grain sowed by the middle of May, and reaped by the middle of August. They sent samples of these summer grains: wheat, rye, barley, oats, buckwheat, canary seed, beans and flax. The cargo of the aforesaid ship is:

7246 beaver skins; 178 1/2 otter skins; 675 otter skins; 48 mink skins; 36 lynx skins; 33 mincks; 34 weasel skins; many oak timbers and nut wood.

Herewith, High and Mighty Lords, be commended to the mercy of the Almighty,

*Your High and Mightinesses’ obedient,
P. Schagen*

Dutch Chronology 1624-1674

1624

First colonists (thirty Walloon families) arrive in New Netherland. The majority construct Fort Orange (Albany), while others settle on the Delaware and Connecticut rivers and Governors Island.

First primitive dock constructed in East River.

1626

Peter Minuit “buys” Manhattan from Indians for the equivalent of \$24. Dutch settlers establish New Amsterdam by building a fort and

thirty houses. The West India Company (WIC) begins importing African slaves, usually via Curaçao, seven years after Dutch traders first sold slaves to Jamestown’s settlers. Slave importation remains haphazard until ca.1652-53, when WIC issues licenses for slaving voyages between the New World and Africa.

First recorded shipment of beaver and other skins from New Amsterdam to Netherlands, though furs noted as exports as early as 1624.

c. 1627

First coastal trade out of the port, with Plymouth colony.

1628

First published description of the inhabitants of New Amsterdam states that 270 settlers occupy the town.

1629

WIC grants a “Charter of Freedoms and Exemptions” offering patroonships in order to encourage Dutch settlement in New Netherland. By this date Wouter van Twiller receives a land grant for a tobacco farm on the site of an old Algonkian settlement; it becomes the nucleus of the suburb later known as Greenwich Village.

1631

Nieuw Nederlandt, first ship (600-800 tons) built in New Amsterdam and launched in East River.

1635

Site of present-day Hoboken purchased as farmland by WIC.

1636

First Dutch purchases from Indians on Long Island at Flatlands and near Gowanus Bay.

1637

First land grant to Dutch at Harlem; village is founded in 1658.

c.1638-42

First ferry service between Manhattan and Long Island — Peck Slip to what is now Fulton Street in Brooklyn. Employs rowboats and flat-bottom pull boats.

1639

Dutch settlement of Staten Island begins; settlers are later driven out by attacking Indians.

WIC buys part of what is now the Bronx from Indians; two years later Jonas Bronck, a Swedish sea captain, becomes the first European settler of the region.

WIC ends its monopoly on New Amsterdam’s fur trade.

1640

WIC enacts a new “Charter of Freedoms and Exemptions” to encourage further settlement.

1641

Beginning of nominal representative government: family heads choose Board of Twelve Men to help govern.

1641-4

Governor Willem Kieft’s Dutch–Indian wars, largely precipitated by Dutch encroachments on natives. Savage attacks on both sides; almost 1,000 Indians perish. A defensive wall at present-day Wall Street is built at the city’s northern boundary.

1642

Stone tavern built at head of Coenties Slip to accommodate coastal traders. Becomes *Stadthuys* in 1653.



▲ City Hall (*Stadthuys*)

1643

French missionary Isaac Jogues reports male population on Manhattan and its environs of 400 to 500 men, speaking 18 different languages.

1645-46

First permanent settlement in Queens at Vlisingen (Flushing), and at Breukelen and Gravesend on Long Island. Village of Breukelen established.



▲ Peter Stuyvesant

1647

Peter Stuyvesant becomes governor. Isaac Allerton constructs great warehouse near present-day Peck Slip.

By this date, the original East River shoreline (now Pearl Street) is known as “the Strand.” It remains the waterfront and the center of commercial activity until the end of the century.

1648

First stable pier in the city, rock fill with timber cribbing, completed at Schreyer’s Hook, Pearl and Broad Streets, on the East River.



▲ Detail of the Hartgers View (1625-1628), the earliest known picture of New Amsterdam

It is from this letter that the famous and oft-quoted purchase price of twenty-four dollars comes. This figure, of course, reflects the rate of exchange between the guilder and the dollar at the time the letter was first discovered in the late nineteenth century. It corresponds in no way with the actual value of sixty guilders worth of merchandise in the early seventeenth century.

During the early years of the colony, New Amsterdam grew slowly. Under the administrations of Peter Minuit (1626-1631), Bastiaen Jansz Krol (1632), Wouter Van Twiller (1633-1638), and Willem Kieft (1638-1647) New Amsterdam spread from a cluster of houses near the fort northward to approximately present-day Wall Street. As the center of the New Netherland colony, Manhattan served as the entrepôt for commercial activity from Fort Orange on the upper Hudson down to the Delaware Bay. Ships transferred cargoes of fur and tobacco to the company warehouse on Manhattan where they were stored awaiting shipment to the fatherland.

New Amsterdam was a

lively seaport town, its streets filled with seamen from all points of the globe; Indians from the various tribes of Long Island, Westchester, and New Jersey; and Africans, both free and slave. Sailors taking shore leave in New Amsterdam made tavernkeeping one of the most lucrative professions. (See "The Sabbath Keeper," page 20). Governor Kieft once remarked to a visiting Jesuit priest that eighteen languages could be heard in his city. It has been estimated that approximately one

half of the population of New Netherland came from places other than the Netherlands. Many were refugees from the Thirty Years War in Germany, wars between Denmark and Sweden, and the religious wars in France. Thus, multi-ethnicity was and has been over the years a characteristic of the area covered by the Dutch colony.

New Amsterdam's transformation into the English colony of New York was foreshadowed in April of 1633 when an English ship, *William*, put into the harbor. Its captain was Jacob Eelckens, who had served with Dutch trading cartels on the Hudson River before the formation of the WIC. His experience with navigating the river and familiarity with native customs and languages in the Hudson Valley made him a distinct threat to New Amsterdam governor Wouter Van Twiller when he requested permission to trade at Fort Orange. The WIC could not admit competition from foreign powers and still remain a monopoly. When denied access to the Dutch fur trade, Eelckens proclaimed that the land in any case belonged to the English king. After some weeks in the harbor, the *William* managed to slip free and proceed up the river. Van Twiller eventually sent several ships in pursuit. They forced Eelckens to return to New Amsterdam, where he refused to comply with Van Twiller's demand to surrender his cargo of furs. Matters returned to normal when Eelckens departed for London.

The English would continue to threaten New Netherland. A few years after the episode with Eelckens, the English sent a force from Virginia to seize the Dutch fort

and trading post on the Delaware River. Since Fort Nassau (present-day Gloucester, New Jersey) was only garrisoned during the May-to-September trading season, the English were able to occupy it without bloodshed. As soon as Van Twiller heard of this intrusion, he sent a military force by sea to recover the fort. The Dutch were aware that whoever controlled the Delaware could also control the fur trade behind Fort Orange. The English soldiers surrendered without incident and were brought to New Amsterdam. They were eventually brought back to Virginia by David Pietersz de Vries who was sailing to the Chesapeake on business. Once again an English incursion into Dutch territory had demonstrated to the people of New Amsterdam the tenuous nature of their settlement on Manhattan.

The English Civil War (1642-1648) reduced the threat from this external force; however, it was soon replaced by disruption from an internal force when Van Twiller's successor as director of the colony, Willem Kieft, became involved in a devastating Indian war. The hostilities laid waste Dutch settlements in New Jersey and on Staten Island and gave rise to numerous brutalities against the Indians. Kieft's misadventures with the native population led to his removal in 1647 as the colony's director. His replacement, Peter Stuyvesant, was appointed Director-General of New Netherland as much for his administrative abilities as for his reputation as an aggressive military commander.

Stuyvesant arrived at New Amsterdam on May 11, 1647. His administration lasted seventeen years, during which time New

Netherland began to attract more settlers and develop into a busy commercial center with trade connections throughout the Caribbean and along the coast of North America.

When the English Civil War was resolved in favor of the Parliamentarians, Oliver Cromwell attempted to improve England's commercial interests around the world by limiting the ability of the Netherlands to compete. The so-called Navigation Act, which allowed only English ships or ships of the country of origin to carry goods to England, led to the first Anglo-Dutch War (1652-1654), which soon threatened to spill over to New Netherland.

In the Spring of 1653 a

delegation from New England visited Stuyvesant in New Amsterdam with accusations that he had incited Indians to attack settlements in the English colony of Connecticut. Stuyvesant immediately began strengthening defenses throughout the Dutch colony. It is at this time that he initiated the building of the defensive barrier along the northern edge of New Amsterdam, which is remembered to this day as Wall Street. In Boston, attempts to form a united New England force to attack New Netherland failed, deflating the possibility of invasion. When word reached New Amsterdam of peace between England and the Netherlands in 1654, the news was celebrated with a huge bonfire and a day of prayer and thanksgiving.

Once again the resolution of external problems was followed by a series of internal ones. In 1638, during Kieft's administration, Sweden sanctioned the establishment

of a colony in the Delaware, on land claimed by the WIC (present-day Wilmington). Although dissatisfied with the situation, the Dutch managed to coexist with little friction. However, when the Swedes captured the Dutch stronghold and trading post of Fort Casimir on the Delaware in 1654, plans were laid for the elimination of New Sweden.

In the summer of 1655 Stuyvesant began to assemble a force for the Swedish expedition. On Sunday, September 5th, after church, the invasion force of seven ships carrying more than three hundred soldiers left New Amsterdam. Stuyvesant quickly brought the Swedish colony under Dutch control, but the operations on the Delaware were disturbed when news reached the Dutch encampment that Manhattan and the settlements in New Jersey and Staten Island had been attacked by a large force of Indians. Although little damage was done on Manhattan, the settlements in New Jersey and on Staten Island were laid waste. Once again the streets of New Amsterdam were full of refugees and the smoke of burning farms hung in the air.

Despite these setbacks, the Dutch colony began to grow rapidly. The new influx of settlers and increased commercial activity was propelled by the loss of Dutch Brazil in January of 1654. Once Brazil ceased to consume most of the company's resources, more attention was devoted to the North American colony. However, because prosperous New Amsterdam was sandwiched between the English colonies of New England and Virginia, it soon attracted the attention of the newly

restored Charles II, king of England, and his brother James, Duke of York and Albany.

In 1664, Charles granted James extensive territories in North America, including the Dutch colony of New Netherland. In September of the same year, without a declaration of war, a naval force under the command of Richard Nicolls demanded the surrender of New Netherland. Fort Amsterdam and Fort Orange gave up without resistance. Fort New Amstel on the Delaware (formerly Fort Casimir), belonging to the city of Amsterdam, had to be taken by storm, however. The ease in capturing New Amsterdam was replicated in 1673 when a Dutch fleet briefly retook the colony. It remained in Dutch hands until the end of the third Anglo-Dutch war when it was returned to England as part of the peace settlement in 1674.

By the time New Amsterdam became New York, the city already had a rich and exciting past colored by its namesake's unique character: Amsterdam, the financial, cultural, and intellectual center of Northern Europe in the seventeenth century, and haven for refugees displaced by European wars, had laid the foundation for the ascendancy of New York City as financial, cultural, and intellectual capital of the world, and the primary port of entry for millions of European immigrants to North America.

Charles Gehring is director of the New Netherland Project, New York State Library, Albany. A version of this article appeared in The Low Countries: Arts and Society in Flanders and the Netherlands, A Yearbook: 1993-94.

continued

1650

Treaty of Hartford: Stuyvesant gives up claims to Western Connecticut and Suffolk County to New Englanders.

1651-73

Passage of the English Navigation Acts regulating colonial trade: British ports monopolize import and re-export of enumerated colonial goods and control flow of European goods exported to colonies.

1652-54, 1664-67

Anglo-Dutch Wars for commercial supremacy; both countries gain and lose various political and mercantile advantages.

1653

Population of Manhattan estimated at 700-800.

Despite Stuyvesant's opposition, a municipal government is incorporated; the city tavern becomes City Hall (Stadhuis). First jail and poor house are built; the first police force, the night watch, is established; brush and timber fortification on city's northern border (Wall Street) reinforced with protective palisade.

New Netherland delegates meet at first general assembly at City Hall.

1654

Canal built (in part to provide water against fires) at Broad Street. Weighhouse built on wharf at Schreyer's Hook; first systematic sheet-piling of waterfront to straighten the shore and provide reasonably uniform water depth along the margin.

Refugees from Brazil establish first Jewish community in North America. First synagogue is not built until 1729.

1655-57

"Peach" War, bloody war between Dutch and Indians, leaves over fifty colonists and sixty natives dead; Staten Island, Pavonia, and other settlements abandoned.

1656

Survey of New Amsterdam finds 1,000 inhabitants and 120 houses.

First broker appointed for Dutch and English merchants; first public market opens for farmers' produce on the beach at what is now Whitehall and Pearl Streets.

1657

By this date, seven villages are firmly established on western Long Island: three Dutch (Brooklyn, Flatlands, and Flatbush) and four English (Gravesend, Newtown, Flushing, and Hempstead).

1658

Harlem is established as a village at northeast end of Manhattan Island; individuals had already settled in the area beginning in 1637.

1659

City's second and larger pier, the "Bridge" or Weighhouse Pier, built near foot of Moore Street.

1659-64

Esopus War: conflict between Dutch and Indians in northern New Netherland.

1661

Resettlement of Staten Island by French and Walloon families at Oude Dorp following Peach War.

1662

Ferry service established between Battery and site of Jersey City (Bergen).

1664

Population of the New Amsterdam is 1,500.

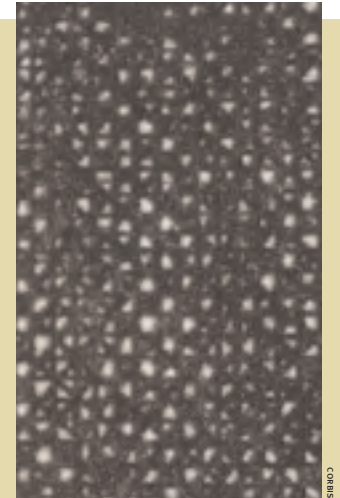
British take possession of New Netherland; rename city and province New York after James, Duke of York, later James II, who becomes proprietor.

1665

Nicolls Charter substitutes English for Dutch form of municipal government; Thomas Willet appointed first mayor.

1673-74

Dutch briefly recapture city, but English rule is quickly reestablished.



▲ James, Duke of York

ITINERARIO,
 Voyage ofte Schipvaert / van Jan
 Huygen van Linschoten naer Oost ofte Portugaels In-

dien inhoudende een cozte beschryvinghe der selver Landen ende Zee-custen / met aen-
 toplinge van alle de voornaemste principale Havens / Reieren / hoeken ende plaetsen / tot noch
 toe vande Portugelen ontdeckt ende bekent: Waer by gheboecht zijn / niet alleen die Conter-
 feysels vande habyten / zachten ende wesen / so vande Portugelen aldare residentende / als vande
 de ingeboornen Indianen / ende hurre Tempels / Afgoden / Dwalinge / met die voornaemste
 Boomen / Druchten / krupden / Spicereyen / ende diergelycke materialen / als ooc die
 manieren des selven Volcks / so in hantten Gods- diensten / als in Politie
 en Huys- houdinghe: maer ooc een cozte beschryvinge van de Coophan-
 delingen / hoe est waer die ghebreken en ghevonden worden /
 met die ghedreuckweerdichste geschiedenissen /
 voo: ghevallen den tye zijnder
 residentie aldaer.

Alles beschreven ende by een vergadert, door den selfden, seer nut, oorbact,
 ende oock vermakelijcken voor alle curieuse ende Lief-
 hebbers van vrenndigheden.



AMSTELREDAM.

By Cornelis Claesz. op 't Water, in 't Schryf-boeck, by de oude Brugghé.

Anno CIO. IO. XCVI.

Outpost
 in a
 New World

The surviving records of the Dutch Age of Exploration reveal the modest beginnings of the island that would become a great city.

WE HAVE TO START WITH *MARGE*. IT'S AN OBSOLETE WORD NOW. AGE MAKES IT MYSTERIOUS. But once it referred to the marginal zone that one writer described as being “between what seamen call ‘open ocean’ and what landmen might call ‘ordinary inland landscape.’”

The seaport of New Netherland on Manhattan Island was a marginal zone. It was along-shore, adjacent to inland, and adjacent to the sea. And it fascinates not because of its uniqueness, but because it once was just another faraway place in a vast seafaring empire. For a long time it was a footnote, an afterthought, a shred of land that barely sparked the imagination of otherwise garrulous adventurers.

BY DONNA MERWICK

Even before 1620, merchants and seamen from northern Holland’s trading towns had stories to tell about “the Virginias.” Captain Cornelis Hendricksz of Monnickendam had been there. His employers were prosperous investors from his own northern coast and Amsterdam, a city just to the south. Hendricksz set sail for the Virginias in 1614. The States-General had thrown open the bidding for the right to explore and trade in the area “between New France and Virginia.”

FACING PAGE: Dutch seafarer Jan Huygen van Linschoten regaled the readers of his 1596 *Itinerario* with stories of riches and natural wonders. The title page features four ports of the Netherlands: Antwerp, Amsterdam, Middelburg, and Enkhuizen.

COURTESY JOHN CARTER BROWN LIBRARY

They called it an “experiment.” Now here were Hendricksz’s backers saying “we are ‘directors’ of a company called ‘New Netherland.’ Our coastal surveying and mapping and our trading with natives have given you possession of some ‘new country, a bay, and three rivers.’ Give us a monopoly to trade and explore for four years.”

We don’t know what stories Hendricksz might have carried back to his home port. We do, however, have some of his official report which reveals Hendricksz trading cheap merchandise with natives for furs and Hendricksz charting the long coasts from a vessel named *Orrust* (*Restless*).

Captain Jan Cornelisz May also had stories to tell. At least some of them became known to an eager public. In 1611-1612 he sailed to the Arctic and the North American coast. His journal is a record of invented, sometimes ominous, place names whose significance could not have been lost on other seafarers or the public: “All Saints Bay,” “Sorrowful Bay,” “Kerckhof”— the church burying ground, an island where the bodies of three sailors had to be interred.

Jan Huygen van Linschoten from Enkhuizen was May’s opposite as a storyteller. As against May’s weighty professionalism, van Linschoten wrote with unbounded exuberance. He sailed to the East Indies as a young man with the Portuguese and recounted his experiences in his *Itinerario* of 1596. He gave readers stories of riches and natural wonders. If the Dutch would but follow the Portuguese, he scolded, they would discover (and profit from) a “*toeverwereld*,” a world of magic, a place of “warmth, lushness and strange things,” a place “*sprookjesachtig*,” like a fairytale.

Nowhere in the stories about the world “situate in America between New France and Virginia” was it ever described as “like a fairytale.” In 1619, the “island of New Netherland” was years away from resembling anything like the magical world of Goa or even the emerging rendezvous at Batavia. Only nine years before, Henry Hudson could see nothing more in the

harbor of New Netherland than “drowned land” that looked like islands, maybe islands in a lake, perhaps in a bay. But the land, he did say, was “very favorable to call into.”

After 1621 the West India Company was permitted to carry forward in a long-term way the exploitation of New Netherland. We know that during these years, 1624 and 1625, the company’s men were giving consideration to a number of islands and river locations as possible rendezvous points. They landed small numbers of personnel at several locations. Cornelis Jacobsz May had been employed to locate and equip the places from which they would one day choose a central rendezvous — “*middelpunt*,” they called it.

For at least two years the

company was uncertain that the island of “the Manahates” was the place they wanted as a central rendezvous. It might have been *Noten Eiland* (Nut Island, Governors Island), just off Manhattan Island. It might have been *Prinsen Eiland* (Prince’s Island), a high island in the river they soon named the South River (Delaware River). We can conjecture that somehow from a loose set of trading posts a single island location emerged as a chosen place of rendezvous. Such places were essential in the world of mariners and overseas trading companies in their initial years. *Verwachtplaatsen* were on-shore assembly points that captains sailing in convoys or pairs established with each other before voyaging out. Often they were chosen by the trading company or investors. Often they were sheltered harbors on islands.

In 1624 Willem Verhulst took command of four ships bound for New Netherland. There he would be provisional director of an enterprise meant to have a permanent presence. He and the others looked for an island. It needed to be suitable for “a fort and habitations.” The fort would be like one of the many shore forts built by the Dutch along coastlines and rivers at home and abroad. With this

building design, the company announced its power. They would be like the Portuguese in their many fortified places in the Indies. They were in control of their own docking station. A mercantile island settlement would emerge. Like Goa or Deshime: adjacent to the sea before it and to the continent at its back. Exploiting both.

The nascent colony anticipated European enemies from the sea, not the natives. Here in New Netherland, they sought peaceful coexistence achieved by a clear sense of separate spheres. They described the indigenes as “native-born people” and themselves as “the strangers” or “foreigners.” After all, Dutch merchants had regularly been “strangers” in places such as Bergen in Norway where they handled the timber trade for a home port such as Enkhuizen.

Only officials were empowered to enter alliances and contracts with the *vreemde mogenheden*, those in power among the natives. They anticipated dealing with “foreign princes and potentates.” So, meetings should be arranged and the proper honorifics extended. They should be careful to present themselves as other overseas Dutch merchants had learned to do in the Indies or eastern Mediterranean: as subjects of a powerful sovereign, in this case, Prince Maurits of Nassau.

And now: the settlement of the “general rendezvous.” In January of 1625, the directors instructed Verhulst to purchase Prince’s Island. They worried, however, that it might be inhabited. In that case and “by good words,” the “Indians” should be persuaded to leave or “given something therefor to their satisfaction.” “Or else,” they continued, arrange a contract allowing them to “live among us.”

Directives written three months later were essentially the same but more revealing. The directors were still reluctant to prescribe the exact location of the *middelpunt*. They wanted to hold out for the same kind of uninhabited place.

So they put forward their “first choice.” Consider “the West side” of the



Encounters with Native Americans

THESE NATIVE AMERICAN CERAMIC SHARDS WERE RECOVERED AT THE BROAD FINANCIAL CENTER SITE NEAR the corner of present-day Pearl and Whitehall Streets. 1) Buff-bodied rim shard with punctate decoration. 2) Grit-tempered body shard. 3) Plain gray body shard. 4) Plain body shard. 5) Gray body shard with mica inclusions. 6) Gray body shard with punctate decoration. 7) Shell-tempered gray body shard. 8) Red clay pipe stem recovered from a deep trench opened during utility work under Pearl Street. 9) Neck shard identified as “Eastern Incised,” which dates to the Late Woodland Period (1300-1600 A.D.). 10) “Bowman’s Brook Incised” body shard with wide but shallowly incised herringbone decoration. 11) Undecorated body shard recovered from the builder’s trench for Augustine Heermans’s warehouse, ca. 1640.

island of the “Manattes,” but here’s a bit of latitude: “In case as a result of your initial efforts no suitable place can be found which was left abandoned by the Indians [on the southern tip of the island]...then don’t undertake the fortifications...as are in the directives to the engineer but put in place something more provisional.” Meanwhile carefully survey the other “places we’ve favored” in case one of them

“has been abandoned.” Should “nothing else except those [lands] inhabited by the Indians” be found, then negotiate an agreement with the native proprietors for the best location on their island.

History has proven that the early Dutch explorers chose the perfect location for their *middelpunt*.

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First Families

When a man in New Amsterdam wanted to get ahead, his most important task was to find a well-connected wife.

BY 1642 NEW AMSTERDAM DESPERATELY NEEDED A NEW CHURCH. THE BARN-LIKE STRUCTURE IN WHICH the Dutch Reformed congregation had been meeting was rotting and overcrowded. Yet the government was unable to find the funds for a new building. At the June wedding of Dutch West India Company surgeon Hans Kierstede and Sara Roelofse, daughter of the renowned Anneke Jans, Company Director

BY DAVID WILLIAM VOORHEES

Willem Kieft came up with a novel plan. After “the fourth or fifth round of drinking,” he shrewdly told wedding guests how much he would give to construct a new church. “All then with light heads subscribed largely, competing one with the other.”

The building of a new church marked a turning point in New Amsterdam’s development from a tentative European outpost into a solid civic entity. Kieft recognized, however, that in New Amsterdam’s frontier-like social conditions, the concept of civic responsibility remained wishful thinking. He thus relied upon the competitive spirit that was driving the city’s emerging elite. At the top of this new social order stood a group of self-made men who, taking advantage of the fluid social conditions of a frontier outpost, forged familial and professional ties with Dutch mercantile syndicates and government officials that gave them an edge in the city’s expanding trade. What rooted these men in New Netherland, as we shall see, was a family of local women.

FACING PAGE: Matriarch Anneke Jans (1605-1663) owned a farm that stretched from present-day Warren Street to just above Canal Street. It was the basis for a series of lawsuits begun in the 1740s and lasting until the 1930s.

Kinship ties launched these men forward and created the competitive divisions that spurred New York City's early economic, political, and cultural development.

If New York has an Eve, she is Sara Roelofse's grandmother, Tryn Jonas van Maesterland. By the time of the American Revolution virtually every member of New York's elite claimed her as an ancestor. Tryn was born in obscurity in an impoverished fishing village on the island of Marstrand (in Dutch, Maesterland) and married an unknown seaman. Her story and that of her descendants is the ultimate New York success story.

Tryn Jonas initially settled with her husband on the island of Vlecker, Norway, but Amsterdam, with its thriving fishing and mercantile fleets, was a magnet for seamen. The area surrounding St. Anthonispoort in the city's oldest section became a slum as immigrants from Dutch, Flemish, German, and Scandinavian fishing villages like young Tryn crowded the damp basements and rickety garrets of its late medieval structures. When Tryn's husband died, her future became tied to that

of her daughters. By 1633 she was living in New Netherland at de Laets Burg farm, a farm managed by her son-in-law Roelof Janssoon near present-day Albany. The following year the family left for Manhattan. There, West India Company Director Wouter van Twiller employed Tryn as the New Amsterdam midwife and had a "small house" built for her at company expense.

In New Netherland,

where childbirth — still cloaked in medieval superstition — was hazardous and parentage often questionable, the illiterate Tryn's role as midwife conferred on her a higher status than she would have enjoyed in Europe. Although she did not leave a substantial estate when she died in 1645, she left a legacy more valuable in a community where females were scarce: two attractive, healthy, and fertile daughters.

Rome has its Romulus and Remus, and New York City has its Anneke Jans and Marritje Jans. Tryn's two daughters and their offspring attracted increasingly richer merchants from the Dutch Atlantic world

into their family to create an unparalleled power base. For example, after the death of her first husband, Roeloff Jansen, Anneke married New Amsterdam Domine (pastor) Everardus Bogardus. Her Manhattan farm, extending from present-day Warren Street to just above Canal Street, became the basis for a series of infamous lawsuits between her descendants and Trinity Corporation, beginning in the 1740s and lasting until the 1930s.

Anneke's sister Marritje successively married company ship's carpenter Tymen Jansen, land speculator Cornelis Dirksz, and, finally, New Amsterdam merchant, Govert Loockermans, whose 52,702-guilder estate at the time of his death in 1671 made him New York City's richest merchant.

Corporate growth and individual economic advancement in the pre-industrial world resulted from the merger of families. The career of Marritje Jans's third husband, Govert Loockermans, reveals how important marital ties could be. Loockermans arrived in New Amsterdam in 1633 as a twenty-one-year-old cook's mate aboard the *St. Martyn*, which also brought the new

West India Company (WIC) director, Wouter van Twiller. Impressed by Loockermans, Van Twiller took him into service as a company clerk. He continued to work in that capacity until 1639, when the WIC opened up trade to private individuals.

In 1641 Loockermans became New Netherland agent for the Amsterdam firm of Gillis Verbrugge and married Verbrugge's widowed niece, Adriantje Jans. Adriantje's previous husband, Jan Hendrickse van de Water, had been active with his brothers, Isaack and Jacob, in the Arctic trade. More important for American development, Isaack van de Water and Gillis Verbrugge were in 1637 among the Dutch financial backers of a Swedish colony on the Delaware River promoted by disillusioned WIC director Samuel Bloomart and directed by former New Netherland director Peter Minuit. Jan Hendricksz, who subsequently disappeared at sea during a hurricane, captained the *Key of Kalmar*, lead ship of the two vessels the Swedish South Sea Company sent to the Delaware River under Minuit's direction in 1637-1638. Adriantje's sister, Hester Jans, was married

to Jacob Wolfertsen van Couwenhoven, another prominent New Netherland merchant. And Loockermans' sister, Anna, married rapidly rising New Amsterdam merchant Oloff van Cortlandt.

Loockermans' extensive

kinship ties in the Atlantic World provided him an edge in New Amsterdam's growing trade. Along with his brothers-in-law, Domine Everardus Bogardus, Jacob van Couwenhoven, and Oloff van Cortlandt, he became a outspoken proponent for the creation of a municipal government for New Amsterdam. The WIC's 1653 granting of municipal government to the community opened up additional trade opportunities, and the results were clearly evident.

By 1664, the forty-year-old town was booming. In a dozen years New Amsterdam's population jumped three fold to more than 1,500 inhabitants, the size of a prosperous provincial European market town. Moreover, the establishment of a municipal government enhanced these merchants' role and made them

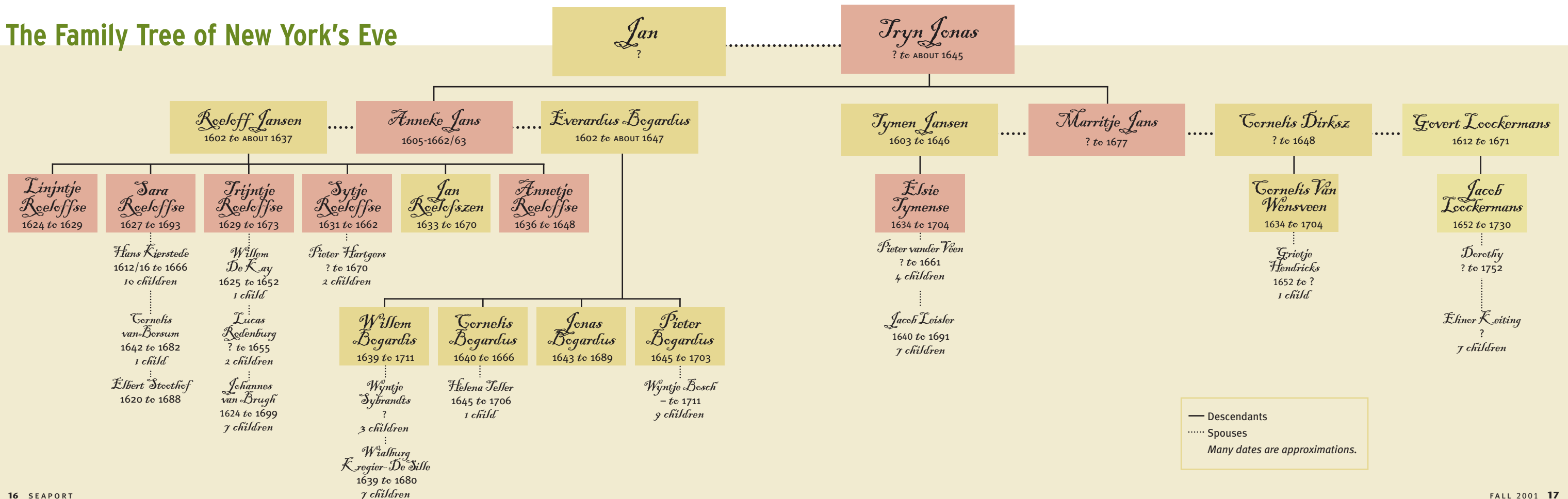
independent of the company officials who had formerly dominated the town.

Despite the failure of the 1657 Great Burgher Right — an attempt to confer important offices only on men of wealth — the kinship network centered on Anneke and Marritje Jans managed to obtain hegemony over the city's economic and political life.

The spouses of Anneke Jans's three daughters included WIC surgeon Hans Kierstede; wealthy merchant and New Amsterdam fiscal Willem de Key; WIC Curaçao director Lucas Rodenburg; Pieter Hartgers, brother of noted Amsterdam bookseller and printer Joost Hartgers; and Johannes Pietersz Verbrugge, or Van Brugh, another member of the Amsterdam mercantile house of Verbrugge. Her sons' spouses included daughters of New Netherland councilor and noted poet, Nicaisius de Sille, and Beverwijck merchant Willem Teller.

Marritje Jans's daughter, Elsie, married first the company's senior ship's carpenter, Pieter Cornelisz vander Veen, then well-connected German-born merchant Jacob

The Family Tree of New York's Eve



Leisler, while her son, Cornelis, married a daughter of New Amsterdam bread inspector Hendrick Willemszen. Their relations soon also included Stuyvesants, Bayards, Van Rensselaers, Schuylers, Philipses, De Peysters, and Provoosts, thus creating a commercial aristocracy that would endure for generations.

In Dutch fashion, carefully planned marriages of daughters brought new men with good connections into the family, thus expanding the family's hold on offices. By the late 1680s, for example, twelve of the twenty-two city militia officers were directly related by blood or marriage to Anneke and Marritje Jans. As one historian noted of Dutch oligarchies, "men could not pick their sons, but they could surely control who became their sons-in-law."

Beginning in the 1670s the familial unity that propelled New York's leading merchants forward began to fracture. At root was the competitive spirit that Kieft had so craftily manipulated in 1642 when he needed to corral community support for a new church. As the older generation passed, the division of their estates now turned contentious. The conflict between Dutch inheritance law, which favored equal division among children, and English inheritance law, which favored primogeniture or descent to the eldest son, aggravated dissension. Disputes over the Van Rensselaer, Govert Loockermans, Thomas Delavall, and Cornelis Steenwijck estates are among the better known of these suits. Contestants courted official favor and public opinion to support their competing claims. Factions arose as a method to promote the particular interests. Religiously based ideological claims were subsequently employed to legitimize the factions.

By the late 1680s, the contestants in the various suits and their supporters were coalescing into two distinct and warring factions. When royal authority in New York collapsed in the wake of England's 1688 Glorious Revolution, which replaced the Roman Catholic King James II with the Protestant William, Prince of Orange, and his wife Mary (James's daughter), the quarreling families now openly vied for control of the provincial government.

In June 1689, Jacob Leisler, who had been battling his Bayard, Kierstede, and Van Cortlandt in-laws over the Loockermans estate for nearly two decades, emerged as opposition leader and immediately set about to destroy his in-laws' political base. "This arbitrary proud person Leysler, exalted himself above his bretheren [and] disdains to own his very kindred unless they will entitle him Lieutenant Governor," Nicholas Bayard wrote of his in-law in 1690.

A foretaste of this bitter political struggle may be seen in the contest over the estate of New Amsterdam burgomaster Cornelis Steenwijck, who died in 1684. Steenwijck's children had already died, and his widow, Margaret de Riemer, subsequently married New York City Dutch Reformed Domine Henricus Selijns in 1686. Selijns and Steenwijck's half-brother and sister, Jacob and Anna Mauritz, now laid claim to the estate. Drawn into the fray on Selijns' side were Bayards, Van Cortlandts, and De Keys, while Gouverneurs, Staatses, and Provoosts sided with the Mauritzes. The dispute eventually escalated into riots.

Once in power, Jacob Leisler hounded and imprisoned his in-laws on charges of "papism," and appointed courts that ruled favorably in the estate interests of his faction. Although religion, class, and ethnicity undoubtedly played a role in the rebellion, the longstanding intrafamilial feuds between the leaders of both factions must be taken into account.

In 1690 Bayard named the "principal authors of our principal miseries": Jacob Leisler, Jacob Milborne, Samuel Edsall, George Beekman, Peter Delanoy, Samuel Staats, Thomas Williams, Jonathan Cowenhoven, Benjamin Blagge, Hendrick Jansen, and Hendrick Cuyler. Each of these men was either a litigant in, or related by marriage to a party in, the estate feuds.

Familial feuding reached an operatic crescendo in 1691. When King William III's royal governor, Henry Sloughter, arrived, Leisler's in-laws rushed to greet the new governor to relate their version of events. The faction that supported Leisler was thrown into jail and had their estates confiscated on charges of treason.

In May 1691, Jacob Leisler and Jacob Milborne, who had recently become Leisler's son-in-law, were beheaded. For a decade Milborne had been in litigation

with Robert Livingston. Spying Livingston in the crowd at the scaffold, Milborne threatened to testify against him in the afterlife: "you have caused the King [that] I must now die. But before gods tribunal I will implead you for the same."

The execution of Leisler and Milborne did not end the family wrangle. As Leisler's in-laws and their relations seized control of the disputed Loockermans and other estates, appeals to the crown in England by Jacob Leisler, Jr., Abraham Gouverneur, Jacob Mauritz, Benjamin Blagge, and Kiliaen van Rensselaer resulted in Parliament's reversal of the sentence of treason against Leisler and his adherents. With their political rights restored, Leisler's family now sought revenge upon their relations.

Although the party factionalism spawned by the estate feuds continued to rend New York's political fabric for decades, the same forces eventually caused the family to rapidly close ranks primarily through intermarriage. As early as the 1690s, cousins from the feuding family factions began to wed. The most dramatic of these unions was undoubtedly the marriage in 1729 of Leisler's granddaughter Elizabeth Rynders and Nicholas Bayard the Younger, grandson and sole heir of Leisler's bitter enemy, Nicholas Bayard. Ironically, then, all the descendants of Nicholas Bayard are also descendants of his arch-rival, Jacob Leisler. Indeed, when Bayard's Manhattan estate was later incorporated into the urban fabric, the streets were named after Leisler's daughters Hester and Elizabeth, as well as members of the Bayard family.

The oligarchy that emerged in New Amsterdam continued to dominate New York society and politics for the next two centuries. It would not be until the so-called "palace revolution" of the 1870s, brought about by the new wealth created by industrialization and so eloquently described in the novels of Edith Wharton, that the old family-based power structure truly began to wane.

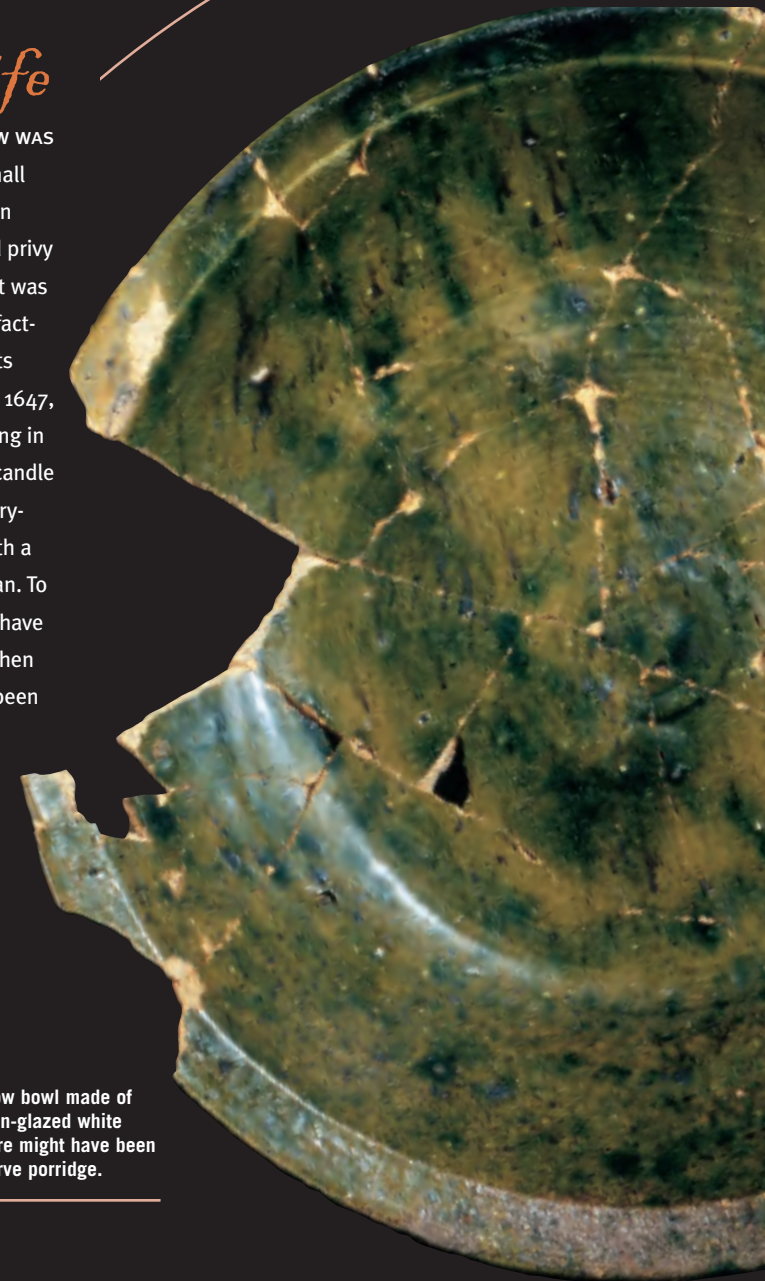
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The Details of Domestic Life

ONE OF SEVERAL TILES PORTRAYING SCENES OF DUTCH MILITARY LIFE, THE TILE BELOW WAS recovered by a team of archaeologists excavating a privy pit associated with a small house owned by Jacob Haie and purchased in 1653 by Cornelis van Tienhoven. Van Tienhoven demolished the Haie house to construct a larger structure, and the old privy was probably filled in and abandoned at that time. The green-glazed bowl at right was recovered at the Broad Financial Center Site, when archaeologists found two artifact-filled privy pits dating to the years that the Kierstede family and their descendants lived on Pearl Street. Dr. Hans Kierstede and his wife Sara bought the property in 1647, but when the privy was abandoned, circa 1680, Sara's daughter Blandina was living in the house with her husband Peter Bayard. Also found in the privy was the brass candle snuffer shown below. With a "looped" handle similar to a mid-seventeenth-century-style scissors handle, the rectangular "box" perched on one blade is stamped with a portcullis mark surmounted by a cross and is the trademark of an unknown artisan. To extinguish candles, Sara Kierstede, her daughter Blandina, or their slaves would have closed the snuffer's handles, bringing the box and its opposing "pad" together when retiring for the night. The ivory comb (below right) was found in a privy that had been abandoned after the death of Blandina Kierstede Bayard circa 1711.



This blue-and-white Dutch tile depicts a seventeenth-century cavalry dragoon or musketeer firing his gun.



This shallow bowl made of Dutch green-glazed white earthenware might have been used to serve porridge.



Seventeenth-century candle snuffers resembled a pair of scissors. This one is missing its opposing blade, probably the reason it was discarded in the privy where it was found.



This ivory comb had two rows of teeth — one closely spaced to comb out lice, nits, or fleas, and the other wider apart for "dressing" the hair.



The Sabbath Keeper

In 1647, Peter Stuyvesant tried to reform New Amsterdam's tavern culture. He failed.

SHORTLY AFTER ARRIVING IN THE COLONY OF NEW AMSTERDAM IN 1647 TO TAKE UP THE POST OF Director-General, Peter Stuyvesant observed that the colonists he encountered, much to his disappointment, were a “feeble lukewarm and fainthearted congregation.” Stuyvesant quickly moved to mold New Amsterdam into an orthodox Protestant society, inflicting harsh punishments on those who led intemperate lives and forbidding “Firing of Guns . . . Planting of May Poles . . . [and] beating of Drums on New Year’s and May Days,” activities he felt would incite people to immoral behavior.

BY JOYCE D. GOODFRIEND

The focus of Stuyvesant’s campaign was the Sabbath. Disturbed by the widespread profanation of the day of rest in New Amsterdam, he enacted a series of increasingly stringent laws that prohibited everything from fishing and hunting to trading with the Indians on Sundays. But his primary target was the town’s ubiquitous taverns, where Europeans, Africans, and Indians drank beer and brandy, gambled, and brawled. Outraged that taverns were abetting the



FACING PAGE: Peter Stuyvesant, the devout son of a minister, was outraged by immoral behavior on the Sabbath in New Amsterdam. INSET, RIGHT: Reconstructed shards of a drinking vessel that might have been used in a New Amsterdam tavern.

desecration of the holiest day in the week, Stuyvesant exercised his considerable power to curtail Sunday revelry in New Amsterdam's drinking places.

Stuyvesant's crackdown began shortly after his arrival in New Amsterdam after witnessing "the great wantonness in which some of our inhabitants indulge, in excessive drinking, quarreling, fighting and brawling even on the Lord's day of rest." In May 1647, he ordered that "no brewers, tapsters and innkeepers shall be allowed on... Sunday...before two o'clock if there is no sermon or otherwise before four o'clock in the afternoon, to offer, tap or serve any people wine, beer or strong spirits of any sort... except for travelers and daily boarders."

Dismayed that the Sabbath was "still profaned and desecrated" in spite of former edicts, Stuyvesant issued a more sweeping ordinance in April 1648 that not only "forbid during divine service, all tapping, fishing, hunting, and other customary avocations, trading and business, either in houses, cellars, shops, ships, yachts, or in the streets and markets," but with the minister's advice, "deemed it expedient that a sermon shall be preached from the Sacred Scriptures and the usual prayers and thanksgiving offered from this time forward in the afternoon as well as in the forenoon."

Not unlike their compatriots in the homeland, New Amsterdammers were addicted to drink. This local propensity for alcohol was specifically linked to religious deficiencies by Domine (pastor) Backerus, who reported that his congregants were "very ignorant in regard to religion and very much given to drink. To this they are led by the seventeen tap-houses here."

Whether the ready availability of alcohol in New Amsterdam caused disaffection from religion or just reflected a general indifference to spiritual concerns, there is little doubt that Bible-based Calvinist culture had a formidable rival in tavern culture. As centers of sociability, taverns played an essential role in this seaport society. "Nearly the just fourth of the city of New Amsterdam [in 1648] consists of brandy shops, tobacco or beer houses," noted Stuyvesant, who was at pains to differentiate between "decent taverns established and licensed for the use and accommodation of travelers, strangers, and

Not unlike their compatriots in the homeland, New Amsterdammers were addicted to drink.

inhabitants," "clandestine grogeries," and "ale-houses and tippling places."

New Amsterdam's taverns varied not only in size but in clientele, serving everyone from the well-to-do to transient seamen, servants, enslaved Africans, and Indians. Despite ordinances prohibiting the sale of alcohol to Indians, Native Americans consistently gained access to local drinking places. On August 28, 1654, the Director-General and council noted that "many and diverse Indians are almost daily seen drunk and intoxicated within the city."

Several New Amsterdam tavernkeepers were condemned for breaking these laws: Nicolaes Terhaer for "tapping to the Indians on Sunday during sermon as well as at other times [1654]," Michel Taden for selling brandy/liquor to Indians [1656], and Lysbet Ackerman for having drawn beer for two Indians [1663]. Some tavernkeepers proved incorrigible, even after Stuyvesant had gone so far as to deport Sander Toursen and his wife for selling brandy to two Indians in 1656. Migiel Tades, who had been punished severely for a previous offense, was brought before the court again in July 1664 for "having tapped on Sunday to twelve Indians." In his defense, Tades explained that "the Indians came drunk to his house and he tapped small beer for them, but no strong beer."

New Amsterdam's

denizens resorted to taverns not only to imbibe, but to join with friends in clubs. In 1654, authorities learned that there were "drinking clubs on divers nights at the house of Jan Peck, with dancing and jumping and entertainment of disorderly people." Jan Rutgerzen was brought to Court in 1661 for "having tapped and kept a club during the preaching and having discovered 5 [or] 6 persons there." At their favorite taverns, people amused themselves by playing games. In 1661, Hendrick Assuerus "sold liquor to sundry persons,

and permitted them to play at ninepins during divine service." On a Sunday in 1663, there were found at Andries Joghimzen's house "seven [or] eight persons bowling and two others sitting ticktacking or playing backgammon."

From the beginning of his term as New Netherland's Director-General, Stuyvesant viewed the dissoluteness of tavern life as symptomatic of the deviation of New Amsterdam's men and women from the path prescribed by the Bible. Though many taverngoers might well have thought of themselves as practicing Christians, they did not embrace the exacting Calvinist standards Stuyvesant championed. To them, drinking and gaming were an integral part of everyday life. Proscribing these pleasures on the Sabbath was tantamount to depriving Dutch men and women of their rights. By circumventing the onerous Sabbath regulations local people were expressing their antipathy to the strict interpretation of the Sabbath Stuyvesant had codified in the laws of New Netherland.

Their voices can be heard on rare occasions through the testimony of tavernkeepers. To defend herself from the charge that "there were nine pins at her house last Sunday during preaching, and the can and the glass stood on the table," Andries Rees's wife related that "some came to her house, who said that Church was out, and that one had a pin and the other a bowl in the hand, but they did not play."

The popular contention that drinking and gameplaying need be curtailed only during the exact hours of divine service on the Sabbath was also frequently articulated by the proprietors of drinking establishments. When the [Schout] found "eight [or] ten persons playing at ninepins and two at backgammon and as many as fifteen [or] sixteen persons, either bowling or drinking" at Andries Rees's tavern on a Sunday in 1663 Rees admitted the infraction, but said "it was full two hours after the afternoon's sermon preaching and he did no business during the week."

Drinking and Gambling in New Amsterdam

THE SIX-INCH-DIAMETER SCROLL-HANDLED DELFT POSSET POT OR LOVING cup shown on the first page of this story was one of many tavern-related artifacts found within the confines of a small early eighteenth-century building at the Broad Financial Center site. Possets were made of hot milk curdled with ale, wine, or other liquors, and infused with spices. Most often associated with celebratory occasions, possets were also used to nourish the sick. The curd, floating above the liquor, was eaten with a spoon, and the liquid below was either sucked or poured from the spout.

The whistle at right, which was carved from a broken pipe, might have been used for entertainment in the city's taverns. Mid- to late-seventeenth century whistles were also recovered at Fort Orange (Albany), leading archaeologists to speculate that these objects might have been traded (along with other goods) to Native Americans in return for furs.

The gambling tokens at right could have been used in the popular board games of the time. These included backgammon, cribbage, and pachisi. These clear, lead-glazed, red earthenware tokens were recovered from the earlier of the two Kierstede privies (circa 1647-1680) located on Pearl Street.

The typical seventeenth-century Rhenish drinking glass fragments (below) include forest-green-colored, raspberry-shaped prunts made of Waldglas that are identical to those used on goblets found in the Netherlands. The fragment of green glass roemer (goblet) with two applied raspberry prunts and a coil wound foot, dating from after 1630, was recovered from a privy associated with a small house owned by Jacob Haie, circa 1653. The use of these Dutch drinking vessels suggests that many residents of New Amsterdam were attempting to replicate the lifestyle found at home in the Netherlands.

Drinking glass fragments include raspberry-shaped prunts used to decorate goblets or roemers and part of a lined or milled beaker used in a drinking game in which a player would drink down to the milled line on the glass, then pass it on to the next player, and so on.



This seventeenth-century whistle was carved from a broken clay tobacco pipe stem. It was recovered from a red brick privy located on property owned by Dr. Hans and Sara Kierstede.

These broken shards of pottery were deliberately reshaped and used as gaming pieces or gambling tokens in New Amsterdam's taverns.

Playing board games was a popular way to socialize in the Netherlands, as shown in the painting, "Tric Trac Players in an Interior" (ca. 1646-1679) by Jan Steen. Peter Stuyvesant tried to ban the playing of tric trac and other games on the Sabbath.



At times, tavernkeepers defended themselves by splitting hairs. Hans Styn claimed that he served only strangers on Sunday. When Salomon La Chair was reproved for desecrating the Sabbath, he retorted that "he had been on the watch and coming home in the morning he tapped a little drop for himself, of which some remained in the glass." To the officer's further charge that he had "found a glass with beer or something else...in it," in the afternoon, La Chair retorted that "some beer remained in the glass, from what his children had asked for."

To eliminate the technicalities that Sabbath violators seized on to rationalize their conduct, Stuyvesant went on the offensive again in 1663, enacting a new

Sabbath law that sacralized the entire day. Alleging that former laws had been "misinterpreted and misconstrued" by some to mean that they "applied to the maintaining and solemnizing only half the Sabbath," the Director-General ordered that "not only a part, but the whole Sabbath shall be observed." Everyone was warned that "pending the Sabbath, from the rising to the setting of the sun no customary labor shall be performed much less any clubs kept." By forbidding "all unusual exercises, such as games, boat, cart or wagon racing, fishing, fowling, running, sailing, nutting or picking strawberries, trafficking with Indians or any like things, and amongst others all dissolute and licentious plays, riots, calling children out to

the streets and highways," Stuyvesant was literally compiling a catalogue of townspeople's Sunday amusements.

Even before Stuyvesant revised the Sabbath law in September 1663, city officials found ways to undercut his strict Sabbath policy. In June 1663, Court Messenger Claes van Elslandt the younger, accused by Stuyvesant of failing to warn the tavernkeepers and tapsters not to allow gaming on Sunday, answered: "Such may well be, but he had forgotten it, as he had many orders from His Honor." Van Elslandt's selective loss of memory can be interpreted as a sign of his distaste for the strict Sabbath rules.

To enforce the Sabbath rules, Stuyvesant depended on Schout Pieter Tonneman, a

council member and kerckmaster, who zealously pursued tavernkeepers who violated not only the Sabbath law but the curfew which mandated no tapping after the watch was set. Tonneman, clearly unpopular among the townspeople, also aroused the ire of the burgomasters and schepens, who at times rejected his recommendations for punishing offenders. They refused to fine Andries Rees, who had tapped on Sunday after the sermon, causing Tonneman to appeal their judgment. They also excused Migjel Tades, the supplier of alcohol to the Indians, on his oath. In overriding Tonneman and exhibiting leniency toward violators of the Sabbath law, the burgomasters and schepens were registering their displeasure at Stuyvesant's efforts to turn New Amsterdam into a Calvinist community—a pattern that remained constant (see "Compassionate Calvinism," page 26).

On September 15, 1663 the Director-General transmitted the new Sabbath law to the city authorities with instructions to have it read from the stand in front of city hall, but they did not do so. Six months later in March 1664, he sent the law again and inquired why they had withheld it from the public. At this juncture, the burgomasters, noting that they had "felt themselves aggrieved in some particulars," articulated their disagreement with the content of the law. They had not communicated the law to the populace, they explained, because even though they "judge[d] the observance thereof to be highly necessary, [they] should not dare to publish such a Placard as divers sections thereof are too severe and too much opposed to Dutch liberties."

Having, in essence, confronted Stuyvesant, the burgomasters stood their ground and refused to enforce the new law, delaying cases brought to the court by Tonneman until the issue was resolved. In April 1664, they postponed judgment in three cases. Noting that "the Placards dated 26th Octob 1656 and 15th Sept 1663 on the observance of the Sabbath contradict each other," they resolved to speak to the Director-General and Council on this subject. For good measure they raised what was obviously another grievance, asking "for what reason those,

The inhabitants took a perverse delight in deliberately engaging in illegal activities on the Sabbath.

who reside beyond the Fresh Water are allowed to tap more on the Sabbath than the tavernkeepers of the city."

Significantly, two of the cases that were postponed involved larger assemblies of Sunday drinkers than had ever before been prosecuted in New Amsterdam. Jan Schryver was charged with letting twenty persons drink in his house on Sunday afternoon, April 6, 1664, after the second sermon. That same day, Schout Tonneman had found twenty-two persons drinking at the house of Hendrick Jansen Smitt. New Amsterdam's residents, emboldened by the knowledge that the burgomasters disliked the restrictive Sabbath policy, openly defied Stuyvesant's new Sabbath law. Confident of popular support, the burgomasters prepared a petition to Stuyvesant in which they asserted that "there are in the last Placard some points in direct opposition to the custom of Holland."

Though the conflict of opinion between the burgomasters and Stuyvesant was not resolved due to the English capture of New Netherland in September 1664, it is evident that Director-General Stuyvesant, despite the power that derived from his office, could not prevail on the bulk of New Amsterdam's population to conform to Calvinist ideals of the Sabbath. Stuyvesant's experiment never succeeded, not least because ordinary men and women persisted in the belief that a wide variety of activities could be pursued on the Sabbath.

While most residents of New Amsterdam maintained links to the local church, if only as a place to marry and have their children baptized, what set them apart from Stuyvesant and his orthodox allies was their conception of sacred time. Stuyvesant believed that the Sabbath lasted twenty-four hours, but to them sacred time was confined to the few hours when the sermon was delivered. When accused of violating the Sabbath law, they stressed the fact that their activities took place "after church was out" or "after preaching." In doing so, they not only conceded the legitimacy of sacred time

(however limited in scope), but validated the religious framework that structured their lives. Their opposition to strict Sabbath laws stemmed neither from hostility to the Reformed church as an institution nor from repudiation of the tenets of the Reformed faith, but rather from an unwillingness to be encumbered by the sober lifestyle advocated by Stuyvesant.

Popular beliefs surrounding the Sabbath endured long after Stuyvesant surrendered the reins of government to the English in 1664. In August 1673, soon after the Netherlands recaptured the colony of New York from the English and renamed the city New Orange, the new Dutch rulers acted to restore strict Sabbath rules. Deploring the fact that "many of the inhabitants almost make it a custom, in place of observing the Sabbath, as it ought to be observed, to frequent the taverns more than on other days and to take their delight in illegal exercises," they prohibited "from sunrise to sundown on Sunday all sorts of handicraft, trade and traffick, gaming, boat racing, or running with carts or wagons, fishing, fowling, running and picking nuts, strawberries, etc. all riotous racing, calling and shouting of children in the streets, together with all unlawful exercises and games, drunkenness, frequenting taverns or taphouses, dancing, cardplaying, ballpalaying, rolling ninepins or bowls etc which is more in vogue on this than on any other day."

New Orange's inhabitants, most of whom had lived in Stuyvesant's New Amsterdam, it seems, took a perverse delight in deliberately engaging in forbidden activities on the Sabbath. Perhaps this is sufficient testimony that Stuyvesant ultimately lost the battle over the Sabbath.

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Compassionate Calvinism

In a world before the separation of church and state, New Amsterdam's courts of law had the delicate task of balancing the secular and the sacred.

THERE ARE TWO POPULAR—AND SEEMINGLY CONTRADICTORY—VIEWS OF THE NEW NETHERLAND colony: One that the colony was built on greed, and religion was only an afterthought; the other that it was a society in which zealous Calvinists attempted to impose their religion on an unruly citizenry.

Like all stereotypes, these are oversimplifications that each contain some truth. In fact, church and state supported each other's shared ambition to develop an orderly society based on biblical precepts. The printed records of New Netherland make this relationship between church and state very clear. From its opening prayer in 1653, for instance, to the oath of its officials, to its daily dealings with the people, the records of the Court of Burgomasters and Schepens (an inferior court of justice administered by a schout [sheriff], two burgomasters [mayors], and five schepens [magistrates], with appeal to the superior court, the Director-General of the colony and his council) reveal that religion was no afterthought in this community. It was an integral part of the very warp and woof of everyday life.

BY FIRTH HARING FABEND

FACING PAGE: The Court of Burgomasters and Schepens was located in the Stadthuys, or city hall, shown here in a nineteenth-century engraving.



Upon taking office, the civil officials of the Court of Burgomasters and Schepens took an oath to protect the “pure and true Christian Religion as taught in the Netherland Churches conformably to the Word of God and the order of the Synod of Dordrecht” of 1619.

The prayer with which the court opened its first session is a succinct distillation of Reformed theology as found in the ubiquitous Heidelberg Catechism, one of the six doctrinal standards of the Reformed Dutch Church (the others being the Apostles Creed, the Nicene Creed, the Athanasian Creed, the Belgic Confession, and the Canons of Dort).

The prayer begins by invoking an Almighty and Triune God: God of Gods, Lord of Lords, Host of Hosts, and it goes on to acknowledge God as the merciful father in heaven to whom the officials owe thanks for creating them, receiving them in Christ as allies, and making them the rulers in New Netherland — even though they are mere miserable and undeserving mortals unfit to carry out their charge unless He assists them.

An important scholar has described the Heidelberg Catechism as “intensely Calvinistic.” To the modern mind, this phrase evokes images of zealotry, the controversial ideas of predestination and limited atonement, fire and brimstone, and an insistence on moral perfection. But Calvinism has another side to it. We have heard of compassionate conservatism; New Netherland had what might be called compassionate Calvinism, based on a belief that a moral society centered around a core of biblical wisdom was the best society. As expressed in the Heidelberg Catechism, it has a charitable, forgiving, even lenient side, qualities that explain why this little work, composed in 1563, was so popular for so long among Reformed clergy and laity alike.

The “Irenic” or conciliatory tone of the Heidelberg Catechism has often been commented upon. The same tone also often underlies the actions of the New Amsterdam Court of Burgomasters and Schepens as it sought to bring unity and order out of an often seemingly chaotic community. Both church and state, in this

trading community on a wild frontier, were hard put to impose standards of order and propriety on the inhabitants, and the records of the court reveal the government’s endless attempts to deal with its Sabbath-breaking, hard-drinking, brawling, cheating, adulterous, and thieving citizens. This is the side of New Amsterdam that has often been played up by historians, as has the image of a harsh Calvinism intent on spoiling the people’s fun and forcing them into rigid molds of good behavior (see “The Sabbath Keeper,” page 20). It is true that for the worst offenders sentencing was Draconian, although this was so mainly of sentences handed down under Director–Generals Willem Kieft and Peter Stuyvesant, not of the Court of Burgomasters and Schepens. Even council sentences were often softened or retracted at the last minute.

The Court of Burgomasters and Schepens bent over backward to be patient, lenient, just, and fair. It was ever hopeful of reconciliation, ever putting its faith in arbitration over confrontation, always helpful to the helpless, and sometimes willing to discount or even overlook the deficiencies of those who came before it. The forbearing behavior of the magistrates suggests that these government officials were attempting to practice the gentler side of Dutch Calvinist doctrine as found in the little catechism with which they were so familiar.

The greatest number of cases coming before the Court of Burgomasters and Schepens fell into three categories: those involving matters of credit and debt, misunderstandings over contract terms, and cases of slander and insult. The Burgomasters and Schepens decided many cases on the merits, once they had examined the facts, but if the facts were obscure they almost invariably appointed two arbitrators to determine the outcome, or a pair of experts to go out and view a disputed boundary or complaints of shoddy work-

manship or spoiled produce. Many litigants came to agreement on their own, declaring in public that “having become reconciled, they will remain good friends henceforth.” Or they “will no longer remember their foregoing dispute, and they settle with each other equitably and make payment.” If a plaintiff’s property was restored, she was “willing to forgive the defendant, and never to trouble her again” — outcomes that echo the tone of conciliation and concord valued by the court.

The court was often patient,

allowing weeks and even months for a debtor to pay what he owed, giving parties “time to think the matter over,” urging litigants to “agree together as friends” until the defendant could scrape his funds together. And it was lenient. One defendant, though guilty, was “allowed to pursue his business as before, inasmuch as he is burthened with a houseful of children.” They “agree to wink at” an old man’s inability to pay his fees, to wait for another man’s payment, to reduce the amount another must pay for his fire-bucket dues, and to excuse another who finds it difficult to pay his rattle-watch dues, “as he has not so much.” A woman who could not pay her rattle-watch dues was promised “that she should not be spoken to about it very soon.” One guilty party “shall, for this time,” be excused from banishment, provided he asked the court’s pardon and promised to behave himself.

It is clear that, although they did not spell it out as such, underlying the decisions of the Court of Burgomasters and Schepens was a foundation of Christian precepts: love your neighbor, be peaceable, turn the other cheek, forgive and forget, show mercy. And just as they understood that church and state worked hand in hand to achieve these goals, so they also believed that that “justice [which] is the foundation of the republic” was based on

“divine and human law,” and that the “law of God was the general basis of the law.”

The society they hoped to create in New Netherland in the image of the fatherland was doomed. A letter of February 1664 from the burgomasters and schepens to the Director–General and Council puts the society they had served since the court’s inception eleven years earlier in poignant perspective. Begging for help in fortifying New Amsterdam against the English, they wrote: “This capital, where your Honours’ good and faithful inhabitants, mostly Dutchmen, have at their own expense built so many fine houses ... should be properly fortified ... [so] that it might cause malevolent neighbours to fear it.” If it were properly fortified, they go on, the city could be a place where its 10,000 inhabitants might grow into a great people, and a place that in time and with God’s blessing “might even become a place of refuge, if our Netherlands should be visited by cruel wars.” It might even become the “granary for our Fatherland in case of failure of the Eastern crops or a prohibition of trade by the Northern kings and princes,” and the “staple of commerce for our Fatherland.” A few months later, fortifications unbuilt, the little colony fell to the English without a shot being fired.

The vision of New Netherland as a refuge in time of war or economic crisis at home, a breadbasket, an Edenic land capable of supplying the fatherland with manna in its time of need, was in line with the other religious metaphors its leaders used to paint it as a just society based on God’s word. Religion was no afterthought in New Netherland. It was woven into the civic fabric and inseparable from it.

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The Quarreling Domine

The second domine (pastor) to officiate in the province of New Netherlands, Reverend Everardus Bogardus arrived at New Amsterdam in April 1633 on the same ship with the new Director–General Wouter van Twiller. Before the Reformed Church inside the fort was built, he preached to the citizens of the town in a large, barnlike building on t’Water (Pearl) Street. In 1638 Bogardus married Anneke Jans, a widow with four children and a 162-acre farm on the Hudson or North River.

Bogardus had many quarrels with the leaders of New Amsterdam, and often denounced them from his pulpit. In return, the magistrates charged him with drunkenness, meddling in the affairs of others, and using bad language. In September 1647, leaving his wife and children behind, Bogardus sailed on the *Princess* to return to Holland and defend himself against the charges that had been brought against him. He never made it. The *Princess* was wrecked in a storm, and Bogardus was drowned.

STATE HOUSE STATE HISTORIC SITE NEW YORK STATE OFFICE OF PARKS, RECREATION AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION



Crowned by Tobacco

In the 1660s, coveted Chesapeake tobacco from the English colonies found an insatiable market in the Netherlands. The result was a trading frenzy with New Amsterdam's merchants in the middle.

BY 1660, THE CITY OF NEW AMSTERDAM WAS BOOMING. DURING THE TRADING SEASON THAT YEAR, five ships arrived from the Netherlands loaded with goods and more than two hundred new immigrants. The city's population had jumped more than 50 percent in the past four years, reflecting a general rise in immigration taking place in all of New Netherland. Ever since the West India Company (WIC) abandoned its fur trading monopoly in 1639, private merchants aggressively pursued a variety of lucrative mercantile opportunities. By 1653, they had secured a city charter to provide order and stability for their commercial community. The Stadthuys, seat of New Amsterdam's municipal government, stood, appropriately, across from the city wharf. A burgher standing on the Stadthuys' new

BY DENNIS J. MAIKA

stoop could observe the trading activity that was the life-blood of New Amsterdam: large quantities of furs, hides, and foodstuffs from the Hudson Valley being loaded for shipment, new colonists disembarking after a long voyage, slaves waiting to be sold, and assorted goods arriving from Europe. Featured in this commercial bazaar were hogsheads of tobacco, large barrels filled with five hundred pounds of Chesapeake leaf being transferred from small coastal vessels to larger transoceanic ships headed for the tobacco-hungry Netherlands.

FACING PAGE: A 1636 painting by Flemish artist Adrian Brouwer depicts the artist and his friends smoking and drinking. The use of tobacco was so central to Dutch social life that a traveller observed that the "smell of the Dutch Republic was the smell of tobacco."

In the early 1660s, new opportunities for tobacco trading emerged at a time when high hopes for the future collided with geopolitical uncertainty. Local merchants and their regional partners enthusiastically embraced both new opportunity and risk, vigorously pursuing the tobacco trade in what can best be described as a frenzy. Some were rewarded for their aggressiveness, while others were ruined.

New Netherlanders had long been interested in tobacco. Efforts to grow the crop began in the early days of settlement, experiments in tobacco farming taking place in Manhattan, on Long Island, and in the Hudson Valley. In 1638, the WIC simultaneously encouraged local cultivation of tobacco while permitting imports from the Chesapeake. In advertisements designed to lure new settlers in the early 1660s, the company boasted that “heere groweth tobacco very good, it naturally abounds.”

Interest in growing and trading in tobacco was spurred by Holland’s insatiable craving for the smokable leaf. In the seventeenth century, the Netherlands led the world in the tobacco trade, and Dutch ports served as entrepôts for leaf destined for both the thriving domestic market and for re-exportation to Russia and the Baltic. Both domestic and international markets favored a blend of Chesapeake leaf (usually high quality and comparatively pricey) mixed with a coarser leaf grown near Amersfoort, Holland.

By the 1670s, almost six million pounds of this blend were re-exported annually from the Netherlands. This trade had a profound effect on Holland’s domestic economy. Amsterdam became the headquarters of the tobacco processing industry, while in nearby Gouda, more than half of the labor force (approximately 16,000 people) was employed as pipe makers. Social use of tobacco had become so woven into everyday life that a traveler through the Low Countries observed that the “smell of the Dutch Republic was the smell of tobacco.” Throughout much of the century, the Netherlands was said to be “a country where demon gold is rested on a throne of cheese, crowned by tobacco.”

English tobacco growers in the Chesapeake region became increasingly interested in this attractive Dutch market. Colonists in Maryland and Virginia had long struggled to balance profitability and production, but throughout much of the seventeenth century, the English tobacco market was stagnant. Due to overproduction, prices generally fell between 1620 and 1680. Chesapeake tobacco growers faced an especially bleak future in the 1640s. Revolutionary upheavals of that decade did not bode well for tobacco’s future; Puritans in England were not as ambivalent as Dutch Calvinists about the moral dangers of tobacco. Faced with this new challenge, yet aware that tobacco was vital to their economic well being, many Virginia growers looked to the lucrative Dutch market and to Manhattan merchants who could provide them access to it.

As this economy became increasingly dependent on Dutch carriers, Virginians challenged the English govern-

Two sides of Augustine Heermans’s token: The obverse (top) has six arms, representing the six provinces of the Netherlands. These support a column that is surmounted by the hat of Liberty which rests upon the Bible. On the reverse (below), six arrows are clasped by two hands. Around the perimeter is the inscription, “CALC SENAT PROVINC VNIT BELGII,” which means “struck in 1590 by the Senate of the United Provinces of Northern Gaul”, Belgii being the Latin name for the northern division of Gaul.



The initial on this fragment of a seventeenth-century Dutch pipe stands for Edward Bird or his son Evert. The Birds’ pipes were the most popular in New Amsterdam.



Artifacts of the Tobacco Trade

THE ORNATE, LATE-SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY PIPE FROM GOUDA (BELOW RIGHT) IS ONE OF THE FEW DUTCH PIPES FOUND in Dr. Lukas van Tienhoven’s privy. Although evidence suggests that New Amsterdammers preferred Dutch pipes, even after the English takeover in 1664, archaeologists noticed greater numbers of English pipes as the century progressed. By the beginning of the eighteenth century, Dutch pipes were a rarity. The most popular Dutch pipes in New Amsterdam were made in Amsterdam by Edward Bird or his son Evert. The Birds marked their products with the trademark initials “EB” (bottom left). Even after his death in 1664, Bird’s widow maintained her association with merchants central to the shipping of Bird products to New Amsterdam. The token or privately issued coin (left) was found wedged between the cobbles of the warehouse belonging to Augustine Heermans, New Amsterdam’s leading tobacco merchant. Struck in 1590 and the oldest dated European artifact found in New York City, this copper alloy coin was privately issued by Prince Maurice of Nassau (1567-1625) to commemorate his election as Stadtholder of Utrecht.



Both sides of the bowl of a tobacco pipe from Gouda, the Netherlands, are shown. On the left side as the bowl faces the smoker (above), an African or Native American woman looks up at the sky. She is bare-breasted and carries a long-stemmed smoking pipe in her left hand and a roll of tobacco in her right as she strides purposefully across the grass. The obverse (right) depicts a Turk or idealized version of a Native American wearing a long cape, ankle-length skirt, and a blouse with seven buttons. He stands elegantly on the grass in soft boots, with elbow akimbo. He might represent a prototype of a “cigar-store Indian.”

A



ment, which was considering restrictions on the tobacco trade. A disaffection with London's proposals in 1647 pushed Virginians into the arms of the Dutch colony to the north. Soon, commercial relationships between the two colonies improved to such an extent that the first formal commercial treaty between the two was signed in 1653.

Several years later, the provincial governments in New Netherland and the Chesapeake colonies gave another substantial boost to the regional tobacco trade. The first significant development came as a result of a diplomatic mission initiated by Director-General Peter Stuyvesant. Facing a potential boundary dispute with Lord Baltimore over company claims to the Delaware River (then called the South River), Stuyvesant dispatched Augustine Heermans to see the Governor of Maryland. Heermans, an established Manhattan merchant who claimed to be the "first beginner of the tobacco trade," traveled with Manhattan burgher Resolved Waldron. In negotiations with Philip Calvert, the colony's secretary, they reached an amicable settlement on the boundary questions.

After these discussions, Heermans had private conversations with Calvert concerning mutual trade and commerce between Maryland and New Netherland, which "could be easily carried on." Calvert seemed to know about the commercial potential to which Heermans was referring, talking "about New Netherland and Virginia and the conveniences of both being considered, he wished Maryland may be so fortunate as to have cities and villages like Manhattan." Heermans must have agreed with Calvert's assessment, and even suggested that trade between Manhattan and Maryland could be beneficial to the governor himself. As if to either encourage or reward such commercial prospects, the governor soon granted a patent for 30,000 acres of Maryland land to Heermans, which became the Manor of New Bohemia.

Formal relationships between the governments of New Netherland and Virginia, which had steadily improved in the 1650s, resulted in a new commercial

treaty in 1660. In February of that year, Peter Stuyvesant sent his brother-in-law, Nicholas Varlet, and Brian Newton, his English adjutant, to negotiations at Jamestown. The agreement reached with Virginia's governor, Sir William Berkeley, concluded that free trade between the two colonies was essential, and promised to facilitate commerce by guaranteeing all traders prompt and equal justice in the courts and offering a way to deal with absconding debtors.

Encouraged by these new agreements, English regional factors stepped up to meet the demands of Manhattan's merchants. Samuel Smith became one of those Englishmen who regularly supplied Chesapeake tobacco to New Amsterdam merchants. In September of 1660, he signed two contracts exchanging tobacco for merchandise imported from Holland. Manhattan's Frerick Gysbertsen agreed to supply him with cloth: 135 ells of linen in exchange for 1,350 pounds of tobacco, and six pieces of silk damask for 1,129 pounds of tobacco. In the same month, Smith made a deal with Jan Gillesen de Jonge to exchange 1,838 pounds of tobacco for 1,148 pounds of nails and 69 Swedish axes.

Englishmen in Virginia and Maryland were elated to have access to the Amsterdam market via Manhattan, but new circumstances threatened to dampen their enthusiasm. By late 1660, they received shocking news from the Restoration government in England: the newly passed Navigation Act made tobacco an enumerated commodity and prohibited direct trade with Dutch ports in Europe or America. Given the threat to their trade, English growers and their middlemen resolved to avoid the new restrictions. In Manhattan, local merchants were aware that the new Navigation Act could ultimately lead to war.

Nevertheless, the combination of lower prices, strong supply, continued high demand in Amsterdam, and a potential threat to the free flow of tobacco made merchants and transporters more eager than ever to find ways to collect and trade

tobacco. The obvious necessity for more ways to carry tobacco to Manhattan was apparent to Ritzert Airy who hired Edward Leake's ship *Providence* for a voyage from Virginia to Manhattan. Samuel Etsall, a New Amsterdam hatter, followed a similar strategy when he made arrangements with Englishman Eduard Prescott to ship tobacco to New Amsterdam. Prescott was only too willing to comply and was able to avoid English customs regulations by collecting tobacco at several stops along the way. With his partner, Allard Anthony, Etsall agreed to deliver 3,270 pounds of tobacco to Cornelis Steenwyck, one of New Amsterdam's most prominent merchants.

Unfortunately the risks taken by men like Airy and Etsall did not satisfy some Manhattan merchants who were unhappy with the amount of tobacco they had received. In the spring of 1661, some merchants relentlessly sought out tobacco wherever they could find it. Cornelis Steenwijck, for example, was surprised to learn that someone else claimed tobacco he had received from Samuel Smith. When Paulus Blyenberg sued Samuel Smith for a previous debt, Steenwijck was forced to give up the tobacco he had received from Smith.

In an effort to regain the lost tobacco, Steenwijck sued Blyenberg, claiming an unpaid debt for an anchor. Many other local merchants used the municipal court to help secure extra supplies of tobacco. Plaintiffs increasingly insisted on payment in tobacco where they had previously accepted alternative forms of repayment.

Grabbing all possible supplies of tobacco might have been a successful strategy if the merchants could guarantee its shipment overseas. Unfortunately, as the new trading season opened in the spring of 1662, a new concern emerged: would enough ships from the Netherlands arrive to transport the tobacco to the European market? To ensure that they would have the bottoms necessary to carry their wares, Manhattan-based merchants employed a variety of tactics, from bartering for ships to outright seizure of ships, disguised as legal transactions.

The actions of a Manhattan-based trading partnership, organized by Cornelis

FACING PAGE: Manhattan merchant Augustine Heermans claimed to be the "first beginner of the tobacco trade."

Steenwijck, Johannes Verbrugge, and Nicolaes Varlet, gives us a rare glimpse of the strategies employed by merchants desperate to continue profiting from the lucrative tobacco trade now threatened by the British. In June 1662, Steenwijck and his partners sent an urgent letter to James Mills, their English factor in Virginia and owner of the sloop *Nathaniel*. Mills had previously traded tobacco with the same merchants and had just completed the second leg of a voyage, contracted in August 1661, which involved carrying “so much white oake pipe staves” as his ship could carry to the Madeira islands where he would purchase wine. Once in Virginia, he was to sell the wine and take on tobacco, hides, or pork and return to his principals in New Amsterdam.

The letter congratulated Mills on his successful arrival in Virginia in April, but the partners then urged him, “we being your friends,” to sell his two barks in Virginia for tobacco at next year’s prices, load as much tobacco as possible on the *Nathaniel*, and come as quickly as he could to New Amsterdam. The partners had information that only two ships would sail to New Amsterdam from Holland that year, and that enough tobacco to fill three ships was already at Manhattan. Those who were willing to pay the high freight

price of twenty guilders per hogshead could not find any available freight space. “Wee concieve that there was never to be looket for a better opportunity to the benefit of [your] ship than this,” and hinted that Mills could earn as much as 8,000 guilders if he agreed to transport the cargo. The partners also suggested to Mills that this might be a way for him to settle his previous accounts with them and maintain his personal credit standing among Manhattan’s merchants. Mills heeded the advice, and reached Manhattan sometime in July. When he arrived, he was ambushed by his creditors.

We do not know precisely

what transpired, but it is certain that Mills did not live up to the expectations of his Manhattan partners. By Tuesday, August 8, 1662, Mills was confronted by his creditors in the Court of Burgomasters and Schepens. On that single day, Mills was sued by Steenwijck and his partners and six other creditors for claims amounting to more than 11,000 guilders and some 13,000 pounds of tobacco. The next day, the court ruled that Mills’s ship be confiscated for the unpaid debts and auctioned by the city’s Vendue Master on Saturday, August 12th. Not coincidentally, the highest bid-

der and new owner of the *Nathaniel* turned out to be Cornelis Steenwijck, who now had a ship to carry the tobacco that spilled from his Manhattan warehouse.

Merchants also turned to New Englanders in their efforts to secure overseas transport for their tobacco. One month after settling the Mills affair, Steenwijck lent money to Richard Hencksman of Boston to buy the ship *Blackbird* from one Matthew Bunne. Hencksman promised to repay nine hundred pounds of Virginia tobacco and as many hides as he could procure to Steenwijck before the end of March 1663. As concerns about transatlantic transport continued, some merchants began to view New England as a potential market and conduit to Europe. Manhattan’s Nicholas Boot had originally agreed to ship twenty-one hogsheads of tobacco to Amsterdam’s William Schuyven, who in turn would “manage Master Boot’s tobacco to his best advantage.” Boot turned to Edward Leake, owner of the *Providence*, asking him to collect twenty to thirty hogsheads in Virginia and transport it to Manhattan. Boot agreed to pay Leake the high freight price of twenty guilders per hogshead.

After several days’ journey from the Chesapeake, Leake arrived as agreed, with a cargo of twenty-three hogsheads togeth-

er with some ox hides. However, instead of unloading all of the tobacco in Manhattan, Boot decided to venture fourteen hogsheads on a quick voyage to New England, hoping for a more certain sale and a better price. His gamble was unsuccessful in two ways: not only was Boot unable to make his quick profit, but also on his return voyage, the *Providence* struck a rock in the East River’s treacherous Hellgate. The “hold became full of water on the flood, and all the rest of the tobacco was ruined, except of a few tubs which were saved.”

The end of the 1662 trading season in the fall offered temporary relief from the frenzied trading activity of the previous months. The degree to which the tobacco enthusiasm would continue in 1663 depended on the number of ships that arrived from Holland. When six transatlantic vessels arrived in 1663, then again in 1664, merchants continued their commerce in a less frenetic but still enthusiastic pace. Manhattan merchants and their suppliers were certainly pleased that the Navigation Act of 1660 had little impact on the flow of Chesapeake tobacco entering Manhattan. But English officials in London were sorely disappointed by the act’s failure and sought to remedy the situation by taking control of New Amsterdam.

The English force that entered the waters of Manhattan in August 1664 did not surprise local merchants; they had anticipated the arrival for months. The merchants also knew that in spite of the jurisdictional changes that would ensue, the English provincial governors would depend heavily on them and their overseas partners to keep the colony’s economy afloat.

The Articles of Capitulation of 1664 offered extremely favorable commercial terms. The most significant was the clause that made New Amsterdam burghers “denizens” of the English empire, entitling them to trade privileges equal to those of natural-born English citizens. Thus, the English intrusion actually resolved some of the conditions that contributed to the trading frenzy. Shipments of tobacco from the Chesapeake to New York City to Holland continued to produce great profits, especially for a new generation of tobacco merchants.

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This Dutch tobacco box (ca.1750-1820) is engraved with a mariner’s log timer on one side (facing page) and a perpetual calendar on the other (below). The brass box is attributed to Pieter Holm of Amsterdam.



What was buried in Cornelis van Tienhoven's backyard?

IN 1984 AN ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION IN LOWER MANHATTAN REVEALED A basket-shaped feature below the seventeenth-century surface. The site of the dig, on the block bounded by present-day Pearl, Whitehall, Broad, and Bridge streets, was the location of the backyard of the great house owned by Cornelis van Tienhoven, a powerful and well-connected man who served as secretary, fiscal, and schout of New Amsterdam under Peter Stuyvesant.

After archaeologists carefully excavated and removed the object, it was found to be either a coiled basket or a rope-wrapped wooden casket filled with European and Native-American goods. The artifacts included a large fragment of a blue-on-white Dutch faience plate decorated in the Wan-Li pattern and

BY DIANE DALLAL

dating from post-1670; thirty-six fish bones; twenty iron nails; seventeen marbles of various

sizes; an iron key; a piece of lead shot; a copper thimble; a hook-and-eye; wampum; stone flakes; and glass trade beads. Finally, at the bottom of the basket, they recovered a circular wooden board that contained a series of perforations or holes. The round board and the presence of the various-size marbles led to the hypothesis that the discovery was a child's treasure basket, which had been buried and forgotten.

A second theory is that the basket was intentionally buried to serve as a drain or run-off basin. This is supported by the fact that the location was on the shore of the East River in the seventeenth century where flooding was common. Researchers have found similar barrels/casks that served this purpose in seventeenth-century basements in Amsterdam.

There is also the possibility that van Tienhoven family slaves buried the basket. Beneath the floorboards of an eighteenth-century Dutch farmhouse in Brooklyn, archaeologists Arthur H. Bankoff, Christopher Ricciardi, and Alyssa Loorya discovered what might be West African ritual objects used by family slaves: corn cobs arranged in a cross or star-shaped pattern, an oyster shell, the pelvis of a sheep or goat, and a cloth pouch tied with hemp string. And at the African Burial Ground in New York City, archaeologists discovered that enslaved New Yorkers were occasionally buried with cowries, beads, coins, and jewelry, suggesting that many of the objects had spiritual significance. Discoveries such as these have led archaeologist Diana diZerega Wall, (co-author of *Unearthing Gotham*, reviewed in this issue) to suggest that we re-examine our archaeological collections for clues to the lives of the disenfranchised who rarely wrote histories or even kept accounts of their daily lives.

Whatever the purpose for the burial of the van Tienhoven basket, it has proved to be an important find, providing insight into living conditions in seventeenth-century New York.

Diane Dallal is the archaeological director of the museum.

Although little organic material remained, archaeologists were able to make a rubber casting of the basket (inset). The basket's contents are shown below.



Discovering History Beneath Our Feet

by Steven H. Jaffe

A carefully argued and elegantly written book is testimony to the passion of the archaeologists of New York City

In *Unearthing Gotham* (Yale University Press, 2001) Anne-Marie Cantwell and Diana diZerega Wall remind us that New York's archaeological treasures are "the stuff of meaningful history, easily transformed into local pride, a sense of place, and even legend, all of which are important in today's often rootless and restless world." Their message has special resonance today, as nearly a million artifacts from the African Burial Ground and Five Points sites remain unsalvaged in a storage basement beneath 6 World Trade Center. That these clues to early urban life are in jeopardy might seem trivial given the horrific loss of life at the Twin Towers. Yet it is important to remember that the city's past can help us to cope in the present by reminding us of who we are and who we have been.

Unearthing Gotham is a comprehensive survey and celebration of the work of archaeologists who have been digging under the city's back lots, shorelines, and construction sites for over a century. The book provides many windows into the city's past, from the seventeenth-century cultural exchange represented by "European and African women...cooking Indian foods in traditional Dutch pots," to the fact that the first non-Indian resident of Manhattan was probably Juan Rodriguez, a "mulatto" from what is now the Dominican Republic, dropped off as an agent by Dutch explorers in 1613. Cantwell and Wall also adroitly sketch how, since 1970, the profession of archaeology in New York has been shaped by the competing agendas of real estate developers, legislators, preservationists, community activists, and construction crews.

Much more than that, *Unearthing Gotham* offers a chronological overview of the city's social and cultural history from the vantage point of archaeologists — a viewpoint which, unlike that of historians, who rely on written sources, permits some 11,000 years of the region's past to be

pieced together. From a Paleoindian hunting camp on Staten Island to a seventeenth-century Lenape wampum-making outpost on Long Island, from colonial warehouses to Greenwich Village townhouses, the authors use the evidence sifted and studied by archaeologists (with the acknowledged aid of pathologists, historians, botanists, and other specialists) to offer a narrative of change from remote prehistory to the mid-nineteenth century. Especially for study of "the hundreds of generations of Native Americans who lived in the area long before the European colonizations began," and for the period of colonial contact between natives, Europeans, and Africans, *Unearthing Gotham* will surely become a standard and definitive work of synthesis.

One of the book's strengths is its recounting of the ways individual archaeologists (including co-author Wall and Diane Dallal, respectively the former and current curators of archaeology at South Street) have sought to decipher the meanings of particular artifacts. *Unearthing Gotham* makes abundantly clear that archaeology is about the interaction between archaeologists seeking meaning and objects that often yield their secrets only grudgingly. Stone projectile points, pottery shards, and tobacco pipes all have stories to tell, but those stories need to be understood and reconstructed by archaeologists — in the laboratory and library as well as in the field.

The interpretive framework for such story-telling has changed over time, not only as scientific methods have become more sophisticated but as the underlying social assumptions of New Yorkers and Americans have changed. *Unearthing Gotham* thus provides a history of a profession in the New York area, from the gentlemanly amateurs seeking relics of "vanquished" Indians and civilizing Europeans a century

ago, to those motivated since the 1960s to recover the lives of New Yorkers "forgotten or ignored in the written record"—women, children, people of color, the working poor, and immigrants. The recent work of archaeologists at the African Burial Ground, Five Points, Sullivan Street, and other sites reveals that the city's archaeologists are now digging "us" up — that is, traces of the evolving race relations, class divisions, and gender roles that embody the origins of modern New York City life.

Reliant on squeezing social and cultural meaning out of limited assemblages of surviving objects, urban archaeology has its limitations as well as its strengths. The authors concede these limits, pointing out the conjectural nature of many archaeological conclusions. Still, some conclusions beg additional questions. Did the Dutch meals served by housewives in English New York really represent a proto-feminist nostalgia for the expansive rights women had enjoyed in New Amsterdam, or merely a continuation of an ethnic culinary tradition? Do the toys and porcelain shards found under Five Points tenements suggest a vision of middle-class culture in working class homes, or rather a mass commercial culture that had penetrated slums and even slave quarters by the mid-nineteenth century? Is the emblem discerned on a coffin lid really a West African Sankofa, a European heart, or both? Such questions suggest what is at stake as urban archaeologists have sought relevance for their finds in larger social concerns, as well as the ever-present risk of reading too much into limited evidence.

The absence of key interpretive works by historians Richard Bushman, Kevin Stayton, and others from the extensive bibliography also reminds us that urban archaeologists and academic historians have been working for three decades on parallel but separate tracks that often intersect only in a haphazard way. By the same token, historians have much to learn from archaeologists whose work they have too often neglected. *Unearthing Gotham* ought to play a role in enhancing the dialogue between New York City archaeologists and historians who have much to say to each other.

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