
Introduction

MARTHA DICKINSON SHATTUCK

The publication of the first volume of *A Beautiful and Fruitful Place: Selected Rensselaerswijck Seminar Papers*¹ in 1991 provided an important collection of scholarly research into various aspects of the often ignored history of New Netherland and the Dutch. The papers in this volume were selected from those presented at the first ten years of the Rensselaerswijck seminars, which started in 1979. Fortunately, the yearly seminars have continued and so has the scholarly research into areas that broaden and illuminate New Netherland's history. This, the second volume of selected Rensselaerswijck seminar papers, covers the years 1988–1997. The ten seminars not only discuss selected areas of New Netherland's history in colonial and local affairs; they also look at the colony's relationship to European and Atlantic aspects of the seventeenth century world.

In the eleventh seminar, which covered “Domestic Life in New Netherland,” Henk Zantkuijl and A. Th. Van Deursen present two views of life in the Netherlands. Zantkuijl's informative and detailed discussion of the use of “private space” in houses in Amsterdam enlarges the understanding of city buildings in the Netherlands. From the use of the stoop and outside activities to the inner living spaces, such information can be applied to the housing in some areas of New Netherland. Van Deursen's thorough discussion of the trades and life in the North Holland village of Graft helps to support his belief that the inhabitants of Albany (Beverwijck) did indeed retain “something of their native country.”

The Leislerian period in seventeenth century New York was a complex time of dissent and division that affected all areas of the colony. Some of the issues of the period were addressed at the twelfth seminar, the “Age of Leisler.” One issue was the content of the derogatory language directed at the pro-Leislerians by the wealthy anti-Leislerians. Firth H. Fabend examines in persuasive detail the reasons for the divisions among the anti- and pro-Leislerians. Credit was a necessary component for successful ventures of Manhattan's merchants. Dennis Maika points out that not only did the merchants come up with a successful credit system, the system also lasted well, and profitably, into the Leislerian era. In relating the details of Jacob Leisler's family background, his education and his eventual arrival and position in New York, David Voorhees makes Leisler's beliefs and actions more understandable.

The South River, or *Suyt Rivier*, is what the Dutch called the Delaware River. Although part of New Netherland, its position in the colony and relation with the Indians received minimal attention at first. In the thirteenth seminar, which examined “New Netherland and the Frontier,” Charles Gehring details the development of the South River area—from its beginnings under the Dutch and the people involved in its development through the concern about potential intrusions of the English in Virginia and Maryland; the attempt of incursion by English settlers from New Haven; and ultimately the Swedish takeover of the area, which was eventually

followed by its return to Dutch rule under Petrus Stuyvesant.

According to the authors of the essays in the fourteenth seminar, the persistence of the Dutch did not languish after the English takeover of the colony in 1664, but continued well into the nineteenth century. As Joyce Goodfriend suggests, the anti-Dutch comments by the English, which she includes, was evidence of Dutch persistence in the society. David Narrett does, however, note a loss for Dutch women's rights once the system of primogeniture eventually eroded the Dutch use of mutual wills. It is through Elisabeth Paling Funk's discussion of the nineteenth-century authors, such as Washington Irving and James Fenimore Cooper among others, that we see how, and which, elements of the Dutch heritage were preserved for future generations in early American literature.

The fifteenth seminar takes us back to the Netherlands with "The Dutch in the Age of Exploration." In his discussion of the Dutch search for the spice trails, Cees Bakker notes that in the beginning of the seventeenth century, once the Dutch had money to spare from their export of herring throughout Europe, they began to look outside of Europe for their investments. The forces behind the decision to invest in the spice trade, the competitions in the trade, and the establishment of the East India Company, are part of Bakker's essay on the spice trade. Obviously, in order to get to the spice trails, good, sea-worthy ships were needed. According to Gerald A. de Weerdt's essay on Dutch primacy in shipbuilding, as shipyards and shipbuilding could be found all over the country, it is apparent that such ships were indeed available for exploration. Of particular interest is the wealth of information De Weerdt provides pertaining to the new technology used in shipbuilding that gave the Dutch fleets their primacy in seagoing ventures.

The Dutch brought many things from their life in the old world to the new world. One of these, according to Peter G. Rose, was their "rich culinary heritage," which continued to exist in New Netherland. For the sixteenth seminar on "Manor Life and Culture in the Hudson Valley," Rose examined

the extant diaries, cookbooks, and inventories that provided the detailed information not only for recipes, but also for the description of what was eaten at the various mealtimes and the manner of cooking. Her interesting and detailed discussion covers the different food customs at births and funerals, when and how some of the foodways changed, and what is still found in America's kitchens.

Searching out one's ancestors and their descendants has grown over the years and increased with the advent of the Internet, which provides an abundance of information and organizations for the searchers to explore. "Family History: Two Branches into New Netherland Research," the subject of the seventeenth seminar, provides several aspects of both genealogical and historical research into the who, where, and when of one's ancestors. Florence A. Christoph is a genealogist and her husband, Peter Christoph, is an historian. Each provide examples of how they approach their work and of their frequent use of each other's work as resource material in order to more fully tell the story. Both Christophs maintain that the work of both historians and genealogists improve by working together. In his essay, genealogist Harry Macy covers the history of the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, founded in 1869, as well as the pros and cons of genealogy. He also agrees with the Christophs that the two disciplines need each other. In a different approach to the subject, Charles Gehring explains how to use the notarial records of Amsterdam for research, and Nico Plomp takes genealogy back to the Netherlands as he delineates avenues of research there for the new world settlers' origins.

The relationship between New Netherland and her New England neighbors was an up-and-down affair with little trust on either side. The major disagreement was over the Dutch claim versus the English claim to the Connecticut River. The Hartford Treaty, which settled the boundary dispute with the English, was the outcome of Stuyvesant's meeting with the English. In the eighteenth seminar, "'neighbourlie correspondencie': Relations between New Netherland and New England," Jaap Jacob provides a thorough and informative study of the Hartford Treaty and the opposing viewpoints of both English

and Dutch. Little neighborly correspondence existed between the Dutch and English villages of Long Island, although the English had agreed to live under, and obey, Dutch law. Martha Dickinson Shattuck explains the reasons behind the Dutch acceptance of English villages as well as the problems that arose between the two peoples that acerbated their relationships during and after the second Anglo-Dutch war. On the subject of boundaries, Cynthia Van Zandt points out that while these did matter between the Dutch and the New England colonies, it was important that the boundaries involved in border crossings of merchants and others intent on business needed to be permeable. Using the commercial and political activities of Englishman Isaac Allerton, who lived in both New England and New Netherland and “crossed and re-crossed cultural and political boundaries,” Van Zandt explains how the trade networks worked for both the Dutch and the English.

Farming was initiated in the first days of the colony and continued to hold a major place in the colony’s economy. Even so, controlled as it was by the West India Company, farming failed on Manhattan. In the nineteenth seminar, “The Staffs of Life: Bread and Beer,” Jan Folkerts explains the problems that ultimately caused this failure. Beer is generally considered to be a choice and a much-used beverage by

the Dutch. Taverns were a favorite gathering and drinking place in New Netherland with the brew provided by local breweries. The history of beer and brewing goes back many centuries, quite likely, according to Vincent van Vilsteren, to between 3500 and 3000 B.C. His interesting and detailed history of brewing covers its development from medieval Europe to the Netherlands.

The place of the Dutch and New Netherland in the Atlantic World requires an examination of a variety of subjects. Several different views were explored in the twentieth seminar, “The West India Company and the Atlantic World,” by four historians. W. Th. Frijhoff addresses the question of whether or not the West India Company neglected the Reformed Church in New Netherland; Wim Klooster investigates the problems of the Dutch and other Atlantic “empires”; Johannes Postma’s essay covers the development of West India Company’s monopoly of slave trading and the reasons for the Company’s loss of the monopoly in the eighteenth century; and Jacob A. Schiltkamp reviews the application of the 1629 “Order of Government, for Police as well as Justice, in the places captured or still to be captured in the West Indies.” The twentieth seminar ended with Joyce D. Goodfriend’s detailed summation and commentary on the four essays.