**Dutch Exploration and the New Netherlands**

The English explorer Henry Hudson made four voyages between 1607 and 1611 in search of a northern sea passage to Asia. Three of them were on behalf of English trading companies, and on all three of these trips Hudson confined himself to the frozen reaches near the Arctic Circle, failing every time to find a route through the ice that would lead to the tropical climes and exotic goods of Asia. As fate would have it, the one voyage Hudson undertook for a foreign power - the Dutch - would have the most historic results. It was on this trip, in 1609, in the small ship de Halve Maen (The Half Moon) that Hudson, after first heading east, changed course and sailed due west in an effort to find a river highway through the North American continent, and wound up charting the rivers that we know today as the Hudson, the Connecticut and the Delaware. Thus, the area he navigated on that voyage was immediately claimed by the Dutch. The results would be farreaching, leading to the founding of the New Netherland settlement, and giving New York City a character distinctly different from Boston, Philadelphia and other large East Coast cities.

On the eleventh of September, 1609, Hudson sailed into what his first mate called "a very good Harbour for all windes," and then up a river that Hudson hoped might prove to be the route to Asia. The river was, his mate noted, "a mile broad" and "full of fish." Today we know it as the Hudson River. To the Dutch it was the North River, since it lay to the north of what they called the South River (which we know as the Delaware). Hudson himself named it the Mauritius, after Maurice of Nassau, the Prince of Orange, the highest ranking nobleman in the Netherlands. He made his way north of present-day Albany, where he found the river became too shallow for the ship and so turned around.

 Hudson realized that he had not found a gateway to the Orient, but he had found a magnificent natural harbor that rarely froze over, a land rich in natural products, and a base for trading for furs with the natives. Beyond that was the North American continent itself, which Europeans would, henceforth, begin to see less as an obstacle between them and Asia and more as a new world to be explored. Without a single road piercing that wilderness, water routes were essential. The Hudson River extended northward to the Mohawk River Valley, which then tended west into the Great Lakes. With the Hudson, therefore, the Dutch controlled the only known route to the west south of the St. Lawrence river, which the French maintained. This natural advantage would give the island at the mouth of the river - Manhattan - a location that would make it the centerpiece of one of the world's great commercial cities.

http://www.newnetherlandinstitute.org/history-and-heritage/digital-exhibitions/a-tour-of-new-netherland/hudson-river/

Although the Netherlands only controlled the Hudson River Valley from 1609 until 1664, in that short time, Dutch entrepreneurs established New Netherland, a series of trading posts, towns, and forts up and down the Hudson River that laid the groundwork for towns that still exist today. Fort Orange, the northernmost of the Dutch outposts, is known today as Albany; New York City's original name was New Amsterdam, and the New Netherland's third major settlement, Wiltwyck, is known today as Kingston. Unlike New York City and Albany, however, where the traces of colonization can be difficult to find, in Kingston, the history of New York's Dutch colonization is quite evident.

In 1609, two years after English settlers established the colony of Jamestown in Virginia, the Dutch East India Company hired English sailor Henry Hudson to find a northeast passage to India. After unsuccessfully searching for a route above Norway, Hudson turned his ship west and sailed across the Atlantic. Hudson hoped to discover a "northwest passage," that would allow a ship to cross the entirety of the North American continent and gain access to the Pacific Ocean, and from there, India. After arriving off the coast of Cape Cod, Hudson eventually sailed into the mouth of a large river, today called the Hudson River. Making his way as far as present-day Albany before the river became too shallow for his ship to continue north, Hudson returned to Europe and claimed the entire Hudson River Valley for his Dutch employers.

After unsuccessful efforts at colonization, the Dutch Parliament chartered the "West India Company," a national-joint stock company that would organize and oversee all Dutch ventures in the Western Hemisphere. Sponsored by the West India Company, 30 families arrived in North America in 1624, establishing a settlement on present-day Manhattan. Much like English colonists in Virginia, however, the Dutch settlers did not take much of an interest in agriculture, and focused on the more lucrative fur trade. In 1626, Director General Peter Minuit arrived in Manhattan, charged by the West India Company with the task of administering the struggling colony. Minuit "purchased" Manhattan Island from Native American Indians for the now legendary price of 60 guilders, formally established New Amsterdam, and consolidated and strengthened a fort located far up the Hudson River, named Fort Orange. The colony grew slowly, as settlers, responding to generous land-grant and trade policies, slowly spread north up the Hudson River.

The slow expansion of New Netherland, however, caused conflicts with both English colonists and Native Americans in the region. In the 1630s, the new Director General Wouter van Twiller sent an expedition out from New Amsterdam up to the Connecticut River into lands claimed by English settlers. Faced with the prospect of armed conflict, Twiller was forced to back down and recall the expedition, losing any claims to the Connecticut Valley. In the upper reaches of the Hudson Valley around Fort Orange, (present-day Albany) where the needs of the profitable fur trade required a careful policy of appeasement with the Iroquois Confederacy, the Dutch authorities maintained peace, but corruption and lax trading policies plagued the area. In the lower Hudson Valley, where more colonists were setting up small farms, Native Americans came to be viewed as obstacles to European settlement. In the 1630s and early 1640s, the Dutch Director Generals carried on a brutal series of campaigns against the area's Native Americans, largely succeeding in crushing the strength of the "River Indians," but also managing to create a bitter atmosphere of tension and suspicion between European settlers and Native Americans.

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| http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/kingston/buildings/peter.jpg**Director General Peter Stuyvesant** |  |

The year 1640 marked a turning point for the colony. The West India Company gave up its trade monopoly, enabling other businessmen to invest in New Netherland. Profits flowed to Amsterdam, encouraging new economic activity in the production of food, timber, tobacco, and eventually, slaves. In 1647, the most successful of the Dutch Director Generals arrived in New Amsterdam. Peter Stuyvesant found New Netherland in disarray. The previous Director General's preoccupation with the Native Americans and border conflicts with the English in Connecticut had greatly weakened other portions of colonial society. Stuyvesant became a whirlwind of activity, issuing edicts, regulating taverns, clamping down on smuggling, and attempted to wield the authority of his office upon a population accustomed to a long line of largely ineffective Director Generals.

Eventually, Stuyvesant cast his eyes upon the small settlements that had developed along the Hudson River Valley between Fort Orange and New Amsterdam. In 1652, 60-70 settlers had moved down from Fort Orange to an area where the Rondout Creek met the Hudson River, the site of present-day Kingston. The settlers farmed the fertile flood plains of the Esopus Creek side-by-side with the Esopus Indians, the original settlers of the area. Inevitably, land disputes brought the two sides to the brink of war, with both the Europeans and the Esopus Indians engaging in petty vandalism and kidnaping. In 1657, seeing the strategic practicality of a fort located halfway between New Amsterdam and Fort Orange, Director General Stuyvesant sent soldiers up from New Amsterdam to crush the Esopus Indians and help build a stockade with 40 houses for the settlers. Board by board, the settlers took their barns and houses down, and carted them uphill to a promontory bluff overlooking the Esopus Creek flood plain. They reconstructed their homes behind a 14-foot high wall made of tree trunks pounded into the ground that created a perimeter of about 1200 x 1300 feet. By day, the men left their walled village, which Director General Stuyvesant had named "Wiltwyck," to go out and farm their fields, leaving the women and children largely confined within the stockade. The villagers lived this way until 1664, when a peace treaty ended the conflict with the Esopus Indians.

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Though no longer needed, the stockade was left standing well into the late 17th century, and wooden remnants of the wall were actually rediscovered on Clinton Ave during an archaeological dig in 1971. The streets of the original village, however, remain laid out just as they were in 1658. Although the wooden houses of original settlers are long gone, the second generation of homes, built by men like [Sergeant Matthew Person](http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/kingston/k2.htm), still survive. These stone houses are fine examples of 17th-century Dutch stone buildings, and 21 still stand within the original layout of the stockade, listed in the National Register of Historic Places as contributing members of the [Stockade Historic District](http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/kingston/stockade.htm). Many of these homes began as a single room with a loft above, and gradually expanded, but the simple limestone and mortar materials hauled directly from the fields outside the stockade are still quite visible. Direct links to the age of Dutch colonization, the sturdy construction of these houses have served generations of Kingston residents, and are still in use today.

Although Wiltwyck, the second large settlement established north of New Amsterdam, grew quickly, the very successes of the Stuyvesant administration put New Netherland in danger. The colony was proving quite profitable, New Amsterdam had developed into a port town of 1500 citizens, and the incredibly diverse population (only 50 percent were actually Dutch colonists) of the colony had grown from 2,000 in 1655 to almost 9,000 in 1664. "Problems" with Native Americans were mostly over, and stable families were slowly replacing single adventurers interested only in quick profits. New Netherland produced immense wealth for the Dutch, and other foreign nations began to envy the riches flowing out of the Hudson River Valley.

The Dutch lost New Netherland to the English during the Second Anglo-Dutch War in 1664 only a few years after the establishment of Wiltwyck. Along the West Coast of Africa, British charter companies clashed with the forces of the Dutch West India Company over rights to slaves, ivory, and gold in 1663. Less about slaves or ivory, the Anglo-Dutch Wars were actually more about who would be the dominant European naval power. By 1664, both the Dutch and English were preparing for war, and King Charles of England granted his brother, James, Duke of York, vast American territories that included all of New Netherland. James immediately raised a small fleet and sent it to New Amsterdam. Director General Stuyvesant, without a fleet or any real army to defend the colony, was forced to surrender the colony to the English war fleet without a struggle. In September of 1664, New York was born, effectively ending the Netherlands' direct involvement in North America, although in places like Kingston, the influences of Dutch architecture, planning, and folklife can still be quite clearly seen.

http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/kingston/colonization.htm