

## Dutch Decline Meghan Burke

The Dutch colonizers experienced a time of great change throughout the 1630s. They changed Director-Generals from Peter Minuit (serving from 1626-33) to Wouter Van Twiller (1633- 1637). As a nephew of the famous patroon Van Rensselaer he seemed like a natural replacement. However his reign in the colonies is not regarded as generally successful.<sup>[1]</sup>

Though the Dutch colony of New Netherland expanded their territory throughout the mid 1600s, it did not come without consequences. The Dutch had a troublesome relationship to the other colonizers and Native Americans. This was aggravated further as they began to expand north from New Amsterdam. As such, the tenure of Directory-General Wouter van Twiller was marked by persistent conflict with these two groups.<sup>[2]</sup>

One of the more famous conflicts was over Connecticut. Purchased by the Dutch in 1632 they established a fort near Hartford. However the following year, the English came to the fort and over ran the lands with their new settlers. Try as hard as he might to rid the newly purchased land of his rivals Van Twiller's efforts failed and Connecticut from then on remained in the hands of the English. Two years later Van Twiller attempted to remove English influence from the colony of Massachusetts; however the outcome was no different than that over Connecticut and the colony stayed English.<sup>[3]</sup>

Even though Van Twiller was unable to hold the expanded land of New Netherland his Directorship was not a complete waste. Throughout his tenure the fur trade with the Native Americans and throughout New England grew maintaining the profitability of the colony.<sup>[4]</sup>

Van Twiller also had to answer issues regarding his management ability. Van Twiller's subordinates noted his excessiveness and that he took a much greater profit than deserved. They then reported Van Twiller's behavior it back to Netherland. In the late summer of 1637 Van Twiller was replaced as Director-General by Willem Keift for his inappropriate behavior with the colony's money.<sup>[5]</sup>

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<sup>[1]</sup> New Netherland Project accessed on March 26, 2010  
<http://www.nnp.org/nni/Publications/Dutch-American/twiller.html>

<sup>[2]</sup> Dutch Colonies accessed on March 26, 2010.  
<http://www.nps.gov/history/nr/travel/kingston/colonization.htm>

<sup>[3]</sup> NNP.org

<sup>[4]</sup> Ibid.

<sup>[5]</sup> Ibid.