

Meghan Burke
Dutch Colonization of the Hudson Valley

A couple of years after Henry Hudson's crew discovered the Hudson Valley and staked a claim in it for their Dutch patrons, the explorers found that the Valley possessed a great wealth of fur, a hot commodity at this time in Europe. Shortly after Dutch merchants began to settle trading posts in New York to establish economic contact with local Native American tribes.¹

One of the first businessmen to come to the new colonies in hopes of new markets was a young Dutch man, Arnout Vogels. Arnout Vogels got wind of Henry Hudson's discoveries and the new markets and commodities available in the Dutch West Indies. Vogels was only thirty but wise beyond his years. He opted to act on the news quickly. He held an apprenticeship in the fur business in Europe and knew well the tricks of the trade. Eager to make his own fortune he made a deal with Captain Sijem Lambertz Mau in 1610 enabling him to trade in the new territory. Their deal was broad in its parameters which was fitting as the New World's geography was still a mystery. The contract stated that Vogels could trade in the "West Indies and nearby lands and places."² It was an undercover expedition which proved to be quite lucrative for the crafty merchant. In fact he chartered two more consecutive trips to the Hudson Valley in 1611. Another Dutchman named Adriaen Block soon followed in the pursuit of riches in the New World. He traded with the French in Canada all the way down to the

¹ Louis Jordan "A Brief Outline of Dutch History and the Province of New Netherland" Notre Dame. Accessed on February 24, 2010
<http://www.coins.nd.edu/ColCoinIntros/Netherlands.html>

² Russel Shortp, *The Island at the Center of the World*, (New York: Random House Publishing 2004) 36.

English in Virginia. This was the beginning of Dutch exploitation of the Hudson Valley.³

Business and trade by the Dutch expanded over several years. In October of 1614 a group of businessmen from The New Netherland Company was granted a three-year monopoly for commerce dealing mostly in fur. However at the end of their charter they failed to colonize the area and in 1617 they were denied renewal of their charter.⁴

The failure of the New Netherland Company provided great opportunities to all other Dutch merchants. Ultimately the Dutch government decided that it would grant another monopoly to any company that would guarantee colonization of the Hudson Valley. The Dutch felt that with the business dealings in North and South America, there was a need for “Permanent Political Presence in their colonies in New Netherland.”⁵ The company that eventually received the fruitful contract was the Dutch West India Company. Their charter was granted in 1621 and included a “Twenty Four year monopoly in America.”⁶

³ Jordan; Shorto.

⁴ Jordan.

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid.