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# THE HUDSON RIVER VALLEY REVIEW

*A Journal of Regional Studies*

*Hudson • Fulton • Champlain  
Quadricentennial  
Commemorative Issue*



*Published by the Hudson River Valley Institute*



THE  
HUDSON  
RIVER  
VALLEY  
REVIEW

*A Journal of Regional Studies*

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## From the Publisher

Arguably the most important year in Hudson River Valley history since 1909, we are already in the midst of celebrations surrounding the Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Quadricentennial. This issue commemorates the accomplishments and legacies of all three honorees—Henry Hudson, Robert Fulton, and Samuel de Champlain—as well as the lasting contributions of the commission that planned events surrounding the 1909 Hudson-Fulton Tercentenary.

We open with a review of the 1909 festivities and follow with a brief survey of Dutch archival history from the preeminent historian and translator of New Netherland manuscripts. For the complete story on Robert Fulton, readers should reference our Autumn 2007 issue, which contained a lengthy biography of the inventor. Here its author offers a brief summary of Fulton's steamboat voyage and how it revolutionized transportation, in America and around the world. Delving into the Champlain Valley for the first time, we begin at the beginning, with an article tracing the Native American presence there from prehistory to the American Revolution. We return to Hudson with an overview written by William T. Reynolds, the captain of the replica ship *Half Moon*, and an excerpt of Robert Juet's journal of the voyage. Joyce Goodfriend illustrates both the power of the Dutch cultural legacy and the tensions caused by the British control after 1664. Lastly, André Senecal explains Champlain and the circumstances that led to his actions in 1609. We conclude with two more articles exploring the signal contributions Hudson and Champlain made to local and world history.

Our Regional History Forums focus on the Hudson-Fulton-Champlain Quadricentennial Commission, which has organized the yearlong celebration, and Walkway Over the Hudson State Park, perhaps the greatest legacy of the 400<sup>th</sup> celebration. Finally, we close with one author's musings over the lasting mysteries surrounding Hudson's 1609 journey. As Executive Director Tara Sullivan and Roosevelt-Vanderbilt National Historic Sites Superintendent Sarah Olson note in their foreword, there are a plethora of once-in-a-lifetime events taking place throughout the state this year. We encourage you to take advantage of them.

*Thomas S. Wermuth*



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## Call for Essays

*The Hudson River Valley Review* is anxious to consider essays on all aspects of the Hudson Valley—its intellectual, political, economic, social, and cultural history, its prehistory, architecture, literature, art, and music—as well as essays on the ideas and ideologies of regionalism itself. All articles in *The Hudson River Valley Review* undergo peer analysis.

## Submission of Essays and Other Materials

HRVR prefers that essays and other written materials be submitted as two double-spaced typescripts, generally no more than thirty pages long with endnotes, along with a computer disk with a clear indication of the operating system, the name and version of the word-processing program, and the names of documents on the disk. Illustrations or photographs that are germane to the writing should accompany the hard copy. Otherwise, the submission of visual materials should be cleared with the editors beforehand. Illustrations and photographs are the responsibility of the authors. No materials will be returned unless a stamped, self-addressed envelope is provided. No responsibility is assumed for their loss. An e-mail address should be included whenever possible.

HRVR will accept materials submitted as an e-mail attachment (*hrvi@marist.edu*) once they have been announced and cleared beforehand.

Since HRVR is interdisciplinary in its approach to the region and to regionalism, it will honor the forms of citation appropriate to a particular discipline, provided these are applied consistently and supply full information. Endnotes rather than footnotes are preferred. In matters of style and form, HRVR follows *The Chicago Manual of Style*.

## Contributors

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**Charles Gehring**, Director of the New Netherland Project in Albany, has spent thirty years translating seventeenth-century documents from the Dutch colonial period. He has translated and written numerous guides to historic manuscript collections, and articles on the Dutch and Native Americans in New Netherland. He received gold medals from the Saint Nicholas and Holland Societies of New York as well as the New Netherlands Society of Philadelphia.

**Cynthia Owen Philip**, an independent historian, has written extensively on the Hudson River Valley. She is the author of *Robert Fulton: A Biography* and the prize winning *Wilderstein and the Suckleys: A Hudson River Legacy*. Her articles and essays have appeared in national and local magazines, and her history *Rhinecliff, N.Y., 1686-2007* was published this year by Block Dome Press.

**Nicholas Westbrook**, Executive Director Emeritus of the Fort Ticonderoga Museum, was awarded the Katherine M. Coffey Award in 2006 by the Mid-Atlantic Association of Museums for more than forty years of “distinguished accomplishment in the museum field.” He has written on a range of topics in 18<sup>th</sup>- and 19<sup>th</sup>-century history, and has contributed articles to *American Indian Places: A Historical Guidebook*, *The Encyclopedia of New York State* and edited *The Bulletin of the Fort Ticonderoga Museum (1991-2009)*.

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**On the Cover:** Hudson-Fulton Tercentenary Postcard. Courtesy of Hudson River Valley Heritage, HRVH.org, from the collection of Vivian Yess Wadlin

# Introduction to the Quadricentennial Commemorative Edition

This is a momentous year in New York State and especially the Hudson River Valley. We are commemorating the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the simultaneous explorations of Henry Hudson and Samuel de Champlain on the waterways that now bear their names, as well as the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Robert Fulton's successful maiden steamboat voyage on the Hudson River. At the same time, we are celebrating the cultures that colonized this land—Native American, Dutch, and French—as well as the legacy of New York's Hudson-Fulton Tercentenary in 1909.

One important focus of the celebration 100 years ago was the protection of open space, including parkland in New York City, Bear Mountain, and, perhaps most important, the Palisades. In addition to its environmental legacy, the Tercentenary was marked by bridge and roadway improvements, parkways that facilitated transportation and recreation, and a strong cultural-preservation movement. We continue to benefit from all of these.

The completion of three Quadricentennial Legacy Projects will build upon the tremendous work accomplished by organizers a century ago. The Crown Point Lighthouse on Lake Champlain, dedicated in 1912 to commemorate Champlain's exploration, has been completely restored and relighted. In October, Walkway Over the Hudson will open, completing the stunning transformation of the historic Poughkeepsie-Highland Railroad Bridge into our newest state park—and the world's longest pedestrian walkway. In New York City, a new public promenade surrounding Governor's Island will provide thrilling views of Manhattan and New York Harbor.

Planning and implementing the Quadricentennial celebration has been a collaborative venture. Nowhere is this better illustrated than Walkway Over the Hudson, which began with a grassroots movement and has involved legislators on the federal, state, and local levels; state agencies (including the Bridge Authority; the Office of Parks, Recreation and Historic Preservation; and the Department of Environmental Conservation); the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area; the Governor's Office; and nonprofit organizations such as the Dyson Foundation and Scenic Hudson. Working together, each individual, agency, and organization has built upon their own mission to achieve something far greater than they could have accomplished alone. This and other efforts throughout the region have served to strengthen communication and cooperation—another important legacy of this celebration that we hope will benefit the region for generations.

Myriad communities, national and state parks, historic sites, and museums from Manhattan to the Adirondacks have planned exciting and educational events throughout the year. Festivities officially kicked off at the Knickerbocker Ice Festival at Rockland Lake in February and will continue throughout the year with parades, expos, demonstrations, concerts, lectures, exhibitions, and conferences. A complete listing of over 1,000 Quadricentennial events is available at [www.exploreny400.com](http://www.exploreny400.com); [www.hudson400.com](http://www.hudson400.com); and [www.Dutchess400.com](http://www.Dutchess400.com).

We invite you to learn what the hoopla is all about by reading this commemorative issue of *The Hudson River Valley Review*.

Tara Sullivan  
Sarah Olson



ANDY LUTZ

Detail of a Dutch manuscript in the collection of the New York State Archives

# New York's Dutch Records: A Historiographical Note —Updated

*Charles Gehring*

Cervantes said of translating: It is “like viewing a piece of tapestry on the wrong side through which the figures are distinguishable yet there are so many ends and threads that the beauty of the work is obscured.” This quote not only describes the nature of translated works, it also expresses what we know about New Netherland. Our knowledge of this important period in American colonial history is, for the most part, based on the records and sometimes prejudiced judgments of New Netherland’s English neighbors. For this reason, the reverse side of a tapestry has for years passed for the true side. It is often stated that the story of New Netherland is one of the best-kept secrets in American history. This secret is not, however, being maintained by ignorance or a conspiracy of American historians; it endures because of the lack of primary source material on New Netherland. Not only are the Dutch records inaccessible to the historian who has no knowledge of seventeenth-century Dutch, but those translations of the records which were made in the nineteenth century are extremely selective and unreliable.

In 1974 (300 years after New Netherland was returned to the English at the end of the third Anglo-Dutch war), a first step was taken to make the needed materials available to scholars. That year saw the publication of volumes one through four of the Dutch records in the New York State Library.<sup>1</sup> These volumes had been translated over sixty years earlier by A.J.F. Van Laer, but owing to a lack of funds and interest, they were never published during his lifetime. It is unfortunate that he did not receive the necessary support to continue work on the records. Van Laer knew the people and history of New Netherland intimately, and could make the records speak accurately and in a way that reflected the original language of the documents. Without the determination and support of Kenneth Scott of the New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, Ralph L. De Groff of the Holland Society of New York, and Kenn Stryker-Rodda of the National Genealogical Society, these volumes would still not be in print.<sup>2</sup>

These four volumes are an important addition to the source material on New Netherland. The first three contain the minutes of the Provincial Secretary, in which contracts, leases, wills, bonds, and other miscellaneous items are recorded. Volume four comprises about 300 pages of the 4,400 pages of council minutes. These minutes contain the executive and judicial proceedings of the Director-General and Council of New Netherland. In addition to the 4,100 pages of council minutes which await translation, there also are some 2,000 pages of correspondence between Director-General Petrus Stuyvesant and the directors of the West India Company.

These letters will provide historians with new insights into the character and ability of Stuyvesant and will form the basis for a much-needed reevaluation of him. For scholars interested in the Dutch West Indies, there are 350 pages of correspondence and instructions relating to the administration of Curaçao. The story of the southern region of New Netherland is recorded in 650 pages of Delaware papers, which include letters and instructions that describe the struggle between the Dutch and the Swedes for control of the Delaware River. The short-lived reconquest of New Netherland by the Dutch in 1673 is described in 650 pages of documents relating to the Colve administration. Less exciting to read, perhaps, but necessary for a complete assessment of the province are the 800 pages of ordinances, writs of appeal, land patents, and deeds.<sup>3</sup> For a colony so neglected in our early history it is an impressive amount of primary source material.<sup>4</sup>

Despite the notorious delay in publication, the 12,000 pages of Dutch records have not been entirely neglected and have an interesting history of their own. As early as 1708, a bill was passed by the Legislative Council of New York to assure their preservation. In 1740, Pennsylvania sent an agent to New York to transcribe certain documents from the records, which were needed to settle a boundary dispute with Maryland. Disputes involving New York's eastern boundaries led to the appointment of Jacob Goelet in 1754 as "Interpreter and Translator of the Low Dutch Language." It is doubtful whether he ever intended to undertake a translation of all the Dutch records. He was, however, responsible for arranging the records into forty-seven volumes and the drafting of a calendar for the council minutes. He probably also made the 140 pages of transcriptions from the Dutch records, now among the New-York Historical Society's holdings, which relate to the Dutch colony on what is now the Connecticut River. In 1776 the records, which had been kept in the office of the Provincial Secretary, were transported to Kingston. At the end of the American Revolution, they were deposited with the Secretary of State, first in New York City, then in Albany. There they remained until 1881, when they were transferred to the state library.

In 1805, James Van Ingen was hired at public expense to translate certain volumes of the Dutch records that would be useful to the Rev. Samuel Miller for his projected history of New York. But by 1826 he had translated only one volume of deeds and patents and twenty-six pages of council minutes. It was, perhaps, Van Ingen's cautious pace that induced Governor DeWitt Clinton to look for another translator. He found his man in the person of Francis Adrian van der Kemp. In 1818, at the age of 65 and with failing eyesight, Van der Kemp reluctantly undertook the task of translating the entire body of material. Working at his home in Barneveld, New York, he completed the translation four years later. These "Albany Records," as his translation was called, contained everything except the two volumes of land papers that were still in Van Ingen's hands.

Van Laer was well acquainted with Van der Kemp's work and in an appraisal of previous translations wrote the following about the "Albany Records": "They have long since been regarded by competent students as absolutely worthless for critical historical work. Owing to the difficulties under which Van der Kemp labored, consisting chiefly in an imperfect knowledge of the English language, impaired eyesight, and the urgency to complete the task during Governor Clinton's administration, the translations are filled with mistakes that destroy them as an historical source." For years, however, the "Albany Records" were the only source for research on New Netherland. Samuel Hazard quotes extensively from them in his *Annals of Pennsylvania*, as does John Romeyn Brodhead in his *History of the State of New York*, and Edmund B. O'Callaghan in his *History of New Netherland*.

O'Callaghan recognized the need for a new translation, and in 1865 he was employed as translator. He finished *Laws and Ordinances of New Netherland* in 1868, and a few years later completed translations of the three volumes of secretary's minutes and one volume of council minutes; only the laws and ordinances were ever published. Van Laer notes that O'Callaghan is not free from error, but is a great improvement over Van der Kemp.

In 1876 Berthold Fernow followed O'Callaghan as translator of the Dutch records. He planned a publication of records, both Dutch and English, relating to the Delaware, Long Island, and Hudson Valley settlements. His efforts comprise volumes 12 to 14 of *Documents Relating to the Colonial History of the State of New York*. Altogether, Fernow translated about a quarter of the Dutch records. Unfortunately, he selected only those documents which he considered important and arranged them topographically, which, in effect, separates chronologically related material; in some cases three separate paragraphs from the same document appear in three different volumes.



The most traumatic event in the history of the Dutch records was the state capitol fire of 1911. Occurring just one year before the state Education Building and library was completed, the fire broke out in the west wing of the capitol, where the library was then located. The Dutch records were more fortunate than other manuscript collections, but did not survive without damage. Some injury was done to the volumes of council minutes and to the first few volumes of correspondence. Volume 1 of the “Register,” which was on Van Laer’s desk at the time, was entirely lost, but fortunately the previous translation by E.B. O’Callaghan survived. Thus the first volume of the register is O’Callaghan’s translation with corrections made by Van Laer from memory. The material was fresh in his mind since he had recently completed a manuscript translation of this volume, which also was destroyed in the fire. The most extensive damage was that suffered by Van der Kemp’s 1822 translation. Of twenty-four folio volumes, only 200 pages survived the fire, and these were found in the vault of the Education Building just before the library’s move to the Empire State Plaza. O’Callaghan’s manuscript translation did survive, but, as has been noted, of these, only the laws and ordinances were published.<sup>5</sup>

When the present translation project was first discussed, it was decided to delay continuation of the council minutes and to begin with the Delaware papers (volumes 18 to 21). The decision was based on the following factors: First, the Delaware papers stand out among the Dutch records as a distinct unit, which appeared manageable in a short period of time; second, they suffered comparatively little damage as a result of the fire; and finally, Fernow had already translated most of the Dutch and transcribed the English for volume 12 of *Documents Relating to the Colonial History of New York*. Thus, the task seemed to be merely a matter of checking Fernow’s translations for accuracy and adjusting his language to conform to the already published volumes. But it was soon realized that there were serious problems not only in Fernow’s translations but also in his transcriptions of the English documents. Volumes 20 and 21 discuss the period in the Delaware Valley after the English takeover of 1664. Therefore, about ninety percent of the documents are in English. In volumes 18 and 19, Dutch documents comprise almost ninety-nine percent of the total. In order to have the English volumes ready for publication as soon as possible, work was begun on the fifty pages in Dutch, which Fernow either had not translated or had omitted.

Van Laer’s evaluation of Fernow’s translating ability—that “his knowledge is apt to fail him when it comes to anything particularly involved or technical”—proved to be an understatement. A few random examples of inaccuracies in Fernow are as follows:

In a patent, he has a creek running “towards the west” instead of “from the west.” In a proclamation, he has the hogs doing “great damage in the company’s high [roads]” instead of “in the company’s grain.” A significant mistranslation occurs in a letter from Stuyvesant to the Council in New Amsterdam a few days after the Indian uprisings of 1655. He asks the council to find out whether the Mohawks were involved and, if not, whether they would punish the Indians who were involved. Fernow reads: “...Your Honors will...inquire...whether it might not be possible that we could get provoked by them [the Mohawks]... Instead of: “...if it might not be possible for them to avenge us...” Numerous incorrect transcriptions of geographical and proper names occur: “Tornaborg” for “Tinnekonck,” “Pieter Smith” for “Pieter Hansen,” “Antony Sander” for “Antony Hansen,” “Jan Insten” for “Jan Justen,” “Gele Eyfgrauw” for “Oelle Eysgrauw.”

In preparing volumes 20 and 21 for publication, it also was necessary to transcribe those English documents that Fernow had omitted. After discovering the numerous errors in his transcriptions of names in the Dutch documents, it was decided to check those English transcriptions that already appeared in his volume 12 of the colonial documents. Peter Christoph, head of the Manuscripts and History section of the New York State Library, undertook the task of comparing the originals with Fernow. The first document turned up over fifty errors in his published transcriptions. Not only is this number of errors typical, but it was also found that many documents were not completely transcribed. For example, the presentation of a series of court cases was transcribed, but the resolution of the cases were omitted. Some typical examples of his errors are: “woods” for “sweeds,” “beatt a downe” for “beatt a drom,” “bitter answer” for “bill or answer,” and “tould” for “asked.” The boundary of one patent appears as “fifty perches” in length instead of “forty.” Another patent has a line running “W” instead of “WSW.”<sup>6</sup>

Damage done to the documents varied dramatically according to their position on the shelves the day of the 1911 fire. Those on the top shelves were damaged the most, as the shelves carrying English documents above collapsed on the Dutch records below. Most seriously damaged were the final four years of council minutes, especially volume 10, which represent the last two years of Stuyvesant’s administration—some 2,000 pages of manuscripts. Generally, the damage is minor in comparison, such as the Delaware Papers. Although these documents, in general, survived the fire with minor damage, some pages have suffered serious damage, not all of which is related to the fire. Dutch secretaries habitually left a two-inch margin on the left side of the paper and then wrote to the edge of the right side. Thus, whenever a document has been damaged along the right edge there is considerable loss of text. Previous translators experimented on faded lines

by smearing ink on them in the hope of providing, evidently, a darker background for the faded words. Fortunately, this method of recovery was given up before more than a few documents were ruined. Sections of some documents have been cut out by signature collectors leaving a gap in the text on the obverse.

But the most serious damage, of course, was caused by the 1911 fire. Volumes 5 to 10 of council minutes and volume 11 of correspondence have all had from one to three inches burned off the tops. This means that the headings of many documents are gone, but more importantly, a considerable amount of text on the reverse side has been lost. There are two possible methods to recover this loss: First, to find copies or originals of the documents; second, to fill in the gaps from previous translations. The latter will be done to retain continuity but with a note that these portions may be unreliable.

Many Dutch records and transcriptions relating to the records in the state archives are scattered about the country in various historical societies and libraries, as well as in the archives of the Netherlands. In order to have these sources available when needed, microfilm copies of all documents relating to New Netherland are being acquired. In 1978, the National Historical Publications and Records Commission funded the research and publication of the *Guide to Dutch Documents in U.S. Repositories*. The guide not only locates related collections of Dutch documents but also indicates whether the New Netherland Project has a copy. Not only will acquisition of these additional manuscripts assist the translating project, but it will bring together in one place all of the source material necessary for scholarly research on New Netherland. An update to the guide, which will also include Dutch repositories, will form the basis for a Center of New Netherlandic Studies at the New York State Library.

With the publication of over half of the surviving records of the Dutch colony, another corner of the tapestry of New Netherland has been turned over. When all of the Dutch records eventually appear in print, historians will, at long last, have in their hands the material needed to tell the true story of the Dutch in colonial America.

## Endnotes

1. The Dutch records were held by the Manuscripts and History section of the New York State Library until 1976 when they were transferred to the newly established New York State Archives. Public records went to the archives while private records remained in the library. As the Dutch records were deemed a precursor of state or government records, they became a part of the archives' holdings.
2. A.J.F. Van Laer, trans. and ed., *New York Historical Manuscripts: Dutch*. Edited with added indexes by Kenneth Scott and Kenn Stryker-Rodda (Baltimore: Published under the direction of the Holland Society of New York by the Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc. 1974.)
3. Since writing this article some thirty years ago, much of what has been outlined above has been accomplished: the Delaware Papers, a volume of Council Minutes 1652-1654, and the land papers labeled GG, HH, and II were all published by Genealogical Publishing of Baltimore; Curaçao Papers by Heart of the Lakes; and Council Minutes 1655-1656, two volumes of Correspondence 1647-1658, Fort Orange Court Minutes 1652-1660, Laws and Writs of Appeal 1647-1663, and two volumes of Fort Orange Records 1654-1679 published by Syracuse University Press. Still remaining are three volumes of correspondence, three volumes of council minutes, and the Colve Papers.
4. Some gaps in the records are irremediable. Though the Provincial Secretary of New Netherland retained a copy of every document that went through his office, some documents were lost or destroyed during the Dutch period and later. In 1647, for example, materials relating to the administration of Director-General Willem Kieft were lost in a shipwreck. Other records such as the Book of Resolutions, the Book of Petitions, and the copybooks of correspondence are referred to in the council minutes but are no longer in the collection. We can only hope they will some day surface.
5. E. B. O'Callaghan ed. and tr., *Laws and Ordinances of New Netherland 1638-1674*. Albany, 1868.
6. The warning to use Fernow's translations with "extreme caution" has been borne out by over thirty years of retranslating from the originals. Unfortunately, nothing can be done about the text that has been lost because of the 1911 fire. In such cases our translations have used Fernow's text to fill in the damaged areas; however, such text appears between brackets which serve as a *caveat lector*. It should be noted that no matter who the previous translator might be, whether Fernow, O'Callaghan, or Van der Kemp, they were all translating with a minimal amount of reference material. Today we have so much more with which to confirm or check our translations: The massive Dutch dictionary *Het Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal*, dialect studies, specialized vocabularies such as the *Zeemans Lexicon*, and thousands of articles on the various families of New Netherland. At best, nineteenth-century translators had only a simple Dutch dictionary such as Sewell at their disposal. I find it amazing that they accomplished as much as they did.

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# The Hudson River Valley Institute

The Hudson River Valley Institute at Marist College is the academic arm of the Hudson River Valley National Heritage Area. Its mission is to study and to promote the Hudson River Valley and to provide educational resources for heritage tourists, scholars, elementary school educators, environmental organizations, the business community, and the general public. Its many projects include publication of the *Hudson River Valley Review* and the management of a dynamic digital library and leading regional portal site.

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Help tell the story of the Hudson River Valley's rich history and culture by joining **The Patriots' Society** and supporting the exciting work of the **Hudson River Valley Institute** at Marist College. Contributions such as yours ensure that the scholarly research, electronic archive, public programming and educational initiatives of the Hudson River Valley Institute are carried on for generations to come. **The Patriots' Society** is the Hudson River Valley Institute's initiative to obtain philanthropic support from individuals, businesses and organizations committed to promoting our unique National Heritage Area to the country and the world. Please join us today in supporting this important work.

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