

## The Beginning of Dutch Colonialism By Meghan Burke

In 1622 the Dutch West India Company was granted a twenty four year monopoly in the New World. In the same decade New Netherland became fully recognized as a province in the summer of 1623 by Dutch parliament. The following year some thirty Flemish Walloon families came to the new colony. These families settled wherever the Dutch West India had staked claims previously. They settled all along the Hudson River from the mouth of the Connecticut River down to present day Governor's Island. The majority of the settlers inhabited around Fort Orange (which today is Albany). Between 1624 and 1625 more waves of settlers came to the Hudson Valley bringing with them not only more people, but livestock and living supplies making life in the New Netherland more comfortable.[1]

During the time when the second wave of settlers came to the area war broke out between the Mohawks and the Mahakin Native American tribes. This not only led to abandonment of several trading posts in the area, but also forced many of the women and children to leave as a precaution to further attack. In the spring of 1626 the director of the Dutch West India Company, Peter Minuit, came to the Hudson Valley. Realizing the vast dislocation of the families forced to leave Fort Orange, Minuit purchased Manhattan from the Lenape tribe for sixty guilders, which equivalent to about twenty four dollars today, allowing the displaced to resettle safely.[2]

Before the purchase by Peter Minuit, the Lenape referred to the island as Manhattes, however after the transaction it was renamed, aptly, New Amsterdam. New Amsterdam then served as the capital for the province of New Netherland. [3] New Amsterdam was an obvious capital for the many rivers and tributaries that meet at the delta. It provided not only great access to the sea, but New Amsterdam also gave way to the deep inland waters of the Hudson River.[4]

In the late 1620s many of the original colonists left and headed back for the Netherlands. The settlers could not handle the cold harsh winters of the Hudson Valley, and longed for the more moderate winters of Europe. By 1630 the Hudson Valley population declined to roughly 300. The majority of whom were in New Amsterdam leaving only about thirty people in the Fort Orange region. Though they were few, the people around Fort Orange served as the epicenter for fur trade with the Mohawks in the New Netherland.[5]

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[1] Louis Jordan, "A Brief Outline of Dutch History and the Province of New Netherland"  
<http://www.coins.nd.edu/ColCoin/ColCoinIntros/Netherlands.html>

[2] Jordan; "Document: the Purchase of Manhattan Island, 1626" Dutch New York Rediscover 400 years of History. Accessed March 3, 2010 <http://www.thirteen.org/dutchny/interactives/manhattan-island/1/>; "Dutch and English in New Netherland" accessed March 3, 2010 <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~nycoloni/dahist.html> and Thomas A. Janvier, "Chapter III The Dutch Rule of New Netherland" New York Times Backfile May 31, 1903.

[3] Ibid.

[4] Janvier.

[5] Jordan.