

# Introduction

The purpose of this book is to introduce its readers to the significant impact of Dutch traders *and* settlers on the early history of Northeastern North America, and their extensive and intensive relationships with its Indigenous peoples. Few people know that New Netherland extended well beyond the Hudson River Valley, westward into present-day New Jersey and Delaware and eastward to Cape Cod. Even fewer realize that Dutch settlers accompanied the Dutch traders. New Netherland was not just a loose linking of Dutch trading posts. Dutch colonists founded villages and towns along Long Island Sound, the mid-Atlantic coast, and up the valleys of the Connecticut, Housatonic, Hudson, and Delaware Rivers. Their daily routines brought them into frequent contact with their Native American neighbors. Although altercations and violence did occur, in general the relationships resulted in Dutch-Indigenous interdependence that enhanced living standards and promoted goodwill within both communities.

Unfortunately, little of this substantial history has found its way into local history books and the public school systems, especially in what was once eastern and western New Netherland (i.e., southern New England and the Delaware River Valley, respectively). Consequently, in 2016 I decided to organize a public conference on this theme. The result was the 11th Annual Native American-Archaeology Round Table, held on October 29, 2016 and hosted by the Institute for American Indian Studies Museum and Research Center in Washington, Connecticut (IAIS).<sup>1</sup>

Entitled “Early Encounters: Dutch-Indigenous Relations in Seventeenth-Century Northeastern North America,” it included nine presentations on various aspects of New Netherland by ten well-known experts in Dutch and Native American histories. Many of the audience were educators, who urged publication of the papers. I concurred, because the Dutch-Indigenous histories they discussed deserve a more prominent position in future history

books, museum exhibits, and in school curriculum and instruction than they have previously enjoyed. The end result is this book. It consists of ten chapters, most of which are revisions of the papers presented at the 2016 IAIS Round Table conference. Chapters 1–6 discuss Dutch involvement in New York, specifically, the Hudson and Mohawk Valleys.

**Chapter 1**, *Henry Hudson Goes Ashore on Castle Hill* by Shirley W. Dunn, introduces the reader to the English sea captain and explorer Henry/Hendrick Hudson, sailing for the Dutch in 1609 in search of a northwestern passage to China and the “spice islands” of the East Indies. Instead of the South Pacific, Hudson sailed into New York Bay and up the river that now bears his name. Hudson’s encounters with Native American communities along his route are the first documented Dutch-Indian relationships in what eventually becomes New Netherland. Dunn addresses the following questions: Where exactly did Hudson make this landfall? Whom did he meet, and what happened during that historic meeting?

**Chapter 2**, *Sources Relating to Dutch-Indian Relations* by Charles T. Gehring, sets the stage for subsequent chapters by providing an overview of the founding and history of New Netherland. It introduces readers to the Dutch people and answers the following questions: Who were the Dutch? Why did they come to the New World? What did they do after they got here? What do we know about Dutch-Indian relations? The chapter begins with the acquisition of the Low Countries by the Habsburg Empire in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, the revolt of the seventeen provinces against the empire, and the formation of the United Provinces of the Netherlands from the original provinces to create a new nation and world leader in maritime trade. Gehring discusses the opening of the New World fur trade at the beginning of the seventeenth century, the exchange of shell beads (*sewant*, *wampum*) in Long Island Sound for beaver pelts on the upper Hudson, and the resulting violent competition that the trade engendered. He demonstrates how Dutch–Native American relations became crucial to the economic survival of New Netherland. Continuing through to the midcentury, Gehring shows how four seventeenth-century Indian wars—Kieft’s War, the Peach War, and the two subsequent Esopus wars and their aftermath—led to a reconfiguration of the Dutch settlements and new economic endeavors. Chapter 2 concludes with an examination of the seventeenth-century Dutch primary sources available for acquiring descriptions of the Native American population in New Netherland through Dutch eyes, particularly those of Harmen Meyndertsz van den Bogaert, Adriaen van der Donck, and Arent van Curler.

**Chapter 3, *Declarations of Interdependence: The Nature of Dutch-Native Relations in New Netherland, 1624–1664*** by Stephen T. Staggs, introduces the reader to the early Dutch settlers in New Netherland and their diverse and sustained relationships with their Native American neighbors. Staggs uses original Dutch-language records from New Netherland to show that cultural adaptation, accommodation, and transculturation occurred within both Dutch and Indigenous communities.<sup>2</sup> Sharing new foods, tools, and ideas and providing labor, military assistance, and political support created bonds of mutual dependence between the Dutch colonists and Indigenous tribal communities that often bordered on what Staggs describes as “familiarity.” Cross-cultural physical intimacies and marriages transpired, as the Dutch “welcomed Indians into their homes and families.”<sup>3</sup>

**Chapter 4, *Building Forts and Alliances: Archaeology at Freeman and Massapeag, Two Native American Sites*** by Anne-Marie Cantwell and Diana diZerega Wall, uses archaeological data to help address the nature of Dutch-Indigenous relationships in upstate New York and on western Long Island. Cantwell and Wall focus on two seventeenth-century fortified Native American archaeological sites that indicate Dutch influence. The Freeman site contained the cultural remains of the Mohawk palisaded village of Kaghnuwage, located in the present Mohawk Valley town of Root, New York—homelands of the Iroquois-speaking Mohawk. Fort Massapeag was a palisaded trading post with an adjacent wampum manufacturing site located in present-day Massapequa, Long Island—the homelands of Munsee Algonquian-speaking communities. Cantwell and Wall argue that, although occupied by very different tribal peoples for very different reasons, both sites symbolize status and political power, and that Dutch-Indigenous interdependence in economic endeavors, military defense, and international politics in both regions created strong political alliances, of which these palisaded sites are material symbols.

**Chapter 5, *Mohawk and Dutch Relations in the Mohawk Valley—Alliance, Diplomacy, and Families from 1600 to the Two Row Treaty Renewal Campaign*** by Paul Gorgen, presents an Indigenous perspective of colonial relationships with Dutch settlers in the Mohawk Valley. A member of the Kanatsiohareke Mohawk Community whose ancestry includes both Mohawk and Dutch lineages from seventeenth-century Schenectady, Gorgen uses Haudenosaunee (Iroquois) oral history as well as New Netherland primary source documents to provide a distinctive description of Mohawk-Dutch interactions and interdependence, occurring on both political and personal levels that continued well beyond the political entity of New Netherland.

Importantly, he demonstrates that all Mohawk-Dutch relations were founded on the concept of an equal partnership, which was originally confirmed by an early seventeenth-century trade agreement known as the Two Row Wampum Treaty. A significant portion of the chapter deals with the legacy of the Dutch-Mohawk alliance, which has extended into the present century.

**Chapter 6, *The Dutch and the Wiechquaeskeck: Shifting Alliances in the Seventeenth Century*** by Marshall Joseph Becker, discusses Dutch-Indigenous relations in southern New York, southwestern Connecticut, and northeastern New Jersey. Becker focuses on the Wiechquaeskeck, a major tribe whose homelands once included present Westchester County and Manhattan Island in New York and southwestern Connecticut. Today, the tribe is virtually unknown to academics as well as to the general public. Becker explains why this is so in his narration of the tribe's relationships with the Dutch, the English, and other Indigenous communities on the regional landscape. The Wiechquaeskeck survival strategy during subsequent social and economic upheavals was migration. Using primary sources—especially land transactions—and buffer zone theory, Becker determines where they emigrated and who they eventually became.

Chapters 7–10 introduce the reader to the eastern portion of New Netherland, namely, southern New England. **Chapter 7, *Early Seventeenth-Century Trade in Southern New England*** by Kevin A. McBride, combines the use of early historic documents and recent archaeological site information to provide new insights into Dutch-Pequot trade relationships in southeastern New England ca. 1614 to 1637. Recent excavations at five Pequot War era (1636–37) Pequot settlements directed by McBride unearthed thought-provoking finds that included over 450 trade items. They and the primary documents are helping to reveal the nature, extent, and mechanics of European (especially Dutch) trade with the Pequot tribe that “significantly altered Native lifeways”<sup>4</sup> in early seventeenth-century Connecticut.

**Chapter 8, *Roduits: A Dutch Fort in Branford, Connecticut*** by John Pfeiffer, details the exciting discovery and excavation of an early European contact period archaeological site in present-day Branford, Connecticut, which the author interprets as an early seventeenth-century Dutch fort. Pfeiffer describes the various artifacts and features recovered from this remarkable archaeological site, which include both Native American and European items, and the remnants of a semisubterranean wattle and daub structure enclosed by a ditch and berm palisade. Primary documents housed in America and in Holland are used to explain the Dutch rise as a major mercantile power and the *raisons d'être* for their involvement with New

World explorations. (It was not just the fur trade.) The documents suggest that the Dutch settlement of Roduins may predate the Dutch trading post House of Good Hope.

**Chapter 9**, *The Fresh River and the New Netherland Settlement, “House of Good Hope”* by Richard Manack, relates the story of Connecticut’s first well-documented, permanent European settlement, which is little known even to state residents.<sup>5</sup> The House of Good Hope (Huys de Goede Hoop) was a Dutch settlement founded in 1633 by the Dutch West India Company (WIC) on the Connecticut River at present-day Hartford. It consisted of a trading post and a *bouwerie*—a circa twenty-five-acre farmstead tended by Dutch settlers. An important part of this story was the Dutch’s intense involvement in the fur and wampum trade with Indigenous trading partners along the Connecticut River and southern New England coast. Using primary Dutch and English documents, Manack demonstrates how the WIC emphasis on this trade, originally lucrative, eventually caused problems with the English and with and among the Pequots and local tribal peoples. The disagreements detrimentally affected the Dutch farming settlement at Hartford, and effectively caused the demise of the House of Good Hope and the loss of most of eastern New Netherland by 1653.

**Chapter 10**, *Dutch–Native American Relationships in Eastern New Netherland (That’s Connecticut, Folks!)* by Lucianne Lavin, reflects on the little-known fact that the first Europeans to settle in what is now western Connecticut and western Massachusetts were the Dutch. It describes how Dutch traders and farmers carried on mutually satisfying relationships with their Indigenous neighbors before and after the advent of English colonists in the region. Unlike their English counterparts in this region, the Dutch recognized the sovereignty of Native American nations and treated their trading partners and neighbors as political equals. They were less judgmental and more tolerant of Indigenous cultures, actively accommodating their Native neighbors, even when both communities were laboring under English rule. For their part, the local Native American communities provided economic and military support to the Dutch, all of which illustrates an interdependence and mutual accommodation in Dutch-Indigenous relationships in eastern New Netherlands similar to that described by Staggs in chapter 3 for the Hudson Valley. The various ways Dutch relationships changed Indigenous community lifeways and the Indigenous-Indigenous sociopolitical landscape in eastern New Netherland is also enumerated.

In summary, the chapters in this book demonstrate a strong Dutch presence in Northeastern North America as traders and as settlers from the

early stages of European visitation. In some regions, that presence lingered through the centuries, occasionally to the present day. In the Northeast, seventeenth-century American history evolved from the actions and interactions of numerous Native American tribes with each other as well as with the Dutch and English, and from relationships of the Dutch with the English. Dealings with the French in present-day Canada and with the Swedes in the lower Delaware Valley contributed to those regional histories. The facts demand that we view American history not through the traditional lens of an Anglo-American past, but as a “conjoined history”<sup>6</sup> created by the interrelations and interdependence of diverse ethnic groups through time.

Lucianne Lavin  
February 9, 2018

### Acknowledgments

Sharon Clapp kindly reviewed an earlier version of this manuscript. Many thanks to historical artist Len Tantillo for generously allowing the use of his beautiful painting, *Curiosity of the Magua. Mohawk warriors approach the ship of Arent Van Curler, 1650*, on the front cover of this book.

### Notes

1. The Institute for American Indian Studies Museum and Research Center (IAIS) is a private, nonprofit museum and educational and research center located on thirteen acres of woodland in the Litchfield Hills of northwestern Connecticut. Founded in 1975 as the American Indian Archaeological Institute, the Institute’s main focus originally was archaeology and research. Because of the vast knowledge and information gained from six Indigenous people on staff, the Institute’s focus soon included preservation, education, and Native American studies. In 1990 the Institute’s name was changed to its present designation to encompass those additional focal points. IAIS is dedicated to the study of the histories and cultures of Indigenous peoples throughout the Western Hemisphere, particularly those of Northeastern North America. Its facilities include a museum/visitors center, a research building that houses all collections not currently on display, and outdoor exhibits featuring a Native American medicinal plant garden and a replicated Algonkian village with several house structures, dugout canoe, central firepit, food drying racks, and a Native vegetable garden. The Institute also maintains several nature trails with signage that

identifies the various trees and plants and their traditional economic and medicinal uses by local Indigenous communities.

2. For a discussion of adaptation and transculturation within both Euro-American and Indigenous communities in Connecticut, see Lucianne Lavin, *Connecticut's Indigenous Peoples: What Archaeology, History, and Oral Traditions Teach Us about Their Communities and Cultures* (New Haven, CT: Yale Peabody Museum of Natural History and Yale University Press, 2013), 311–315.

3. Stephen T. Staggs, chapter 3, this volume.

4. Kevin A. McBride, abstract to a PowerPoint presentation entitled “War and Trade in Eastern New Netherland,” presented at the 11th Annual Native American–Archaeology Round Table, “Early Encounters: Dutch-Indigenous Relations in 17th Century Northeastern North America,” October 29, 2016.

5. The Dutch settlement at Saybrook Point in present Old Saybrook appears to have been occupied at an earlier date, but there are few references to it in the published literature. See Lucianne Lavin, “Dutch-Native American Relationships in Eastern New Netherland (That’s Connecticut, Folks!),” chapter 10, this volume.

6. An apt term borrowed from Anne-Marie Cantwell and Diana Wall, “Building Forts and Alliances: Archaeology at Freeman and Massapeag, Two Native American Sites,” chapter 4, this volume.