

# New Amsterdam Yesterday & Today

New Amsterdam History Center

Fall 2023, Vol.7, No. 1

Editor, Firth Haring Fabend

Berg

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Dear NAHC Patrons, Donors, and Friends,

Welcome to the Fall, 2023, NAHC Newsletter! This is our 17th newsletter since the inaugural volume published in 2017.

NAHC's 2023 public programming continued in May with a fascinating talk by Christopher Bishop of Christopher Bishop Fine Arts concerning his rediscovery of Jan Lievens's portrait of Admiral Maarten Harpertszoon Tromp. The portrait, which was executed in 1652, became a touchstone for the Dutch cause during the first Anglo-Dutch War, 1652-1654. The talk was held on May 16 in conjunction with the Netherland Club at their townhouse headquarters the Salmagundi Club on Fifth Avenue.

On Tuesday, June 6, prize-winning author Sara Cedar Miller led a group of NAHC donors and contributors to the northern end of Central Park, an area once called "Dutch Haarlem", for an informative walking tour. The tour wound its way through land that was once the tobacco *bouwerie* of the de Forest family as Ms. Miller spoke about the early local Dutch residents, their intermarriages, and their engagement with slavery. This part of Central Park and its history was truly a revelation for all who attended.

The following week, Professor Frans R.E. Blom spoke at length on the Vrooman Letters, a trove of 40,000 commercial and private Dutch letters that was intercepted at sea and brought as intelligence information to England during its wars with the Netherlands. The program, which was sponsored by NAHC donor Sandra Lazo and held at Columbia University's Deutsches Haus, was simultaneously offered on ZOOM. It is currently available on the NAHC Website. We thank NAHC Trustee Wijnie de Groot for organizing this fascinating talk.

NAHC's programming will resume this fall, on Wednesday, October 11, with a concert by the Camerata Trajectina, a Dutch Early Music ensemble, an event co-presented with and at the Morgan Library. This special program features narration by Professor Jaap Jacobs and follows the footsteps of Jacob Steendam (1616-1672) in presenting music that once echoed off walls of the homes of New Amsterdam. We hope many of you will join us for this unique program.

NAHC's seventh scheduled program of 2023, "New Netherland's Slave Trade: Origins, Evolution, Impact, and Significance," is a November 15 discussion featuring historians Dennis Maika, Andrea Mosterman, and Jaap Jacobs, guided by moderator Lavada Nahon. These historians of New Netherland have recently shed new light on the colony's enslaved people, including the conditions of their enslavement and the inner workings of slave trade.

In addition to these informative and entertaining programs, NAHC has continued its progress with its "Mapping Early New York" project, led by NAHC Trustee and Project Manager Toya Dubin. Toya is currently working with the New-York Historical Society to use our 3D model of the Castello Plan as part of the museum's anticipated 2024 exhibit of the original document from Italy. Finally, we are excited to launch our new website this September. We hope you enjoy exploring it.

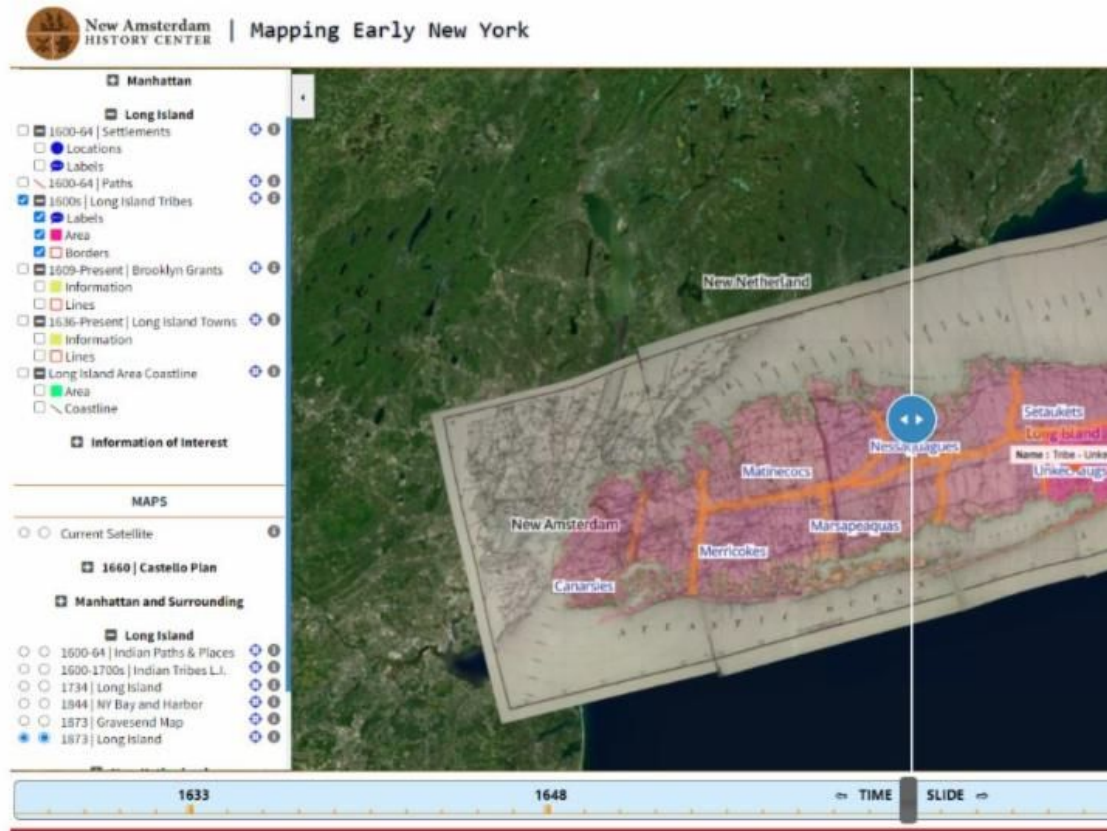
In closing, Esme and I want to thank all of you once again for your continuing support of NAHC through your annual contributions and gifts. It is this generous support that enables us to produce a broad array of programs, newsletters, and talks. If you are not yet a contributor, we ask that you please consider becoming a NAHC supporter this year. We also invite you to help sponsor a program that may be of special interest to you. Please write to us at [events@newamsterdamhistorycenter.org](mailto:events@newamsterdamhistorycenter.org) for more information.

On behalf of the entire NAHC Board of Trustees, thank you for your continuing support.

Michael Cavanaugh, President  
Esme E. Berg, Executive Director



## What's New at NAHC



### Mapping Early New York Surges Forward on Several Fronts

Toya Dubin  
Project Manager

AI image generators are helpful in this part of the project. By using photography of modern historians in detailed period-correct clothing, we can generate images with reasonable variations to populate the 3D model in the style of 17th-century oil paintings. Joel Grossman's research into the plants found in New Netherland is helping us to define the gardens, forests, and shorelines. The team at the Mapping Early New York project is pleased to report that we are collaborating with the New-York Historical Society to provide a 3D model for their upcoming exhibit featuring the original Castello Plan in the spring of 2024.

Our 3D project lead, Eduard van Dijk, is currently working on a stop-by-stop tour of the 3D model with significant enhancements. Russell Shorto, Nicole Mahoney, and their team are collaborating with us biweekly. This will be exhibited on the main floor of the New-York Historical Society along with the original Castello Plan, the original Vingboons drawing, and a host of other important documents and artifacts.

We are also well under way with our work on two 3D models in Long Island.

- An Unkechaug Village near the Carman's River

- The Wreck of *the Princz Maurice* on Fire Island.

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#### Document Collections

Earlier in this year we uploaded New York State Library document collections A1878 and A1883 with Charly Gehring's translations. In addition, our collaboration with the New York City Archives has resulted in an opportunity to upload the entirety of their Dutch Document collection, more than 10,000 documents. We are in the process of adding these document collections to the 22 complete collections already, comprising more than 9,700 documents as of this writing. <https://encyclopedia.nahc-mapping.org/document-list>

Our work with Drew Shuptar-Rayvis, our Algonkian Historical Consultant, has resulted in numerous new encyclopedia entries, along with historically correct photography to illustrate them. This has allowed us to significantly increase the level of detail and the number of entries relating to the Native American experience in the Dutch Colonial period.

Our deepest thanks to the Robert D.L. Gardiner Foundation, The Society of Daughters of Holland Dames, the Society of the First Families of New York, Ken Chase, and all the members, individuals, and institutions who support our project. Our many improvements may be viewed here: <https://nahc-mapping.org/mappingNY/>

Many thanks to our sponsors for making all of this possible.

The Robert David Lion Gardiner Foundation - The Society of the First Families of New York - The Society of Daughters of Holland Dames

[Read More](#)

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Len Tantillo's New Work on the Connecticut River and Fort Good Hope  
to be unveiled at the Connecticut River Museum





An unveiling ceremony of historical artist, Len Tantillo's work on  
the Connecticut River and Fort Good Hope

will be held at  
the Connecticut River Museum in Essex, Connecticut on  
Thursday, October 12, 2023  
Old Lyme Country Club  
40 McCurdy Road, Old Lyme  
6:00 p.m.

Please contact the museum for reservations at 860.767.8269 or email them at  
[crm@ctrivermuseum.org](mailto:crm@ctrivermuseum.org).

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In order to create this latest painting, L.F. Tantillo conducted a thorough research study.

"No one living today knows what Fort Good Hope, on the banks of the Connecticut River in Hartford, looked like. Some information can be gleaned from historical accounts but it is quite vague and of little use in definitively representing the physical appearance of the fortification.

So where to begin?"

[Read his fascinating research study here](#)

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NAHC Celebrates Its 18th Anniversary with a New and Updated Website  
Esme E. Berg

NAHC has had a busy year with more to come. Lectures, historic walks, and the continuing development of *Mapping Early New York*, our virtual New Amsterdam project, are some of our activities, but that has not stopped us from looking toward our future with

a beautiful new, modern website, [www.newamsterdamhistorycenter.org](http://www.newamsterdamhistorycenter.org).

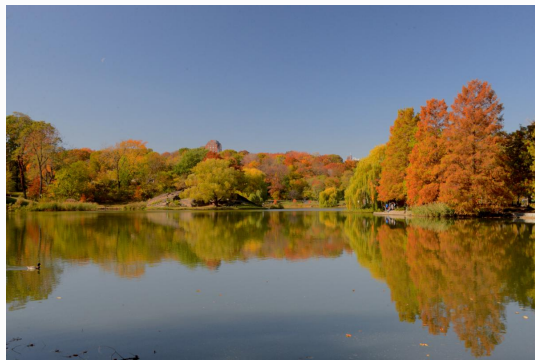
Launching this September, it has a brand-new look and feel, is easily navigable, with all of the rich content we had before still there, enhanced and increased with new articles, book, videos, and more. Take a look at *Mapping Early New York* with its encyclopedia and new 3-D model and see if you can find your Dutch ancestors. Click on a spot on the Castello Plan and see who lived there in the 17<sup>th</sup> century and what they did, all beautifully illustrated. Did you miss our Spring talks on the Vrooman Letters or the Little Ice Age? Well, now you can watch them on our website in the comfort of your home. All NAHC newsletters since 2017 are available for your reading enjoyment. Find learning resources and lesson plans about the history of New Amsterdam.

The New Amsterdam History Center website is the ideal place to begin to learn or further your knowledge about New York when it was New Amsterdam. And, If you think it's all worthwhile, please do click on **Help Us Grow** <https://b74.240.myftpupload.com/help-us-grow/> where you can show your enthusiasm with a tax-deductible contribution that will enable us to continue our work.

We hope you enjoy exploring the new website as much as we enjoyed creating it. We invite you to send us your comments at [events@newamsterdamhistorycenter.org](mailto:events@newamsterdamhistorycenter.org).

NAHC warmly thanks Cynthia Bogart for her inspiration, enthusiasm and hard work that have made the new website possible.

## A Walk in Central Park Ina L. Selden



The Haarlem Meer in the Fall  
Courtesy of the Central Park Conservancy

Not just any park, but Central Park. And not just any part of the park, but the extreme north end, 110<sup>th</sup> to 103<sup>rd</sup>, between Fifth Avenue and Central Park West. And not just with any guide, but Sara Cedar Miller, former official photographer for the Central Park Conservancy and its official historian for 28 years. Sara's latest book, *Before Central Park*, tells the "pre-park" story of the unusual topography of this section of the park and how it played a key role in New York City's history.



\*Flaco, a Eurasian Eagle-Owl, escaped this winter from his cage in the Central Park Zoo. Owl sightings are major events in the City. Flaco is the latest avian celebrity.

One of the first stops on our tour was Fort Clinton, a massive 140- foot-high bedrock outcropping set between the park's two highest points. The panoramic view explains why the hill

On June 6, the New Amsterdam History Center trustees hosted donors, members, and their guests for an hour's walk through a section of the park's 843 square acres rarely explored by its annual 42 million visitors, let alone the city's 8.5 million inhabitants. At every step, we benefited not just from Sara's keen eyes but also her deep knowledge of the landscape and New York City history. Here are highlights from the tour and comments from some of NAHC's guests:

*"Central Park is so often understood as a terrific work of design and landscaping that we lose sight of its natural terrain and how it was used before it became a park. Sara Cedar Miller's tour alerted me to the Park's distant past and how it endures in the present, in everything from rocky outcrops to colonial roads. My future walks in the park will be richer and more rewarding for her tour."*

Robert W. Snyder, Manhattan Borough Historian, Professor Emeritus, Rutgers University.

In 1637, the Walloon De Forest family arrived in New Amsterdam. The family leaders had traveled for years in search of a welcoming place for their fledgling religious community. They chose New Amsterdam for its tradition of Dutch religious toleration. Having lived in Leiden for years they were familiar with Dutch manners and traditions. In 1638 the Dutch West India company granted the De Forests use of acreage at the extreme north end of Manahatta. The land was fertile, flat, and well served by a fresh-water creek.



was strategic for both Washington and the British during the Revolutionary War.

The Black Horse Tavern once stood on the nearby Wickquasgeck Trail. We walked the pass blazed by Indigenous hunters, favored by wild animals, used by both Washington's Continental Army and the British and Hessian troops to conduct offensives and lead retreats.

Yale historian Alan Mikhail, currently writing a book about the family of New Netherland's purported only Muslim resident, observed: "Walking around Central Park with Sara Cedar Miller was like walking around it for the first time. Places one has passed hundreds of times suddenly revealed their Dutch past. Tracing the Wickquasgeck path through what is today McGowan's Pass was especially thrilling. After being unearthed about a decade ago, it is now covered over again, with little indication of what lies beneath. One hopes this site gets the attention it deserves."

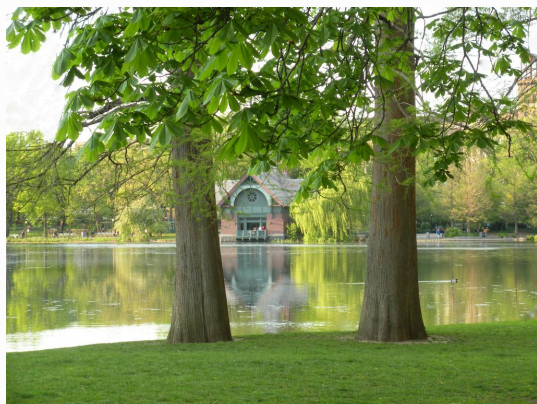
When a water feature on the original itinerary was blocked by construction work, Sara quickly led us to a rocky waterfall. *"Olmsted and Vaux wanted a park for all the people," she said. "The rich could journey to the Adirondacks at will, not a luxury the working class could enjoy. So, they created the Adirondacks in the city."*

Most of our guests that day were native or long-time New Yorkers. But like so much else on our tour, they had little idea that The Mount, a convent, once stood on a hill next to the Harlem Meer.

*"What I enjoyed most was seeing the park through Sara's eyes as a photographer and naturalist. Her acute sense of scale and height at the varying levels of the park terrain enhanced the tour for me. I was able to view the Park through her photographer's eye. The Adirondack waterfall was also news to me – another part of the Park I hadn't known*



Today The Mount refers to one of the park's composting areas. But in 1847 the area was developed and inhabited by the Sisters of Charity of Mount St. Vincent who ran a boarding school on pre-Park land. The Parks Department envisaged the property as a museum, but instead it became a hospital for Union soldiers during the Civil War. A fire destroyed the buildings in 1881. The restaurant was rebuilt and named McGowan's Pass Tavern. Only the stone foundation of the chapel remains as a reminder of the area's rich architectural history.



The Haarlem Meer in the Spring  
Photo courtesy of the Central Park Conservancy

*before, shocking to me as I grew up right across the street! An unexpected treat was catching a glimpse of Flaco\* on a compost pile."*

Joanna Cawley, Executive Director, Carnegie Hill Neighbors, a non-profit dedicated to preserving the residential character and architectural heritage of Carnegie Hill and enhancing quality-of-life programs that maintain the neighborhood as a safe and beautiful place to live.

*"Sara's tour made me feel as if I was stepping back in time as I listened to her descriptions of the life of the early Dutch settlers in its northern part. I will also always remember that walk as the first night the smoke from the Canadian wildfires arrived in NYC. We emerged from the Park into the sepia haze that had descended upon the entire city."*

Barbara McLaughlin, President, Fund for Park Avenue. The Fund is responsible for planting and maintaining the trees and flowers on the Park Avenue Malls between 54th and 86th Streets through and also manages the annual Park Avenue Tree Lighting.

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## Events at a Glance

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SEE WHAT'S COMING THIS FALL





## The Sounds of the City as Heard by Jacob Steendam, the First Poet of New York

### Camerata Trajectina Concert

A Dutch early music ensemble

With narration by Jaap Jacobs

October 11, 2023

6:30 to 8:30 pm

The Morgan Library & Museum

225 Madison Avenue at 36th street

New York City

In this special program, Camerata Trajectina follows in Jacob Steendam's (1616-1672) footsteps and presents Dutch music that once echoed off the walls of the houses of New Amsterdam interspersed with anecdotes and quotes from original sources. This program recreates the soundscape and musical culture of Dutch Manhattan, thus providing a unique perspective on early New York. Composers will include Jacob van Eyck, William Byrd, Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck, and Claude Goudimel, as well as Camerata's own versions of popular folk tunes. Co-presented with the Morgan Library.

This program is funded in part by Dutch Culture, The Consulate General of the Netherlands in New York

[CLICK HERE FOR TICKETS](#)

## New Netherland's Slave Trade

*Origins, Evolution, Impact,*

## Significance

Jaap Jacobs, Dennis Maika, Andrea Mosterman  
with moderator Lavada Nahon

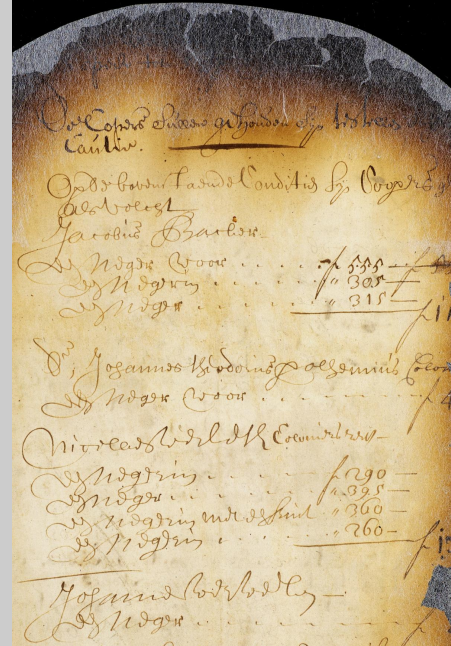
November 15, 2023  
at 6:30 PM

Historians of New Netherland have recently shed new light on the colony's enslaved people: the conditions of their enslavement, the Africans' relationship with their enslavers, and the inner workings of the trade in slaves. This program will introduce the findings of three leading historians whose research challenges various myths and misunderstandings about New Netherland slavery. Jaap Jacobs revises the date that Blacks first arrived in the colony; Andrea Mosterman reveals conditions aboard the slave ship *Gideon*; Dennis Maika probes Dutch merchants' involvement with the slave trade. And much more. The speakers will discuss the implications of their findings for New York history, and for our contemporary debates over slavery's legacy, guided by moderator Lavada Nahon, Interpreter of African American History for the Bureau of Historic Sites, New York State Parks Department.

**This program will be presented  
virtually.**

**Jaap Jacobs** (PhD Leiden, 1999) is an Honorary Research Fellow in History, University of St Andrews, and the 2022-2023 Dr. Ernst Crone Fellow at the National Maritime Museum Amsterdam. His publications on Dutch New York include *The Colony of New Netherland: A Dutch Settlement in Seventeenth-Century America* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009) and "The First Arrival of Enslaved Africans in New Amsterdam," *New York History*, August 2023. He is currently working on a biography of Petrus Stuyvesant.

**Dennis J. Maika** is Senior Historian at the New Netherland Institute. As a specialist on colonial New York with a Ph.D. in history from New York University, he has written numerous articles and papers and served as a consultant for a variety of local history and education



### Translation of document:

*Based on the foregoing conditions, the  
following were purchased:*

*Jacobus Backer – 1 Neger (male) for 550  
guilders; 1 Negrin (female) 305 guilders  
1 Neger 315 guilders (total) 1175 guilders*

*Dominie Johannes Theodorus  
Polhemius, Colonists' account:  
1 Neger for 440 guilders*

*Nicholas Verleth, Colonists' account: 1 Negrin  
for 290 guilders;*

*1 Neger 395 guilders; 1 Negrin and a  
child 360 guilders; 1 Negrin 260 guilders  
(total) 1305 guilders*

*Johannes Verveelen, 1 Neger, 445 guilders*

Original Date May 29 1664; Language Dutch  
Source New York State Archives. New Netherland Council.  
Dutch colonial council minutes, 1638-1665. Series A1809.  
Volume 10.

**Andrea Mosterman** is associate professor in Atlantic History and Joseph Tregle Professor in Early American History at the University of New Orleans. Her book *Spaces of Enslavement: A History of Slavery and Resistance in Dutch New York* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2021) received the 2020 Hendricks Award for best book-length manuscript relating to New Netherland and the Dutch colonial experience. She is currently

projects. His recently published work on New Netherland's slave trade grew from his on-going book project about Manhattan merchants and their city government in the Dutch and English periods of seventeenth-century New York.

REGISTER HERE

researching the voyage of the Dutch slave ship the *Gideon* and the seventeenth-century Dutch Atlantic slave trade with North America.

**Lavada Nahon** is the Interpreter of African American History for the New York State Bureau of Historic Sites and a cultural and culinary historian focused on the 17th-19th centuries mid-Atlantic region. She has 20-plus years of public history experience working with a variety of historic sites, societies, and museums across the tri-state region. Her mission is to bring history to life by giving presence to the Africans and people of African descent enslaved and free in New Netherland/New York.

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## Dutch American Story #3 on NAHC

### New Amsterdam: “What’s in a Name”

by Jaap Jacobs

The small colonial town that the Dutch founded in North America was called New Amsterdam. We now know it as New York City. The story of how the name evolved has many twists and turns and is, in fact, a tale of war and peace.

New Amsterdam was the talk of the town in 1953, as New York City commemorated the 300th anniversary of its city charter. Pomp and circumstance were the order of the day and a special stamp was even issued. In addition, the Peter Minuit Plaza near the Staten Island Ferry Terminal was officially dedicated, and a Dutch royal, Prince Bernhard, arrived to give a speech at St Mark's-in-the-Bowery. Musically, the icing on the cake was provided by the Canadian male quartet The Four Lads, who brought together New Amsterdam, Istanbul (Not Constantinople), and New York City in a song that became their first gold record. New Amsterdam only gets a cameo appearance:

Read More

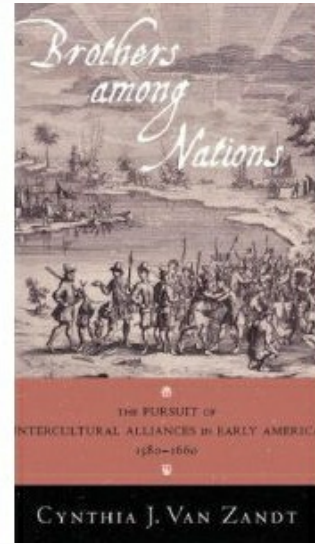
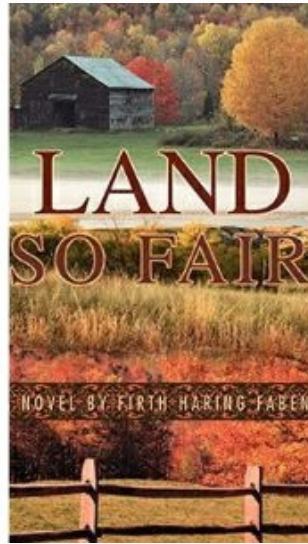
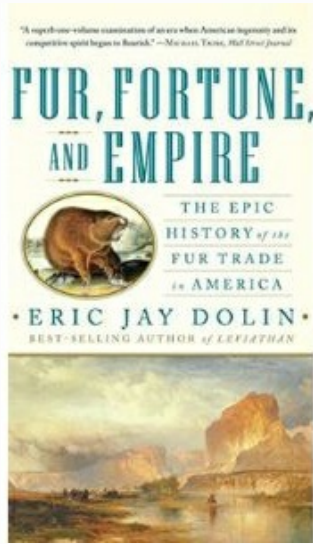
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## In Case You Missed...

All prior Newsletters can be found and reviewed at your leisure [on our website](#).

[Music of Many Worlds, Sephardic Vocal Music of 18th-century Amsterdam](#)

## On Our Reading List



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We want to thank you once again for your annual contributions and gifts. Your continuing support enables us to offer you this newsletter and a broad array of online and in-person programs. If you are not yet a contributor, please consider becoming one this year.

If you would like to help promote and spread the history of the early New York, [please click here](#).

To be a sponsor, email us at: [events@newamsterdamhistorycenter.org](mailto:events@newamsterdamhistorycenter.org).

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