What's NEW at
NEW AMSTERDAM HISTORY CENTER

October, 2026

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A Journey through Dutch History, Art, and the Pilgrim Story

What memorable days in the Netherlands! The New Amsterdam History Center's three-day tour brought together art, architecture, urban landscapes, and inspiring encounters with curators and historians. This cultural trip, undertaken by twelve American and Dutch participants, started in The Hague and culminated with the festive European launch of NAHC's *Mapping Early New York* 3D model of the 1660 Castello Plan of New Amsterdam at the Pilgrim Fathers Church in Delfshaven.

On Tuesday, October 6, 2026, NAHC tour participants gathered in the lobby of the Mauritshuis Museum in The Hague to begin the three-day journey into 17th-century Dutch life and culture. What better place to start than in this magnificent museum, with its outstanding collection of Dutch Golden Age paintings? We were especially fortunate to see Vermeer's *Girl with a Pearl Earring*, freshly returned from a loan in Japan, alongside several Rembrandts and other masterpieces. Our first visit was followed by a convivial lunch in the museum's café.

The afternoon began with a brief orientation on the history of The Hague, presented through maps at the renowned Literary Society "De Witte" by Wim Visée, our knowledgeable tour guide and father of NAHC European Representative Tom Visée. Lead by Wim, we walked through the city's historic heart, enjoying the sights of several royal palaces and monuments, and hearing remarkable, little-known stories that revealed layers of history hidden behind each of them. The day ended with drinks and quintessential Dutch *bitterballen* (croquettes) at De Posthoorn, one of The Hague's oldest taverns, in the elegant setting of the Lange Voorhout.

Walking through historic The Hague with our guide Wim Visée. L to R: Lilian The, Esme Berg, Vanessa Sellers, Wim Visée, Suzanne Gottuso, Richard Gottuso, and Abby Suckle.

The next day, Wednesday, October 7, another unusually sunny, mild autumn day, was spent in Leiden, where we explored the intertwined histories of the Dutch Golden Age and the Pilgrim Fathers. At the Leiden American Pilgrim Museum—housed in the former sexton's quarters of the Pieterskerk—we were welcomed by its enthusiastic director, Sarah Moine. After a brief viewing of the medieval Pieterskerk itself, Sarah took us into the carefully reconstructed Pilgrim Fathers' interiors, pointing out specific 17th-century household items and sharing insights into the lives of these English Separatists who made Leiden their home before embarking on their historic voyage to America.

Sarah Moine explains the history of the Pilgrim Museum, Leiden, and its original 17th-century household items.

Few of us knew that the "Pilgrims" lived in Leiden before setting out for the New World in 1620. From Leiden, they traveled to Delfshaven to board a ship, but when the *Speedwell* began leaking, they had to return to England and transfer to the *Mayflower*, eventually landing at Cape Cod rather than near the Hudson River. A fascinating Dutch-American story and connection! Sarah's tour ended at the charming Jan Pesijn hofje, an almshouse courtyard opposite the Pieterskerk, near where the Pilgrims lived and operated their printing presses.

Lunch at the nearby Hortus Grand Café in the Leiden Botanical Garden (where the tulip was first cultivated in Northern Europe) was followed by a guided walk through the city. With pauses at several monuments, such as De Burcht (a symbol of Leiden), the tour ended at the Lakenhal Museum, housed in the former Leiden Cloth Hall. Its high-quality woolen cloth was shipped to New Amsterdam.

Enjoying the history of Leiden cloth manufacturing in the Lakenhal Museum. L-R: Suzanne Gottuso, Richard Gottuso, Lilian The, Abby Suckle and Esme Berg.

A special stop was made at Rijksmuseum Boerhaave, dedicated to the groundbreaking Dutch history of natural science and medicine, where we admired the replica of Leiden University's anatomical theater. More importantly, Director Jan-Jaap de Haan met us on the square right in front of the museum, where the outline of the demolished *Vrouwekerk* or Church of Our Lady can still be recognized in the stone ground pattern. He discussed the emigration of a large number of Walloon families from this church to New Amsterdam in 1620, a story that needs further research.

Façade of Pilgrim Fathers Church, Delfshaven on the morning of October 8, 2026.

On Thursday, October 8, the grand finale took place in Delfshaven with over 130 people gathering at the *Oude of Pelgrimvaderskerk* or Pilgrim Fathers Church with the launch of the 3D model of the 1660 Castello Plan of New Amsterdam. The New Amsterdam History Center was represented by Executive Director Esme Berg, European Representative Tom Visée, and Vice President and *Mapping Early New York* Director Vanessa Bezemer Sellers.

Eduard van Dijk, 3D modeler of the Castello Plan of New Amsterdam, with Sietze Vermeulen, Daniel Kanigan, Vanessa Sellers, Esme Berg, Abby Suckle in the Pilgrim Fathers Church. Photo by: ©MartensMedia.nl

An introduction by Sicco de Vries and Marjan van Schijndel, Program Director and Secretary of the Friends of the Old or Pilgrim Fathers Church, was followed by two fascinating talks by Vanessa Sellers and Alexandra van Dongen, Curator at Museum Boijmans Van Beuningen. Vanessa introduced the 3D model of the Castello Plan and talked about its history and how it came to fruition with the help of the *Mapping Early New York* team, especially creative 3D modeler Eduard van Dijk. Daniel Kanigan, Cultural Attaché at the U.S. Embassy in the Netherlands, officially opened the exhibition by pressing a button, highlighting the longstanding friendship between our countries and the importance of continued historical dialogue.

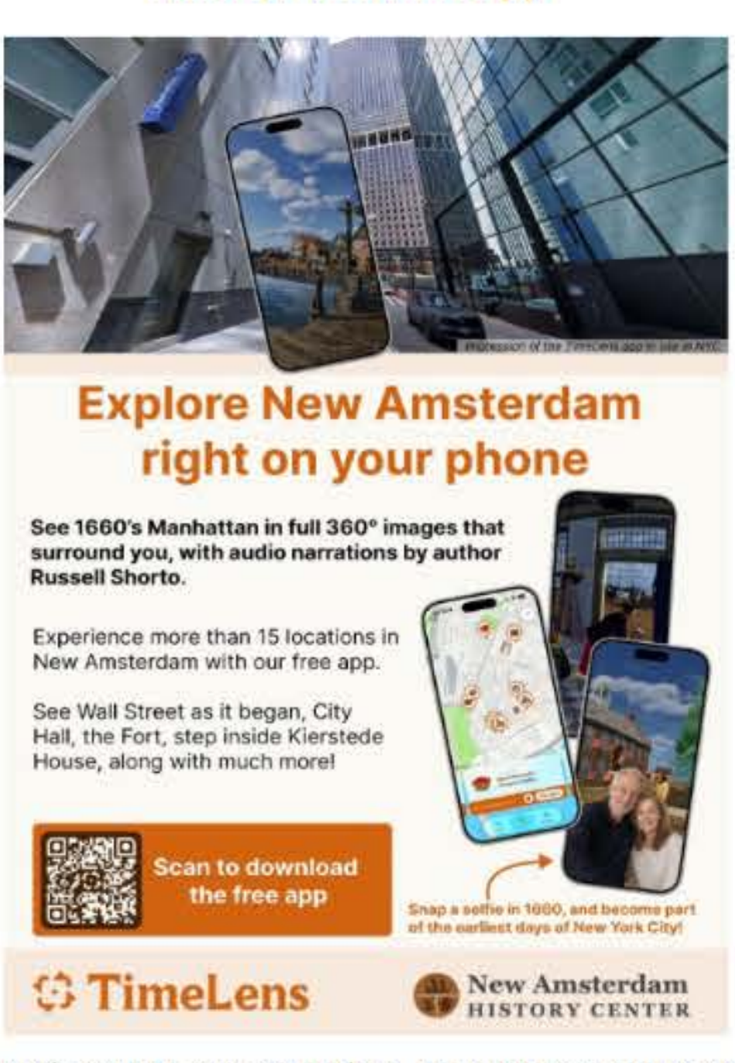
Cultural Attaché Daniel Kanigan pushes the red button to open the exhibit. L to R: Sicco de Vries, Alexandra van Dongen, Daniel Kanigan, Vanessa Sellers, Marjan van Schijndel. Photo by: ©MartensMedia.nl

NAHC 3D modeler Eduard van Dijk presents 3D model of New Amsterdam at Pascal Institute

On October 23, NAHC's 3D modeler Eduard van Dijk presented the *Mapping Early New York* 3D model of New Amsterdam at the Pascal Institute in Leiden, showcasing the digital reconstruction of the 17th-century city. His demonstration followed a talk by Geerten Waling about his book Amerika, dat zijn wij (America, that is Us), which connected with the previous day's online discussion between Waling and Russell Shorto for the New York Historical. Among those attending in Leiden was Daniel Kanigan, Cultural Attaché at the U.S. Embassy in the Netherlands, who had opened NAHC's *Mapping Early New York* exhibition in historic Delfshaven on October 8, and now greeted Eduard again!

TimeLens Launch

New Amsterdam Comes to Life: NAHC and TimeLens Launch the Phone App



Explore New Amsterdam right on your phone

See 1660's Manhattan in full 360° images that surround you, with audio narrations by author Russell Shorto.

Experience more than 15 locations in New Amsterdam with our free app.

See Wall Street as it began, City Hall, the Fort, step inside Kierstede House, along with much more!

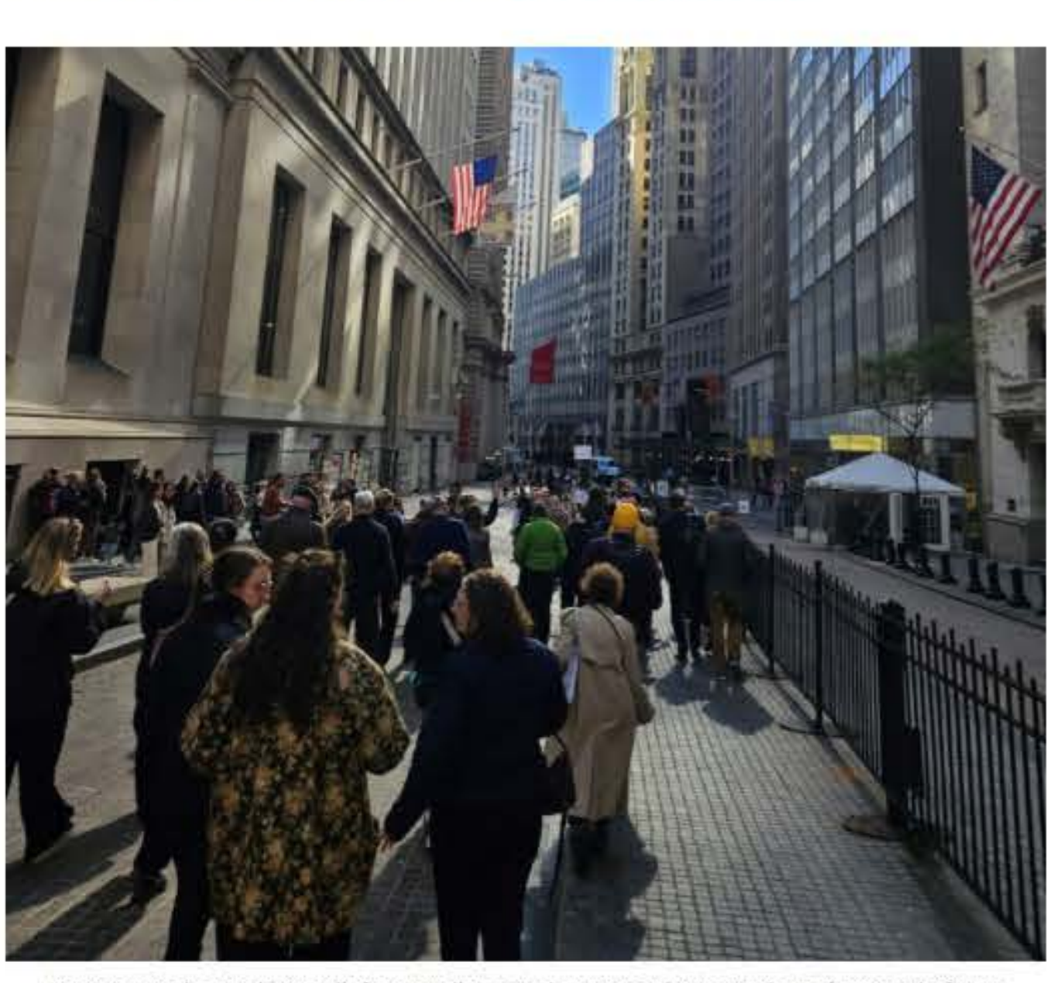
Scan to download the free app

Snap a selfie in 1660, and become part of the earliest days of New York City!

TimeLens

New Amsterdam HISTORY CENTER

It was a fantastic launch, full of surprises, as about 150 people gathered in Lower Manhattan on October 22 to experience New Amsterdam as it looked in 1660, using the innovative TimeLens phone app.



Participants begin their walk from Wall Street down Broad Street, where the Canal of New Amsterdam once ran.

With their phones in hand, participants followed a walking route connecting 15 historic locations, beginning at the New York Stock Exchange, at the Company Garden near today's Trinity Church and Wall Street, continuing down Broad Street, where the Canal once ran, and passing the House of the Enslaved Workers and City Hall before reaching the Docks, the Kierstede House, and Stuyvesant's Home. The route continued to the Fort, Bowling Green, and Broadway.

Along the way, the walkers were thrilled to see the bustling streets, historic buildings, gardens, and waterways of New Amsterdam come to life through immersive 360° reconstructions at each stop—right in the palm of their hands! And they could also listen to an explanation of the significance of each location, narrated by New Netherland historian Russell Shorto.

"It is crazy to be able to compare the hustle and bustle of New Amsterdam then with New York now," exclaimed one participant. Others seized the opportunity to take a selfie in the past!

Jersey City historian Jerome Choice makes a selfie in front of the House of Enslaved Workers, today South William Street.

The successful launch was made possible by the close collaboration of Vanessa Bezemer Sellers, Eduard van Dijk, and Toya Dubin of the New Amsterdam History Center's *Mapping Early New York* team, working hand in hand with Jason and Ilias Halbgewachs of the Amsterdam-based TimeLens team.

Michael Cavanaugh and Jason Halbgewachs meet at the launch and compare experiences.

Several NAHC trustees joined the launch, including President Michael Cavanaugh, Executive Director Esme Berg, and Allen Hirsch.

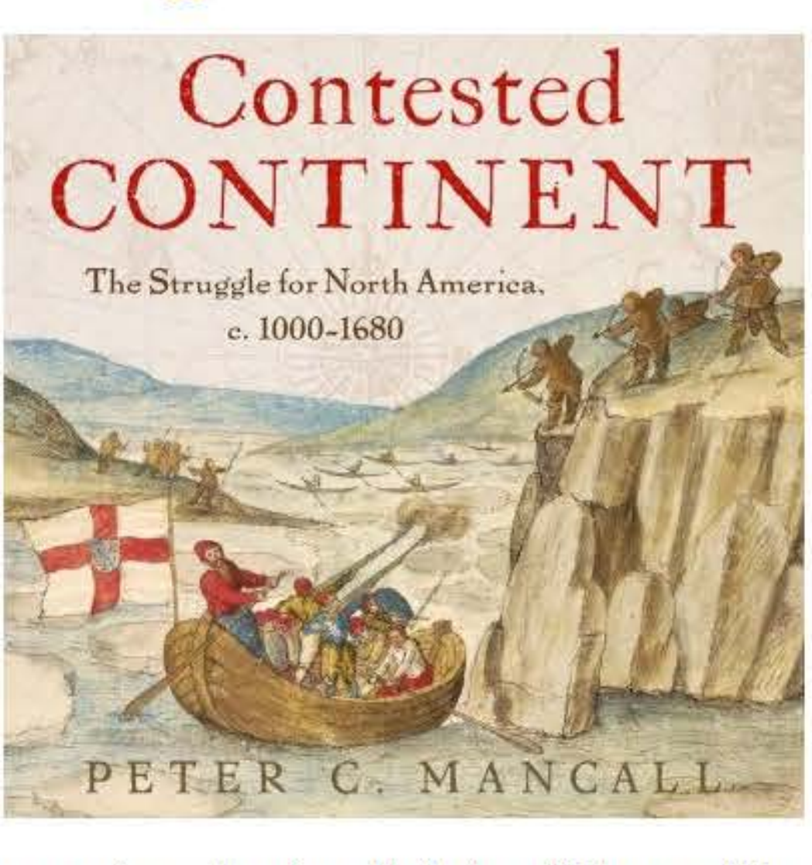
After the walk, participants gathered at the historic Fraunces Tavern to share their experiences over a beer. The enthusiastic response was clear: the app offers a wonderful and exciting way to bring New York's early history to life in the city of today! So next time you're in Lower Manhattan, download the TimeLens phone app and let it take you on your own walking tour of 17th-century New Amsterdam.

Jason Halbgewachs, Toya Dubin, and Vanessa Sellers greet participants.

NAHC BOOK TALK SERIES

Peter C. Mancall

Contested Continent: The Struggle for North America, 1000-1680



More than seventy people gathered in the beautiful lounge at the Netherland Club in midtown Manhattan on October 27th to listen to a fascinating and in-depth talk by Professor Peter C. Mancall about his recent book, *Contested Continent: The Struggle for North America, 1000-1680.* This latest entry in the NAHC Book Talk Series was illustrated with numerous maps, contemporaneous etchings, and other images. It was enhanced by comments from NYU Professor Susanah Romney, who joined Prof. Mancall in a conversation about the forces that shaped North America as we know it

Prof. Mancall began by emphasizing his date span, intentionally ending his book in 1680, and the many conflicts that underlined the stubborn struggle to master the continent almost two centuries after Columbus's first voyage across the Atlantic. His initial focus was on the indigenous peoples of North America, whose large populations and complex, dynamic cultures were radically transformed by the trajectory of the expansion from Europe, beginning in the year 1000 with the arrival of Norse explorers.

This view of history differs from others espoused in the past few centuries, such as "manifest destiny" or the "Columbian exchange." Professor Mancall explained how North America was created from the experiences, both positive and negative, of millions of people, Indigenous, African, and European. He summarized the negative effects of the European colonization on the native people, from disease to wars to displacement from their lands, as well as on enslaved involuntary immigrants from Africa. Professor Romney emphasized the role of the Dutch colonists during the 17th century. By viewing early American history in this time frame, and from a broader geographic perspective, Professor Mancall argued that the ultimate European domination over North America was not inevitable.

During the concluding Q & A session, members of the audience—including Anousha Nzume from the Dutch Consulate General's Dutch Culture USA—asked questions and offered comments on a range of topics, from early indigenous migration patterns to historians' use of primary and secondary sources.

We warmly thank the Netherland Club for hosting this event.

NAHC Student Internships

Summer 2026

During the summer of 2026, the New Amsterdam History Center hosted three college students as virtual interns. The three students, now sophomores and juniors majoring or double-majoring in history, were recruited with the help of the Alumni Affairs Director at the Collegiate School in New York City. Collegiate is a K–12 school that traces its origins to the Dutch Reformed Church in New Amsterdam, and that will mark its 400th anniversary in 2028.

Under the guidance of NAHC trustees Esme Berg, Sandra Lazo, and Vanessa Sellers, the interns were introduced to the history of New Amsterdam and New Netherland, as well as to NAHC's work. Each then identified several possible research topics that interested him. Over six or seven weeks, they met with the trustees about once a week over Zoom and consulted by email as needed. These conversations helped them refine their topics, identify primary and secondary sources, and shape their projects. Ultimately, they contributed valuable research and creative work, producing several essays for the *Mapping Early New York* Encyclopedia and one short film—the first in our new series, *In a New Amsterdam Minute*, featuring concise, engaging public-history videos.

The students demonstrated strong research and writing skills and a genuine interest in early American history. Their work helped to expand NAHC's research resources and advanced our goal of making New Amsterdam's history better understood and more accessible to a wider audience. We hope they will be the first class in a continuing NAHC Scholars Circle.

Vanessa Sellers, Peter Burns, Alexander Goldin, Michael Cavanaugh, Zachary Blackston, and Sandra Lazo.

UPCOMING EVENT

TUESDAY, FEB. 9, 2027

Cultivating New Amsterdam Gardens, Plants, and the Dutch Atlantic

A talk by Jonas Danen · 6:30–8:00 pm · Virtual on Zoom

DETAILS

Download the TimeLens app to your phone and you can 'visit' New Amsterdam from anywhere in the world while listening to evocative audio sounds and Russell Shorto's narrations.

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