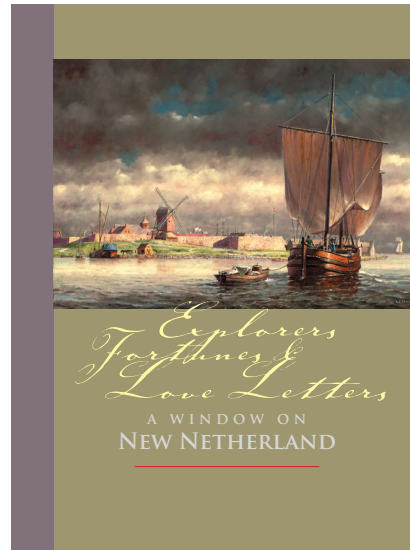


Explorers Fortunes & Love Letters

A WINDOW ON NEW NETHERLAND

“Without being aware of it, the inhabitants of New Netherland helped to spawn something new. We are their heirs, their future. They are our fathers and mothers. I can’t think of a grander achievement for a historical venture than to kindle the awareness of such a familial connection between the present and a forgotten moment in the past.”

—Russell Shorto, from his essay entitled
“Three Conversations”



IN 1609 THE SAILORS ABOARD HENRY HUDSON’S SHIP THE *HALF MOON* laid their eyes upon the entrance to what would come to be known as the Hudson River and the shores of a land that still remained mostly a mystery to European explorers. Within fifteen years the Dutch began to settle this newly discovered land, creating the colony of New Netherland and bringing with them not only their belongings but also their culture and customs, their hopes and dreams.

Today, four hundred years later, the influence of the Dutch still remains in America. *Explorers, Fortunes and Love Letters: A Window on New Netherland* presents the fascinating story of this diverse and enterprising colony and its enduring cultural impact. The twelve essays in the book cover a wide array of topics and historical perspectives, immersing the reader in the day-to-day life of the settlers and tracing the influence of the Dutch from the seventeenth century to the present. These topics range from Henry Hudson’s navigational methods, the pursuit of fortune in the New World, child-rearing practices, and the love letters of Kiliaen van Rensselaer to the interactions between Dutch settlers and the Mohawks, Jews, and barber-surgeons in New Netherland. Other essays cover the transformation of St. Nicholas into Santa Claus, the significance of bread baking, New York factional politics, and why New Netherland matters today.

Readers will find this compilation brimming with fresh and varied perspectives on the origins of American culture and society, opening many truly new windows on the colony of New Netherland.

MARTHA DICKINSON SHATTUCK is the editor of *Explorers, Fortunes and Love Letters: A Window on New Netherland*. She received her Ph.D. from Boston University and has been an editor and researcher with the New Netherland Project since 1988.

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