

New Netherland Claimed

September 11, 1609

The Dutch colony of New Netherlands was established in 1609, two years after the English Colony at Jamestown, Virginia, by the Dutch East India Company. They hired the English explorer, Henry Hudson to find a Northeast Passage to India. After searching for a route around Norway, Hudson turned west hoping to discover a “Northwest Passage” above North America. After arriving off the coast of Cape Cod, Hudson sailed southwest along the coast and entered the mouth of a long north-south river. Of course, this would become known as the Hudson River. He made his way to present day Albany, however, the river became too shallow for his ships to continue any farther north. So, he returned to Europe and claimed the entire Hudson River valley for Holland and the Dutch East India Company.

Although the Dutch only controlled this valley from 1609 to 1664 – after which the English took control of the area – Dutch merchants associated with the Dutch East India Company and the later established West India Company establish New Netherlands as a series of trading posts, towns and forts up and down the Hudson River. Fort Orange was the northernmost town, which is present day Albany, and New Amsterdam – now New York – was the southernmost settlement.