

New Netherlands Settled May 1624

The first settlers in New Netherlands arrived on Noten Eylandt (Nut or Nutten Island, now Governors Island) aboard the ship *New Netherlands* in May 1624 following Henry Hudson's 1609 voyage that discovered the eponymous river. The settlement was under the purview of the Dutch West India Company that had been formed in 1621 by the Dutch government to establish and manage the colony after several previous, private attempts failed.

The settlement included thirty families who took legal possession of the New Netherlands territory. Due to concerns about attack from other European colonial powers, the Dutch West India company directed the settlers to move to Manhattan Island, at the mouth of the Hudson River, where Fort Amsterdam was being built at the direction of Willem Verhulst, the Dutch West India company director-general (the fort also served to protect Dutch interests from native American conflicts during this time). The fort served as the center of trading activity. It contained a barracks, the church, a house for the West India Company director and a warehouse for the storage of company goods.

Verhulst was replaced by Peter Minuit, who later founded the New Sweden Colony in the late 1630's, thus continuing the activities of many European mercenaries who worked for whatever country paid the highest price. Minuit was in his early 30s and had been sent to diversify the trade coming out of New Netherlands, then almost exclusively animal pelts. Historian Nathaniel Benchley, quoted in *How the Dutch Actually bought Manhattan*, believes Minuit negotiated the "purchase" of Manhattan Island from the Canarsees, a Lenape tribe principally located in south Brooklyn, led by Chief Seyseys. The purchase was negotiated to legally safeguard the settlers' investments, possessions and farms on the island.

Moving forward, New Netherlands expanded by means of additional purchases from and conflicts with the natives; conflicts with other European powers; and opening the colony to other private Dutch interests through the relinquishment of the Dutch West India monopoly. So, by 1664, the population of New Netherlands had grown to 9000 people who occupied territory from New Amsterdam all the way up to Albany, Orange, New Jersey, and Burlington Island in the Delaware River. The Dutch fully relinquished New Netherlands to the English in 1667 following the Treaty of Breda ending the Second Anglo-Dutch War.