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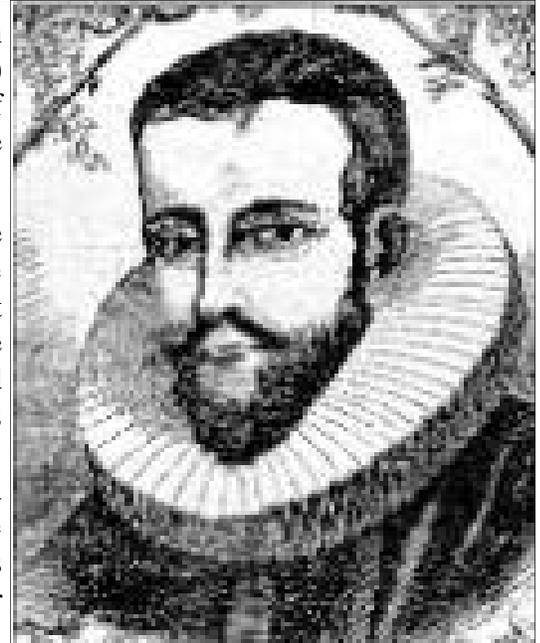
The next two years will be a very exciting time to be a Dutch descendant as we celebrate in 2009 the quadricentennial (400 years) of the arrival of Hendrick Hudson on our shores and the founding of New Netherland. For details on the plans for the celebration see <http://www.henryhudson400.com/>

Hendrick (or Henry) Hudson (1565-1611) was actually English, the grandson of a wealthy London alderman. The 1609 voyage which we will be celebrating was Hudson's third voyage to find the Northwest Passage around North America to the Orient. The first two were financed by an English trading company and were done in 1607 and 1608. They would not back another voyage because of Hudson's inability to discover the Northwest Passage on the previous two trips. Luckily for the Dutch in 1609 he was chosen by the Dutch East India Company to make the trip. He was given an old small ship the Halve Maen (or Half Moon) which carried a crew of twenty. The backers told Hudson that if he had any complaints they would find another Captain.

After starting out again in a northerly route he instead turned south to Virginia and went up the coast, entering the Hudson River in September 1609 claiming the land for Holland. He continued on to Albany before turning back south. In November 1609 he sailed the Halve Maen into Dartmouth in England but was arrested for sailing under the Dutch flag and was forbidden to continue 'voyaging to the detriment of his country.' The Halve Maen was eventually returned to Holland but Hudson never returned to Holland himself.

Hudson made one further voyage of discovery: in 1610 he again sailed for the English this time reaching the Hudson Strait and James Bay. After becoming stuck in the ice and being forced to winter over in the Arctic, come the spring, Hudson still wanted to continue exploring. Most of his crew thought otherwise and set him, his son John and eight loyal crew members adrift; he was never heard from again.

The lower Hudson valley and the islands of New York harbor were unique in North America. Burrows and Wallace in "Gotham," their 1999 history of New York City, describe the "sweetness in the air" of the region when Hudson arrived. Every Spring the hills and fields were dyed red with ripening strawberries and twelve-inch oysters and six-foot lobsters crowded the waters. Birds were so numerous that a hunter bagged 170 Blackbirds with a single shot. It was a place that the Dutch poet Jacob Steendam compared to Eden.



An artist's drawing of a young Henry Hudson in 1609.
Courtesy: Harper's New Monthly Magazine.

The Dutch were certainly fortunate to have engaged a brave and intrepid man such as Henry Hudson.

Thomas J. Blauvelt, President

The ABD will take part in the celebration.

We hope to see YOU at the Quadricentennial!