HOMELINESS AND WORLDLINESS:
MATERIALITY AND THE MAKING OF NEW NETHERLAND, 1609-1740

by

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Abstract

This study examines the role of things in the making of New Netherland in the seventeenth century and the formation of New York in the early eighteenth century. With an attention to the translations of form and transculturations of meaning for objects, which have often led peripatetic lives, I focus on previously marginalized crafts and everyday objects like books, tea tables, chairs, hearth tiles, and other domestic goods found in peoples’ homes, to describe the way things connected people and places in early modern Dutch trade networks. Through a careful analysis of objects of material culture and depictions of material culture I focus on how the colony was physically constructed and ideologically imagined internally by the colonists and externally by other interested parties throughout Atlantic world.

My research on the making, circulation, and consumption of things in and from New Netherland develops intersecting narratives of the past, some of them regional and localized, others cross-cultural, transnational, and global. By connecting artifacts, objects, and things to larger narratives it is possible to write a new history of materiality and the making of New Netherland, primarily in the seventeenth century but also in later histories. In what follows, through the examination of increasingly mobile and hybrid material cultures in the Dutch Republic and New Netherland, I demonstrate that just like materialism and morality, worldliness and homeliness were not binary constructs, but mutually constructive and inextricably intertwined in the oud and nieuw Netherlands.
Acknowledgements

This thesis is about the connections made between people, places, and things. Accordingly, over the last five years my interest in pots, pans, maps, prints, and other things has taken me across North America and Europe and connected me to many inspiring people. First and foremost I would like to thank my supervisors Stephanie Dickey and Janice Helland for their insight, support, and advice. Personally and professionally I have learned a tremendous amount from each of them.

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and their host of knowledgeable volunteers were generous with their time and expertise. Undoubtedly one of the highlights of my research trips was the trek to Kinderhook to meet with Roderic Blackburn and Ruth Piwonka. Ruth welcomed me into her home, shared her knowledge and her collection of things that would rival many museums’ holdings and for this I am very grateful.

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I am eternally grateful for my parents John and Kellie. In their own way both of them have inspired me to value both the homely and the worldly. I absolutely could not
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After the initial research was done I went home to finish writing this dissertation. Far from New Netherland and even further from the Netherlands I was struck by how my grandparents continued Dutch traditions in their North Delta home. In their sunny dinning room cobalt blue Delft vases were neatly placed above their cupboard. A Turkish rug was draped on the dining room table and a lepel rack housed their collection of decorative spoons. My grandmother Betty had left the Netherlands as a young woman and brought the *wooncultuur* with her. She and my other grandmother Violet were *goede vrouw* in every sense of the term. Last summer, while I was working on this project both my grandmothers passed away. I would like to dedicate my study to them.
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Several years ago a cutlery set surfaced amongst the holdings of an antiques dealer in Cape Town, South Africa (Fig. 1.1). Very little was known of the utensils’ production or provenance: the pair was what archaeologist James Deetz has called “seemingly little and insignificant things that accumulate to make a life.”\(^1\) Measuring just over sixteen centimetres and made from silver, the spoon was constructed of a hammered bowl soldered to a separately cast stem with a decorated finial. Formed in a similar manner, the fork had an identical stem and finial, and three flat, inward curving tines. These objects did not have significant signs of wear, for example to the tips of the tines or bowl, indicating that they were used lightly if at all. Unlike many other “insignificant things” this lepel (spoon) and vork (fork) contained invaluable clues about their history and ownership. The reverse of the middle fork tine and the back of the spoon’s bowl were both engraved: “Sara Lewes Obijt 7 Junij 1672” translating to “Sara Lewes, died 7 June 1672” (Fig.1.2).\(^2\) Although not definitive, this inscription may have linked the set to a woman living in North America during a time when the Dutch established trade posts throughout the world.

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1 James Deetz, *In Small Things Forgotten: the Archaeology of Early American Life* (New York: Anchor
2 Recently London silver dealer and historic cutlery expert Daniel Bexfield examined the Lewes set. His scrutiny revealed that although there is a crude solder repair to the stem of the fork, both objects display a patina characteristic of a seventeenth century dating. He also concluded that the engraving on the items is undoubtedly by the same hand, and that the *vork* and *lepel* date to roughly the same time as they were engraved. Bexfield saw no indication that the fork had been converted from a spoon or reconfigured in any other way. Alena Buis and Kevin Brown, “Trifling Things: The Sara Lewes Memorial *Lepel* and *Vork*,” *Dutch Crossing*, 36, no. 3 (November 2012): 192-215.
This dissertation is about seemingly insignificant things like this cutlery set that when accumulated help define New Netherland. In what follows I focus on the materiality shaping the colony from early European explorations in 1609 to the waning of Dutch influence in the mid-1750s. By focussing on previously marginalized crafts and everyday objects like books, tea tables, chairs, hearth tiles, and other domestic goods found in peoples’ homes, I describe the way things connected people and places in early modern Dutch trade networks.

In her ground-breaking work on the power of things to tell stories, historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich argues: “To focus on furniture without considering the broader consumption patterns of ordinary households is to leave out a vital part of the story; to think about consumption without considering the social context in which tables, chairs, chests, blankets, petticoats, and pots were acquired is to divorce objects from the human relations that gave them value.” When placed in a larger social context requiring “the recovery of the unspoken assumptions that animated ordinary life,” the Lewes cutlery set does precisely what Ulrich suggests: it “speaks about gender, family, literacy, gentility, and even mortality. It teaches us to look at the way objects are used, reused, inherited, and remembered, as well as at how they are made.”³ The Lewes vork and lepel can serve as an introductory case study for how two specific objects may have been created, displayed, coveted, and used in early modern trade networks. This specific example also

provides an opportunity to review the literature and state of research on the material culture of New Netherland and the theoretical frameworks within which it has been examined.

Like many other examples of domestic material culture there is little conclusive evidence identifying the maker, original owners, or subsequent provenance of the set. These utensils, however, serve as a starting point to introduce the questions I wish to explore about the cross-cultural life of things in early modern trade networks. With attention to the translations of form and transculturations of meaning for such objects, which have often led peripatetic lives, this dissertation examines the role of things in the making of New Netherland in the seventeenth century and the formation of New York in the early eighteenth century. Through a careful analysis of objects of material culture and depictions of material culture I focus on how the colony was physically constructed and ideologically imagined internally by colonists and externally by other interested parties throughout the Atlantic world.⁴

Like many of the other objects I am interested in, the Lewes set demonstrates how as Angela VanhaeLEN and Bronwen Wilson suggest, “things are inextricable from the networks of people, spaces, institutions and technologies that are brought together in their material forms.”⁵ Without a maker’s mark the spoon and fork are difficult to attribute to a particular silversmith. The lack of assay marks suggests that the set was made outside

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of the Dutch Republic’s heavily regulated guild system. Where then might items with the Dutch language inscription “Obijt 7 Junij 1672” have been made? The several possible answers to this question all speak to the global reach of the trade networks established in what is now thought of as the gouden eeuw (Golden Age) of Dutch commercial enterprise. According to Dirk Jan Biemond of the Rijksmuseum, because of the lepel and vork’s typical form, but absence of identification, the Lewes set may have been made in the Dutch colonies of South Africa, Ceylon, Indonesia, the Coromandel Peninsula or the Americas where Dutch silversmiths lived and worked.

Who then was the Sara Lewes memorialised in the inscription? Even at the height of European expansion, far more men than women ventured overseas and of those women who did travel abroad, very few documentary records remain. Furthermore, the narratives that have contributed to the history of Dutch colonial expansion have traditionally privileged masculine voices. Biographies of significant merchants and directors, economic treatises and political accounts have reinforced stereotypes about what Ulrich has called “the invisibility and the innate decorum of the female sex.” These assumptions have left the local and domestic contributions of women unrecorded. It is not surprising that research to date has not uncovered traces of Lewes. Initial searches

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turned up nothing to suggest a woman by the name of Sara Lewes in Cape Town archives. Similar investigations have not yet identified a Sara Lewes in the Dutch East Indies. However one possible answer draws us to the opposite reaches of the seventeenth-century Dutch global empire: the North American colony of New Netherland.

Archival research has uncovered a Sara Lieuwes in the records of the Dutch Reformed Church of Leeuwarden. She was baptised in the small town in the northern province of Friesland on 28 April 1643. Thirteen months earlier a Sytske Lieuwes appeared in the baptismal records, on 23 March 1642; and given the small size of Leeuwarden, a sparsely populated provincial centre at that time, there is a powerful inference from these dates that Sytske and Sara were sisters. On 28 September 1662, Sytske married Gerrit Hendrix, who had also been baptised in the Leeuwarden Reformed Church, on 25 June 1643. Sytske and Gerrit later immigrated to New Netherland where he first appeared in records as “de Wees” or with the patronymic “Hendrickszen.”

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12 “Gerrijt Hendrix, from Amsterdam, and Sijtske Liuwes, in this town, banns proclaimed for the first time on 14 September 1662, for the second time ditto, for the third time 28 ditto, and on the same date [they] were married.” Curtis Dewees and Jack C. Vaughan, “Gerrit Hendricks de Wees: 17th Century Dutch Immigrant to New Amsterdam” New York Genealogical and Biographical Record 125, no. 1 (January 1994): 1-7.
two surfaced in a variety of New York City documents including nine baptismal entries in the records of the Reformed Dutch Church ranging from 1664 to 1682 where they are listed as Gerrit Hendrickszen and Sytske Lievens, or its variations Tietie, Aefje or Sytie.

Did Sara Lewes join her sister and brother-in-law in the New World? She might have died in New York and this cutlery set is the only surviving record of her presence there. Passenger lists do not record her journey, but these records are incomplete. In contrast to her often-recorded sister, the lack of documentary evidence from church records suggests Lewes may have remained home, in patria. Throughout this dissertation I use patria or the Dutch “Fatherland” to refer not just to the nation state of the United Provinces, but a broadly defined Northern European “homeland” that served as the main “point of origin” and “center of reception,” in the establishment of New Netherland.

The steady stream of people and things across the Atlantic Ocean enabled communication between families divided by the colonial careers of those who left Europe. With the global reach of the Dutch East India Company (Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie or VOC) and Dutch West India Company (West Indische Compagnie or WIC), Sara and Sytske Lewes would have been but two among many examples of the increasingly global interactions of family life altered by the dynamics of migration. At a time when “a series of liminal zones where patterns of family life responded to the arrival and departure of

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13 Many of these records no longer exist, but even if they did, they may not be of any use for it was common practice not to document those who had already paid their fare. Charles Gehring, “Wringing Information from a Drowned Princess: Using the Notarial Records of Amsterdam for Historical Research,” A Beautiful and Fruitful Place Selected Rensselaerswijck Seminar Papers Vol. 2, eds. Elisabeth Paling Funk and Martha Dickinson Shattuck (Albany: New Netherland Publishing, 1991), 131-134.

migrants,” distance would not have prevented Sytske from memorialising her sister Sara’s death by following usual Dutch customs. Upon hearing of her sister’s death, she may have had this set made in New York to mark her bereavement, even though Sara may have died in Leeuwarden, across the Atlantic. Lewes’s grief-stricken sister might have commissioned a local New York silversmith to create the lepel and vork. Or she may have requested the engraving of the text in New York on a set perhaps made somewhere else, perhaps in Batavia, and then later carried to Nieuw Amsterdam as personal property aboard a Dutch ship.

The well-documented Dutch trading empire of the seventeenth century was truly “seaborne.” In 1639, Dutch poet Joost van Vondel (1587-1679) patriotically claimed, “Wherever profit leads us, to every sea and shore, for love of gain the wide world’s harbours we explore.” The politician and popular moralist Jacob Cats (1577-1660), in a similar vein, praised “Everything the [that] Heaven sends, or grows out of the earth, that

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comes to us by sea imported into our harbours.”

Dutch fleets sailed from ports like Rotterdam and Amsterdam to Batavia, Dejima, Ceylon, Cape Colony, Malacca, Canton, Formosa and other places to the east as well as to Western Africa and the Americas and traded their diverse cargos for whatever would turn them the best profit. On their voyages they transported spices, lumber, cloth, precious metals and herring around the globe. But these ships carried more than just bulk goods. They also transported objects crafted in the Dutch manner and by this means they conveyed, in cabins and in cargo holds, the latest and most fashionable decorative art styles. The peripatetic trading of the WIC and the VOC in the seventeenth century therefore had an under-considered secondary effect: it made Dutch material culture global in reach and scope.

Considered the world’s first joint stock conglomerate, the VOC was also the largest shipping and trading enterprise of the seventeenth century. Officially founded in 1602 when the States General awarded the company a monopoly on Asian trade, it sailed

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almost five thousand ships and employed over one million people both in the Dutch Republic and overseas. Nearly twenty years later the WIC was established to maintain a similar Dutch primacy in Atlantic trade. In 1621, the same year the Dutch truce with Spain and Portugal ended, the States General gave the company jurisdiction over the African slave trade, Caribbean plantations, and North American commodities along with the potential for a western route to Asia. 21 Drastically altering the material culture of trade, these two companies were responsible for the formation of new identities, altered forms of communication and the intersection of representational practices that occurred in the contact zones of early modern exchange networks throughout the world. 22

The Dutch companies’ complex and constantly evolving trading relationships served to forge a globalised material culture that generated a stylistic dialogue between


patria and the colonial production centres on the peripheries of the empire.\textsuperscript{23} Produced under the auspices of Dutch trade and consumed by VOC merchants the silverware created in these networks is often referred to as “VOC silver” or “Company silver.”\textsuperscript{24} To facilitate the production of such goods Batavia, the VOC headquarters in the East, had a designated section known as the \textit{ambachtswartier} or artisan quarters. Initially these \textit{ambachtslieden}, or skilled workers, were involved in outfitting the ships as carpenters, caulkers and riggers, but eventually all industrial crafts were represented. From 1682 onwards the quarter included furniture makers, blacksmiths, locksmiths, armorers, glaziers, cobblers, tailors, dyers, jewellers, and others producing goods for use in the colony as well as for shipment back to Europe. By 1759 there were over four hundred European makers and considerably more African and Asian workers with varying degrees of indenture. In Coromandel and Ceylon and some of the other factories in larger Dutch settlements the VOC and WIC developed their own \textit{ambachtswartier}, but those in Batavia were the most developed and housed the widest range of skills.\textsuperscript{25}

Silver objects made in the \textit{ambachtswartier} often displayed secondary decorative motifs derived from Ceylonese, or Indian, or Malaccan artisans and design sources.


\textsuperscript{25} Monique van de Geijn-Verhoeven, Titus Eliëns and Paul Regeer, \textit{Wonen op de Kaap en in Batavia 1602–1795} (Zwolle: Waanders, 2002). Boxer, \textit{The Dutch Seaborne Empire}, 213.
Resident makers likely also worked outside of Dutch economic spheres now and again, and so were influenced by yet other design canons. According to Marybeth De Filippis, the objects created in this diverse community combined many different techniques, styles and visual forms that featured Chinese and Islamic motifs more frequently than Dutch ones for they were modelled on luxury goods from patria but also incorporated design details from local sources.  

Hybrid things, these objects were then carried from place to place aboard Dutch trading vessels, and inspired imitations by colonial makers throughout the Dutch Empire.

Mobile and transnational Batavian silver objects are just one example of the globalising effect that the seventeenth-century Dutch trading enterprise, and its on-going shipment of goods and things, had on forms of material culture and on decorative art styles throughout the VOC and WIC trading networks and the Dutch Empire.

Due in part to the rapid expansion of global trading networks in the early 1600s, a consumption revolution occurred in Europe in the later part of that century, which led to the creation of new forms in material culture. Novel furnishings, appliances and utensils proliferated in the service of everyday life. These were designed and made for the domestic consumption of newly available commodities flowing from global trade like

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27 My use of “hybrid” to describe these objects is informed by Annie Coombes, “The Recalcitrant Object: Cultural Contact and the Question of Hybridity,” Colonial Discourse/Postcolonial Theory, eds. Francis Barker, Peter Hulme and Margaret Iversen (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1994), 89–113.

spices, coffee, tea and tobacco.\textsuperscript{29} Europe’s innovative makers were prompt to provide the vessels and utensils called for by these new markets.\textsuperscript{30} Teapots and teaspoons, smoking pipes, sugar snips, coffee and nutmeg grinders and other items related to the consumption of new products also served as markers of the sophistication and privileged economic participation of a newly emergent global consumer class in Europe.

Along with other goods from around the world, VOC silver appeared in colonial New Netherland and later on in New York, again demonstrating the reach, interconnection, and efficiency of WIC and VOC trade routes across the expanse of the Dutch Empire. The New York inventory of Margrieta (Grietje) Visboom van Varick (1649-1695) included “an East India Silver wrought box,” “one Silver wrought East India trunk,” and “three silver wrought East India cups,” and also a plethora of other domestic furnishings originating in Dutch global trade.\textsuperscript{31} Born in the United Provinces, Grietje Visboom had travelled to Malacca to live with her guardian uncle the merchant Abraham Burgers (died after 1679) when she was orphaned at the age of eighteen. There she


\textsuperscript{31} “Inventory of the Estate of Margrita van Varick Deceased, late widow relict & administatrix of Do. Rudolphus Varick taken by Nicholas Bayard, Charlis Lodwick and John Harperdingh Exexecutors of the last will and Testament of the said Margrita van Varick,” New York State Archives, Series J0301-82 Court of Probates, Inventories and Accounts, 1666-1822, 15.
married Egbert van Duins (died c. 1677) an employee of the VOC. After his death she returned home where she married Rudolphus van Varick, a minister for the local Reformed Church and settled in Hem, West Frisia. In July 1686, the two and their children immigrated to New Netherland to lead the Flatbush parish. After her death in 1695 a lengthy probate inventory of her household possessions and the holdings of her textile shop revealed her ownership of an astonishing array of things from around the world. The analysis of this inventory has formed the basis for one of the few recent case studies to examine the possessions and life of a female Dutch immigrant (discussed further below). Along with the East Indian silver listed there were Turkish carpets, Dutch paintings, Chinese porcelain, Japanese lacquer work, Indonesian cabinets, Arabian coins and many different kinds of cloth. In 1711 Van Varick’s daughter Cornelia van Varick (nd) married Peter van Dyck (1684-1751), an important early American silversmith. This connection together with Cornelia’s receipt of a portion of Van Varick’s silverware as a legacy introduces the likelihood that her possessions, which she had amassed from around the globe, may well have influenced the later history of American decorative arts.

In addition to the readily available imported silverware, by the end of the seventeenth century colonial silversmiths were commissioned to make a wide variety of both utilitarian and display goods. Early American makers were not required to mark

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33 De Filippis, “Margrieta van Varick’s East Indian Goods”.
their wares, although many did stamp their products with a maker’s mark. Even after the English conquest in 1664, the majority of elite craftsmen in New York (silver and goldsmiths, gunsmiths, painters, limners and the like) remained Dutch.34 These makers of Dutch descent soon adopted English forms for their new and increasingly cosmopolitan patrons. They crafted silver goods in a wide variety of forms, functions and styles, including different types of richly moulded and engraved brandywine bowls, salt, sugar and pepper casters and boxes, tankards, teapots, kettles and utensils. Modeled after traditional forms and styles, luxury goods were often connected to dining rituals, and sometimes also served as gifts that marked life’s passages: births and baptisms, marriages and deaths. As in other colonies, local trades in New Netherland were, according to the preeminent scholar of early American life, Robert Blair St. George, “charged with actually making and remaking the symbolic world in a direct, material sense.”35

The similarity of the Lewes spoon to other utensils with cast handles made in New York in the last quarter of the seventeenth century suggests an early American provenance. Known New York memorial spoons were constructed by soldering a hammered bowl to a cast stem and finial, exactly the technique used for this set.36 Of the roughly one dozen known today, all are thought to have been made by New York smiths.

34 Roderic Blackburn, “Crafts: Dutch,” The Encyclopaedia of the North American Colonies (New York: Scribner’s and Sons, 1993), 343. Normally such entries would not be appropriate sources, but this entire volume is a very well researched, in-depth analysis of various aspects of Dutch, English, Spanish, and French colonies in North America, by experts in the respective fields.
and are engraved with the owner’s initials. Of these, only two have memorial inscriptions.²⁷ Roderic H. Blackburn estimates that of the hundreds of surviving silver pieces with engravings of names, initials or coats of arms none were European. Rather, they were made by some of the seventy local silversmiths, and were of an equal quality to those that could be imported.²⁸ Local craftspeople, often trained abroad, produced hybrid luxury items displaying distinctive regional stylistic features to meet the tastes of local patrons. These objects were often modelled in the first instance on imported wares, and so blended ornamental and formal elements copied from English, Northern European and also Dutch colonial objects brought in from elsewhere, and then altered to serve in the formation of a new regional style.

Numerous questions remain: Was the Lewes set made in Batavia and then engraved in New York? Or was it made and engraved in New York by a craftsman who had seen such a memorial set recently imported from Batavia? The plausibility of either of these scenarios, and the possibility of others, demonstrates the enormous geographic and temporal range covered by things traveling in early modern trade networks. The maker of these items will most likely never be identified and chances are no further information on the Sara Lewes whom it memorializes will surface. However, these objects have apparent connections to New York, possible associations with Batavia, and definite links to the Cape of Good Hope, where they appeared sometime prior to 1972.

An examination of the Sara Lewes memorial *lepel* and *vork* set, and the complex strands of history and meaning involved in its “biography” of nearly three and a half centuries, raises more questions than it provides answers. But it is a perfect example of how, as Sarah Pennell writes, “research into the associations of singular objects, especially their material and spatial contexts, can offset the apparent problems that arise” in material cultural studies.

While at first it appears from the available records that Sara Lewes had little or no textual voice, she did leave behind her a material legacy, the Lewes set, as evidence of her presence and her passing. It seems that these objects are all that remains now to tell us that once, somewhere in the Dutch Empire there lived (and died) a Sara Lewes. More written traces of Lewes’ life may surface in inventories, bills, diaries, letters or from other sources but the set by virtue of its very materiality may in fact provide us with much more information than writings such as these ever could about the world that Lewes lived in. As a case study, the obscurity of these domestic objects, owned by a woman, demonstrates how written documents typically favour the histories of white, middle and upper class males. In contrast, William B. Hesseltine claims, “Artifacts, after all, are

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facts, and facts are the raw material out of which the historian constructs a narrative of the past.”

The complex histories revealed in attempts to establish the provenance of the Lewes vork and lepel show how such a practice is one “so basic to decorative arts scholarship that researchers may have overlooked its potential as social history.” The set is a material document that speaks volumes about networks, about relationships, and about the global transmission of decorative art styles long after the so-called Dutch Golden Age. Historian Charles Boxer emphasised the extent to which the Dutch empire of the seventeenth century was “seaborne” by so titling what is still considered one of the most important texts on the subject. It follows from this characterisation of this global trading empire that a dynamic material culture, one more mobile and hybrid than has often been recognised, was produced. The Lewes lepel and vork demonstrate the ways in which scholars can, to borrow from Ulrich, adopt part of the vocabulary of social history. In doing so, this thesis considers “‘ethnicity’ as well as ‘taste,’ ‘social economy’ as well as ‘aesthetics’.” By including vernacular, domestic things in my study, I have broadened the scope of objects typically considered in art historical projects. I examine things like spoons and forks but also pamphlets and palampores in order to think in terms of networks and meshworks rather than the masterworks of traditional histories.

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43 Ulrich, “Furniture as Social History: Gender, Property, and Memory in the Decorative Arts” online.  
44 Boxer, The Dutch Seaborne Empire, 1600-1800.  
45 Ulrich, “Furniture as Social History: Gender, Property, and Memory in the Decorative Arts” online.
With Chapter Two, I begin my exploration of materiality and the making of New Netherland by looking at what was known about the colony during its formation. I investigate how the colonization of North America factored into the simultaneously emerging concepts of wonderwerelden and huiselijkheid that allowed for “the furnishing of mental interiors as well as of architectural ones” for both men and women.\(^{46}\) Specifically, I am interested in how knowledge of the American colony was constructed. Who created it? Who was the audience for such understandings? How did it circulate? And most importantly what forms did the knowledge take? According to Benedict Anderson, the formation of “imagined communities” was made possible through “print-capitalism.”\(^{47}\) But the very need to form a united social, political, economic body suggests that the provinces first united in 1579 under the Union of Utrecht and finally recognized by the Spanish with the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 were, as Vanhaelen and Wilson suggest, “a polycentric and unstable polity, a conglomeration of diverse regional, cultural and linguistic traditions.”\(^{48}\) Specific genres of print-culture responded to the multiplicity that was being encountered as people, things, images and ideas from around the world entered the purview of the Netherlands. Throughout the seventeenth century so many new materials, technologies and objects had been introduced to the Dutch home through expansive trade networks, it was almost as if there needed to be an explicit re-

\(^{48}\) Vanhaelen and Wilson, “The Erotics of Looking,” 882.
organizing of these things physically in the home and intellectually within an understanding of a new global materiality.

The following chapter emerged due to my interest in how women in the United Provinces would have envisioned colonies around the world and perhaps even their place in colonial projects. Initially I had been curious to see if there was any promotional literature aimed at women. In the early years of Dutch expansion, few women immigrated to the colonies established by the VOC. The long voyages aboard dangerous and unsanitary ships and political instability of trade posts around Africa to various locations on the Indian Ocean discouraged women from making the journey. Furthermore it was believed that delicate European women could not adapt to the tropical climes of Batavia and other Asian and South American settlements. In contrast, New Netherland was not only a shorter journey, but it was also promoted for having a similar climate to Northern Europe and a landscape that was increasingly shaped to resemble that of Holland. According to one New Netherlander promoting emigration schemes, it was “…a very beautiful, pleasant, healthy, and delightful land, where all manner of men can more easily earn a good living and make their way in the world than in the Netherlands or any other part of the globe that I know.” While I did not find any pamphlets or the like addressing women in particular, what I found instead was an interest in catering to broader classes of artisans, farmers, and traders who would be able to recreate Dutch


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material culture and landscape in the New World. This must have been apparent, for upon his visit to the Dutch Republic in 1636, Charles Ogier (1595-1654), a French diplomat, commented, “There isn’t a cobbler or tailor who is not well informed about the East and West Indies and who cannot show you on prints and maps exactly what went on there.”

Depictions of the New World figured prominently in encyclopedic attempts to catalogue the expanding boundaries of the Dutch conceptual universe. Within the prodigious output of European cartographers, descriptions of New Netherland came in many forms: books, maps, pamphlets, atlases, and other expressions of visual culture. Through a careful analysis of this wide range of imagery, I found views, both verbal and pictorial, of the colony to have been created through a multi-vocal dialogue. Although often mediated by the WIC, a vision of New Netherland was discursively constructed between the people physically establishing the colony and those publishing it in patria. In considering the ways visual culture respond to the things from the expanding boundaries of the Dutch empire, Chapter Two demonstrates how New Netherland was configured and re-configured within the visual culture of exchange in the United Provinces.

Chapter Three examines the unique roles afforded to Dutch and Dutch-American women that allowed them to participate in the formation of New Netherland. While previous histories have focused on the achievements of male figures such as Henry Hudson (c.1560s-c.1611?), various directors of the colony such as Cornelis Jacobz May (nd), Willem Verhulst (nd), Peter Minuit (1580-1638), Willem Kieft (1597-1647), Petrus

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Stuyvesant (c.1612-1672) and Jacob Leisler (1640-1690), my interest here is in the ordinary, vernacular contributions of women. Recognizing the potential for materialist scholarship to uncover the vernacular microhistories, untold by traditional written accounts of patriarchal history, feminist scholars have utilized material culture approaches to re-examine women’s roles as producers, retailers, and consumers.\textsuperscript{52}

Without appearing to have taken the lived experiences of women into account, scholars such as Simon Schama describe a dichotomy between Dutch conceptions of “homeliness and worldliness” that reveals contradictions between the idealized domestic roles ascribed to women and the actual public activities they participated in.\textsuperscript{53} During the seventeenth century, foreign commentators were struck by the autonomy of Dutch women who were entitled to own property and enter into contracts, and who not only assisted their families in business pursuits, but also successfully managed their own independent ventures. But how were these practices transformed and translated in the differing social spaces of the New World? In what ways did gender and race influence the commercial relationships that were formed? Building on a relatively small body of scholarship on the lives and experiences of women in the contact zones of the Dutch trade empire, this chapter addresses women’s roles in global production and consumption as they developed in New Netherland.


One of the many ways I assessed these roles was through a careful analysis of several portraits of women produced between c.1690 and 1740. I was curious to see what these representations, rich with descriptive content, conveyed about the participation of women in Dutch trade networks both regional and global. If previous histories of production have obscured “one of women’s most important historical roles - as managers or participants in household consumption strategies,” the texts, objects, and images I examine in this chapter recoup colonial women’s roles as producers, retailers and consumers of the material culture of home.  

I found that women were represented in colonial portraiture as dynamic participants in cultures of exchange.

At the height of VOC and WIC trade, women’s contributions demonstrated what post-colonial scholar Rosemary Marangoly George terms “public domesticity.” In her work on British imperialism in the Indian subcontinent she claims colonialism provided European women with an “authoritative self” when differing power structures allowed for a sense of agency that was defined against a racialized “Other.” She employs the term “public domesticity” to describe the ways colonies legitimated the “most imaginative skills of the homemaker,” blurring distinctions between public/private, foreign/domestic, masculine/feminine, interior/exterior, passive/active, production/consumption and so on. This is an apt description for women’s contributions in the Netherlands, old and new. In fact one 1695 account by Sir William Montague...

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recognized women’s roles outside of the home noting, “‘t is very observable [here], more women are found in the shops and business in general than men; they have the conduct of the purse and commerce, and manage it rarely well, they are careful and diligend, capable of affairs, (besides domestick), having an education suitable, and a genius wholly adapted to it.”

This idea of a “public domesticity” guides my nuanced investigation of women’s relationships to the production, retailing and consumption of things that were both homely and worldly.

In Chapter Four, I build on the idea of a “public domesticity” to consider women’s roles in New Netherland and Dutch New York as home makers, and also curators of the goods that constructed their world. In her pioneering work on consumption and women’s possessions, Amanda Vickery observes that eighteenth-century women were responsible for the accumulation, organization, and display of material goods so that “the maintenance of property was a constituent of genteel housekeeping.”

As “mistresses” of the house, women had a profound relationship to the material goods of the domestic sphere. Goods that were purchased, inherited, hand-made, and received as gifts could all come to embody personalized meanings. According to Linda Cavallo household objects did not only have a “static, narcissistic function, attributing status and identity” but also had a “relational value” reinforcing social

56 William Montague, *The Delights of Holland, or A Three Months Travel about that and the other Provinces* (London: John Sturton and A. Bosville, 1696), 183.
relations as they are kept, used and exhibited, given away, loaned and inherited. Clive Edwards emphasizes the importance of household furnishings as consumer goods for they entered homes through a series of negotiations between makers and buyers mediated by retailers, like Van Varick, and others discussed in this chapter. The process was complex for status and symbolism shifted with each exchange, as the retailer added value and the buyer often constructed additional meanings, rendering both “pivotal in the process of turning houses into homes.”

While in the Dutch Republic the home was viewed as a microcosm for society the establishment of an orderly, peaceful, prosperous, symbolic and distinctively Dutch architecture in a foreign land would have been a politically charged statement. If “home was that morally purified and carefully patrolled terrain” as Schama suggests, with the household “the saving grace of Dutch culture that otherwise would have been indelibly soiled by materialism,” how was domesticity performed in the trade post of New Netherland, a community motivated by the exchange of worldly goods? How did the movement of goods and circulation of things change the goods that came to furnish

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interiors? How did they change how people interacted and engaged? By answering these questions Chapter Four investigates the things that made up the domestic interior, from the architecture to furnishings and the spatial divisions to pictorial representations of material culture, to consider how Dutch concepts of “home” were reconfigured within the differing physical, social and cultural circumstances of the colonies. Retracing and remapping the movement of things that connected places and shaped lived experience allows for a reading of the home and its construction through material culture as a powerful political space.⁶²

Few traces of the domestic interiors of New Netherland and Dutch New York exist. Along with inventories, archaeological findings and surviving objects demonstrate the extent to which household furnishings were brought to the frontier outpost in order to replicate the interiors of patria. According to Paul Huey, “no effort was spared in the importation of the rich material culture of this period and re-establishing the comfort and sophistication of everyday life in the Netherlands.”⁶³ Global things featured prominently in the genre prints and paintings most often cited as espousing domesticity and used to re-imagine how homes in the Netherlands both old and new would have been assembled. Simultaneously concepts of globalization and domesticity were made concrete through highly consumable things, acquired or made throughout the world but utilized or experienced in the home.

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One of my initial interests in this project was to see how Dutch ideas of domesticity were translated in the differing physical, social and cultural circumstances of the New World. I was curious to see what role prescriptive literature played in the actual establishment of new communities overseas. While I found some evidence that household manuals and domestic guides were brought with colonists, I was struck by the subtle, material ways the ideas of Jacob Cats and others became transmediated onto the things owned by Dutch colonists. Reflecting these findings, Chapter Five discusses what I call *prescriptive objects*: the vernacular material culture that although primarily utilitarian came to serve a secondary, often liturgical, function. In an article on morality and social ritual in the early modern home, Andrew Morrall notes the shifts in material culture that occurred when, following the Reformation, many northern European homes came to replace the church as an important site of moral education.\(^{64}\) This of course would have carried over to New Netherland where many Dutch settlers (but by no means all) were Protestant, or of other reformed faiths. The home as a locus of religious instruction would have been further emphasized by the lack of European religious institutions available during the initial settlement of New Netherland. These conditions encouraged the transmediation of religious imagery on to furnishings and utensils within the home.

From the use of Biblical prints for plastic surface ornament to the scriptural paintings that flourished among the production of patroon painters, New Netherlandish material culture demonstrates how home became a important spaces for religious

expressions. How was the religion of patria communicated in the material culture of New Netherland? What things did people bring with them to recreate the moral climate to which they were accustomed? The prescriptive objects found in New Netherlandish homes demonstrates that Ruth Piwonka was correct to apply the significance of the Dutch word verklaaren, meaning both to illustrate and also to declare, interpret or explain in the context of domestic material culture.65

Picking up on the role of women in preserving the idea of New Netherland in succeeding generations, Chapter Six seeks to unpack the gendered (and ultimately raced and classed) communities created by and producing a particularly palatable vision of the Dutch as part of the early twentieth-century Colonial Revival. For decades through their writing, curating, and (often volunteer) participation in museums, wealthy women of Dutch descent living in the New York area actively constructed a stereotypical view of women’s roles and their relationship to material culture in New Netherland. The popular mythology that developed characterized Dutch colonists as having “lived solely in houses built of bricks brought from the Netherlands, dr[u]nk from wrought silver cups, supped on delft plates, and dressed in homespun and dyed garments produced on their own farms” created a lasting image that endures today. 66

Although the Colonial Revival and the connected Holland Mania created a highly problematic sanitized view of early Dutch-American life, the movement did bring a

sustained interest in material culture, interiors and the preservation of historical structures. Drawing on the work of Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, this final chapter concludes with a critical account of how Dutch colonial things moved “through the cluttered rooms of nineteenth-century memory and the ordered galleries of twentieth-century scholarship” to construct a particular vision of New Netherland as both homely and worldly.

For this project I have attempted to write what Francesca Trivellato has called a “global history on a small scale.” It is one that follows the movement of people and things demonstrating how trading communities, economic activities, and social practices created new forms of publics. At a time when “desire and necessity, curiosity and commerce together created a converging world,” knowledge was embedded in the things of trade. My research on the making, circulation, and consumption of things to and from New Netherland develops intersecting narratives of the past, some of them regional and localized, others cross-cultural, transnational, and global. My analysis of things in New Netherland is informed by cultural materialism: it is one that, as Curtis Perry writes, “remains alive to the materiality of all kinds of artifacts, explores the socio-economic conditions within which they are produced, and examines their participation in other

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ideological and material fields of culture.”\(^{72}\) By connecting artifacts, objects, and things to larger narratives it is possible to write a new history of materiality and the making of New Netherland, primarily in the seventeenth century but also in later histories.\(^{73}\)

**New Netherland, 1624–1664**

In a recent discussion of materiality and Netherlandish visual culture, Benjamin Schmidt contends that during the early modern period the “space” of the Netherlands expanded in a variety of ways: politically the Dutch Republic was created; physically land was reclaimed from the sea, urban centers grew; and commercial and colonial territory was gained with the various forts and settlements that were formed throughout Asia, Africa and of course the Americas.\(^{74}\) Numerous scholars have noted the extent to which the Dutch overseas empire was primarily a commercial endeavor, with the emphasis on trade rather than permanent settlement. In many cases, the VOC and the WIC preferred to remain “alongshore” relying on a complex maritime system rather than devoting time and resources to imperial gain. One observer noted that Dutch merchants seldom took an interest in their surroundings overseas: “those of Holland meanly, minding their gain alone...when they are abroad, shew that they are onely a Race of plain Citizens, keeping


themselves most within their own Cells, and Ware-houses; scarce regarding the acquaintance of any, but those with whom they traffick.”

However, New Netherland, the exception, was “unique among the ‘factories’ or trading locations established by the Dutch East and West India Companies in developing into a thriving and productive community, closely modelled on its Low Countries roots.”

Upon arriving in Lenapehoking on 5 September 1609, Henry Hudson’s first mate, Robert Juet (nd), wrote:

> Our men went on Land there, and saw great store of Men, Women, and Children, who gave them Tabacco at their coming on Land…This day many of the people came aboard, some in Mantles of Feathers, and some in Skins of divers sorts of good Furres. Some women also came to vs with Hempe. They had red Copper Tabacco pipes, and other things of Copper they did weare about their neckes [sic].

The furs, hemp, copper, and tobacco Juet described as being initially offered by the native people would quickly fuel the European colonization of North America by diverse groups of Europeans. Elizabeth Edwards, Chris Gosden and Ruth Phillips have characterized colonialism as a “profoundly material” manifestation occurring when “people detached from their local community in the search for objects of quantity, encounter peoples for whom qualities are crucial.”

During the long seventeenth century,

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the WIC was undoubtedly seeking furs, timber, tobacco, sugar cane and other North American commodities in quantity. In fact, New Netherland was initially conceived of as the most efficient site for the Dutch to acquire the things of the New World. The lens of accumulation studies provides insight into the intersections of material, cultural, and intellectual activity of the time, affirming what Lissa Roberts describes as a “historical, geographical, and cultural history of the early-modern period in which the Dutch occupied the world and the world (pre-)occupied the Netherlands.”

During the seventeenth century material culture in the United Provinces, as with the rest of Europe, was becoming increasingly textured. Just as domestic ceramic and textile production increased along with the manufacture of local distilleries and improved agricultural yields, exotic goods and commodities were being imported from Asia, Africa and the Americas, actively contributing to what Schama describes as “an embarrassment of riches.” He continues on to characterize seventeenth-century Dutch burgers as “commodity fetishists,” with the Republic as “the great emporium mundi” – a “consumer’s paradise.” Based on his observations while a diplomat in the Low Countries, Englishman William Temple described Dutch mercantile ambitions:

By this we find out the foundation of the Riches of Holland… For never any Country traded so much and consumed so little. They buy infinitely but this to sell again. They are the great masters of the Indian spices, and of the Persian silks; but wear plain woollens and feed upon their own fish and roots. Nay, they sell the finest of their own cloth to France, and buy coarse out of

80 Schama, The Embarrassment of Riches, 297-8.
England for their own wear. They send abroad the best of their butter… and buy the cheapest out of Ireland… for their own use. In short, they furnish infinite Luxury, which they never practice, and traffique in Pleasures which they never taste [sic].

However exaggerated Temple’s characterization of Dutch exchange, his description speaks to the materialistic aims of the small country and its citizens in the acquisition of overseas territories. Between 1609 and 1664 New Netherland specifically attracted the attention of merchants, particularly those of Amsterdam. For a brief time, the area situated between the far more studied French and English colonies, rarely described in the literature as an exotic wonderwereld, like the near and far Easts, was as Oliver Rink has demonstrated a “commercial success rather than [a] political failure.” Ultimately the Dutch failed to establish a permanent North American colony, but the contacts made there influenced trade patterns for centuries to come.

In 1621 the States General of the Netherlands granted a charter giving the newly incorporated Dutch West India Company (WIC) a twenty-four year trade monopoly along the eastern coast of North America. When the area was given provincial status two years later, the WIC began to organize the permanent settlement of New Netherland. On 29 March 1624, the first wave of Swannekens, thirty Flemish Walloon families, set sail

aboard the ship *Nieu Nederlandt*. Some settled to the north at the mouth of the *Varsche* (Fresh or today’s Connecticut) River, while some went south to along the *Suydt* (South or Delaware) River, others were left on Nutten Island and another settlement was strategically placed up the *Noort* (North or Hudson) River, later becoming Fort Orange. From 1624 to 1625 six more ships (the *Oranje Boom, Griffioen, Swarte Paert, Schaept, Mackereel and Ruijter*) brought colonists, much-needed livestock, and other supplies. One 1626 account relayed to the *Heeren Negentien* (the Gentlemen Nineteen), the governing board of the WIC, declared:

... our people are in good heart and live in peace there; the Women also have borne some children there. They have purchased the Island Manhattes from the Indians for the value of 60 gilders; it is 11,000 *morgens* in size. They had all their grain sowed by the middle of May, and reaped by the middle of August. They send thence samples of summer grain; such as wheat, rye, barley, oats, buckwheat, canary seed, beans and flax.

This account propagated the myth that the island of Manhattan was purchased for “gay clothing, beads, and brass ornaments,” “beads and ribbons... that must have furnished enough ribbons and beads to give every brave and every squaw a chance,” “the usual form of trading goods, knives, beads and trinkets,” or “beads and other ribbons.” While far more complex than the exchange of beads and trinkets, this purchase also contradicts

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85 In an interesting transculturation, this was Dutch term adopted by the indigenous people to refer to the European settlers. Anne-Marie Cantwell and Dianna diZerega Wall, *Unearthing Gotham: The Archaeology of New York City* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2001), 167.
86 Rink, *Holland on the Hudson*, 81-82.
the other popular myth that Europeans came to a “new” world to people an untamed wilderness. As with other colonial projects, land was appropriated from the indigenous people in a process of acquisition, subornation, and settlement of space as part of a global power grid of empire.

For centuries prior to the arrival of Europeans, the Wekquaesgeeks, Sint Sinks, and the Mahikans in the Hudson Valley and the Munsee to the south created the landscape with the establishment of communities, often with farms, gardens, workshops, burial grounds, prescribed fishing and hunting areas and transportation routes. According to William Starna, differing conceptions of land ownership was one of the many issues that shaped the encounter between Europeans and the people indigenous to North America: land was (and arguably still is) considered “a life force, a source of sustenance, a place for home and community, a domain over which some degree of control might be exercised, and not least of all, a core element of identity.” In 1625 or early 1626 a wind-powered sawmill was built by the WIC after the first settlement of

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Governors Island that effectively altered the indigenous landscape. While Anne-Marie Cantwell and Diana diZerega Wall have considered one of the first major acts of appropriation to be changing the name of the island from Pagannack, the Munsee name for Nut Island, to Noten Eylant, the Dutch equivalent, the erection of a Dutch-style windmill, a quintessential symbol of patria, would have been another important demonstration of power. As the landscape was transformed to New Netherland, “a colonial space at the edge of empire,” the mill constructed to exploit the native resource of lumber for settlement and export not only literally but also figuratively superseded and challenged indigenous space.\(^93\) In the minds of the Dutch the process of acquisition was complete by 1642 when adventurer David Pietersz de Vries saw patriotic omens in the ecology of New Netherland. When he saw crabs crawling along the shore that had claws “the color of the flag of our Prince, orange, white and blue.” These creatures as signs from God “that [the Dutch] ought to people the country, and that it belong[ed] to [them].”\(^94\)

On the edge of the Dutch empire, New Netherland itself had colonial centers and colonial peripheries, with the port of New Amsterdam quickly becoming cosmopolitan through its regular contact with other North and South American cities as well as Europe, Africa, and Asia. In contrast frontiers were formed to the north and south where the colony met with indigenous settlements and the competing French and English colonies.

To quote Lynette Russell’s study of such borders:

Cross-cultural encounters produce boundaries and frontiers. These are spaces, both physical and intellectual, which are never neutrally positioned, but are assertive, contested and dialogic. Boundaries and frontiers are sometimes negotiated, sometimes violent and often are structured by convention and protocol that are not immediately obvious to those standing on either one side or the other.\(^95\)

Wim Klooster has argued that in the case of New Netherland, these frontiers marked the boundary between civilization and savagery and not because the indigenous people were considered to be barbaric, but because settlers themselves behaved lawlessly, engaging in illegal trade and piracy, and often abandoning the rules and regulations of civil society.\(^96\)

These spaces formed what Mary Louise Pratt has called contact zones: “social spaces where cultures meet, clash, and grapple with each other, often in contexts of highly asymmetrical relations of power.”\(^97\)

By the 1660s the population of New Netherland had increased to a thriving, self-sufficient, predominantly Dutch speaking community.\(^98\) However, one of the biggest questions in scholarship on New Netherland has been regarding the “Dutchness” of the colony. In many ways it was Dutch in that it mirrored the United Provinces’ own ethnic

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\(^96\) Wim Klooster, “Other Netherlands beyond the Sea: Dutch America between Metropolitan Control and Divergence, 1600-1796,” *Negotiated Empires: Centers and Peripheries in the Americas, 1500-1820*, eds. Christine Daniels and Michael V. Kennedy (London: Routledge, 2002).

\(^97\) Mary Louise Pratt, *Imperial Eyes: Travel Writing and Transculturation* (London: Routledge, 1992), 4-5.

and religious diversity. The relatively tolerant environment of the recently established republic meant an influx of religious refugees including Lutherans from Flanders and Germany, Brownists from England (later the Pilgrims who were briefly in Leiden before sailing for Plymouth), French Huguenots and Walloons from the southern Catholic provinces, as well as other merchants from around the world. Reflecting this heterogeneity, only one half of the population in New Netherland was in fact “Dutch.” In 1655 two to three thousand people formed the colony and it grew to a total of about nine thousand by 1664. A significant number of the inhabitants were Germans, Swedes and Finns who emigrated in the period after 1639. Dennis Maika notes that even the enslaved population was a varied mix of Africans from the Guinea Coast, Brazil, the West Indies and Spanish colonies. Accounting for the diversity, Neil Kamil has provided one of the most direct descriptions to nuance the ethnic make up of the colony. He explains:

The endurance of such self-serving ethnic stereotypes seems all the more anachronistic when confronted with important recent scholarship based on quantitative analysis compiled for extended

99 Jeremy Bangs, Strangers and Pilgrims, Travellers and Sojourners: Leiden and the Foundations of Plymouth Plantation (Plymouth: General Society of Mayflower Descendants, 2009). Bangs is director of the Leiden American Pilgrim Museum. The small museum is located in a house on the Beschuitsteeg originally built in ca. 1365-1370 and contains furnishings from the time of the pilgrims stay in Leiden. Not only is Bangs an extraordinary resource, but the current set up of the often overlooked museum, allows for visitors to touch all of the objects that comprise the interior, giving a completely unique opportunity to engage with over four hundred year-old things.


101 Dennis Maika, “Encounters: Slavery and the Philipse Family, 1680-1751,” Dutch New York: The Roots of Hudson Valley Culture, ed. Roger Panetta (New York: Fordham University Press, 2009), 38. With roots in New Netherland slavery became an integral component of New York’s development. In the early eighteenth century definitions of slavery were complicated with some slaves able to collect wages, contract their own labour, own and exchange goods and even marry and raise children. Although they were not considered citizens, a system of “half-freedom” resulted in an ambiguous institution that only became more rigid after a slave uprising in New York City in 1712.
time frames by folklorist David S. Cohen and historian Thomas L. Purvis, who argue persuasively that although New Amsterdam/New York came into being as a monopoly chartered under the auspices of the Dutch West India Company, from its very inception the colony did not seem to possess an effective ethnic Dutch majority. Indeed, many of the earliest colonists were French-speaking Huguenots and Walloons who, together with a large and steadily increasing population of African slaves, joined immigrants from all over Europe (especially the Germanic regions) to inhabit a profoundly pluralistic port town and its hinterland. This fact has enormous implications for the fluid history and culture of New York Colony.102

Reflecting this plurality, Willem Frijhoff contends that in New Netherland to be “Dutch” was not an ethnic distinction but a cultural notion. It did not mean people sharing a common language, religion or even origin, but the adoption and assimilation of cultural values by a group of people of different ethnicities to form a social system currently operative throughout the Netherlands. As such, “Dutchness” as a lifestyle and a form of social intercourse and community formation continued long after the end of New Netherland.103

In March 1664, Charles II of England (1630-1685) annexed New Netherland to “bring all his Kingdoms under one form of government, both in church and state, and to install the Anglican government as in old England.” Four months later the governor of New Netherland, Pieter Stuyvesant was informed that the English intended to take possession of the “key of the North [Hudson] River.”104 When on 27 August 1664, four

English frigates, led by Richard Nicolls, sailed into New Amsterdam’s harbor and demanded New Netherland’s surrender, they were not challenged. Officially, the Dutch were only in possession of New Amsterdam for forty years from 1624 to 1664 and again briefly in 1674. However, especially in rural pockets, a Dutch-American culture persisted long after the English gained control of the colony. Writing in the 1760s, colonial historian William Smith noted, “The Dutch counties, in some measure, follow the example of New-York, but still retain many modes peculiar to Hollanders.” Therefore this study considers the Dutch period of New Netherland to extend up until the 1740s to reflect the persisting material culture of first generation Dutch New Yorkers and their descendants.

**Romantic Re-Visions: Describing the Material Culture of Dutch New York, 1750-1850**

During the seventeenth century many travelers, correspondents, and visitors wrote accounts of the material landscape and social practices of New Netherland and New York for a variety of different purposes. It was often external observers who noted the

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distinctive customs of the region because they regarded Dutch society as relatively foreign and sufficiently different from their own.\textsuperscript{108} Daniel Denton (ca. 1640-1696), a resident of New Jersey and Long Island, wrote the first English account of New Netherland, a text published as \textit{A Brief Description of New York: Formerly called New Netherlands} in London in 1670.\textsuperscript{109} But as was often the case, such initially private reports were not made public until some time (often centuries) later. One such case was the journal kept by Jasper Danckaerts (1639-1702/4) who made notes while searching with his colleague Petrus Sluyter (1651-1722) for a location to establish a religious colony for the communal Labadists.\textsuperscript{110} In 1697 Dr. Benjamin Bullivant (nd), a provincial official and physician, documented his travels along the eastern seaboard from Newcastle to Boston. He commented on the particularities of ways of life in the Hudson River Valley, observing, “They are a parsimonious people & expend Little on their livelihood, which makes them usually well moneyed, & good paymasters [sic].”\textsuperscript{111} In lieu of extant objects, these first-hand accounts have been instrumental in shaping understandings of early Euro-American lifestyles.

Well into the eighteenth century, travel diaries continued to be a source of information on local material culture. One of the most cited accounts is that of the

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\textsuperscript{108} Blackburn and Piwonka, \textit{Remembrance of Patria}, 17.
\textsuperscript{109} Daniel Denton, \textit{A Brief Description of New York: Formerly called New Netherlands} (London: John Hancock, and William Bradley, 1670).
\textsuperscript{110} This manuscript along with the six drawings it included was purchased in Amsterdam by Henry C. Murphy who translated it into English in 1864. Later the Long Island Historical Society acquired it from his estate. It was not translated into English and edited for publication until 1913. Jasper Danckaerts, \textit{Journal of Jasper Danckaerts, 1678-80} eds., Burleigh J. Bartlett and J. Franklin Jameson (New York: Scribner’s Sons, 1913).
\end{flushleft}
Scottish physician Dr. Alexander Hamilton (1712-1756) documenting his travels through Philadelphia, Albany, New Haven, Providence, Boston and the surrounding communities in 1744. Often considered “the best single portrait of men and manners, of rural and urban life, of the wide range of society and scenery in colonial America,” Hamilton’s observations contributed to the forging of a particularly domestic vision of Dutch colonial life in North America. Hamilton was surprised by the decoration of the dwellings of Albany, noting “They affect pictures much, particularly scripture history, with which they adorn their rooms. They set out their cabinets and bouffetts much with china [sic].”

Similarly, from 1748 to 1751 the Swedish naturalist Peter Kalm (1716-1769) documented his observations while traveling throughout North America, with special attention paid to “the physical characteristics of the country, its natural resources, and the opportunity for cultivating certain products advantageous to [European] consumption and trade.” His account was informed by his studies with the Swedish “Father of Taxonomy” Carl Linnaeus, and included details of the natural and built environment. Kalm’s characterizations of the Dutch would also have an impact on the way they were viewed by later historians, for he noted, echoing Bullivant and others, that “The extensive

112 Hamilton’s Itinerarium received little attention until it was acquired by Frank T. Sabin, a London bookseller and eventually passed to the American collector, William K. Bixby of St. Louis who arranged to have the text transcribed and edited. In 1907 it appeared as a deluxe limited edition of 487 copies printed on special paper made in The Netherlands and “issued only for Private Distribution by W.K. Bixby” to his family and friends. Carl Bridenbaugh ed., Gentleman's Progress The Itinerarium of Dr. Alexander Hamilton, 1744 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1948).
114 Bridenbaugh, Gentleman's Progress The Itinerarium of Dr. Alexander Hamilton, 1744, 72.
trade which the inhabitants of Albany carry on, and their sparing manner of living, in the
Dutch way, contribute to the considerable wealth which many of them have acquired.”\textsuperscript{116}

Not long after Hamilton and Kalm were writing, in 1770 an anonymous reviewer in \textit{The
Critical Review, or Annals of Literature} commented on the place of similar diaries in
understanding what we now consider material culture by stating “A book of travels, in
which materials are in general important and well managed, is one of the most
entertaining and instructive literary productions. There is a happy mixture in it of the \textit{utile}
and the \textit{dulce.”}\textsuperscript{117}

In particular, accounts by women at the time were considered to contain more
\textit{dulce} than \textit{utile}. In 1704 the widowed Madame Sarah Kemble Knight (1666-1727) made
the journey from Boston to New York and back, calling the city a “pleasant, well
compacted place.”\textsuperscript{118} The small diary of her journey was not made public until it was
published posthumously in 1825 by Theodore Dwight as \textit{The Journal of Madam Knight}.
Knight’s diary included the subtleties in local dress in New York as compared with those
of the English she was used to, commenting:

…[E]specially the middling sort, differ from our women, in their
habit go loose, wear French muches which are like a Cap and a
headband in one, leaving their ears bare, which are set out with
Jewels of a large size and many in number. And their fingers
hoop’t with Rings, some with large stones in them of many

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\textsuperscript{116} Peter Kalm, \textit{Peter Kalm's Travels in North America}, ed. Adolph B. Benson (New York: Dover
\textsuperscript{117} \textit{Critical Review} 30 (1770): 195-196.
\textsuperscript{118} Madame Sarah Knight, \textit{The Private Journal Kept by Madam Knight, on A Journey from Boston to
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Colors as were their pendants in their ears, which You should see very old women wear as well as Young [sic].119

Described as the first novelist of colonial America, Charlotte Lennox (1730-1804) was another woman who upon her return to England wrote of her experiences in the New World to support her young family. As the daughter of a Scottish military captain, she lived at the garrison in Albany from 1738 to 1742. In 1750 her semi-autobiographical novel *The Life of Harriot Stuart*, set partially in North America, recounted a girl’s search for a suitable husband against the backdrop of an exoticized wilderness and savage indigenous population. Roderic H. Blackburn and Ruth Piwonka suggest that as the tale hardly mentions the Dutch it was likely the protagonist rarely left the confines of the English fortifications. However, Lennox’s last book, the lengthy, three-volume *Euphemia* published in 1790 in London by T. Cadell and J. Evans, gave a detailed account of the social customs of Albany’s Dutch community. This text was greatly supplemented by information provided by other contemporary travelogues.

Lennox’s epistolary narrative is constructed from letters sent between the young daughter of a British officer stationed in various locations in New York and her friend Maria Harley in London. Her descriptions of life in New York City as well as the forts at Albany and Schenectady, then considered the frontier of the British Empire, chronicle her private life and her interactions with the Dutch, Native American, and African American inhabitants of the colony. Complete with a dramatic episode in which a native raiding party captures the protagonist’s son, Lennox’s account provides canny observations of

the social distinctions between the various groups in contact at the fort “while depicting
the Dutch, with the Indians, as part of the exotic background of her heroines’ romantic
adventures.”\textsuperscript{120} As such, Lennox’s stories are set in an “Exotic Colonial” environment,
creating a nostalgic image that serves to emphasize the exoticism of frontier society and
naturalize the racial hierarchies it presents. While some have considered Lennox’s books
to be trivial romances, Miriam Rossiter Small suggests a more complex reading of her accounts. She notices that in the American scenes of \textit{Harriot Stuart} (1750) and \textit{Euphemia}
(1790) there is an interesting shading of the biographical with the historical: the “accurate
simple accounts of a passage up the Hudson and of life in the fort at Albany with
occasional excursions into the surrounding country are the most valuable and unusual
portions of these novels.”\textsuperscript{121} Lennox’s inclusion of what the \textit{London Review} called “the
picturesque beauties of the province of New York, the manners and customs of its
inhabitants, together with the vagrant life of the savages, … described, in the course of
this correspondence, with great beauty and effect,” responded to an increased interest
among late eighteenth-and early-nineteenth century readers for tales of “Indians” and
“adventures in the wilderness.”\textsuperscript{122} In these tales, the Dutch with their differing lifestyles
were viewed as being as exotic as the indigenous North Americans.\textsuperscript{123}

\textsuperscript{120} Alice P. Kenney, “Albany’s Lady Historians,” \textit{de Halve Maen} 55 no. 3 (Fall 1980): 2.
\textsuperscript{121} Miriam Rossiter Small, \textit{Charlotte Ramsay Lennox: An Eighteenth Century Lady of Letters} (London:
\textsuperscript{122} Quoted in \textit{Euphemia}, ed. Susan Kubica Howard (Peterborough: Broadview Editions, 2008), 32.
\textsuperscript{123} Philippe Séjourné, \textit{The Mystery of Charlotte Lennox, First Novelist of Colonial North America, 1727}
In the introduction to the most recent re-publication of the book, literary historian Susan Kubica Howard agrees with other literary historians like Mary Geiter and W.A. Speck who suggest these mid-eighteenth century accounts provided the first glimpses of the formation of an American identity differentiated from European colonists. The colonial setting, with the interaction of Europeans with native North Americans and Africans imported as slaves, created a society very different from *patria*.

Like many of the women introduced in this thesis, Lennox, in her semi-autobiographical tale, revealed her simultaneous agency and oppression. As a privileged wife of a British soldier she identified with the project of colonization, but her voice was also impeded because, as a woman, she was subordinated in the patriarchal community, much like those around her who were marginalized by colonialism. As Laura Peers has discovered in the context of the Canadian fur trade of the nineteenth century, the elite status of many women within the dominant colonizer’s society was mitigated by their gender. Peer’s emphasis on “the dispersed nature of power within such situations and the negotiation of identity” as entangled within networks of power and hierarchy is helpful for situating my study.

As an “ethnic memory,” the imagery of a nostalgic Dutch identity flourished in nineteenth-century literature. First published in 1808, Anne McVickar Grant’s (1755-1838) *Memoirs of an American Lady* provided a vivid if not embellished picture of the

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Albany area. Just as Lennox did, after the death of her husband Grant turned to writing to provide for her children. By far her most successful publication, *Memoirs of an American Lady* recalled her childhood stay in the 1760s at the house of Margarita Schuyler. She described the house belonging to the prominent family, “indulging” herself in a still more minute account of the “premises, the mode of living, etc. which will afford a more distinct idea of the country; all the wealthy and informed people of the settlement living on a smaller scale, pretty much in the same manner.”\(^{127}\) Although Grant describes them as “living on a smaller scale,” the Schuylers’ dwelling and lifestyle reflected their elite status and may not have provided an entirely accurate view of the frontier’s diverse population. Her descriptions of Albany and the “Manner of living there,” the “Education and early habits of the Albanians described,” and the “Distinguishing characteristics of the New-York colonists,” are among the most often cited accounts of Dutch colonists’ material culture.\(^{128}\)

Like Howard’s interpretation of Lennox’s work through the lens of gender, Alice P. Kenney notes the differing observations made by Grant and Kalm: “He told far more about architecture and the farmers’ crops, while she concentrated on furniture, domestic arrangements and gardening.”\(^{129}\) Grant’s description of the Flatts, “inhabited by Colonel Schuyler, one of the most enlightened men in the province,” illustrates not only the domestic interior but also the relationship between the Schuylers and their colonial

\(^{128}\) Grant, *Memoires of an American Lady*, vi.  
\(^{129}\) Kenney, “Albany’s Lady Historians,” 2.
positioning. She notes, “This being a frontier, he would have found it a very dangerous situation had he not been a person of singular worth, fortitude and wisdom.” Along with descriptions of the Schuylers’ lifestyle, Grant commented on their relationships with marginalized members of upstate New York’s diverse communities. She included accounts of the “Gentle treatment of slaves among the Albanians…Reflections on servitude,” the “Progress of civilization” in which “Northern nations [were] instructed in the arts of life by those they had subdued,” the means by which “the independence of the Indians was first diminished,” and “the Management of the Mohawks by the influence of the Christian Indians.” Grant’s nostalgic recollections of her childhood in colonial Albany are just one of the many ways such representations obscured the violence of colonial conquest with an idealization of a pastoral frontier.

Along with the tales provided by Lennox, Knight and Grant, the early nineteenth-century romantic literature of authors such as James Kirke Paulding (The Book of St. Nicholas 1827, The Dutchman’s Fireside 1831), Charles Fenno Hoffman (Greyslaer: A Romance of the Mohawk 1840), Herman Melville (Pierre, or the Ambiguities 1852) and James Fenimore Cooper (The Littlepage Manuscripts 1843-1846), highlighted the region’s unique attitudes, values and customs to provide a particularly bucolic vision of Dutch culture in the Hudson River Valley. The most popular and ultimately the most successful in creating a lasting image of the descendants of Dutch settlers was the author

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130 Grant, Memoirs of An American Lady, 22.
131 Grant, Memoires of An American Lady, vii-ix.
132 For more on the idyllic visions of colonialism later proposed see Ulrich, The Age of Homespun, 251.
Washington Irving (1783-1859). Irving’s prodigious career was marked by his two most famous fictional works: *History of New York* (1809) and *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent.* (1819), a collection of vignettes highlighted by two tales of the Hudson Valley: “Rip Van Winkle” and “The Legend of Sleepy Hollow.”

Irving’s *History of New York from the Beginnings of the World to the End of the Dutch Dynasty* first appeared on St. Nicholas Day in 1809, under the pen name of Diedrich Knickerbocker. One of the first histories of New York, unrivalled until the 1880s, the book was the most widely known discussion of the colonial Dutch, and was considered by many as entirely factual. Writing through the eyes of “an esteemed antiquarian who wore old-fashioned clothing,” as noted by Kathleen Eagan Johnson, Irving “conceived of his ‘treatise’ as a parody of a then-popular guide book to New York, but through it wielded his considerable knowledge of seventeenth-century New York history to lambaste both early Dutch culture and contemporary Jeffersonian politics.”

By the time the “Author’s Revised Edition” of *A History of New-York* appeared in 1850, Irving noted the cultural resonance of the name Knickerbocker, as it had been attached to a varied of products and enterprises from ice to bread and insurance to transport vehicles, with its immediate cultural associations. Although popular at the time of their first

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134 As Diedrich Knickerbocker, *A history of New York, from the beginning of the world to the end of the Dutch dynasty: containing among many surprising and curious matters, the unutterable ponderings of Walter the Doubter, the disastrous projects of William the Testy, and the chivalric achievements of Peter the Headstrong, the three Dutch governors of New Amsterdam: being the only authentic history of the times that ever hath been published* (New York: Inskeep & Bradford, 1809); as Geoffrey Crayon, *The Sketch Book of Geoffrey Crayon, Gent* (New York: S.S. Van Winkle, 1819-1820).

publication, during the 1880s and 1890s there was a renewed interest in Irving’s legends and mythologized histories.

The Colonial Revival coincided with the expiration of copyrights held by Irving and new editions rapidly appeared. Much like the range of descriptions of the New World published in the seventeenth century to cater to a wide audience with varying budgets, these ranged from paper copies of *The Legend of Sleepy Hollow* costing twelve cents to a lavish twenty-seven volume edition of Irving’s complete works available to the wealthy for over one hundred and fifty dollars. Appealing to all ages, Irving’s tales of *Rip Van Winkle* and *Sleepy Hollow* were published as children’s books.

According to Willem Frijhoff, Irving was a “superb proto-folklorist” with his vivid, hyperbolic descriptions of the people of New Netherland and their ways of life. He documented the social history of the Dutch in exaggerated but nuanced ways. Through Diedrich Knickerbocker’s voice Irving provided descriptions of how during “that delightful period, a sweet and holy calm reigned over the whole province.” Such descriptions of the burgomasters and mistresses were so captivating they would become stereotypical: the colonial Dutchman “smoked his pipe in peace – [in] the substantial solace of his domestic house, [and] his well petticoated yffrouw, after her daily cares were done, sat soberly at her door, with arms crossed over her apron of snowy white…” Irving explained to the reader in the introduction to the book:

The main objective of my work, in fact, had a bearing wide from the sober aim of history... It was to embody the traditions of our city in an amusing form; to illustrate its local humours, customs, and peculiarities; to clothe whimsical associations so seldom met with in our new country, but which live like charms and spells about the cities of the old world, binding the heart of the native inhabitant to his home.\footnote{Irving, “History of New York, 110.}

However exaggerated the tropes and dramatically caricaturized the people in Irving’s tales were, it appears that Irving staged his narratives in front of a remarkably accurate backdrop of material culture.

**The Things of New Netherland: Material Culture Strategies**

*Thus, today’s gift is tomorrow’s commodity. Yesterday’s commodity is tomorrow’s found art object. Today’s art object is tomorrow’s junk. And Yesterday’s junk is tomorrow’s heirloom.*

This observation by Arjun Appadurai comes from an article entitled “The Thing Itself,” in which he reflects on his theory of the social life of things and revisits his earlier contention that things travel between commodities and singularity, defying distinct categorization. He rightly argues, “all things are congealed moments in a longer social trajectory.”\footnote{Arjun Appadurai, “The Thing Itself,” *Public Culture* 18, no. 1 (2006): 15-21.} In keeping with Appadurai’s contentions, Ann Smart Martin’s approach to early American decorative objects studies things simultaneously as arts, commodities, and artifacts of daily life.\footnote{Ann Smart Martin, “Arts, Commodities, and Artifacts: The American Decorative Arts, 1630-1820,” *Makers and Users: American Decorative Arts, 1630-1820, from the Chipstone Collection* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1999), 9-24.} Similarly, Paula Findlen proposes that by envisioning the early modern period through objects, the cultural hybridity of many things is engendered,
as each is “the product of new relations among peoples expressed in their material culture.”

Unpacking the term used by Findlen, Samuel Adshead argues that material culture is not exclusively an intellectual construct or physical object, but rather the interface between the two. The term’s two-part meaning is sometimes forgotten, according to Cynthia Falk, for material culture “entails more than just the ‘material,’” the physical or tangible. It imparts ideas and values and is embedded within the culture of not only its makers but also its original and subsequent users.” She is cautious of scholars from various disciplines using terms like artifact and object interchangeably with that of material culture to signify everything from landscapes to objects or anything else made or modified by humans.

Often containing multiple histories, and an equally complicated nomenclature, things can be difficult to define. Despite Falk’s inclination to draw boundaries among things (as opposed to artifacts and objects) Bill Brown’s “thing theory” draws on twentieth-century material culture studies to address “the vitality of material history, in accounts of everyday life and the material habitus.” John Plotz expands on Brown, suggesting that defining what is meant by things can be “an arcane dispute” in light of

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142 Adshead, Material Culture in Europe and China 1400–1800, 3.
Martin Heidegger’s “thingness of things,” for “thing theory is at its best when it focuses on the sense of failure, or partial failure, to name or classify.” It is not a philosophy regarding the significance of objects but a methodology that recognizes the slipperiness of these terms as being at the heart of “thing theory,” one that “highlights, or ought to highlight approaches to the margins – of language, of cognition, of material substance...” 

Recently developed material cultural strategies have turned to interpreting “the design and materiality of interiors” as a particularly meaning-filled site for investigation. Ian Woodward outlines the role of things in these interiors in a way that challenges binary distinctions of public and private, proposing that analyses of domestic objects should consider a socio-semiotic and a socio-cultural approach, with the home being an important focus in material culture studies:

Domestic spaces are not exclusively public or private, as such meanings shift according to the social and familial location of visitors to the spatial organization of the home. Domestic objects, too, serve shifting purposes; an issue that requires application of both the semiotic and cultural approach to objects. The semiotic value of domestic material culture varies according to the needs of the situation; objects sometimes have a public role in the home.

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147 Plotz, “Can the Sofa Speak?” 110.

as a signifier of status, style or taste, and other times do very private psychological work for the viewer which revolves around the object serving as a focus for managing self-identity, family relations or self-esteem...Ways of living in the home, and the organization and selection of the system of objects within its spaces, are circumscribed by moral prescriptions associated with family, gender and class positions.149

Conveniently, the Dutch term wooncultuur encompasses a wide range of terms including “domestic things,” “domestic culture,” “domestic lifestyle,” “culture of living,” and even “material culture of the home.” Mariët Westermann locates the study of wooncultuur as the “inherently interdisciplinary and cross-cultural area of study pursued by social, economic, and cultural historians, anthropologists, and historians of art that emerged with the democratization of topics of study beyond elite classes.”150

Beginning in the 1970s, cultural anthropologists like Mary Douglas and Barry Isherwood reconsidered previously overlooked goods and commodities to be bearers of meaning and important artifacts of exchange.151 At the same time new kinds of social histories turned attention to vernacular histories, folkways and the material culture of the everyday.152 Leading such studies, Henry Glassie views material culture as a “transdisciplinary movement” useful in “expanding and integrating” the study of art, for:

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It uses historical and ethnographic techniques to understand art as part of common human experience. It adds the anthropological idea of culture to art history in order to make art a part of history in general. It adds the art of the people to general history to make it more democratic. It gathers archaeological, geographical, historical and ethnographic evidence to locate art in the world.\textsuperscript{153}

In the last several decades these approaches have encouraged a wide range of scholars from historians (including scholars of art and literature) to anthropologists to work more closely with archaeologies and curators to consider a broader range of objects.\textsuperscript{154}

Reflecting this interdisciplinary turn, a renewed interest in the material traces of New Netherland flourished in the 1970s. From 1974 to 1976 Alice P. Kenney undertook a large project to locate and catalogue the art and artifacts of 1609-1800. Co-sponsored by the Albany Institute of History and Art and the New-York Historical Society, the Hudson Valley Dutch Museum Survey was funded by the National Endowment for the Arts and the New York State Council on the Arts. What is particularly interesting about Kenney’s survey is how she defined “Dutch material culture” as first, objects made and imported from the Netherlands; second, those made by makers with Dutch surnames; third, those showing Dutch stylistic characteristics; and fourth, and those purchased by or handed down from several generations in Dutch families in New Netherland. Although very broad, this approach provides a variety of different ways to think about the biographies of objects circulating in trade networks and passed between people. To

\textsuperscript{153} Henry Glassie, \textit{Material Culture} (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1999), 76.
\textsuperscript{154} Findlen, “Early modern things,” 11.
obtain information about objects in public holdings, a questionnaire was sent to seventy-five museums in New York, New Jersey, and Delaware (within the boundaries of New Netherland) and thirty other museums with Dutch artifacts listed in published catalogues.155

Using the responses, Kenney compiled “Silence Is Golden: A Catalogue of Dutch Artifacts in Hudson Valley Museums,” a database of 1811 objects that consisted of seven hundred and sixty silver pieces, two hundred and twenty paintings and graphics, one hundred and seventeen ceramic pieces, fifty-three architectural details, three hundred and fifty-three furniture pieces, two hundred and two household utensils for cooking, heating, lighting and other purposes, forty books, and eighty-four miscellaneous items (smoking accessories, textiles, vehicles, and weapons). To further analyse the objects, Kenney divided the catalogue into four chronological periods: 1609-64; 1664-1714; 1714-1776 and 1776-1800, which she explained “reflect developments in the history of the colony which significantly altered the colonists’ opportunities to acquire material possessions.”156 It is important to note that Kenney’s survey only included public institutions and in doing so her database excludes items held in personal collections. She did, however, take into account the factors that shaped what objects survived over the

155 Kenney’s database recorded on recipe cards is held in the archives of the AIHA.
156 Alice P. Kenney, “Neglected Heritage: Hudson River Valley Dutch Material Culture,” Winterthur Portfolio 20, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 62. Two other categories were added: “eighteenth century” goods that were difficult to precisely date and “undated” objects that cannot be dated.
centuries, with museum holdings reflecting the often heavily biased choices of collectors rather than a balanced representation of all aspects of material culture.\footnote{Kenney, “Neglected Heritage,” 62. Considering how much systems of organize information have adapted with digital technologies, Hudson Valley Dutch Museum Survey, would be a wonderful resource for scholars if it were an online resource. The painstaking process Kenney underwent in the 1970s would be expedited and made more widely available to researchers now.}

In 1982, as part of the bicentennial of the exchange of diplomatic ambassadors between the Republic of the United Netherlands and the United States of America, the New-York Historical Society mounted the exhibition “The Birth of New York: Nieuw Amsterdam 1624-1664.” In the following year the show travelled to the Amsterdams Historisch Museum.\footnote{Van Gelder, The Birth of New York, 42.} The exhibition interpreted the material traces of New York City’s Dutch period utilizing documentary sources from Dutch archives and recent archaeological discoveries made in North America. Organized by Boudewijn Bakker, then chief curator of the Department of Prints and Drawings of the Municipal Archives of Amsterdam, the symposium New Netherland Studies: An Inventory of Current Research and Approaches showcased “pioneering research into the history and ‘post-history’ of New Amsterdam and New Netherland, and the economic and cultural relations between the colony and the mother country.”\footnote{Boudewijn Bakker, New Netherland Studies. Bulletin KNOB 84, no. 2/3 (June 1985): 50.} The exhibition, the accompanying symposium, and the published proceedings were a major contribution to what had previously been disparate scholarship.

Benefiting from the connections formed between American and Dutch scholars through “The Birth of New York: Nieuw Amsterdam 1624-1664” project, in 1986
Roderic Blackburn and Ruth Piwonka curated the “Remembrance of Patria: Dutch Arts and Culture in Colonial America 1609-1776,” an exhibition at the Albany Institute of History and Art. The substantial exhibition reflected and contributed to a burgeoning academic interest in a critical view of not only the colonial period, also but how scholarship had been influenced by late nineteenth and early twentieth century Colonial Revivalism. The exhibition catalogue, along with the proceedings of the accompanying conference on “New World Dutch Studies: Dutch Arts and Culture in Colonial America” covering archival, archaeological, and curatorial findings, continues to be among the most important scholarly explorations of a relatively under-examined period in American history.¹⁶⁰

For many years, Blackburn’s and Piwonka’s individual and collaborative research was considered the final word on the people and things of New Netherland and Dutch New York.¹⁶¹ Their meticulous primary research left little room for new contributions.


Finally, in 2009 the 400-year anniversary of Hudson’s “discovery” of New York inspired renewed scholarly attention. Throughout the State, there were celebrations, which almost rivalled the 1909 Hudson-Fulton celebration with an outpouring of scholarship and the mounting of numerous exhibitions.\(^{162}\) A replica of the ship De Halve Maen was docked in the harbour and many of the city of New York’s cultural institutions held exhibitions highlighting the city’s Dutch heritage. Crowds flocked to see Johannes Vermeer’s Milkmaid (1657-58), borrowed from the Rijksmuseum and displayed in America for the first time since it was part of the New York World’s Fair in 1939.\(^{163}\)

The quadricentennial also produced one of most important recent contributions to the scholarship on New Netherland. Held at the Bard Graduate Center Gallery, the Dutch New York Between East & West exhibition and catalogue were both major additions to scholarship on colonial New York and the perseverance of Dutch culture despite the English take over and subsequent American Revolution. This project reflected an intersection of curatorial and academic approaches and the research methods and critical

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methods employed serve as a model for innovative ways to display and discuss material
culture. More importantly, the exhibition amassed a diverse range of objects from
around the world, exemplifying innovative ways to tease full and vibrant portraits from
often flat and dull documents. Marybeth De Filippis, Deborah L. Krohn and Peter N.
Miller’s project utilized microhistorical methods to tell the story of a woman and her
things. They poetically describe their search to find Margarieta van Varick’s voice and
put a “face” to her inventory, saying:

...[P]hysiognomy itself comes to us through several layers of
translation: a person translated into her things, the things named
in the language of their users and then translated into the language
of law, and then, hundreds of years later, translated first back into
the things, insofar as we are able, and then at the very limit of our
intuition, into a human face.

Utilizing the unique opportunities provided by material cultural strategies, the curatorial
team was motivated “by a desire to recapture the ordinary, the female, the excluded,
those whose voices were not recorded in archives or were ventriloquized by their
‘betters’. “ Although the picture that begins to emerge only sketches Van Varick,
raising more questions than answers, perhaps one of the greatest strengths of the
catalogue is the methodological self-reflexivity outlined by Krohn and Miller. The
authors sought a certain degree of transparency in the curatorial project, keen to note
alongside the multitude of important discoveries the recurring challenges that appear

164 Peter N. Miller and Deborah L. Krohn, “Introduction: Seeking Margrieta,” Dutch New York Between
East and West, eds. Deborah L. Krohn and Peter N. Miller, with Marybeth De Filippis (New York: BGC,
2009), 7.
when dealing with objects from the past and narratives often excluded from traditional histories. The exhibition and the catalogue are equally invested in the journey and the destination, noting that the contributions extend beyond exploring one woman’s life to engage with many of the problematics of microhistorical methodologies.

Most importantly, the curators acknowledged the limitations of working with inventories, noting that the passage of time and the translation process have rendered Van Varick’s inventory a list signifying classes or types of objects, leaving it impossible to identify specific objects. Rather than ceding to this constraint, instead the exhibition included representations of the many types of goods described in the 1696 inventory – furniture, metalwork, textiles, clothing, utensils and ceramics. The imposing walnut, elm and oak kast displayed in the exhibition could be similar to the “Great Chist lockt up [sic]” listed at the very beginning of her inventory. Likewise, Krohn, Miller, and De Filippis have included plausible representations of the “finist turkey worky carpet [sic],” the “silver wrought East India trunk” and “cullerd callico Curtens [sic].” Other items such as the “eleven Indian babyes [sic]” proved to be more challenging to interpret. Again reinforcing the curators’ understanding of their role in the act of “translating” Van Varick’s inventory, Krohn, Miller, and De Filippis provide multiple possibilities for the interpretation of some of the entries. In doing so, they cleverly recoup the process of “connoisseurship” or what they refer to as “historical tact” to come to conclusions as to what the inventory could have referred to.  

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167 Miller and Krohn, “Introduction,” 2
With the hopes of “bumping into [the] cultural furniture” of the communities of New Netherland and early Dutch New York I have developed a broadly interdisciplinary foundation, reading the work of anthropologists, historians, economists, art historians and sociologists. Of these approaches, material culture scholarship examining hand-made crafts, everyday household objects, and domestic spaces has provided an entry into vernacular history previously denied. As well as inventories and other egodocuments, I utilize non-written sources - visual representations and material evidence - to fill in the gaps where voices are absent from written records. In doing so, my work presents marginalized histories otherwise excluded from the forthright documentation used to form traditional narratives.

Throughout this dissertation I investigate the complex roles of Dutch colonists as communicators of culture in the domestic empire of things and the global empire of commerce in New Netherland and New York from the first European settlement of the area c. 1609 to the middle of the eighteenth century. In order to shape the landscape, the initial settlers most likely, according to James Deetz, “brought with them a blueprint – in their minds for recreating the culture they left behind.” Although Simon Schama has argued that “‘Home’ existed in the Dutch mentality in a kind of dialectical polarity with ‘world,’” using examples of an increasingly hybrid and transient visual and material

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168 Schama, The Embarrassment of Riches, 6-7.
170 Deetz, In Small Things Forgotten, 58.
culture, this thesis investigates the ways in which the Dutch concepts of *huis* and *wereld* were not polar opposites but rather inextricably intertwined in the making of New Netherland and Dutch New York.\textsuperscript{171}

\textsuperscript{171} Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches*, 389.
Figures

Figure 1.1 Maker Unknown, *Lepel and Vork*, c. 17th century, private collection.

Figure 1.2 Maker Unknown, *Lepel and Vork* (reverse), c. 17th century, private collection.
Chapter 2

Mapping and Materiality: Geographies of Homeliness and Worldliness

To know is to name is to describe, but it is also to make.\(^{172}\)

Johanna de Laet (nd), a colonist of New Netherland, was just one of many consumers and producers of the “graphic traffic” that was used to shape the image of the New World in the seventeenth century.\(^{173}\) The daughter of Johannes de Laet (1581-1649), WIC director and author of books on the company’s world trade, she arrived in New Netherland in 1653. The transatlantic voyage came after her father died and she inherited his share in the patroonship of Rensselaerswyck, a large tract of land in the upper Hudson Valley. The patroonship plan was devised in 1629 by the WIC to attract more settlers to the colony without causing the company to incur further expenses. Similar to manorial lords, patroons were given land and legal command over their property in exchange for settling the territory at their own expense. The original patents included Zwaanendael on the Delaware Bay, managed by Samuel Blommaert (1583-1651) and Samuel Godyn (1561-1633), but abandoned after being decimated by the indigenous population; Pavonia, which was quickly sold by Michael Reyniersz Pauw (1590-1640) back to the WIC;

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\(^{173}\) Elizabeth Sutton borrows the term from Richard Brettel’s discussion of the modern art in which capitalism has produced a variety of images used to construct and reinforce power. I think this is a particularly apt term for the circulation of visual information in seventeenth-century Dutch trade networks. See Elizabeth Sutton, “Mapping Dutch Nationalism across the Atlantic,” *Art@ls Bulletin* 2 no.1 (Spring 2013): 11; Richard Brettel, *Modern Art, 1851-1928: Capitalism and Representation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 105-106.
Staaten Eylandt, now Staten Island, for which Cornelis Melyn (1600–c. 1662) battled the Raritans and company politics; Achter Col, on the Hackensack River, which was deserted with the start of Kieft’s War; and Rensselaerswyck established by Kiliaen van Rensselaer (c. 1586-1643). Patroonships were one of the many ways the Dutch attempted to re-organize North American geography according to European standards of land ownership. After their arrival in North America Johanna de Laet and her husband Johan de Hulter (nd) established a farm and one of the colony’s first successful brick kiln and tile yards north of the Vossenkil near Beverwijck, now Albany. When de Hulter died in 1656, Johanna sold the brick business and relocated to New Amsterdam where she later met and married Jeronimus Ebbingh (nd), a wealthy merchant from Hamburg. Engaged in various forms of trade, de Laet appears several times in the court records, particularly in reference to her share of the Van Rensselaer patroonship, a legal battle that was not settled until 1674.

I include this anecdote about Johanna de Laet because she is an example of one of the many consumers typically excluded from a discussion of early modern cartography. Prior to her departure for the New World she would have engaged with the various forms of knowledge that formed European understandings of lands across the seas. Although we do not know what specific things she may have owned, as I describe later in this

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chapter, her father possessed at least one map and a globe. It is likely she would have seen these things and the information they provided was shaped by her interaction with them in a domestic setting. Years later when she returned to Leyden, the same city where her father had published his accounts of America, Johanna de Laet no doubt returned with mental images of New Netherland inconceivable to her father. As early colonists, she and others with familial and trade ties to the Dutch Republic actively contributed to the physical and intellectual construction of the colony.

This chapter looks at the ways the imaginative - textual and visual - geographies of home intersected with what Alison Blunt and Robyn Dowling call “the politics, lived experiences and conceptualizations of nation and empire” both in the Dutch Republic and overseas during the colonization of eastern North America first as New Netherland and subsequently as New York. As with other depictions of contact zones, the print culture that constructed New Netherland through cartography and its related media formed not only “imagined communities” as Benedict Anderson suggests, but also “imagined worlds,” a concept that according to Appadurai accounts for “the multiple worlds which are constituted by the historically situated imaginations of persons and

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groups spread around the globe.\textsuperscript{177} This chapter focuses, then, on the books, pamphlets, maps, atlases, prints, and paintings that saturated European publishing markets with a “cross-cultural cartography,” amply displaying the expanding European world and its global encounters, for while peddling the material goods of the world, the Dutch also widely distributed \textit{images} of the world.\textsuperscript{178}

At the center of the “empire of print” lay the publishing houses of the United Provinces, which essentially controlled the narratives formed by the histories, broadsides, and geographies that visually and ideologically connected continents.\textsuperscript{179} In conjunction with their commercial efforts, the VOC and WIC contributed to the production of knowledge about the New World, as both required all captains under each company’s employ to submit all charts, maps and journals upon their arrival home.\textsuperscript{180} As Julie Hochstrasser has written, the “perceptual knowledge” produced through these portrayals became a vital commodity: as images circulated through the networks of the Dutch trade routes lavish publications presented visual information about distant cultures.\textsuperscript{181} While not leading the physical conquest of the New World (in comparison to territorial gains made by France, Spain and later England), the Dutch, as Benjamin Schmidt argues, did in

\begin{flushleft}
\textsuperscript{179} Schmidt, \textit{Innocence Abroad}, xix.
\textsuperscript{181} Julie Hochstrasser, “The Butterfly Effect: Embodied Cognition and Perceptual Knowledge in Maria Sibylla Merian’s \textit{Metamorphosis Insectorum Surinamensium},” \textit{The Dutch trading Companies as Knowledge Networks}, eds Siegfried Huigen, Jan L. de Jong and Elmer Koffin (Leiden: Brill, 2010), 60.
\end{flushleft}
fact win the contest of *representing* it, with North America and other colonies readily depicted via their successful publishing industry.¹⁸²

By considering specific maps as images and objects, depicting, defining, and deconstructing homeliness and worldliness, this chapter addresses questions of how the things of colonialism were made visible, and which things were made visible, that is, the politics of visible objects. My approach follows what Gillian Rose and Diya Tollia-Kelly call “a situated eye, an attunement to the collective, multiple and embodied textures, sensibilities and productive meanings of the visual through the material, and vice versa.”¹⁸³ Existing literature on visual and textual descriptions of New Netherland has concentrated on the attribution of authorship and the geographic and historical information these sources provide. Rather than dwelling on various descriptions’ accuracies or inaccuracies, I interrogate the layers of meaning and multiple perspectives made material through the discursive practice of mapping. My investigation contributes to the field by performing a close analysis of how New Netherland was pictured by not only the peoples actively constructing the colonial community but also those in *patria*.

**Describing New Netherland: The New World in Texts**

In the seventeenth-century journals, reports and letters written in the New World for a European audience shaped the contours of maps and formed images of the local flora,

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fauna and inhabitants. These accounts provided valuable information about the things available in North America and ways to access both familiar resources already exhausted in Europe and also relatively new materials. According to Svetlana Alpers, during this time *descriptio* was a term commonly applied to maps, atlases and related genres, with cartographers and publishers frequently referred to as “world describers.”

Literary descriptions were produced, disseminated and consumed in a variety of ways, for instance as *things* that were touched to turn a page or place on a shelf in the home. In what follows I do not intend to perform a close literary reading of key texts describing New Netherland for an early modern European audience. Instead, I focus on the materiality of these works – as folios, quartos, pamphlets – and how their form served to engage with existing understandings of the New World and would in turn inspire later versions. For Jaap Jacobs, contemporary descriptions of New Netherland provide a “good picture” of New Netherland but one that was shaped by available means of production and modes of consumption. Primarily written by the Dutch and produced for an audience in *patria*, at home, the records I examine were accordingly shaped to appeal to European commercial and/or imperialistic interests rather than serve as accurate, first-hand accounts of the colonies.

Despite the increase in cartographic and visual representations in the years following Henry Hudson’s 1609 voyage, initially few books provided information on WIC colonies to a wider public. Many of those available were intended for a specific

audience of mariners and explorers. In 1623 Dierick Ruiters published *Toortse der Zeevaart* (*The Torch of Navigation*) a manual on navigating the south Atlantic, based on the previous findings of the Portuguese navigator Manoel de Figueiredo’s *Chronographia repertorio dos tempos*.\(^\text{186}\) Ruiters’ account promised readers “one could observe the marvellous works of the Lord: how in all quarters of the world man is created of various natures and shapes and in multitudinous conditions.” This claim included specific attention to conditions in New Netherland.\(^\text{187}\) Despite his inclusion of exotic travel narratives, the popularity of Ruiters’ book was quickly overshadowed by the more descriptive texts that would follow.

In 1625 Johannes de Laet, then a *bewindehebber* (director) of the WIC and later its unofficial historian, published *Nieuwve werelt ofte beschrijvinghe van West-Indien* (*The New World or a Description of the West Indies*) and later the four volume *Historie ofte Iaerlijck verhael van de verrichtingen der Geoctroyeerde West-Indische Compagnie* (*History and Account of the Incorporated West India Company*) in Leiden in 1644.\(^\text{188}\) The first edition of *New World*, as it is now commonly known, was published by the House of Elzevier as a large folio and subsequently reproduced with additional material De Laet had collected from other printed sources.\(^\text{189}\) It was reprinted several times, appearing in Latin (*Novus Orbis*) in 1633 and in French (*Histoire du Nouveau Monde*) in 1640. Never

\(^{186}\) Dierick Ruiters, *Toortse der Zeevaart: Om te beseylen de Custen gelegen bezuyden den Tropicus Cancri, als Brasiliën, West Indien, Guinea en Angloa* (Vlissingen: Maarten Abramsz van der Nolck, 1623); Manoel de Figueiredo, *Chronographia repertorio dos tempos* (P. Ramires, 1603).


\(^{188}\) Klooster, *The Dutch in the Americas, 1600-1800*, 45.

having traveled to New Netherland, De Laet based his writing on the reports and journals of Hudson, Cornelis Jacobsz May, Hendrick Christianensz (nd) and other sailors. His interest was geographic description and providing information about the shores, distances and navigability of water and land routes. Like Ruiters, De Laet addressed a mercantile audience (his closely linked network of peers) through the content – primarily travelogues and journals indicating shipping, anchoring and trading locations – and the form – large and expensive volumes affordable only to a select few.

In the early 1620s Nicolaes van Wassenaer (1571-1630) broadened the audience for accounts of current events and overseas exploration, when he wrote Historisch Verhael alder ghedenck-weerdichste Geschiedenissen die hier en daer in Europa (Historical Account of all the most Remarkable Events which have happened in Europe). This publication was contemporaneous to developments in newspaper publication in the modern sense, as it appeared as semi-annual volumes or pamphlets beginning with the 1622 coverage of activities between January and June of 1621 and continued for the next ten years. Van Wassenaer’s accounts began right around the time the WIC was granted charter and gained popularity as the company continued to structure its internal organization and establish posts throughout the Atlantic world. Van Wassenaer addressed their coincidental flourishing by dedicating the second issue (the first lacked a dedication) to the WIC. The February 1624 installment began by linking the mercantile and imperial

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190 Jacobs, New Netherland, 9.
potential of New Netherland:

Numerous voyages realize so much profit for adventurers: that they discover other countries, which are afterwards settled and planted with people... The Lords States General observing the great abundance of their people as well as their desire to occupy other lands, have allowed the West India Company to settle that same country. Many from the United Provinces did formerly and do still trade there. 192

The popularity of Van Wassenaer’s publication as a novel form of media in the first quarter of the seventeenth century demonstrates a new public interest in its content as well as its physical presence. Specifically the pamphlets addressed events surrounding multinational organizations and their implications for global economies, international politics and transcultural interactions. Furthermore, their popularity was linked to their material form. Books, pamphlets, broadsides and other goods made tangible the increasing availability of information as communicated by the intangible knowledge networks formed by Dutch trade companies. In light of his own contribution to early modern geographic knowledge it is also important to note Van Wassenaer’s own consumption of cartography: an inventory of his belongings taken in 1630 indicates he owned a globe (een globus met een gepleijstert hart sonder horen) and a map (een groot kaert van de geheele werelt). 193 Along with the reports he was receiving from around the world, these tools enabled him to write of the rest of the world without ever having to

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leave his home.\textsuperscript{194}

While early accounts were provided by proxy through the writing of those who never ventured outside of Northern Europe, learned men stationed in New Netherland for political, mercantile, and religious posts provided later reports. Johannes Megapolensis (1603-c.1670), a \textit{predikant} (minister), arrived in the colony in 1642 and upon his scheduled departure in 1649 was asked to stay on after Dominie Backerus’ resignation. Megapolensis remained in New Amsterdam until his death in 1669, even counseling colonial leader Pieter Stuyvesant through the city’s surrender to the English in 1664. Two years after Megapolensis’ arrival in the new world, in 1644, \textit{Een kort Ontwep vande Mahakvase Indiaenen} (\textit{A Short Account of the Mohawk Indians}) was published in Alkmaar, North Holland.\textsuperscript{195} The introductory sentences would have appealed to the entrepreneurial spirit of a mercantile audience, as Megapolensis began by stating, “The land is good, and fruitful in everything which supplies human needs, except clothes, linen, woollen, stockings, shoes, etc., which are all dear here [sic].”\textsuperscript{196}

Typical of the recycled nature of information at the time, the pamphlet was compiled from Megapolensis’ correspondence with friends and was published without

\textsuperscript{194} Among other sources, Van Wassenaer gathered information from people on board the \textit{Arms of Amsterdam}. Peter Francis Jr., “The Beads That Did Not Buy Manhattan Island,” \textit{One Man’s Trash in Another Man’s Treasure: The Metamorphosis of the European Utensil in the New World}, ed. Alexandra van Dongen (Rotterdam: Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, 1995), 59.
\textsuperscript{195} Johannes Megapolensis, \textit{Een kort Ontwep vande Mahakvase Indiaenen} (Alkmaar: 1644).
the knowledge or consent of the author. Joost Hartgers (active 1650), a bookseller located on the Kalverstraet in Amsterdam (or more precisely: “boekverkoper op den Dam, beziijden t Stadt-huys, op de hoeck vande Kalver-strael” according to the title page) reprinted the text in 1651 along with an engraving of one of the first topographical views of New Netherland (Fig. 2.1) as a pamphlet entitled, Beschrijvinghe van Virginia, Nieuw Nederlandt, New Engelandt, en d’Eylanden Bermudes, Berbados, en S. Cristoffell (A Description of Virginia, New Netherland, New England and the Islands of Bermuda, Barbados and St. Christopher). The ways in which knowledge of New Netherland was constructed and re-constructed through such accounts by different sources emphasizes how images - textual and visual - were shifted, translated and revised with each of these iterations. Layers of understandings (and misunderstandings) were inscribed through symbolism and motifs each time sources were aestheticized, quoted, converted and compiled. One of the most common misconceptions was that palm trees grew in New Netherland, a myth that persisted well into the representations of the eighteenth century, despite Adriaen van der Donck’s (1618-1655 or 1656) detailed description of the various “fine species of trees” and temperate climate of the colony.

In 1649 Van der Donck a lawyer educated at the University of Leiden turned New World schout (director), provided one of the first widely circulated first-hand descriptions...
of New Netherland. As a member of New Netherland’s *Raad van Negen Mannen* (Board of Nine Men) he wrote two documents originally intended as an appeal to the States General for a reorganization of the colonial administration: “*Re queste van de Gemeente van Nieuw Nederland*” (“Petition of the Commonality of New Netherland”) and the forty-nine page treatise *Vertoogh van Nieu-Neder-land* (*Representation of New Netherland*) more commonly known as the *Remonstrance*. In a third document, he annotated the concise “Petition” with “*Naedere Aenwysinghe opde Requeste by de Gedeputeerden van de Gemeente van Nieuw Nederland*” (“Additional Observations on the Petition of the Representatives of New Netherland”). *Representation of New Netherland* became a well-read pamphlet when it was printed in 1650. In fact, the same text was reissued and translated several times to become the most reproduced of all texts on New Netherland.\(^{200}\) While it may not have resulted in Dutch citizens “clamouring to emigrate,” as suggested by Russell Shorto, the accessibility of this pamphlet (in terms of its content, form and language) raised the Dutch awareness of the colony.\(^{201}\) It was an example of the ways political agendas circulated broadly in the mid-1600s, reaching new forms of publics.\(^{202}\)

While waiting for the Dutch government to respond to the concerns outlined in the *Remonstrance*, during which time he was exiled from New Netherland, Van der


Donck published a longer book-length text, extolling the virtues of the land. First published in 1655, Van der Donck’s *Description of New Netherland* stands in contrast to earlier travelogues, for it constitutes a new type of text, with a different intended audience, content and ultimately, purpose.\(^{203}\) Van der Donck shifted the focus away from seafaring, mercantile consumers, to address middle-class farmers, artisans, and tradespeople who would be required to recreate the United Provinces overseas. Fitting his education, and the literacy level of his readers, Van der Donck wrote in a sophisticated style, described by Charles Gehring as “full of complex constructions, contemporary metaphors, and historical allusions.”\(^{204}\)

According to Frans Blom, the textual images constructed in the *Description* were part of a major emigration campaign in Amsterdam supported by the municipal government of New Netherland, after the WIC had all but abandoned the project of settling the colony.\(^{205}\) The *Description*’s form was tailored to an audience of artisans, farmers and merchants with skills needed in the new world, who were pondering the question of emigration. It was a low-cost popular printed production, undertaken by Evert Nieuwenhof (active 1640s-1660s), an Amsterdam publisher known for his vernacular texts produced for a widespread readership. In terms of the *Description*, for the author, the publisher and the WIC, who acquired its copyright, the main goal was increasing the

\(^{203}\) Blom, “Picturing New Netherland and New York,” 103.


\(^{205}\) Blom, “Picturing New Netherland and New York,” 104.
population of New Netherland by disseminating specific information to potentially emigrating Dutch citizens. Van Der Donck proclaimed his intentions in the text:

And because it is Your daily concern to bring people to that land... I felt the urge to give this [description] to my fellow countrymen, to the bold and skilful people in particular. Those who might otherwise not know of that good and healthy air and the potentials of New Netherland can now be stimulated to go there [sic].

Van der Donck’s text was a source of information and in its printed form it was an important, commodified thing that entered the open Dutch market. An extant pamphlet from 1659 entitled t’Verheerlickte Nederland door d’Herstelde Zee-Vart (The Netherlands Glorified by Seafaring Restored) copied Van der Donck’s use of a conversation between “A Dutch Patriot and A New Netherlander” to answer potential immigrants’ questions about the colony. In it a burgher, a farmer, and a sailor discuss the current challenges that face them and the potential opportunities available in the New World. When the seaman raises concerns about their ability to understand his geographic references, the burgher’s and the farmer’s responses attest to the their familiarity with cartography, with each respectively stating “I’ve had occasion to look at maps, so that they are not completely strange to me,” and “I even have some maps at home, where I

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206 “En de oornemendt gheghe veel syn de wijchhe molts aem, ende syt zich bestendighe, om dat Lantschap met bequaeme Colonien van Menschen te version [...] daerom hebbe ick niet konen nalaten alle mijne Lantsluyden ten besten, ende voornemmente veele kloekhertighe en bequaeme Luyden, mijne Mede-Burgeren, dit te laten toe komen, opdat sy, die andersins soo grondeljck van de goed ende gesonde lucht en vruchtbaerheyt des gemelten Lantschaps Nieuw-Nederland, niet bewust en zijn, te best mogen opgeweckt wonden om derwaerts te gaen.” Adriaen van der Donck, Beschryvinge van Niew-Nederlant... (Amsterdam: Evert Nieuwenhof, 1656), fol. 3v-4r.

207 Anonymous, t’Verheerlickte Nederland door d’Herstelde Zee-Vart (Amsterdam, 1659).
can look things up now and then.” They discuss theories of colonization and finally the sailor urges them to purchase a copy of Van der Donck’s recently published book, where he not so subtly opined that the state and not trading companies should fund colonial projects. This pamphlet reflected the interests of the WIC, in promoting the colonization of New Netherland, as well as serving as excellent advertising for Nieuwenhof’s publication of Van der Donck’s *Description*.

Again in October of 1662, Van der Donck’s and Nieuwenhof’s texts were featured in another anonymous emigration pamphlet, *Kort Verhael van Nieuw-Nederlants gelegentheit (A Short Account of the Opportunities in New Netherland).* Perhaps written at the WIC’s request, the eighty-four-page pamphlet described the colony as an Eden in the North American wilderness, where “free living Christians” could live in a prosperous, democratic society. Wealth and happiness would come to those willing to establish “Dutch industry and thrift” overseas. Various subsequent compiled publications based on Van der Donck’s writing connect to broader issues of print culture. The increased access to multiple texts resulted in a more active participation on behalf of the reader, but also re-structured thought processes and led to the circulation of multiple, co-existing ideas, as opposed to singular objective truths.

By the time New Amsterdam was taken by the English in 1664 a great deal had changed for key players in the early production of print publications on New Netherland.

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208 Van der Donck, *A Description of New Netherland*, 168.
210 *Kort Verhael van Nieuw-Nederlants gelegentheit, Deughden, Natuurlijke Voorechten, en bij ondere bequaemheidt* (Amsterdam, 1662), 61.
Van der Donck was dead, Nieuwenhof was no longer publishing emigration literature and the WIC had lost their stake in the territory, with their rights to the text ending in 1670. In 1671 Arnoldus Montanus repurposed parts of the Description in *De nieuwe en onbekende weereld: of Beschryving van American en ‘t Zuidland (The New and Unknown World, or the Description of America and the South Land)* for a text published by Jacob van Meurs. Much like the luxury folio volumes of travelogues and geographical narratives that preceded Van der Donck’s original publication, later versions were produced for a select and wealthy audience. Throughout the seventeenth century (and later), the text appeared in several material forms. From cheap multiples to luxury editions, Van der Donck’s words were re-used, re-cycled and re-employed to serve a variety of different purposes aimed at very different audiences.\(^{211}\) Over its many iterations Van der Donck’s *Description*, like many of the imaginings of the colonies, became a hybrid composition

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\(^{211}\) Texts attributed to van der Donck include Adriaen van der Donck, *Beschryvinge van Nieuvv Nederlant* (ghelijck het tegenwoordigh in state is) begrippende de nature, aert, gelegentheyt en vruckt-baerheyt van het selve lant; mitsgaders de proffijte-lijck ende gewenste toevallen, die aldaer tot onderhout der menschen, (soo uyt haer selven als van buyten ingebracht) gevonden worden. Als mede De maniere en og hemeyne egenschappen vande wilden oste naturellen vanden lande. Enge een bysonder verhael vanden wonderlijchen aert ende het wezen der bevers, daer noch by gevoeght is een discours over de gelegentheyt van Nieuw Nederlant, tusschen een Nederlant patriot, ende een Nieuw Nederlande (T’Aemsteldam: Evert Nieuwenhof, 1655); Adriaen van der Donck, *Beschryvinge van Nieuvv Nederlant* (ghelijck het tegenwoordigh in state is) begrippende de nature, aert, gelegentheyt en vruckt-baerheyt van het selve lant... Daer noch by gevoeght is een discours over de gelegentheyt van Nieuw Nederlant, tusschen een Nederlant patriot, ende een Nieuw Nederlande (T’Aemsteldam: Evert Nieuwenhof, 1656); Adriaen van der Donck “Description of New Netherlands, by Adriaen van der Donck, J.U.D., translated from the original Dutch by Hon. Jeremiah Johnson,” *Collections of the New York Historical Society* (New York: New York Historical Society, 1841), 125-242; Adriaen van der Donck, *Description of New Netherland*, trans. Jeremiah Johnson, Old South Leaflets 4 no. 69 (Boston: Directors of the Old South Work, 1896); Adraen van der Donck, *A Description of the New Netherlands* ed. Thomas F. O’Donnell (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1968).
drawing on multiple perspectives. Broadly speaking, it also stands as an example of the malleability of texts and ideas in the wake of a burgeoning culture of print.

**Mapping New Netherland: Geographies of the Imagination**

*A place on the map is also a place in history.*

When Nieuwenhof republished Van der Donck’s *Description of New Netherland* in 1656, the second edition included a map (Fig. 2.2). The representation of the territory of *Nieuw Nederlandt* comprises the top two-thirds of the map. Although the geography is inaccurately rendered, with the island of Manhattan much too large and incorrectly oriented, the *Versche Rivier*, the *Noordt Rivier*, and the unlabelled *Sud Rivier* each neatly frame the area claimed by the Dutch. Small shapes indicate the densest forests and mountainous regions. In the top corner fantastic animals represent the wilderness beyond European exploration. In the void made by the “*Mar del Nort*” a view of “*Nieuw Amsterdam opt Eylandt Manhattous*” is shown. This townscape would have been familiar to the Dutch viewer: small houses were neatly arranged with each gable-end visible below a windmill, church, gallows, and Dutch flag. Nieuwenhof had copied the middle portion of an already available map, that I will soon discuss, and also a cropped view of *Nieuw Amsterdam* from the inset image.

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For the many European consumers of cartographic material who would never set foot in the New World, maps and atlases documented exotic lands. They were no longer just tools to locate places but also a highly consumable method of describing.\textsuperscript{214} According to Valerie Traub, attempts to analyze the politics and poetics of space of such maps provide a complex portrait of the role of early modern cartography in the simultaneous construction of subjects, nations, and the world.\textsuperscript{215} By the time New Netherland was being created, maps were not only produced for actual use in seafaring, but also used for a much wider range of consumption as decorative elements in burghers’ homes in the United Provinces. During the early modern period Dutch cartography flourished as printers in urban centers like Amsterdam, Leiden and The Hague proffered exotic prints, overseas histories and travel narratives. In these cities supply met the demand, with multiple artists and engravers taking advantage of increasing advancements in print technologies to serve markets created by maritime industry.

The school of Dutch cartographers that emerged in the seventeenth century combined two descriptive traditions: the production of maritime maps, guides, journals and travel narratives, and the making of decorated sea maps on parchment.\textsuperscript{216} Jodocus Hondius (1563-1612) and his son-in-law Johannes Janssonius (1588-1664) as well as Willem Janszoon Blaeu (1571-1638) produced high quality maps, globes and atlases.

\textsuperscript{216} Klooster, \textit{The Dutch in the Americas}, 47.
Prior to 1600, Blaeu began producing scientific instruments and globes, then later maps and engravings. Finally, after several years in the business the States General provided him with a stipend to print a nautical guide with maps and charts.\(^{217}\) When Blaeu’s book and map shop, *de Vergulde Sonnewijser*, opened in 1605 in Amsterdam, he had direct contract with sailors returning to the port city from their travels.\(^{218}\) In order to cater to markets throughout Europe and the world, these materials were produced in multiple languages and different forms, including maps, globes, and atlases, each of varying size, cost and portability. Schmidt observes that local and international publishers “crudely pirated” and “brazenly copied” originals, copies, and copies of copies to satisfy an increasing demand for images of the world.\(^{219}\)

In 1609 when Hudson sailed down the river that would later bear his name (an important point to make when in an imperial consciousness, nomenclature and possession went hand in hand), he and the other Dutch explorers and traders that followed encountered an already well-established Native economic system that distributed material culture widely. Along with agricultural products (corn, beans, squash, berries, meats, and tobacco), manufactured goods (animal skins, twines, canoes, basketry and other crafted items) were commodified in complex trade networks reaching across North America.\(^{220}\)

\(^{218}\) By 1664 the House of Blaeu was the largest printing operation in Europe. For more on this see Cornelis Koeman, *Joan Blaeu and his Grand Atlas* (Amsterdam: Theatrum Orbis Terrarum, 1970), 17-18.
\(^{219}\) Schmidt, “Mapping an Empire,” 554.
At a time when Europe’s demand for animal fur was increasing, beaver skins along with the promise of other potential resources drove Dutch colonial projects. Walloon families setting sail on 29 March 1624 were required to follow the WIC’s “Provisional Orders,” which encouraged settlers to seek out “mines of gold, silver copper or any other metals, as well as of precious stones, such as diamonds, rubies and the like, together with pearl fisheries.” The rich material culture that existed in the New World combined with the exotic commodities Europeans imagined waiting to be discovered and mined in lands they had yet to possess was quickly appropriated for symbolic and ornamental use on maps.

Adriaen Block (1567-1627), a Dutch lawyer turned merchant-explorer, returned to the United Provinces in 1614 with animal pelts and the knowledge of how to obtain more in the form of a map charting the waterways from Manhattan to Cape Cod. (Fig. 2.3) As the earliest extant European geographic representation of the area, Block’s map was viewed as evidence of a Dutch claim to the area, despite the presence of indigenous people. The map’s caption Manhates indicated on the island did not denote the place but rather a group of people occupying that space. At the time competition for prized beaver furs was heated between Block and other companies present in the harbor. The States General declared their intentions to privilege the endeavors of groups charting the area to further access to resources when they proclaimed, “those asking for a privilege to trade in newly discovered countries should submit an account on their return describing the

221 Quoted in Rink, “Seafarers and Businessmen,” 19.
After Block’s map was presented to the States General on 11 October 1614, the governing body first declared the area between the fortieth and forty-fifth parallels to be New Netherland and also granted Block and his company of twelve merchants from Amsterdam and Hoorn exclusive trade rights there until 1 January 1618.223

Early images of the area demonstrate the extent to which knowledge of the New World was discursively constructed from a European perspective to hybrid, collaged results. While most likely a contemporary copy of Block’s original sketch, the map held today in the State Archives of The Hague was probably executed with the help of Edam cartographer Cornelis Doetsz (active 1610s). Two separate, distinctive styles appear in the drawing and lettering indicating that while Block would have sketched in the details, Doetsz may have completed the outline. This careful mapping of the area influenced later colonization of the lands by providing the information needed to allow settlers to spread out instead of concentrating their settlement in one area. Later cartographers like Blaeu would copy Block’s rendering. For example, Blaeu’s *Nova Belgica et Anglia Nova* (1635) and subsequent engraved versions are strikingly similar to Block’s. His version of the map would remain the prototype for another almost thirty years.224 (Fig. 2.4)

Figurative maps like those based on Block’s 1614 expedition to New Netherland, 

223 For more on this see Jacobs, *New Netherland*, 36.
which were submitted to the directors of the WIC, demonstrate the connection between cartography and possession. For Schmidt “the signs and symbols of geography shape the contours and circumstances of colonial expansion” and these images engaged “the drive to colonize abroad and simultaneously convince rivals at home of the legitimacy, feasibility, and enforceability of their imperial claims.” When on 27 March 1614 the States General called for “diverse merchants, wishing to discover New Unknown Rivers, Countries and Places,” part of the agreement required those accepting the offer to submit a detailed report including charts and maps, within two weeks of their return. After the WIC was founded in 1621 to create a national monopoly on Atlantic trade, similar documentation persisted. According to J. B. Harley and David Woodward, mapmaking “was one of the specialized intellectual weapons by which power could be gained, administered, given legitimacy, and codified.” In their various forms, maps mattered to those interested in creating a New World empire. These documents can be viewed as a form of “cartographic petition.” That is, Dutch claims in New Netherland were staked not entirely through settlement of the land (like the English tactic), but rather through

discovering, mapping, and naming. Shortly after assuming the post of Director-General of the colony in 1647, Pieter Stuyvesant drew up his “Description of the Boundaries of New Netherland,” a document that has been described as a position paper outlining the extent and limits of Dutch sovereignty in New Netherland. The geographic language of this document reflects how cartography was not just a tool for trade, but also could be understood as what Mukerji calls “a means for approaching and appreciating the orderliness of the earth and patterns of human domination over it.”

Dating from the early 1660s and possibly drawn by Johannes Vingboons (1617-1670) cartographer to Johan Maurits, Prince of Nassau-Siegen, for the WIC, the Manatus Map (Fig. 2.5) is a copy of a map first executed in 1639 and now lost. The inhabitants of the area of Manatus Gelegen op De Noort Rivier, most likely prepared the original, at the request of the WIC, who were eager to document the development of the patroon system. Prior to establishing the cartographic convention of orienting maps to the north, many views like this were oriented with the west at the top, almost as if Europeans were viewing the New World as they would from across the Atlantic Ocean. Clearly indicating the forty-five farms using the Dutch terms bouwerij or plantages, this image was part of the WIC’s effort to colonize the area depicted. The diverse list of property owners includes English, Danish, Norwegian and even Moroccan names. When few Dutch were eager to emigrate, the company drew on individuals who had recently

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immigrated to the Low Countries and other foreigners employed by the VOC and WIC to add to the colony’s population. In line with the WIC’s interest in providing the resources to populate the land, the map’s key describes the settlement including a gristmill, two sawmills, and as listed the “Quarters of the Blacks, the Company’s slaves.” The southern tip of Manhattan is depicted as the most developed region but there are other settlements along the Noort River and outlying areas suggesting that the Dutch were interested in replicating the landscape of patria with its canals and rivers by charting water routes linking dispersed settlements strategically located for regional and Atlantic trade.\textsuperscript{231}

Lacking cartouches or other forms of decoration, this stark, utilitarian map makes apparent the diffusion of the settlements throughout the area, likely in order to facilitate exchange across the expansive terrain and ultimately stake possession of the territory.

In contrast to the previous earlier manuscript maps, \textit{Novi Belgii Novaeque Angliae Nec Non partis Virginiae Tabula} (c. 1651-53) was mass-produced for a wide audience, eager to display images of the New World in their homes (Fig. 2.6). The authorship of the map is complicated for a prominent New Amsterdam citizen Augustine Herrman possibly drew it and later had it engraved by Nicolas Jansz. Visscher (1587-1652).\textsuperscript{232} Johannes Jansson (1588-1664) first published the unsigned map in 1652 (hence the common attribution to his hand). Jansson created at least five states and other publishers and

\textsuperscript{231} Cantwell and Wall, “Landscapes and Other Objects,” 318.
\textsuperscript{232} Hermanns (and various spellings) came to the colony in 1633 and through joint ventures with fellow countrymen did a brisk trade in furs from the north, tobacco from the south and wool and woods from the Caribbean. Eventually considered one of the “greatest merchants” of the area he retired to Maryland in 1670. See Cathy Matson, \textit{Merchants & Empire: Trading in Colonial New York} (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 26.
mapmakers would release over twenty-five other versions. At the time of its publication it was relatively accurate in depicting landmasses and labeling place names, as it was a summation of all previous cartographic knowledge of the area. A version of the map was mentioned in Van der Donck’s Remonstrance when he describes a “perfect map of the country and its situation.”

The result of a variety of different sources, this map located many new settlements to provide one of the most detailed renderings of both Dutch and English colonies.

While accurate in many ways, perhaps this particular map overemphasizes Dutch power in the area depicted. Elizabeth Sutton notes it appeared during a time when encroaching English and Swedish settlements increased the need to clearly define the boundaries of the Dutch sovereignty in New Netherland. Even though at the time of its publication Amsterdam would not yet have received word of Stuyvesant’s capitulation to the English, the map figures into Dutch emigration schemes. According to Kees Zandvliet, the WIC utilized “news maps” in their effort to motivate investors, interest new ones, and entice colonists. As part of the representation of Dutch nationalism abroad, news maps depicting political and military events overseas were both

234 Pritchard and Taliaferro, *Degrees of Latitude*, 86.
The bucolic abundance shown in the decorative additions of *Novi Belgii Novaeque* were part of deceptive marketing attempts to lure colonists to New Netherland. Drawing heavily on the landscape and still life conventions of other forms of visual culture, these idyllic renderings are examples of thematic maps that show that in these cases “mathematical accuracy” was of less importance than “information value” to the producers and users alike. For nearly a century, the exhaustively reproduced Jansson-Visscher series established the ways the boundaries of New Netherland were visualized.

Jansson-Visscher maps of New Netherland provided additional information by including a view of New Amsterdam in the bottom right portion of the map where the Atlantic Ocean left a void. Town views as a means of further describing places began to be appended to cartographic images when folio sized maps became popular in the sixteenth century. In 1581, *Civitates orbis terrarum* was the first atlas to show townscapes from Europe, as well as Asia, Africa and South America. It was printed by Franz Hogenberg (1535-1590) with a team of contributors: the theologian and editor Georg Braun, the engraver Simon van den Neuvel, the artist and draftsman Joris Hoefnagel, the topographer Jacob van Deventer (c. 1500-1575) and possibly others. With an interesting afterlife in the seventeenth century, its perspectives would serve as an

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important forerunner to later geographic representations. With so few versions available, views of New World settlements built by Europeans were often similar. The first recorded view of New Amsterdam, dating to 1626-1628, was most likely based on a drawing made for Pieter Minuit, the first director-general of the colony. This image was created by Kryn Frederycks (nd), a German engineer sent out in April of 1625 by the WIC with instructions for him to survey the land in order for the council to construct houses and suitable fortifications. In this bird’s-eye view, houses are arranged neatly in the Dutch manner as if along canals below a predominant windmill, *stad huys*, and Reformed church. In the harbor, a large European trade vessel symbolically dwarfs an indigenous canoe.

Linked to geographical possession, townscape were important tools for the Dutch to view the ways in which their colonial efforts were transforming the environment. These landscapes served as information-filled artifacts demonstrating the ways in which natural and cultural surroundings were shaped by varying groups of people. The reuse of certain motifs and views demonstrates how maps were not pure forms, but hybrid compositions that further contributed to imaginary visions of “exotic” places. One view first seen on maps made by Visscher in the early 1650s was later replicated on maps made by Justus Danckerts (1635-1701), John Seller (1630-1697), and

242 Cantwell and Wall, “Landscapes and Other Objects,” 318.
243 Mukerji, “Printing, Cartography and Conceptions of Place in Renaissance Europe,” 653.
In the late 1600s and early 1700s, topographic views of New Amsterdam were employed to assert the continued Dutch presence through the establishment of familiar forms of architecture.

Carel Allard’s ornamental map of New Netherland, *Totius Neobelgii Nova et Accuratissima Tabula* (Fig. 2.7) reconstituted Janssons’ map from about 1655 with a baroque cartouche surmounting the “Rستيتتيو" view of New Amsterdam. Bearing the inscription “*_Nieuw-Amsterdam Onlandgs Nieuw Jorck Genaemt, en nu Hernomen by de Nederlanders op den 24 Aug 1673,*” this version of the view was likely drawn shortly after the recapture of New York and replaced the Visscher view as the topographical representation found on maps by Joachim Ottens (1663-1719), Georg Matthaus Seutter (1647 - 1756) and John Seller (1630-1697), serving as the backdrop for later views by Allard, Peter Schenk (1660-1711), and Pieter Mortier (1661-1711). On 7 August 1673 the Dutch recaptured the colony from the English in a relatively peaceful coup. They would only control the city for a few months, with the English regaining possession in the following year, but the “Rستيتتيو" view remained a popular propagandistic product until the mid-1760s. The townscape reflected later construction projects, such the completion of the _Heere Graft_ (Broad Street Canal), and a tavern built in 1670, but was in many ways an inaccurate depiction based on previous views, verbal descriptions, and rough sketches made on site. Comparisons between this townscape and previous versions

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245 Stokes, *“The Iconography of Manhattan Island, 1498-1909,”* 154.
support Bronwen Wilson’s suggestion that the process of defining and redefining civic identities was enhanced through the pictorial and technical ways perspectives such as the bird’s-eye view were manipulated.\textsuperscript{246}

In 1691 Carel Allard inherited the copper plate that was used to produce \textit{Totius Neobelgii Nova et Accuratissima Tabula} from his father, Hugo Allard, who published it in the mid-1650s. However, he does not appear to have used it until nearly ten years later, when he erased the motif of the city and etched a new more lavish view on the same plate. Like many other topographic views, slight inaccuracies suggest that the sketch of the city was not based on an eyewitness view but compiled from previous drawings or verbal reports.\textsuperscript{247} In fact, by the time it was published, Manhattan would have looked very different under English possession. Like verbal iterations of nationalistic propaganda, Allard’s map was used to embellish historical truth. But perhaps to the early modern viewer the notion of geographic accuracy differed from modern understandings. According to Mukerji, “Cartographic images – accurate or not – were reproduced and copied in print shops because there were readers who wanted to understand where they lived and how to imagine themselves part of the universe, a trading network, or a new regime of power.”\textsuperscript{248} Reflecting the fluidity of their material construction, the ways plates and images were exchanged and recycled produced a “cartographic pluralism” that

\textsuperscript{246} Bronwen Wilson, “The Eye of Italy: The Image of Venice and Venetians in Sixteenth-Century Prints,” (PhD diss., Northwestern University, 1999), 72.
\textsuperscript{247} Cohen and Augustyn, \textit{Manhattan in Maps 1527-1995}, 46-47.
\textsuperscript{248} Mukerji, “Printing, Cartography and Conceptions of Place in Renaissance Europe,” 664.
created multiple understandings of the New World.249

In her discussion of the culture that produced the commercial, scientific, and artistic confluence of “tulip mania” in the 1630s, Anne Goldgar proposes that the Dutch Republic created a discussiecultuur, defined as a society “that attempted, through discussion, mediation, and compromise, to rise above difficulties created by a pluralistic and at times politically divided society.”250 Thinking about cartography as a material form of geographic discussiecultuur can be fruitful when examining images of New Netherland. In the production of maps, publishers took on an administrative role, masterminding the publication of a print by organizing the designer, engraver, poet, financier, and printer.251 This combined process involved many people and collaborations.252 As such the final products were very much the result of multi-vocal geographic conversations with political, social and economic subtexts. According to Lesley B. Cormack, “a constructing community” of engravers, cartographers, explorers, and astronomers were all involved in producing cartographic material that would attract the attention of a consuming public.253 The collaborative process involved many people

251 Skelton outlined the roles: “a) when referring to the cartographer or draughtsman: delineavit, descripsit, invenit, auctore; b) when referring to the engraver: sculpsit (sculp., sc.) fecit, caelavit, incidit (incidente); c) when referring to the printer or publisher: exudit (exud. exc.), formis, sumpitubs, apud, ex officina. R.A. Skelton, Decorative Printed Maps of the 15th to 18th Centuries (London: Staples Press, 1952), 4.
and the consultation of previous cartographic representations created a kind of “discussion” between new and established images.

Maps provided people the means to travel the globe, and in the process they were able to collect further navigational data to contribute more information to future maps and images. The knowledge of the world that lead to map making was constantly changing and informed by many people with varying degrees of interaction with the places depicted. In the process of communicating about what the world looked like translations were made, nuances were lost and details were gained. Historian Timothy Brooke has commented on the reciprocal activity of cartography’s producers and consumers, noting that, “The geographer’s task in the seventeenth century was to engage actively in this endless loop of feedback and correction.”254 While exchanging goods, knowledge, however subjective, was formed. Here, capitalism was a key driver, as companies, amidst their financial pursuits, created an infrastructure to access information about the foreign world. In turn this knowledge produced further opportunities for commercial success.255

All very suitable to be framed and hung: The Thingness of Maps

In a 1663 letter to Louis XIV, cartographer Johannes Blaeu (1596-1673) extolled the value of maps declaring that they “enable us to contemplate at home and right before our

eyes things that are farthest away.” Growing in popularity since the sixteenth century, by the time of Blaeu’s commentary, maps and other geographic arts had made their way into many homes in the Dutch Republic. Like other luxury industries, cartographic workshops had moved north from Antwerp at the end of the sixteenth century, establishing Amsterdam as a major center of production. The breadth of production for geographic materials included everything from large lavish globes, smaller portable “pocket” versions of globes, grand folio atlases, simpler “minor” atlases and plain sheet maps, wall maps and even floor model mosaics that mapped the world under the patron’s feet. A major example is the room in the Amsterdam Town Hall that was inscribed with maps of the Eastern and Western hemispheres highlighting Dutch colonial possessions. (Fig. 2.8) Options available ranged from inexpensively produced broadsides made for wide distribution to lavishly printed and hand painted ornamental, specially commissioned works that could be more costly than paintings reflected the expansion of commercial cartography on the open market. Dutch geography appeared in many forms, genres and styles and appealed to an equally vast array of consumers throughout Europe and the world.

In literature on the place of maps in the ordering of Dutch homes, often their

258 Schmidt, “Mapping an Empire” 532.
259 Underscoring the commodification of maps, in 1717 one London publisher George Willdey included a small advertisement below the cartouche of the map, *To his Sacred & Most Excellent Majesty George by the Grace of God King of Great Brit/ain France and Ireland/ This Map of North America*. In the box was an illustration of the other things he sold in his “Great Toy Shop”: a pocket watch, a knife box, telescope, combs, razors, chatelaines, buckles, beads, spurs, jewelry, eating utensils etc. See Prichard and Taliaferro, *Degrees of Latitude*, 110-11.
materiality is overlooked. Schmidt finds that Alpers’ discussion of the place of cartographic imagery in Dutch art avoids a discussion of maps themselves and how they function as material objects. Instead of being a “flat working surface” for visual concerns, he considers early modern maps to be “delightfully thick objects and fundamentally material things” serving as décor in houses, devices of learning and a cultural and highly political medium of communication.  

260 In 1688, a catalogue for the Janssonius publishing house advertised sea charts as an ornamental as well as accurate image, noting that they were “based on very precise drawings. All very suitable to be framed and hung.”

261 Within Dutch homes maps were significant things: they were the material manifestations of global expansion locating settlers, and those who remained at home, within new understandings of the world. Not just used by sea captains and military leaders, by the mid-seventeenth-century maps became distributed to a broader public as a decorative art.

262 Beginning in the early 1600s wall maps were usually combined from several engraved sheets that were mounted on linen backing, hand colored and then varnished. They were then framed or attached to rollers. In this manner, as Welu claims, “A single wall map, therefore, could be made up in several different ways-in-effect, a made-to-order work of art.”

263 These carten hanging in many seventeenth-century Dutch homes

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262 Pritchard and Taliaferro, Degrees of Latitude, 42-53.
were literally collages of various prints arranged to produce a highly consumable view of the world.

Not surprisingly, John Loughman’s and John Michael Montias’ study of room use in upper-middle class urban homes in the United Provinces finds maps to be frequent elements of the décor of Dutch townhouses.\(^2\) They appear most frequently in the interstitial space of the voorhuis (front house). In typical early modern urban dwellings, the voorhuis was a small passageway to the other living areas used to receive guests or mail and deliveries, as well as for reading, sewing and other activities. According to Mariët Westermann, it was “a transitional space between the street and the inner home, neither fully public nor completely private but rather a place where the outside world may intrude upon the domestic.”\(^2\) Supporting Loughman’s and Montias’ findings, Jan van der Heyden’s *Sectional View of an Amsterdam House on Fire* from 1690 depicts a large wall map of the two hemispheres and a smaller map (possibly of the United Provinces) in the voorhuis (Fig. 2.9). In the inventories they examined from Amsterdam houses between 1600-1639, of the sixty-five maps that appeared, thirty or forty-six percent were listed as hanging in the voorhuis. In the next period covered by their study 1640-1679, the number of maps found in the same room had slightly decreased to thirty-six percent, with an increasing number found in upstairs rooms. Loughman’s and Montias’ research does not necessarily represent the holdings of all of the classes of people who immigrated

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to New Netherland. Instead the inventories represent the types of upper middle class families that were either directly investing or trading with the colonies or were indirectly enjoying the material goods that were changing the fabric of daily life within the United Provinces.\(^\text{267}\) Perhaps changes in distribution within the house, as evidenced in Loughman’s and Montias’ study, reflect a shift in cartography away from a scientific, navigational tool towards a decorative, symbolic art suitable for display in different areas of the home.

In the transfer of information from textual descriptions to visual descriptions, an active transmediation occurred. Specifically, travel narratives originally illustrated with rough woodblock prints in inexpensive and widely circulated octavo or duodecimo form were later remarketed to an upscale buyer with refined etched or engraved prints, and detailed maps as folios, by another or even the same publisher. Equally common was the rebranding of a luxury edition in a less expensive, smaller and abridged format.\(^\text{268}\) In part due to this transmediated process, seventeenth century cartographic representations were no more “mirrors of reality” than paintings of the time.\(^\text{269}\) According to Mukerji, maps served markets, not necessarily an intellectual progress. As aestheticized objects, luxury maps added a further dimension to the social function of maps that often altered the information they provided. Transitioning to decoration, maps were revised to provide a new product to old clients or adapted. For example, detail was added or simplified to

meet the price points of a broad purchasing public. As commodified objects they were tailored to particular audiences and part of the commodification of knowledge was the manipulation of these images.

As with other forms of print media, not only did maps circulate as commodities, so too did the materials used to make them. In his work on maps in Vermeer’s paintings, Welu traces the biography of the copper plates used to render the map depicted in *The Art of Painting* (Vienna) through the hands of four generations of cartographers from Haarlem to Rotterdam and finally to Amsterdam. When a fire destroyed the headquarters of the House of Blaeu in 1672, the surviving plates were sold at auction where other Amsterdam publishers purchased them and continued to sell the impressions. The copper used in making the plates for engravings was a valuable commodity itself, one that even had ties to the riches of the New World. Economic considerations even physically shaped plates, as they were often trimmed down to the boarder of the engraving in order to conserve extraneous bits of metal. Shop inventories and surviving examples indicate plates were often engraved on each side, recto and verso,

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270 Mukerji, “Printing, Cartography and Conceptions of Place in Renaissance Europe,” 651-3.
273 Pritchard and Taliaferro, *Degrees of Latitude*, 399.
thus doubling their output.\textsuperscript{275} In order to keep production costs to a minimum, copper plates from previous printings could be updated to show more up to date geography and also alter the decorative program according to current tastes. The changes made from state to state indicate printmakers’ responses to market demands and the increased availability of images and knowledge. The newly emerging, prosperous middle class purchased globes and atlases as educational aids, serving didactic purposes to help adults and children alike in understanding contemporary politics and global economies.

As copperplates were disseminated through different publishing houses and images were bought, sold, pirated, reproduced and updated, Dutch cartographers plied their trade to all levels of society providing images of the world for display in political offices, private libraries, merchant shops, and on the wall’s of burghers’ homes.\textsuperscript{276} Maps and related geographic imagery came to play an important role in the social life of people in the Dutch Republic. Originally used by government officials and the merchant elite to track expansion, worldly images soon filtered into popular visual culture.

Some mapmakers were affiliated with the artists in the St. Luke’s Guild and even some well-established artists such as Pieter Bast (1550-1605) and Balthasar Floriszoon van Berckenrode (1591-1645) considered themselves “\textit{cunstwercker in caerten}” (map-making artists). The son of Floris Balthasar van Berckenrode (1562-/63-1616) and engraver and goldsmith from Delft, Balthasar Floriszoon and his brother Frans Florisz

\textsuperscript{276} Traub, “Mapping the Global Body,” 71.
(1603-1634) exemplify the multi-media production of many artists of the time. While Frans would go on to have a successful career mapping for the Dutch East India Company, dying in Batavia, Balthasar Floriszoon produced the map *Nova et Accvrata totivs Hollandiae Westfrisae Topographia*, *(New and accurate description of the topography of the whole Holland and of West Friesland)* included by Johannes Vermeer in *Officer and Laughing Girl* (Fig. 2.10). Both brothers drew maps and also painted large-scale cityscapes, garden layouts and battle scenes. The bird’s eye was just one of the many perspectives rendered by the Van Berekenrode family. As artists catering to recently emerging open art markets, they produced many thematic and decorative maps as well as large-scale cityscapes, garden layouts and battle scenes that came to decorate Dutch homes.

In depicting versions of everyday life, Dutch genre paintings demonstrate the ways in which maps stood both for worldliness and also what Richard Helgerson describes as “a strongly positive national self-consciousness” among burghers and their families. Works like *Women with Needlework*, a sketch by Willem Buytewech (1591/2-1624) from 1617 (Fig. 2.11) challenge the home/world binary to suggest a more nuanced relationship to global expansion, literally within the homes of Dutch people. Westermann explains that paradoxically, maps “belonged in the home because they

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represented the world beyond it.”

Buytewech, one of the first artists to include maps in his compositions, typically used the motif to emphasize the cosmopolitan style of his elegant sitters but in this example the map fits right in with the working woman. By showing the vernacular engagement with maps in working class Dutch homes this drawing suggests how broad the audience for cartographic viewing was.

Buytewech is now known best for his prints and drawings, with his few extant paintings almost all depicting raucous interior scenes. In them, maps figure prominently on the walls above carousing, well-dressed young people. The Merry Company (c. 1620 The Hague, Museum Bredius) has the same map as that in Women with Needlework, suggesting Buytewech may have owned it, along with some of the other props, for example the unusual Y-shaped table, also depicted in his other paintings (Fig. 2.12). A wall chart containing a map, text and costume creates a worldly backdrop for the serving woman, a pipe player and two young men they are entertaining, one sporting a trendy beaver hat and the other smoking tobacco in a pipe (both products of New World trade). Another Merry Company (c.1620), now in the Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam (Fig. 2.13), also contains a chart, which according to Jeroen

280 Westermann, “‘Costly and Curious, Full of pleasure and home contentment’,” 74.
Giltaij, denotes worldly pleasures.\textsuperscript{283} Ironically, the map depicted on the chart is not of the world but of the United Provinces. Perhaps Buytewech’s intention was to demonstrate the recently formed Dutch Republic’s relationship to such worldly possessions. The inclusion of a map in these compositions indicates that it was not the content but the very presence of cartographic imagery that suggested worldliness.

In contrast to these merry scenes filled with things is another work, *Four Standing Young Men* (ca. 1624), attributed to Buytewech (Fig. 2.14), in which several men are posed in an almost empty room. The only other contextualization for the figures in the sparse setting is a large *cartes à figures*, depicting people from around the world. In his careful visual description of the four titular men and also the small African boy curiously omitted from (perhaps later nineteenth-century designations of) the title of the work, Buytewech is echoing the ethnographic bodies posed at the margins of the wall map. By replicating the figures on the map, this self-referential picture exemplifies Valerie Traub’s theories of cartographic bodies by evidencing a bricolage of fashion that:

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\text{…celebrates and encourages the cross-cultural contact of clothes, a ‘miscegenation’ that mirrors the aesthetic intermingling of clothing styles promoted by the fashion industry itself. Just as publishers of costume books pirated images from voyage illustrations for their collections, mapmakers copied images from costume books for map boarders. However, in so doing, cartographers reconstituted the dynamism of the clothing trade into a stable iconography of national dress. On maps, } \textit{habit} \text{ functions as a static metonym for national character, status hierarchies, and gender and erotic relations.} \textsuperscript{284}
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\textsuperscript{283} Quoted in Jansen, *Senses and Sins*, 47.
\textsuperscript{284} Traub, “Mapping the Global Body,” 51.
In quoting the cartographic bodies shown on the map, Buytewech shows the young men as costume plates. Bronwen Wilson explains that costume books were one of the expressions of a preoccupation with geographical differences, a phenomenon that emerged across Europe in the sixteenth century, but continued throughout the seventeenth and well into the eighteenth centuries.\(^{285}\) She describes how the discovery of worlds previously unknown to Europeans, and the associated practices of cartography, motivated by trade, created a geographic cataloguing of clothing, style, language, and even alphabets. Like the floating figures, abstracted from location, devoid of place, the ambiguous setting means that they could be standing anywhere and thus Buytewech gives the viewer an opportunity to “place” the figures based on the visual information available, primarily their dress.

According to Wilson, the importance of interpreting costume expanded along with “the image of the world.”\(^{286}\) Unable to be categorized as portraits or allegories, Buytewech’s genre paintings of men and their \textit{habit} is part of a larger early modern understanding of ethnoscapes. In the same manner as the cartographic bodies posed on the map the subjects of the painting are organized, centralizing and reconstituting and ethnographic arrangement. This impulse was in keeping with a larger ethnographic trend at the time for early modern viewers to observe bodies as objects classifiable according to gendered and ethnographic understandings.\(^{287}\)

\(^{285}\) Wilson, “The Eye of Italy,” 147.  
\(^{286}\) Bronwen Wilson, \textit{The World in Venice: Print, the City, and Early Modern Identity} (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2005), 70.  
\(^{287}\) Traub, “Mapping the Global Body,” 57.
**Imagining New Netherland: Ethnoscapes**

In his discussion of the materiality of Dutch cartography, Welu notes how the “ornamentation” of maps often extended beyond the margins of the sheet to include appended engraved and printed matter added to the perimeter in various combinations.288 A single wall map like that depicted by Buytewech in *Four Standing Young Men* contained geographic information but also included visual descriptors of how people from different places looked, dressed, and behaved – their habitats and their habits.289 Similar to the map Buytewech incorporated into his composition, Willem Blaeu’s 1635 *Nova Orbis Terrarum Geographica ac Hydrogr. Tabula (New Map of the Land and Seas)* (Fig. 2.15) included engravings by Josua van den Ende that depicted people of the world. Below the edges of the continents but within the cartographic picture plane, classical allusions abound. Europa is depicted with a scattering of industrial, scientific and artistic implements at her feet. Other personifications of the known continents pay homage: Asia presents a camel loaded with exotic goods, a nude Africa rides a crocodile-like creature while carrying a parasol and America is figured by two semi-nude women decked in feathers and followed by a gift-laden armadillo. The double border surrounding the map includes twenty-eight town views and thirty groups of inhabitants of these locations, identifiable by distinct regional dress.290 Far from inconsequential ornamental

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embellishment, according to Traub, such “cartographic bodies” drove the commercialization of the Northern European map trade and what appears to be superfluous decorative embellishment conveys a complex strategy of representing people and places according to emerging ethnographic knowledge.

Pieter van den Keere’s (1571–c.1646) *Nova Totius Oris Mappa, Ex Optimis Auctoribus Desumta, studio Petri Kaeri* (1611) is one such example of the ways a kaleidoscope of images from around the world were neatly arranged for viewers in Europe (Fig. 2.16).²⁹¹ Consisting of eight sheets, plus four sheets of decorative border, the large wall chart included classical allegories and contemporary ethnographic studies. The borders are made up of views of fourteen cities, seven rulers of nations, and eighteen pairs of local types. In the process of reorganizing cartographic bodies into grids of measured, linear spaces, they were extracted from the landscape and resituated according to the grammar of latitude and longitude, cartographic idioms. However, as framing devices, these figures cannot be dismissed as marginalia, for even from the edges their forms engage with the geography depicted.²⁹² Despite (or perhaps even more so because of) their ornamental function, the pairs of people on the borders were readily arranged according to European ethnographic hierarchies: representations of Europe were organized along the top, the New World along the bottom band, and Africa/the Near East on the right and Asia on the left.

²⁹² Traub, “Mapping the Global Body,” 76.
Drawing on classical motifs and contemporary accounts, an allegorical trope was employed to construct an image of New Netherland through an imperial gaze. According to Annette Kolodny, male travellers to the New World viewed the landscape as an idealized utopia, looking to America with a “European pastoral vision, seeing the land as Edenic, feminized for ease of conquest.” The imagery created by compiling descriptive travelogues and promotional pamphlets with cartographic decorations personified America as an exotic, fecund, indigenous woman, pictured bare-breasted, wearing a feathered headdress and carrying a bow and arrows, or sometimes corn and accompanied by an armadillo or alligator. The image of the “newest” continent was distilled and codified through the distinctive features of “America.” Her almost entirely imagined attributes, included the partial nudity, read as a lack of civil dress, exotic headdresses of fruit and feathers, and iconic bow and arrow even endure in popular media today. Perhaps one of the most well-known of these tropes is that of Adrien Collaert II’s (after Marten de Vos’) *Personification of America* in which a semi-nude, warrior

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woman is seated on a ferociously stylized armadillo. (Fig. 2.17) The print was part of a series depicting *The Four Continents*. Along with the other three “corners” of the earth, frequently represented iconographically as naked, veiled or feathered female figures, this raced and gendered personification of America drew on Cesare Ripa’s formulaic pairing of women dressed with the garb, accessories and products of their geographic homes in *Iconologia*. In fact the way all four corners are similarly depicted is significant because it demonstrates the homogenization of the “other” into a general trope of conquest. These increasingly iconic allegories were relied heavily on the style of sixteenth century Flemish prints, but were slightly adapted according to the visual information and verbal descriptions that were relayed as Europe sustained encounter with different peoples throughout the world.

Borrowed from previous maps by Blaeu and others, two native figures were a common if not inaccurate image by the time they appeared around the townscape of Justus Danckerts’ *Novi Belgii Novaeque Angliae (New Netherland and New England)* from the mid-1650s (Fig. 2.18).297 Here the sculptural poses of the two people, one clothed in furs and the other with a bow and arrow, not only refer to classical idioms (as seen allegorically in sculpture and frontispieces) but also serve to stereotype the indigenous people as “savage,” and easily placed within European colonial hierarchies. By representing native subjects as standard tropes, these cartographic bodies reduced the diversity experienced by European colonists into an orderly, systematic classification that

encouraged comparison amongst different “types” of people.\textsuperscript{298} Significantly, the identities of these figures often hinged on their presentation of goods that symbolized the untapped wealth of territories previously unexplored by Europeans, in this case the beavers and other local animals scattered across the map they title and also the swags of fruit and foliage that accompany them in framing the cartouche. As in mental cartographies, the illustrative cartouches in early modern mapping created flat indigenous types, where “cultural totems” replaced more nuanced understandings of other cultures. This appeared on maps in the spaces between place names, where Joseph Roach notes nude or feather-laden natives and their accompanying material culture created a bounty of goods not always verified through a first hand observation of the people depicted.\textsuperscript{299}

The “inexhaustible cornucopia” of foodstuffs, furniture, weapons, tools, furnishings and other accessories that were depicted in cartographic representations of indigenous people can be viewed in the same light as Dutch still life painting, in that both are, in the words of Norman Bryson, “a dialogue between this newly affluent society and its material possessions.”\textsuperscript{300} P. de Lang, in \textit{Woneren des Werelds (Wonders of the World} 1671), described the “exotic morsels” awaiting human consumption as \textit{admirabilia mundi} or what Schmidt summarizes as “sundry bric-a-brac” intended “for a vast and cluttered mental cabinet of curiosities.”\textsuperscript{301} By the time \textit{Recens edita totius Novi Belgii in

\textsuperscript{298} Traub, “Mapping the Global Body,” 64.
\textsuperscript{300} Norman Bryson, \textit{Looking at the Overlooked: Four Essays on Still Life Painting} (London: Reaktion, 1990), 109.
\textsuperscript{301} Schmidt, “Mapping an Exotic World,” 34.
America Septentrionali (A New Edition of All of New Netherland in North America), a version of the Jansson-Visscher map, was published by Tobias Conrad in 1757, the sumptuous nature of the luxury goods available was increasingly paired with the objectification of the indigenous and enslaved people who were often violently exploited for material gain (Fig. 2.19). The things of the New World were ostentatiously proffered in the margins, with the same sumptuousness as the still lifes of display or pronkstilleven discussed by Julie Hochstrasser in her study of visual and material cultures of trade.

These and many of the other images made to adorn maps and append geographic descriptions of New Netherland constitute “ethnoscapes,” a term coined by Appadurai to describe a transnational and intercultural phenomenon, deriving from global shifts in the representation of cultural and territorial group identities. Ethnoscapes are the landscapes of people, the tourists, immigrants, refugees, exiles, guest workers, and other moving groups and individuals who constitute a shifting world. Drawing from various textual, visual and material sources amalgamated by various agents in the field of early modern cultural production, print media created numerous, often contradictory ethnoscapes of New Netherland. One modern observer notes the differences in representation over the course of the seventeenth century: “Deteriorating relationships with American Indians surface in their pictorial treatment: upright Native American warriors in the Visscher map

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303 Hochstrasser, Still Life and Trade in the Dutch Golden Age.
devolve into groveling savages in the Allard map. The cartographic and social marginalization of the ethnic ‘other’ also, quite literally, frames a concurrent narrative of strife between competing European powers.”

Instead of Native Americans being viewed as equal partners in trade, as initially was the case when local politics and the availability of resources changed trade relationships between the Native Americans and the territorially ambitious colonists, later depictions began to show a range of non-Europeans as the disenfranchised tools to acquire goods. In this case, representations of indigenous people were underscored by their supplication and provisioning of goods.

The conflation of indigenous peoples with local resources is furthered by prints like *N: Amsterdam, ou N: Iork. In Ameriq:* published by Mortier ca. 1700 (Fig. 2.20).

Although the work has not been connected to a specific publication, based on the number visible on the cartouche it is thought to be the first of nineteen city views produced depicting twelve American towns (*Cartagena, Iuan de Porto Rico, Mexico, Havana, Quebec, Fernambuco, St. Salvador, Kallas de Lima, Kurason, St Augus de Floride, Cuso and another seven in Europe and Asia* (*Madrid, Rome, Mecha, Galen, Smirna, Goa* [sic]).

In these different plates alterity is communicated not through physical characteristics but more so through aspects of material culture, for in the early modern period, as Traub states, phenotypes were not established by skin color but strategies “marking differences and similarities through a visual mimesis of nation, religion, lineage, costume, as well as

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skin color – in a word, habit.”

Traub explains:

Derived from the Latin for ‘holding, having, ‘havior,” habit in this period signified ‘the way in which one holds or has oneself…
a) externally; hence demeanour, outward appearance, fashion of body, mode of clothing oneself, dress, habituation; [and] b) in mind, character, or life; hence mental constitution, character, disposition, way of acting, comporting oneself.” Habit thus synthesized the separate, yet closely related concepts, costume and custom, manners and morals.

Central to the composition of N: Amsterdam, ou N: Iork. In Ameriq is a semi-naked woman carrying a basket, alluding to the abundance of the New World. She gestures to another pair of figures in the foreground. A dark skinned, muscular man faces away from the viewer, to display his arrow and quiver full of bows. Closest to the viewer at the front of the picture plane, a sensuous woman embraces a palm tree. Despite the temperate climate of New Netherland, the tropical tree had long been a symbol of difference, fertility and prosperity and by extension the New World. Palm trees were just one of many “global conceits” of exotic imagery or exotic icons, as Schmidt terms the objects, images, and motifs that borrowed meaning as they circulated through various media and across cultures and were transformed in the process of cultural diffusion. The exotic tree gripped by the woman depicted, different from any seen in Northern Europe, came to stand for other attributes of difference.

Another particularly vivid early modern ethnoscape that drew on hybrid idioms of

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309 Schmidt, “Collecting Global Icons,” 34
the New World is an engraved copper plate engraving of *Nieu Amsterdam* preserved in the I.N. Phelps Stokes Collection of the New York Public Library (Fig. 2.21). This image is typical of the sorts of views that were produced during the later half of the seventeenth and early part of the eighteenth-century by publishers like Allard, Mortier, Pieter van der Aa and Pieter Schenk, to be attached to wall charts or to be bound together with maps as atlases. Despite appearing like books, such atlases prove to be a challenge to bibliographers. The combination of many artists’ hands in varying workshop practices and the non-standardized process of compilation, for example maps, images, and texts appearing on both sides of the page without a common orientation, created a range of imagery. As noted by Pieter van der Kroogt, the “additions, omissions and the interchange of individual sheets” ensure that each atlas is often a unique creation.\(^{311}\) Such gatherings of worldly images demonstrated how collecting also took place in the form of printed volumes, or “literary Wunderkammeren,’’ as Schmidt refers to these often uniquely assembled albums of visual and textual exotica.\(^{312}\)

Like the book it originally formed, *Nieu Amsterdam* is a collage of imagery and ideas of the New World that challenges notions of authorship and originality. While the artist is unknown, one observer noted the figures closely resemble others by an engraver named Pieter van den Berge (1539-1737), a native of Amsterdam active in Paris and Hamburg during the late seventeenth century.\(^{313}\) The fact that the authorship is also


\(^{312}\) Schmidt, “Collecting Global Icons,” 33.

unknown supports the extent to which these images were culturally produced by a dense, convoluted meshwork of makers.

The image includes three distinct picture planes: in the foreground are two fully clothed colonial figures, male and female on a raised hill; behind them are four slaves naked to the waist carrying heavy goods; and in the background, a topographic view of New Amsterdam. In the foreground a man holding tobacco leaves gestures to a woman in contemporary European dress holding a basket of fruit. Between them are packages ready for shipping and behind them in the secondary picture plane are half-naked Africans carrying unidentifiable goods, possibly referencing a sugar plantation. Their muscular features and almost caricaturized forms stand in stark contrast to the distinctive garments and identifying details of the figures in the foreground. The palm trees awkwardly sketched into this middle ground are not indigenous fauna of New Netherland but perhaps reference the tropical climes from where many enslaved people originated (Western Africa) and where their labor was required most notably plantations in Brazil, Surinam, and the Caribbean. Lacking any sort of narrative, their specific ethnic identity is ambiguous but as Roach suggests in other contexts, their exoticized bodies are treated like costume pieces, they are disposable objects “attached to the properties they manage, their role as metonymic substitutes is to efface the necessity of the real labor required to make and remake their world.”314 The presence of numerous enslaved peoples was one of the major differences between patria and New Netherland. During the 1620s and 1630s

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Africans acquired during the battles with the Portuguese for Atlantic territories were brought in to provide labor for farming company plantations as well as the construction of forts and palisades, like those visible in the townscape of *Nieu Amsterdam*.

A careful analysis of the architecture in the third, background portion of the picture plane, suggests that the townscape represents New Amsterdam c. 1643. Originally I.N. Phelps Stokes gave this date based on the fact that the church depicted lacks the steeple erected in that year.\(^{315}\) Despite certain recognizable features, artistic license has been taken to condense the view in order to depict important landmarks like the WIC buildings and the *Stadt Huys*. The cartouche above their head, indicating *Nieu Amsterdam* was a cartographic conciet; the landscape behind them was a common representational form, codifying place at the time. With references to several different visual traditions (townscapes, landscapes and ethnographic portraiture) literally layered, this print constitutes a complex, transmediated image.

A later image, *Engelse Quakers en Tabak Planters aende Barbados* (*English Quakers and Tobacco Planters in Barbados*) in Carel Allard’s *Orbis Habilitatis* (1700) reveals how interchangeable colonial motifs really were (Fig. 2.22). Here, the cityscape seen in *Nieu Amsterdam* is replaced with a view of the island of Barbados but the primary characters in the foreground and the objectified Africans blending in with the landscape are almost identical. This later, larger print, signed by Aldert Meijer, includes identical decorative accessories, the foreground figures and the mid-ground labor scene, but

replaces the background with a relatively accurate view of the island of Barbados. The repackaged images were thus available for sale to a new audience in a commodification process Schmidt describes: “Diffuse, digressive, often disorienting, sometimes recycled, purposely decontextualized: Dutch geography ended up being specific to none and thus palatable to all. The exotic world designed by the Dutch was a brand, ultimately, of very wide appeal.”

The medium of print is paramount to this practice of appropriation and reuse: just as with textual recycling and refashioning, it allowed for almost endless combinations of images.

In a similar visual sampling, another extant version from Pieter van der Aa’s Les Forces de l'Europe, Asie, Afrique et Amérique (1726) contains the same tobacco planters in Barbados but is brightly colored to further emphasize the paleness of the woman’s skin with the darkness of the enslaved Africans behind her (Fig. 2.23). This reuse of imagery to illustrate different geographic locations should serve as a cautionary tale to historians, eager to view early modern print culture as objective illustrations of daily life. In contrast to a “face value” approach, Michael Gaudio’s methodology of looking at and not solely through this series of images requires an attention to the processes of printmaking (the primary means through which the images and ideas of New World were reproduced) and the deep structures and significance beyond visual surfaces.

Historian Firth Haring Fabend reads the print of Nieu Amsterdam (Fig. 2.21), as

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317 These impressions were colored by hand. For more on this see Susan Dackerman, Painted Prints: The Revelation of Color (Baltimore: Baltimore Museum of Art, 2003).
318 Gaudio, Engraving the Savage, xiv.
encapsulating the main cultural institutions modeled after those in patria and reconfigured in New Netherland, namely the political structure (the tricolor flag waving), the legal organizations (the Stadt Huys) and the religious associations (the building housing the Dutch Reformed Church). While her characterization of townscape as constituting an “organization chart” establishing the hierarchy of institutions is convincing, her comments on the role and status of women are more problematic. For instance, she reads agency into the wife vis-à-vis the “brimming basket of produce, while slaves bring more produce up from the fields for her to consume at her table or to sell, as she wishes.” However, when the image is repurposed to represent Barbados nearly a century later, this image has very different implications for women in this English colony. As I will demonstrate in the next chapter, under the English legal system, women’s economic activities were far more circumscribed. In keeping with Gaudio’s approach to how the savage was engraved in visual depictions of the New World, a more nuanced “attention to the materials and techniques of the engraver reveal the structures as well as the limits and ambiguities in the imagining of primitive origins” also evident in this image.

In the ethnoscapes of New Netherland, figures become reused and repeated to create instantly recognizable and easily understood tropes. The process of production and material makeup of cartography meant that they were often quite literally stereotypes. Taking terminology derived from the print trade, originally indicating plates that

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320 Gaudio, Engraving the Savage, xiv.
duplicated typography or imagery, the term stereotype also came to be defined as “to
repeat without variation.”321 Copper plates changed hands as they were bought, sold, and
inherited throughout the early modern period and in doing so images got reused in more
or less the same form.322 The imagery they produced reflected this fluidity of ownership,
authorship and meaning. As part of practical, economically driven conventions, titles,
backgrounds and figures were be adapted and reconfigured in print to depict various
exotic locations in the New World. Indeed, as Schmidt claims, “the extensive illustration
programs of printed Dutch geographies also lent a fluidity, and even interchangeability,
to these sources. Plates produced for one volume typically reappeared in others, and a
reader could hardly be faulted for eliciting only the broadest and most basic themes from
the resulting, perhaps recycled product.”323 In their various incarnations cartographic
representations of New Netherland constitute ethnoscapes as described by Appadurai,
whereby “the suffix scape also allows us to point to the fluid, irregular shapes of these
landscapes, shapes which characterize international capital as deeply as they do
international clothing styles.”324

When Engelse Quakers en Tabak Planters aende Barbados appeared later in a
similar cartographic amassing of maps, images and textual descriptions published in a
French edition as Galerie Agréable du Monde (1728) by Pieter van der Aa, Nieu
Amsterdam al. New York was represented by a very different image of the former Dutch

321 For a more detailed discussion see Landau and Parshall, The Renaissance Print, 26-27. This definition is
322 Schmidt, “Collecting Global Icons,” 34.
colony (Fig. 2.24). Instead of depicting European colonists, it showcased fur-clad indigenous people. The atlas was a lavish sixty-six volume series, of which only one hundred copies were made, and included over three thousand prints and maps reproduced from plates acquired from other well-known seventeenth century cartographers. According to Wilson costume books (like those by Allard and van der Aa) were one expression of an early modern preoccupation with geographical differences and by “circulating a new global conceptualization of the place of bodies in the world, costume books codified social differences, a process of visual abstraction that compressed time and space.”325 The social differences most apparent across the vignettes in Galerie Agréable du Monde were conveyed through subtleties in the materials of everyday life and the exchange of goods.

Carel Allard originally engraved the pairing representing New Netherland (after works by Aldert Meijer from 1685) for inclusion in his version of Orbis Habitable. As with the image of Nieuw Amsterdam al. New York, the print shows a distanced view of lower Manhattan with, in the foreground, two people representative of what would have been considered local types (Fig. 2.25). The seated man, in loose garments and with bow and arrow in hand, is shown in the act of handing a small and inaccurately rendered beaver to a standing, fur-clad woman. The beaver is central to the composition and European audiences would have recognized the animal as the primary motivator for the establishment of New Netherland and the sustained contact between the Dutch Republic

325 Wilson, “The Eye of Italy,” 147-148.
and the colony of New York. Several conclusions can be drawn from this simple exchange: first, more accustomed to viewing furs disembodied from their animal form, the European artist sketching this scene was unfamiliar with the actual animal and the process of acquiring skins (trapping) and secondly, locals were actively engaging in the retailing of pelts.

The presence of regionally specific commodities relevant to the fur trade coupled with a gesture of exchange distinguishes *Nieu Amsterdam al New York* from many of the other images included in *Galerie Agréable du Monde*. Most significantly, it is one of the few selections from the collection of couples from around the world where the individuals are actively engaging with each other. The other pairs, especially those representative of European towns, are posed independently of one another (*Wien, Stockholm, Madrid*) and do not interact. However, throughout the consistent pairing of adult female and male, these figures reinforce a heterosexual idiom. Marriage is implied through the portrayal of the two positioned with arms draped around one another, holding hands, or gazing at one another and other poses of domestic intimacy. Instead of utilizing other relationships (parent/child, master/servant, ruler/subject) the implication of domestic heterosexuality reinforces the notion that the boundaries of a nation were formed and land domesticated by the presence of the marital body.

Within these encyclopedic organizations of life and lifestyles, another secondary pattern emerges whereby only the “savage” figures are seated (*Cape of Saint Augustine, Puerto Rico, the Cape of Good Hope*). In the case of *Fort Dauphin* (Madagascar) a cross-
legged man feeds a large zebu from his hand. With an imperial gaze, the European audience would have understood such postures to emphasize the indigenous person depicted as both close to nature and lacking the civility of a standing figure.

Finally, the cultures deemed to be the most removed from European ways of life are represented in ways that include more visual information about the native material culture. Although, as Traub writes, “representation of bodies is governed by an impulse to depict alterity, not to provide a comprehensive global itemization: what is already known does not require delineation; what is foreign or unfamiliar demands specification.”326 As well as providing more details, there is a difference in the type of accessorizing material culture depicted. The representative European figures display evidence of refined culture and erudition, while to varying degrees those on the margins of civilization are occupied with satisfying their base needs, such as acquiring food and preparing shelters. In contrast to the lace draped woman and reading man in Venetië, the dwellers of Mozambique carry weapons, boxes and other accessories of daily life. The characters in Cabo de Santo Agostinho feed children and prepare meals, demonstrating more of local ways of life, all with camel in tow. In the “civilized” images accessories have been processed through human consumption: they are the result of manufacture and as such they are pictured as refined things.

In Nieu Amsterdam al New York as with other images, the resources defining non-European locations were depicted in their raw state. Within these views, as Honig writes,

“both the value of goods and that of the persons who trade them are under its sway.”

In the process of creating a hierarchy based on material relations, the pejorative subtext here is that despite nearly two centuries of exchange in some of these locations, the indigenous people had failed to utilize commodities as deftly as Europeans had. This line of thinking would have provided the rationale behind the expropriation of goods and materials. With varying views of commodity exchange, the cartographic bodies in *Nieu Amsterdam al New York* depicted in *Galerie Agréable du Monde*, as with other ethnoscapes presented in early modern European print culture, speak to the relationship between imperial aims, ethnographic ordering and material desires.

Mapping visually solidified relationships to places and also access to the things that drove colonization, namely commodities and materials. Along with globes, atlases, prints, paintings, travel narratives, and other tools of the geographic trade, descriptions of the New World constructed and projected the image of power and possession abroad. In this chapter I have demonstrated how these cartographic tools were, as Schmidt explains, “no mere semblance of empire, maps furnished monarchs and merchants the very materials out of which distant empires could be fashioned.” The idea of New Netherland, where it was, what it looked like, who lived there, and the opportunities it provided were all constructed and re-constructed through a complex discourse, featuring multiple voices, all with differing views and motivations. Regardless of the media

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329 Schmidt, “Mapping an Empire,” 549.
utilized, dramatic hyperbole was used to describe the colony, as one poet Jacob Steendam did, calling New Netherland “the epitome and most noble of all climes, a maritime empire where milk and honey flowed.”

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330 “Niewu Nederland is ’t puijck, en ’t eedelste van de Landen, een Seegenrijck, daer Melck en Honigh vloeijd,” quoted in Albert Eekhof, De Hervormde Kerk in Noord-Amerika, 1624-1664 (The Hague: M. Nijhoff, 1913), 68.
Figures

Figure 2.1 Joost Hartegers, *T' Fort Nieuw Amsterdam op de Manhatans* (called *The Hartegers View*), c. 1626, J. Clarence Davis Collection in the Museum of the City of New York.

Figure 2.2 Published by Evert Nieuwenhoff, “Nova Belgica sive Nieuw Nederlandt,” *Beschryvinge van Nieuw-Nederlant…*, 1655, New-York Historical Society.
Figure 2.3 Adriaen Block (and Cornelis Doetsz), *Map of Chesapeake Bay to Penobscot Bay*, 1614, Algemeen Rijksarchief, The Hague.

Figure 2.4 Willem Janszoon Blaeu, *Nova Belgica et Anglia Nova*, 1635, John Carter Brown Library, Rhode Island.
Figure 2.5 Johannes Vingboons, *Manatus Gelegen op De Noort Rivier*, 1639, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C.

Figure 2.6 Augustine Herrman, Johannes Jansson, Nicolas Jansz Visscher, *Novi Belgii Novaeque Angliae Nec Non partis Virginiae Tabula*, c. 1651-53, New-York Historical Society.
Figure 2.7 Carel Allard, *Totius Neobelgii Nova et Accuratissima Tabula*, c. 1700, Museum of the City of New York.

Figure 2.8 Jacob van Campen, stadhuis floor, 1655, Amsterdam.
Figure 2.9 Jan van der Heyden, “Sectional View of an Amsterdam House on Fire,” Beschryving der nieuwlijks uitgevonden en geoctrojeerde slang-brand-sputen, 1735, Winterthur Library.

2.10 Johannes Vermeer, Officer and Laughing Girl, 1660, Frick Collection, New York.
Figure 2.11 Willem Pietersz Buytewech, *Women with Needlework*, 1617, Hamburger Kunsthalle, Hamburg.

Figure 2.12 Willem Pietersz Buytewech, *The Merry Company*, c. 1620, Museum Bredius, The Hague.
Figure 2.13 Willem Pietersz Buytewech, *Merry Company*, c.1620, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam.

Figure 2.14 Willem Pietersz Buytewech, *Four Standing Young Men*, ca. 1624, private collection, image from the Rijksbureau voor Kunsthistorische Documentatie, The Hague.
Figure 2.15 Willem Blaeu, *Nova Orbis Terrarum Geographica ac Hydrogr Tabula*, 1635, New York Public Library.

Figure 2.16 Pieter van den Keere, *Nova Totius Orbis Mappa, Ex Optimis Auctoribus Desumta, studio Petri Kaeri*, 1611, British Library, London.
Figure 2.17 Adrien Collaert II (after Marten de Vos), *Personification of America*, c. 1765, Winterthur Library.

Figure 2.18 Justus Danckerts, *Novi Belgii Novaeque Angliae*, c.1650s, Fordham University, New York.
Figure 2.19 Tobias Conrad, *Recens edita totius Novi Belgii in America Septentrionali (A New Edition of All of New Netherland in North America)*, 1757, Fordham University, New York.

Figure 2.20 Published by Pieter Mortier, *N: Amsterdam, ou N: Iork. In Ameriq*, ca. 1700, New-York Historical Society.
Figure 2.21 Maker unknown, *Nieu Amsterdam*, early 18th century, New York Public Library.

Figure 2.22 Carel Allard, “Engelse Quakers en Tabak Planters aende Barbados (English Quakers and Tobacco Planters in Barbados)” *Orbis Habilitatis*, 1700, New York Public Library.
Figure 2.23 Pieter van der Aa, “Barbados,” *Les Forces de l’Europe, Asie, Afrique et Amérique*, 1726, New York Public Library.

Figure 2.24 Pieter van der Aa, “Nieu Amsterdam al New York,” *Galerie Agréable du Monde* 1728, New York Public Library.
Figure 2.25 Carel Allard (after Aldert Meyer), “New Amsterdam or New York,” *Orbis Habitablis*, c.1700, New York Public Library.
Art historian Elisabeth de Bièvre has described exchange as a characteristic of the visual culture of the seventeenth century throughout the Low Countries, but most prominently in the mercantile province of Holland. She notes that many painted and printed images seem to be united by the common feature of exchange in which two people are seen in the act of a hand-over with the visual subplots giving viewers “non-verbal information about the society in which the representation was both produced and consumed.”

Given that profits could be made each time goods changed hands, the act of trade and its representation becomes particularly significant in the visual culture that first developed in the Netherlands and was subsequently used to depict women traders in New Netherland. In this chapter I examine women’s agency and the representation of things in visual cultures of exchange.

The women of New Netherland and Dutch New York were as Elizabeth Kowaleski-Wallace has termed “consuming subjects” and active participants in the economic shaping of the colony. I begin by analysing how these roles figured into the prescriptive literature of the time and extend the discussion into how such designations

materialized in the New World. Reflecting the contributions of koopvrouwen in patria, how did women in the New World participate in an industry such as the beaver trade that was quite specific to the region? One way in which I explore this type of question is by looking at images depicting women in the colonies. In her consideration of global methodologies, De Bièvre also calls for a “green art study” that views conditions such as local geography, eco-systems and climate as critical in the distinctiveness of an artwork’s appearance. My analysis of the wooncultuur depicted in portraits of women in Dutch New York is informed by such a “green” or ecological approach. This allows me to demonstrate the connectivity of people, like European and Aboriginal traders specifically linked through the exchange of beaver pelts and other things across space (regionally, and globally) and time.

Prescriptive Literature

The husband must conduct his business in the street,
The wife must look after the kitchen of the house.
One finds a country strange,
Where only women conduct business with people outside.
The husband broods in the house and busies himself with the child.
The husband makes sure the maid is spinning uniform threads.
There are also blots even here on our shores,
Where women do business and carry out great affairs.
Yes, traveling all over while the husband sits idle,
Sits and consoles himself with a full jug.

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334 Cats, Houwelyck, np.
During the seventeenth century the Dutch moralist Jacob Cats provided one of the most popular prescriptions of women’s roles. More than a dozen of his verse books combining biblical allusions, instructive anecdotes, folk wisdom, and explicit household examples outlined moral instructions for both men and women at all stages of life. Cats was particularly successful at putting into words (and images) ideals shaped by a new Protestant religion and family structure.\(^{335}\) His formative book *Houwelyck*, first produced in Middelburg in 1625 for an elite audience with engravings after designs by Adriaen van de Venne (1580-1662), was re-published twenty-one times in various formats customized to appeal to a variety of people with different economic means and social backgrounds. It is estimated that by 1650 there were over fifty thousand copies in circulation in the Dutch Republic, with the book often accompanying the family’s bible in a prominent place within the house.\(^{336}\)

Cats was influenced by *Hausratgedichten* (household utensil poems) that combined domestic duties with proper marital roles. Among the early publications on marriage and family were Justus Menius’s *Oecomonia Christian* (*Christian Housekeeping*, Nuremburg 1529), Heinrich Bullinger’s *The Christen State of Matrimonye* (London 1540), Desiderius Erasmus’s *Christiani matrimonii institutio* (*The Institution of Christian Matrimony*, Basel 1526) and Juan Vives’s *De Institutione feminae Christianae* (*The Education of Women*, Basel 1523). Other treatises produced in the Low Countries,

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336 For more on the cultural context of Cats’ writing and its influence on Dutch social structures and imagery see Schama, *The Embarrassment of Riches* and Franits, *Paragons of Virtue.*
like Johan van Beverwijck’s *Uytnementheit des Vrouwelijke Geslachten* (*On the Excellence of the Female Sex*, 1643) and Petrus Wittenwrovengel’s *Christian Economy*, lauded the role of the housewife and idealized the home as the sacred domain of private virtue. In *Paragons of Virtue: Women and Domesticity in Seventeenth-Century Dutch Art*, Wayne Franits considers the intertextual referencing of visual and literary imagery in the Dutch Republic to demonstrate how contemporary prescriptive texts such as *Houwelyck* were influenced by an already well-established print culture and would go on to further inform the iconography of genre paintings. In the case of both literary and visual examples, these images of domestic virtue are neither neutral nor faithful reportage; rather they should be considered as communications of great cultural significance, which shaped and were shaped by belief systems that endorsed the patriarchal views of the time. Although Cats’ texts and their accompanying images have been analyzed by a number of historians to emphasize Dutch domesticity, seldom have they been investigated for what they demonstrated about women’s relationships to things inside and outside the home and a broader exchange of material culture of the time.

Cats’ *Houwelyck* was by far one of the most popular of several similar publications circulating in the seventeenth-century Netherlands. It was unique in that it

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337 Westermann, “‘Costly and Curious, Full of pleasure and home contentment’,” 55.
addressed a female audience and was organized by stages in a woman’s life - *Maeght* (Maid), *Vryster* (Sweetheart), *Bruyt* (Bride), *Vrouwe* (Housewife), *Moeder* (Mother), and *Weduwe* (Widow) - instead of by household tasks or labour. Whether maids, wives, or widows, women’s roles contributed to what Arie Theodorus van Deursen refers to as “the unstable relationships” created in the fluidity of Dutch society between 1572 and 1648. Cats’ organization of life stages and gender roles reflected and responded to changes in Dutch society. With the emergence of a middle class, women who had not previously had domestic servants had to know how to manage them. They also needed guidance in response to the influx of worldly goods into the home. Along with increased access to materials, furnishings and accessories, civility in the form of new manners was shaped by increasing urbanization and social mores required as people came to live in closer quarters.

Published in 1632, Cats’ *Spiegel van den Ouden en Nieuwen Tyt* (*Mirror of Old and New Times*), an emblem book in three parts, was intended as a guide for both public and domestic life. For him emblemata were “mute pictures which speak, little mundane matters that are yet of great weight; humorous things that are not without wisdom; things that men can point to with their fingers and grasp with their hands.” As such, domestic material culture figured prominently in the iconographic programs of prescriptive

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342 Jacob Cats, *Proteus, ofte, Minne-beelden verandert in sinne-beelden* (Rotterdam: Pieter van Waesberge, 1627), i.
literature of the time. Working in varying degrees of collaboration, authors, illustrators and publishers employed an extensive number of commonplace utensils as metaphors for the idea that things were neither idle nor vain.\textsuperscript{343} *Proteus ofte, Minne-beelden verandert in sinne-beelden* (*The Emblems of the Proteus*, 1627) by Cats described utensils as “silent yet speaking images, laughable yet not without wisdom, in which morality is almost tangible, for they contain a hidden power to punish inner defects.”\textsuperscript{344}

Prescriptive literature had become popular among the people of the Dutch Republic because it outlined quite literally how to handle commodities that were entering their homes. The agency of things in altering domestic routines demonstrates that, as Talia Shaffer suggests, “Things are objects we tend to overlook, but they are meaningful in ways that can be breathtakingly different from our current understanding of objecthood.”\textsuperscript{345} As tables were being set with knives, forks, and napkins and dishes served in a particular order, prescriptive texts, often with instructive illustrations, outlined where things should be placed and in what order. Decorum became an important system of organizing people’s relationships to things as new commodities flooded the market and a new middle class emerged. When trade networks made available everything from exotic fruit and spices for the kitchen to porcelains, rugs, and wood furnishings to decorate the home, women had a wider range of goods from which to choose. The acquisition of goods was no longer related to survival, for according to Martha Moffitt Peacock, the

\textsuperscript{344} Cats, *Proteus*, 7.
consumption of luxuries allowed for women to demonstrate taste, and in turn their choices pressured the market into providing more lavish goods for the female consumer.\textsuperscript{346} In fact Petrus de Vernoegde’s \textit{De tien delicatessen des houwelicks} (\textit{The Ten Delights of Marriage}) from 1679 listed having a wife to decorate one’s home as one of the benefits of such a union.\textsuperscript{347}

The domestic conduct books that emerged during the seventeenth century were no doubt popular but rather than understanding them as straightforward indications of gender roles of the time, Dutch historians have begun to think of the images and ideals preached in prescriptive literature as a shift in thinking about women’s roles outside of the home. Cats’ texts are not necessarily indicative of hermetically sealed, distinct national and domestic spheres, as Schama suggests, but rather this literature grew in popularity as a response to domestic values that were being attacked, if they in fact ever existed.\textsuperscript{348} Writing about a similar situation in England, Amanda Vickery is quick to note that the advice books, magazines, sermons, and social criticism that many historians rely on for evidence are prescriptive rather than descriptive literature often outlining an ideal instead of a reality. According to Vickery, although volumes of domestic advice appeared

\begin{footnotesize}
\bibitem{346} Martha Moffitt Peacock, “Early Modern Dutch Women in the City: The Imagining of Economic Agency and Power,” \textit{Urban Space in the Middle Ages and the Early Modern Age} ed. Albrecht Classen (Berlin: Hubert & Co., 2009), 668.
\end{footnotesize}
in women’s homes, it did not necessarily mean they “took its strictures to heart” and despite their best intentions may not have lived life accordingly.\textsuperscript{349}

**Bargaining, Cyphering, and Writing: Koopvrouwen in the United Provinces**

Jacob Cats preached, “Young man, go out and provide for your family, Young woman, stay here and look after your family,”\textsuperscript{350} but outside of elite household, few women could afford what Van Deursen has described as “the luxury of specializing in the unpaid profession of housewife.”\textsuperscript{351} In fact during his travels in the Low Countries in the late sixteenth century, Scottish student Fynes Moryson observed Dutch women’s various commercial activities with great surprise:

> One thing not used in any other country, is here most common, that while the husbands snort idly at home, the women especially of Holland, for traffic sail to Hamburg, and manage most part of the business at home, and in neighbour cities. In the shops they sell all, they take all accounts and it is no reproach to the men to be never inquired after, about these affairs, who taking money of their wives for daily expenses, gladly pass their time in idleness.\textsuperscript{352}

Such accounts of Dutch women, however shaded by the author’s own personal and nationally situated bias, were common throughout the seventeenth century.\textsuperscript{353} Travelers

\textsuperscript{350} “Ghy, reyst dan neerstigh man, en past op uw gewin, Ghy, set u, jonge vrou, en let op uw gesin.” Jacob Cats, *Huwelijk* (1655), eds. A. Agnes Sneller and Boukje Thijs (Amsterdam: Querido, 1993), 51.
\textsuperscript{352} Fynes Moryson, *An Itinerary, Containing his Ten Yeeres Travell* (Glasgow: J. MacLehose, 1908), 58-9.
\textsuperscript{353} D. Christopher Gabbard, “Gender Stereotyping in Early Modern Travel Writing on Holland,” *Studies in English Literature, 1500–1800* 43 (2003), 83-100. Both Willem Frijhoff and Els Kloek have concluded that contemporary writing by foreign and native authors portray women in keeping with their vision of the
visiting the Northern Provinces in particular commented on the remarkable presence of women in commercial enterprise. James Howell, an English visitor to Amsterdam in 1622, observed:

There is no part of Europe so haunted with all sorts of Foreigners as the Netherlands, which makes the Inhabitants, as well Women as Men, so well vers’d in all sorts of Languages, so that in Exchange-time one may hear seven or eight sorts of Tongues spoken upon their Bourses; nor are the Men only expert herein, but the Women and Maids also in their common Hostries; In Holland, the wives are so well versed in Bargaining, Cyphering, & Writing, that in the Absence of their Husbands in long sea voyages they beat the Trade at home and their Words will pass in equal Credit.\(^{354}\)

A variety of factors contributed to the relative economic independence and legal autonomy of women in the Dutch Republic and by extension in Dutch colonies. Under Dutch-Roman law, women were afforded different rights according to their marital status. Women could opt to be wed under manus or usus. Manus granted a woman’s husband guardianship of her, with ultimate marital power and legal representation. In contrast, usus was an ante-nuptial agreement, where the woman remained a legal entity unto herself with control of her own property. The legal opportunities afforded by usus, combined with the education and vocational training of “ciphering and the arithmetic of

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\(^{354}\) James Howell, Epistole Ho-Eliane, familiar letters domestic and forren (London: S. Crouch, 1705), 87.
commerce” many women received, meant they were able to engage in entrepreneurial activity, reaping economic rewards and financial autonomy.  

Economic historian Danielle van den Heuvel points to recent debates linking high rates of female labour participation and economic growth, suggesting that the “outstandingly high levels of urbanization, high literacy rates, and technological superiority that contributed to Dutch commerce in general also created an environment of female empowerment, encouraging entrepreneurship.”  

Women in the United Provinces assisted their husbands and male family members and also independently managed their own businesses. The relatively high ratio of women to men in Dutch towns created an imbalance: many women did not marry, and the ones that did were often paired with sailors or traders who were frequently at sea. Accordingly there was a need for single and widowed women to be able to financially fend for themselves.

Using Dutch East and West India Company documents and local institutional records, scholars have concluded that wives of absent sailors used a variety of strategies to augment their husbands’ often low or unreliable earnings. They were able to supplement their family’s income by working in seafaring-related occupations expanding on typically female domestic roles (spinning, weaving, laundering) or by accepting poor relief provided by trade companies or local charities. In some cases women were used to

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recruit for the VOC and WIC, with one commentator accusing them of having “more or less kidnapped unemployed Dutchmen and foreigners,” providing them with lodgings and equipment to ensure potential sailors would enlist, and collecting high interests on the debts incurred. The high costs the women charged for procurement, and the often-long periods of indenture they tricked their victims into, led these people to be known as *zielverkopers* (soulsellers). Their contributions were not always altruistic, with the Dutch Governor of Surinam Cornelius van Aarsen (1637-1688) noting, “Surely I must say again that all the Soulsellers’ hands are expensive, useless and godless hands, with regard to their purchase as well as their services.”

Sometimes associated with crimping or deceiving, maritime outfitting trades were typically considered family occupations but according to Van den Heuvel’s research, by 1730 almost ninety percent of the soulsellers in the town of Middelburg were female. These were typically wives or widows of sailors, living by harbours with access to clothing, food and other gear men would need for their voyages. And while they often gained poor reputations, in ports where sailors’ wives were accused of coercing their innocent marks into dishonourable conduct, *zielverkopers* can perhaps more productively be viewed as active agents in the distribution and circulation of domestic material culture. They would have been responsible for supplying much of the meager gear sailors would

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take with them on their overseas voyages and upon their return would have often received pirated or otherwise pilfered goods in lieu of payment. In a very practical way, as *zielverkopers* women were vectors of contact for the unofficial and often unsanctioned circulation of goods and of course for the gossip of people traveling all over the world.

Particularly in larger VOC and WIC towns, during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, women as both producers and merchants participated in the Company’s supply networks. Even though women were in the minority (in the 1740s there were seven male suppliers for every female) the enormous size of their trade made their contributions significant enough to warrant attention.\(^{361}\) According to J. Gawronski, women supplied all categories of shipbuilding material as well as the equipment for the ship and crew but their sales of textile products were especially notable, providing clothing and curtains, pillows and table clothes for the *cajuitslijwaten* (ship’s cabin).\(^{362}\) Women dealt in other goods like ink, paper, ribbon and linen (to make moneybags among other things), and other practical administrative goods to provision other large institutions like the Admiralty based in Amsterdam and Rotterdam and the *Wisselbank* (Bank of Exchange) in Amsterdam, Delft, Middleburg and Rotterdam. Other institutions such as army regiments, hospitals, orphanages and other charitable organizations would also have

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\(^{362}\) J. Gawronski, *De Equipagie van de Hollandia en de Amsterdam. VOC-bedrijvigheid in 18de-eeuws Amsterdam* (Amsterdam: De Bataafsche leeuw, 1996), 301.
required supplies.\textsuperscript{363} As victuallers supplying provisions and outfitting those going to sea, this form of caregiving was viewed as an extension of their normal household duties.\textsuperscript{364}

The activity of re-distributing household goods also fell to women. \textit{Uitdraagsters} (second-hand dealers) would typically purchase old clothing, furniture, and household goods such as kitchenware and porcelain from estate sales to re-sell for a profit. While within consumption studies the sale of new goods emphasizes material innovations and the diffusion process, Hester Dibbits suggests that the “re-use” of objects demands a re-focusing on social practices.\textsuperscript{365} As such, the active second-hand trade is an underappreciated element in the social life of material goods. By purchasing and re-selling items at auctions women were involved in the redistribution of goods. They facilitated the circulation of goods, and they also actively contributed to how they were valued, monetarily and otherwise, for the sworn \textit{priseersters} (appraisers) assessing the goods for public \textit{vendus} (sales) were typically women.\textsuperscript{366} The second-hand trade followed the sales practices of other goods with men primarily active as ambulant old-clothes sellers and women as shopkeepers. According to Bibi Panhuysen, in Haarlem in 1693, \textit{uitdraagsters} and \textit{oudkleerkoper} (old-clothes sellers) were forbidden from selling their

wares door to door, which suggests that shops were established.\textsuperscript{367} Although women did appear in guilds for retail trade, second-hand sales and textile industries, Van den Heuvel demonstrates the impact of guilds on gender divisions with women’s participation typically being lower in trades controlled by guilds.\textsuperscript{368} While feminist observers have considered the barring of women from guild systems as hampering economic involvement, I would like to suggest that their exclusion provided opportunities for women to circumvent the system’s rules. Particularly in company towns in colonies like New Netherland, women likely could operate outside of heavily regulated trade systems. From 1653 to 1664, the colony’s main port of New Amsterdam had one hundred and thirty four self-identified female traders. In the settlement up the river, Beverwijck, there were forty-six.\textsuperscript{369}

\textit{Koopvrouwen in New Netherland}

The roles of good housewives did not exclude women from contributing to local economies. In fact, in New Netherland, just as in patria, duties of cooking, cleaning and serving often extended into occupations outside the home. Censuses listed women working in a variety of different trades including bakers, millers, and tavern keepers as well as merchants.\textsuperscript{370} Extant court records and notarial papers confirm women’s

\textsuperscript{367} Bibi Panhuysen, \textit{Maatwerk, Kleermakers, Naaisters, Oudkleerkopers en de Gilden, 1500-1800} (Utrecht: IISH, 2000), 240.
\textsuperscript{368} Van den Heuvel, \textit{Women and Entrepreneurship}, 211.
participation in New Netherland and also suggest that their involvement was not surprising or unusual. Martha Shattuck found that of the eighty-four women appearing in court between 1652 and 1660, sixty-six were married but only fifteen were representing their husband’s business, while the other forty-one were acting on their own behalf. In 1679, Jasper Danckaerts and Peter Sluyter gave the following description of an unnamed Dutch woman trader they encountered in Albany:

> Although not of openly godless life, [she] is more wise than devout…She is a truly worldly woman, proud and conceited, and sharp in trading with wild people, as well as tame ones…This trading is not carried on without fraud, and she is not free from it… She has a husband, which is her second one… He remains at home quietly, while she travels over the country to carry on the trading. In fine she is one of the Dutch female traders, who understands the business so well.

As in the Dutch Republic, New Netherland had many openbare koopvrouwen (independent female traders) participating in activities ranging from running small shops operated from their homes to large-scale international import and export businesses. On the island of Manhattan, Elizabeth Drisius, the widow of the minister Samuel Drisius, ran a shop selling various goods. It appears Maria Lookermans sold nails, foodstuffs, scissors and shirts there too. In the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries there

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371 Martha Dickinson Shattuck, “‘For the peace and welfare of the community’: Maintaining a Civil society in New Netherland,” de Halve Maen (Spring 1999): 155, 162-64.
374 Venema, Beverwijk, 188-189.
was however a distinction made between shopkeepers, retailers, and those merchants
transporting goods in bulk to be sold wholesale.

Elizabeth Bancker (1614-1693) profited from her small sales of textiles, buttons
and liquor to customers like Jeramias van Renssaeler, while also participated in more far
reaching exchanges.\textsuperscript{375} The daughter of a well-known trader Jan van Eps, on 10 April
1658 she married a fur trader named Gerrit Bancker. After his death in 1690 she was
“sole, general, and universal heir of all his property, real and personal, whether situated in
New York, Albany, in Schenectady, in England, in Holland, or at sea.”\textsuperscript{376} This listing of
the various locations of their goods indicates the reach of their trade in the Atlantic,
enabled by her share in a two-mast brigantine ship. The widowed Bancker continued to
run a shop in the city. An inventory of her possessions after her death included a large
quantity of store goods, as well as an extensive collection of books (“\textit{duytse bybel in folio
met annotatie},” a German folio bible with annotations, was among the many listed), and
furnishings: two beds, two tables, six chairs, four chests, eighteen picture frames, and an
“\textit{Ebben houte cas}” (ebony cupboard).\textsuperscript{377}

With a reach even greater than Bancker’s, one of the wealthiest women in
colonial New York was Margaret Hardenbroeck (c. 1631-c. 1686-90). Born in the United
Provinces, Hardenbroeck had first sailed to New Netherland in 1659 at the age of twenty-
two as a factor for her cousin Wouter. On 10 October 1660, she married a merchant,

\textsuperscript{375} Van Rensselaer Manor Papers, Box 45 (1669, May 19, 1670).
\textsuperscript{376} Quoted in “Some Old Dutch Families,” \textit{New Amsterdam Gazette} (New York: Morris Coster, 1886), 14.
\textsuperscript{377} “Inventaris van de nagelaten state van Elizabeth Banker [Bancker],” July 19th and 20th, New York State
Archives, Albany, J0301-82.
Pieter Rudolphus de Vries (1603-1661), in the Dutch Reformed Church of New Amsterdam. Shortly after the marriage he died and she purchased two ships using the proceeds from his estate. In 1662 Hardenbroeck married Frederick Philipse (1626-1702), a carpenter from Bolsward, Friesland, who came to New Netherland in 1653. The two met when he traveled aboard one of her ships to sell furs in London. As was the Dutch custom, even when married she continued to utilize her maiden name to conduct business. After the English came into possession of the colony her free enterprise, along with that of other merchants, was curtailed but not completely eliminated when foreign ships were restricted to one sailing per year. In 1668, Hardenbroeck successfully petitioned the Privy Council of England for permission for her ship the King Charles to sail from the United Provinces to New York, allowing her to continue transporting goods across the Atlantic.

As evidenced by Hardenbroeck’s early family connections in the New World, the common bond of immigration created important points of contact between other immigrants who may have had few other commonalities. Laura Cruz notes that travel supplied goods, services and information across the fluid borders of physical and political

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The commercial exchange of goods enabled contact between people outside of familial, social, and religious relationships creating what Mark Buchanan calls “social bridges,” formed by weak ties of acquaintances that are important because they unite otherwise unrelated familial networks together. Because of this the mundane relationships of everyday life, like retailer and customer, merchant and client, produce larger patterns in fluid networks sharing goods and information. Most importantly, very practical concerns often meant as Paul McClean argues, that social networks were neither static nor self-sustaining and needed constant and strategic management to work. The connections made by men are clearly outlined in the purchase agreements, sales contracts, and shipping manifests easily documented through the activities of the VOC and WIC. However, in contrast, these informal relationships formed by women through the selling, purchasing, gifting, lending and inheriting of domestic things have eluded historians. Many commercial endeavours went almost unrecorded. For example when Catrijn Jochems married Abraham Staats, the owner of a sloop (small ship) trading goods along the Hudson River, she also began to profit from renting out property. She and others such as Immetie de backster, Dolle Griet, Geertge Bouts, and Dorothee Douw are

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recorded as having purchased goods at auctions, but the extent of their participation is largely unknown.\footnote{383}

The wide range of jobs undertaken by women in New Netherland is exemplified by the varied career of Anneke Jans (1605-1663).\footnote{384} Born in Norway in 1605 to Johannes and a mid-wife named Tryntie, Jans married Roeloff Jansen in Amsterdam in April of 1623. They brought their three children with them to New Netherland where they became tenant farmers in Kiliaen van Rensselaer’s patroonship. Jans’ mother had made the trip with them but settled in New Amsterdam where she was appointed by the colony to assist with birthing children. Jans went on to be actively engaged in trade first in New Amsterdam and then later in Beverwijk. Her husband died in 1636 and by 1638 she married Dominie Everhardus Bogardus, appearing in church records as a witness to baptisms and eventually being drawn into Bogardus’ conflict with the colony’s first director, Willem Kieft. Jans seems to have been successful in trading beaver skins and farming a plot of land near Fort Orange, for her will made on 29 January 1663 divided her “real estate, chattels, money, gold, and silver, coined and uncoined, jewels, clothes, linen, woolens, household furniture and all property what soever” between her children and grandchildren. Perhaps she left directions to have memorial utensils, like the spoon and fork memorializing Sara Lewes, commissioned, for:

\[S]\he, the testatrix, gives to Roeloff Kierstede, the child of her daughter Sara, a silver mug; to Annatje Van Brugh, the child of

daughter Catrina, also silver mug; and to Jannettje and Rachel Hartgers, the children of her daughter Fytje, a silver mug each; and to the child of William Bogardus named Fytje also a silver mug; all the above donations to be provided for out of the first moneys received and afterwards the remainder of the property to be divided and shared as aforesaid.\footnote{ny surrogate’s court 1893, 487-90.}

Other records provide insight into the dealings of \textit{koopvrouwen} in New Netherland and Dutch New York. A 1695 probate inventory of Margrieta van Varick’s household possessions and commercial holdings attests to women’s economic participation in Dutch trade. Twice widowed, the forty-six year old resident of Flatbush, New York had accumulated a wide array of textiles, silverware, and furniture from around the world. After her death the following year, an accounting was composed listing over four thousand household, shop and personal goods. Although Van Varick, who also lived in Batavia was mostly likely one of the few documented women to have lived in the far reaches of both the VOC and WIC trading empires, her itinerant lifestyle was not unusual for merchants of the seafaring Dutch nation.

Van Varick’s personal collection and shop goods demonstrate the wide range of global things available to even middle class women in New Netherland. The contents of her home read like a domestic \textit{wunderkammer}.\footnote{probate court records, inventories and accounts, 1666-1822, new york state archives, albany.} Some of these things things she would have brought with her from her time in the East Indies, but others would have been available in rural Flatbush. Things travelled around the world through mercantile trade, but they also accompanying people like Van Varick. Here key figures can be viewed as
vectors: they served as agents transmitting forms, styles, and trends with the goods they carried. For example Van Varick’s commercial assets comprised ells upon ells of checked and flowered cottons and her personal holdings included calico curtains, valances, cushions, wall hangings, dresses, aprons and other household items. In this context, Van Varick can be viewed as both a participant and promoter of the chintz craze of the late 1600s. The Coromandel coast region of India was the premier exporter of cotton goods during the last quarter of the seventeenth century when the European demand for chintz was at its highest. One broadside from 1697 outlined the extensive list of textiles available through Dutch cargos shipped from India between 1686 and 1696 as including calico, silk, and “Other Goods Painted, Stained, Printed, or Coloured There [sic].”

As traders and shopkeepers, women like Van Varick played an important role in the retailing of domestic goods. Arriving in New York in 1686, Van Varick could have been viewed as rather cosmopolitan. She would have brought with her the current fashions from patria augmented with the exotic trends she had witnessed first hand in Malacca. Furthermore, as the wife of the minister to the congregation of Flatbush, Van Varick would have had a prominent role in the community. When setting up shop to sell

a wide range of textiles along with other goods like thread (“7 ½ Collered thread”),
ribbon (“5 remnents of silke ribning”), buttons (“17 dz: collard buttons” and 12 dz. Black
buttons”) and pins (“29 papers great pinns’) she was an important “middleman”
providing information and advice to consumers and mediating fluctuations in supply and
demand. The “List of the Debts as they Stand Charged in the Debt Books of the
Widdow Varik [sic]” provides a glimpse into some of the people purchasing her goods.
“Anna Davis Spinster at Graves,” “Alida the Niece of Jan Teunissen Carpenter at
Flatbush,” “Engeltie van Cleef at Utregt,” and other women were among the customers
who exchanged goods with Van Varick.

The relationship of women to a larger world of goods hinges on
the acquisition
and distribution of goods through their own economic agency and power. The loss of
New Netherland to the English changed the circumstances of women in the colony.
Eventually, James, Duke of York, who had received the colony as a gift from his brother
King Charles II, introduced a new legal system based on the New England codes that
became known as the “Duke’s Laws.” Under the far more restrictive English law, women
in the former Dutch colony lost their ability to write a pre-marital contract, which

390 For more on the role of “middlemen” see Ilja Van Damme, “Middlemen and the Creation of a ‘Fashion
Revolution’: The Experience of Antwerp in the Late Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries,” The Force of
Fashion in Politics and Society: Global Perspectives from Early Modern to Contemporary Times ed.
391 For more on this see Martin, “Makers, Buyers, and Users,” 141- 57; Ann Smart Martin “Ribbons of
Desire: Gendered Stories in the World of Goods,” Gender, Taste, and Material Culture in Britain and
179-200.
maintained their independent legal status. Essentially, all married women were relegated to living under manus. As Biemer writes, the woman was to be “protected and guarded by her husband, which meant being no legal entity at all!” As a result the number of women participating in trade or working within the service industry decreased and charges related to theft and prostitution increased. A number of women who were negatively impacted by English legal reform resorted to other sources of income when they lost their access to legitimate business enterprise, economic independence and legal autonomy. After English common law was introduced to New York in 1664, women no longer had control of half of their married property, drastically changing patterns of inheritance. Crime rates among women increased, as they no longer had access to economic opportunities.

Furthermore, far fewer women were identified as traders or proprietors. In fact after Beverwijck became Albany the numbers dwindled to roughly three between 1695 and 1700. Although much scholarly attention has been paid to how political changes were enacted by English rule after New Netherland became New York, it appears that changes took place not only in New Netherland but in the Dutch Republic as well. Van den Heuvel, for example, noted that by the eighteenth-century general opinions to women

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393 Biemer, “Criminal Law and Women in New Amsterdam and Early New York,” 75.
in the work force had shifted, with moralists preferring women “to be housewives instead of businesswomen.”

Even though women’s voices seem absent from legislation following the English takeover of New Netherland, the study of material culture reveals traces of their presence. With the persistence of Dutch inheritance conventions, women were often in possession of real and personal assets. Just as objects can have biographies, Martin Hall writes, the biographies of estate inheritances map “out a ‘shadow lineage’ of women, standing behind the formality of male legal ownership.” For example the 30 July 1688 will of Matthew Blanchan (c. 1610-1688) stipulated if he happened to die first, his wife was to remain in possession of all the property as long as she lived. Similarly, the Dutch custom of inheritance persisted, as was the case with Jan Jacobsen (nd) and Marritje Pieters (nd). Their marriage contract stated, “First, in regard to the property which he, the bridegroom, shall leave behind in case of his death, whether movable or immovable, or such as may rightfully belong to him, it shall belong in free ownership to Marritje Pieters aforesaid, without any of Jan Jacobsen’s blood relations having claim thereunto [sic].”

Women’s commercial endeavours would continue on with second-generation New Netherlanders until the mid-eighteenth century. Long after the official Dutch rule ended, women actively contributed to the colony’s economy. For instance, in 1734 a

399 New York Manuscripts Dutch Vol. 1 Register of the Provincial Secretary, 1638-1642, 212.
group of outraged widows demanded their say in regional politics, writing to Peter Zenger’s recently founded *New-York Weekly Journal*, “We are House keepers, Pay our Taxes, carry on Trade, and most of us are she Merchants, and as we in some measure contribute to the Support of Government…” The statement was no doubt just one comment made in a larger political debate surrounding the *Journal’s* campaign against the current Governor William Crosby (1690-1736), but by including the opinions of this anonymous group of widows, however exaggerated they might be, this document establishes that not only were a number of women engaged in trade, but also their concerns mattered.

**Women and the Fur Trade**

According to the records of Albany trader Evert Wendell (1681-1750), as many as fifty percent of his trade partners were women.\(^401\) Evidence for Johanna de Laet’s participation in such exchange appears when on 3 April 1663 she sued Pieter van Booheemen for four beavers and one-half of goods “which had been loaned and one and one-half of which were goods furnished.” The defendant did not contest receipt of the goods. He instead argued he did not owe the plaintiff anything “as the latter did not keep her promise to let
him learn a trade” from her.\textsuperscript{402} The court ruled in De Laet’s favour, demonstrating clearly that De Laet was an accomplished agent in the fur trade, and also successfully able to articulate her legal rights. Along with men, women too were active in the exchange of animal pelts for various goods. Margareta van Schlectenhorst operated as an openbare koopvrouwen dealing in pelts well into the late 1680s. Her daughter Alida Schuyler Livingston (1656-1726) followed in her footsteps as a successful entrepreneur.\textsuperscript{403}

According to Jean P. Jordan’s extensive searches of English shipping manifests, a pattern emerged where koopvrouwen like Helena Teller Bogardus Rombouts (1645 - 1707), the widow of merchant Francois Rombouts (1631-1691), Margaret van Schaik (nd) and Margaret Livingston Vetch imported dry goods, sugar, rum, molasses, and lime juice from the West Indies while exporting beaver pelts to London.\textsuperscript{404} In 1701 and 1702 Anna Schepmoes Cuyler brought in various sundries, sent back out skins to Charles Ludowicks (nd), a merchant in London on board the ship “Calles” and shipped “Indian goods” and gunpowder to Albany.\textsuperscript{405} Underlying all of these transactions, the primary material shaping the encounter between settlers and indigenes in New Netherland was

\textsuperscript{403} For more on the women of the Livingston family see Cynthia A. Kierner, “From Entrepreneurs to Ornaments: The Livingston Women, 1679-1790,” The Hudson Valley Regional Review 4 no. 1 (March 1987): 38-55. Kierner notes the changes in women’s roles from active participants to more passive following political and economic changes under the English.
\textsuperscript{404} Jordan, Women Merchants in Colonial New York, 419.
\textsuperscript{405} Anna Schepmoes' will is dated July 3, 1702, and was proved March 18, 1702-3 and Her will is filed in Liber 7, p. 93, New York, Surrogate's Office. On May 2, 1690, mention is made of an account of Anna, widow of Henry Cuylcer, for sundries delivered to the Government. See Stefan Bielinsky, “Anna Schepmoes Cuyler, Biography Number 8629,” The People of Colonial Albany https://www.nysm.nysed.gov/albany/bios/s/anschepmoes8629.html (accessed 12 March 2013).
beaver fur. Active in the fur trade, Virginian William Byrd II wrote of the Dutch interest in the animals’ pelts:

...the fur of these creatures is very valuable, especially in the more Northern Countries where it is longer and finer. This the Dutch have lately contriv’d to mix with their Wool, and Weave into a sort of Drugget, that is not only warm, but wonderfully light and Soft. They also make Gloves and Stockings of it, that keep out the Cold almost as well as the fur itself, and do not look quite so Savage.⁴⁰⁶

Margaret de Roever writes that the Dutch search of New Netherland for furs can be viewed as part of an expanding series of exploratory expeditions in search of new markets around the globe.⁴⁰⁷ Once pelts were acquired, exporting them back to Europe was the quickest way to make a profit.⁴⁰⁸ When it returned to its titular city in 1623 the ship Arms of Amsterdam carried over seven thousand beaver, eight hundred otter, eighty-one mink, thirty-six wildcat, and twenty-four muskrat pelts. According to legal registrations, between 1630 and 1635, 15,000 furs were exported each year to Europe. In 1626 Isaac de Rasieres (1595- after 1669) the WIC’s accountant requested an additional supply of two hundred pieces of blue and grey “duffles” cloth in order to stock Fort Orange in return for over ten thousand pelts.⁴⁰⁹ Built in 1624, the fort was strategically

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located to encourage the fur trade. Traders could come down from Montreal, use the Mohawk River to come east, or send goods down the Hudson River to New Amsterdam, a natural harbor. Beverwijck, the fur trading community north of the fort was not only named for the town in North Holland but, as the name suggests, also because it was quite literally the beaver district. By 1645, over 10,000 of the animal’s pelts went through Beverwijck to New Amsterdam and across the Atlantic. After a revised bill of “Freedoms and Exemptions” for colonists was instated in 1639 opening up importing and exporting to the colony, in the early 1640s new settlers and traders competed for furs.

The animal furs driving Dutch colonial interest in North America are an example of what Jane Bennett calls “vibrant matter,” things both alive and material, with vitality, the capacity to “not only impede or block the will and designs of humans but also to act as quasi agents or forces with trajectories, propensities, or tendencies of their own.” Historical approaches to the fur trade tend to ignore the life of the beaver before becoming a pelt. Not just a commodity the very animal itself had an active presence in North American ecosystems and even in indigenous religious practices. Through a process of transmediation the beaver and their furs, reinforcing the previously established cultural capital of the animal took on symbolic power in the heraldry of the colony and in the visual culture of patria.

410 Matson, Merchants & Empire, 15-16.
412 Bennett, Vibrant Matter, viii.
In addition to (or perhaps because of) their economic value, pelts and their source animals came to occupy an important place in the representation of the New World. As with other self-referential practices, New Netherland was caught between the old and new. Roberta J.M. Olson explains the heraldic symbolism devised for the colony conveys the optimistic materialism of Dutch colonial culture and further reveals that the desire to forge a new identity was still entrenched in the traditional models of patria.⁴¹⁴ Within the established conventions of Netherlandish visual culture, the beaver in particular came to be a symbol of New Netherland. Preparatory drawings for the coat of arms for New Amsterdam are examples of the symbolic importance of such commodities in images of exchange. Created circa 1630 for presentation to the WIC, the design included a modified version of the arms of the city of Amsterdam, with the incorporation of several distinctly North American elements such as a crouching beaver above the three silver Saint Andrew’s crosses, the two large beavers flanking the central shield, a stylized WIC (GWC) logo and of course garlands of flowers and fruit symbolizing the abundance and fertility of the New World colony (Fig. 3.1). These designs were never executed and until 1654 only the official seal of the Province of New Netherland existed.⁴¹⁵ Created in 1623 it imprinted an escutcheon with a beaver placed diagonally and a border of wampum, with two stars and the inscription “Sigillvm.novi.belgii” (Seal of New Netherland). By the time the engraving of Nieu Amsterdam, discussed previously, was included in late

seventeenth and early eighteenth century atlases, the beaver had become an established symbol of that particular region of the New World.

The series of classifications and re-classifications that developed as the image and the object of beaver furs shifted in varying contexts exemplifies Arjun Appadurai’s thoughtfully proposed cultural biography of things. This commodity life cycle supports his contention that like people, things can have biographies, and that there is a correlation between the social construction of individuals and the construction of the meaning of objects.416 After being worn by native trappers, to condition the fur in order to create the highly prized oil fur, or castor gras, pelts became a commodity or even a currency, in many instances before being manufactured into en vogue hats and garments for European consumers. Once a living animal, beavers became highly valued commodities, transformable into various garments and accessories, and in the process even functioned like monetary units.

With monetary as well as symbolic value, the prices of pelts fluctuated. During the early 1660s, a contract between the WIC and local merchants had established the rate of one leverbaer (sellable, or quality pelt) to eight guilders. At a time when in patria the average labourer earned two hundred to two hundred and fifty guilders a year, a haul of several dozen pelts could make a trader relatively wealthy.417 Significantly, this valuation became a benchmark, as other commodities such as wood, wheat, and tobacco, were

416 Appadurai, The Social Life of Things, 3-64.
valued at the beaver rate. Account books recorded prices in guilder and stuiver values but were paid in the beaver or seewant equivalent. Seewant was the Dutch term for wampum, manufactured shell pieces possessing symbolic and monetary value with the indigenous people. What James Bradley has described as a cross-cultural product of indigenous and European contact, seewant was considered “light money” and a volatile and complicated currency subject to vast fluctuations in the market. Cantwell and Wall consider seewant to be the glue that held the fur trade together, for the shells were often exchanged lesser quality pelts or portions of pelt called drielings. According to Peter Stuyvesant, seewant was “the source and the mother of the beaver trade, and for goods only, without [it], we cannot obtain beavers from the savages.”

Furs, mostly beaver but also other animals were the goods that created the space of encounter around which indigenous and European exchange in New Netherland was arranged. This relationship has been widely explored, perhaps most notably in Richard

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419 Venema, Beverwijck, 156-159.  
420 Cantwell and Wall, “Landscapes and Other Objects: Creating Dutch New Netherland,” 331. The beads, made by coastal Algonquians from whelk and quahogs found in the waters off southern New England and New York, were traded to the Dutch, who subsequently traded them to Native peoples further inland. Used in spiritual ceremonies and diplomatic transactions, the shell beads came to be produced in larger quantities as the Dutch incorporated them into their exchange. The Dutch had already had a similar experience adapting to the exchange of cowrie shells in their dealings with West African communities. George Hamell, “Trading in Metaphores: The Magic of Beads, Another Perspective Upon Indian-European Contact,” Proceedings of the 1986 Shell Bead Conference: Selected Papers ed. Charles F. Hayes III (Rochester: Rochester Museum and Science Centre, 1989); Lynn Ceci, “The Effects of European Contact and trade on the Settlement Patterns of Indians in Coastal New York, 1524-1665,” (PhD diss., City University of New York, 1977).  
White’s *The Middle Ground*, which conceptualized the relationships between Native Americans and Europeans as a series of on-going encounters and interactions in which “the result of each side’s attempts to apply its own cultural expectations in a new context often produced change in the original culture itself… The middle ground grew according to the need of people to find a means, other than force, to gain cooperation or consent of foreigners.”[^422] Beavers and *seewant* became the shared goods of contact zones where previously distinct groups of people (American, Northern European and even African) encountered one another. From prized commodities and profane articles to sacred objects, their meaning and valuation shifted as they passed through emerging social landscapes where diverse people played active roles.^[423]

**An Atlas of Accessories: Materiality in Early American Portraiture**

The prominent figure of a man wearing a large felt hat in Johannes Vermeer’s *Officer and Laughing Girl* (Fig. 2.10) demonstrates just one of the many ways Europeans consumed the products of New Netherland. This commonplace accessory provides an entry point into the ways North American materials began to appear in the images shaping and shaped by Dutch visual culture. According to Timothy Brook, things in many of Vermeer’s paintings aptly describe “a global history of the intercultural transformations of seventeenth-century life.”[^424] Even the artist’s most quintessentially

[^424]: Brook, *Vermeer’s Hat*, 4.
“Dutch” vista, the *View of Delft* (1660-1661, Mauritshuis, The Hague), hinted at a world beyond the small town’s harbour by including the roof of the Delft Chamber of the VOC’s *Oost-Indisch Huis* warehouses. The turkey work carpet and the dish of fruit in *Young Woman Reading a Letter at an Open Window* (1657-1659, Gemäldegalerie, Dresden) can be discussed as part of the complex material dialogues between places like the Middle East and China and Delft that created the iconic blue and white ceramics later synonymous with the city. Similarly, Vermeer’s *The Geographer* “requires little effort to locate signs of the wider world that was enveloping and invading” the Dutch Republic (1668-1669, Städelisches Kunstinstitut, Frankfurt).

In her exploration of the shifting boundaries and identities in Dutch visual culture during the seventeenth century, Martha Hollander observes that the thick silk robes worn by the geographer and also *The Astronomer* (1668, Musée du Louvre, Paris) are not only attributes of knowledge and distinction, embodying the “intellectual activity behind the power of Dutch global commerce” but also important “objects, like the others – globes, maps, patterned carpet – bringing the entire global reach into Vermeer’s small room in Delft.”

The silver in *Woman Holding a Balance* (1662-1663, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.) positions Vermeer and his subjects in the later portion of “the silver century,” a period beginning roughly in 1570 when the drive for the precious metal put varied communities in contact and increasingly conflict especially in the New World.

Following Brook’s lead, my discussion of New Netherlandish paintings considers the

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objects depicted, “not as props behind windows but as doors to open”; they are passageways to discoveries about the early modern world.\footnote{Brook, Vermeer’s Hat, 9.}

As is the case with Vermeer’s paintings, portraits of wealthy merchants of Dutch descent in colonial New York sustained an engagement with material culture in keeping with de Bièvre’s notion of early modern images of exchange. In light of changes in domestic ecologies, the first expressions of American portraiture were filled with an early modern “commodity aesthetic,” Jean-Christophe Agnew’s term for a view of the world in which interior space was filled with “mobile, detachable and transactionable goods.”\footnote{Although Agnew argues this to be a nineteenth-century perspective, I would argue it had its roots in Dutch mercantile culture. Jean-Christophe Agnew, “A House of Fiction: Domestic Interiors and the Commodity Aesthetic,” Consuming Visions: Accumulation and Display of Goods in America 1880-1920, ed. Simon J. Bronner (New York: WW Norton, 1989), 135.}

The paintings produced in Dutch New York during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries (significantly after the English assumed control of the colony), continued to utilize a pictorial vocabulary that structured what Hochstrasser has called the “language of commodities.”\footnote{Hochstrasser, Still Life and Trade in the Dutch Golden Age, 229.} In the works of Gerrit Duyckinck (1660-c.1710), Nehemiah Partridge (1683-c. 1737), Pieter Vanderlyn (1687-1778), John Heaten (also John Heaton active 1730-1745) and other limners whose names remain unknown, things - luxury fabrics, fashionable footwear, and relatively cosmopolitan furnishings - stand in for a larger dialogue on trade and worldly goods. In the case of the selected portraits I will discuss in detail, theatre historian Joseph Roach is correct when he proclaims, “the four corners of the world were represented synecdochically or metonymically in the form
of selected costumes, sets, properties, and (where racial difference is concerned) makeup – hence the powerful symbolic importance that emanates from accessories.”

With a keen period eye, viewers at the time would have understood the symbols of trade ubiquitous in portraiture well into the eighteenth century.

Gerrit Duyckinck’s Portrait of an Unknown Woman from 1690-1700 (Fig. 3.2) records what Jones and Stallybrass have called “a world system constituted by trade, migration, and colonialism” that emerged in the early modern era. The youngest son of Evert Duyckinck, a painter-glazer from North Brabant who had come to New Netherland in the employ of the WIC, Duyckinck appeared in New York records as early as 1699 as “Gerrett Duyckinck, Limner.”

The accounts of Jasper Danckaerts and Pieter Sluyter, two Labadist travelers in New York in 1679 and 1680, describe the work of the father and son in creating enamelled glass for a new church in Hysopus (Kingston), where they found “Gerrit, the glassmaker…engaged in putting the glass in their new church.” Although the glass does not survive, it is likely that it was similar to other heraldic windows displaying the arms of families like the Van Rensselaer, Rutgers, Herbersen and Schuyler families in the Albany Dutch Reformed Church. Glazed and enamelled windows were among the artisanal crafts brought from Europe.

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430 For the concept of the period eye see Michael Baxandall, Painting and Experience in15th-Century Italy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1988).
The younger Duyckinck’s attributable oeuvre not surprisingly included several paintings of Dutch patroon families. By the time *Portrait of an Unknown Woman* was painted in the final years of the seventeenth century or early eighteenth century, the artistic conventions employed would have recalled trends in portraiture popular in the United Provinces nearly fifty years before.\(^{434}\) Painters like Duyckinck, most likely working from traditions taught by his father and removed from the changing styles across the Atlantic in continental Europe, maintained rather provincial conventions. The wealth of the unknown sitter in this portrait is clearly evidenced by her elegant clothing and the luxurious table covering beside which she poses. By including a Turkish carpet or “turkey work” rug in his typically Dutch composition, Duyckinck implied the hybridization of Asian commodities and European artistic practices in a North American setting, as enabled by early modern global trade networks.\(^{435}\)

As in the Dutch Republic “turkey work” knotted pile rugs were typically placed on tables because they were often considered to be too valuable to be walked upon. They also came to signal the worldly reach of Dutch commerce. Sarah B. Sherrill has described this particular carpet as being based on medallion Ushak carpet patterns created in Western Anatolia in the sixteenth to nineteenth centuries.\(^{436}\) By the mid-seventeenth century the ubiquity of turkey work rugs in Dutch images has led modern observers to believe they were more common in the seventeenth century than they actually were. They

\(^{434}\) For more on this see Onno Ydema, *Carpets and their dating in Netherlandish paintings, 1540-1700* (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 1991).


came to be called “Turkey work” rugs, despite the actual location of their manufacture in parts of Persia or even Europe, as designs began to be copied. On occasion they appear in the inventories of elite New Netherland and New York families. Restricted from trading directly with Levant, American colonists would have acquired their Eastern carpets through trade with England. On both sides of the Atlantic, visual and documentary evidence suggests that only the wealthy could afford such worldly luxuries and the inclusion of such items demonstrated the sitter’s affluence, taste and connections to global exchange.

The rather straightforward composition of the Portrait of an Unknown Woman belies the complex interaction of the woman’s accoutrements, demonstrating Roach’s contention that:

To accessorize a costume is thus to furnish it with the supplementary but nonetheless crucial items that serve to identify or locate the wearer… In matters of ethnic identity, it was still more tentative, but the expansion of colonization and trade gradually had increased the repertoire of signs.438

While other accounts note the rich brocade and delicate lace of her dress, examinations of this painting never mention the Asian fan she holds in her left hand.439 It is closed, highlighting the sleek, exotic ivory of the supports. In her other hand, raised to her chest,

439 Fans were common accessories in seventeenth century Dutch portraits of women. For more on this see David Smith, Masks of Wedlock (Ann Arbor: UMI Research Press, 1982); and Eddy de Jongh, Portretten van echt en trouw: huwelijk en gezin in de Nederlandse kunst van de zeventiende eeuw (Haarlem: Frans Halsmuseum, 1986).
she clasps a delicate pink and red carnation. According to Netherlandish wedding customs during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, these flowers became a symbol of betrothal, indicating this portrait may commemorate a wedding.\textsuperscript{440} Literally, this girl grasps in one hand the material traces of worldly encounter and in the other the domestic traditions of her ancestry. The only indication of her current location is the necklace she wears. At first it appears to be gold, but upon further examination proves to be a string of corn-kernel beads. This necklace was similar to those worn by other women in Dutch New York and references the corn introduced by indigenous foodways and that had become a profitable export product manufactured by colonial gristmills.\textsuperscript{441}

Like that of this unknown girl, early American portraits of sitters from the Beekman, Van Cortlandt, Wendel, Schuyler, de Peyster, and other families depicted a world shaped by consumerism.\textsuperscript{442} However, in contrast to previous depictions of worldly goods, one shift in the representation of material culture accessorizing the figures is important. In many of the earlier seventeenth-century cartographic embellishments and printed materials comprising images of exchange, the bounty of the New World is presented in commodity form. The bushels of tobacco, packages of beaver pelts, slats of lumber, and canes of sugar depicted are all indigenous goods, unrefined and waiting for European harvest and ultimately manufacture. Later when these same goods appear in the next century, portraits show these goods processed for human consumption and

\textsuperscript{440} James Hall, \textit{Dictionary of Subjects and Symbols in Art} (Boulder: Westview, 2008).
\textsuperscript{441} Blackburn and Piwonka, \textit{Remembrance of Patria}, 210.
\textsuperscript{442} Shannon, “Dressing for Success on the Mohawk Frontier,” 20.
subsumed in daily use. Like earlier Dutch still lifes with their overturned glasses or partially eaten meals, as Honig observes, “the object’s character is a very function of both its past and its potential use by people: a whole human community is implied in the histories of these things.” The raw materials of North America have been transformed through manufacture – metaphorically and/or physically – and returned to the outpost as “refined” goods.

A painting of Susanna Truax by Vanderlyn is also a portrait of cultured things (Fig. 3.3). Vanderlyn had left Holland for New York in 1718, first stopping in Curacao. Once in New Netherland, he married Gerretjen Van Den Berg in 1718, and after her death four years later he moved to Kingston where he painted the local gentry. Although little is known of his life, Vanderlyn’s course to New York via the Caribbean traces a well-traveled trade route for both people and things. Only slightly more is known of Vanderlyn’s painting. The inscription in the upper left corner identifies the sitter of the work as “Susanna Truax/Gebooren den 8 gdr 1726/Geschilderd Maart 1730r” (Susanna Truax, born the eighth month 1726, painted 1730). In comparison to Duyckinck’s work, Truax is rather flat and awkwardly rendered. This suggests Vanderlyn may have lacked the training the Duyckinck family received and also that the work was painted from life and not from a mezzotint, as we shall see was the case with other colonial limners.

Vanderlyn’s portrait illustrates Truax in full length in a defined interior space.

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Although according to the inscription she would have only been a child of four, she is depicted as mature for her age. The pale flush of her cheeks is echoed in the stylized rose she holds in her left hand. She wears a brightly striped dress with lace-trimmed sleeves and ornate, heeled shoes. Around her neck is a simple gold chain with a flat decorative clasp similar to the HB example now in the collection of the Yale University Art Gallery (Fig. 3.4). A similar clasp marked with the same eagle motif as the Boelen piece, dating to before 1689, belonged to Catalyntje (Trico) Rapelje another Dutch colonist.

Truax also wears delicate drop earrings. *Oorstricken* (ear ornaments) were commonly listed in the inventories of New Netherlanders. These came to replace the *oorijzers* (ear irons) used by first generation Dutch women to secure their caps on their heads. Easily portable, jewellery was among the prized possessions most easily transported to the colonies. Typically metals were more durable, resisting the wear and deterioration that plagues textiles or other fibre-based materials. Silver, gold and other precious metals have historically been valuable, and moreover, malleable commodities. With changing tastes and financial circumstances, metal wares were frequently melted down, remade and repurposed as needed to fulfill a variety of social, economic and political functions. Despite the lack of volume given to the forms Vanderlyn’s execution of the detail of the

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445 The clasp, or locket as they were called in the seventeenth century is attributed to either Hendrick Boelen (baptized 1661-1691) or Henricus Boelen (baptized 1697-1755). Erin E. Eisenbarth, “Clasp,” *Dutch New York Between East and West: The World of Margrieta van Varick*, eds. Deborah Krohn and Peter N. Miller, with Marybeth De Filippis, (New York: BGC, 2009), 233.

446 Shortly after arriving in New Netherland in 1624, the Huguenot woman gave birth to Sarah Rapelje, a daughter commonly thought to be the first child of European descent born to the colony. Leslie A. Bryan, “Rapalje of New Netherlands,” *The Colonial Genealogist* 3, no. 3 (January 1971): 157-159.

jewelry, the diaphanous elements of the apron, and intricacies of the lace suggest an attention to the materiality of the things depicted.

The Portrait of Susanna Truax depicts a documented domestic activity, the consumption of tea. According to Peter Kalm, tea was virtually unknown to Dutch-Americans in the late seventeenth century. When it did catch on nearly forty years later, he noticed it was primarily taken at breakfast, and that “They never put sugar into the cup but take a small bit of it into their mouths while they drink.” Anne Grant would go on to describe the ritual hospitality associated with the serving of tea in Dutch New York:

Tea here was a perfect regale. In all manner of confectionery and pastry these people excelled; and having fruit in great abundance, which costs them nothing, and getting sugar home at an easy rate, in return for their exports of the West Indies, the quantity of these articles used in families, otherwise plain and frugal, was astonishing. Tea was never unaccompanied with some of these pretty articles; but for strangers a great display was made.

As Woodruff Smith has observed, the ritualized act of taking tea was a practice “invented or radically revised in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries that centred around the consumption of overseas imports and that possessed important social and cultural meanings for its participants.” What by the 1730s had become a vernacular means of consuming sugar and tea had connections to global world commerce. In 1610 the first shipment of tea arrived in Europe when the VOC purchased the curiosity in Hirado, Japan and shipped it back to Amsterdam via Bantam. The trend caught on more

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448 Blackburn and Piwonka, Remembrance of Patria, 201.
450 Grant, Memoirs of an American Lady, 113.
quickly with those stationed in Batavia, but shipments of tea to Europe increased when they brought the habit of drinking the exotic luxury home with them.\textsuperscript{452} By the time the first significant quantity of tea was brought to Amsterdam in 1667, there was a great demand for the new commodity. Not long after it became a popular beverage, consumed frequently by women in small groups as part of afternoon social functions. Ironically, tea as a globally traded good would have implications for constructions of domesticity as it led to “the formation of a cultural context built around the home as the core of civilization, around the crucial role of women in the home, and a definition of femininity derived from that role.”\textsuperscript{453} In contrast to coffee and tobacco that were more publicly consumed in taverns and emerging coffeehouses, tea drinking came to be associated with the social activities of upper-class women.\textsuperscript{454}

New commodities like tea changed not only social structures but also the material cultures that supported these practices. By the eighteenth century new items initially introduced by the first wave of global exchange had become everyday objects but still important enough to be depicted as status symbols and indicators of ethnicity. These were designed and made for the (often home-based) consumption of newly available commodities flowing from global trade, including spices, coffee, tea and tobacco. Tea

\textsuperscript{452} Hochstrasser, \textit{Still Life and Trade in the Dutch Golden Age}, 151.
\textsuperscript{453} Smith, \textit{Consumption and the making of respectability, 1600-1800}, 172.
\textsuperscript{454} For more on this in the British context see Cowan, \textit{The Social Life of Coffee}. The access to tea would also come to be highly politicized. The most notable example being the symbolism of tea employed in the activities now known as the Boston Tea Party of 1773. A similar protest occurred in New York State in 1776. When tea was scarce due to British taxation, John Arthur, a grocer from Manhattan began to stockpile chests full of tea in the Ossining area of Northern Westchester. In protest, a group of women naming themselves the “Daughters of Eve” demanded he make the tea available at a fair price, sieging his house when he refused. Arthur finally agreed and the area became known as Teatown. Peter G. Rose, \textit{Food, Drink, and Celebrations of the Hudson Valley Dutch} (Charleston: The History Press, 2009), 118.
drinking necessitated teapots and tobacco required smoking pipes and snuffboxes, and subsequently Europe’s innovative craftspeople were prompt to provide the new forms of vessels and utensils called for by these new markets. As Timothy Shannon writes, colonists in North America “used trade goods to invent new appearances, new ceremonies, and a new, visual language by which they communicated in a diverse and contentious world.” Teapots and teaspoons, smoking pipes, coffee grinders and sugar snips: things like these also served as markers of the sophistication and privileged economic participation of a newly emergent global consumer class in Europe.

In the colonies wooncultuur conveyed further meaning as in the same manner as cartographic ornamentation. The accoutrements of Hudson Valley portraiture displayed things like pronkstilleven. From exotic foodstuffs to fancy furnishings all the commodities available to merchants in Dutch New York are shown off for the viewer. Furthermore they were also presented in a similar manner to those in their seventeenth-century still life precursors. To quote Schama, as with pronkstilleven in images of exchange produced in colonial New York there was an “eruption of goods thrown over the canvas.” As Bryson has noted, the things depicted:

... come from a new and greater space, of trade routes and colonies, maps and discoveries, investment and capital. It is these, which bring to the table the porcelain of China and the carpets of the Near East, and the shell, which lyrically sums up the wealth of the merchants of the sea. As with the flower paintings, the objects speak of oceanic distances and trade, and the sense of breaking

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the confines of regional or local space, of flying out towards the far corners of the globe, disrupts the unity and coherence of the tactile, domestic space of the table.\textsuperscript{457}

The still life elements accessorizing the Truax portrait contain several of the goods described by Bryson as “breaking the confines of regional space.” The tea would have come from Japan or China, as would the vessels that contain it. Like tea, sugar (represented in the painting as small cubes), was made available through the appropriation of indigenous American crops and the enslavement of people required to produce the commodity, which, as Hochstrasser writes were a “grave blight on the glowing history” of global Dutch trade.\textsuperscript{458} Although awkwardly rendered by Vanderlyn, the small table on which the teapot, the cup and saucer and bowl of sugar rest, is another material manifestation of domestic furnishings altered by globally traded products. As seen in Pieter van den Berg’s \textit{Teedrinken in de namiddag (Drinking Tea in the Afternoon)}, an engraving from c. 1700, small tables, often ornately decorated legs, were used to hold the teapot in the increasingly ritualized service of tea (Fig. 3.5).

Objects that spoke of distances and trade also feature prominently in a portrait of Magdalena Douw (1718-1796) from c. 1740, painted by John Heaten (Fig. 3.6). The large and colourful canvas is thought to have been a wedding portrait of the young woman around the time of her marriage to Harme Gansevoort (1712-1801) an Albany merchant and brewer, in May of 1740.\textsuperscript{459} Gansevoort’s account books featured teas and wine and

\textsuperscript{457} Bryson, \textit{Looking at the Overlooked}, 128.
\textsuperscript{458} Hochstrasser, \textit{Still Life and Trade in the Dutch Golden Age}, 192.
fabrics sold, among them linen, mohair and calicos.<sup>460</sup> Clothing, especially in portraiture, came to be an expressive medium; colour, style, fabric and fit all conveyed elements of identity such as class, position, career, beliefs, and religion.<sup>461</sup> With its bright floral print, Douw’s dress was clearly intended to be the focal point of the composition. Her attire indicated her identity as a member of the Hudson Valley elite, but most certainly also would have been an advertisement for her family’s business. The stylish garment was made from a fabric known at the time as “flowered,” or harrateen, a fine English wool moire. First advertised in the *Boston Gazette* in 1737, the cloth was at the height of fashion.<sup>462</sup> The cut of her gown is a variation on the Watteau sacque, a style popular in the second and third quarters of the eighteenth century. Her shoes are rendered as stylized commodities, allowing no confusion as to what they are. In 1740 newspaper advertisements offered “Red Morocco,” and “red everlasting” shoes.<sup>463</sup> Filled with trends of the time, Douw’s portrait demonstrates fashion to have been closely tied to the acquisition and distribution of material goods.

T.H. Breen has observed that in New Netherland and Dutch New York consumer goods were “woven into a complex cultural conversation about the structure of colonial society,” as the “stuff of claims and counter-claims, of self-representation among people

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<sup>463</sup> Alice Morse Earle, *Two Centuries of Costume in America* (New York: Macmillan, 1903), 384.
who understood the language of *Holland* shirts.“ The nomenclature of global things demonstrates how commodities came to be associated with the site of their production. Among the textiles listed for sale by Gansevoort were *calico*, originally produced in the Calicut region of India; *schaloen*, a type of cloth made in the small town of Schaloen, outside of Maastricht; and also *osnaburg*, a coarsely woven linen frequently used to make garments for slaves. Similarly, Van Varick’s inventory of shop goods is filled with items that have names referencing their place of origin: “2 pss Damast (damask),” “8 rements Canterbury grassett,” “9 ¼ yard Bengall,” and also “shalloon (schaloen).” An advertisement in *The New-York Gazette* from 1732 demonstrates the wide range of goods available, with similarly widespread geographies:

EUROPEAN AND EAST INDIA GOODS - On the Monday the 17th of April, next at ten in the Morning there will be exposed to Sale at publick Vendue, on Credit, at the Store-house of David Clarkeson over against the Fort, Sundry sorts of European and East India Goods, being the Remainders of several Cargoes, viz. Fine Spanish Clothes, Shaloons, Camblets, Camblet Stuffs, Callimincoes, Durants, English Damasks, Ditto India, China Tafities, plaine, striped and flowered Persians, Cherryderries, Gingrams, Grograms, Sattins, Cheerconnies, Sooseys, Atchabannies, Threads, Mohair, Buttons, Callicoes, Chints, Muslins, Garlicks, Hollands Linnen, Cambricks, Diapers, Books for Accounts, Indian Gunns, and Brush Ware, with several Parcels of Haberdashery, Cutlery, Iron Ware and other Goods.465

Far from living in a commercial backwater, the women of New Netherland had access to a wide variety of fashionable goods. Ships from all over the world were constantly bringing new things. Reflecting this, Wheeler notes the hybridity of the clothing worn by Douw. The sack-backed gown, with bows across the stomacher, and full white engageantes (false sleeves) hanging below winged cuffs, was typical of fashions in England at the time. However, the combination of an English style dress with a more typically Dutch choker is representative of the subtle hybridity of fashion in the region.

In Europe dress had long communicated much about the identity of the wearer, but perhaps some of these cultural messages were more pronounced in the contact zones of the colonies. Shannon suggests that in the fashionable dress of frontier New York, clothing served an important function in intercultural contact and trade patterns. In social relations, choice of dress played a part in the process of exchange. The careful curation of material culture in these images can further shape our understanding of New Netherlandish portraiture during a time when the “nationalistic climate clearly charged trade goods with further political innuendo.” In posterity, as in everyday life, clothing communicated non-verbally across the ethnic divides and linguistic boarders present in such heterogeneous communities. For Linda Baumgarten, extant garments from the Colonial and Federal era reveal the extent to which people expressed identities through

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ways garments were worn and arranged on the body. She argues that while uncodified rules dictating what people wear on specific occasions follow grammatical rules, these can often be misunderstood. Furthermore, they can be confusing to later generations.\textsuperscript{470} Today’s viewers might not recognize cues that would have been strikingly apparent to audiences of the time. In order to negotiate cultural borders artists and sitters living and working on frontiers could construct strategically hybrid identities through the language of appearance.\textsuperscript{471}

Douw’s dress and the other things accompanying her in the portrait speak to the significance of commodities in the contact zones of early North American communities. Laura Peers argues: “Objects and their consumption performed and articulated identity and status, proclaimed allegiance and aspiration, and acted as potent symbols within the complex cross-cultural realities of colonial society.”\textsuperscript{472} Equally communicative as garments, the other things in the portrait contribute to the message expressed. The artist calls attention to these material signifiers with carefully placed bright red tones, so that the viewer’s eye is rapidly drawn around to Douw’s bodice, shoes and finally to the items she is holding. In one hand she holds a green sprig bearing an unidentifiable fruit and in the other she clasps a small book. These accessories give her the appearance of a contemporized colonial Eve. A common attribute in European portraits of women, the

\textsuperscript{472} Peers, “Material Culture, Identity, and Colonial Society in the Canadian Fur Trade,” 55.
basket of fruit on the table further underscores her fecundity and that of her setting. In a similar manner to the table in Truax’s portrait, the Queen Anne style table upon which the basket rests works with the architectural setting to foreground the materiality of Douw and her things.

Although things feature prominently in each of these three works, one of the primary differences between them is the divergent way space is represented. In keeping with the sombreness of mid-seventeenth-century Dutch portraiture, Duyckinck places the sitter against an ambiguous dark background. Contrasting with this approach, perhaps as an assertion of regional identity, later artists place their figures in defined interior space, with a hint of the Hudson Valley landscape viewed in a secondary picture plane. The schematic interior space framing Douw relies heavily on architectural templates found in other print sources. The Romanesque windows and door arches appeared frequently in scriptural paintings in Albany area homes that were modeled on prints from bibles. Republished in Holland frequently between 1680 and 1760 with many engraved illustrations, the Keur Bible, a staple in many Hudson Valley homes, is just one example of the intertextual sources of religious and secular imagery that provided limners with a wide variety of subject matter. In the transmediation from a print to a painting, several of the features of the work change the overall composition. For instance in Heaten’s painting, interior details are rendered with the same artistic attention as the features of the

sitter and her attire, signalling a preoccupation with materiality, sociability, and consumerism that emerged in the early eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{474}

In this manner, carefully fashioned domestic backgrounds augmented with evidence of global material cultures serve to reinforce the construction of social selves. Figuring prominently in colonial dress and interiors, textiles formed a “multifaceted discourse enriched the visual and material aesthetics of the world,” a process Andrew Sherratt defines as communication and performance through consumption.\textsuperscript{475} The women in the paintings I have just discussed are all depicted with symbols of the global reaches of world trade. They are highly self-conscious representations of materiality and expressions of the wealth made available to merchant families in Dutch New York. Many of the goods shown, for example the Turkish carpets, tea tables, the teapots, were not family heirlooms with ancestral significance. Contemporary viewers would have understood them as direct references to emerging commodities. For example, the lump of sugar carefully posed on the spoon held by Truax may allude to the fact that while having access to the social practices of European culture, those in North America also controlled the flow of goods back to Europe. The combination of hybrid material and visual references in these paintings is, as Kathleen Wilson suggests of long eighteenth-century imperial identities in general, expressly performative. The carefully contrived


employment of specific objects of material culture was indeed a “citational social practice.”

Paintings, like maps not only communicated information about material culture, they too were commodified goods in and of themselves. While some, such as the portrait of Traux painted on bed ticking, utilized materials at hand, the colourful pigments used to render the images were acquired through the same trade networks both regional and trans-Atlantic that in fact had established the communities scattered along the Hudson River. Early eighteenth century advertisements provide insights into the commercial trade of painting supplies. In 1736 John Merritt of Boston promoted “Painter’s Colours and Gums of every Kind, for House-painting, Face-painting, and Water Colours.” Quite often painters were also making the materials they imported in large quantities available to other limners. One of the Duyckincks (“G.”) placed an ad selling “white lead, red lead, Spanish brown, English, French, Spruce and Stone Oker, Indian and Venetian red, ivory, Frankford and lamp black, Umber Cullin’s earth, smalt’s Prussian blue, vermilion, verdigrease, the whole ground in powder or in oil…(sic).” Another advertisement, possibly for John Heaten (“J.H. painter and glazer”) lists goods available from England: “white lead, read lead, spanish brown, spanish white, venetian red, English oker, spruce yellow, blue smalt, vermilion, prussian blue, india red, verdigrease,

umber…”479 Artists in New York had a wide-range of pigments from around the world available to them. These same ads demonstrate the wide range of media artists in Dutch New York worked in. Gerardus Duyckinck advertised his skills in “limning, painting, varnishing, japanning, gliding, [sic] glazing, and silvering of looking-glasses, all done in the best manner…” His skills as an educator were also offered, as the ad noted “He will also teach any young Gentleman the art of drawing, with painting on glass; and sells all sorts of window-glasses, white lead, oil and Painter’s coulours [sic].”480

Another artist, Nehemiah Partridge (1683- before 1737) had similar skills in a variety of media. The son of a merchant with ties to England, the Netherlands and the West Indies, he was originally apprenticed as a japanner of furniture, but by 1712 he was wholesaling painters’ supplies in Boston where he advertised his skills as a limner, capable of “all Sorts of Painting, and all Sorts of Dials to be made and done by the said Partridge at reasonable rates.”481 Partridge went on to paint portraits of the elite of Manhattan in 1718, and over fifty portraits of upper Hudson Valley residents between 1718 and 1722 in the Albany area and in regions surrounding Albany and Schenectady from 1724 to 1725. Unsigned, many of these works were inscribed with Aetatis Suae, a Latin convention used by European artists, indicating the subject’s age and the date of the painting’s execution. Previously attributed to the “Aetatis Suae Limner” these works were not linked to Partridge until 1980 when art historian Mary Black found an entry in


One of the most striking portraits produced by Partridge during the colonial period was a life-sized likeness of Ariaantje Coeymans now considered to be the first full-length portrait of a woman painted in North America (Fig. 3.7). Prior to her marriage in 1723 at the advanced age of fifty-one, Coeymans built one of the grandest houses in the Upper Hudson Valley.\footnote{The Coeymans do not appear to be related to Joseph Coymans, a wealthy Dutch businessman from Haarlem, who commissioned portraits of himself and his wife Dorothea Berck from Frans Hals in 1644 on the occasion of their daughter’s marriage. For more on this see Peter Biesboer, \textit{Collections of Paintings in Haarlem: 1572-1745} (Los Angeles: Getty Trust, 2001).} Based on the size of the painting it could have been commissioned to hang in the entrance hall. The scale, composition, and overall grandeur of the work make it similar to the imposing portrait Partridge painted of prominent Albanian Peter Schuyler (Fig. 3.8). Like Schuyler, Coeymans’ commanding figure emerges from a static, two-dimensional background. On the large canvas she is shown wearing a simply styled but ornately ornamented dress trimmed at the hem with gold shot ribbon and delicate lace lavishly cascading from her sleeves and peaking out around her collar. One arm circles her waist drawing attention to her ringed finger at the centre of the composition. In the other hand (like Susanna Truax and other female sitters, such as the unknown woman, Catarina Ganesvoort (Fig. 3.9, and Deborah Glen (Fig. 3.10) all painted by Vanderlyn), she holds a pink flower. Her shoes look similar to the graceful heels worn by the women of the other portraits. Around her neck are looped several strands of a necklace made from corn kernels. Coeymans’ portrait accurately illustrates

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  \item \footnotesize The Coeymans do not appear to be related to Joseph Coymans, a wealthy Dutch businessman from Haarlem, who commissioned portraits of himself and his wife Dorothea Berck from Frans Hals in 1644 on the occasion of their daughter’s marriage. For more on this see Peter Biesboer, \textit{Collections of Paintings in Haarlem: 1572-1745} (Los Angeles: Getty Trust, 2001).
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what Wayne Craven has categorized as the early American colonists’ “drive toward prosperity and their enjoyment of worldly stuffs, and the establishment of a mercantile aristocracy.”

Drawing on several different pictorial traditions, James Flexner notes the ways in which Dutch New York was a “region where the influence of the international court style was superimposed on Dutch realism.” The baroque balustrade dividing the foreground and the classical landscape depicted behind Coeymans hint that Partridge may have drawn on architectural details of British mezzotints, readily available in the American colonies at the time, to structure the composition. Louisa Wood Ruby argued that in light of the English-dominated government, portraits of the Schuylers, the de Peysters and other elite Dutch-Americans demonstrate aspirations of a social status associated with the English aristocracy. For the most part, art historians have recognized the ways artists working in New York City drew from British mezzotints. However, what many scholars fail to note is the extent to which the contemporary British conventions were derived from previous Dutch sources. Among the most important figures in establishing a market for aristocratic portraiture were Dutch émigrés like Sir Peter Lely, who was born in Holland but became the keeper of Charles II’s pictures, and his successor, court portraitist Sir Godfrey Kneller, also of Dutch descent, who introduced later continental

trends to England.\textsuperscript{488} The work of both Lely and Kneller, like much of British portrait painting, was strongly influenced by Anthony van Dyck, a Flemish artist who became the leading court painter in England during the 1630s.\textsuperscript{489} Even after his death, the circulation of prints of his works resulted in his influence lasting well into the eighteenth century. This transcultural production is fascinating because it shows that Dutch-American painters adapted European conventions even though they were not professionally trained. It also demonstrates that in executing these works painters like Vanderlyn and Partridge were looking at other forms of visual culture and that they were familiar with the prints and other items circulating.

Scholars of early colonial painting have primarily concentrated on identification – of the artist, the sitter, or even the location. Quite often in this literature works are discussed pejoratively for the artist’s lack of skill in rendering the human form. One commentator has aptly described the awkwardness apparent in many of the works produced in the early colonial period: “All these images formidable in their expressiveness, all struggling to master the human figure.”\textsuperscript{490} Frequently they are dismissed as naïve, flat representations. The bodies are stiff and the faces figuratively and


\textsuperscript{490} S. Lane Faison Jr., \textit{Hudson Valley People, Albany to Yonkers, 1700-1900} (Poughkeepsie: Vassar College Art Gallery, 1982), 13.
emotionally lack depth. But as Patricia Fumerton has noted regarding the English limner Nicolas Hilliard, the sitter’s face is the centrepiece around which to arrange complex compositions of clothing, hair, jewellery, personal items and even furnishings. 491 Like Hilliard New Netherlandish artists were often called limners, a distinction made by modern scholars separating them from professional painters. As in the case of English limners in works by Vanderlyn, Heaten, and Partridge, “the costume, not the face, is privileged.” 492 This flatness, decorativeness, and emphasis on the careful description of attributes is just one of the ways Elizabethan and colonial portraiture differed from the more illusionistic style that developed in seventeenth-century Europe.

Robert Tittler and Anne Thackray have looked extensively at the ways native English painters working in rural areas were also trained to produce works in associated genres such as heraldic painting, staining, glass painting, and various forms of carving. This was obviously the case with members of the Duyckinck family. Tittler also suggests that a strong sense of regionalism produced a “doggedly insular” outlook and training amongst “painter-stainers” that distinguished them from the more cosmopolitan styles that were emerging amongst artists working for the elites of stylish metropolitan centers and wealthy courts throughout Europe. 493 The same sort of regionalism emerged especially in the Upper Hudson Valley, where artists did not have the same access to

492 Jones and Stallybrass, Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory, 35.
training or professional memberships made available through the United Provinces’ highly developed guild system. Because of this a very distinct, local style is apparent.

Admittedly the works I have discussed are rather inelegantly executed in contrast to the sophisticated canvases imported from the refined visual culture of the Netherlands. Much like the works discussed by Beth Fowkes Tobin, they have “gone unnoticed because they have seemed to lack importance either as cultural artifacts or as objects productive of aesthetic pleasure.” For a scholar critically engaged with works falling outside of the Western-European art historical canon, however, it is not helpful to discuss the work of the Hudson Valley Patroon painters as primitive or unsuccessful. Especially in the discourses on Elizabethan-Jacobean portraiture there is a tendency for scholars to apply derogatory terms such as “folk” and “survival style” to denigrate works created by limners and craftsmen as opposed to classically trained and intellectually motivated continental artists. Rather, I argue for a reading of these works that considers the competing sources of prints and complex functions of paintings in the contact zones of colonial societies as collating multivalent modes of representation.

In their attempts to practice realism, artists in Dutch New York were forced to study the material culture at hand. Despite the intensity of the objects depicted alongside them, the women in the portraits I have discussed are not objectified. With a hint of a smile on her handsome, chiselled face, Coeymans confidently asserts her

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495 Flexner, *First Flowers of Our Wilderness*, 84.
presence. Her countenance is just one of the aspects of her identity that articulated her as one of the more powerful (female) landowners along the Hudson River. A comment by Jones and Stallybrass is particularly applicable to the portraits I have discussed: “‘Identity’ is thus clearer in the case of the objects than the subjects. And the objects refer us back to the making of identities – the transnational labour through which subjects and objects alike come into being.”

Even with the commodification of the things around them, the women in these portraits are subjects, not objects themselves. The commanding way they appear speaks to their agency in commercial networks.

This chapter has demonstrated how women’s roles in the United Provinces often diverged from the domestic ideals prescribed by popular literature of the time. Building on this tradition, within the North American colony of New Netherland, a “public domesticity” encompassed the relationships formed through exchange. Little is known about the commissions of the portraits I have discussed. Given Coeymans’ wealth and involvement in constructing one of the grandest houses in the upper Hudson Valley, it is highly likely that she was involved in making the arrangements with Partridge. She, like each of these women through their consumption of hybrid colonial material cultures, was an active participant in making the homes of New Netherland and was depicted as such.

Women in patria as well as New Netherland and Dutch New York actively participated in the making of the colony as openbare koopvrouwen distributing goods through official channels and personal networks. They too were consumers demonstrating that the

496 Jones and Stallybrass, Renaissance Clothing and the Materials of Memory, 46.
497 George, “Homes in the empire, empires in the home,” 95-127.
household objects they purchased did not only have what Linda Cavallo calls a “static, narcissistic function, attributing status and identity,” but also “relational” values that reinforced social relations as they were utilized, displayed, given away, borrowed, and inherited. Representations of women in the portraiture commissioned during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries in the Hudson River Valley discussed in this chapter demonstrate the ways in which many material objects became important social signifiers.

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Figures

Figure 3.1 Artist Unknown, *Proposed Coat of Arms for New Amsterdam, New Netherland: Preparatory Drawing for a Presentation to the Dutch West India Company*, ca. 1630, New-York Historical Society.

Figure 3.2 Gerrit Duyckinck, *Portrait of an Unknown Woman*, 1690-1700, Winterthur Museum, Wilmington.
Figure 3.3 Pieter Vanderlyn, *Portrait of Susanna Truax*, 1730, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.

Figure 3.4 Attributed to Hendrick Boelen or Henricus Boelen, *Clasp*, ca. 1680-90 or ca. 1720-1750, Yale University Art Gallery, New Haven.
Figure 3.5 Pieter van den Berg, *Teedrinken in de namiddag (Drinking Tea in the Afternoon)*, 1700, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam.

Figure 3.6 John Heaten, *Portrait of Magdalena Douw*, c. 1698-a. 1742, Winterthur Museum, Wilmington.
Figure 3.7 Nehemiah Partridge, *Portrait of Ariantje Coeymans*, c. 1722, Albany Institute of History and Art.

Figure 3.8 Nehemiah Partridge, *Portrait of Peter Schuyler*, c.1710-1718, Collection of the City of Albany.
Figure 3.9 Attributed to Pieter Vanderlyn, *Portrait of Catarina de Wandelaer Gansevoort*, 1730, Jane Forbes Clark II collection.

Figure 3.10 Attributed to Pieter Vanderlyn, *Portrait of Deborah Glen*, c. 1739, Abby Aldrich Rockefeller Folk Art Center, Williamsburg.
Chapter 4

Homemaking: Spaces, Places, and Things

“What do we make of the histories that domestic interiors once concrete and now perhaps crumbling or even disappeared have the capacity to yield?”

Economic treatises and historical accounts of early modern global trade identify shipping routes, itemize cargo holdings and iterate corporate accounting practices. Often passed over, however, is that the most routine, intimate, and perhaps the most influential encounters with global trade would have happened within the home. Contemporary inventories clearly show that domestic space was the contact zone par excellence where global commodities were displayed, shown, and presented, in the Dutch Republic and also in the colonies. Through the use, valuation and gifting of goods, usually as home based transactions; hearth and home played a vital role in investing these objects with socially constructed meaning. The cultural implications of American furs, Batavian pepper, Ming bowls or Brazilian sugar would not have been felt as the crates were being loaded and unloaded from ships, but rather became evident when these items were arranged on a table within the home. Some of the most important shifts in household consumption were initiated by the introduction of non-European products into Dutch homes throughout the empire. These material transitions came to have a tremendous impact on the global transmission of decorative art styles and fashions, and on gendered

and racial roles that became part of colonial home making.

This chapter maps the cultural networks created, disrupted and adapted by the production and consumption of what Janet Hoskins calls biographical goods and public commodities that comprised household interiors. The material culture forming these highly contested spheres reflects complex intersections of European, North American, and even Asian and African modes of production and patterns of consumption. Here I investigate the domestic interiors of homes in New Netherland and early Dutch New York as dynamic social spaces where people and things from around the world came into contact.

In her work on Italian interiors in the early modern period, Erin Campbell has proposed an ecological approach to the decorative arts. Her methodology is based on the anthropologist Timothy Ingold’s conception of ecologies in which culture mediates human and non-human relationships to the environment in “a world furnished with objects.” For Ingold there is a critical distinction between the lines formed by “networks” and the “meshworks” of a more rhizomic “fluid space.” The interiors and the objects that inhabited the spaces discussed in this chapter lacked well-defined

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500 Hoskins, Biographical Objects, 1-10.
501 For more on this see Thomas DaCosta Kaufmann and Michael North, “Introduction- Artistic and Cultural Exchanges between Europe and Asia: Rethinking Markets, Workshops and Collections,” Artistic and Cultural Exchanges Between Europe and Asia 1400-1900, ed. Michael North (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010), 1-8; and for a focus on the exchanges initiated by the VOC see Jan van Campen and Ebeltje Hartkamp-Jonxis, Aziatische Weelde: VOC-kunst in het Rijksmuseum (Zutphen: Walburg Pers, 2011).
boundaries; they were mobile, mixing and mutating, dissolving and reforming through the nexus of meshworks. Even though the physical space of the home was a solid, wooden building, the things that filled it were not permanent, or fixed. They moved from person to person and circulated from place to place with their acquisition, use, sale, and exchange. Things in these politicalized ecologies, such as beaver pelts, seewant, delftware, Turkish carpets and textiles, are what Latour has called actant; they had agency, they had the ability to alter relationships. Furthermore they contained a “vital materiality,” a term coined by Jane Bennett that builds on Michael Foucault’s notion of bio-power and Judith Butler’s understanding of “bodies that matter” to separate materiality from substances that are passive, mechanistic or divinely infused. In the homes of colonists, like any other ecology, the introduction of a new component enacted a series of changes: something as simple as coffee beans set off a chain reaction in the utensils, vessels, and other products related to its consumption, altering the entire dynamic of a material culture. Rather than anachronistically defining public and private spheres, my approach considers domestic spaces as both fluid, cultural prescriptions and as permeable physical places filled with symbolic materials and meaningful objects.

Oost west, t’huiz best: The Mobile Home

507 Bennett, Vibrant Matter, xiii.
A 1639 edition of Johan van Beverwijck’s treatise *Uytnementheit des Vrouwelijke Geslachten (On the Excellence of the Female Sex)* included an illustration of a woman posed on a slowly moving turtle (Fig. 4.1). Behind her another woman worked at a spinning wheel inside a house and outside a man plunged a shovel into the earth of a garden. A text accompanied the image glorifying women’s achievements within the household. For many viewers, this engraving with its caption “t’hui best,” literally translated to home is best (or more poetically “home sweet home”) emphasized the contemporary notion that a woman’s proper place was in the home. Throughout the seventeenth century, the motif of the turtle appeared frequently in emblemata, often accompanying literature assigning women’s roles to the domestic sphere. The eminent moralist Jacob Cats too presented the turtle in his emblem of women’s morality, instructing virtuous women to conduct themselves consistently as if they were at home, even if they should have to leave. Historian Lotte C. van de Pol explains that many emblem books of the time utilized the slow moving animal, carrying its home on its back, to symbolize “the virtuous home as opposed to the wicked world.”

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In 1586, the English-born poet Geoffrey Whitney, then a student at the recently founded university in Leyden, published *A Choice of Emblems and Other Devices* through the Plantin Press. One entry utilized a similar *pictura* of a woman on a turtle, holding out keys from the chatelaine at her waist, to accompany the *subscription*:

This represents the vertues of a wife,
Her finger, staies her tongue to runne at large.
The modest looks, doe shewe her honest life.
The keys, declare shee hath a care, and chardge,
Of husbandes goodes: let him goe where he please,
The tortoyes [turtle] warnes, at home to spend her daies [sic].

George Wither’s *Collection of Emblems, Ancient and Modern* from 1635 included an image of a turtle in the foreground; in the background is a thatched house with one wall cut-away to reveal a family arranged around a table. Above the picture is the inscription, “The best, and fairest House, to mee/ Is that, where best I love to bee.”

In his seminal work on depictions of women and domesticity in Dutch genre painting, Wayne Franits deems the animal to be an appropriate symbol, “for the turtle is always at home, and carries its house along under all circumstances.” Despite Whitney’s, Wither’s and Beverwijck’s employment of the turtle as an indication of domesticity, these animals were frequently used in the same visual culture of the seventeenth century to represent the New World. Johann Theodor de Bray illustrated part IV plate III “Quomodo Hollandi in Mauritii” of *Indiae Orientalis* with an exotic scene of two men riding a large

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511 Franits, *Paragons of Virtue*, 69. It is important to note that in the Dutch context, Cats does not include Whitney’s sentiments for a woman to hold her tongue.
514 Turtles formed the emblem for “Festina Lente” or make haste slowly as well.
turtle (Fig. 4.2). The exoticism of turtle iconography has been thoroughly examined, however, the significance of the turtle for non-European societies is seldom considered. Within the beliefs of the indigenous people of the north east coast of North America turtles figured prominently. According to their creation myths, the world was supported on the back of a giant turtle.

In light of this multivalent iconography, I instead take Beverwijck’s image as a response to men’s and women’s increased migration throughout Europe and later the world during a time of increased social and geographic mobility. Although it is often interpreted to support Beverwijck’s contention that women were to remain in the home, I would like to introduce this image of a woman on a turtle, paired with the two figures in the background, as an example of the complexity of gender roles in Dutch colonial projects throughout the world at the beginning of the age of exploration. The image portrayed age-old attributes associated with female and male labor, as in representations of Adam and Eve after the fall, associated with the adage, “When Adam toiled and Eve span, who was then the gentleman?” Both the woman spinning and the man digging reference, literally and figuratively, the Dutch engagement with making their material world and as such the image would have taken on a more nuanced meaning in the cultural

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consciousness of the Dutch at a time when global trade and increased travel would have been challenging some of the boundaries defining home.

Nanette Solomon cautions viewers to understand the discourse of domesticity prevalent in discussions of the Dutch in the seventeenth century “not as a given but as a cultural fabrication, one whose ideology and presentation are clearly related to its binary - itinerancy.” In the face of fluid migration and meshworks of contact, a Dutch national identity was conceived - counter to expectation - as a result of the lack of ethnic homogeneity. Even the definition of domestic positions the concept in relation to what it is not. According to Merriam-Webster, domestic simultaneously connotes both “of or pertaining to the home, the household, household affairs, or the family” and “indigenous to or produced or made within one's own country; native: domestic goods” and not foreign. Though domesticity may have been a seventeenth-century concept, Mariët Westermann argues the Dutch would hardly have used the term any more than in the everyday vernacular of their English counterparts, with the word huiselijkheid, or homeliness, dating to the beginning of the eighteenth century. The articulation of domesticity did indeed correspond with notions of otherness that developed at the end of the seventeenth century. Benjamin Schmidt notes that this understanding came as Dutch overseas possessions are waning: no longer involved in colonizing overseas, the Dutch

instead turned to promoting exoticism as a broadly appealing, universal view of the “world” as everything outside its borders and capitalized on stereotyping worldly differences. The permeability of boundaries both real and imagined (domestic, national, societal) reveals the extent to which homeliness and worldliness were as Simon Schama puts it “two faces of the same cultural coin.”

Schama’s suggestion that the turtle iconography appearing in prescriptive literature reflects a feminine “conquering the home/world tension through the solution of the mobile home” proves to be not just a metaphor; it may also highlight an actual challenge to women who would have been venturing to the new world. For some women venturing to the far reaches of the Dutch trade empire, the emblematic iconography that emerged depicting a woman standing on a turtle, with the animal carrying its home on its back, might have aided in “solving the tension, much felt in Dutch life, between mobility and durability.” Like the turtle carrying its home on its back, Dutch men and women were charged with taking ideas of domesticity and moral values with them wherever they might go – especially to the New World.

When Jan Cornelisz van Goudriaen (nd) a former bosschieter or gunner with the WIC, returned to New Netherland aboard the ship the Liefde (the Love), it was “with and

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522 Schama, The Embarrassment of Riches, 389.
523 Franits, Paragons of Virtue, 8.
alongside his *huysvrouw* named Aeltgen.\(^524\) Using Aeltgen’s experience and other examples, Susanah Shaw Romney has argued that Dutch women had a unique role in colonial projects.\(^525\) I agree with Romney that it was because of women’s association with homes that they were critical in the claiming of space through the establishment of households in the colonies. However I disagree with her explanation for why women were integral to the process of colonization. It was not because “the physicality of the home both contained and was defined by a woman’s body,” it was their active roles as *homemakers*, participating in regional and global trade, shaping the materiality of homes and entire communities. Their role in taking care of the house was not a restrictive one as defined by nineteenth-century conceptions of separate spheres defining gendered roles.\(^526\)

As wives or otherwise, women’s contributions to the establishment of homes overseas mattered.

### Making the Home: Domestic Architecture In New Netherland

The first shelters constructed by Dutch settlers in the early years of the colony were little more than dugout pits with bark or sod roofs, but quickly more permanent structures were erected. In 1628, Dominee Jonas Michaelius (1577- after 1638) observed, his peers were “beginning to build new houses in place of the huts and sheds in which heretofore they

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524 8 April 1650, Notarial Archief 1298, f. 86 v. 8 April 1650 Not H.Schaef, Gemeente Archive Amsterdam.

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nestled rather than dwelt.”\(^{527}\) Over the next forty years, a wide variety of urban and rural houses were constructed throughout the area ranging from Nieuw Amstel in the south to Schenectady in the North.\(^{528}\) As more Europeans arrived, people spread out from the clusters of settlements on the island of Manhattan and around Fort Orange to build farmsteads on the fertile, low-lying areas along waterways, where they could farm and trade, beyond the purview of growing urban developments.\(^{529}\) The French Jesuit missionary Isaac Jogues (1607-1646) described the roughly thirty houses scattered along the Hudson River as being established “as each has found convenient.”\(^{530}\)

By 1654 Nicasius de Sille (1610-1674) wrote of daily life in New Netherland, “one can live here and forget patria... This country is almost like Holland.”\(^{531}\) The son of a diplomat from Arnhem, De Sille immigrated to New Netherland in 1654 where he served as schout-fiscal (councillor, among other roles) to Governor Pieter Stuyvesant.\(^{532}\) In 1657, De Sille became one of the first twenty patentees of New Utrecht. Five years prior, Cornelius Van Deventer (active 1650s) a surveyor from Utrecht and investor in the WIC purchased land from the Canarsee and Nyack people. When he died in 1655 Jacques Cortelyou (1625-1693) Surveyor General of the colony sold off twenty lots to create New

\(^{527}\) “Men begint vast nieuwe huysen te bouwen in de plaetse van de hutten ende coten daerin men te voren meer genestelt dan gewoont heft.” A.W. Eekhof, Jonas Michaeliues, Founder of the church in New Netherland (Leyden: A.W. Sijthoff, 1926), 103.


\(^{529}\) Cantwell and Wall, “Landscaes and Other Objects,” 321-322.

\(^{530}\) Dean Snow, Charles Gehring, and William Starna, eds., In Mohawk Country: Early Narratives about a Native People (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1996), 32.


\(^{532}\) For more on De Sille see Ellis L. Raesly, Portrait of New Netherland (New York: Columbia University Press, 1945), 295-296.
Utrecht, the last of the original six towns that would later become Kings County and today’s Brooklyn.

De Sille purchased a plot and erected one of the first three houses in the area. Built by the carpenter Jacob Hellakers (aka Jacob Swartz 1612-1687), the small dwelling made from locally sourced stone and roofed with red pan-tiles from Holland combined native and imported materials. Miss C. Lott of Brooklyn made a sketch of the house prior to its demolition in 1850 (Fig. 4.3). The quaint cottage depicted in the nineteenth century was undoubtedly altered from its seventeenth-century form, but it still contains traces of the architectural features re-created by De Sille and his contemporaries to mirror the construction styles of the United Provinces from which they came. During the time De Sille was writing his Description of the Founding or Beginning of Nieuw Utrecht, towns were laid out according to the urban development of patria and houses, although utilizing the various resources of the New World, were built according to Dutch customs.

Structures like De Sille’s built during the time of the WIC’s control, between 1624 and 1664, do not remain. However, using extant documents like building contracts, architectural historian Jeroen van den Hurk has confirmed that housing construction throughout the colony would have echoed the building traditions of the Low Countries. Based on Netherlandish prototypes, he considers structures featuring a distinctive bent system, with high ceilings and specific style windows (described below) to be indicative not a “Dutch Colonial” form but rather what he terms a “New Netherlandish”

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533 Dilliard, An Album of New Netherland, plate 73.
The definition of Dutch colonial structures has raised important issues amongst architectural historians. Rosalie Fellows Bailey noted that what is often considered “colonial” only came into existence after the fall of New Netherland proper, and perhaps more importantly did not reflect the diverse, regionalized populations. Instead, Bailey and Helen Wilkinson Reynolds considered Dutch houses to be structures in which Dutch families lived. Others like Hugh Morrison defined the Dutch colonial farmhouse by its characteristic gambrel roof and Thomas J. Wertenbaker noted the overhanging eaves. In contrast, David Cohen utilizes Henry Glassie’s fundamental components of folk objects (use, form, and construction) to categorize what he calls Dutch-American farmhouses. To counter essentialist approaches, Van den Hurk specifically uses Netherlandish rather than Dutch as the architectural elements used in New Netherland reflected Northern European conventions outside of just the Dutch Republic.


According to Van den Hurk, “As the population of New Netherland increased, various aspects of its colonial culture would reflect the customs and traditions of the Dutch Republic, in some cases modified by the New World environment.” The translation of architecture from patria was initiated by the differing materials available in the geographic area of New Netherland, the ethnic diversity of the communities and the fact that there were fewer skilled people involved in the process of construction. As such, the homes built well into the eighteenth century are examples of how traditional architectural practices were transformed and adapted to the differing physical and cultural conditions of the New World. A truly hybrid architecture was produced when “the range of European architectural and cultural traditions in early colonial [New Netherland] enabled the sharing of knowledge and fostered a climate of innovation that could produce an anomalous, un-classifiable” structure.

Van den Hurk’s investigation into seventeenth-century New Netherlandish building contracts reveals one woman in particular active in the process of homemaking through the commissioning of architectural projects. In an extant notarial document “the honourable Annete Dirx widow of the late Pieter” entered into an agreement with carpenters Willem Abrahamsen van der Borde and Deonijs Isaaksen van Hartogsvelt to

538 Edmund B. O’Callaghan’s translation of the contract appears in The Register of Salomon Lachaire, Notary Public of New Amsterdam, 1661-1662, New York Historical Manuscripts: Dutch Series, ed. and indexed by Kenneth Scott and Kenn Stryker-Rodda (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1978), 14-15. I have used van den Hurk’s far more accurate translation. While he does an excellent job analyzing this contract in relation to contemporary New Netherland documents and also those written in the Netherlands at the time, Van den Hurk’s focus on the legal ramifications and the structural comparisons is quite different than how I utilize this document.
have a house built. It appears this was not Dirx’s first attempted project. Previously Robbert Roelantsen and Abraham Janzen sued Dirx on the grounds that they had a contract with her husband to build a house. Even though she claimed the agreement was terminated with the death of her husband, the document must have been viewed as legally binding for the court ruled in favour of the plaintiffs.539

On 21 February 1661, Dirx, Abrahamsen and Isaaksen and their witnesses Pieter Jansen “metelaer” (bricklayer) and Jan de Wit “molenear” (miller) met before Salmon Lachaire, public notary and “declared that with each other contracted to the making of and the cost of making of a house… five and forty wood-feet long and four and twenty equal feet wide.” The house was to be two stories, with a cellar below the main floor voorhuis (front house) and a garret above, with no less than five staircases including one “a winding stair to go up with a paneled door” and several bedsteads (cupboard beds). The contract outlined what was to be included “shutters and panes… with everything that belongs with it” (probably meaning hardware) and all in good working order “to hang to seal and lock tight in such a manner as is proper.” The agreed upon sum for “everything done truthful and in good faith” was “fifteen-hundred guilders of which five hundred guilders in good beavers and the remaining ten hundred guilders in good well strung wampum [seewan].”540 This was to be paid in three instalments: “one third part when the

540 For the construction of the aforesaid house the proprietor hath promised and the contractor agreed during the time he is employed at the work free board and lodging and in addition thereto once the sum of three hundred and twenty guilders in wampum and so much good blue cloth as will make him a coat, and a
aforementioned work is raised and the second third part when the roof is placed and remaining third part when the aforemented work conform as the forementioned is finished and made and to effectually to satisfy [sic].” Like most local transactions, the purchase was made using the indigenous monetary units of wampum and beaver.

Although the contract specifies primarily the construction of major architectural features, the document gives a surprisingly vivid image of what the interior space of a New Netherlandish house would have looked like. The floor boards were to be planed, the beams above the cellar “squared and hewen” and the “short flight of stairs to go up to the chamber with a handrail with turned balusters there to with a paneled door and frame covered.” Precise placement and even the style of the windows was specified:

…a door frame with glass and planed and two planed *kruijskozijnen* (crossbar windows) with shutters and glass panes also two *bolkozijnen* (two-light windows) with in each a wooden shutter with a glass pane in the attic and a *klooster kosijn* (cloister window) in the garret and a French point on the gable in the rear gable in the cellar chamber two *kruijskosijn* windows of three-lights with wooden shutters and panes also two *bolkozijn* in the attic.

Openings for “een tweelight” (two-light window) were placed in the interior partitions to allow light and air to flow through the rooms. Dirx’s specification of “a stoop such as stands in front of the house of the honourable mister Martijn Kreiger,” suggests not only the emulation of her peers but also perhaps the unfamiliarity of the contractors with a particular regional style.

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With the price tag of fifteen hundred guilders, Dirx’s house would have been in the top range of construction costs for typical New Netherlandish homes. In contrast to others built at the time with only one large main room and cellar storage below and a garret space above, her plan demonstrates a surprising differentiation of space (Fig. 4.4). It contained a *kelder kook* (cellar kitchen), partitioned space on the second floor and a *voorhuijs*, the most public room in Netherlandish homes where visitors were greeted, and craftspeople worked and plied their trades. In *patria* the *voorhuijs* was an important passageway as space was divided into rooms in long narrow canal houses. Even though freestanding homes in New Netherland did not have the same spatial restrictions, the custom of building long narrow structures was often continued. The abundance of storage space and her payment to the builders in beaver pelts and wampum suggest that Dirx continued to participate in the fur trade after her husband’s death. However, despite these divisions of space, it is unlikely that these boundaries were as “clearly demarcated and jealously guarded” as Schama described Dutch conventions to be. While Dutch genre painting may have depicted women predominantly within the home, as the previous chapter has demonstrated, their varied roles as consumers, merchants on small and large scales, members of political and religious communities necessitated them to spend considerable amounts of time outside of domestic boundaries.

No material traces of Dirx’s home exist: all that remains is the informative and detailed contract. In contrast, while no documentary evidence has survived, Ariaantje

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Coeymans’ house overlooking the Hudson River still stands today. Built between roughly 1717 and 1720 for Coeymans and her brother Samuel (1670-after 1754) it is one of most ambitious early examples of domestic architecture in the Hudson Valley (Fig. 4.5). The large project was made possible by a substantial inheritance the two received from their father, according to the Dutch custom of *boedelhouderschap* in which the children only received the property after the death of both parents. Furthermore it was divided equally among the children both male and female in the customary *gavelkind*. With the English takeover of the colony, the practice of primogeniture was instituted, but, according to Article 11 of the capitulation, the Dutch were allowed to maintain many of their customs. This included the distribution of goods to allow for the preservation of harmony and the family structure noted as, “The Dutch here shall enjoy their own customs concerning inheritances.” In 1701 Charles Wooley described the similar practice of another merchant family:

The Dutch in New York observe this custom, an instance of which I remember in one Frederick Philips, the richest Mijn Heer in that place, who was said to have whole Hogsheads of Indian Money or Wampam, who having one Son and Daughter, I was admiring what a heap of Wealth the Son would enjoy, to which a Dutch man replied that the Daughter must to halves, for so was the manner amongst them, they standing more upon Nature than Names; that as the root communicates itself to all its branches, so should the Parent to all his off-spring, which are the Olive

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543 Cohen, *The Dutch American Farm*, 139.
branches round his Table.\textsuperscript{545}

In 1673, patriarch Barent Pieterse Coeymans had built a large stone house on the southern bank of Coeymans Creek. He had emigrated from Holland early after the establishment of the colony, working in the Rensselaerswijck mills as a millwright’s apprentice. He worked in the grist- and saw- mills until he was able to purchase land fifteen miles south of Albany, where he established his own mills using the waterpower of a creek flowing into the Hudson.\textsuperscript{546} After his death Samuel and Ariaantje built their home across from their father’s house on the north bank with the narrow gable end to the south and the main façade facing eastward to the Hudson River. In comparison to other houses of the time the two-and-a-half story stone structure would have been considered one of the grandest mansions in the upper valley and an ostentatious symbol of wealth in the frontier community.\textsuperscript{547}

Coeymans House is unique in documented Hudson Valley architecture in that it was built for both unmarried siblings to each have individual quarters under the same roof. As such it has two rooms on each floor separated by a central hallway. On 16 July 1723, at the age of fifty, Coeymans married the much younger David Verplanck, the son of early immigrants to New Amsterdam, then twenty-seven years old. By 1733 Verplanck


\textsuperscript{546} The validity of the Coeymans patent was challenged by the patroon of Rensselaerswyck who contented that the land was part of his domain. The matter was finally settled in court in 1706 and his son received the patent in 1714. Reynolds, \textit{Dutch Houses in the Hudson Valley before 1776}, 71-72.

and the Coeymans siblings had a legally binding contract drafted to outline the equal division of the dwelling house, as well as the outbuildings, saw and gristmills, and land jointly owned by the three. According to the 16 July 1733, document:

David ver planck and Ariantie his Wife have Allotted to them the South part of the said Dwelling house with ground to build a Kitchen on & seeing the Aforementioned Kitchen Cannot Well be performed this Season It is therefore farther Covenanted by and Between the Partyes to these present that Each party Shall Continue to Keep his possessions as to the House and Kitchens aforesmemented [sic].

After Coeymans’ death about 1747, Verplanck brought his portion of the property into his subsequent marriages to first a Miss Brouwer (nd) and then Catrina Boom (nd) on 10 November 1752. Upon his death in 1769, Verplanck left an estate probably including some goods that had belonged to Coeymans, including a variety of chairs, silver mugs, spoons, forks, bowls, tankards, wafer irons, hang irons, looking glasses and a chest of drawers that were auctioned off on 7 September 1769. His share of over 8500 acres of the Coeymans Patent was left to his four children, Johannes, Harriet, Isaac Davidse, and Ariaantje. Although Verplanck and Coeymans did not have children, his naming of a later daughter after his first wife suggests his respect for the woman who provided him with much of his fortune.

According to Trent et al., the grand stair hall of the Coeymans house was “a significant message-bearer of culture and style both inside and outside their

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548 “Manuscript dated 16 July 1733” MS-2168 OV, Albany Institute of History & Art.
community.” With six turned newels, forty-two turned balusters, and moulded handrails and stringers, the extant (but relocated) staircase connects two stories in four dogleg runs (side-by-side) (Fig. 4.6). Although they are no longer in situ, the Coeymans house included other elaborate interior fixtures like jambless fireplaces with large smoke hoods, casement windows, moulded overdoors, box beds, Dutch doors and elaborate tile work, typical of the Dutch architectural style. But it is particularly in this comparison to the architecture of the Dutch Republic where historians tended to stumble. The “Genesis of the Style,” outlined by Aymar Embury in *The Dutch Colonial House: Its Origin, Design, Modern Plan and Construction* had less to do with the actual architectural production of early European settlers, and more clearly reflected twentieth-century houses being built in the Colonial Revival manner. Embury explained with a broad generalization:

> The genius of the Dutch race did not lend itself to formality in building any more than it did to the pomp of public life; we do not find in Holland itself any buildings, either private or public, of such a character; the Dutch simply do not know how to be stately. But if a country house is wanted which shall be homelike, quaint and lovely, the style is admirably adjusted to its use, especially since in a small house the lower the roof comes, the more intimately the building will fit its landscape, and houses of the Dutch type are essentially low in appearance.

This characterization was typical of Colonial Revival discussions of the “Dutchness” of early colonial architecture. Apparently Embury had never visited The Netherlands to

551 Trent et al., online.
552 Trent et al., online.
view Amsterdam’s Town Hall or see the architecture lining Leiden’s Rapenburg Canal. However, here Dell Upton’s definition of terminology provides a helpful alternative to the reductive approach of Embury and his contemporaries. According to Upton, *style* is pervasive: it is a unifying force providing “a context, or system of understanding.” In contrast, *mode* refers to divisions serving “to identify individuals within a subgroup of people with one another, and to demonstrate to the individuals and to outsiders their differences from the larger society.” While Embury may have been correct to suggest that the style of architecture employed in New Netherland, as well as New England and Virginia, “bore little resemblance to that of the countries from which they came,” specific modes were undoubtedly translated to the differing conditions of the New World. The domestic landscape of the Coeymans house from its architectural features to furnishings and fixtures shows how Dutch baroque styles were altered according to regional modes, demonstrating Upton’s assertion that “Owning such goods set one off from one’s neighbours, and intentionally so.”

Sometime during the last quarter of the eighteenth century, the Coeymans house was renovated to remove the original gabled roof and stepped dormer, indications of the Hudson Valley mode evolving to conform to the increasingly popular Georgian style. Only a few extant images attest to the original structure of the building (Fig. 4.7). Like the Glen-Sanders House discussed by Robert F. Trent, Alan Miller, Glenn Adamson, and

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Harry Mack Truax II, significant changes were made when “a post-Revolutionary embarrassment about old-fashioned Dutch internal appointments and trim,” initiated changes.556 With the founding of the United States of America few of the revolutionary generation wished to own quaint looking cottages that became associated with a démodé colonial past. As such Coeymans house can be discussed as a particularly rich architectural palimpsest. Through three hundred years of renovations the residence contains evidence of inscription, erasure and re-inscription. The layers provide for multiple interpretation: the original construction is that of a wealthy merchant family of Dutch descent, the second perspective accounts for the Georgian renovations, and a third simultaneous reading of both the old and the new witnesses the material traces of cultural assimilation in the Hudson River Valley.

In looking at Dutch incursions into the South African landscape, Martin Hall finds the metaphor of layers particularly compelling for an “accumulating palimpsest of meanings” in the colonial context.557 Fashioned by New Netherlandish architecture the colony’s landscape was recursive: it was “shaped by expressions of identity and, in turn, shapes the formation of identity.” Prior to European settlement, the area around the Coeymans estate was marked with Mahican settlements and well-used trails and trade routes connecting them to the Mohawks in the west and the Musee groups to the South. Overlying this indigenous landscape were the buildings, routes, farms, and other

556 Trent et. al., online.
interventions of Dutch mercantile and agricultural networks. Hall’s metaphor of the architecturally influenced landscape gaze imagines that “a Dutch East India Company official looking at the Castle [Cape Town] in 1720 would see a mark of Dutch authority and sea power.” To borrow his description one can easily picture Coeymans overlooking her family’s complex of mills, wharfs, warehouses, and farms from the mansion with the same conquering view, as depicted in her portrait.

**The Hybrid Materiality of Interiors: Using Inventories**

In the body of literature on colonial architecture, New Netherlandish houses have been discussed as symbolic structures and socio-cultural metaphors but the more mundane contents of the dwellings and equipment for living and daily use have been underexplored. A certain amount of reconstruction is required to imagine how Dirx and Coeymans would have furnished the rooms and occupied the space of their homes. Between the eleven H-bents and sided walls of the structural architecture, the internal spaces contained exchanges made material through the movements of things, goods, merchandise and artworks. In lieu of extant interiors or images of how these interiors would have looked, a “qualitative approach” to probate inventories and other documentary texts can be helpful in recreating the texture of domestic space. Using a small sample or even a single inventory can help map the lived experience associated with listed objects to reveal, as Margaret Ponsonby writes, how “individuals organized

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558 Hall, “Identity, Memory and Counter memory,” 204.

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their homes as meditations on the prevailing ideals of the period, and as expressions of the particular circumstances of their lives.”

The very same legal customs that allowed Dirx to contract the construction of a house, and Coeymans to inherit an expansive estate, allowed for women to leave often detailed inventories that mark their presence in the colony’s commercial pursuits and material construction.

Coinciding with the growth of mercantilism, the European practice of inventory taking was just one of the many legal, economic, and social customs to be transplanted from the Netherlands to America. Few inventories from before 1664 exist, but a 1665 provision of the Duke’s Laws stipulating that a written inventory be made within forty-eight hours of the official inquiry into a death increased the number of documents produced and thus the number of extant records. For the next twenty or so years, such affairs were administered by local courts or in the New York City Mayor’s Court, but after 1691, a new judiciary system was established by Governor Henry Slaughter (d. 1691) and the provincial legislature that put the Prerogative Court in charge of the administration of estates. In 1692, this law was reinforced, for “the rights of orphans and the estates of such as dye intestate throughout this province and dependency are often concealed, wasted, Embazilled, and destroyed to the utter ruine of many orphans and next of kind…”

By the early eighteenth century, the Surrogate’s Court, was created

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562 *The Colonial Laws of New York from the Year 1664 to the Revolution* (Albany: James B. Lyon, State Printer, 1894), 300-301.
through the appointment of deputies for each county to appraise the property of the estate.\footnote{Ruth Piwonka, “Margrieta van Varick in the West,” Dutch New York Between East and West: The World of Margrieta van Varick, eds., Deborah L. Krohn and Peter Miller, with Marybeth De Filippis (New York: BGC, 2009), 100.} Ruth Piwonka estimates there to be roughly 1100 existing inventories from Long Island, New York City and the lower Hudson Valley counties ranging from the 1660s to the 1740s.\footnote{Piwonka, “New York Colonial Inventories,” 81. Those considered “Dutch” break down to the following: 1660s 1, 1670s 30, 1680s 52, 1690s 61, 1700s 106, 1710s 103, 1720s 61, 1730s 7, 1740s 9.} While they may be considered “subjective representations,” as described by Giorgio Riello, and not objective records of reality, extant inventories have been among the most utilized documentary sources.\footnote{Giorgio Riello, “Things Seen and Unseen: The material culture of early modern inventories and their representation of domestic interiors,” Early Modern Things: Objects and their Histories, 1500-1800, ed. Paula Findlen (New York: Routledge, 2012), 124-150.}

Both wills and inventories are important indications of how people thought about possessions, but for very different reasons. Although notaries or scribes, in the case of those unable to write, could mediate both, wills are often “semi-narrativised” and retain an owner’s characterization of the items listed. As Lena Cowen Orlin writes, they allow an entry “into the mental world of persons who located identity, value, memory, and meaning in a marked mattress and some labelled sheets – or equally, a cupboard, a kettle, a set of spoons, or a backstool.”\footnote{Lena Cowen Orlin, “Empty Vessels,” Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and its Meanings, eds. Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010), 299-300.} On the other hand, Peter N. Miller and Deborah L. Krohn insist that unlike “self-consciously imaginative” forms of historical documentation, inventories can be “read against the grain” to reveal relatively accurate representations of daily life.\footnote{Miller and Krohn, “Introduction,” 2.} However, the very pedestrian nature of the documents

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564 Piwonka, “New York Colonial Inventories,” 81. Those considered “Dutch” break down to the following: 1660s 1, 1670s 30, 1680s 52, 1690s 61, 1700s 106, 1710s 103, 1720s 61, 1730s 7, 1740s 9.
means the commonplace objects of the time are often omitted for they are taken for granted by those living with the material culture. Here the subtlety of “translating” a document becomes increasingly apparent. Like the literary and visual descriptions discussed in the previous chapter, wills and inventories reveal layers of authorship and multiple opportunities for interpretation and misinterpretation. Initially the deceased can be credited for the acquisition of property and goods, but Miller and Krohn raise an important question: “Do a person’s possessions constitute a collection? And does a list of these possessions amount to a catalogue of a collection?” Although different from accumulations of art, coins, naturalia, and the like typically discussed in the literature on the early history of collecting, the amassing of goods for practical use still speaks to decisions made based on things’ utility, value, and even aesthetic appeal.

One of the major challenges to utilizing probate materials to visualize interiors is the slipperiness of gauging affect from such documents when so many different contributors mark the process. Executors, often under the supervision of a town official, are charged with accounting for and appraising the quantity and at times the quality of possessions. Because of this the format and amount of detail provided can be irregular. For example, while Cornelis van Dyck’s inventory taken in early January of 1687 contained details of the items in each of the rooms, (“1 small parcel of button used,” and “In the fore room “4 racks that the pewter stands on 5 earthen dishes, 6 painted earthen

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dishes & five white earthen plates”). Others like that of Gabriel Thomson of New York City, from 11 October 1702, are more straightforward but include values for the goods (“2 table cloaths 1d” and “1 table 3S”).\textsuperscript{570} As was the case with many of the documents created for those of Dutch descent, English language translations were provided (“9 pare pillowbors with laid or handwork as the Dutch call it,”).\textsuperscript{571} At each of these stages the individuals’ own interests, biases, and opinions shape the final product. Despite these challenges, as Piwonka’s research demonstrates, inventories “provide varied examples that reveal details about domestic architecture, household contents, the use of rooms, relative wealth, and change over a period of time,” but they also “express economic and cultural values as well as the texture of daily life.”\textsuperscript{572}

Accounting done after the death of Margareta van Slichtenhorst Schuyler provides a view of how interior space was divided in early eighteenth century New York. Born in Nykerk in 1628, Schuyler accompanied her father Brant van Slichtenhorst to New Netherland where he assumed a position as schout (director) of Rensselaerswyck.\textsuperscript{573} In 1650 she married Philip Schuyler, a gunstock maker, bringing him into Van Rensselaer’s trade network. Through their participation in the fur trade the two acquired great wealth and properties including in 1672 De Vlackte (The Flatts) north of Albany, partitioned off

\textsuperscript{570} New York State Court of Appeals Collection (Albany: New York State Archives); Kenneth Scott and James A. Owre’s Genealogical Data from Inventories of New York Estates 1666-1825 (New York: New York Genealogical and Biographical Society, 1970), 88, 82.  
\textsuperscript{571} Scott and Owre, Data from Inventories of New York Estates 1666-1825, 117. 
\textsuperscript{572} Piwonka, “New York Colonial Inventories,” 63.  
\textsuperscript{573} Venema, Beverwijck, 36.
from the Van Rensselaers patent, and another property in increasingly urban Albany.\textsuperscript{574}

After her death in 1711 at the age of eighty-two the probate inventory of Schuyler’s possessions was roughly grouped according to room.\textsuperscript{575} This shows her home contained the following spaces in two buildings: \textit{groot kamer} (the great room), \textit{voor huis vant groot huis} (entry chamber), \textit{voor ruym vant ander huis} (front room of the secondary structure), \textit{de grotte keuke} (great kitchen), \textit{op solder} (garret), \textit{in’t Bruyl huys} (boutling house), and \textit{in’t State} (yard).\textsuperscript{576}

The \textit{groot kamer} appears to have contained, among other things, a wide variety of cushions, bedding cottons, table clothes, several sets of both bed and window curtains, many blue and white aprons, coverlets and clothing.\textsuperscript{577} Counter to modern conventions, this room with “2 ordinary tick feather beds with small blue checks, 2 bolsters… & 3 cushions with pillowcases & 2 bedsteads” would have been used for sleeping and also the display of the family’s most prized possessions. Three large paintings were listed in the \textit{groot kamer}, four others in the \textit{voor huys} and the five more in the \textit{voor ruym} of the other house. One of these could have been an unidentified f/100 painting purchased by Schuyler’s husband in 1664. Similarly, it is impossible to be certain, but definitely plausible, that the \textit{kas} in the \textit{groot kamer} is the same inlaid oaken cabinet he purchased for twenty-two beavers and f/10 in beavers in 1654.\textsuperscript{578} Also listed are “8 porcelain

\textsuperscript{574} Venema, \textit{Beverwijck}, 256.
\textsuperscript{575} Schuyler Family Papers, Albany Institute Of History and Art, Albany.
\textsuperscript{576} For yards as part of the domestic space see Zantkiujil, “Home is More than a Roof,” 5.
\textsuperscript{577} Piwonka, “New York Colonial Inventories,” 73.
\textsuperscript{578} Pearson and Van Lear, \textit{Early Records of the City and County of Albany, and Colonial Rensselaerswijk (1656-1657)}, 83-194. It is probably not the “blue painted kas” in the \textit{voor huys vant Groote huys} however.
(Chinese) plates upon the mantle.” Like the placement of Asian commodities in still life paintings, this conscious assimilation is an example of how domestic space neutralized exotic luxuries by co-opting them and making them part of the setting.\(^579\)

Even more elaborate is the inventory of Schuyler’s daughter, Gertruy van Cortlandt (1654-1723). In 1671 she had married Stephanus van Cortlandt (1643-1700), of the prominent Van Cortandt family, who later went on to become the first American born Mayor of New York in 1677. Van Cortlandt lived in New York City, where she participated in the lumber trade as a merchant in her own right. The 1724 probate inventory describes her possessions in situ with each tablecloth listed along with the table on which it belonged, the curtains listed where they were hung and the clothes in the elaborate cabinets where they were stored. This provides a glimpse into the spatial organization of an upper class urban home. Such multi-room dwellings stood in stark contrast to rural farmhouses where single large rooms fulfilled multiple functions for sleeping, cooking, eating, working, and socializing in undifferentiated spaces.\(^580\) When taking the inventory Robert Lurting moved through the rooms, documenting respectively the contents of the “parlor,” “the entry,” “the back parlor,” “the closet,” “the chamber over the back parlor,” “the room over the large parlor,” and “the room over the entry at the head of the stairs[sic].” The accounting continued to list the furnishing and utensils of the “fore” and “great” garrets,” the “kitchen” and the room over it, and the back room

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\(^579\) Hochstrasser, *Still Life and Trade in the Dutch Golden Age*, 200.
\(^580\) For more on the four basic floor plans in use through the 1750s see Cohen, *The Dutch-American Farm*, 37-40.
behind it, as well as the garret above it, suggesting this may have been a separate building or an extension to the main structure, along with back and fore “sellers” and the “brew house, yard & outhouses,” the “wharf & shop.”

The ordering of Van Cortlandt’s possessions reflects not only a more detailed method of inventorying, but also an increased distinction of space within colonial homes. While her mother had cooked and worked in the groot keuke and entertained and slept in the groote kamer, Van Cortlandt’s inventory indicates further room specialization. The “chamber over the back parlor” contained “1 bedsteed 1 feather bed 1 bolster & two pillows” along with curtains and “vallins” or valences. Another room on the second floor contained a canopied bed with “green stripd Cheyney curtains,” while another room had a feather bed with calico curtains. With the increase of globally traded textiles, the bedroom became the most common venue for the showcasing of exotic calicos and chintzes.\(^ {581}\) In his discussion of *The Invention of Comfort*, John E. Crowley identifies fabrics as key indicators of ideas about cleanliness and orderliness being established at the time. Courtesy books highlighted the importance of private chambers and sufficient furnishings in order to facilitate hospitality, but also indicated function in multiuse spaces.\(^ {582}\) A range of textiles also appeared in Van Cortlandt’s main parlour. The English term encompassed what had previously been known as the groot kamer in Dutch-American homes, but was becoming known as the pronkkamer among the wealthy in the

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\(^ {581}\) Lemiire, “Draping the body and dressing the home,” 87.
Netherlands. As with *pronkstilleven* or still lives of display, these rooms were intended to demonstrate the household’s wealth. Showcased in Van Cortlandt’s best room was a small tea table and stand, blue and white calico curtains, a large oak table, eighteen chairs, a Turkey carpet, and nine pictures of various subjects.

Meanwhile, the “back parlor” of Van Cortlandt’s house may have been used as a sort of dining room. Listed among its contents was a black walnut table, six leather and eight matted chairs, one tin “jappan mug” and a shagreen case with eleven knives and forks. These individualized eating utensils were items relatively new to the Dutch home. Not only did the use of personal knives reflected a shift in the burgher diet, when meat was added in greater quantities to the middle-class menu of grains along with napkins, they were individual eating tools that entered the home as a result of new individualized eating habits and manners.\(^{583}\) Of course the teakettle, coffee pot, and pepperbox listed among the contents of the kitchen were new additions to Dutch homes as sugar, spices, tea and coffee were introduced from global trade networks. Many of these changes in people’s possessions were linked to the consumption of colonial beverages.\(^{584}\) As in *patria*, the popularity of globally produced ceramics demonstrates how fine earthenware replaced copper and pewter, in what Harm Nijbor has identified as part of a larger “shift

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from hoarding towards consumption.\textsuperscript{585}

Looking glasses are also found in several of Van Cordtland’s rooms. By the end of the seventeenth century, mirrors had gone from being “an aristocratic luxury to a vernacular decency.”\textsuperscript{586} Along with personalized toilette sets and shaving accessories, mirrors became a standard bedroom furnishing, part of the performance of appearance, vanity, and of course self-fashioning. Various containers for make up and perfumes, basins for washing and boxes for pins and jewellery, mirrors were just one example of the type of things that had become available to the middle class consumer as daily grooming routines were becoming increasingly elaborate. Wills, inventories and the associated documents are not only a snapshot of a particular individual’s belongings at a certain moment in time, but they are also important indications of the ways goods were inherited and redistributed across time and space, creating a genealogy of people and things.

\textbf{Transient Things: Travel and Materiality}

One key criticism of the study of the colonial period in North America is that political and territorial boundaries are often discussed as being stable and uncontested.\textsuperscript{587} The movement of things across space, whether domestic, regional or transatlantic, demonstrates how fluid and permeable spatial divisions really were. The exchange of


\textsuperscript{586} Crowley, \textit{The Invention of Comfort}, 122-123.

goods necessitated interaction between not only neighbours and allies but also enemies and others.\footnote{Cantwell and Wall, “Landscapes and Other Objects,” 318.} In questioning “Did Boundaries Really Matter in Seventeenth-Century North America?” Cynthia Van Zandt discovers that in colonies similar to New Netherland, such as Massachusetts Bay and New Haven, not only were goods like furs, tobacco, and food stuffs traded, so too were intangibles like credit, favour, and information. Van Zandt argues that agents and traders developed cross-cultural skills to build relationships with different people and in a variety of different locations.\footnote{Cynthia Van Zandt, “Did Boundaries Really Matter in Seventeenth-Century North America?” \textit{A Beautiful and Fruitful Place Selected Rensselaerswijck Seminar Papers Vol. 2}, eds. Elisabeth Paling Funk and Martha Dickinson Shattuck, (Albany: New Netherland Publishing, 1991), 178.} In addition I would argue that these strategies of identity formation were driven by and aided in the movement of material goods. Political, cultural, and economic boundaries did matter, but these were more opportunities than obstructions not just for people but also for the goods that bridged cultures and boundaries. As Timothy Brook notes through circulation and sale, things were no longer accidental travelers, but important connections between people and places.\footnote{Brook, \textit{Vermeer’s Hat}, 8.}

For James Clifford, traveling cultures are defined by “the ways people leave home and return, enacting differently centered worlds, interconnected cosmopolitanisms.”\footnote{James Clifford, “Travelling Cultures,” \textit{Cultural Studies}, eds. Larry Grossberg, Cary Nelson, and Paula A. Treichler (London: Routledge, 1992), 103.} The nuanced things of these mobile cultures are evident where “constructed and disputed historicities, sites of displacement, interference, and interaction, come more sharply into
view." New Netherland was constituted not only by people who traveled long distances to construct the colony but also by heavy traffic within the territory itself. Prior to European arrival, indigenous people travelled to hunt and fish different areas according to season and also to trade with other communities. After, the Noort, Suydt, and Varsche Rivers and their tributaries provided rapid transportation between settlements throughout New England, New Netherland, and what would become New Jersey, Delaware and Virginia. Waterways allowed for the transportation of ideas and commodities. When goods moved between places and people, possessions became as transient as their owners, with the prestige of ownership maintained over time and projected over space. Through the purchasing, collecting, and viewing of objects, Leah Clark notes, “individuals were able to partake not only in the “making” of the histories of objects, but also in the fashioning of their own biography.”

On 8 October 1641 Kiliaen van Rensselaer, member of the WIC board of directors and the founder of the Rensselaerswyck Patroonship, sent a fine saddle as a gift to Willem Kieft, then Director-General of New Netherland. The attached note read: “…I send it to you in the care of Gysbert op den dyck and kindly request you to accept it as a first sign of gratitude for the favours bestowed upon me. I hope that it will arrive without damage. I have had it sewed in canvas with everything that belongs to it and addressed to

593 Clark, “Transient Possessions,” 221.
your honour with the mark of the colony, as in the margin.”594 (Fig. 4.8) With the bestowal of this lavish gift, Van Rensselaer appears to have been showing his gratitude for Kieft’s assistance in shipping goods back and forth between the United Provinces and New Netherland, via Curacao.595 In doing so Van Rensselaer demonstrated the ways in which the exchange of gifts for diplomatic purposes was interconnected with mercantile commerce. For the infamous Kieft (later responsible for a violent battle between colonists and the Lenape that would come to be known as Kieft’s War), riding in the saddle marked with Van Rensselaer’s symbol would demonstrate his alliance with the powerful patroon. Furthermore, the sign of the patroonship of Rensselaerswyck was very similar to Van Rensselaer’s own merchant’s mark. (Fig. 4.8) As a precursor to the modern trademark, these symbols were used to identify shippers and authenticate goods during the increase in overseas commerce and expansion of trade networks.596 They would be stamped on invoices or shipping documents as well as branded with hot irons onto wooden shipping containers. The inscription and marking of material culture as part of the mechanics of trade indicated where goods originated, how and where they were shipped, and by whom. These marks can also be viewed as reflecting the economic and social relationships formed along such trade networks and meshworks.

595 Venema, Kiliaen van Rensselaer, 256.
The practice of identifying objects with commercial marks was transferred into domestic lives, as personal brands became used on furniture too. Roderic Blackburn’s study of early American furniture has uncovered a significant number of items branded or stamped not with makers’ marks but with indications of ownership. Scholars have not been able to determine exactly why this practice developed. F. Liefkes of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam confirmed that the branding of furniture was not a common practice in the Low Countries. Although it was not carried over from patria, Blackburn has noted that the majority of marked furniture came from the New York area and many were marked with Dutch names. The ratio is even more outstanding considering that at the time the upper Hudson and Mohawk valleys’ populations were only roughly thirty-five percent Dutch. The practice of branding appears to have been taken up by the middle class, not the richest landowners. Blackburn suggests that it is unlikely furniture was marked as a sign of pride of ownership because the initials are usually not in conspicuous places. It appears the purpose was to identify objects in case they had been removed from the house due to fire, wartime evacuation, theft or after being lent to neighbours or relatives. Regardless of the specific reason for being removed, these items were all small enough to be carried by a single person, suggesting that they may have left the house frequently. Blackburn’s most convincing hypothesis is that the marking of furnishings may have been a unique cultural tradition that emerged in New

Netherland and Dutch New York. Perhaps this was a practice that developed from the region's mercantile culture.\textsuperscript{600} I like to think of it as a side effect of commercial culture in which every \textit{thing} was viewed as a commodity.

The practice of furniture branding in Dutch New York emphasizes the potential for domestic material culture to circulate through various hands. The biographies of things were rarely as straightforward as the dichotomies of production and consumption suggest. As things for the home were bought, sold, traded, inherited, lent, borrowed, gifted and stolen they moved through time and space. Megan Aldrich has even suggested that the ways in which furnishings can be detached from one context and combined and re-combined with other objects through their transportability suggests they should be called “moveable culture” instead of material culture.\textsuperscript{601} \textit{I mobile, les meuvles, die Mobel, mobler} and of course \textit{meubelen}, the Italian, French, German, Scandinavian and Dutch terms for furniture, recall this history through their etymological connection to “movement.” For Neil Kamil, this etymology and definition, literally as “moveables,” is “one way to begin understanding such ambiguous issues as regional identity in diverse colonial settings, ethnic stereotypes, and cross-cultural conflict and accommodation by considering the journey (or diffusion) of an instantly recognizable colonial artifact.”\textsuperscript{602} Kamil credits furniture historian Benno M. Foreman with identifying Boston leather

\textsuperscript{600} Blackburn, “Branded and Stamped New York furniture,” 1130-1145.
\textsuperscript{601} Megan Aldrich, “Not Material Culture but Movable Culture,” (paper presented at the College Art Association Annual Conference, New York City, 14 February 2013).
\textsuperscript{602} Neil Kamil, “Hidden in Plain Sight,” 191-249.
chairs as a particularly influential movable.\textsuperscript{603} Initially carried as merchant cargo, the chair as an “object concept” circulated through colonial communities as local copies were produced.\textsuperscript{604} Such examinations demonstrate a focus on what Kamil notes as the “complex, contingent relation between history and form” or more precisely “the life from form.”\textsuperscript{605}

Just like other movable goods shaping life, the scope of globally traded textiles entering New Netherlandish households and clothing the bodies of Dutch-American men and women cannot be underestimated.\textsuperscript{606} Not only did they contribute to shifting ideas of comfort and fashion, fabrics conveyed motifs and other graphic information from around the world. As Asian quilts and bed hangings were flowing into Amsterdam and other European trade centres, so too were new species of plants whose exotic appearance inspired fabric patterns. Europeans living in North America and Asia were being introduced to exotic ecosystems that began to appear in visual and material culture. Writing of the “verdant gardens and the new botanic species brought from distant shores now transforming the landscapes of Europe,” Beverley Lemire argues that the calicos and chintzes circulating in Dutch trade routes brought “the energy of an imaginary garden

\textsuperscript{604} Blackburn, “Transforming Old World Dutch Culture in a New World Environment,” 95.
“one Chint flowered Carpett” listed among Margareta van Varick’s possessions may have represented one of the ways these hybrid objects entered colonial homes. By 1700 calicos made in factories along the Coromandel Coast were being supplied to the North American colonies through the British East India Company. When direct trade between India and England was restricted in an effort to protect domestic textile industries, the Company began to re-export goods to the Netherlands and New York, Pennsylvania, and Virginia. Therefore Dutch-American colonists were able to acquire many of the hand-painted fabrics through English merchants as well as those in patria. Palampores, single large panels of cotton chintz frequently depicting flowered trees surrounded by a decorative floral border, appeared in the colonies as early as the seventeenth century. Derived from the Persian and Hindi word palangposh, meaning bedcover, palampores were frequently used in the West as bedcovers but also as curtains, wall hangings, and even on floors. One English record notes “100 palampores valued at 40 pounds silver 16s 18d were exported to Virginia in 1700.” Despite their documented presence in many Dutch-American homes, the lack of extent textiles from the colonial period reflects not only the ephemeral materiality of cloth, but also key utilitarian conditions, for fabrics were often so valuable they were reused and recycled in

a variety of ways. Few examples of trade textiles exist because the survival of textiles, like the retention of most artifacts only “favours the beautiful or unusual.”

One of the few extant colonial palampores descended through members of the Van Rensselaer family (Fig. 4.9). Dating to the first half of the eighteenth century, the textile is a truly hybrid object combining Persian, European, Indian, and Chinese motifs created using a complex process of wax-resist painting and dyeing to produce bright, fast colours unavailable in Europe until the late 1600s. Mordant was drawn or printed on cotton by Indian kalamkari makers, and when the cloth was dipped in dye the color only adhered to where the mordant had not been applied. These steps were repeated to apply multiple colors and then details were hand painted to make each cloth unique. The Van Rensselaer example contains one of the most popular motifs, that of the Persian tree of life. Although now unidentifiable it does have a maker’s mark on the back as a clue to where it was manufactured. It is also similar to another palampore in the collection of the New-York Historical Society with a traditional red ground that was popular before European designers requested white backgrounds favoured by European consumers.

Originally discovered amongst the possessions of the Van Rensselaer family, this palampore may have been purchased by Robert Sanders (1705-1765), an Albany

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merchant and father of Maria van Rensselaer (1740-1830). Sanders’ account books for his general store reveal him to have had extensive contacts in England, where he made intricate arrangements using intermediaries in New York City. He purchased a wide range of fabrics from fine silks for dresses to inexpensive, brightly coloured calicos, which he described as “for the Indian trade.” The son of Barent Sanders (1678-1757) and Maria Wendell (1685-1738), he had become active in the fur trade like his parents. During the relatively peaceful years between 1713 and 1744, Sanders travelled north into New France where he developed lasting trade networks for the acquisition of fur pelts. To acquire these he purchased textiles from the Coromandel Coast, demonstrating that even the most local interactions in the Hudson River Valley had ties to global trade. According to Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, the history of textiles is not only one of materials and makers, it is a narrative of international commerce made through the exchange of goods and of ideas.

Wilden Huysjen: Domestic Sites of Exchange

The acquisition of beaver pelts motivated considerable movement through the Atlantic world. Traffic along the waterways of New Netherland also increased as people sought out dwindling animal populations. Of course numbers varied year to year but one account by Jeremias van Rensselaer (1632-1674) expected roughly four hundred native traders to

615 Ulrich, The Age of Homespun, 414.
make the journey to Beverwijck with their furs in 1665 and another almost thousand in 1667. Typically traders from Europe, bringing manufactured and other processed goods, conducted their business with locals in New Netherland’s well-developed tavern culture. Frequently, court records indicate the limits of hospitality in these places where ale lubricated financial transactions. Although committed business relationships did develop, trappers selling furs often went door to door in order to find the most advantageous arrangements. Because they frequently travelled long distances, they also needed places to stay. Domine Johannes Megapolensis described his arrangement with the Natives who came to trade with him saying, “I have had eight at once lying and sleeping upon the floor near my bed…”

The initial years of contact when trade was mutually beneficial for both indigenous trappers and European factors were relatively peaceful. Tensions increased between the colonizers and colonized during the 1640s, when the WIC and the Dutch States general attempted to maximize economic exchange in the area by establishing permanent settlements. Explosive miscommunications, for example Kieft’s War (1643-1645), strained relationships between the Dutch and Natives. In order to segregate the settlers from the increasing threat of attack, European style houses were built and a

division of space separated the Europeans in their homes from what they considered to be the wilden in specially constructed out buildings. As a result of various violent uprisings, in 1671, legislation was passed stating that specific groups of no more than ten natives were allowed to stay in the settler’s houses.\(^{620}\) Because of this ruling other housing arrangements were made.

On the northern frontier of European settlement the village of Beverwijck, which had grown from the initial settlement around Fort Orange, had a cropping of “Indian sheds” erected on the western limits of town. In 1672, this practice continued as the English governor, Francis Lovelace (1621-1675), referenced a prior ordinance allocating temporary huts to be converted into summer and winter lodgings.\(^{621}\) The 1698 Roemer map shows these buildings to the northeast of the fort (Fig. 4.10). As late as 1716, temporary housing for Native traders continued to be established.\(^{622}\) Created as a result of the fur trade, these wilden huysjen are particularly interesting to think about in light of late seventeenth-century concepts of domesticity. Although very few documents relating to their construction exist, each reference I have found cites a female trader to be responsible for the erection of specific domestic spaces to engage in trade and other activities. Women like Volkertie Juriaense, Sara Roeloffse, and Hilletje Bogardus were each linked to the establishment of a pseudo-domestic space in which to host indigenous people for the purpose of trading. This created distinct social spheres where koopvrouwen

\(^{620}\) Johannes Megapolensis, in Joost Hartgers, Beschrijvinghe van Virginia, Nieuw Nederlandt, Niew Englandt (Amsterdam, 1651), 42.

\(^{621}\) Hugo Palsits ed. Minutes of the Executive Council of the Province of New York; administration of governor Francis Lovelace, 1668-1673 (Albany, 1910), 146-147.

\(^{622}\) Van Laer, Court minutes of Albany, Rensselfaelerswyck, and Schenectady, 1668-1685, 280, 303.
produced a semblance of domestic order in their daily encounters with indigenous women. Concomitant to the consumer revolution were emerging ideas of domesticity and privacy that were socially constructed and historically specific.\textsuperscript{623}

The erecting of wilden huysjen is the ultimate disruption of homeliness because it hints at the implied risk of hosting native traders within the house proper. In order to facilitate trade, they were housed, but they were still considered strangers, foreigners, enemies and potentially threatening guests. For example, in preparation for the 1652 trade season, the baker’s wife Juriaense set up a shed to house native traders with permission of the Court of Fort Orange.\textsuperscript{624} Similarly, in New Amsterdam, Roeloffse (1626-1693), the daughter of Anneke Jans and wife of the surgeon Hans Kiersted, was reported to have had a wilden huysjen constructed in her yard on Pearl Street to house the Native traders having traveled from the north and west.\textsuperscript{625} In 1661, the city’s Burgomasters stipulated “the planks lying before the house of Dr. Hans [Kiersted] shall be removed to erect there a trading house for the Indians.”\textsuperscript{626} Archaeologist Joel Grossman has suggested that the remains of a building his team excavated in 1984 on the Broad Financial Center Site in Manhattan may have been this wilden huysje Roeloffse had built.\textsuperscript{627}

\textsuperscript{623} Rybczynski \textit{Home}, 80-92.  
\textsuperscript{624} Jacobs and Shattuck, “Beavers for Drink, Land for Arms,” 105.  
\textsuperscript{625} Berthold Fernow, “Minutes of the Executive Board of the City of New Amsterdam, 1661-1664,” \textit{Minutes of the Orphanmasters court of New Amsterdam} (New York: Francis P. Harper, 1907), 112–113.  
\textsuperscript{626} Stokes, \textit{The Iconography of Manhattan Island, 1498-1909}, 264.  
Roeloffse played a significant role in regional politics of the time. She learned how to speak several indigenous languages and became a valuable interpreter between the Dutch settlers and the Lenape. Grateful for her services in liaising between the two groups, the sachem Oratam (c. 1567-after 1666) presented her with over two thousand acres of land along the Hackensack River in 1638. She maintained her claim to the land even after the English came into power. In 1666 the Royal Governor Sir George Carteret confirmed her patent making her one of the first non-native land owners in the area and one of the first women to have a patent.628

The activities of women like Roeloffse confirm, as Trocolli suggests, “the separation of the so-called domestic sphere from the public sphere is an analytical model that is not applicable to all societies.”629 The presence of female traders in wilden huysjen demonstrates that not only were Euro-American women engaged in the exchange of goods, so too were native women.630 Perhaps much like Dutch women of the time:

> These women’s existential identities are not tied to notions of passivity, lack of personal power, dependence, and childishness – qualities associated with women in Western culture… [Rather] these women accessed roles that in Western society are gendered and limited to, or reserved for men. Such roles are not defined by gender in their own societies; instead they are circumstantial.631

Cantwell and Wall are correct to point out that like their Dutch trade partners, indigenous women’s roles did not always conform to those of “wives, servants, concubines, or

cultural brokers,” but that many functioned as independent agents acting on their own. 632 Their activities in the production of wilden huysjen suggests a very different reading of Dutch domesticity than has been previously suggested. 633 While the segregation of business transactions to a separate space external to the home was in keeping with an increasing demarcation between public and private life developing in the United Provinces, the roles of women in these ambiguous out-buildings may have challenged the prescription limiting women to the home. 634 On the other hand, women’s requests to build wilden huysjen can be viewed as a clever strategy to legitimate their public trading activities under the guise of making a suitable place for encounter in keeping with European standards. Far from restricted to the domestic sphere, colonial koopvrouwen negotiated diverse relationships. However, their success often came at the expense of others: the agency of Euro-American women was buoyed by the indigenous people that were often exploited through trade, while enslaved people provided labour that was used to further acquire goods.

Homi Bhabha’s essay “The World in the Home” provides an important counterpoint to many of the ways Dutch domesticity has been theorized. In contrast to the positive connotations typically associated with the notion of home, such as comfort, refuge, and privacy, Bhabha considers the “unhomely” or what he describes as the sense of displacement, where the “border between home and world becomes confused; and uncannily, the private and the public become part of each other, forcing upon us a vision that is as divided as it is disorienting.” Native North American women, Euro-American women, and most certainly the enslaved Africans, many of whom were imported like any other commodity must have felt a sense of unease in the tenuous domestic spaces they inhabited. In light of the contested nature of public and private spheres, I appreciate the idea of the colonial home representing “a hybridity, a difference ‘within,’ a subject that inhabits the rim of an in-between reality” that Bhabha contends is a “discursive ‘image’ at the crossroads of history and literature bridging the home and the world.”

New Netherland and successively New York, were ultimately constructed through the “enforced social accommodation, historical migrations and cultural relocations” that Bhabha contends shaped the unhomely. Initially the fur trade (and the lure of other potentially lucrative commodities) created the “enforced social accommodation” of the Dutch by their indigenous hosts. As the seventeenth century progressed, the booming felt industry had the concomitant consequences of depleting the beaver supply (already near

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635 Rybczynski, *Home*, 52-64.
extinction in Europe) and driving the indigenous populations even further inland and away from the coastal regions they had inhabited. Of course the most obvious cultural relocation would be the enslavement of African peoples for labour throughout the Americas, a practice the Dutch maximized for economic gain, essentially commodifying the human body. This violent process placed the human body within a cycle of the social life of things. According to Appadurai, “Slaves, once sold as chattel, can become gradually humanized, personified, and re-enchanted by the investiture of humanity. But they can also be recommoditized, turned once again into mere bodies or tools, put back in the marketplace, available for a price, dumped into the world of mere things.”

Throughout the seventeenth and well into the eighteenth century, social migration and cultural relocations were shaped by the acquisition of commodities and the exchange of goods.

When Jonas and Pieter Bogardus were trying to sell their mother Hilletje Jans’ (1633-1705) property, they described the lot as having a small wilden huysje or Native house. Later when the lot was purchased by David Schuyler, the out building on the property was described as “the hansioos, little house in the rear wherin [sic] are a chimney and bake oven.” What is interesting here is that in other documents, hansioos is a term used to describe jewellery or trinkets, suggesting that it may have been a slang term used by local natives to reference trade. Janny Venema notes that often the

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640 Venema, Beverwijck, 78.
hansjoos or goods for trade with natives, such as thimbles, beads, and other items would have been small domestic goods, readily at women’s disposal.\textsuperscript{641}

Wilden huysjen were clearly sites of exchange, but the descriptor hansjoos hints at other uses for these spaces. They appear to have also been sites of production. In early New York City, one-story log huts formed a line of palisades on the city’s most northern border (today’s Chambers Street). Although these huts were usually empty, some recalled various Lenape people making and selling baskets while they stayed there. One account describes this cluster of huts, beyond the early city hall, as where Native women “occupied many places outside of their line and used there to make baskets, ladles, etc. for sale.”\textsuperscript{642} Another source describes the activities that occurred in these places: “under its shelter there was always a number of squaws who came and went as if in their own village, and plied their industries of broom and basket making, stringing wampum and seewant and spinning after their primitive mode; and on market days they were able to dispose of their products.”\textsuperscript{643} Long after beavers had been hunted out of the area, indigenous women were reported to gather in these temporary structures to make baskets and brooms, string wampum, sew and spin, and sell these products along with venison, maize, and other foodstuffs.\textsuperscript{644}

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\textsuperscript{641} Venema, Beverwijk, 187.
\textsuperscript{642} Told by Jacob Tabele and Daniel J. Ebbets to John F. Watson, Historic Tales of Olden Time Concerning Early Settlement and Advancement of New York City and State (New York: Collins & Henney, 1832), 106.
\textsuperscript{643} John King van Rensselaer, The Goede Vrouw of Mana-ha-ta (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1898), 26.
\end{flushright}
During the seventeenth century, those colonizing North America noted that the Natives they engaged in trade were clamouring for “many Things that they wanted not before.” These things, which included manufactured tobacco pipes, copper pots converted into gorgets, thimbles adorning dresses, and beaver pelts tanned into hats, can be considered the material manifestation of interactions and relationships in the process of colonial exchange. To many of the Iroquois and Algonquian people already living in the area that became New Netherland, these were often new items. Trinkets like beads and metals they incorporated into their daily life in keeping with their own conceptual universe, in ways different from how European utilized them. As they were repurposed, utilitarian things were transmediated to be remade ornamentally and symbolically. For example a Dutch *roemer* (wine glass) ubiquitous in still life paintings could be hung from a brass pendant to make a necklace. According to Timothy Shannon, “The goods that passed between Europeans and Indians, like the rituals involved in their exchange, created a language of speech, deportment, and appearance that crossed cultural barriers.” Participants in cross-cultural exchange attached different meanings to various domestic goods outside of the utilitarian value of things like garments, weapons and utensils.

The transculturation of things was a phenomenon of contact zones, in which “subordinated or marginal groups select and invent from materials transmitted to them by

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a dominant or metropolitan culture.” Mary Louise Pratt sees agency available in this exchange, noting that while the subjugated people cannot control what they receive they are able to determine what they absorb and how to use it. The concept of transculturation also raises questions regarding modes of representation: how does the periphery receive and appropriate and conversely how is the centre influenced by the periphery? The shifts in representation that occurred as everything from pewter spoons, clay smoking pipes, and glass beads, to duffle cloth and other goods, was incorporated into indigenous wooncultuurs, exemplifies Angela Vanhaleń’s and Bronwen Wilson’s contention that objects are always viewed from multiple perspectives. Things do not bring people into conformity: “they solicit a plurality of interpretations…a thing must present diverse or even contradictory aspects in order to constitute plural public participation in a shared common world.” In networks, or perhaps more precisely, the intricate meshworks of New Netherland, things became active agents, negotiating the space between people. Objects become nexuses for human relationships. For Laura Peers, trade goods were “active social agents with webs of relations” and possessed biographies “with meanings shifting across time and cultural context.” They were:

…traded, sold, given, worn, acquired by force or as souvenirs, presented as diplomatic gifts, exchanged in marriage ceremonies, objects coveted and despised, objects used domestically or fetishized, objects misunderstood or appropriated across cultural divides, objects which served to bridge these – in many ways, the empire existed materially, not simply as networks of people and

648 Pratt, Imperial Eyes, 6.
politics but as the things they commented on, and consumed: an ‘empire of goods’ as much as of political structures.\footnote{Peers, “Material Culture, Identity, and Colonial Society in the Canadian Fur Trade,” 55.}

With implicit and explicit references to transcultural themes, these goods exchanged through the interactions of the fur trade highlight not just the ways objects circulate symbolically but also the slippages between an object’s materiality and its intended meaning. The things associated with the fur trade became embedded with differing significance as they changed hands.

The acquisition of materials like beaver pelts that supported the establishment of European colonies throughout the world required interaction with the indigenous people that provided them. \textit{Wilden huysjen} kept indigenous people at a safe distance but also nearby. Ultimately, \textit{wilden huysjen} present what Bhabha considers the slippages in spatial narratives, where “[t]he home does not remain the domain of domestic life, nor does the world simply become its social or historical counterpart.” Instead the unhomely is “the shock of recognition of the world-in-the-home, the home-in-the-world.”\footnote{Bhabha, “The World and the Home,” 445.} In these provisional structures we see the active segregation of people based on networks of institutionalized relationships related to the establishment of defined social spaces. However, while architecture established boundaries for bodies, one in which \textit{wilden} were differentiated and separated from the “burghers” or landowners, or, more specifically in the trade networks, the commodity-controlling merchant class, the goods of these encounters permeated the boundaries between these spaces.
The relationships formed through the exchange of goods demonstrate what Natalie Zemon Davis has called simultaneity of the Amerindian and European worlds, in which the colonial encounter can be viewed in ways “other than the necessary and overpolarized two-some of ‘domination’ and ‘resistance’. Bhabha’s approach begs the inversion of the sorts of questions I have posed, leading me to wonder how indigenous people’s perspectives of home were challenged by colonial infiltration. Or conversely did the Dutch and if so, how did the Dutch rationalize, express, imagine, and justify their own intrusion into the homes of their colonized subjects? Very little is known about wilden huysjen; only these few vague references are made in passing. What did they look like? What were they used for when not being inhabited by visiting traders? How did the people that used them feel about the space? How rigid were the boundaries?

Perhaps the lack of traces and gaps in the scholarship on these ephemeral forms of vernacular architecture is telling. The relationship between material culture of the home and the construction of identity can also highlight absences in the official record in colonial spaces. In the face of such challenges, Svetlana Boym turns to “countermemory” to highlight the “blemishes in the official narrative of history,” calling for an alternative reading of traditional sources using “ambiguity, irony, doublespeak, private intonation” and often unheard voices lacking in the official records. In the case of New Netherland the silenced voices were the indigenous people the Dutch exploited and ultimately

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marginalized and the African people they objectified and forcibly imported through the human slave trade.\textsuperscript{655}

**Depicting Difference In the Home**

In his critical examination of the material culture of South Africa, Martin Hall has asked, “How did the material things - buildings, farmlands, street grids, personal possessions, domestic utensils, food - contribute to the mapping out of the colony? What were the relationships between such systems of signification and the discourses of colonial power?”\textsuperscript{656} A wide range of depictions of New Netherland came from communication occurring as a result of colonial encounter, “when representational practices that [had] never been in contact before [were] suddenly in collision and contention, when the readability of the art change[d] because of contact, when people’s lives [were] changed because of their altered material culture.”\textsuperscript{657} Two paintings by John Heaten, *A Child of the Van Rensselaer Family and Servant* (Fig. 4.11) and *Van Bergen Farm* (Fig.4.12) illustrate the discourses of colonial power at work in the upper Hudson River Valley.

Unlike the majority of European women in New Netherland who as wives, mothers, and mistresses of households shared the same fundamental life experiences,


\textsuperscript{656} Hall, “Identity, Memory and Counter memory,” 189.

bondage denied others access to the well-worn channels of marriage and childrearing.\textsuperscript{658} Initially, the Dutch system of “half-freedoms” contributed to the varied and multifaceted levels of indenture in the community of free Africans and West India Company slaves who, although not citizens, were legal entities able to earn wages, farm crops, own property and marry and raise children.\textsuperscript{659} By 1703 the institutionalization of racialized slavery under English rule removed any potential for the autonomy of the roughly four hundred enslaved women in New York at that time.

However diverse the relationships between colonial mistresses and the slaves they managed may have been, the Slave House at the Mabee Farm in Rotterdam Junction demonstrates a similar spatial segregation to wilden huysjen in the area. James van Twerpin, a fur trader, originally settled the farm and in 1705 the Mabee Family purchased it.\textsuperscript{660} Outfitted with a large open-hearthed Dutch fireplace, the multi-purpose building was also used to house the family’s slaves first acquired in 1701. A particularly rich palimpsest, the outbuilding was originally constructed on the foundations of an old trading post, reflecting the shift from trading to agriculture in the mid-eighteenth century, supported by slave labour. As with wilden huysjen these slave quarters were liminal spaces where marginalized people were kept close to but separate from their colonial trading partners in dwellings that were built according to European standards of

\textsuperscript{659} Maika, “Encounters,” 35-38.
construction rather than mimicking the kinds of dwellings the people would have built for themselves. Describing the dwellings of slaves owned by Albany patricians, Anne Grant wrote, “These cottages were in summer occupied by some of the negroes who cultivated the grounds about them, and served as a place of joyful liberty to the children of the family on holidays, and a nursery for the young negroes, whom it was the custom to rear very tenderly, and instruct very carefully.” She continued on to note a custom that developed in slave owning families in the Upper Hudson Valley, in which at the age of three children of slaves were given to a same-sex child of the owner’s family:

The child to whom the young negro was given immediately presented it with some piece of money and a pair of shoes; and from that day the strongest attachment subsisted between the domestic and the destined owner. I have no where met with instances of friendship more tender and generous than that which here subsisted between the slaves and their masters and mistresses [sic].”

While these relationships most certainly were not as idyllic as Grant describes, they speak to the close proximity and bonds formed between people possessing varying degrees of agency within the domestic sphere.

One of the first images depicting a person of African descent in the Albany area is a painting of *A Child of the Van Rensselaer Family and Servant* (Fig. 4.11). Now attributed to John Heaten, the work shows an unknown boy of the wealthy, slave-owning Van Rensselaer family, attended to by an older male slave. The central figure wears a bright red gown of a type worn by both male and female children under roughly the age

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of five. In one hand he clasps a sprig of flowers and on the out-stretched index finger of
the other hand perches a small yellow bird. Based on European portrait conventions, the
finch appeared frequently in depictions of Dutch-American children. In Agnolo
Bronzino’s Portrait of Giovanni de’Medici (c. 1545), a perched bird had Catholic
associations (Galleria degli Uffizi, Florence), but in Dutch pictures like Dirck Santvoort’s
Portrait of Geertruyt Spiegel with Finch (1639) it represented one of the five senses, that
of touch (National Gallery, London.). Given this association, perhaps the frequent
inclusion of the bird in portraits of the male heirs of Hudson Valley merchants signifies
the tangible wealth at their fingertips. Another cultural indicator is the rinkelbel (rattle)
hanging from the child’s waist. A multi-purpose toy, whistle, and teething stick, it
appears in other portraits of children, for example those of children by Hudson River
Valley artists in the Metropolitan Museum of Art.662

The Van Rensselaer child’s pale face, delicate features, and lavish clothing are
rendered in stark contrast to those of his companion. The black boy wears clothing made
from un-dyed, homespun cloth. However, while dressed in far less expensive cloth, he
still does wear buckled shoes, and his garments suggest that his labour was within the
home. In her discussion of “Bringing the Empire Home,” Beth Fowkes Tobin suggests
the presence of black servants in eighteenth-century portraits was often an allusion to the

662 Blackburn and Piwonka, Remembrance of Patria, 195.
consumption of foreign luxury goods like tea, sugar, coffee, and tobacco, “all commodities associated with the dark others of the world.”

The inclusion of a “Negro servant” conforms to a similar practice within European portraiture conventions in which dark-skinned Moors appear to further exoticize lavish pronkstillevn. Other works of the time incorporate such figures to experiment with the painterly techniques of contrasting a Dutch lady’s pale skin with that of her black servant. Julie Hochstrasser’s analysis of Still Life with Moor, Nautilus Goblet, Porcelain, and Fruit (Fig. 4.13) by Jurriaen van Streeck points out that in European conventions there were seldom any connections between the portrait sitter and the servant, as property or otherwise. In contrast regardless of how marginalized the young African-Albanian boy was in the Van Rensselaer depiction, based on the practices described by Grant, he was very much a real person, and tied in some way to the Van Rensselaer child. Mary C. Black recognizes that while the children’s garments signal lifelong disparities between their stations, the intimacy of the double portrait suggests they may have shared similar childhood experiences. In the multi-ethnic homes of Dutch New York, a variety of people would have lived, worked, and played together.

Another work attributed to John Heaten depicts the heterogeneous community surrounding a Dutch colonial home in the early eighteenth century. The Van Bergen

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663 Tobin, Picturing Imperial Power, 27.
665 Mary C. Black, Remembrance of Patria, 196.
**Farm** (Fig. 4.13) is now considered one of the most informative visualizations about daily life in colonial New York. It dates from sometime in between 1730 and 1745 and the unique shape of the large panorama indicates that it may have been painted to hang over the fireplace of the Marten van Bergen (c.1692-?) farmhouse, hence its common description as an “over mantle.” A wide-range of people is shown in front of the backdrop of the Van Bergen farmhouse, barn, hay barracks, and blacksmith shop. A well dressed couple, possibly the owners of the estate, stand outside the front door. Next to them two girls recline on the grass. In the foreground three figures with darker skin, wrapped in blankets and wearing moccasins, mark the presence of indigenous traders. Near the barns two black women tend to the cows and the geese. Another black man, carrying some sort of tools, walks toward the blacksmith shop. A well-trodden path runs the length of the panel with horses, a carriage, and multiple people travelling on foot, highlighting the movement of people and goods throughout the communities of Dutch New York.

With the scarcity of objects of discernible provenance, inventories and archaeological traces are among the only ways to “retrieve the narratives of domestic life contained in the material evidence of home interiors and the homemaking and consumption practices of the people who inhabited them.” In this chapter I have built upon discussions of “New Netherlandish” architecture to locate the lived experiences of early colonists in their built environment. I examined extant structures, documentary

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*Ponsonby, Stories from Home, 1.*
evidence, and visual representations of houses to describe the ways homes were constructed according to European standards but with local influences. The Dutch colony constituted a hybrid community diversified by aboriginals, slaves, religious refugees, relocated orphans and merchants from around the world. Also, as noted above, the evidence that often women built and inhabited these spaces suggests that their participation would have included the establishment of homes overseas. Women’s roles in making and maintaining practices integral to colonial presence meant that what was often denigrated as merely “house-keeping” in patria were recognized as valuable labor abroad.
Figures

Figure 4.1 Artist Unknown, *Uytnementheit des Vrouwelijke Geslachten* 1643, Harvard University.

Figure 4.2 Artist unknown, “Quomodo Hollandi in Maurittii” *Indiae Orientalis*, 1601-1606, New-York Historical Society.
Figure 4.3 Miss C. Lott, Nathanial Woodhull House built by Nicasius de Sille in 1657, c.1850, http://freepages.history.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~wcarr1/Lossing1/55-14.gif.

Figure 4.4 Jeroen van den Hurk, partial reconstruction of Annete Dirx house.
Figure 4.5 Thomas Nelson, Drawing showing the original appearance of the Coeymans House Façade c. 1717-1723, 1986, Albany Institute of History and Art.

Figure 4.6 Detail showing the lower newel and balusters of a staircase in the Samuel and Ariaantje Coeymans House, 1717-1723, privately owned, photo Gavin Ashworth.
Figure 4.7 Artist Unknown, Coeymans House ca. 1717-1750, detail from a painting formerly in the possession of the Holland Society of New York.

Figure 4.8 Mark of the Colony of Rensselaerswyck and Mark of the Van Rensselaer Family.
Figure 4.9 Maker unknown, palampore, c. 1700-1725, Historic Cherry Hill.

Figure 4.10 John Wolfgang Roemer, *Map of Albany*, 1698, The British Museum, London.
Figure 4.11 Attributed to John Heaten, *A Child of the Van Rensselaer Family and Servant*, c. 1730, Collection of Rodman C. Rockefeller.

Figure 4.12 Attributed to John Heaten, *Van Bergen Farm*, c. 1730-1745, New York Historical Association.
Figure 4.13 Juriaen van Streeck, *Still Life with Moor, Nautilus Goblet, Porcelain, and Fruit*, nd, private collection.
Chapter 5

Perscriptive Things: Morality and Materiality

...[P]eople do different things with words and with things and that... difference has to do with embodiment and its corollaries of complex sensory perception and morality... A narrative of origins can be sewn into a quilt or woven into a basket. Joys and sorrows can be expressed in how clothing is made, worn, preserved, or destroyed. Sometimes words and things come together; things are written about in diaries, inventories, letters, or songs, but the 'truth' of the object is not more to be found in the words than in the thing itself.667

In iconographic readings of seventeenth-century Dutch genre paintings depicting challenges to domesticity, such as The Dissolute Household by Jan Steen, much attention has been paid to the complex meanings and intertextuality of objects (Fig. 5.1). The things represented are replete with a mélange of classical, vernacular, and especially religious associations. In Steen’s composition a basket holding a sword and a switch signifies justice while a cane and crutch nearby forecast poverty and a leper’s clapper warns of calamitous disease. Broken glasses, tenuously positioned plates and a trampled Bible speak volumes about the mismanagement of domestic objects and the proper placement of things in well-kept homes. But how were the actual objects, the baskets, the plates and other household things, perceived in Dutch homes throughout the world?

According to Alexandra van Dongen commonplace objects “were parts of a sum of moral associations and came to be a culture’s visual symbols.” If material culture is the physical manifestation of the beliefs, values, ideas and desires of a society, what do we make of the iconographic programs decorated on household objects in New Netherland and Dutch New York? Did they convey moral messages while serving a utilitarian function? How were these things replete with ethical reminders employed in the furnishing of colonial projects? Of course churches were eventually built in New Netherland, but the proliferation of religious imagery on domestic goods in the New World suggests the home was utilized alongside religious institutions as an important locus of moral instruction. Looking at a wide range of utilitarian objects, including cookbooks, utensils, and even fireplaces, this chapter examines the material expressions of Dutch religious and moral beliefs in New Netherland and Dutch New York.

Transmediation: Images and Objects

In her work on early modern collections, Leah Clark explains the profuse dissemination of images, aside from the circulation of the specific object, as a complex intermediality. Accordingly, various representations create:

…[A] field of visual citations and associations across media. This process of translation not only circulated their fame, but such representations also served as a means to stabilize the circulatory nature of the objects themselves, allowing individuals to own

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copies of these transient possessions. Engagement also shifted with the change in media, underlining the need to pay attention to the materiality of transmission. 669

Clark’s reading of intermediality is based on Peter Wagner’s definition of the term in *Icons, Texts, Iconotexts: Essays on Ekphrasis and Intermediality*, in which an important subdivision of intertextuality takes into account the differences between texts and images, with an attention to “difference and différence in medium and between media.” 670 While this is important, perhaps Benjamin Schmidt’s “transmediation” is a slightly more appropriate term. As opposed to “inter” meaning between, among, amidst or mutual and reciprocal, “trans” defined as across, through, also implies a change or translation that occurs in the adoption by a new medium, that takes into account the subtle or not so subtle shifts that may occur in the process. Regardless of the prefix, it is important to consider how shifts in materiality altered the beholder’s engagement with the object.

Through a process of transmediation images and ideas changed forms, transgressing linguistic and national boundaries as they appeared variously in paintings, on textiles, ceramics, furnishings and other decorative arts. As Schmidt points out, “in each of these transfers, icons both lost and gained signification; the further they traveled from their point of origin, the less of their original meaning they retained.” 671 Utilizing Schmidt’s concept of *transmediation*, this chapter examines the ways in which images, forms, and motifs crossed into different media from religious imagery to various forms of material

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669 Clark, “Transient Possessions,” 221.
culture in New Netherland and elsewhere. In the transmediation previously discussed, visual forms cross generic lines, with graphic works replicated on other sources, but here I am specifically interested in the complex and dynamic way graphic images like drawings and engravings served as the basis for three-dimensional objects, such as utensils, accessories, and furniture.

As a result of the contacts formed through seventeenth-century global trade European images, patterns, and designs came to be replicated on a variety of different types of craft production throughout the world. For example, in 1685, with the hope of improving the products and tailoring designs to Dutch tastes, the directors of the VOC employed the painter and textile trader Gerrit Clinck (1646-1693) to travel to Coromandel and Bengal. During the nearly six years he spent in India, Clinck painted patterns for textiles to be sold in Europe, while also introducing changes to the quality of materials. In this case, the “transfer culturel” a term coined by Michel Espagne and Michael Werner to describe the transfers of select elements of culture, was quite literal. It occurred in a very material way, every time Clinck’s designs were transferred via woodblock to dye fabric in order to create brightly colored chintz patterns suited to a European consuming public.

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673 Heleen B. van der Weel, In die kunst en wetenschap gebruyckt: Gerrit Claeszoon Clinck, meester kunstschilder van Delft en koopman in dienst van de Verenigde Oostindische Compagnie (Hilversum: Verloren, 2002).
674 Gaastra, The Dutch East Indian Company, 135-137.
In a similar early eighteenth century transmediation Jan Luyken’s prints were
copied on Chinese porcelain made for the European market (Fig. 5.2). Over the course of
his career Luyken wrote and illustrated twelve poetry and emblem books. More than
three thousand of his etchings were used to illustrate at least five hundred books by a
range of authors in other fields, which were produced by over one hundred publishers.676
His copper plate engravings were used in a wide range of publications including Bibles,
travel narratives, historical texts, natural histories and even the decorative programs of
atlases. Luyken (along with his son Caspar) was among the most prolific graphic artists
in Amsterdam at the end of the seventeenth century until his death in 1711.677

Christiaan Jörg has noticed that four biblical scenes - The Nativity, The
Crucifixion (Fig. 5.3), The Resurrection, and The Ascension - appearing on chine de
commande products seem to have been taken from a series of twenty-four prints of New
Testament scenes by Jan Luyken that appeared in the Lutheran Nederduytse Bijbel
published in Amsterdam in 1750. Along with another eighteen prints from the Old
Testament, these views became very popular illustrations for several editions of the
Bible, including a small, cheap octavo versions, rapidly becoming the “common people’s
Bible.” Because there is no indication of an order for such designs in the VOC records,
Jörg suggests that these items could have been a private commission made by a Dutch

676 E. Stronks, Negotiating differences: Word, image and religion in the Dutch Republic (Leiden: Brill,
2011).
677 P. van Eeghen and J. P. H. van der Kellen, Het werk van Jan en Casper Luyken (Amsterdam: Frederik
Muller, 1905).
officer, who of course would have carried a small, portable Bible in his ship’s chest.\(^{678}\)

As Dutch merchants travelled throughout the world, they brought with them Bibles, laden with imagery easily translated into local designs. These images even came to appear on items recently introduced into European homes as a result of the increased consumption of new beverages like tea and coffee, for example a cup now in the Groniger Museum decorated with a scene of the Crucifixion (Fig. 5.4). By tracing several examples of similar uses of imagery on decorative arts, this chapter addresses the role of materiality in the religious making of New Netherland, and the persistence of the Dutch Reformed Church’s influence after the English assumed control of the colony.

**Sources: Print Culture in New Netherland**

By the end of the seventeenth century, there was direct correlation between the expansion of the borders of the Dutch colonial empire and new systems of documenting vernacular material culture. From expensive folios to mass-produced pamphlets, a range of publications realistically depicted the world of things.\(^{679}\) Among the prints produced in Amsterdam, Leiden, Middleburg and other publishing centers were what Eddy de Jongh and Ger Luijten have termed “worldly sheets,” depictions of everyday life that were


\(^{679}\) During the seventeenth century Dutch genres of publications included broadsides, schoolbooks, almanacs, religious texts, pamphlets, and collections of sermons and treatises. In 1650 there were over two hundred and fifty printers, publishers, and booksellers in the Dutch Republic. Amsterdam led with ninety-seven, Leiden had twenty-six, The Hague and Utrecht had fifteen each and Rotterdam thirteen. Mid-sized towns like Alkmaar, Delft, Dordrecht, Haarlem, Hoorn, Groningen, Leeuwarden, and Middleburg averaged five to ten and twenty-five smaller towns had one each. Craig Harline, *Pamphlets, Printing, and Political Culture in the Early Dutch Republic* (Dordrecht: M. Nijhoff, 1987), 2-14.
consumed by the very same working class they depicted. These pictures along with illustrated histories provided both moral edification and entertainment to their viewers.

Neither prints nor books were new information technologies in the 1600s, but the ways in which they were consumed shifted with the two often being produced and retailed in the same spaces where book publishing and copper-plate printing went hand-in-hand as the interrelated products, materials and markets greatly increased in supply and demand.

Different forms of printed material, everything from sheets, catalogues, and advertisements to artisanal how-to books and illustrated religious histories provide what Chandra Mukerji has called “patterns of materialism,” allowing for vivid reconstructions of the material worlds of the past.

Several challenges lie in teasing out the patterns of materialism established in New Netherland. Alice P. Kenney has suggested that the lack of autobiographical descriptions by Dutch colonial women can be explained by the fact that while highly literate, “most of the Dutch were much too busy working at the fur trade, their crafts, or their household duties to have time for keeping diaries or writing letters, let alone...
Ironically, women’s participation in these activities left them little time to document their own unique contributions. Without such egodocuments, it is difficult to evaluate women’s internalization of both the materiality and morality espoused in prescriptive literature. The lack of extant evidence of literacy in New Netherland speaks to Glenn Adamson’s recognition that a key issue in material culture studies is the “phenomenon of loss.” He proposes a helpful approach: “What if absence in the historical record were to be treated not as a problem to be overcome, but rather as a matter of historical interest in its own right?”

If little documentary evidence exists locating works by Luyken or Cats in New Netherland, where can traces of popular Dutch religious practices be found in the extant material culture?

The lack of references to specific titles in records has made it difficult to trace the books that were owned by people in the colonies. In her work describing “New York, Amsterdam, Leiden: Trading Books in the Old and New Worlds,” Marika Keblusek has emphasized the private nature of the book trade. Books were purchased by people for use in the home, causing them to circulate through less official channels: they were tucked in parcels of sundries by family members and very rarely ordered in quantities substantial enough to be listed on shipping manifests. Furthermore, inventories are often of little help. Bibles, domestic manuals and similar books were personal items and could have been gifted to family members before the official accounting of real property was done.

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And when books were included in inventories titles were seldom recorded. English notaries were infamous for recording the language of the book and not specific titles. At the end of the inventory of Margareta van Varick’s personal goods the appraiser noted, “More a parcel of printed bookes not yet apprized= most of them High Garman and forreing Languages, soo of little value here; wherefore they are packt – up to be kept for the use of the Children when age [sic].” In light of these practices Hugh Amory explains that New Netherlandish libraries were probably larger than previously thought. Although other book historians have stressed how the majority of reading material was religious, other forms were present too, including history, geography, dictionaries, surveyors’ handbooks, bound newspapers, inexpensive popular literature, and even romances.

The probate inventory of Elizabeth Bancker included a full accounting of her library. A good portion of her books were religious in content: “1 duytse bybel in folio met annotatie (1 German bible folio with annotations), 1 ditto in quarto… 1 bybele met silver beslagen & een silver ketting (studded with silver and a silver chain), 1 nieuw testament ditto, 2 Ursini catechisms… 2 J/g duykerilis [sic] kerke historie (church histories)” and so on. Elizabeth van Corlaer of Albany (?-1754) left her grandson a “New Large Dutch Bible, as cast in Holland” valued at 20 to 22 guilders, Holland money, as part of his birthright and to another “my two books, made by Willem a Brakel” (1635-

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688 “Inventory of the Estate of Margrita van Varick Deceased,” 15.
690 “Inventaris van de nagelaten state van Elizabeth Banker [Bancker],” July 19th and 20th New York State Library and Archives, Albany, J0301-82.
1711), a Dutch theologian. Along with the “Testament with silver clasps in a box” and the “book in folio Calvins Institutes” listed in the inventory of Margareta Schuyler after her death in 1711 is also listed “1 do history of the Netherlands.”

In both English and Dutch, the term histories referred to small “picture bibles” or “story books” that did not include entire scriptural passages, but instead illustrations accompanied by short, moralizing texts. These might well have included emblem books like those by Luyken and Cats. Mary Leisler Gouverneur’s (Fig. 5.5) 1740 will mentioned, “my Large Book of Martyrs with silver hooks.” Given both the popularity and the domestic nature of books appearing in New Netherland, it is highly likely that emblem books, religious texts, and domestic manuals by writers such as Jacob Cats were among the books brought on initial voyages and also ordered later.

In her explorations of Dutch heritage in nineteenth-century American literature, Elisabeth Paling Funk argues that Cats’ books would have undoubtedly been brought by colonists, for the texts occupied a prominent place in the possessions of many Dutch families as a counterpart to their Bible. The book not only came with settlers but also was imported and continued to be a family favorite long after the fall of New Netherland,

692 Schuyler Family Papers, Albany Institute of History and Art, Albany.
695 Hendrik Edelman explains why it took quite a while to have printing presses set up in North America, by suggesting that the colonies needs were being met by media supplied by Europe. Another reason is that the local government may have been hesitant to print locally. After the Remonstration, Stuyvesant may have considered access to the production of knowledge and the communication of ideas to be a dangerous tool in his contentious colony. Hendrik Edelman, The Dutch Language Press in America: Two Centuries of Printing, Publishing and Bookselling (Nieuwkoop: De Graaf Publishers, 1986), 20.
becoming popular with the descendants of New Netherlanders clinging to their heritage. According to his letters, Jeremias van Rensselaer received *Buyten Leven op Zorgvliet* (*Country Life at Zorgvliet*) by Cats, first printed in 1658. Cats wrote movingly about old age and country life enjoyed at his property of Zorgvliet. Although his experience was far less leisurely, Van Rensselaer must have identified with the themes addressed to a gentleman running a large country estate.

*Buyten Leven op Zorgvliet* was part of an established genre of country house literature, that became popular as seventeenth-century urbanization and economic development drove wealthy city-dwellers to rural areas in pursuit of leisure. A large volume entitled *Het Vermakelijck Landtleven* (*The Pleasurable Country Life*) is often considered the most important practical guide to domestic life for the upper-middle class Dutch burgher. Like other texts at the time it was a compilation of a variety of different treatises. “The Dutch Gardener” by Pieter van Aengelen was first published by Marcus Doornick in 1667 and the following year it was recombined with “The Sensible Gardener” written by the Prince of Orange’s gardener Jan van der Groen and another text on medicine by P. Nijland, a botanist and doctor in Amsterdam. To the third portion “The Medicine Shop or the Experienced Housekeeper” were added sections by an anonoumous author: “The Diligent Beekeeper,” “The Sensible Cook,” “The Dutch

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697 Jacobs, *New Netherland*, 419. Rensselaer also sent eight copies of a text noted as *Practijcke der Godtsalicheyt* (*the Practice of Godliness*) for families on patroonship. This could have been either *De Practyckye ofte eoeffeninghe der godtsaligheydt* by Lewis Bayly (1633 or 1620) or Voetius’s *Meditatie van de ware practijcke der godtsalicheydt* (1628).
Butchering Time” and “The Sensible Confectioner.” More than ten editions were produced between 1668 and 1711. A 1671 edition translated terms specific to the Northern Provinces to language suitable for audiences in the South and also contained a separate chapter on the harvesting and cooking of mushrooms. It was published again in Middelburg in 1742 and Amsterdam in 1802.698

Complete with recipes the section “The Sensible Cook” is a wealth of information on vernacular foods ways. It illustrates the use of cooking utensils and serving accessories as well as specific information on measurements. Although many of the ingredients and flavors were remnants of medieval foods, “The Sensible Cook” also includes many recently introduced goods such as spices (cinnamon, cloves, cumin, ginger, mace, pepper, and nutmeg) as well as sugar.699 According to Hilde Sels and Jozef Schildermans, it is the first known cookbook in which spices are used to augment flavors rather than mask any unpleasant tastes or odors from poor preservation.700 Demonstrating how to incorporate new foods into Dutch diets was just one way in which the print culture of the time responded to new materiality and imagery from around the world, with a range of emblematic and instructional literature. Mary Louise Pratt’s comments can be taken literally when she argues that the “fruits of empire” have been “pervasive in shaping European domestic society, culture, and history” and posits how through various

698 Rose, The Sensible Cook, 4.
699 For more on these commodities see Hochstrasser, Still Life and Trade in the Dutch Golden Age, 95-159.
modes of representation, countries like the Netherlands would have been “constructed from the outside in as much as from the inside out.”

“The Sensible Cook” was not the first cookbook produced in the Netherlands. *Een Notabel Boecxke van Cokerije* (A Notable Book of Cooking) first appeared in Brussels around 1510 and Carolus Battus published *Eenen Seer Schonen/ende Excellenten Cocboeck* (An Exquisite and Excellent Cookbook) in 1589, but as part of Het Vermakelijck Landtleven, “The Sensible Cook” paved the way for other household manuals that would elucidate changing dynamics between people and their possessions during the consumer revolution. Dating from the early eighteenth century, *De Ervarene en Verstandige Hollandsche Huyshoudster* (The Experienced and Knowledgeable Hollands Householder) emphasized the connections between domestic economies and larger patterns of material welfare, stating, “This art was the very foundation of our prosperity and is still today the basis on which every household must be built.” Like *De Ervarene en Verstandige Hollandsche Huyshoudster*, *De verstandige kock* was aimed at a well-to-do audience like the Van Cortlandt family, whose copy of the 1683 edition is currently in the collection of Historic Hudson Valley in Tarrytown.

*De verstandige kock* is a rare extant example of the type of prescriptive literature known to have been possessed in New Netherland. Although it is highly likely that folios of Cats’ work made it to the New World, increasing evidence points to the oral traces of

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702 *De Ervarene en Verstandige Hollandsche Huyshoudster* (Amsterdam, 1735), xv.
his teaching in folk traditions. Rather than appear in the official histories of politics or written documentation, Cats’ domestic parables appropriately appear in the vernacular material culture produced first by the people of New Netherland and continuing in rural areas of New York. This can be seen in Washington Irving’s inclusion of proverbs from Cats’s *Spiegel van den Ouden en Nieuwen Tyt* (*Mirror of the Old and New Times*) from 1632 in Irving’s *History of New York*. Funk argues that Irving’s inclusion of two adages in particular are pivotal to interpreting the underlying themes of the account of Dutch culture in North America. The first frames the tales as having been based on truth: “*De waarheid die in duister lag/Die komt met klaarheid aan den dag*” (The truth that lay in darkness/comes clearly into the light of day). Cleverly employed by Irving, this aphorism of truth eventually becoming revealed relates to his deft satire of his own times. The second adage appears in Irving’s translation of the proverb inscribed on the wall of Van Twiller’s chamber *Stille seugen eten al den draf op* to mean “The sow that’s still/Sucks all the swill.” The appearance of these proverbs in an early nineteenth-century account of Dutch New York is twofold. On the one hand they suggest the extent to which Cats’ images and words had infiltrated oral histories in the New World. On the other hand, as proposed by Funk, the emblems with images of Dutch daily life rather realistically illustrated by the prints made by Adriaen van de Venne in the early

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705 For more on such masculine histories see Ulrich, *Well Behaved Women Seldom Make History*, 225-228.

seventeenth century “must have caught Irving’s eye” during his travels in the Netherlands and provided the “accurate descriptions of Dutch material culture throughout the Knickerbocker canon.”

The use of Cats’ visual emblems and moral parables by New Netherlanders are examples of how a group of immigrants asserted a collective identity based on selected memorial imagery of their homeland. According to Willem Frijhoff, these were attempts “to affirm an ethnically distinct identity, gradually losing different elements of their original culture and social institutions, and stressing or inventing such traditions and rituals as may best symbolize their changing self-consciousness.” Traces of the moralizing imagery of patria can be found in the surviving material culture of New Netherland and Dutch New York.

Prescriptive Objects in New Netherland

As cultural expressions, prescriptive literature crossed the Atlantic in book form as well as in vernacular mores. However, the evidence of this was often intangible and excluded from traditional histories. In light of this absence of documentary evidence, it is important to note the ways these imaginings have persisted: these emblems appeared on domestic things. In “Protestant Pots: Morality and Social Ritual in Early Modern Homes,” an essay describing the employment of religious imagery as decoration for

household and utilitarian vessels, Andrew Morrall questions if men and women of the late sixteenth century “placed more importance and derived more meaning from their decorated furnishings- textiles, furniture, ceramics, the accouterments of social life- than from paintings or prints?” In doing so he argues for the primacy of material manifestations of cultural values taking quotidian forms over more elevated expressions.

According to Svetlana Alpers, in the United Provinces images proliferated outside traditional definitions of art: they were “printed in books, woven into the cloth of tapestries or table linens, painted onto tiles, and of course framed on walls.” This could have indeed been even more so the case in colonial outposts such as New Netherland where the development of a sophisticated visual culture was decidedly secondary to mercantile ambitions. By building on Morrall’s attention to the “social uses of imagery” or more specifically “how an image might derive particular meaning from the utilitarian nature of the medium upon which it was drawn and from the context in which it was used,” it is possible to think of select examples of colonial material culture as “prescriptive objects”: utilitarian, vernacular goods that through their direct or indirect association with Dutch prescriptive literature came to have distinct moralizing tones and didactic functions.

While the decoration of objects was certainly not a new practice, in Northern Europe it became especially popular in the 1600s, with tin and glass being engraved and

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712 “Original emphasis Morrall, “Protestant Pots,” 272.”
earthenware decorated with scenes and proverbs, allegorical texts, mythological tales, and Biblical references.\footnote{Irma Thoen, \textit{Strategic Affection? Gift Exchange in Seventeenth-Century Holland} (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007), 111.} Often the designs made popular in emblem books and prescriptive literature appeared on household utensils and utilitarian wares. Religious motifs appeared on everything from fire backs and bed warmers to plates and cupboards. Examining post-Reformation Britain, Tara Hamling found a similar impetus to embellish furniture, textiles, pottery, and silverware with religious imagery. Her investigations have shaped my own approaches to how “the everyday and familiar domestic environment sets the context for the reception of religious imagery and conversely how the imagery influences the use of domestic objects and spaces.”\footnote{Tara Hamling, “Reconciling Image and Object: Religious Imagery in Protestant Interior Decoration,” \textit{Everyday Objects: Medieval and Early Modern Material Culture and its Meanings}, eds. Tara Hamling and Catherine Richardson (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2010), 322.} In the United Provinces prints from \textit{bybelsche figuren} (picture bibles) provided inspiration not only for other artists but also for craftspeople, with compositions appearing on everything from tobacco boxes and hearth screens to painted furniture and ship’s transoms.\footnote{T.G. Kootte, ed., \textit{De bijbel in huis: Bijbelse verhalen op huisraad en meubilair in de zeventiende en achttiende eeuw} (Utrecht: Museum het Catharijneconvent, 1991-1992).}

Not only were designs copied but also specific modes of production allowed for the transmission to other media. The act of transferring images and designs onto textiles and ceramics like ink onto paper allowed the consumer revolution to mass-produce imagery. Just as copper plates or wood blocks were inscribed, pictures and text could be applied to domestic material culture. Sculptural figures could be carved on to wood
furnishings such as the elaborately decorated *beelden kasten*, or image chests. Made between 1630 and 1650, one particular oak and ebony inlaid kast (Fig. 5.6) was carved after prints by Maerten van Heemskerk (1498-1574). Heemskerk was a prolific draftsman and etcher and the leading proponent of the Mannerist School in Haarlem. Heavily influenced by his time in Rome, Heemskerk’s depiction of Old Testament figures has been cited as an influence on many seventeenth-century artists. However, the adoption of his designs for the decoration of furniture like this kast has yet to be explored. With its series of panels and vertical elements, the form of the piece demonstrates how easily the imagery found in prints could be transferred to the design of furniture. Each distinct space allowed the carver to depict in sequence elements of Biblical stories in a similar manner to the narrative progression found in graphic art.

The same techniques used to etch copper plates were used to engrave motifs and even text on to glassware. During the seventeenth century it became fashionable to use glasses with appropriate decorations to make toasts. Margriet de Roever has identified four different categories of designs distinguished by their motifs: political contexts required glassware to be decorated with the arms of the provinces, country, or political families; social gatherings often incorporated communal motifs; in the commercial sphere proprietors and companies were represented with many glasses decorated like those engraved in honor of the VOC and WIC; and in people’s personal lives the imagery

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reflects the celebrations of marriage and childbirth. One of the most noteworthy examples of this practice is Anna Roemer Visscher’s (1584-1651) and her sister Maria Tesselchade Visscher’s (1594-1649) etchings on roemers (glasses). The younger daughter was named Tesselchade or “Damage on Tessel” because on the day she was born, her father lost a ship near the island of Texel. The daughters of Amsterdam merchant and poet Roemer Visscher, both became well-regarded scholars and accomplished artists known for their painting, carving, etching and tapestry work. Of this production only some examples of their glass engravings exist.

In 1618 Anna contributed poems to Jacob Cats’ Silenus Alcibiadis, Sive Proteus and translated epigrams from Georgette de Montenay’s Emblèmes, ou devises chrestiennes (1584). Some of these were literally transferred into their artistic production.

One roemer Maria engraved, now in the Rijksmuseum is inscribed with Sic Soleo Amicos

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719 The family was part of an elite cultural circle known as the Muiden Circle. Named for the Dutch poet Pieter Corneliszoon Hooft’s medieval castle where he hosed summer gatherings, for guests like the poet Joost van den Vondel, the musician Dirk Sweelinck, and the secretary of the Orange Stadhouders Constantijn Huygens. Although close friends for most of their lives, Huygens was deeply resentful of Maria’s conversion to Catholicism, so much so that he penned a scathing poem on the matter. For more on this see Peter Davidson and Adriaan van der Weel, A Selection of the Poems of Sir Constantijn Huygens (1596-1687) (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 1996), 126-127. For more on the sisters see Carol Pal, Rethinking the Republic of Letters in the Seventeenth Century (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012): 59; Mieke B. Smits-Veldt, Maria Tesselchade: Leven met Talent en Vriendschap (Zutphen: Walburg, 1994); James A. Parente Jr. “Anna Roemers Visscher and Maria Tesselchade Roemers Visscher,” Women Writing in Dutch, ed. Kristiaan Aerceke (New York: Garland, 1994), 147-84; and Ria Vanderauwera, “Maria Tesselchade: A Woman of More than Letters,” Women Writers of the Seventeenth Century, ed. Katharina M. Wilson and Frank J. Warnke (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1989), 141-163.
(“this is how I treat my friends”).

These works must have been highly regarded at the time the sisters were producing them for in 1630 the Nederduytsche Academie (Dutch Academy) offered a roemer decorated by Anna as the first prize in a contest. Engraved with a likeness of Prince Frederick Henry of Nassau, this is now thought to be one of the first portraits engraved on glass, and the beginning of a practice that would continue on well into the eighteenth century.

The same cross-medial absorption of imagery onto the decorative programs of domestic things occurred in New Netherland and Dutch New York. Taking Alpers’ argument one step further, the use of a well-known motif exemplifies the ways the visual culture of patria was adapted to the altered living conditions of New Netherland. In his travels through the homes of Dutch-American families in 1744 Alexander Hamilton noted how ceramics were utilized as décor: “…they hang earthen or delft plates and dishes all round the walls in manner of pictures, having a hole drilled thro the edge of the plate or dish and a loop of ribbon put into it to hang it by.”

The archeological holdings of the New York State Office of Parks, Recreation, and Historic Preservation at Peebles Island contain several examples of plates that once chipped, or cracked and no longer usable had a small holes drilled in them to be hung on the wall. In sparse colonial interiors things like utensils but also cupboards and plates had to do double duty as functional articles but also as decoration. The secondary usage of things like spoons,

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722 Hamilton, Gentleman’s Process, 72.
*kasten*, tobacco boxes and other objects contains imagery that sought symbolically to represent a set of social religious and moral values. This practice (one that continues today) began in Europe but would have become more prevalent in the New World where material goods were not always as easily acquired.

One popular motif drawn directly from Cats’ marriage treatise, *Houwelyck*, appears on several extant objects. It is based on a roundel with a clasped pair of hands topped with two doves featured prominently at the top of the title page of the first edition of the book, published in Middleburg in 1625 (Fig. 5.7). Another later version for a more cheaply made, mass-produced edition simplifies the iconographic program (Fig. 5.8). The two putti that held the hand motif up at the top now support the title. The hands are now moved to the central position and to emphasize the message of marital harmony, a flaming heart is added to emphasize the man’s and woman’s joined hands. For those unaware of the symbolism of the synecdoche, a regal looking couple flanks the central emblem. From pewter to brass and copper to wrought iron and pigment on wood, the crowned-heart motif, expressing the Dutch aphorism “a true heart is worth a crown of gold,” appeared on a variety of vernacular items. Since this motif is typically associated with Catholic themes, previously scholars have been puzzled by the selection of such imagery by a primarily Protestant group of people, but it makes much more sense when it is associated with the complex iconography that emerged from Cats’ publications and other moralizing emblemata of the time.  

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The iconographic program of Cats’ title page is almost identically replicated on a spoon now in the collection of the New-York Historical Society (Fig. 5.9). The figures of a man and a woman are engrailed within the spoon’s ovoid bowl. Trees flank them and between them is a floral basket. They reach their hands to a crowned heart and the pattern of the basket extends down the spoon’s handle. As in the United Provinces, colonists used pewter items in everyday food preparation and as eating utensils. One example is the wide range of pewter items listed among Van Varick’s possessions. At the time of her death she owned thirteen dishes, a colander, a fish plate, and hollowware articles. Gertruy van Cortlandt’s inventory lists similar holdings of “14 pewter dishes, 1 fish plate, 1 cheese plate, and 52 other plates for a total weight of one hundred and thirty pounds. Archeological remains from the Broad Street site in Albany indicate that New Yorkers not only had access to a wide range of pewter forms, but that these were often intricately ornamented, as was the case with the New-York Historical Society spoon. The almost illegible makers mark on the reverse of the bowl may attribute the spoon to William Austyn (nd), a Freeman working for the Worshipful Company of Pewterers in London during the late 1660s. William would not have engraved the figures on the spoon when it was manufactured. The decidedly Northern European folkloric pictorial vocabulary of the decoration suggests that a New Netherlandish colonist may have added it once it was

724 Van Varick Inventory, np.
725 Van Cortlandt family papers.
imported. The subject matter suggests it may have been done to commemorate a marriage.

In another case, the crowned heart appeared on a stylized doorknocker and latch at the Bronck Museum in Coxsackie, made by an unknown blacksmith ca. 1729 (Fig. 5.10). Knocker latches with escutcheon plates typically were in the form of hearts or diamonds, but this particular one is unique in that it bears the initials of the owner, Marten van Bergen, *MVB*. ?28 Perhaps hinting at the successful partnership of his marriage to Catarina de Meyer, Van Bergen had two limestone plaques inscribed to commemorate their erection of a house on 14 June 1729 (“Ao 1729 IUN 14, MVB x KVB”) and a barn three weeks later (“Ano 1729 July 2/4 MB+KB”). Roderic H. Blackburn has noted that this sort of self-conscious marking of architecture as well as other possessions (as discussed previously with respect to furniture) was specific to the Dutch of New Netherland and New York, with over one-third of all remaining Dutch style houses in the upper portion of the Hudson River valley dated in stone, brick or iron. ?29 Literally placed at the threshold of the Van Bergens’ home, the Heart and Crown Knocker Latch hints at the highly permeable boundary loosely established between the home and the outside world.

A hanging cupboard from the Monmouth County, New Jersey, area is also painted with the same imagery derived from Cats’ prescriptive literature (Fig. 5.11). Prominently displayed on the door is a simplified heart, hands and crown surmounted with the date

In many ways this yellow pine storage furnishing is similar to larger kasten built by professional carpenters. With the cornice trim, imitation of “ball shaped” feet and butterfly hinges it is a smaller version of the large kasts or chests built in the Hudson Valley in the eighteenth century. The projecting wooden hanger is much like the type used to hang paintings in the Netherlands old and new. Along with these rather sophisticated techniques the maker also painted it with red swirls over a dark brown first coat, possibly in order to imitate tortoise shell finish. During the early eighteenth century a variety of techniques like jappaning were used to give the impression of more exotic materials like ebony or lacquerware. Throughout the world the Dutch were adapting indigenous materials to produce the styles and goods of patria.

Engraved much like the spoon, a tobacco box by an unknown maker from the Netherlands in the late seventeenth or early eighteenth century contains a rebus suggesting the widespread recognition of the heart-hands-crown motif (Fig. 5.12). The lid of the box contains a slightly stylized crucifixion scene, but around the sides is written, “Een trou [heart] is een [crown] der [gold orb].” I would imagine it would be difficult to represent “gold” any other way, but it is intriguing that the engraver chooses a gold orb to represent the valuable commodity. Scriptural scenes, including the Crucifixion, were a common motif engraved on tobacco boxes, but not all approved of the utilization of such imagery. In April of 1753, Jacob Lansing Jr., wrote to Andries Traux to tell him that he would not be able to complete an order of engraved crosses for trade with native trappers.

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For Lansing Jr., it went against his beliefs. He explained, “With respect to the crosses, I can well make them; but I will never never never go completely contrary to God’s command for in the Ten Commandments it is stated ‘thou shalt not cut images nor make any likenesses. See Exodus 20.”731 Not all New Netherlanders agreed with him for the familiar iconography of illustrated Bibles came to appear in a variety of media including furniture, textiles, metalwork and of course the ubiquitous blue and white Bible Tiles.732

“Scriptural Histories, wretchedly scrawled”: Hearth and Home in New Netherland
Open, jambless fireplaces have been described as one of the key features of a Netherlandish style of architecture transplanted to the differing context of the New World. Decorative and easy to clean, the large smoke hood was suspended above the fire and the brick chimney was framed into the level above the first floor. (Fig. 5.13) In contrast to the English-style boxed version, these open hearths included a large cooking surface of several rows of large square tiles, inset into the floor. These “hearth tiles” were glazed green, yellow or with transparent glazes, or unglazed or constructed of native stone. A conical brick flue vented the smoke and the wall behind the fire was made of brick or stone covered in plaster and often further protected by a decorative cast iron fireback. The flat open cook space of the hearth was far more similar to indigenous models and arguably allowed for those employing it to adapt to regional food ways better.

731 Jacob Lansing Jr., to Andries Truax (16 April 1733). Truax collection, Albany Institute of History and Art.
than the English-type fireplaces. Sapaen, a boiled corn meal dish commonly eat by natives of the region, was prepared and eaten in much the same ways as porridges, and rapidly became a staple of the Dutch-American diet. While adopting local foods such as corn, beans and rice, the perseverance of the Dutch style hearth allowed for the continued use of European cooking and heating utensils.

Formally, Dutch open hearths allowed for a wide range of decorative possibilities. Designed to protect fireplace bricks and reflect the heat of the fire into the room, firebacks often had figurative programs. One example in the Albany Institute of History and Art reveals these to be vehicles for political propaganda as well (Fig. 5.14). Emblazoned on the cast iron surface are a rampant Dutch lion and the “Hollands Maid” an allegorical figure symbolizing the peaceful, prosperous country, enclosed in de Hollandsche tuin (a Dutch garden with allusion to the bounds of the nation) and holding a hat on a pike, a symbol of the liberty of the seven United Provinces. Framing the tombstone-shaped arch are dolphins alluding to Dutch overseas possessions, while swags of fruit and flowers are symbols of fertility and prosperity. Inscribed on the fireback are also “Hollandia,” “Pro-patria” and the date Anno 1665. Given that the Dutch had

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737 For more on the iconographical programs of heating tools see Henry C. Mercer, The Bible in Iron: Pictured Stoves and Stoveplates of the Pennsylvania Germans with notes on colonial fire-backs in the United States, the ten-plate stove, Franklin's fireplace and the tile stoves of the Moravians in Pennsylvania and North Carolina, together with a list of colonial furnaces in the United States and Canada (Doylestown: Bucks County Historical Society, 1914), 246.
seceded power to the English the previous year, this patriotic sentiment would have been quite a strong political statement when similar versions were imported along with other ironwork to the colony shortly after their manufacture.738

Along with ironwork, textiles were used to adorn open hearths. The long, low mantles were often decorated with chimney cloths. These ruffled lengths of cloth served to not only absorb smoke but also to brighten up the interior (Fig. 5.15). Such cloths did not appear in the inventories of English settlers, but they did appear frequently in Dutch possessions. Albany resident Tryntje Arents’ (c. 1627-1696) modest 1696 inventory contained “four old chimney valances.”739 In Ulster County, Gysbert van Imbroch’s (c.1665) holdings included more ornate examples, with “a fringed border and one made of coloured ribbon around the mantle piece.”740

During her travels in 1704, Madame Sarah Kimble Knight described the fireplaces in a typical New York home, noting the differences from those of the English in her own communities, as they “have no Jambs (as ours have). But the backs run flush with the walls… The hearths were laid with the finest tile I ever see.”741 Even nearly forty years later, Peter Kalm observed Albany houses to have fireplaces with “small sides projecting out about six inches made of Dutch tiles with a white background and blue

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738 There seems to be some confusion as to the provenance of the AIHI fire back. A shard of the original once adorning the open-hearth fireplace of the Schuyler Flatts house built in 1666 is now in the state archeological collections on display at Craillo. A receipt and further correspondence in the object files of the AIHI indicates that this pristine and obviously never used example was purchased in Germany in the early twentieth century, as it was identical to the disintegrating original. “Fireback,” 1910.2 Albany Institute of History and Art.

739 In Inventories and Accounts, 1666-1822, New York State Archives, Albany.

740 Gustave Anjou, ed., Ulster County, N.Y. Probate Records in the Office of the Surrogate, and in the County Clerk’s Office at Kingston, N.Y. (Ulster County: County Clerk's Office, 1906), 25.

741 Knight, The Private Journal Kept by Madame Knight, 53.
Benjamin Bullivant noted, “Dutch tyles on each side the fire place, carried up very High.” He also noticed “They also tyle theyr sides of ye staircase and bottom of the windows…[sic]” While Bullivant’s description suggests that tiles were placed in other locations throughout the house, the only surviving examples of tiles being used in a similar manner are the baseboards in the Coeymans house. During twentieth-century renovations, tiles were found behind baseboards dating to the early nineteenth century. Extant architecture and genre paintings (most famously Vermeer’s *The Milkmaid*, Amsterdam, Rijksmuseum) suggest that this tile placement was a common practice. In addition to its decorative value, it was useful for keeping out drafts and preventing rot along damp floors. Peter van der Coelen notes that such decorative tiles, and even those depicting biblical scenes, were so ubiquitous in prosperous Dutch homes that they came to be considered a typically Dutch product, consumed domestically and also exported abroad on a large scale.⁷⁴³

As tile installation does not appear among extant building contracts in New Netherland, advertisements for the product among colonial merchants suggest the decoration was an item procured through retailers and not provided by builders. In 1748 Robert Crommelin at Canon’s Wharf in New York advertised for sale “a parcel of handsome Scripture Tiles with the Chapter, and some plain white ditto.”⁷⁴⁴ Schenectady merchant Robert Sanders arranged for shipments of Bible tiles from agents in Amsterdam.

⁷⁴³ Van der Coelen, “Something for Everyone?” 55.
indicating that they were part of economic exchange.\textsuperscript{745} As well, they were symbols of communal identities formed by the Dutch-Americans through their continuance of a practice taken over directly from homes in \textit{patria}. Long after the adoption of English-style fireplaces and even the importation of tiles from England, the installation of tiles in the Dutch manner may have been a way of asserting religious, cultural and ethnic affiliations. This is suggested by the fact that in the period from 1760 to 1775 over eighty-seven percent of the identified consumers of tiles in the Hudson Valley were of Dutch or mixed Dutch decent based on family patronymics.\textsuperscript{746} Decorating the surface of hearth surrounds, tiles were not structurally required or necessary to food production or consumption like other ceramics and as such illustrate the social values and aesthetic choices of those living in houses with them.\textsuperscript{747}

Like previous engravers, tile painters traced, reversed, and re-interpreted the compositions of other artists, disseminating various permutations.\textsuperscript{748} But not all artists were able to reproduce with clarity in the unwieldy glazes what etchers and engravers could, often creating awkward compositions and flat figures. Manganese glaze became popular when the purplish-brown hue was discovered to be easier to draw with than cobalt.\textsuperscript{749} Both cobalt and manganese tiles and even polychrome tile fragments found at the archeological excavations of sites like the Quakenbush House, Schuyler Flatts, Fort

\textsuperscript{745} Gerhauser, “Hart Tyles and Histories,” 98.
\textsuperscript{746} Wheeler, “Once Adorned with Quaint Dutch Tiles...” 145.
\textsuperscript{748} Gerhauser, “Hart Tyles and Histories,” 89.

After the final capitulation of the province in 1674, not only did the decrease in trade with Holland influence the availability of tiles, the popular subject matter changed too, with more children’s games, landscapes and “elegant couples” being depicted. However, by the second quarter of the eighteenth century, scriptural or bible tiles were by far the most popular type of tile used in the upper Hudson Valley. One of the most common exchanges in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries was the appropriation of Dutch \textit{historie} prints for designs on ceramic tiles.

As in \textit{patria} religious scenes served as didactic tools for a moral education that literally began around the family’s hearth. The eighteenth-century biblical imagery employed in the decorative programs of New Netherlandish tile installations was connected to seventeenth-century verbal and visual conventions of embedding symbols and emblems conveying multiple meanings within narrative scenes.\footnote{Gerhauser, “Hart Tyles and Histories,” 87.} Many designs for Dutch tiles were taken from Matthaeus Merian’s \textit{Iconum Biblicarum}, published first in
Frankfurt (1627) and then again in Strasbourg (1630). At the time, Merian was working with Dutch publishers to produce his *Merian-Bibel* that in turn would provide illustrations, reduced in size, for the *Statenbijbels* of 1657 and 1741. Later Nicolaes Visscher’s *Historiae Sacrae Veteris et Novi Testamenti* (ca. 1660) would become a popular source of imagery. Although the majority of settlers were farmers and artisans, the Dutch Republic was a relatively literate European society and this continued with the establishment of primary schools for children in the New World. It was only after the English assumed power that documents and records indicate a drastic decline in the literacy rate especially among women.

In response to these changes, the decorative programs of domestic material culture were increasingly influenced by visual modes of representation. The teachings of the bible continued to be etched, printed, and decorated onto household items. Utrecht, Rotterdam, Amsterdam and the smaller Frisian centers of Makkum and Harlingen led the production of Bible tiles. Just as New Netherland came to be a mix of English and Dutch, hand-painted tin-glazed earthenware industries flourished in the two countries between 1680 and 1780. English production of Bible tiles, however, never reached the same scale or scope as the Dutch industry. Furthermore, the consumption of the tiles continued to be dominated by colonists of Dutch descent. It appears that the installation of tiles from the Netherlands endured as a way for emigrants and their first-generation offspring to demonstrate their cultural allegiance while under pressure to assimilate to Anglo-

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dominance. In trade, tiles may have been part of “the larger economic and communal order,” but at home they were a symbol of tradition and piety.\textsuperscript{753}

One mid-eighteenth century cobalt blue tile fragment was recovered from the Daniel Pieter Winne House in Bethlehem, New York (Fig. 5.16). Although just a small piece of the original tile, the remaining section is fortuitous for it contains the inscription “IOAN 20” referring to the New Testament scene John 20.27, in which Doubting Thomas touches Christ’s wounds. This is the same scene depicted on a manganese purple tile series associated with Crailo House in Rensselaer, now in the collection of the Albany Institute of History and Art (Fig. 5.17). Jan Pluis has identified the print source as a plate of Pieter Hendricksz. Schut’s \textit{Toneel ofte Vertooch der Bybelsche Historien}, illustrating John Chapter 20, verse 27 (Fig. 5.18).\textsuperscript{754} Schut’s \textit{Toneel ofte Vertooch} was first published by Nicolaes Visscher in Amsterdam in 1659 and in subsequent editions such as \textit{Historien des Ouden en Nieuwen Testaments vermaeckelyck afgebeelt, en geetst door PH Schut (Illustrated Old and New Testaments with etchings by PH Schut)} in 1660, and as \textit{Afbeeldingen Van de Heilege Historien Des Ouden en Nieuwen Testamensts (The Illustrated Old and New Testaments)} in Amsterdam in 1700, Rotterdam in 1734, and various editions served as sources for tile production well into the late nineteenth century. The location of the IOAN incorporated into the composition as opposed to below the

\textsuperscript{753} Gerhauser, “Hart Tyles and Histories,” 98.
\textsuperscript{754} Pluis, \textit{Tegels met bijbelse voorstellingen}, 914, 915-917.
picture plane was characteristic of *met text* (with text) tiles and was unique to Utrecht manufacturers.\textsuperscript{755}

According to Piwonka, “Dutch Bible illustrations and numerous religious subjects depicted on hearth tiles reinforced [biblical] instruction.”\textsuperscript{756} A letter from Benjamin Franklin to Peter Burdett, dated 3 November 1773, speaks to the cultural associations of the ceramic decor:

As the Dutch Delphware tiles were much used in America, which are only or chiefly Scriptural Histories, wretchedly scrawled, I wish to have those moral prints (which were originally taken from Horace’s Poetical Figures) introduced on Tiles, which being about our Chimneys, and constantly in the Eyes of Children when by the Fireside, might give Parents an Opportunity, in explaining them, to impress moral sentiments…[sic]\textsuperscript{757}

**Women and Religion in New Netherland**

In the foreword to *Afbeeldingen der voornaamste Historien, soo van het Oude als Nieuwe Testament (The Sacred Histories of the Old and New Testament)* Nicolaes Visscher indicated his reasons for providing commentaries in five different languages. He explained, “And that this light may extend its rays thro all the Christian world, we have taught our images to speak several languages. Not only our mother low Dutch, but likewise the manly High dutch [German], the smooth English, the eloquent French and

\textsuperscript{755} Gerhauser, “Hart Tyles and Histories,” 89- 94.
the learned Latine…” [sic]. In contrast to the evangelical missions of the French in *Nouvelle France* and the Spanish in *Nueva España*, the Dutch were far less interested in the religious conversion of the native people they encountered in the establishment of *Nieuw Nederland*. The colony was produced during a time when “Dutch tolerance, colonies, and nation were created together.” Particularly after the English established control of the colony, the focus was not on spreading the Reformed faith but rather preventing adherents from defecting to other congregations in the increasingly religiously diverse Mid-Atlantic.

According to Alexander Hamilton (1744), by the mid-eighteenth century the Dutch Reformed Church was among the last bastions of Dutch culture in the New World (Fig. 5.19). He observed that “there have been a great number of Dutch here, tho’ now their language and customs begin pretty much to wear out, and would very soon die out if not for a parcel of Dutch Dominies here, who in the Education of their children Endeavor to preserve the Dutch customs as much as possible.” Until the first *domine* Jonas Michaelius arrived in 1628, *ziekentroosters* (comforters of the sick) provided spiritual guidance to settlers. Despite the diversity of the colony, the Dutch Reformed Church was really the only official option for religious affiliation. According to Joyce Goodfriend, membership was neither automatic nor inevitable, but a voluntary act that required a

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confession of faith and mastery of the Heidelberg catechism. As in the Dutch Republic, those wishing to attend but not become a communicant had the option of remaining informal adherents. After the Dutch capitulation to the English, a deal was struck that the Reformed Church would be allowed to continue to minister to the residents of New York. It was during this time, the 1670s and 1680s facing English assimilation that inspired most aggressive evangelism attributed to the Dutch Reformed Church in North America. Well into the eighteenth century sermons continued to be preached in Dutch providing cultural continuity as well as religious guidance to isolated congregations throughout the Hudson Valley.

In New World religious communities as in the Dutch Republic, women were important human and financial resources for congregations in New Netherland. Marybeth Carlson has argued that the pluralistic nature of religion in the Republic, while privileging the Dutch Reformed Church, allowed Mennonites, Lutherans, Socinians, Collegiants, and Remonstrants along with Catholics and Jews to follow their own faiths, and created a measure of agency for women “performing useful services for their coreligionists.” Despite their active participation in the spiritual making of the colony, women have been more commonly discussed as shrewd traders “not above earthy

762 Blackburn and Piwonka, Remembrance of Patria, 49.
language and abusive behavior.” Only recently have scholars probed the religious life of women in the Dutch colony. The conversion work of the Catholics in New France and New Spain and the challenges to orthodoxy of the Puritan and Quaker women have left more traces and garnered more scholarly attention. By moving beyond a clergy-centered view to consider a community-based history of the Dutch Reformed church in North America, Goodfriend has demonstrated how women were important vehicles of communication, conveying religious messages to family and other members of the population.

Although barred from official roles in religious governance, women were far from passive spectators in the establishment of the Reformed Church in New Netherland. As wives and mothers they played a critical role in sustaining religious identities. Individually they were also able to influence their husband’s financial support via donations as well as providing their own gifts and bequests. The First Dutch Reformed Church of Breukelen’s records from 1684 have Maria Baddia presenting the church with “a silver cup for the administration of the Lord’s Supper.” After the Reformation Protestants adopted the beaker form of domestic cups for use as communion cups. Two cups from the First Church in Albany (Reformed) demonstrate a continuity of form and decoration with the beakers made in the United Provinces. One possibly made by

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Volkaert Symons Swaert was brought from Haarlem in 1660 (Fig. 5.20). Ahasuerus Hendricks (?-1727), a silversmith working in the City of New York between 1675 and 1727, made the other beaker, identical in size and engraving (Fig. 5.21).\textsuperscript{767} The resilience of this form was just one of the many ways the tastes of the Dutch Reformed Church helped to preserve Dutch material culture in the New World well into the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{768} In 1730, Catharina Philipse (nd) left in her will “a large silver beaker, on which my name is engraven and a damask table cloth… with a long table, In trust for the congregation of the Dutch church… at Phillipsburgh [sic].”\textsuperscript{769} Even Pieter Stuyvesant’s widow donated the family’s chapel on the Bowery farm to the Dutch Reformed Church.\textsuperscript{770}

Reflecting the emphasis on a personal relationship with worship, most women in New Netherland would have been familiar with the contents of the Scriptures and sufficiently literate to read the Bible. Religious instruction by Dominie Henricus Selyns and catechism classes run by schoolmaster Abraham Delanoy (1686-1770) in the late 1600s included both male and female students.\textsuperscript{771} Anne Grant writing in 1808 recalled how girls “were taught… to read in Dutch, the Bible and a few Calvinist tracts of the

\textsuperscript{767} For more on Hendricks see Beth Carver Wees and Medill Higgins Harvey, \textit{Early American Silver in the Metropolitan Museum of Art} (New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2013), 76.
\textsuperscript{768} For more on the conservatism of Hudson River Valley material culture see Ruth Piwonka, “Old Pewter Bright Brass: A Suggested Explanation for Conservatism in Dutch Colonial Culture,” \textit{de Halve Maen} 68 (1995): 43.
\textsuperscript{769} “Will of Catherine Phillipse, 1730-31,” Collections of the New-York Historical Society (1894), 21-22.
devotional kind” though few were taught to write. The wills and inventories of women of all social ranks indicate they possessed Bibles, Testaments, and Psalters of their own along with the large Bibles belonging to the family. The continued use of Bibles and other devotional books in Nederduyts (versus Hoogduyts or High German and the English that increased after 1664) maintained the Dutch language in homes. The two main types of religious texts surviving indicate how they were used. Large folio version like that published by Jacob and Hendrick Keur (Dordrecht, 1702), a copy of which was owned by the Beekman family, were read at home and often left open to view, demonstrating the piety of the family to any visitors. The oldest illustrated Bibles preserved in Hudson Valley collections today date from 1702 to 1744. These large tomes were also used to document family births and deaths.

In comparison to the New England practice of tucking smaller bibles away, the larger Dutch publications required related furnishing, such as the Bybllessenaar or Bible desk usually consisting of a slant-lid box with a molding to prop the bible placed on a table. One example dating to 1690 to 1720 was made by a cabinetmaker working in either New York City or the Flatbush area of Kings County. Citing it as one of the keystones in understanding late-seventeenth-century urban New York turned furnishings, Neil Kamil has proposed that the similarity of the turnings to French prototypes suggests it was made by a Huguenot emigrant capable of working in such “urban idioms” (Fig. 5.22). It also contains an inscription on the inside of the lid documenting a business transaction, “1695

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772 Grant, Memoirs of an American Lady, 33.
773 Kamil, online.
Oktober 12 gelient den P-Q maule Schenk 5 pont.” Not only does this inscription help with the dating of the desk, like scribbles in the margins of a book, it is a delightful trace of one of the previous owners’ hands during its use. The desk appears not only to have served a liturgical function, in holding the family’s bible, but apparently it supported commercial dealings as well.

Large folio bibles were passed to the sons of the family, but daughters customarily received and later bequeathed to their daughters psalters, small portable New Testaments and Psalm books taken to church for use in public worship as well as private devotion. Gertie Jans van Langedyck’s 1708 will included instructions for her daughter to receive her two Dutch church books with silver clasps. In 1758 Margaret Gouverneur left her “Psalms book with gold clasps” to Gertruyd Gouverneur.774 Elisbet Cuyler’s psalm book has her initials engraved on the inside of the top clasp, a common practice. A copy of a bible published by A. Hasebroeck, Wed Van G. de Groot and I. Heekere of Amsterdam (1714) with leather covered with silver mounts, clasps and a chain was engraved AVI for its original owner Alida Van Yveren (1704-?), a member of the Reformed Church in Albany on State St. and Broadway. These practices continued well into the nineteenth century with Abigail Lefferts Lloyd’s (1759-1847) initials engraved onto her New Testament printed in Holland with the Apocalypse and Psalms. Often lavishly ornamented, these books had silver corners, monogrammed clasps, and carrying

chains to allow for them to easily be brought by the women with them to Sunday services.  

A similar clasped bible is depicted in John Heaten’s portrait of Catherine van Cortlandt Johnson (1734, Fig. 5.23). The daughter of prominent New Yorkers Gertruy and Stephanus van Cortland, Van Cortland married Andrew Johnson. In 1752 Johnson sold six acres of the land his wife had inherited from her family, with the provision that the land could only be developed for educational or religious purposes. Years later his wife would be credited with founding St. Peter’s Episcopal Church in Van Cortlandville. Although this portrait was painted in the years prior, it still speaks to her involvement in the religious community. As with the paintings discussed in Chapter Three, hints of her material life are represented. Her dress is of a luxurious fabric, trimmed with lace and decorated with a gauzy overlay and her simple but eye catching jewelry includes a ring on her finger, a necklace and gold drop earrings. However, to juxtapose the moral with the material she holds a small bible, on which the clasps, mounts and chain glisten. According to Stephanie Dickey, the inclusion of a Bible or other devotional text in a portrait was one of the many Dutch tropes for conveying the piety of the sitter. She explains such books were read for comfort in adversity as well as moral instruction. Like the handkerchiefs she discusses as providing information on early modern “manners, mores, and mentality,” the frequency in which books appeared in portraits of Dutch-

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775 Kenney, “Neglected Heritage: Hudson River Valley Dutch Material Culture,” 67. Along with Bibles, foot warmers or *kerck stoofs* (church stoves) are typically discussed as signifiers of Dutch domesticity, when in reality, they were taken to church and part of very public performances of women’s communal personas.
American women demonstrates that they too were not just accessories but also telling personal attributes and clearly understood rhetorical motifs.  

Along with the presence of Bibles in wills and inventories, portraits demonstrate the importance of spiritual concerns in representations of women’s identity. In a portrait of Elsje Rutgers Schuyler Vas (1674-1752) attributed to Gerardus Duyckinck from 1723, a thinner more austere book accompanies the sitter (Fig. 5.24). The wife of Domine Petrus Vas is depicted more demurely wearing a white summer kuif (headress) worn by matrons and widows. The open clasps suggest that she has been recently reading, but they are also another way to emphasize ownership. However, these were not just portraits of women; they were also careful representations of the important objects in their lives. Noting the care with which the Dutch painter Frans Hals constructed the book held by Marritge Vooght Claesdr, Jan Storm van Leeuwen insists these were more than mere accessories (1639, Rijksmuseum Amsterdam). As objects that actually existed, with the careful attention to depicting the clasps and intricate bindings, books in paintings such as the Hals portrait display a woman’s piety but more importantly present a “portrait” of her Bible as an important thing in her self-representation.


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While the Dutch Reformed Church persisted in uniting the community, by the mid-eighteenth century personal devotion within the home was also important. A multi-sensory experience of touching and even tasting and smelling objects reinforced hearing and seeing as ways to engage with the teachings of the Bible. Goodfriend clearly elucidates the role of domestic material culture in the religious education of women:

Spending her early years in a home adorned with objects displaying religious motifs conditioned a girl to accept spiritual values as an integral part of her everyday life. Delft tiles decorated with scriptural scenes and texts, installed around the fireplace in Dutch homes both in the Netherlands and in America, have been viewed as a means of instilling religious verities in impressionable children. The educational value of the biblical tiles was undoubtedly enhanced by their pictorial attractiveness. Children learned the stories of the Bible through oft-repeated explanations of the tiles by adult members of the household coupled with family Bible reading. A variety of other objects in Dutch households—furniture, firebacks, bedwarmers, and plates—might be decorated with religious scenes and inscriptions.

Goodfriend’s description illustrates the ubiquitous presence of religious imagery in the everyday lives of women in New Netherland and subsequently New York. Of course the Dutch Reformed Church played an important role in the spiritual and moral education of its adherents in the New World, but when clergy members and their churches were few and far between, the home served as an important site for religious edification.

Scripture Paintings

778 Blackburn and Piwonka, Remembrance of Patria, 177.
Numerous contemporary accounts describe colorful religious paintings hanging in the best rooms of New Netherlandish homes. During his travels in 1750, Peter Kalm noted that New Netherlandish houses “were quite covered with all sorts of drawings and pictures in small frames.” He was probably referring to the single-leaf decorative prints published to be hung in domestic spaces. While visiting Albany in 1744, Alexander Hamilton remarked that in the homes there he saw locals “affect pictures much, particularly scripture history, with which they adorn their rooms.” In Memoirs of an American Lady, Anne Grant recalled that during the early eighteenth century the best bedroom of the Schuyler home near Albany, New York was “hung with family portraits, some of which were admirably executed; and in the eating room... were some fine scripture paintings... one of Esau coming to demand the anticipated blessing.”

Of course many pictures would have come from Europe either with the colonists or as part of later shipments. Although very few are extant, inventories give a glimpse into what art may have come to New Netherland in the seventeenth century. Thirty-nine paintings were listed in the contents of Mayor Cornelis Steenwyck’s (1626-1684) house, nineteen were owned by Sara Webber (1640-?) and a further seventeen by Margarieta Van Varick. Most of the paintings in these inventories were sea and landscapes, still lifes and genre scenes. The estate of barber surgeon Jacob de Lange (?-1685) itemized his paintings room by room. In his front room hung two banquet scenes, three landscapes,

780 Owre and Scott, Genealogical Data from Inventories of New York Estates 1666-1825, 39.
781 Kalm, Peter Kalm’s Travels in North America, 195.
782 Bridenbaugh, Cities in the Wilderness, 72.
783 Grant, Memoirs of an American Lady, 171.
two still lifes, a genre scene, and a portrait; in the chamber there were two more banquet
scenes, a biblical scene and two more landscapes and other lesser value works, possibly
prints; the side room contained sea and landscapes, various prints and “5 East India
pictures with red frames.”784 While most likely not typical of most colonists' artistic
holdings, de Lange’s collection reveals the breadth of images available to buyers well
connected to art markets in the United Provinces.

At least thirty-eight scripture paintings, like those described by Grant, exist today.
These proliferated between 1713 and 1744, coinciding with the importation of illustrated
Bibles. Seventeenth-century print series such as Matthias Merian, Icones Bibliae (1625),
Nicolaus Visscher, Toneel ofte Vertooch der Bijbelsche Historien (1659 and reprinted in
c. 1700), another edition of the same illustrations titled Afbeeldingen van de Heilige
Historien des Ouden en des Nieuwen Testaments (1734), and Melchior Kusel, Icones
Biblicae Veteris et Novi Testamenti: figuren biblisch er historien Alten un Neuen
Testaments (1679) depicting biblical episodes were used to illustrate the eighteenth-
century Dutch bibles and were sources for scripture paintings. The only extant work
definitively attributed was The Naming of John the Baptist signed by Gerardus
Duyckinck (Fig. 5.25).

Based on its similarities to The Naming of John the Baptist, Christ at Emmaus
(Luke 24:31) from c. 1715-20 is also attributed to Gerardus Duyckinck (Fig. 5.26). Like
the portraiture discussed in Chapter Three, the awkward rendering of figures and lack of

784 Scott and Owre, Genealogical Data from Inventories of New York Estates 1666-1825, 69.
realistic depiction of space or “decorative naïveté” belies this work’s engagement with a much longer pictorial tradition. Blackburn and Piwonka have identified the prototype for this image as a print by Jacob Matham (c. 1600) done after an engraving by his master Hendrick Goltzius (Fig. 5.27). The scene was codified from Italian Renaissance painting to include a dog and particular gestures. One example of this is Jacopo Bassano’s *Supper at Emmaus* (c.1538) in which after the Resurrection, Christ reveals himself to two of his disciples while breaking bread at an inn (Kimbell Art Museum). Other examples such as William Swanenburgh’s print of *The Supper at Emmaus* after Peter Paul Reubens (1611) circulated, providing other artists with inspiration for representing the scene (Smart Museum of Art, The University of Chicago).

Depicting another scene from scriptural history, Duyckinck’s *Christ on the Road to Emmaus*, illustrating Luke 24:13-17 (Fig. 5.28), was adapted from conventional representations published in the 1625 Merian bible, utilized throughout the seventeenth century and appearing in the 1702 Keur Bible that was documented in many homes in Dutch New York. Other artists treated the same topic, with another three paintings surviving. One in particular utilizes the same kind of tulip poplar panel and range of colours as Duyckink’s but the flatter shapes and unresolved issues with perspective suggest that it may have been painted by another emerging artist in the Duyckink circle. While this example could have been copied from Duyckinck’s, two others from

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785 Ruby, “Dutch Art and the Hudson Valley Patroon Painters,” 52.
the Albany or Schenectady area were most likely adapted from engravings (Fig. 5.29). Both demonstrate a lack of depth typical of copies of two-dimensional prints and highly stylized halos differentiating Christ from his companions. In the background the classical architecture is replaced with simplified flat, almost abstracted architecture similar in style to that of the upper Hudson Valley.

Along with prints bible tiles that drew on the same pictorial conventions could be other sources for inspiration for artists working with the images at hand. A mid-eighteenth-century cobalt tile depicting Jesus on the road to Emmaus was originally installed in the Philip van Rensselaer Mansion in Albany (Fig. 5.30). As another potential source for colonial artists, attempts to copy this version of the scene would further explain the awkwardness and lack of three-dimensionality in the scripture paintings.

Although the Dutch already had a strong belief in a personal religious relationship, the Great Awakening that swept the American colonies in the 1730s and 1740s invigorated spiritual conviction and redemption by encouraging introspection and a commitment to a new standard of personal morality. This was the first of several periods of revival in American history characterized by a resurgence of evangelical ministering paired with an increase in church membership and the formation of new religious movements and denominations. Viewed in conjunction with these events,

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788 The First Great Awakening received the name from Joseph Tracy in his influential 1842 book of the same name. Tracy viewed the phenomenon as a precursor to the American Revolution. Joseph Tracy, *The Great Awakening: A History of the Revival of Religion in the Time of Edwards and Whitefield* (New York:
scripture paintings would have been understood at the time as parables relating to social
life and political events. Despite the awkward rendering of figures and issues dealing
with the representation of space, early colonial painters excelled at combining easily
recognizable religious themes with contemporary issues.

Of the many Old and New Testament narratives available, extant scripture
paintings reveal an overwhelming preference for Biblical scenes dealing with travel
pilgrimages or the experience of being lost in the wilderness. Reoccurring themes include
Christ on the Road to Emmaus, the Adoration of the Magi, Philip Baptizing the Ethiopian
Eunuch, and Christ and the Woman of Samaria. These of course were popular subjects in
the Dutch Republic, but based on their high ratio among extant colonial paintings from
the period it appears that they were exceedingly popular in the colonies. It has already
been widely suggested that the some Dutch associated themselves with the Biblical
Israelites, finding in the Old Testament’s recounting of the people of Israel’s struggle
parallels with their own fight against contemporary Spanish tyranny. In his 1612 play *Het
Pascha* Joost van den Vondel made a comparison between the Dutch Revolt and the
Israelites’ escape from Egyptian oppression with the Crossing of the Red Sea.789 Scholars
have described this notion of a “Netherlands Israel” as expressed visually.790 But these

Charles Tappan, 1842); for more on the Great Awakening see Thomas S. Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The
789 Peter van der Coelen, “Netherlandish Printmakers and The Old Testament,” *Patriarchs, angels &
prophets: the Old Testament in Netherlandish printmaking from Lucan van Leyden to Rembrandt*, ed. Peter
790 See Christian Tümpel ed., *Het Oude Testament in de schilderkunst van de Gouden Eeuw* (Amsterdam:
Joods Historisch Museum, 1991); Shelley Perlove, “An Irenic Vision of Utopia: Rembrandt’s *Triumph of
Mordecai* and the New Jerusalem,” *Zeitschrift für Kunstgeschichte* 56 (1993): 38-60; Michael Zell,
themes would have been even more pronounced, even more relevant to a group of people who literally were wandering in what they considered a wilderness, on the frontier of European civilization.

Now held in the Albany Institute of History and Art, The Flight into Egypt is attributed to Nehemiah Partridge (Fig. 5.31). The holy family is shown in the foreground but in the background is a distinctly American landscape punctuated with a seventeenth-century Hudson Valley brick house. Despite these local indications, this work is heavily grounded in European visual tradition. The painting is based on an engraving by Jan Baptist Barbe (1579-1649), and printed by Adrian Collaert (1560-1618), after a picture by Martin de Vos (1532-1603) (Fig. 5.32). Based on the repetition of certain diasporic themes, such as this, it is possible second and third generation Dutch colonists found parallels between their experiences and those of the Biblical Israelites, who while wandering in exile strove to preserve their religious beliefs. If their ancestors in patria identified with Old Testament figures, Blackburn and Piwonka insist that the Dutch in New York would have even more closely identified as “a remnant in the wilderness, in danger of losing their culture and their identity as a people” in the face of assimilation into the English population. 791

Conclusion


791 Blackburn and Piwonka, Remnant in the Wilderness, 11.
In the previous chapter I demonstrated how global material culture came to shape domestic settings in the Dutch establishment of New Netherland. With a similar focus on vernacular objects, this chapter demonstrates the ways in which moral prescriptions and religious beliefs were manifested in the daily lives of colonists. While much has been written on the official expressions of beliefs in ecclesiastical histories and even legal accounts, far less scholarly attention has been paid to how things conveyed moral messages while also serving utilitarian purposes. My contribution to the literature on religion in New Netherland and Dutch New York is in the identification of “prescriptive objects.” By referencing already ingrained motifs and symbolic imagery, well understood by a visually literate public, these utilitarian and vernacular goods came to have distinct moralizing tones and didactic functions through their direct or indirect association with Dutch prescriptive literature.

In a similar manner religious imagery assumed a prominent role in domestic settings. While such iconography was restricted from early churches, scenes from the Bible were popular decorations in the homes of Dutch colonists. Overtly didactic scripture paintings provided constant reminders of the morals brought over from patria. Not surprisingly, New Yorkers of Dutch decent, appeared to have preferred the depictions of themes they may have viewed as paralleling their own struggles in frontier communities. The predominance of travel and wilderness imagery suggests that such exemplary imagery was utilized in the moral education and shaping of social habits in the face of eighteenth-century cultural assimilation.
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Figure 5.27 Jacob Matham, *Christ at Emmaus*, 1604-1608, Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.

Figure 5.28 Attributed to Gerardus Duyckinck, *Christ on the Road to Emmaus*, c.1725-30, National Gallery of Art, Washington, DC.
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Figure 5.30 Unknown maker, tile depicting Christ on the Road to Emmaus, Philip van Rensselaer Mansion in Albany, History Cherry Hill, Albany.
Figure 5.31 Nehemiah Partridge, *The Flight into Egypt*, 1683-c. 1737, Albany Institute of History and Art.

Figure 5.32 Joan Baptiste Barbe and printed by Adrian Collaert after a picture by Martin de Vos, *The Flight into Egypt*, early 17th Century.
Chapter 6

“To ponder upon the days of old”: Collecting and Recollecting Dutch New York

As a woman, I have inclined to the social side of life, and have endeavored to record the changes which time has made among the people in their homes and at the fireside.

In their 1906 text, The Quest of the Colonial, avid collectors Robert and Elizabeth Shackleton described the “Dutch influence” on early American colonial material culture as encompassing:

Not only Dutch ideas and peculiarities, as the Dutch paneled armoires and heavy cupboards, and the blue tiles, with Scripture subjects, around fireplaces, and similar things to go with the old Dutch ‘stoops.’ But the influence of the Orient; for the Dutch, great traders that they were, brought home with them from the East, along with the spices and silks for which they more specifically sailed, specimens of ebony furniture, of teakwood, of sandalwood, of wicker, and the grotesque designs of the Chinese.

Authors of several other books on antiques, relics and curios, including Adventures in Home-Making (1910), The Charm of the Antique (1914), and The Book of Antiques (1943), the Shackletons provided detailed guides for their fellow wealthy North Americans to find “Old-Time Houses” and renovate and furnish their homes in the

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increasingly popular Colonial style. Along with many others, the two were active proponents of a nostalgic movement glorifying the early and violent years of the colonization of North America.

As part of my exploration of the materiality and making of New Netherland and New York, this final chapter moves forward from the early modern period to examine the ways the Dutch presence in North America was re-imagined and re-configured in the following centuries. In this chapter I provide a critical and contextual historiography of how the Dutch concepts of homeliness and worldliness were taken up by later generations of Americans eager to celebrate their forefathers and foremothers. By performing a close reading of how Dutch material culture was created and curated in literature and museum exhibition practice, I summarize and further theorize the making of New Netherland and Dutch New York through the processes of collecting and recollecting.

Annette Stott’s exploration of the cultural relationship between the Netherlands and the United States in the decades surrounding the turn of the twentieth century recognizes the increased collecting of Dutch painting, the re-visioning of American history to include Dutch political and cultural roots, and complex appropriation of Dutch signs and symbols as a Holland Mania that swept through the United States. The Netherlands’ political and economic position during the country’s “Golden Age”

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provided a model for the emerging nation at a time when Americans were searching for an alternative to Anglo interpretations of American history. Proponents of this Holland Mania believed Dutch culture to embody “a rich tradition of art; quality workmanship; ideal folk life; middle-class patronage of the arts; an emphasis on the home as a simple, comfortable, clean, yet picturesque refuge; and a stable lifestyle achieved through the use of uncomplicated technology.” However, while unique, Dutch culture was not viewed as so ethnically distinct as to challenge the established white hegemony dominating American projections of national identity. In fact, sharing a similar physical landscape, social customs, Protestant religion, democratic republicanism, and interest in personal freedoms facilitated the appropriation of stereotyped images of the Dutch in American founding mythologies. From the 1880s and well into the 1930s, the Netherlands became a popular resource in an American search for a national past and also for a contemporary cultural identity.

With the same communal impulse to form one of Anderson’s “imagined communities,” the North American Colonial Revival movement was what Richard Guy Wilson has identified as “an attitude or a mental process of remembering and maintaining

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the past that generations of Americans have quite consciously created." Describing the aesthetic, historical and social implications of the movement, Kenneth L. Ames explained that its presence in the urban planning, restoration and reconstruction of gardens and architecture, the decorative arts, painting and popular literature reveals it was not a surface phenomenon, but rather a far-reaching and intricate “network of communications and linkages” between people and things. 

By the 1880s, the Colonial Revival’s initial focus on English settlements spurred many of the elite families of New York City and throughout the state to rally in defense of the contributions made by their Dutch ancestors. This chapter explores how a renewed interest in a Dutch-American past was presented and re-presented in the closely connected activities of exhibiting and writing about material culture. How were the things of New Netherland collected and memories of the Dutch colonial era recollected during later historical moments? In the first chapter of this dissertation I demonstrated how ideas of New Netherland were collaged from a variety of different sources with varying degrees of accuracy from across the Atlantic Ocean during the seventeenth century. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries for those collecting objects and projecting a nostalgic view of the Dutch colonial presence in North America, “the past [was] very much a foreign country” similarly ripe for exoticizing and re-constructing.

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May King Van Rensselaer, *The Goede Vrouw of Mana-ha-ta*

At the 2 January 1917 annual meeting of the New-York Historical Society, May King Van Rensselaer (1848-1925) read aloud a carefully prepared speech. Addressing the organization’s staid (and at that point startled) representatives she proclaimed:

I have been attending the meetings of the New-York Historical Society for nearly three years, and have not heard one new or advanced scientific thought, although many distinguished scholars have visited the city. Having been a life member of the society, I can no longer be silent on the conditions, which exist in an organization of which I should be proud but of which I am ashamed. I hear on all sides that the society is dead or moribund. Instead of being in the front rank of similar organizations in the United States, it is in the rear. Some members may be satisfied with present conditions; I am not. Many have told me they have resigned because of them. Only a few attend meetings because they are uninteresting and dull. And instead of an imposing edifice filled with treasures from old New York, what do we find? Only a deformed monstrosity filled with curiosities, ill arranged and badly assorted. And we ought to have another committee to rearrange the collections and enlarge them properly.  

The *New York Times* reported the next day that Van Rensselaer, “member of one of the oldest Knickerbocker families,” who with her “snow-white hair … looks like a Duchess of the Victorian period,” had “exploded a verbal bomb” on the “dignified company” of the twenty members and five guests present. Despite (or perhaps because of) their shock the motion was seconded by a man seated near Mrs. Van Rensselaer, “just to enable the matter to be discussed,” and finally “carried in a rush.”

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802 In contrast to this colourful account, the New-York Historical Society’s minutes blandly read as follows: “Mrs. Rensselaer with remarks submitted the following resolutions: ‘Whereas, It is desirable to appoint committees for entertainment, Be it Resolved, that there members be appointed by the President on each committee with power to act.’”  

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However shocked the *New York Times* reporter may have been by Van Rensselaer’s behavior, in *Knickerbocker Birthday: A Sesqui-Centennial History of the New-York Historical Society 1804-1954* Robert W.G. Vail, a later director of the Society, was well aware of her outbursts, calling her “the tempest in a teapot” and dubbed her attacks on the administration of the organization over several years prior to his tenure as “Mrs. Van Rensselaer’s War.”\(^803\) In 1898 she had become a lifetime member of the Society and at that point became personally invested in the organization. She was even rumoured to have patrolled the premises “notebook in hand, *looking* for causes of dissatisfaction.”\(^804\) From 1915 to 1920 she undertook a letter writing campaign, barraging then president John Abeel Weekes (1856-1939) with critical feedback on the running of the institution, threatening that if changes were not made she and her wealthy, well-connected friends would divert their patronage elsewhere. From these letters it is clear her main concern was primarily the lack of a systematic acquisition strategy and also a grave concern for the care of the objects already in the Society’s holdings. Van Rensselaer thought these issues could be solved in part by establishing what she considered to be a democratic system of volunteer committees that could take on the responsibilities of managing and growing the group’s permanent collection.\(^805\)

Founded in 1804, with a mission to “discover, procure, and preserve whatever may relate to the natural, civil, literary, and ecclesiastical history of the United States in

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\(^{804}\) Vail, *Knickerbocker Birthday*, 206.

\(^{805}\) Letter of Mrs. Van Rensselaer to President Weekes (16 January 1915; 26 December 1916; 3 October 1917; 14 November 1917; 29 October 1917) New-York Historical Society Collections.
general, and this State in particular,“806 the Society was plagued by financial and organizational issues throughout its history. During the nineteenth century its collections moved frequently, first to the Government House on Bowling Green in 1809 and then to the New York Institution, formerly the city almshouse, by City Hall Park. In 1857, the first building constructed specifically to house the collection was erected at the corner of Second Avenue and Eleventh Street, where the Society would remain for the next fifty years until moving to its current location, Central Park West at West Seventy-Seventh Street. The architects York and Sawyer, well known for their neo-classical designs for banks, created a similar imposing structure to house the Society. Printed in 1813, the Society’s first catalogue lists the museum’s holdings to include over four thousand books, along with documents, almanacs, newspapers, maps, views and portraits. Many of these items had ties to the city’s early Dutch past and over the course of the nineteenth century the Society’s collection of visual and material culture would rapidly expand.807 Despite growing holdings, even by early twentieth-century standards the Society was considered to be an out-dated hodgepodge of relics. One observer characterized the Society’s matronly presence in the city: “Like an ancient spinster, who puts on her paint and her ornaments when she intends to ask a favour, the old Historical Society has sent up to its garrets and down to its cellars and bedecked itself with rare paintings...”808

808 Town Topics (6 November, 1913): np.
In light of such a tarnished public image, changes were already in the works when Van Rensselaer (loudly) voiced her concerns. Shortly thereafter, the Society appointed a special committee of internal and external reviewers to examine its administration. The Third Vice President, the Treasurer and a member of the Executive Board were joined by Worthington C. Ford (1858-1941) of the Massachusetts Historical Society, John W. Jordan of the Pennsylvania Historical Society (1840-1921) and Clarence S. Brigham (1877-1963) of the American Antiquarian Society, who reported the Society’s faults were “sins of omission rather than commission…imperfections due chiefly to lack of means.” Subsequent fundraising allowed for specialists to reorganize the collections (including an Egyptologist to consult on the arrangement of the Egyptian collection), the paintings to be cleaned and properly labeled, newspapers bound, and books and manuscripts catalogued. In addition, it seems that Van Rensselaer’s criticism elicited a further response. Angered by her reproach, loyal members rallied to solicit substantial new donations, at least fifty new members joined, and the organization was restructured with the organizational by-laws revised.

Regardless of the outcome for the New-York Historical Society, Van Rensselaer followed through on her threats and withdrew her support, taking other influential members of New York’s high society with her. As early as 31 October 1920 the New York Times reported that Van Rensselaer had held a meeting announcing her plans to

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810 Vail argues that many of these by-law changes were enacted to prevent dissidents like Van Rensselaer from hijacking future meetings, “and so Mrs. Van Rensselaer was defeated in her attempt to take over the running of the Society.” See Vail, Knickerbocker Birthday, 210-213.
initiate a movement to open “a historical museum, under the patronage of twenty society women, representatives of the oldest families in New York.”811 Several months later she announced their intentions: “We want a house of the year 1800, of which there are still half a dozen in the city. There we will install figures of men and women – call them wax figures, if you like – dressed in the costumes of their times, and surrounded by the furniture they knew.”812 Essentially what Van Rensselaer wanted to implement was a novel exhibition strategy. Foreshadowing later “living museums” she expressed a desire for a collection to come to life, for the things of their ancestors to be animated by displays showing how they would have been used and enjoyed. Under the auspices of the “Society of Patriotic New Yorkers,” a small collection of furniture and prints were shown inside her great-grandfather Archibald Gracie’s (1755-1829) mansion on the East River in 1923, under the curatorship of Henry Collins Brown (1862-1961).

After these initial loan exhibitions, Van Rensselaer’s Society was relatively inactive, but after some time Gracie Mansion was renovated and reinvented as the Museum of the City of New York, directed by Brown. In 1925 Van Rensselaer passed away, but her vision to launch “an educational campaign to teach the inhabitants of the city and the state just what New York really is”813 was achieved with the first museum devoted “to the presentation of the civic and commercial life of the city and the private

life of the inhabitants.”  

Over the next few years the Museum “represented a distinctive addition to New York’s growing roster of history institutions,” for as Max Page notes it was the first American museum to focus solely on the material transformation of a city. By using relatively new techniques for museums - period rooms, dioramas, and models - it attempted to “create, out of a landscape subject to ‘constant restless reconstruction,’ a usable past.” On 4 January 1932, now rapidly outgrowing Gracie Mansion, the museum reopened in a “commodious building” on Fifth Avenue between 103rd and 104th Streets. Along with old maps, prints, and “delightful models representing characteristic scenes [and] historical incidents” the museum also included regional products such as “the early New York silver [that] bears witness to the skill of the native craftsmen; costumes, pottery, pewter, and other handicrafts also help to visualize aspects of New York life and customs.”

Van Rensselaer’s outspoken objection to the Society’s collecting practices and her role in establishing new exhibition practices at the Museum make her an important yet understudied forerunner of today’s institutional critique. Her characterization of the institution’s dated approach to artifacts and even more problematic elitist exclusion of popular histories of the city echo much later objections to museums as places where things go to die. Theodor W. Adorno has commented on the “unpleasant overtones” of

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814 John Shapley, “The New Museum of the City of New York,” *Parnassus* 1, no. 6 (October 1929): 32-34, 43.
815 Max Page, “‘A Vanished City is Restored’: Inventing and Displaying the Past at the Museum of the City of New York,” *Winterthur Portfolio* 34 no. 1 (Spring 1999): 50.
the German word *museal* (museumlike), for it “describes objects to which the observer no
longer has a vital relationship and which are in the process of dying. They owe their
preservation more to historical respect than to the needs of the present … the result is
even more distressing than when the works are wrenched from their original surroundings
and then brought together.”

At the time it seemed that Van Rensselaer had similar
corns for the Society’s *museal* collections. In the days that followed the 1917 annual
general meeting, newspapers reported her performance with inflammatory headlines: the
*Herald* “Oh! Oh! Historical Society decadent she says”; *The Tribune* “Historical body is
called dead”; and the *World* “Mrs. Van Rensselaer shakes up dry bones.”

Contemporary responses to Van Rensselaer’s concerns speak to the gendered
nature of museums and other institutions during first quarter of the twentieth century
when they were either being expanded, as was the case with the New-York Historical
Society and the Metropolitan Museum of Art (especially the 1924 addition of the
American Wing), or founded like the Museum of the City of New York or the other
house museums I will investigate in this chapter. The problem was not necessarily what
Van Rensselaer was saying: the changes made by the Society clearly indicate they were
striving to improve their collections management. The issue was that as a woman,
however active in the upper echelons of society, Van Rensselaer was overstepping her
bounds within the gendered (and raced and classed) roles clearly established at the time.

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Enabled by her family’s wealth and social connections, she occupied a privileged position within the museum world, but one that was nonetheless nuanced by the gendering of American institutions. As much as she was a part of a well-documented social elite, she was also a part of a community of under-represented, volunteer women, whose collaborative, behind-the-scenes efforts have been marginalized in museum history. Their access to these positions was determined by their conformation to prescribed gender roles. Van Rensselaer’s efforts only became problematic when her contributions challenged and ultimately disrupted these roles, with her centre stage, vocal critique of the Society. Moreover, her subsequent endeavours with the Museum of the City of New York have gone unrecognized by the same sexist mid-century accounts (like Veil’s) that marginalized her impact on the Society.

According to Dorothy M. Browne, Van Rensselaer “reflected the ambivalent times in which she was raised, poised between the Victorian Cult of domesticity and the era of the New Woman.” In an attempt to cloak her ambition within a more suitable guise for a woman’s participation in the museum in established political terms, Van Rensselaer explained her ideal position to President Weekes to be like that of ancient times when kings were assisted by queen consorts, and she wished to advise the Society’s president in a similar partnership. But her ambition was still considered to overreach

821 Vail, Knickerbocker Birthday, 206.
her circumscribed position within the unofficial women’s auxiliary. One mocking poem appearing in the newspaper *Town Topics* supports this suggestion:

> Again has that belligerent and much outspoken dame,  
> Sharp Mrs. John Van Rensselaer, achieved a bit of fame.  
> To no man’s views or ways or speech bends she the humble knee,  
> And what she says and what she does the wide, wide world may see.\(^{822}\)

The sexist reaction to her critique of the New-York Historical Society is apparent in the response of the media in general. Another editorial in the *New York Times* praises her accomplishments but derides her means of achieving them. The tone emphasizes that only a woman could create such a scene:

> The Metropolitan public is almost as much grieved as shocked by the charges, which Mrs. John King Van Rensselaer threw like a shower of hand grenades among the faithful score who gathered Tuesday night to go through the formality of its annual meeting. Of course it was a woman who created all the excitement...for it is only women who dare to make ‘scenes’; men have a deadly fear of disclosing private matters and exciting the amused or reprehensive comment of an irreverent populace...Her assault on this venerable institution will have good results – that it will be stirred into life and activity.\(^{823}\)

Born in 1848 to Archibald Gracie King (1821-1897) and Elizabeth Denning King (1821-1900), Maria Denning King Van Rensselaer was indeed a member of the elite New York society tracing their roots back to colonial times. According to the society pages of the *New York Times* she was a “direct descendant of Mrs. William Alexander, born Polly

\(^{822}\) *Town Topics* (11 January 1917): np.  
Spratt, the most prominent female figure in the days of New Amsterdam.” Her father was a descendent of Archibald Gracie, who left Scotland for America in 1784, where he became wealthy through investing in merchant ships. Her mother’s side had equally privileged connections, with her grandfather being William Alexander Duer (1780-1858), president of Columbia College from 1830 to 1842. This position was only furthered when she married John King Van Rensselaer, president of the Stirling Fire Insurance Company in 1871. Van Rensselaer was not only a wealthy businessman, he was a direct descendent of the Van Rensselaers, one of the first and most prominent Dutch families to settle the region. His wife's work establishing the Museum of the City of New York came towards the end of a long life, educating the public and promoting the study of material culture. After her death, the New York Times lauded her position (“related by birth or marriage to most of the old ‘Knickerbocker’ families,”) and knowledge (“the repository of innumerable bits of family tradition throwing light on the social customs of the New Yorkers of the good old days of Dutch and English rule”). Her obituary claimed that her “desire to bring the great facts of American history to the knowledge of present citizens of New York was made manifest” through her petitioning to reform the New-York Historical Society and also through her writing.

Although considered by many of her (male) peers to be a flighty socialite, Van Rensselaer is listed in the Encyclopedia Americana first and foremost as a writer. In 1882

she published *Crochet Lace* (1882). Next, *Devil's Picture Books: A History of Playing Cards* (1887, 1890) outlined in depth the social, political, religious and iconographic origins of cards and card games, meticulously researched with the help of the National Museum in Washington and drawing on the collections of her affluent friends for illustrations. In 1914 Van Rensselaer drew on her research for this book to create a feminist card game called “Women Are Trumps.” Played much like “Go Fish” the game had a deck comprised of four suits: bells symbolizing American women (Martha Washington, Pocahontas-Matauka, Jemima Boone, Sacagawea, Betsy Ross); crowns representing royal women (Hat-Shep-Set of Egypt, Queen Esther, Margaret of Scotland, Elizabeth of York, Isabella of Castile, Elizabeth of England, Marie Therese of Austria-Hungary, Elena of Italy, and Sadako of Japan); serpents, “emblems of immortality” indicating noteworthy women (Hypatia, Jeanne d’Arc, Vittoria Colonna, George Eliot, Rosa Bonnerur, Florence Nightingale, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Marie Curie and Ida Lewis); and Maltese crosses distinguishing martyr women (Mary Queen of Scots, Lady Jane Grey, Marie Antoinette and “the carriers of Germany, fisherwomen of France, field hands of Russia, burden bearers of Italy, golden lilies, or crushed-footed women of China, traffic of Japan, muzzled women of England, [and] taxed women of America”).

Although her contributions were not recognized Van Rensselaer was also involved in editing *A Girl's Life Eighty Years Ago: Selections From the Letters of Eliza*

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827 “New Feminist Card Game: Suffragettes Use Pasteboards That Show Work Accomplished by Women in All Ages,” *The Washington Post* (5 April 1914): 4. The game also encouraged politeness. If a player forgot to say “please” or “thank you” during their turn they forfeited their next play.
Southgate Bowne, a compilation of a young woman’s correspondence describing her youth in the late eighteenth century, marriage and childbirth in the early nineteenth century before her death in 1808, following the birth of her second child. Published in 1888, the introduction to the book written by Clarence Cook (1828-1900) is a nostalgic recollection of a bygone era prior to “the material convenience of the great public life” in which the letters of a young girl serve as “illustrations of the domestic life of our country at a most interesting time.”

Decades later, Van Rensselaer’s work would be critiqued retrospectively, claiming that she was preoccupied with frivolous activities and merely “found time to write brief studies on crochet lace and playing cards and a superficial book on old New York.” It appears as if her earlier research was overshadowed by her last accounts of contemporary society and socialites, Newport: Our Social Capital (1905) and finally The Social Ladder (1924). Despite one commentator’s opinion of it being a “too-accurate gossipy book,” in fact, The Social Ladder was a critical commentary, espousing Van Rensselaer’s views on the role of the cultural elite in her community. She writes:

> The story of the development of a social organization is something more than the tale of changing fashions and the ruses of the ambitions to gain admission within a sacred circle. Society epitomizes those traits of a people and a history of Society is, to some extent at least, a history of national thought and custom.”

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In her museum work and her writing, Van Rensselaer believed women to be the unheralded and important “keepers of culture.”\textsuperscript{831} While Dorothy Browne’s recent doctoral research has recognized Van Rensselaer’s participation in the founding of New York City’s cultural institutions in the early twentieth century, she does not locate Van Rensselaer among an active group of Colonial Revivalists interested in recouping the efforts of Dutch women in the founding of New Netherland.

Among the broad topics she discussed, Van Rensselaer’s favourite subject was New York’s Dutch past. Best known for writing about her in-law’s family in books such as \textit{Van Rensselaers of the Manor} (1889) and \textit{New Yorkers of the 19th Century} (1897, 1899) she boasted “The Van Rensselaers of Van Rensselaerswych, have for over two hundred years held an important position in the history of America.”\textsuperscript{832} Writing nearly a century after, her perspective kept alive the “inherited prejudice against Washington Irving, whose ‘Knickerbocker History’ was resented by old New Yorkers in whom pride of race was greater than sense of humour…”\textsuperscript{833} Early in the twentieth century, her work on the lives of the Dutch in America was lauded as demonstrating her “long research, laborious inquiries and the gathering of trustworthy material.”\textsuperscript{834} Only later was her work degraded in comparison to more serious historical writing such as the publications of the much-celebrated Isaac Newton Phelps Stokes with his encyclopedic approach to cataloguing iconography and also of Mariana Griswold (Mrs. Schuyler Van Rensselaer

\textsuperscript{831} Browne, “New York City Museums and Cultural Leadership, 1917-1940,” 47.
\textsuperscript{832} May King Van Rensselaer, \textit{New Yorkers of the 19th Century} (New York: 1897), 1.
1851-1934), author of the *History of the City of New York in the Seventeenth Century* (1909). Griswold’s account of New Netherland was thought to be more in keeping with “serious” histories published at the time. She organized the history of the colony according to the contributions of “great” men and major political events: the chapters were divided according to “explorers and fur-traders,” and the governors Minuit, Van Twiller, Kieft, Stuyvesant. When Griswold was granted an honorary degree of Doctor of Letters from Columbia University in 1910, President Nicholas Murray Butler (1862-1947) commended her writing for combining “a woman’s skill and a man’s strength to the story of the early history” of the city.

In contrast to Griswold’s political history, Van Rensselaer’s narratives were more informed by popular and oral histories. The *Goede Vrouw of Mana-ha-ta at Home and in Society*, an account of the contributions of Dutch women to daily life in New Netherland, was published in 1889. Underscoring the popularity at the time of relics from the state’s colonial history and her audience’s familiarity with the material culture of “old New York,” the book’s cover was designed to look like worn leather and bound with steel clasps, in imitation of Anna Lockerman’s Bible. Introducing her approach, Van Rensselaer confided to her reader, “I am emboldened to lay before the public the results of my researches into the lives of the women who, by their industry, their courage, and their piety helped to create a colony in the New World.” Consulting various sources, from

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public to private family papers, and even books “long out of print” and “on the back shelves of some old-fashioned library,” Van Rensselaer apologized for the result: “All of these I have woven into a web. If the pattern is not clear, or the colors are not properly assorted, it must be excused, as being the work of a woman, done in a womanly way, from a woman’s point of view.” Despite this initial deference, she continues on to offer a critique of current scholarship, noting poignantly:

History is generally written by men, who dwell on politics, wars, and the exploits of their sex. Household affairs, women’s influence, social customs and manners, are seldom chronicled, and are only to be discovered underlying what are deemed the important events of life, more by inference than from anything that is actually written about them.

Van Rensselaer continues on to clarify her aims: “The life of the ‘Goede Vrouw of Manahata’ was written between the lines of contemporaneous history; I have merely taken the liberty of placing her in the foreground, with the men of the day in shadow as her background, thereby throwing her into strong relief, instead of (as is usually done) reversing the process.” Although she pre-dates the feminist movement, many modern scholars ranging from the radical feminist philosopher Mary Daly to Beverly Gordon and Laurel Thatcher Ulrich would later echo Van Rensselaer’s rhetoric. Noteworthy is her distinction between the “foreground” of traditional histories that privilege publics, politics and events associated with patriarchal ideologies of dominance and control and

\[\text{References:}\]


the “background” of the private, domestic and ordinary. Despite (or because of) this, at the time of her death in 1925, Van Rensselaer’s books were considered to “stimulate popular interest in the city’s history without having any great significance for professional historians.”

Van Rensselaer’s writing was successful in contributing to an idealized vision of women’s roles in New Netherland. She claimed that the wealth and prosperity of the colony was a result of the “heroism and thrift of the Dutch women who ventured to America.” According to Van Rensselaer, “Even in mercantile pursuits the women had a voice, and their opinions were sought and valued.” In her attempt to recuperate the past from a female perspective, Van Rensselaer noted the challenges to writing a “conglomerate history of the lives of the dames of Mana-ha-ta,” due to the “scanty data that have been preserved concerning them.” The “Preface” outlined her methodology: she consulted conventional sources (Puritans in England, Holland, and America, Letters on Smith’s History of New York, Old New York, Old New York and Trinity Church, New York Genealogical Record etc.) but also mined her own family’s heritage and “laboriously studied,” the “volumes of letters and trucks full of bundles of old papers [that] have been preserved in many families.” In these letters she found those by women were “filled with interesting details, and were far more valuable to the historian than those of the men of the day, which were on dry business affairs that might have been of

841 Van Rensselaer, The Goede Vrouw, 10.
842 Van Rensselaer, The Goede Vrouw, 12.
importance at the time, but are of no value now.” In these underutilized reservoirs of vernacular knowledge she found much to encourage modern women to emulate their colonial ancestors and to spark the interest of her peers. In *The Goede Vrouw of Mana-ha-ta* she included “provoking references to family affairs that excite the curiosity without gratifying it, although here must have been as much to say of the women of the past as there is of the women of the present or of the future.”

Van Rensselaer’s writing and her involvement, albeit much marginalized, in the establishment of museological institutions, is telling of women’s roles in the Colonial Revival. Both *The Goede Vrouw of Mana-ha-ta* and *The Social Ladder* are coloured by Van Rensselaer’s ambitions to promote the patriotic contributions of colonial woman. She stressed that Dutch women were relatively well educated, and “knowledgeable about commerce and politics as well as household manufactures and social graces,” and insisted “No one in Nieuw Amsterdam dreamed of insisting that a woman’s place was in the home, yet never were homes cared for more scrupulously and systematically.”

Along with other Colonial Revival idealizations, the “omnipresent *huis vrouw* at her spinning wheel” was part of the construction of a homogenized, palatable American historic identity. Her views of the unity of “national thought and custom” were being threatened on the one hand by the influx of immigrants, particular those not of Northern

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European descent, and the ostentatious display of the new money made through post-
Civil War manufacturing and industrialization.\textsuperscript{848} Along with others of her time, Van
Rensselaer was a dynamic proponent of the Colonial Revival who focused on the Dutch
participation in the cultural, religious and political foundations of the United States of
America.

**Writing New Netherland: Colonial Revival Literature**

May King Van Rensselaer was just one of the prolific female authors championing the
role of the *goede vrouw* in New Netherland to a twentieth-century audience. Of the many
writers participating in the Colonial Revival, this section investigates three in particular.
Like May King Van Rensselaer, Gertrude Lefferts Vanderbilt (1824-1902), Alice Morse
Earle (1851-1911) and Esther Singleton (1865-1930) all contributed to an imaginative
recollecting of the relationship between women and their things in colonial times. In an
article in *de Halve Maen*, entitled “Albany’s Lady Historians,” Alice P. Kenney
commented on the success of these women in writing the material history of early Dutch
settlers. She noted that while historically the contribution of Dutch women to their
families and communities hardly needed to “become ‘liberated’,” the contributions of
women “to the writing of the history of the Dutch in America has been less widely
recognized.”\textsuperscript{849} Moreover, Kenny distinguishes these contributions from traditional
masculine histories focusing on military struggles and political events. For her the writing

\textsuperscript{848} Browne, “New York City Museums and Cultural Leadership, 1917-1940,” 49.
\textsuperscript{849} Kenney, “Albany’s Lady Historians,” 1.
of women like Van Rensselaer, Vanderbilt, and others was a decidedly social history. She explains:

The history of any local community is the study of ordinary people to whom great men and world-shaking events are occasional interruptions in the continuing fabric of everyday experience. In order to understand why people of one community responded to those events differently from those of another, it is necessary to understand the unique qualities of their local way of life. Perhaps it is because women in their daily tasks do so much to create that way of life that these lady historians have interpreted it so effectively.  

One such “lady historian” interpreting local history was Gertrude Lefferts Vanderbilt. Like the Van Rensselaers, the Vanderbilts were among the first and most prominent Dutch families in the region. The Lefferts were descended from Leffert Pieterse, the son of Pieter Janse Hagewout, who had originally purchased a farm in the town of Midwout, on Long Island. Gertrude’s husband Judge John Vanderbilt’s family had an equally established legacy in the area, tracing his roots back to Jeramias Vanderbilt (b. 1695) and others settling in the area by then known as Flatbush.

Along with her extensive humanitarian projects, during the last decades of the nineteenth century, she contributed regularly to popular periodicals of the time like Harper’s Bazaar, The Independent, The [Christian] Intelligencer, Home Mission Monthly and the magazine of the annual Industrial Home fair. Documenting her own community and family history for A Social History of Flatbush, Manners and Customs of the Dutch Settlers in Kings County, she consulted inventories, account books, newspaper

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advertisements, and architectural reports on interiors and exteriors, as well as contributed her own recollections and the stories told by her parents’ and grandparents’ generations. Vanderbilt’s text originally appeared in 1881, but with the renewed interest in the Dutch colonial project created by the Hudson-Fulton tri-centennial celebrations, the book was republished in 1909 to quite a bit of interest. One anonymous reviewer of the second edition noted the similar content to a history of Flatbush by Rev. T.M. Strong published in the 1850s but calls attention to Vanderbilt’s differing standpoint for “As a woman, she naturally inclined to the social side of life, and she pictured the early days from that point of view and adds details of the changes that time made among the people in their homes.”

Vanderbilt’s contribution to contemporary understandings of Dutch New York was not only literary but also material. Central to A Social History of Flatbush were descriptions of the house she grew up in, built in 1783 by Pieter Lefferts, a fourth generation descendant of early New Netherland immigrants. Lefferts was best known for serving as a lieutenant in the Continental Army during the Revolutionary war and for his participation in the 1788 New York State convention that ratified the Constitution. In 1917, the estate of Vanderbilt’s son, John Lefferts, offered the family home to the City of New York, with the condition that it be preserved from the development that was threatening to demolish it. The following year the house was moved to its current

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852 For more on the Hudson-Fulton tri-centennial see Panetta, “The Hudson-Fulton Celebration of 1909,” 303-338.
location in Brooklyn’s Prospect Park, where in 1920 the Fort Greene chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution (a group Lefferts had long been involved with) opened it as a house museum. Currently run by the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation, and a member of the Historic House Trust, the Lefferts Historic House contains period rooms furnished to reflect daily life in Brooklyn circa 1820.

Like others in her social class, Vanderbilt engaged in philanthropy that included lending prized family heirlooms to fund-raising exhibitions that served the dual purpose of exhibiting art and historical objects held in private collections for the moral edification of those lacking such material legacies and gathering money for charitable purposes. Of the hundreds of objects gathered for the “Articles of Ye Olden Times: Loan exhibition for the Benefit of the Home for Consumptives” held at the Midwood Club, from 11 June to 13 June 1896, many had real or imagined Dutch colonial provenance. Vanderbilt’s contribution included ten items: plates, saucers, a brazier, and an antique clawfoot chair, “laws of the State of New York 1691-1751,” a book “with parchment cover published in Amsterdam in 1656,” a “Family bible from 1686 published in Amsterdam,” and the accompanying “Bible stand, upon which said Bible was rested.”

As discussed in previous chapters, these were all items commonly found in early New Netherland homes. The exhibition also displayed objects lent by Alice Morse Earle. She contributed forty items. Many, including the plates, bowls, apothecary jars, vases and punch bowls, were described as being “Old Delft.” The women’s elevation of vernacular material culture

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through the exhibition of “historic relics” demonstrates, in Igor Kopytoff’s formulation, that responses made to the biography of a thing’s life “reveal a tangled mass of aesthetic, historical, and even political judgments and of convictions and values that shape our attitudes to objects.”

At the end of the nineteenth century, Earle produced eighteen books and numerous other articles and pamphlets on what she described as colonial “home life.” Her works on the life, manners, customs and material culture of early American communities coincided with an increased interest in history, genealogy, and antique collecting that formed the Colonial Revival. Earle’s books such as *Two Centuries of Costume in America 1620-1820* (1903), *Customs and Fashions in Old New England* (1893), *Home Life in Colonial Days* (1898), and especially *Colonial Dames and Goodwives* (1895) can be viewed in the same light as Van Rensselaer’s texts for they too focused on the ordinary people and practices of everyday life, rather than the political and military histories that glorified leading individuals. In their emphasis on domestic life they are the precursors of later social histories foreshadowing the emphasis on the lives of her “great-grand mothers’ ” experiences in later women’s histories. In *Alice Morse Earle and the Domestic History of Early America*, Susan Reynolds Williams accounts for the ways in which Earle’s writing “reflected her belief that women had played a key historical role, helping to nurture communities by constructing households that both

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856 She was involved in establishing free kindergartens, and a member of the Daughters of the American Revolution. Politically conservative, she did not support the suffrage movement or any other of the more radical Progressive social reforms.
served and shaped their families. The friendly style in which it is written glossed over the extensive research that went in to writing her books. Furthermore their popularity combined with their subject matter meant that at the time and later, male historians often ignored or denigrated her oeuvre.

Published in 1896, Colonial Days in Old New York was dedicated to The Society of Colonial Dames of the State of New York, of which Earle was “a loyal and loving member.” In it she paints an idyllic vision of Dutch colonial life:

> When the sun was setting and the cows came home, the family gathered on stools and forms around the well-supplied board, and a plentiful supper of suppawn and milk and a sallet (salad) filled the hungry mouths, and was eaten from wooden trenchers and pewter porringers with pewter or silver spoons. The night had come; here were shelter and a warm hearthstone, and though in the new wild world, it was in truth a home.

Drawing heavily on Irving’s descriptions of Dutch material culture, Earle’s Colonial Days in Old New York repeats his stereotypes, portraying women as moral, decorous, but gossipy housekeepers, at a time when “full stomachs, storerooms, and pipes were top priorities.” But Irving was not the only source for Earle, as she also refers to the “colonial neighborliness” described by Anne Grant in her Memoirs of an American Lady from contemporary knowledge of early life in Albany. Earle also researched at the Long Island Historical Society and corresponded with other archives for material, but as was typical of the time, the lack of footnoting makes her research impossible to trace.

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858 Susan Reynolds Williams, Alice Morse Earle and the Domestic History of Early America (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2013).
861 Grant, Memoirs of an American Lady, 10.
Historians are cautious of Earle’s reliance on unreliable secondary sources, for as Laura M. Chielewski suggests, “given the importance of Earle’s work to the creation of new house museums in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, its propensity to pass on old chestnuts in new shells was highly problematic.” Like Van Rensselaer and Vanderbilt, Earle was a prolific writer whose work included what Ruth Piwonka considers an emphasis on the ubiquitous “huis vrouw at her spinning wheel and yeoman at his harvest and heath” and does not give an accurate depiction of the diversity of Dutch-American life.

Another writer contributing to a quaint view of early colonial life was Esther Singleton (1865–1930), a prolific author, editor and translator. Published in 1909, at the height of Holland Mania, *Dutch New York* sought to provide an antidote to the inescapable characterizations of the Dutch made by Irving, which Singleton herself called the “almost ineradicable impressions left in the mind of the casual reader by the brilliant author of *Knickerbocker’s History of New York*.” Utilizing a wealth of material and textual sources, Singleton constructed a thematically organized narrative examining what she called “the life, hardships, struggles, manners, customs, joys, sorrows, beliefs, superstitions, and worldly possessions of the first white settlers” in an attempt to correct the widespread image of the Dutch propagated by Irving. In a previous text, *Furniture of Our Forefathers* (1900) she had briefly explored the Dutch contribution to

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colonial material culture, asserting “Dutch artifacts were a reflection of wholesome Dutch values well-suited to middle-class Americans.”

Singleton’s other publications addressed a wider, European audience as well, including a British readership of collectors vying with Americans for Dutch antiques. This is evidenced by one review that notes how Singleton’s discussion of many works in the Metropolitan Museum of Art highlights the gaps in the Victoria and Albert Museum’s collection of English furniture. The elaborate furniture, paintings, varied textiles, toys and silver, as elite holdings, may have over-emphasized the comfort and elegance of colonial Dutch life in North America. However, not all readers appreciated her overviews. A 1914 review of *Furniture* described the “handsome book” as “a help to many amateurs who like to dabble in this fascinating subject.” It continued with a critique, “Miss Singleton lays no claim to original research and advances no new or surprising theory. She is content to string together extracts from Jacquemart, Moliner and other writers.”

Literature by Van Rensselaer and others such as Vanderbilt, Earle and Singleton, emphasized with nationalistic overtones the accumulation of old Dutch furniture in personal collections and public exhibitions and the close association of the material culture of the Netherlands and that of colonial New York. Their focus on social customs, domestic routines, popular foodways, clothing and childrearing patterns of Dutch New Yorkers influenced the ways in which material culture was displayed. The

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primary audience for these texts were their own contemporaries, the women who continued to trouble the boundaries of the private and the public, as established in the nineteenth century. They were the women who along with furnishing their own domestic interiors with a taste for the “colonial” were also creating exhibitions of early Dutch-American life in museums.

Exhibiting New Netherland: Dutch New York on Display

However influential it may have been at the time, women’s writing on New Netherland found an even more dynamic expression in exhibitions of material culture. Thomas Schlereth claims, “Unlike books, exhibitions bring like-minded students of the object together physically in one place to compare notes, to gossip, to exchange ideas, and to meet each other.” Although often the catalogue or, in some cases, contemporary accounts are all that remains, for nearly one hundred years, ephemeral exhibitions brought things together to tell new stories and to provoke ideas precisely elucidating Schlereth’s emphasis on the potential for exhibitions to “act as a basic display case of evidence often inaccessible to many students.” He continues to point out the ways exhibitions can potentially also “serve as the analytical vehicle whereby material remains are arranged in a new relationship so as to prompt a new interpretation about the past.”

Beginning in the mid-nineteenth century especially in New York State, exhibitions glorifying a Dutch heritage became very popular. Displaying a wide range of visual and material culture,

these events constituted a “partly residual, partly reinvented set of symbols, practices and rhetorical forms of Dutchness…”

At Sanitary Fairs of the Civil War era material culture was often presented as part of displays of early American “relics” and “colonial kitchens.” Such exhibitions were designed as fundraisers for the U.S. Sanitary Commission but through their curatorial programing, they had a secondary function in providing a socially acceptable way for women to participate in the war effort and a tertiary function in illustrating idealized historical roles. In 1864, one of the exhibits at New York’s Metropolitan Sanitary Fair, the “Knickerbocker Kitchen,” featured elements considered to be Dutch: cosy folk furnishings and quaint architectural elements like open jamb-less fireplaces decorated with Delft tiles. (Fig. 6.1) With “certain ladies whose ancestors figured in the chronicles of the Niew Nederlandts” the kitchen was a living display of colonial lineage. Among the many attractions of the Metropolitan Fair according to the New York Times review the Knickerbocker Kitchen was:

…successful in its results, and so honorable to the ladies who devoted themselves through long weeks of toil and anxiety to its work, this department deserves to be especially mentioned. Besides contributing largely to the receipts of the general treasury, it had a moral influence in reminding us in the midst of the startling extravagance of the day, of the frugal habits of the early fathers of this City. It was at once gratifying and surprising to see how old and young, from day to day, repeated their visits to

871 Patricia West, Domesticating History: The Political Origins of America’s House Museums (Washington: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1999), 40.
873 West, Domesticating History, 41.
the apartments to partake of the primitive fare administered by the ladies in attendance, and to view the simple, household articles used from which have sprung the more costly, and familiar decorations of our modern parlors and dining-rooms. Thus while the great object of Christian charity was promoted, it bound in stronger ties of kindred and patriotism, the descendants of the early fathers of the City, and taught them a lesson in this season of sacrifice to the country which, it may be hoped, will not pass unheeded…kindly furnished by their descendants to adorn the apartment; to preside over the festival, and remind us in the words of the motto, adopted by the ladies of the committee, from the Dutch version of the Bible: ‘Gedenkt-aen-de-dagen-van-ouds’ To ponder upon the days of old.874

Throughout the nineteenth century, displays of material culture continued to be an appropriate, public way for men and women “to ponder upon the days of old.” The 1876 centenary of American independence inspired a newfound interest in colonial studies. Philadelphia’s Centennial Exhibition included kitchens, crafts and other demonstrations that renewed interest in early American material culture.875 By the 1893 Chicago World’s Columbian Exposition, colonial revival proponents had available to them a stylistic vocabulary and historical research not yet codified 1876.876 The Netherlands asserted their contribution to colonial exploration by supplying a large-scale model of Henry Hudson’s Half Moon and on 3 September, Hudson’s arrival in New York Bay was celebrated. Despite deviating from the colonial architectural program followed by the other states with an ostentatious Florentine palace, New York’s pavilion included a “relic

875 Stott, Holland Mania, 161.
room” displaying objects of “home life of the past.” It had very few pieces of colonial furniture, but it did have items thought to be representative of the colony’s early Dutch period: a cannon from the Van Rensselaer family, a life-sized portrait of Deborah Glen, the original 1656 deed to the Bayard property in New Amsterdam, and assorted spinning wheels, silver tankards and candlesticks. Like previous celebrations, the World’s Columbian Exposition was an ephemeral event, with its exhibits dispersed and objects returned to their owners at the end. “Foreshadowing major trends and manifestations of the colonial revival movement,” however, it had a lasting impact, as Susan Prendergast Schoelwer explains, on interior design including architectural and decorative styles, reproduction and revival-style furniture, the design of costumes, pageants, and celebrations, popular literature, painting, theatre, as well as historical research, scholarly writing, tourism, historic preservation, artefact collecting, and museum building.

While problematic in their representation of other cultures, these types of exhibitions did spark interest in Dutch Colonial material culture, and a specific interest in the architecture and artifacts of the colonial and early national periods, and in doing so focused on regional and social variations. An exhibition specifically devoted to Dutch colonial objects was displayed in Kingston, New York, in 1886 that included, along with documents, Bibles and other books, household utensils, furnishings, and paintings. Recently established in 1885, The Holland Society of New York took a particular interest

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in the exhibition and briefly described some of the things displayed in their first *Holland Society Yearbook*. The photographs accompanying the article provide a rare glimpse into the display practices of the late nineteenth century.\(^{880}\) Several years later the Claverack Loan Exhibition was held in “Ye Olde Court House” of the village of Claverack, New York. From 22 May to 30 May 1891, four hundred and seventy eight artifacts, most associated with local households, were shown.\(^{881}\) These objects would have varied in quality and authenticity but the sheer volume of items displayed in such relatively small spaces would have been a powerful indicator of the popularity of historical relics.

According to the *Catalogue of a Loan Exhibition* held in Kingston, New York, in September of 1912, “In all these exhibitions, manuscripts and old books were most frequently displayed, with quaint kitchen utensils, a quantity of porcelain and pewter, costumes and textiles, specimens of ‘antique art,’ and ‘old furniture’ rounding out the exhibition.”\(^{882}\) Although these were not quite domestic displays like previous kitchen recreations or the period rooms that would be introduced in later years, Piwonka notes that “the variety of objects in this and other early exhibitions contrasts sharply with the tendency to isolate objects by type that has developed over the twentieth century.” Modern curatorial practices of providing a precise context for each object have provided opportunities for detailed study and comparison to similar styles or mediums but such a

\(^{880}\) *Holland Society Yearbook 1886-7* (New York: 1887), 19-34.

\(^{881}\) *Claverack Loan Exhibition* (Claverack: 1891).

\(^{882}\) *Catalogue of a Loan Exhibition Kingston NY* (Cooperstown: 1912), 268-288.

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view has “sacrificed the view of the whole”\textsuperscript{883} and, as Ulrich protests, “would make it difficult to explore the mythology that connects” such potentially symbolic objects.\textsuperscript{884}

For these reasons, the Albany Bicentennial Loan Exhibition of 1886 can be more closely examined as a relatively unstudied case as well as one that sheds light on shifting exhibition practices and the place of Dutch-American material culture in conceptions of national identity. Held under the auspices of a Loan Commission appointed by the Citizens’ Bicentennial Committee, the exhibition was held in the Albany Academy building near the Capitol from Monday 5 July 1886 through Saturday 24 July 1886. During the first week, admission was twenty-five cents or one dollar for a “season ticket” for the hours nine in the morning to seven in the evening, with special extensions to ten on Tuesday and Saturday. During the final week of Bicentennial celebrations admission was reduced to ten cents and the pavilion was open daily from eight to ten at night. At the opening ceremonies the city’s mayor, John Boyd Thacher, himself a generous lender of artifacts, referred to the wide range of things drawn from Albany attics, front parlours, collectors’ cabinets, and library shelves as “curious relics and precious memorials of many ages.”\textsuperscript{885} Lenders to the exhibition included Mrs. S.S. Pruyn, Miss D.M. Douw, Mrs. Jacob H. Ten Eyck, Mrs. Erastus Corning, Jr., Mrs. Henry Lansing, and other prominent members of Albany’s high society claiming an early Dutch ancestry. Among the “articles of value or artistic worth” were pictures, prints, relics, bric-a-brac, silver,

\textsuperscript{883} Piwonka, “Dutch Colonial Arts,” 79.
\textsuperscript{884} Ulrich, \textit{The Age of Homespun}, 4.
\textsuperscript{885} \textit{Albany Bicentennial Loan Exhibition of 1886} (Albany: 1886), np. The massive exhibition of hundreds of objects was divided into seven general departments.
bronzes, personal ornaments, books, pamphlets, manuscripts, and maps. Highlights included a towering portrait of Peter Schuyler then thought to be by Sir Godfrey Kneller but now attributed to Nehemiah Partridge (c. 1710-1718, Collection of the City of Albany), the original manuscript charter of the city of Albany, and the Sanders-Garvan beaker currently in the Yale collection. According to the brochure, the exhibition was “designed especially to illustrate the growth, development and historic past of Albany, and to present to the minds of this generation some idea of the character, manners and habits of their ancestors, and awaken an interest in the men and events which have made the city famous throughout the United States.

Another major anniversary demonstrating a shift in exhibition practices was the 1909 Hudson-Fulton celebrations in honor of the shared tercentennial of Hudson’s arrival and the centennial anniversary of Robert Fulton’s first successful commercial application of the paddle steamboat. The parades, parties and displays provided an opportunity to demonstrate the triumphs of New York City, highlighting not only the city’s aspirations but also national ambitions of the time.886 Amongst the numerous parades, pageants, and historical displays the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York City held two major exhibitions. Displayed from 30 September 1909 to 30 November 1909, the exhibition for The Hudson-Fulton Celebration included furniture, object d’art and one hundred and forty five paintings by artists such as Rembrandt van Rijn, Frans Hals, Johannes Vermeer, Jacob van Ruisdael and Aelbert Cuyp culled from the collections of prominent

New Yorkers such as Henry Frick (1849-1919), J.P. Morgan (1837-1913), Charles Schwab (1862-1939), and George W. Vanderbilt (1862-1914). The second simultaneous exhibition, also at the Metropolitan Museum, displayed American visual and material culture from the early seventeenth century through to 1825. Among the important legacies of this exhibition was the relatively new curatorial organization of objects by form and period. According to Schlereth 1909 and 1910 were “watershed years for material culture studies in the American decorative arts” in particular due to this exhibition, which is now considered the “first nationally recognized exhibition to present American furnishings to the public.”

Building on the success of the exhibitions held as part of the Hudson-Fulton Celebration, the Metropolitan Museum would continue on to be a leading force in the institutional collecting of American material culture. From 5 February to 22 April, 1934 a “Loan Exhibition of New York State Furniture with Contemporary Accessories” displayed colonial Dutch furniture “to demonstrate that New York had distinctive furniture of its own, including objects related to its Dutch past.” As the Metropolitan Museum was just beginning to acquire American furnishings, the two hundred and fifty-six objects displayed in 1909 were borrowed from the collections of the Albany Institute of History and Art, The Holland Society of New York, the Museum of the City of New York, the New-York Historical Society, and over one hundred private lenders. Compiled by the curators Joseph Downs (1895-1954) and Ruth Ralston (nd), the catalogue

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887 Schlereth, Material Culture Studies in America, 14.
888 Blackburn and Piwonka, Remembrance of Patria, 14.
acknowledged the exhibition as the first time “the furniture made in the Hudson Valley, Long Island, and Manhattan has been assembled for the purpose of specialized study.”

Twenty pieces – mostly chests, *kasten*, and metal accessories – along with four water-colours of Albany done by James Eights (1798-1882) in the early nineteenth century were among the items designated in the exhibition and the corresponding catalogue as “Dutch” in style whose “contribution of solidity to New York furniture is evident until post-revolutionary times.” Even a hint of Irving’s characterization of the Dutch slips into the introduction to the catalogue when the curators refer to the presence of a “full-bodied generous mass that bespeaks the genial and comfort-loving New Yorkers who ordered and used them.”

Along with such temporary exhibitions the Metropolitan Museum and the Museum of the City of New York would go on to establish more permanent displays of period rooms, examined more thoroughly later in this chapter. During this time the Metropolitan’s collection of European paintings was being established through the purchases and donations from local collectors, largely consisting of Dutch paintings.

Not only did this reinforce an awareness of the local heritage and connections to Netherlandish culture, the influx of genre scenes by increasingly popular “Dutch masters” created a visual familiarity with the types of domestic material culture that constituted early modern interiors.

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890 Downes and Ralston, *A Loan Exhibition of New York State Furniture with Contemporary Accessories*, xv.

In 1956 the Museum of the City of New York had an exhibition of New York furniture that sought to “bring New York furniture before the public again,” like the 1934 Metropolitan’s show did for the first time. From 15 November 1956 to 3 March 1957, “Furniture by New York Cabinetmakers 1650-1860” focused more narrowly on displaying one hundred and forty four pieces of furniture (and not accessories) made in the two hundred and thirty year period. In the catalogue’s preface, Bertha Benkard Rose (1905-1982) noted how the names of very few early cabinetmakers appeared before the Chippendale period, but saw the persistence of Dutch styles, noting “The influence of the robust Dutch patroons is evident in the generously proportioned early pieces. The furniture recalls the styles of their native Holland; the great chests are ample and commodious, the chairs are wide seated and deep, and the tables are simple and strong. This feeling of hospitality and comfort influenced New York furniture for a hundred years.”

V. Isabelle Miller, the curator of costumes, furniture, and silver at the Museum of the City of New York, had endeavoured to build the museum’s holdings but the same institutions and private collectors that had supplied the Metropolitan show lent a great number of the pieces exhibited. Miller’s career was firmly established when she wrote the exhibition catalogue for “Silver by New York Makers: Late 17th Century to 1900,” a show on display from 7 December 1937 to 17 January 1938. She would go on to curate

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892 Bertha Benkard Rose, *Furniture by New York Cabinetmakers 1650-1860* (New York: MCNY, 1956), 6. She was the daughter of Bertha King Bartlett and Harry Horton Benkard one of the first major collectors of early American furnishings and a good friend of Henry F. Du Pont. Rose was on the board of directors for the Museum of the City of New York, Winterthur Museum, the New-York Historical Society, the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiquities, and other institutions demonstrating how inter connected many of these organizations were. “Bertha Benkard Rose, Obituary,” *New York Times* (28 August, 1982): 42.
other well-received exhibitions into the 1960s such as, “New York Silversmiths of the Seventeenth Century” (1962). Miller’s alliance with Lefferts, Van Rensselaer, Earle and Singleton in their glorification of the roles of colonial women is apparent. She would later write:

It has often been said that the position occupied by the wife and mother throws light on the civilization of any society. It is a well-authenticated fact that the women of New Netherland of the 17th century were more highly educated, better protected by the laws of the country, and held a more position than any of their contemporaries in other countries. The girls received the same education as the boys and shared in their studies until the latter were old enough to select a trade or profession for themselves. The girls were then carefully trained in household duties and educated to fill responsible positions.  

Just as the 1876 centennial was a lightning rod for displaying visions of American culture, during the 1970s the American Bicentennial inspired many exhibitions of early colonial life. In preparation for the celebration, the New-York Historical Society presented three exhibitions organized by Mary C. Black, the curator of paintings and sculpture. These were “New York to 1776: River, Bowery, Mill & Beaver,” a display of maps, engravings, accounts and receipt books “that reflect the culture & economy of early New York”; “The Duyckincks: Merchants Chiefs and Painters,” a show of “three generations of a pre-revolutionary family”; and “Pieter Schuyler & the Indians,” displaying “early settler-Indian relations.” In 1976, the Society for the Preservation of Long Island Antiques held a large exhibition of furniture that displayed many objects

894 New York Magazine 7 no. 2 (14 January 1974), 27.
associated with the Dutch. The accompanying catalogue by the curator Dean F. Failey listed numerous cabinet-makers with Dutch surnames, but as is often the case, only a few items were attributed to specific makers.\textsuperscript{895} However as an example of a more detailed, regional investigation Failey’s major contribution was recognizing the hybridity of the local culture and the objects that were produced through Northern European, indigenous, and other influences from throughout the increasingly globalized material world.\textsuperscript{896}

**Domesticating New Netherland: Period Rooms in Museums**

During the late nineteenth century, the demand for early American antiques encompassed by the Colonial Revival highlighted the profound relationship between people and objects. According to Celia Betsky, it was the domestic interior that “brought [colonial objects] together in one place and, as a single overarching metaphor, identified them with each other.”\textsuperscript{897} As I have demonstrated, Dutch and Dutch-American material culture made an appearance in various exhibitions, but perhaps more significant were the ways these items were often permanently displayed. As a result of and in conjunction with the Colonial Revival, how things were arranged in order to give an impression of the past or original context in which they were created and used became important and from the increasing interest in display practices, “period rooms” were developed to display institutions’ growing collections of historical things, relics and curios.

\textsuperscript{895} Blackburn and Piwonka, *Remembrance of Patria*, 15.
\textsuperscript{896} Miller and Krohn, “Introduction,” 7.
\textsuperscript{897} Betsky, “Inside the Past,” 241.
Writing in 1914, F.W. Burgess claimed, “There is a peculiar charm about the relics found in an old home… Such interesting mementoes of past generations accumulate and in course of time the older ones become curios.” Decades later anthropologist James Deetz echoed Burgess’s claims, arguing that the historical object has an immediacy that written accounts do not: “After all, it once was there, and it forms an powerful link between then and now in a way a written account cannot.” In an important article on contemporary institutional display practices, Deetz continues on to suggest that while specific items can be tied to those who owned, made or utilized them, collections are organized into systematic and functional groupings to mirror the behaviour of specific groups of people. As early as the mid-nineteenth century, the organization of objects into “period rooms” was an ideal means of conveying ideas of how people in the past lived and related to their material environment.

According to Elizabeth Stillinger, the goal of early domestic displays was primarily entertainment and not education; assemblages were more like theme parks with performances and refreshments, with little serious attempt to authentically recreate early American interiors. Although the “Connecticut Cottage” and the “Old Log Cabin New England Kitchen” of the 1876 Philadelphia centennial are considered among the first American period rooms created, permanent installations did not occur until several decades later. Emerging from the ethnographic displays at world fairs and international

exhibitions, period type rooms also appeared during the late nineteenth century in Europe. An example of these is the Nordiska Museet in Stockholm installed in 1873 by Artur Hazelius. The first North American examples were the colonial kitchen and bedroom exhibits created by Charles P. Wilcomb in November 1896 at San Francisco’s recently established Golden Gate Park Memorial Museum. Based on his extensive collection of objects gathered during his travels in New England, Wilcomb did not coin the term period rooms, but used the descriptor “colonial” to specify their rarity.  

At the height of industrialization and increasing urbanization, Betsky notes that quaint interiors were an accessible means of “entering history, of bringing the country into the city and grafting an idealized agrarian past, a bucolic colonial way of life, onto an alienating and impersonal urban present.” Ultimately they were furnished with nineteenth-century tastes, with accessories from every room of the house combined with “heedless abandon.” Stillinger points out the purpose of these rooms was “not to give a correct impression of past life, but to gather objects around which stories could be built.” Writing in 1915, John Rowley commented on the recent shift in museum practice:

> Group installation methods lend themselves to many classes of objects… A good example of a historical group, for instance, is the colonial kitchen…How much better this is than simply to have arranged all the articles displayed in these rooms in a glass case. No matter how carefully and artistically they might have

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904 Stillinger, *The Antiquers*, 16.
been arranged, nor how explicitly the description labels might be
gotten up, the average visitor would not carry away with them the
details of and the purpose and character of the objects displayed
therein.\textsuperscript{905}

In 1907 George Francis Dow (1868-1936) was responsible for the installation of three
“alcoves” at the Essex Institute in Salem, Massachusetts, the New England Kitchen
(1750) and a bedroom and parlor (1800). Each had three sides, like a life-sized diorama
allowing the viewer full access from the fourth side and included accessories in order to
give the illusion of human presence and daily occupancy.\textsuperscript{906} As with many of the other
period rooms that would emerge, Dow created more a generalized colonial conceit than a
room designed with strict historical accuracy.\textsuperscript{907} By the height of the their popularity in
the 1920s, \textit{period rooms} with some semblance of historical accuracy conveyed through
the use of original “shells” or interior woodwork were differentiated from \textit{period settings}
that created a historical atmosphere or ambience without an accurate architectural
framework. Many early period settings, like the Gothic, Italian Renaissance and Northern
Baroque rooms installed in museums in Chicago and Detroit evoked the spirit of the
past.\textsuperscript{908}

Due in part to the success of exhibitions held as part of the 1909 Hudson-Fulton
Celebration, The Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York began a systematic
assemblage of American material culture for display in period rooms. By 1924, the first

permanent exhibition space for American decorative arts in a major museum was established with R.T.H. Halsey’s (1865-1942) installation of the three-story American Wing. Halsey thought the wing represented “a visual personification of home life in this country.” Declaring, “[it] is our pride in ancestry that adds to the appeal which American furniture makes to some of us…” his comments underscore the patriotic nature of early twentieth-century collecting. His endeavors coincided with a broader patriotic endeavor to educate the public that would gradually lead to museum exhibitions being organized according to nationalistic styles and periods as opposed to material or usage. From 1928 to 1931, The Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, The Philadelphia Museum of Art, The Baltimore Museum of Art and the St. Louis Art Museum 1928-1931 all followed suit installing a wide-range of period rooms. However altruistic it may have appeared, the stripping of interiors for period room displays has been seen by many as a threat to a larger preservation movement, valuing the importance of conserving architecture in situ.

During the early 1920s the Museum of the City of New York led the indoor preservation movement, but by “becoming the storehouse for the heirlooms of New

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911 Pilgrim, “Inherited from the Past,” 5.
912 The combined efforts of Fiske Kimball, with his innovative approach to period rooms and Edward W. Bok, a prominent Philadelphian and proponent of Holland Mania, resulted in the acquisition of an entire seventeenth-century Dutch interior for display. Kimball approached Karel Sluyterman, a Dutch architectural historian In the late 1920s Fiske Kimball, director of the Philadelphia Museum of Art, Het Schipjije (Philadelphia Museum of Art) As editor of the Ladies Home Journal, Bok had a platform to share his views.
York’s elite, it became, in a sense, part of the booming demolition business.”

By the time it opened in its new building in 1932, the museum utilized multiple and new exhibition strategies to tell the story of New York’s development. One contemporary observer noted that in preparation for a 1934 exhibition, the Women’s Committee had “been busy ransacking New York attics, exploring old New York houses for early American paneling and digging back into contemporary eighteenth century records for local color.” Furnished with relics from donors, the Museum’s “Dutch Alcove,” demonstrated daily life in rural and urban homes of the early eighteenth century.

In 1939, with the installation of a permanent period room, the museum described in their members’ bulletin the state of collections:

…the influence of Dutch names and their traditions has persisted up to the present day. So far as actual physical material is concerned, that is another story. With the phenomenal growth of New Amsterdam, and then New York, the old landmarks were destroyed both by changing styles and such conflagrations as those of 1776, 1778 and 1835. Scarcely a vestige left of these early times, aside from their names and traditions.

However varied the donated collection was, curatorial teams were consistently unable to “unearth” any original costumes owned by the earliest settlers. Like other attempts to create period rooms, the Museum’s display was plagued by a “method of creating a compatible mood for the display of the individual objects by the feigned restoration of

913 Page, “A Vanished City is Restored,” 49.
associations that may have had no reality in the past of the particular articles shown.”

The main obstacle for twentieth-century curators in creating period rooms telling the story of New Netherland and Dutch New York has been the lack of remaining architectural examples from the seventeenth century. Much of the material culture that continues to be displayed in early Dutch colonial period rooms or period setting rooms dates from the eighteenth century. But according to Voorhees, this may not be as big of an issue as it seems for “the golden age of ‘Dutch Culture’ in the Hudson Valley was not during its four decades under Dutch administration but in the eighteenth century under English rule.” Furthermore, the static nature of period rooms as an attempt to capture a historical moment may belie the variation of objects that would have made up New Netherlandish interiors. Not only would people have possessed old heirlooms and newly purchased goods from a variety of temporal periods, but as exemplified by the truly global nature of the goods listed in the inventory of Margrieta van Varick, things were remarkably geographically diverse as well.

Along with issues relating to the recreation of a temporal moment, period rooms contend with issues relating to the replication of space. One way curators have dealt with these problems is to install entire floors of historic homes, with the interior and exterior intact. In 1929 the Jan Martense Schenck House was installed in the Brooklyn Museum, along with eighteen other American period rooms (another one is the Nicholas Schenck

House, built by his grandson, 1732-1810, in the following century). Schenck (1631-1687) arrived in New Netherland in 1650 aboard The Falconer along with his brother Roeloff and his sister Anetje. In December of 1675, Schenck purchased land on an island in the marshes of Brooklyn, where he built a well-crafted, two-room structure, with a loft, organized around a central chimney, using what is now not considered to be a typically Dutch framing plan. Using many of the same visual, archival and material sources, the house was furnished “to reflect the way in which a comfortably established Dutch-American family might have lived in a rather uncomfortable environment – isolated, rural” in the early eighteenth century. The Brooklyn Museum is different from other installations because visitors see the exterior and “enter” the building to view the interior. It is not disembodied from the structure like other museums. As with other period rooms in the Brooklyn Museum, these examples maintain the integrity of the original structures, but raise issues in the correct way to furnish the exhibitions. Two aims of displaying furnishings and conveying an accurate historical vignette, can contradict each other. Often it is difficult to view objects (rooms can be ill-lit and filled with furniture) and the unrealistic assemblage of things from a select period does not give an accurate reflection of the range of quality and the range in age of the items that would have

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918 Kevin Stayton, Dutch by Design: Tradition and Change in Two Historic Brooklyn Houses, The Schenck Houses at the Brooklyn Museum (Brooklyn: Brooklyn Museum, 1990), 22.
typically been seen in homes.920

Dianne H. Pilgrim’s main critique of issues of the authenticity and purpose of the period room argues that typically museums have been “negligent in informing” visitors as to what they are seeing.921 A broad range of types of period rooms have emerged in the last century. Aesthetic or artistic period rooms are considered to be groupings of objects based on stylistic characteristics. In contrast are “historical” period rooms which in turn have a variety of subgenres including “sociological” or “biographical historical period room,” “utilitarian period room” or the “moment historical period room” and even the “time continuum room” which was contrived by Abbott Lowell Cummings (1923- ) at the Society for the Preservation of New England Antiquities to deal with issues of historicity in display practices. However, for E. McClung Fleming, such distinctions are less important than how successful the display is in achieving its aims, whatever they may be. Calling for curatorial transparency, he asks, “How is it to be presented to the public? What theory of restoring the past, what assumptions about communication are being implemented? How much realism and lived-in atmosphere will be attempted?”922

Containing different iterations of the period room Wintherthur Museum provides a unique setting for the display and interpretation of colonial material culture unavailable in other institutions.

According to Fleming, period rooms are important cultural documents themselves.
that can be viewed as an expression of scholarship of the day in which they were created. He explores how the arrangement of objects is telling (I would argue perhaps more) of contemporary understandings, rather than of the era they attempt to recreate. In this sense they are “period rooms of period rooms.”923 For example, through the reinterpreted lens of the Colonial Revival the period room arrangement of the Museum of the City of New York, the Metropolitan Museum, the Brooklyn Museum and Winterthur reflect early twentieth century ideas of what the interior of a New Netherlandish home would look like. By the time Fleming considered “The Period Room as a Curatorial Publication,” in the early 1960s, he estimated there to be over three hundred period rooms in American museums and an average of eight thousand in the over two thousand historic homes open to the public.924 Critical to his approach were ideas of how contemporary beliefs shaped the way historic interiors were displayed. He wondered, “Are there traits that identify a room assembled by Henry Francis du Pont? Mrs. Watson Webb [Electra Havermeyer]? Mrs. Louise du Pont Crowninshield?”925 While identification may not be the most valuable line of inquiry, further investigation into the gendered communities that shaped how interiors were organized and articulated in museum institutions is highly fruitful.

New Netherlandish House Museums: The Case of The Dutch House

With its eaves only a few feet above the sidewalk, this quaint little house was built about 1665. Few facts are known of its

history, but the lack of this knowledge leaves it none the less interesting, and perhaps even adds to its charm and old-world attraction.\footnote{Gertrude and Albert Kruse, \textit{New Castle Sketches} (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1932), np.}

In 1937 the Dutch House was purchased by the Delaware Society for the Preservation of Antiquities and was later opened as a historic house museum, now touted by the New Castle Historical Society as Delaware’s “Early Colonial Gem.” Inspired by John D. Rockefeller’s (1839-1937) efforts in Virginia, the Society’s initial goal was to create a similar “Williamsburg on the Delaware.” One of their first (and only) undertakings was to preserve the Old Dutch House. In July 1938 Colonel Daniel Moore Bates (1876-1953), committee chairman of the Society and neighbour of Louise Crowninshield (1877-1958), wrote a letter to another member explaining that for a sum they could obtain the building. The committee and Delawareans raised over ten thousand dollars to purchase the house for $2500 and also to repair the building’s foundation and make other structural restorations. The project would be the Society’s only major contribution to the preservation of New Castle; the outbreak of the Second World War prevented further efforts. In 1949 the Society gave The Dutch House and its other properties and assets to New Castle Historical Society. Involving many people with ties to the Colonial Revival movement, the social construction of the Dutch House is an example of the staged and imagined symbolic community identities created at the time. Furnished with European and American decorative art, the small house is considered to contain two intertwined narratives: primarily it illustrates the town’s early Dutch history, but secondarily it
considers the ways collectors and preservationists of the early twentieth century interpreted early colonial life.

A “small brick dwelling with low pent eaves projecting so far over the front of the house as to give the whole a storybook air,” the Dutch House was “associated with tales and personalities, curious and fantastic.” 927 Throughout the nineteenth century the little building was referred to as the “Old Dutch House” hinting at its colonial past. Although the moniker of the Dutch House has persisted, the earliest indications of a building on the property fall outside Dutch possession of the colony of New Netherland from 1624 to 1664 (and brief reclamation in 1674) and significantly outside of the original Dutch West India Company settlement of Fort Casimir established in 1651. In 1654, Swedes from nearby Fort Christina captured the settlement and renamed it Fort Trinity, only to have it recaptured by the Dutch in the following year. For almost ten years the small garrison was called Fort Amstel and controlled by the Dutch before finally becoming New Castle under English control; it remained so until the founding of the United States of America in 1776. The insistence on colonial origins was even reinforced by a deed record which stated: “All that parcel of land, with the ancient brick building thereon erected, believed to be of Swedish or Dutch erection, situate in the City…of New Castle [sic].” 928

However, no Dutch names appear in its title provenance and it does not closely resemble any other easily attributable New Netherlandish architecture. The original descriptors Old and Dutch were almost redundant because by the end of the nineteenth and beginning of

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928 New Castle Deeds T-40, 263.
the twentieth century, the adjective “Dutch” generically referred to long past colonial
time. The title “Dutch” is instead derived from the fact that it appears to be different
from contemporary English models. One 1936 report made for the Historic American
Buildings Survey by Laussat Rogers concluded it had Dutch origins based on the steep
pitch of the roof and central chimney despite the fact that these both were most likely
nineteenth century additions.

With few written records dating to before 1751, architectural historians tentatively
have attributed the original timber-framed, one-room, single-story house to builder John
Walker before 1696 or to Powell Barnes shortly after 1701. Like many early colonial
structures the internal framing is wood and some of this finished and exposed interior and
exterior wood siding can be seen on the gable end. Later, c. 1720, additions included a
lean-to running the length of the back wall and the division of the large halls into two
rooms and a tight, wound staircase to a half story garret. In the mid-eighteenth century
substantial renovations were made as the house was raised, a cellar excavated and the
brick added to the exterior. By 1823, the Dutch House appeared similar to other houses
surrounding it on Third Street, with a re-constructed second floor, Federal style
fireplaces, woodwork and floor plan. Early twentieth-century renovations undertaken by
the Society returned the building to its 1823 state.

In the most recent historical structures report on the Dutch House, Jeff Klee notes
that “Despite a contemporary, Colonial Revival mania among restoration architects for

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929 Stott, Holland Mania, 191.
stripping away all historical layers except the earliest – and occasionally inventing an earliest layer,” the architect hired by the Society, Albert Kruse, “worked with a light touch, only making changes where structural necessity demanded.’" Klee further noted that with evenly-spaced H-bent structural frames typical of Netherlandish construction as well as the materials, spacing and manner of supporting the walls and floors in a typically English way, the frame of the Dutch House is neither English nor Dutch - it does not fit neatly into any known European typology. As such, it is an excellent example of how traditional architectural practices were translated and adapted to the differing physical and cultural conditions of the New World. This complex reading of a pluralistic colonial past disrupts many of the well-ordered, culturally homogenous narratives of American colonial history.

One early-twentieth century New Castle resident tellingly proclaimed, “This [building] is always called the Dutch House…its story for the most part is lost in the passage of time. The Architecture is quaint and unusual.’’ The “quaint” and “unusual” architecture of the Dutch House made it a particularly appropriate focus for early twentieth-century ideas of Dutch colonial participation. Although in some ways the arrangements of furnishings for colonial revival period rooms and house museums have been interpreted to serve as “a vehicle for the promotion of anti-modern, rather than progressive ideals,” the rhetoric behind the assimilation of recent immigrants was quite

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933 Eagen Johnson, “Frans Hals to Windmills,” 52.
modern in its drive to create a homogenized, unified national culture. In an 1890 speech to the Holland Society, Theodore Roosevelt (1858-1919) epitomized the contemporary understanding of seventeenth-century Dutch colonists as having “possessed the faculty of becoming good American citizens… pressing all their energies into the service of the mighty Republican Commonwealth… [This] has a direct bearing upon one of the great questions of the present day, the assimilation of the masses of our foreign-born fellow citizens.”

The curatorial programming of house museums contributed to this ideology. For example according to Reginald Bolton the Dyckman House an early Dutch dwelling in Manhattan was used as part of a “kindergarten of citizenship” to provide young citizens with a “living history of honest and upright life.”

According to Eagen Johnson, by viewing seventeenth-century genre scenes Americans stereotyped Dutch colonial homes as “interiors that were filled with light and air, spotlessly clean, simple but richly furnished, and adorned with inspiring art.”

These characteristics had corresponding moral and philosophic implications: ideally American citizens were to be prosperous, clean and frugal. During a time of increased immigration to the United States, the Society’s endeavours to preserve and furnish the Dutch House was in line with Colonial Revival aims to assimilate a diverse ethnic population by creating a singular American cultural pride, modelled on a Dutch colonial precedent. With their charming material culture and quaint architecture, historic houses

934 Quoted in Stott, Holland Mania, 95.
were viewed as valuable pedagogical tools in the assimilation of the population into one idealized community.

The 1938 minutes of the Delaware Society for the Preservation of Antiquities note that one particular participant “was strenuously opposed to placing a single piece of furniture in the house, unless it was the proper type and period.”937 But what was the “type” and “period” in mind? When furnishing the house, the volunteer group was working from a particular model well established by decades of Colonial Revival interests when they conceived how to furnish the house. A curatorial colleague noted: “Now, that room needs only a nice little painted Dutch looking cupboard, a quaint wall sconce or two, colourful printed curtains at the window (not glazed chintz) to complete the picture. Of course, the cupboard will need a few logical utensils on it.”938 One sales receipt from Koopman Antiques on Madison Avenue in New York itemizes some of the many purchases made for the Dutch House. It lists one pair of metal candlesticks for $30, one Delft vase for $25, one Hendelopen Bench for $60 and a brass bucket and copper kettle and stand for $36. These items were all to be shipped to New Castle for installation in the Dutch House. By 4 December 1939, Mary W. Thompson of the Society wrote “the table & chairs are lovely & make the little yellow room look very well.” By 16 December 1939, “six beautiful chairs had arrived” and they looked “particularly well with the little table in the room on the right.”939 These six chairs mentioned are a set of turned side

938 Hagley Museum and Archives, 471, Box 54.
939 Hagley Museum and Archives, 471, Box 54.
chairs bearing the brand of “D-Coutong,” indicating their manufacture by David Coutant, a maker active in New York City and nearby New Rochelle, New York in the mid-eighteenth century. None of the pieces gathered had a connection to the original inhabitants of the house. Instead, the majorities of these furnishings were purchased throughout the Hudson River Valley and reflect the design and construction of that area.940

The appointments of the house involved what Seth C. Bruggeman has described as “a performance of carefully coded social rituals within a regime of highly symbolic historical objects.”941 When the Society was faced with a lack of material contents – items from the original house were no longer in situ and the group lacked a collection of works – the Dutch House was filled with “iconic relics,” a term coined by Bruggeman to describe curatorial selections for George Washington’s birth place.942 “Indexical relics”, those with a direct physical relationship to the original site, did not exist, but through antique dealers, auction houses and private collections throughout the North Eastern United States, the committee was able to find furnishings that they felt reproduced closely the “material realities” of the original house. As in Laurel Thatcher Ulrich’s study of the material culture of New England, objects now found in the Dutch House “not only undercut colonial revival ideas about the simplicity and harmony of early American life, they challenge the compartmentalization of contemporary scholarship,” in a manner that

941 Seth C. Bruggeman, Here George Washington was born: Memory, Material Culture and the Public History of a National Monument (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 63.
942 Bruggeman, Here George Washington was born, 63.
connects “the study of household production with the study of expanding commerce.”

The things filling the typically Dutch interior in fact indicate the much more global reach that came to typify the worldwide expanse of the trade networks formed by the Dutch East and West India Trade companies. The very goods that were selected because of their “Dutchness” were actually among some of the most “globally” produced goods in history. As discussed in an earlier chapter, the ornate rug placed on the table because it would have been too valuable to lie on the ground was known during the late sixteenth and seventeenth century as “Turky work,” hinting at its Middle Eastern origins. While the ubiquity of these easily transportable luxury goods may have been overestimated within the visual culture of the time, they became sought after accessories to appear in portraits that rapidly symbolized the owner’s ties to international trade and cosmopolitanism.

Similarly, the iconic blue and white ceramics centrally displayed in the Dutch House and synonymous with Dutch culture originated in Asia. Prominently placed in the house were tobacco jars and flower bricks, objects that were the epitome of material transculturations in the Dutch trade empire.

In creating a unified domestic narrative, decorative arts and domestic material culture were important. In a speech given to a group of unidentified female volunteers, Halsey stated “the home furnishings of our people in the days when our country was struggling to get on its feet, of those who protected this country from enemies within just as you women in this last campaign did such convincing work to preserve us from the

943 Ulrich, The Age of Homespun, 7.
dominating influence of foreign ideas.”944 By addressing “you women” Halsey underscores the role of women in creating national founding mythologies. However, like the domestic material culture they collected, the vernacular, collaborative efforts of the women of the Society have gone unrecorded in masculine histories that have marginalized women’s participation in the gendered politics of early twentieth-century professionalization of cultural institutions. As is often the case with women’s participation in cultural activities, it is not the lack of contribution but rather the ways in which women’s histories are written that obscure their activities.945 While men typically have been designated “collectors” women have been discussed as “consumers of objects,” with their collections of textiles and ceramics subject to a hierarchy of the arts in which paintings were deemed more aesthetically and historically valuable. Within gendered accounts of peoples’ relationships to the material world women have been perceived as selecting objects for their decorative, domestic potential or for sentimental reasons.

In her work on power structures in the voluntary sphere, Kathleen D. McCarthy outlines how women’s organizations were often most successful when they conformed to ideal female gender roles and arenas viewed as extensions of maternal instincts. Most importantly, McCarthy suggests that benevolent work created “invisible” careers for women that served as a socially acceptable form of female entrepreneurship. And no

944 Halsey undated typescript, R.T.H. Halsey Papers, New York Stock Exchange Archives, 4-5.
project was better than the establishment of house museums, with an emphasis on the public educational roles they provided. Like the women described by Lianne McTavish in her study of women who participated in the organization of Canada’s New Brunswick Museum, the women of the Society “garnered symbolic capital in a way that conformed to social expectations and did not overtly challenge dominant gendered norms” (as was the case with Van Rensselaer). Their participation placed an emphasis on domestic skills and household management in a manner in keeping with socially prescribed female roles related to caretaking. Like many other women in early twentieth-century institutions their contributions were simultaneously significant and subordinate.

Along with Thompson, others such as a Miss Sloan, dismissively described in a letter as “a rather pathetic little lady of Dutch descent,” were involved in opening the house to the public. The society pages of the *Wilmington Morning News* in the summer of 1939 gives names to the legion of heretofore anonymous women responsible for interpreting the House to the visiting public. Women like Mrs. J. Leroy Holcome, Mrs. Everett Reynold, Mrs. Edward Taylor, Mrs. R.J. Quillen and Mrs. Lewis Booker were engaging with the objects in a different sort of way when they hosted tours. They too were involved in the actual placement of objects. The director wrote that Mrs. Janvier “had not yet placed any of the things” that had been purchased. Others were involved too: when Mrs. Stewart “decided not to relinquish” her table, Mrs. Bailey “found another

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Delaware bench table… better in every respect. It is better looking of sturdy build, and in
good condition, ready to move in, price $45.” Mrs. Bailey also wished others on the
committee to consider “a foot warmer, $5 and an old Delft vase $25… fine and
authentic.” Like the spinning wheel – “Dutch, for flax, from Maryland” – the coffee
roaster, copper kettle, and assorted pots, pans, spoons and forks were all acquired in order
to reconstruct an Old Dutch colonial kitchen vignette.948

As a socially acceptable platform for women’s agendas, historic house museums
and period rooms were a way of making public what their curators had long expressed
privately.949 By “inventing traditions” women in Colonial Revival communities
employed “a set of practices, normally governed by overtly or tacitly accepted rules and
of a ritual or symbolic nature, which seek to inculcate certain values and norms of
behaviour by repetition, which automatically implies continuity with the past.”950 By
accepting and contributing to a revisionist history of early Dutch settlements that
glorified the housewife, they were able to revive women’s participation in America’s
founding mythologies. In doing so a dynamic tension was created for those working in a
public environment and fashioning private spaces: they were “part of a wider trend in
early-twentieth century middle-class women’s culture, in their enjoyment of a new public

949 Bruggeman, Here George Washington was born, 62.
950 Eric Hobsbawm, “Introduction: Inventing Traditions,” The Invention of Tradition, eds. Eric Hobsbawm
role, in their defensive celebration of their “colonial” domestic inheritance, and in their efforts to create a public institution communicating their concerns about the home.”\textsuperscript{951}

Furthermore, a woman’s perceived affinity for decorative art objects created a unique position for female expertise in house museums. Stuart Hobbs has argued that while museum historians engaging with objects began to distinguish themselves from academic historians who traditionally privileged texts, simultaneously they “recognized in their work a kinship with art historians who had developed methodologies for interpreting \textit{objets d’art} just like the furniture and decorative arts displayed in house museums.”\textsuperscript{952} Exclusion from textual-based histories provided an opportunity to closely study objects, particularly domestic objects. Participation was still gendered as a pattern emerged in house museums whereby men administered the overall operations of the facility and women were charged with furnishing period rooms. According to Patricia West, the process of establishing a house museum “provided a vehicle for women to negotiate the shifting relationship between women’s customary power base (the home) and the public realm (the state).”\textsuperscript{953} Some of the stereotypical views of Dutch-American culture also, perhaps more importantly, provided a means for select elite women to participate in the construction of a mythology that glorified domesticity and a woman’s place in the home. The displays that were often referred to at the time as “relics” from

\textsuperscript{951} West, \textit{Domesticating History}, 72.
colonial days and the recreation of vignettes, like the ubiquitous “colonial kitchen,” highlighted women’s work and daily life.

Increasingly, literature, art and popular culture glorified the role of the goedevrouw, or good wife, to promote women’s position within the home, however circumscribed by domestic boundaries, as one of agency and to a certain degree power. As genteel housekeepers, women were considered responsible for the accumulation, organization, and display of material goods, which in turn, instilled in women what historian Amanda Vickery describes as a “curatorial ethos in their dealing with things.”

In their role as “mistresses” of the house, women had a profound relationship to the material goods of the domestic sphere that legitimated their role in the foundation of historic houses. Epitomizing this, in 1898 May King Van Rensselaer wrote in The Goede Vrouw of Mana-ha-ta that:

> The houses of the emigrants were not bare log huts, but were at once brighten by the touch of facile feminine fingers, and converted into pleasant homes. The goedevrouw hung her neat lattice of leaden-sashed windows, with snowy curtains, made by her own hands, stuck a beau-pot of flowers on the ledge, set her spinning-wheel by the hearth-stone and her huge loom under the sloping roof of the ‘bock stoep’ [sic].

If businessmen of the Gilded Age found kindred spirits in the seventeenth-century burgher, the Dutch Colonial Revival inundated their wives with idealized images of the ideal Dutch goedevrouw. Nowhere was the conflation of women and the interiors of

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homes more emphasized than in turn of the century nostalgic visions of the Dutch and Dutch-colonial domesticity. As goede vrouwen themselves women like May King Van Rensselaer, Gloria Lefferts Vanderbilt, and their contemporaries legitimized their participation in the curatorship and administration of house museums, through the repetition of a domestic mythology of colonial communities centred on hearth and home.

Well into the twentieth century, acceptable forms of women’s philanthropic involvement extended their domestic roles to encompass public concerns in a manner that has been called “municipal housekeeping.” Literally and figuratively, historic homes provided outlets for traditional women’s roles. By accepting and contributing to a revisionist history of early Dutch settlements that glorified the housewife, women were able to revive women’s participation in America’s founding narratives.

During the Depression years of the 1930’s, Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal increased government funding to cultural institutions and over two hundred more house museums would open. But with the financing came a new era of bureaucracy. In 1933, the Historic American Buildings survey was established and two years later Congress passed the Historic Sites Act in order to fund new research and establish more inventory programs. In Preservation Comes of Age, Charles Hosmer considered the 1930s with the participation of major figures like John D. Rockefeller in the preservationist movement to

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957 Rybczynski, Home, 52-64.
signal a rise in professionalism. In contrast to the volunteer groups that had furnished sites previously, places like Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello and Robert E. Lee’s Stratford Hall came to be curated by formally trained directors such as Fiske Kimball of what was then the Pennsylvania Museum. Historic houses were taken over by men whose historical knowledge was supported by university educations. This new modernist vanguard of the Progressive Era decried the previous symbolic relics in favour of a new so-called authenticity that relegated the contributions of women to the margins. The legions of volunteer associations of housekeeping women were replaced with accredited men. As such, this professionalization simultaneously celebrated select women’s accomplishments as collectors while it erased the collaborations that helped form many great collections. Charm was out, fact was in and a “new profession for the study and interpretation of the artifact” replaced the “curatorial ethos” of the goede vrouw.

The Holland House, Homeliness and Worldliness on the International Stage

In 1941, Maud Esther Dilliard curated an exhibition of two hundred and forty-four Dutch-colonial objects for The Holland House Corporation of the Netherlands. Held at the Corporation’s headquarters at Rockefeller Center in New York City, the show was comprised of works lent by various institutions and private collectors. With “An Early New York Home,” Dilliard introduced the catalogue of objects with accessible language,

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960 Bruggeman, *Here George Washington was born*, 127.
aimed at a middle-class, interested amateur viewer, stating: “The homes of the first
settlers were necessarily simple. The ‘kamer’ a combined bedroom and kitchen was the
principal room in the house. A bed was usually built into the wall.” 962 Quoting “New
Amsterdam’s first poet” Jacob Steendam, Dillard hailed “New Netherland, thou noblest
spot on earth.” 963 Her exhibition aptly demonstrates what Ovar Lofgren calls “the ways in
which national differences become embedded in the materialities of everyday life, found
not only in the rhetoric of flag-waving and public rituals, but also in the national
trajectories of commodities.” 964

Most tellingly, Dillard concluded the catalogue for the Holland House exhibition
by noting “Only forty years of Dutch rule, but those years left a deep impression on the
American way of life.” 965 Held just prior to the United States of America’s participation
in the Second World War, the loan exhibition specifically and the Holland House in
general utilized Dutch colonial culture in a bigger national project. In conclusion I would
like to employ George Yúdice’s arguments for culture-as-resource, to further examine the
Holland House’s utilization of Dutch colonial identity to promote other agendas. In The
Expediency of Culture: Uses of Culture in the Global Era, Yúdice suggests that culture is
now widely positioned as a tool, explaining that it is “increasingly wielded as a resource

962 Maud Esther Dillard, “Preface to Dutch Colonial Exhibition Catalogue,” A Loan Exhibition of Dutch
Colonial Heirlooms, 30th January to 28 February 1941. (New York: Holland Horse Corporation of the
Netherland, 1941), 5.
964 Ovar Lofgren, “Scenes from a Troubled Marriage: Swedish Ethnology and Material Culture Studies,”
for both sociopolitical and economic amelioration.” Characterizing culture’s enmeshment within systems of neoliberal economic globalization, Yúdice writes, “the role of culture has expanded in an unprecedented way into the political and economic, at the same time that conventional notions of culture largely have been emptied out.” In this sense the Holland House can be viewed as actively deploying Dutch (material) culture to aid in international diplomacy.

According to Fenton B. Turck Jr., president of the Holland House (and vice president of the American Radiator and Standard Sanitary Corporation) in 1941, the exhibit was “designed to re-create the democratic spirit of Nieuw Amsterdam, marked by public education and freedom of religion, assembly and speech.” He continued on to oversimplify the religious freedoms enjoyed by emigrants to New Netherland, “When New York was a Dutch West Indies colony the people were told that they were members of one religion. However, they were also told that they could worship as they pleased. That’s about typical of the Dutch colonists’ sense of freedom.” The highlight of the exhibition was Peter Stuyvesant’s 1636-7 Staten Bible, brought when he left Holland carrying “a sword and a family bible.” Attached to the bible was a Beggars medal (commemorating the Dutch revolt from Spain). The description by one reporter shows the extent to which people at the time compared the two nations: “a copy of the medal worn by William the Silent, Holland’s George Washington.”

different goal from those of the past: “Here for the first time, were shown objects used by the Dutch farmer as well as high-style possessions of the urban merchants.”

In November of 1938, a portion of the “amusement and commercial development” complex of Rockefeller Plaza on the corner of 48th Street in New York City was leased to the Holland House Corporation of the Netherlands. The space was a four-story wing adjacent to the main sixteen-story tower of Rockefeller Plaza and included an exhibition hall, dining room, meeting room, and other commercial areas for shops. At the outbreak of war, the arrangement was made with the intent to increase trade between the two countries. H.M van Haersma de With the Dutch minister to the US, said, “There can be no sounder basis for peace between nations than that of a growing volume of commercial exchanges and of mutual appreciation of cultural interests.” He continued on to mention the two countries’ shared history: “The creation in New York of Holland House appropriately marks nearly three centuries of peace and of the friendliest commercial and cultural relations between America and the Netherlands, and signals the beginning of a still closer relationship.” The enterprise was supported by The Netherlands-America Chamber of Commerce and subsidized by the government of the Netherlands.

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971 A portion of the development had been designated for German use as the *Deutsches Haus* but this plan was re-evaluated after Adolf Hitler invaded Poland on 1 September 1939. The empty office site was then divided up and became the *International Building*. 401
Given the early modern commercial foundations of New Netherland it is fitting that the Holland House was conceived of as part of a neo-liberal effort to strengthen trade between the Netherlands and the United States. Turck is quoted as saying that, “Both the United States and the Netherlands are credit nations and their trade needs complement each other. Trade between the two countries has increased substantially since the signing of the reciprocal trade agreement of 1935. The Netherlands and its colonies last year purchasing $154,028,000 of American goods and exporting to this country goods worth $141,007,000.”972 According to the same newspaper account, even the era’s preeminent capitalist, Nelson Rockefeller, another noted descendent of early Dutch settlers, agreed, praising the friendly ties between the two countries, and expressing his admiration for “The Netherlands colonial administration.” It is unclear as to whether this comment refers to seventeenth century Dutch imperial projects, or contemporary colonial relationships, for in 1940 Turck was particularly optimistic about American trade (rubber, tin, palm oil etc.) with The Netherlands East Indies despite international conflict.973

In keeping with an increased interest at the time in the Dutch colonies, a portion of the Holland House was utilized as a restaurant, The Holland House Tavern, serving Dutch and Indonesian cuisine. It was a two-story glass-fronted space on the ground floor of the building decorated to look like an old Dutch tavern complete with oak interiors, a

972 “Center is Leased for Netherlands” 25.
973 “These wealthy territories, always an important source of supply for our American industries, will undoubtedly export increasing quantities such commodities as rubber, tin, palm oil etc. Germany has always been a large market for such products but it has been restricted as a result of the Allied blockade and increased sales of the products to the United States and to the Allied powers is now eagerly anticipated by East Indian traders.” Quoted in “Turck Visions Expanded U.S. Holland Trade: War Hurts Indies Europe Markets,” *Brooklyn Eagle* (6 January 1940): 18A.
crescent bar and fireplaces lined with Delft tiles depicting life in old Holland (Fig.6.3). According to an ad that ran in the New York Times in April 1946 the restaurant even featured “Dutch maidens to serve you.” In many ways, The Holland House Tavern was a functional, modernized version of the Knickerbocker Kitchen from the Metropolitan Fair: it utilized stereotypical images of Dutch material culture to provide an experience of the colonial past. Along with the restaurant, the Holland House complex included an ample exhibition space, where shows like those curated by Dilliard could be displayed. As part of the Colonial Revival, the material culture presented to a broad viewing public had an impact on the way visitors viewed home décor. After seeing a show of “Dutch Antique Maritime Art,” drawn from the collection of Baron van Haersolte van den Doorn, Walter Rendell Storey praised “picturesque accents” like the Dutch tiles, ship models and old glass on display at Holland House. 974 He said it “was the Dutch traders, in their voyages in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, who brought home from the East those ceramics which inspired Dutch artists and craftsmen to produce the famous Delft tiles and other pottery.” 975 Like the interior decors of other social clubs in New York City (The Grolier Club of New York, the Salmagundi Club etc.) the identification with Holland and even more specifically the Dutch who were credited with having initially colonized North America was expressed through carefully contrived interiors of both the


975 Storey, “Home Decoration,” 75.
seventeenth century and the nineteenth century. These were of course contrived re-
visionings produced through the homely and worldly materialities that contributed to the 
making of New Netherland.

**Conclusion**

The Colonial Revival provided an opportunity for women to participate in the re-
imagining of early American life. Discounted later by gendered histories, the 
participation of elite society ladies like Van Rensselaer, Earle, Singleton, Vanderbilt, and 
others in the institutionalization of New Netherlandish material cultures makes visible 
“the line that was crossed by a few wealthy women in the late nineteenth century from 
being angels of culture within a domestic setting to being queens of culture in public.”

In this chapter I have outlined the ways their collecting and recollecting shaped the 
material history of New Netherland. Through their writing and curating a specific vision 
of the early Dutch colonization of North America appeared and in it, the *goede vrouw* 
played a prominent role.

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977 Wanda M. Corn, *Cultural Leadership in America: Art, Matronage and Patronage* (Boston: Isabella 
Figure 6.1 Knickerbocker Kitchen at the New York Metropolitan Sanitary Fair, 1864, New York Public Library.

Figure 6.2 Advertisement for the Holland House Taverne, nd, New York Public Library.
Chapter 7

Conclusion

I began this dissertation with a closer look at a *lepel* and *vork*, two seemingly insignificant utensils that ultimately served as an entry point into a larger discussion of the role of *things* in early modern Dutch trade networks. Where has this exploration of maps, tea tables, palampores, and psalters led? What have I discovered of the making of New Netherland during the colonial period and subsequent centuries? Looking back at the materiality of objects, images, and texts discussed I found that not only did these *things* travel, but also that as they travelled their values fluctuated and meanings shifted as they changed hands. Furthermore, during a time of increasing mobility, things became the connection between people and places around the world. Throughout “Homeliness and Worldliness: Materiality and the Making of New Netherland, 1624-1750,” I have employed various strategies in my analysis of colonial material culture in order to illuminate “patterns of materialism” that emerged as diverse groups of people came into contact.\(^{978}\) By linking *things* such as spoons and forks, maps and paintings, buildings and trademarks, and tea cups and tiles to larger narratives I have contributed to a new history of materiality and the making of New Netherland, primarily in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries but also as interpreted in later histories.

To conclude I would like to return to another seemingly insignificant item, a small foot stove or foot warmer dating to the final quarter of the seventeenth century now held

\(^{978}\) Mukerji, *From Graven Images*, 1-5.
in the collections of the Albany Institute of History and Art (Fig. 7.1). Like the Lewes set, the small, octagonal, chip-carved box is inscribed with marks not indicating the maker but rather the owner. To the right of the door are the initials “MD” and the date “1675.”

These markings have allowed for this object to be identified as having been once owned by Margarita Douw of Albany, making it one of the few utilitarian objects extant from the colonial period to be traced to a specific person. She was born during the mid 1670s, suggesting that this foot stove may have been a gift from her father, Albany doctor Abraham van Tricht (? -1687) to his wife Elizabeth Teller van Tricht (1652-c. 1726) to commemorate her birth. The foot stove also could have belonged to Elizabeth’s mother, Margaret Donchesen Teller (? – before 1664), a woman from Scotland who was married in Amsterdam in 1639 and arrived in New Netherland by 1642. Subsequently it may have been passed down to another woman with the initials MD. Born in November 1740, Margarita Douw (1740- after 1795) was the daughter of Abraham Douw, a sloop captain participating in moving goods up and down the Hudson River. In 1767 she married Henry Ten Eyck Jr. (1744-1795), connecting her to another prominent New York family. Although it impossible to definitively confirm the Albany foot stove’s provenance, the multiple potential biographies of this object speak to the distances traveled by domestic things throughout the homes of Dutch immigrants. By way of concluding, I explore the larger implications of utilizing material culture objects such as the Albany foot stove to tell the story of the colonization of New Netherland.
Within art historical scholarship, discussions of foot stoves have been typically limited to their representation in seventeenth-century genre paintings. In a recent discussion of Johannes Vermeer’s *The Milkmaid* (1657-1658), Walter Liedtke argues for the erotic implications of a foot stove placed under a woman’s skirts.\(^{979}\) However, Liedtke misses the practical applications of such things in the daily lives of people. For example in Geertruyt Roghman’s engraving of *Two Women Sewing* (c. 1650), we see that by securely elevating a woman’s feet, foot stoves effectively transformed a woman’s lap into a useful workspace (Fig. 7.2).\(^{980}\) This image and others from the seventeenth century that include women using foot stoves, have often been interpreted to speak of domesticity, but the activities the women are actually participating in connect them to the world outside of the home. When women used foot stoves they were also reading and writing, for religious and commercial purposes, performing tasks like sewing for sale and for use within the home, caring for children, and other activities that connected them to the world outside their home. Even when poised on a *vlondertje*, the small raised plinth that raised them above the drafts of damp Dutch rooms, they were actively contributing to the types of exchanges that were common in the most public room of the home.

Regardless of their iconographic or descriptive connotations in seventeenth-century genre paintings foot stoves were physical things that occupied the space of homes. The material culture approach I developed in this dissertation considers the

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thingness of such items commonly dismissed as vernacular objects. How were they used? How did people live with them in their daily life? How were they taken to new places as Dutch people explored the world? How did local makers replicating the material culture of patria reinterpret objects? And finally how were such artifacts of colonial endeavours valued by collectors in later centuries? In many ways the Albany foot stove exemplifies many of the ideas I have put forth in this dissertation.

As discussed in Chapter Two the appearance of cartographic imagery in a wide range of books, prints, and paintings demonstrates new understandings of the world and global travel in the Dutch Republic and its colonies during the early modern period. I began by exploring what people in patria knew about New Netherland and how they knew it. Previous studies have focused on the attribution and provenance of maps and texts and their political implications. My research highlights the ways in which people experienced these objects in their daily life. This chapter demonstrated how the thingness of maps was shaped by a variety of voices and created by numerous hands in the “graphic traffic” that moved back and forth across the Atlantic Ocean. Textual and cartographic depictions painted an idealized view of the colony, as quite literally a new version of the Netherlands. Ubiquitous in the homes of Dutch people from farmers and fishers to merchants and politicians, such cartographic elements came to appear on a variety of decorative and utilitarian objects.

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In a highly transmediated fashion, the Albany foot stove is decorated with some of the same decorative elements used in early modern cartographic representations. Originating in the maritime communities of Northern Friesland, the geometric style of chip carving incorporated familiar motifs such as compass rose patterns. Much like the compass rose pattern discussed by Laurel Thatcher Ulrich as a feature of embroidery on “rose blankets,” Frisian sea art echoed the navigational lines of early maps. Once brought to New Netherland local makers took up these motifs. Amateurs and professionals alike were aware of production conventions and the forms produced often conformed to regional standards. Star and floral patterns were adapted on a wide range of wooden objects like wooden shoes, mangle boards, *kapdozen* (cap boxes), and spoon racks. Spoon racks in particular were among the items typically carved to commemorate a betrothal or marriage. Despite their proliferation, spoon racks are not included in any of the inventories of personal possessions. They appear to have been considered part of a woman’s personal property and as such were omitted from probate records.

An important aspect of the materiality of New Netherland is the relationship of women to *things*. It became apparent in Chapter Three that many women in the Dutch Republic and its colonies had unique commercial opportunities that gave them agency as “consuming subjects.” While much archival research has uncovered the economic contributions of women in New Netherland and also the subsequent restrictions to their

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984 Kowaleski-Wallace, *Consuming Subjects*, 1-10.
activities under English rule, far less attention has been paid to the direct implications of these conditions in regard to women’s relationships to the goods they were distributing and objects they were purchasing for their own use. As producers, retailers, and also consumers, women were directly responsible for the things that came to constitute the material culture of New Netherland and Dutch New York. Their contributions are apparent in the visual culture of exchange that highlighted the significance of globally and regionally traded things. Although foot stoves do not appear in the images of women I discussed, they were just one of the many things that articulated the identities of women in New Netherland and Dutch New York. While many questions remain surrounding the biography of the Albany foot stove, the potential narratives that emerge demonstrate possibilities available when considering the agency of koopvrouwen operating officially as traders and unofficially in managing household economies. The same transactions that brought a Northern European foot stove to Albany also brought commodities such as tea, coffee, chocolate, sugar, tobacco, and spices from around the world into the homes of the New Netherlands and New York.

The Albany foot stove is one of the few objects to exist from the interiors of seventeenth-century colonial homes. Utilizing other rare surviving objects, along with inventories and archaeological findings, Chapter Four demonstrated the extent to which household furnishings were brought from patria to replicate the interiors familiar to colonists. While historians have traditionally focused on shipping manifests, account books, and other documentary evidence, my approach considered the vernacular
implications of global commodities on the creation of domestic spaces. Hearth and home played a vital role in investing objects with socially constructed meaning. Through the use, exchange, and distribution of goods domestic transactions came to have a tremendous impact on the global transmission of decorative art styles and fashions, and on gendered and racial roles that became part of colonial home making.

As objects of domestic material culture, foot stoves played a part in the making of interior space in New Netherland. The small decorative and utilitarian boxes were just one of the many objects that came to be replicated in the New World colony. Based on an analysis of the wood from which it is constructed, the MD foot stove was made from *acerplatnoides*, a European maple. This indicates that it was an item brought from *patria*, and among the many types that would inform the construction of later similar models. Well into the nineteenth century these continued to be produced from local materials like tulip poplar, demonstrating the transference of what Roderic H. Blackburn has called an “object concept” in which certain things from the Netherlands were adapted to fit the differing circumstances of North America.

Not only did the things of *patria* inform the material cultures of the New World, but increasingly globalized things also shaped European culture. In seventeenth-century emblem books, the use of familiar iconography was employed to absorb new things and codify novel ideas that had physically and ideologically permeated the borders of the United Provinces. Through these channels many people in the newly formed nation (and

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985 “MD Foot stove,” curatorial notes, Albany Institute of History and Art.
986 Blackburn, “Transforming Old World Dutch Culture in a New World Environment,” 95.
arguably its colonies) were presented with complex allegorical interpretations of realistic representations from nature, daily life, mythology and biblical histories. Willem Frijhoff and Marikje Spies boldly describe the wide currency such manners of perceiving must have had, arguing that they “undoubtedly nurtured a collective sense of the divinely governed coherence of existence such as we can hardly imagine today.”

Foot warmers were among some of the domestic objects depicted in emblem books to illustrate vernacular aphorisms. In 1614, Roemer Visscher’s *Sinnepoppen* called the fire pan the “Love of the Ladies,” suggesting that during cold winters women prefer the heat provided above all else (Fig. 7.3). The popularity of this publication created direct associations between the actual object and popular culture of the time.

By considering the transmediation of such imagery this chapter examined how objects and their surface ornamentation came to hold moral associations that were transferred to the colonies. Especially on the peripheries of empire where churches as physical structures and organizing institutions were few and far between, domestic spaces came to be important sites of religious instruction. As in Europe scenes from religious literature came to appear on a wide range of media, making biblical subjects part of the quotidian visual experience.

While religious imagery played an important role in the decoration of domestic material culture, the things of the home also moved through the public spaces of

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churches. For example foot stoves were not only used within the home, but they also were equipped with small handles that allowed them to be easily transportable. During the cold winter months women brought them along with their chained psalters to attend Sunday services. Therefore rather than being utilized only within the home, they can be viewed as very public objects, related to women’s participation in religious communities. By literally bringing things of the home into the public sphere, foot stoves are a material manifestation of the “public domesticity” employed by Dutch women and their descendants in North American colonies.989

Finally my research has been attentive to the making of New Netherland and Dutch New York during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries through the collecting and display of historical objects during the Colonial Revival. In Chapter Six I considered elite women’s involvement in the writing and curating colonial things to produce a palatable narrative of New Netherland that conformed to modern American interests. Buoyed by their appearance in a number of the genre paintings collected by wealthy New Yorkers beginning in the 1880s, quaint looking foot stoves quickly became highly sought after antiques. Of these one such example was acquired by Wallace Nutting (1861-1941), a photographer and antiquarian credited with having shaped the Colonial Revival style. Thought to date from the eighteenth century, the tulip poplar box with small metal handle is now in the Wadsworth Athenaeum along with the rest of his “Pilgrim Century” furniture and decorative arts. From the Dutch Alcove at the Museum

989 George, “Homes in the empire, empires in the home,” 95-127.
of the City of New York to Winterthur’s Hardenbergh Bedroom and The Dutch House in New Castle, foot stoves became a mandatory accessory in the institutional display of colonial Dutch material culture.

The extensive archival work of Alice P. Kenney, Roderic Blackburn, Ruth Piwonka, Marybeth De Filippis, and others represents an initial phase of identification and attribution of the visual and material culture of New Netherland. My intent has been to move beyond these initial quantitative studies to develop and apply theoretical approaches that have been constructed to consider the integration of images and objects into people’s lives. Aside from Louisa Wood Ruby’s thoughtful consideration, “Dutch Art and the Hudson Valley Patroon Painters,” in Going Dutch: The Dutch Presence in America, 1609-2009, there has been little critical engagement with the visual and material culture of New Netherland since Blackburn, Piwonka and Black’s painstaking and ground-breaking archival research in the 1980s and 1990s. As with the case of the exhibition Dutch New York between East and West: The World of Margrieta van Varick at the Bard Graduate Center in 2009, exhibitions can stimulate research and observations and the application of methods that examine circulation and exchange, creative cross-pollination and the movement of things and ideas. Much like the larger study of New Netherland, the images and objects have often been segregated into an enthusiastic but isolated branch of scholarship. For Dutch scholars, New Netherland has often been a brief footnote in a larger colonial narrative, and conversely many North American scholars have lacked a command of the Dutch language required to access the content of
early colonial documentation. Fortunately, the New Netherland Project, led by Charles Gehring, has endeavoured to translate Dutch language records held by the New York State Archives and New York State Library. Translation, however, is just the first step. A concerted effort must be made by scholars not only to identify and describe examples of material culture but also to further theorize the ways in which objects of New Netherland came to circulate throughout the region, the Atlantic world and beyond.

Despite the picture of the materiality of New Netherland and Dutch New York that emerges, many questions still remain. Further cross-cultural explorations need to be done. I have taken the Dutch perspective but far more needs to be done to integrate the narratives of other people involved in the making of New Netherland. Also to be traced are further connections between other communities in the Atlantic world. How did object concepts continue to spread as people moved into New England? Or Nouvelle-France? During the eighteenth century the fur trade continued to forge networks into areas that would later become Canada. More research needs to be done on the communication between places like Albany and Schenectady and Montreal. Also intriguing is the establishment of Dutch-American communities in places like Southeastern Ontario where many Loyalists migrated after the Revolutionary War. As always, further studies can be made into the ways objects connected people and places.

For Simon Schama the seventeenth-century Dutch golden age was characterized by “the struggle between worldliness and homeliness” that was “but another variation on
the classic Dutch counterpoint between materialism and morality.\textsuperscript{990} Like spoons and forks, foot stoves were among the “small things forgotten” that moved throughout the meshworks of seventeenth-century Dutch trade networks.\textsuperscript{991} Through an examination of increasingly mobile material cultures that constituted New Netherland and laid the foundations for New York, I demonstrate that just like materialism and morality, worldliness and homeliness were not binary constructs, but mutually constructive and inextricably intertwined as things moved between \textit{oud} and \textit{nieuw} Netherlands and throughout the world.

\textsuperscript{990} Schama, \textit{The Embarrassment of Riches}, 389.
\textsuperscript{991} James Deetz, \textit{In Small Things Forgotten}, 1-13.
Figures

Figure 7.1 Maker unknown, foot stove, 1675, Albany Institute of History and Art.

Figure 7.2 Geertruydt Roghman, *Two Women Sewing*, c. 1650, Museum Boijmans van Beuningen, Rotterdam.
Figure 7.3 1614, Roemer Visscher, “Mignon des Dames,” Sinnepoppen, 1614.
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die aldaer tot onderhout der menschen, (soo uyt haer selven als van buyten
ingebracht) gevonden worden. Als mede De maniere en oghemeyne
eygenschappen vande wilden oste naturellen vanden lande. Enge een bysonder
verhail vanden wonderlijcken aert ende het weesen der bevers, daer noch by
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