

Name: _____

Colonial America

New Netherland



Directions: Read the following passage then answer the questions.

The Dutch in New Netherland: America's Dutch Roots

In the 1600s, the Dutch wanted a piece of the New World too! At the time the Dutch Republic was a maritime powerhouse. They explored far and wide. They established trading posts across the globe. Hearing tales of the New World's potential, they sent Henry Hudson to explore the coast in 1609. He found a wide river, later named the Hudson River, and the potential for a flourishing fur trade.

Trading and Settling

So the Dutch set their sights on an area they named New Netherland. This area spanned parts of modern-day New York, New Jersey, Delaware, and Connecticut. By the 1620s, the Dutch West India Company was created to manage trade in the Americas. They set up a trading post at the mouth of the Hudson River and called it New Amsterdam. This would become the heart of New Netherland. Not only that, New Amsterdam would go on to become the famous New York City!

Legend has it that the Dutch bought Manhattan for beads and trinkets. The native Lenape people likely viewed the deal as a treaty for shared rights to the land, not an outright sale. They did not understand the idea of owning land in the way that Europeans did. But the Dutch took control of their new land. Gradually, settlers displaced the Lenape and pushed them westward.

Settling Down and Making a Life

The Dutch colonists didn't just come to trade. They came to stay. They built homes using Dutch styles and farmed crops from the Netherlands. They built windmills for milling grain and dug canals for transportation. They raised livestock and set up dairy farms, much like in the pastures of the Netherlands. And they brought Dutch customs like barn raisings, harvest festivals, and ice-skating.

A Haven of Tolerance

The Dutch also brought their tradition of tolerance. New Netherland was a refuge for several persecuted groups. Huguenots and Jews who had trouble elsewhere were welcome in the Dutch colony. This tradition of acceptance would go on to shape the future United States.

End of an Era

Unfortunately for the Dutch, the English had their eyes on New Netherland too. In 1664, the English captured the colony without firing a single shot. Governor Peter Stuyvesant wanted to resist the English. But the settlers felt unprotected and disconnected from the Dutch government. They chose not to fight. The English took control and renamed New Amsterdam to New York, after the Duke of York.

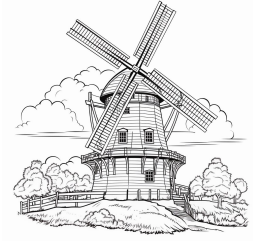
Dutch settlers carved out a unique space for themselves in American colonial history. Their rule lasted only for a few decades. But the legacy of their culture, governance, and traditions left a lasting mark on the region. Names like Brooklyn (from "Breukelen") and Harlem (from "Haarlem") remind us of their legacy.

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Reading Questions

1. Why did the Dutch explore the coast of the New World in 1609? _____

2. Which company was created by the Dutch to manage trade in the Americas? _____

3. What did the Dutch trade with the Lenape and what did they receive? _____

4. Do you think that the Dutch dealt fairly with the Lenape? Why do you feel this way?

5. In what ways were Dutch roots and culture reflected in the New Netherlands? List at least two.

6. Why did the Dutch settlers choose not to fight back against the English? _____

7. How was the Dutch tradition of tolerance expressed in New Netherland? _____

8. How do you think this tradition shaped or influenced future principles of the United States?

9. Why do you think Governor Stuyvesant wanted to fight the English and the settlers didn't?

10. In what ways did the Dutch leave a lasting legacy even after their rule ended? _____
