

# **Sex and the City**

## **The Early Years**



**A Bawdy Look at Dutch Manhattan**  
**by Bill Greer**

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## About the Author

Bill Greer has spent much of his working life in the heart of New Amsterdam and is a Trustee of the New Netherland Institute. His novel of New Amsterdam, **The Mevrouw Who Saved Manhattan**, paints a real and humorous portrait of Dutch life on the Hudson through the eyes of a sharp-tongued bride who comes among the first settlers.

## Reviews for **The Mevrouw Who Saved Manhattan**

**From de Halve Maen, Journal of the Holland Society  
of New York, Summer 2009**

“[A] romp through the history of New Netherland that would surely have Petrus Stuyvesant complaining about the riot transpiring between its pages ... Readers are guaranteed a genuine adventure that will evoke the full range of human emotions. Once begun, they can expect to experience that rare difficulty in putting down a book before they have finished.”

**From Historical Novels Review,  
August 2009**

“Bill Greer has deftly blended fact and fiction in his humorous tale *The Mevrouw Who Saved Manhattan* ... The characters are rowdy, raunchy, loveable, and sometimes despicable, but thoroughly believable ... This is a thoroughly delightful story that brings the Dutch colonies to life. *The Mevrouw Who Saved Manhattan* is heartily recommended with or without a tankard of beer, not ale, to accompany it.”



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# **Sex and the City: The Early Years**

A Bawdy Look at Dutch Manhattan

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**F**OUR HUNDRED YEARS BEFORE Carrie Bradshaw and the girls burst onto the New York scene in *Sex and the City*, Griet Reyniers invented the role of the New York woman on the prowl. In 1633, Griet stepped off the ship *de Soutberg*, the Salt Mountain, and onto the Manhattan shore.

The tiny village of New Amsterdam was eight years old. Two hundred people lived there. The *de Soutberg* was also bringing a new Director appointed by the Dutch West India Company, which ruled the place. Wouter van Twiller was the 27-year old nephew of a high official of the Company, Kiliaen van Rensselaer. Van Rensselaer wasn't one of their Honors the Nineteen who governed the Company, more likely number twenty-two or three. Today, his name is memorialized in Rensselaer, NY, and the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Van Twiller seems awfully young for the weighty responsibility of ruling a distant outpost. But as his Uncle Kiliaen liked to say, "one cannot accomplish as much by doing well as by having friends in the game." Maybe that's how Van Twiller got the job.



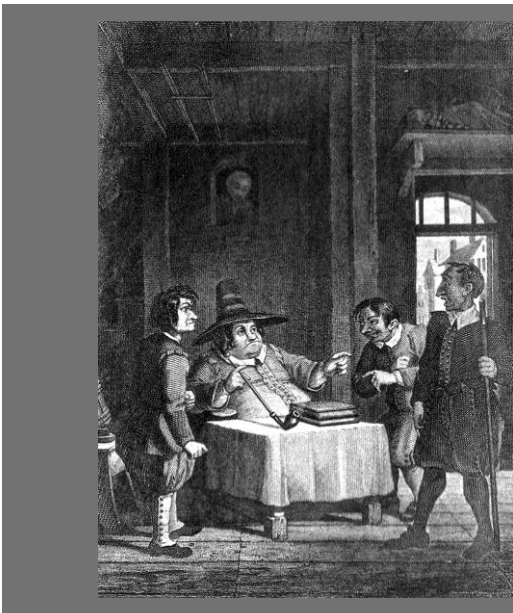
**New Amsterdam after Griet arrived.**

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Van Twiller had either hooked up with Griet in an Amsterdam tavern, where she was known for hoisting her petticoats in the back room, or aboard ship, where she entertained herself pulling sailors' shirts out of their breeches. Whichever, he liked his first taste and took her for his mistress, making Griet New York's first high class hooker.

Within five years, Van Twiller ran afoul of his Amsterdam masters and was recalled to Holland. He broke things off with Griet. Having his own personal whore in the wilderness was one thing, quite another to traipse into his Uncle Kiliaen's Amsterdam drawing room with Griet on his arm. If anyone questioned her character, she would likely turn around, lift her skirt and tell them to have a good lick on the bare rump she was slapping. That's exactly what she'd done on Pearl Street when sailors called out, "Whore, whore, two pounds butter whore!" Lifted her skirt, slapped her rump and yelled back, "*Blaes my daer achterin.*" In today's vernacular, that would translate as Kiss My Ass.

Getting thrown over by her sweetheart didn't slow Griet down. She marched into the fort by Bowling Green and declared, "I have long enough been the whore of the nobility, now I want to be the whore of the rabble." To attract customers, Griet was known to wave her broomstick around, challenging prospective tricks to test their manliness against it.



Director Wouter van Twiller,  
the nephew of Kiliaen van  
Rensselaer:

*"One cannot accomplish as  
much by doing well as by  
having friends in the game."*

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At some point Griet grew tired of her philandering ways and got married, or maybe not so tired as her philandering continued after the wedding. Her husband was Anthony Jansen van Salee, better known as the Turk. The Van Salee part of the name came from the African port his Dutch father sailed from as Admiral of a Sultan's fleet. His nickname the Turk came from the Moroccan woman the Admiral bedded. Anthony's mother gave her son his swarthy skin, but he behaved more like the pirate his father had turned into. As a cantankerous troublemaker, he was a good match for Griet.

Serious trouble started when the couple got into a dispute with the Reverend Everardus Bogardus, a Dominie of the Dutch Reformed Church who arrived with Van Twiller and Griet.

Dominie or not, Bogardus was no saint. For starters, he shared with many Dutchmen a fondness for drink. More than once he was accused of stumbling over his feet getting into the pulpit or over his words when he got there. While the drink might lead to a good tongue-lashing for his congregation, it also led him to abuse his companions over dinner, in the tavern, during weddings and at most other occasions. In one sermon, he accused Director Willem Kieft, who succeeded Van Twiller, of being a child of the devil, no better than a buck goat. Bogardus could understand how such a monster might be produced in Africa, where on account of the great heat, wild animals of different types copulated together and produced abominable offspring. But he couldn't understand it in the temperate climate of New Amsterdam.



**A child of the devil, no better than a buck goat. Such a monster might be produced in Africa where on account of the great heat, wild animals of different types copulate together and produce abominable offspring. But not in this temperate climate.**

*Reverend Everardus  
Bogardus on Director Kieft*



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Reverend Bogardus grew a bit riled when Griet called his wife Anna a whore. The insults had started flying when the court ordered the Turk to pay 319 guilders he owed the Dominie. Van Salee refused, rather he countersued that Bogardus owed him 74 guilders. Bogardus denied it in court but finally owned up to a debt of seven guilders.

Griet was incensed. The holy man Bogardus swore a false oath over those seven guilders, she charged. Questioning a man's honor in that way was a serious accusation. To top it off, Bogardus's wife Anna lifted her skirt in public like a common whore, Griet and Anthony claimed. Imagine such immoral behavior by a preacher's wife!

But other witnesses testified that Anna merely raised her hem while she was crossing a rough and muddy road. Griet and Van Salee had gone too far. The court ordered Griet to swear under oath that Bogardus was no perjurer and to beg his forgiveness. Van Salee had to acknowledge that Anna was an honorable and virtuous woman.

That punishment didn't stop Griet or the Turk from raising hell, however. After a couple more incidents, Director Kieft banished the couple from New Netherland. Griet and Van Salee had six months to wrap up affairs and depart.

But before six months were out, a child was on the way. To support the baby, Director Kieft granted the Turk two hundred acres of Long Island waterfront. Manhattan's first whore moved to Brooklyn, finishing out her life as a respectable farmer's wife.

Well, not so respectable. When she bore her child, Griet begged the midwife to say who the child resembled, her husband the mulatto Turk or Andries Hudde. "If you do not know who the father is," the midwife said, "how should I?"



### **Reverend Bogardus's wife Anna**

***She lifted her skirt in  
public like a common  
whore, claimed Griet and  
Anthony.***

## A Bawdy World

**T**O EUROPEANS OF THE ERA, Griet's outrageous ways simply reflected the loose morals of Dutch society during the seventeenth century, in what is known as the Golden Age of the Netherlands, the most prosperous country in Europe at the time.

The Dutch certainly had a fondness for beer. If a Dutchman had no drinking partner, observed one traveler in Holland, he would choose his own hat or coat as a boon companion and drink himself so silly that he reached the same level of reason as the hat or the coat. Dutch women outnumbered their men because they drank so much that they couldn't beget boys, argued an English visitor.

The Dutch more or less agreed. "Beer and wine certainly weren't brewed for the geese," they said. "So let us use it to our hearts' content."

Gambling went hand in hand with drinking. Pass-ten was a popular dice game in which each player rolled the dice from a glass appropriated as the shaker. A man immediately downed as many drinks as the number he had thrown. A woman immediately gave her fellow players kisses totaling her roll. One preacher thundered against the scene around the card table: "Young girls got up like dolls, with shameful hair-styles, their necks, shoulders and bosom bare, offering to young men a spectacle of sinful flesh which tempts them to stray in the paths of their own hearts and amid the impure visions of their eyes, contaminated by disgusting pleasures, forgetful that one day they will have to appear before their judge."



**Beer and wine certainly weren't brewed for the geese,  
so let us use it to our heart's content.**

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That preacher was on the right track for fervor for sex played second fiddle to neither beer nor games of chance. When asked whether it was better to make love in the morning or evening, a Dutch doctor concluded it was no doubt better on the digestion to have your poke in the a.m.. But it was more fun in the p.m., so why not do it in the morning for health and in the evening for pleasure?

If a Dutchman was looking for new ways to pleasure his mate, he found a copy of *Venus Minsieke Gasthauis*, an extraordinarily frank sex manual that went through seven printings during the seventeenth century. Don't over do it, the manual warned. Four or five ejaculations a night is all a man's health can endure. Indulge more often and your semen will lose its fertility. And don't come at your beloved from behind, humping like a wild beast.

Women got much of the blame for throwing inhibitions to the wind. A nubile maiden was like a chestnut on the fire, sure to explode if not cooled down. Sex before marriage was known as a "premature conversation," and plenty of couples started early. A couplet about the goings on at peasants' festivals describes the loose behavior: *There people recklessly make a mixed bed / That is, a net for catching virgins.*



Better on the digestion in the a.m.,  
but more fun in the p.m. So why  
not do it in the morning for health  
and in the evening for pleasure?

*A Dutch doctor on sex*



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The devil was conspiring to ruin the Fatherland by luring serving girls to all kinds of moral iniquity, according to “The Seven Devils Ruling Present-Day Maidservants,” a 17<sup>th</sup> century satire. Widowers were particularly vulnerable to seduction by their maids, a folly described as “a man shitting in his own hat and then setting it on his head.” Said a maid about her morals, “It costs so much to keep your honor. I’m glad I’m well rid of mine.”

So the people of Manhattan came by their bawdy character honestly. As New York’s earliest whore, Griet wasn’t the only person who earned a place in the early annals of Sex and the City.

### **An Early Member of Manhattan’s Gay Community**

**H**ARMEN VAN DEN BOGAERT ARRIVED in Manhattan about 1630 at the tender age of eighteen. He was New York’s first surgeon, barber too for in those days the person who deloused your hair also bled you when you took sick.

For nearly twenty years, Van den Bogaert was a respected citizen about town. He owned a house on Stone Street, called Brouwer in those days for the breweries that lined it. His wife Jelisje bore him four children. Along with other town leaders, Van den Bogaert invested in the La Garce, a privateer raiding Spaniards in the Caribbean. So what the wars with Spain had ended, there was money to be made.



My master’s son was always pawing at my breasts

I wasn’t bothered. I let him do it

You see, he loved me and I was green

Oh, I’d grab him if he missed me

It happened once that while I made his bed

He caught me in his arms and threw me on the sheets

I can’t begin to tell what fun the fellow had

Before he had his way ...

‘Twasn’t bad at all – oh ‘twas sweet.

*Maid servant on becoming a whore in Bredero’s play, The Spanish Brabanter*

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In 1634, Van den Bogaert was named an ambassador to the Mohawks. In the middle of winter, he and two companions set off on the arduous journey into Mohawk country. Their assignment was to restore the fur trade, disrupted by what the Mohawks considered prices that cheated them out of their beaver and a crooked head of the Dutch trading post at Fort Orange, today's Albany. Frenchmen eager to claim the fur trade for themselves stirred the Mohawk's anger. By all accounts, the mission was a success, and in the bargain, Van den Bogaert left us a journal that sheds much light on the life of the Indians he visited.

But in 1647 upriver at Fort Orange, Van den Bogaert was discovered in what the Dutch considered an unnatural position with a young boy named Tobias. The offense was a capital crime. Two sailors caught buggering aboard ship would be tied together and cast overboard. Even a powerful business or social position was no guarantee of safety. Justus Schouten was a leading official in the East Indies when he was found *in flagrante* with a young native. Despite his connections as a close advisor to the Governor-General in Batavia, he was burned at the stake.

Realizing the fate awaiting him, Van den Bogaert fled to his friends the Mohawks. Chasing after, a Dutchman cornered him in a Mohawk longhouse. Van de Bogaert set the longhouse afire, but the conflagration did not help him escape. He was hauled off to jail.

The new Director Peter Stuyvesant promised to come to Fort Orange when the ice broke on the river. He would personally pass sentence on the criminal, and he was not a man from whom anyone should expect mercy. Desperate, Van den Bogaert broke out of his prison. But his luck had run out. As he scampered across the frozen river, the ice cracked. Sucking its victim into its icy flow, the river carried out the capital sentence.

Lest anyone think Stuyvesant might have shown mercy, some years later Jan Quisthout van der Linden was caught sodomizing an orphan boy placed with him as an apprentice. He was tied in a sack and drowned. Being the victim was not punishment enough for the orphan either. He was whipped.

## The Adulteress

NANNE BEECH DIDN'T LET MUCH get in the way of her fun, least of all her husband. In 1638, the still-closeted Van den Bogaert observed her at a neighbor's house "appearing merry." Strong drink making her frisky, Nanne spent the evening fumbling at the breeches of all the men present. Her husband Thomas begged her to come home, but she was not to be persuaded.

That particular evening was a relatively innocent one for Nanne. Not so another night when Nanne opened her home to two guests, Edward Wilson and Francis Lastley. According to Wilson, Nanne offered a little too much hospitality to Lastley.

Proclaiming her innocence, Nanne, or perhaps her husband Thomas, sued Wilson for slander. Wilson testified he was sick abed while staying with the Beeches. Thomas was out hunting. Feeling lonely, or taking advantage of a good situation, Nanne cosied up to Lastley. As their affections progressed, Nanne called out three times to make sure Wilson was asleep. He pretended to be. But he kept one eye cocked open as Nanne lay upon the bed with Lastley, manipulating his "male member" and engaging in "carnal conversation."

No word survived on how the court decided the slander case. But Thomas took his wife's adulterous ways hard. In a very depressed state a year later, Thomas declared he should not live another fortnight, or a month at the longest. His prophecy proved true. Within a year, Nanne had captured a second husband.



**Young girls got up like dolls, with shameful hair-styles, their necks, shoulders and bosom bare, offering a spectacle of sinful flesh.**  
*A preacher on card games*

### **The Cuckold**

Joost Goderis learned the hard way that trouble in the marriage bed could be no private matter in New Netherland. Returning from a day of oystering near Ellis Island, Goderis was met by a group of men who'd taken an interest in his wife. Claiming that one of the town's schepens, Allard Anthony, had had the woman on her back, they called out Goderis ought to wear horns like cattle in the woods. One went so far as to ask Joost to permit him to lay where Allard lay, to have sexual connection with the lady himself. Blows soon followed and before the melee ended, Goderis suffered not only the humiliation of being one of New York's early public cuckold's but a sliced neck as well.

### **The Jilted Woman**

**G**RIETJE WESTERCAMP WAS A GOOD GIRL, really she was. She loved Pieter Jacobsen, but she wasn't throwing her virginity away until she got the promise. Say you'll marry me, then you can enjoy my pleasures, she told him. He promised, Grietje testified before the court. He is the father of my baby. Make him marry me.

The judges looked at Pieter. A promise of marriage made in the Eyes of God shall remain in force, they ruled.

But I never promised, Peter swore. Grietje Westercamp is a loose woman. She lay under the blanket with Jan van Breeman, and with his daughter in bed beside them.

Juriaen Westvael and his wife backed up Pieter's story, in return for a few coins Grietje believed. The judges pressed Pieter. Did you not enjoy Grietje's pleasures? Did you not promise to marry the girl?

Pieter finally broke under the interrogation. One time, he admitted, one time I lay with the plaintiff. But, he asked, looking at the pregnant girl, how can a woman be thirteen months in the family way? He wasn't the father and he had never uttered a word about marriage. Where was her proof?

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Proof? the judges asked. Did Grietje have her promise in writing? Or could she bring witnesses who had heard Pieter say it, and had the couple exchanged gifts? That would be binding.

Poor Grietje had neither paper, gifts nor witnesses. The court could not force the marriage without proof of the promise.

But he admitted he lay with me, Grietje protested.

True, the judges decided. Pieter has acknowledged a time he lay with the girl and he is bound to pay her for that service. Two hundred guilders.

At least the judges treated Grietje better than a common whore. Two hundred guilders was far above the going rate.

### **A Bigamist and an Embezzler**

CORNELIS VAN TIENHOVEN WAS AN important man. He came as a clerk, but Director Kieft promoted him to Secretary, a powerful position responsible for recording land deeds and marriages, taking depositions, keeping minutes for the Director's Council, collecting taxes.



A nubile maiden is like a chestnut on the fire, sure to explode if not cooled down.



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Being a compatriot of Kieft and supporting the Director's Indian wars made Van Tienhoven none too popular. He wasn't an appealing man to start with, being rather corpulent with a red and bloated visage. He was known for chasing Indian women wearing nothing but a patch over his loins and his lust showing through. Meanwhile his wife Rachel sat at home raising the children.

When Peter Stuyvesant took over, Van Tienhoven retained his position as Secretary. In 1650, he returned to Holland to defend Stuyvesant against accusations of tyranny. He grew lonely with his wife so far away so he took up with a basket maker's young daughter named Lysbeth.

The girl's widowed mother was none too happy about the arrangement. The couple ran away. They secretly set up house together at a tavern called The Three Doves. Upon the proprietor raising questions, Van Tienhoven admitted he and Lysbeth weren't married, merely engaged. He intended to wed her as soon as they returned to New Amsterdam.

Lysbeth believed his promises. The sheriff did not. He caught up to the couple, but Van Tienhoven bought him off. With the heat upon him, Van Tienhoven decided he better ignore the orders not to leave Holland without official permission. He and Lysbeth slipped aboard a ship bound for New Amsterdam.

Unfortunately for Lysbeth, Van Tienhoven's wife Rachel waited on the Manhattan shore, dissolving the poor girl's engagement but saving Van Tienhoven from becoming New York's first bigamist.

The man still had a first in him, however. Upon his return, Van Tienhoven wormed his way back into all Stuyvesant's business, only to be discovered with his fingers in the till. New York had found its first embezzler, or at least first caught red-handed.

Shortly thereafter, Van Tienhoven's hat and cane were found floating in the river. Stuyvesant declared he had drowned. Most people believed Van Tienhoven had absconded to the Caribbean with the embezzled funds.

## **Two Deviants**

**W**ILLEM GILFOORT ATTAINED HIS NOTORIETY in 1648 when he ran across 11-year old Maria Barents. The girl's mother had unwisely let her wander off alone. Gilfoort scooped the child up and threw her into the cellar of a neighbor's house.

Climbing in after, the man untied his breeches and jumped atop Maria. For a quarter hour, he tried to have carnal conversation with her.

Gilfoort was charged as New York's first child molestor. But poor Maria was too young for Gilfoort to achieve his desired penetration, the court ruled. It sentenced him to flogging and banishment. A punishment lighter than the man deserved, the court noted, but it justified the leniency on the grounds that shortly after Gilfoort's act, Maria willfully consented to conversation with one Willem Wessels. Ready or not, the girl was starting young.

New York's first schoolmaster, Adam Roelantsen, was known for poking his nose into other people's business. Seeing how much fun others were having, he decided to claim his own on a visit to Harck Syboltsen. Harck wasn't home but when his wife Mevrouw Teunes answered the door, Roelantsen pushed in and proceeded to violate the poor woman, or try to. When he was hauled into court on a charge of rape, he admitted to fondling the woman's naked breasts. With marks of his attack still visible on her body, Roelantsen was condemned to be flogged and banished as an example to others.

Director Kieft, however, took pity on Roelantsen's four children who had lost their mother, and with a cold winter approaching, he postponed the sentence to a more suitable opportunity which evidently never arrived.

## **The Roots of Rebellion**

**W**HERE DID ALL THIS debauchery lead? The Directors appointed by the West India Company thought the answer was down the path to perdition. In a sense, they were right for the bawdy behavior was one sign of a rebellious streak that would lead to conflict

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throughout the era of New Amsterdam. The roots ran far deeper than bad behavior, however. The conflict really turned on economics – who would reap the benefits of the fur trade, the West India Company or the people – and politics – who would govern the place, the appointees of the Company or the people themselves.

Trouble started at the very beginning. Willem Verhulst came as the first Director in 1625 and established the settlement at the mouth of the Hudson, first on Governor's Island, then on Manhattan. He ruled with a hard and arbitrary hand, or so the people thought. No matter they were sworn to obey, before a year was out they set up their own court and put Verhulst on trial over his intemperate rule. While we don't know precisely what his crimes were, he was deposed and banished from the colony. He didn't do himself any favors hearing his sentence. If he were not serving the honorable gentlemen of the West India Company, he threatened, he knew other masters who would want his services and he knew how to avenge himself. He perhaps had the English or French in mind.

The presumed ringleader of the rebellion was elected to replace Verhulst – the man who had come as his lieutenant and who has gone down in history as purchasing Manhattan from the Indians for 24 dollars, Peter Minuit. His takeover wasn't the last sign of a rebellious streak in Minuit. After the Company recalled him a few years later, he carried out the act Verhulst only threatened. He went to work for the Swedes, intending to steal the Delaware River from the Dutch.



Peter Minuit,  
the man who has gone down  
in history as making the  
greatest real estate deal of all  
time, purchasing Manhattan  
for \$24 in trade goods.

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The next Director fared a little better with the people, Wouter van Twiller, who brought Griet as his mistress. Perhaps he was more tolerant of the people's behavior, given his own, and more interested in snapping up real estate for himself than tending to the Company's business. He had a particular fondness for islands, taking title to what today are Roosevelt, Randalls, Wards in the Hellgate where Long Island Sound meets the East River and Governor's Island in the bay.

The notorious Willem Kieft succeeded Van Twiller. One of his first acts aimed to straighten out the people's morals. He issued An Ordinance against Immoderate Drinking. Imbibing too much beer and brandy led to much evil and mischief, Kieft charged. He wouldn't abide it. Nor would he accept the selling of wine except from official Company stores. Perhaps competition cutting into the Company's profits was as much concern as the people's morals.

Kieft went on to outlaw drinking past the 10 p.m. curfew and fornicating with savages. Then he outlawed the festivities of Shrove Tuesday, the day before Lent. New Orleans didn't hold America's first Mardi Gras, New York did.

Shrove Tuesday was a day dear to Dutch culture. It began with men stealing the skirts from their wives and parading through the streets – New York's first transvestites if only for a day. Their wives chased after them bare-bummed.

After the ladies reclaimed their clothing, the celebration proceeded to Pulling the Goose. A goose was buried in the street with its head sticking out and waving like a hydra dodging Hercules's sword. Men galloped by at full speed, grabbing at the neck. The one who got hold and tore off the goose's head won a prize.

With the competition over, everyone got back to drinking and brawling with an intensity that led to the Dutch proverb, a hundred Netherlanders, a hundred knives. More Dutchmen landed at the doctor or in the cemetery on Shrove Tuesday than any other day of the year.

All Kieft's ruining the fun stirred the people of New Amsterdam up to a boil. When Kieft launched a massacre that started an Indian war, they were ready to lynch him. A

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tailor named Hendrick Kip suggested they send Kieft to Master Gerritt in Amsterdam. Those in the know understood that Master Gerritt referred to the public executioner. Kip offered to send along a pound Flemish so Kieft could die like a nobleman. A pound Flemish would buy a man an axe instead of a rope.

The people didn't send Kieft to Master Gerritt, they arguably did something bolder. They wrote a letter to the Company, specifically to the Prudent Gentlemen of the Amsterdam Chamber, the committee that handled day to day operations. After outlining the colony's forlorn condition and Kieft's crimes, they got to the point: either send us a new governor or we're packing up our wives and children and quitting the place.

That wasn't bold enough though. The people also went over the Company's head and wrote the High and Mighty Lords the States General, the ruling body of the Netherlands. That amounted to appealing to the boss's bosses' bosses' bosses. In the Dutch scheme of things, there wasn't any higher to go before God.

Sure enough, their High Mightinesses sent a missive down to their Honors the Nineteen who ruled the Company wondering why their lofty heights were being disturbed. And their Honors the Nineteen passed the missive down to the Prudent Gentlemen of the Amsterdam Chamber who handled operations asking how affairs reached such a state that their High Mightinesses were butting into Company business. And the Prudent Gentleman decided they better find a scapegoat, and who fit that bill better than the man on the spot, Director Kieft? Before he knew it, all the colony's troubles were laid on Kieft's shoulders.

It took a few years, things moved slowly in those days, but the Company recalled Kieft. The people got what they asked for, a new governor. Unfortunately for them, his name was Peter Stuyvesant, and he was the most effective tyrant the Company had yet sent. He didn't take long to impose ordinances that made Kieft's look mild.

First off, he outlawed the pig pens and privies that occupied the streets of New Amsterdam. From now on, he warned the people, keep yourselves and your livestock shitting on your own property. He liked to ride his horse through town and evidently didn't appreciate the stench or dirtying his horse's feet.



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Then he went after the tavern keepers. Fully one quarter of the town was brandy shops and tobacco and beer houses, he charged. As a consequence, honorable trades were being neglected and the people seriously debauched. Worse still, youth, seeing the improper example of their parents, were being set on a path toward the devil. So all clandestine grogeries were being shut down and any legitimate tippling places better apply for a license.

Furthermore, Stuyvesant ordered, if a tavern keeper sees any fighting or mischief in his establishment, he better inform an officer immediately on pain of forfeiting his business. He'd be fined a pound Flemish for every hour he concealed the matter. And Stuyvesant would no longer tolerate reveling at unseasonable hours or drinking to excess on the Sabbath. From now on, the curfew bell would ring at 9 p.m., and tavern keepers would shut down their taps. Nor would they serve before three in the afternoon on Sundays.

Next, Myn Heer General, as Stuyvesant insisted he be addressed, was sick and tired of how the town profaned the Holy Sabbath. From now on the Dominies would preach both morning and afternoon on Sundays. All officers, subjects and vassals were commanded to attend both sermons. No more tapping, fishing, hunting or any other fun until afternoon services ended.



Peter Stuyvesant

“People may think of appealing during my time – should anyone do so, I would have him made a foot shorter, pack the pieces off to Holland and let him appeal in that way.”

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Those orders marked the beginning of a tumultuous relationship that would last seventeen years, until the English took over. In Stuyvesant's view, the people better obey and keep their mouths' shut. To speak evil of one's superiors was one of the greatest offenses a person could commit against the government. *Crimen lasae majestatis*, Stuyvesant called it in Latin. Under military law, a soldier could be punished with loss of limb or life for ridiculing his superiors, he warned. The he quoted canon law: "Whosoever slanders God, the authorities or his parents shall be stoned to death."

The people protested once again to their High Mightinesses the States General. Stuyvesant warned them again. Anyone who thought of appealing his rulings to Amsterdam would be made a foot shorter and packed off to Holland in pieces, his removed head shipped in its own box. While Stuyvesant never actually chopped off any heads, he did ruin many who questioned his authority, from the richest merchant to the lowliest baker.

Threats notwithstanding, the people persisted. Finally their High Mightinesses listened. They recalled Stuyvesant. But before the ship carrying the order set sail for New Amsterdam, Englishmen fired on another Dutch ship in the channel separating the Netherlands from England. "War," the Company cried, "we can't change the government in the colony now." To the people's chagrin, their High Mightinesses agreed. They snatched their order back.

While New Amsterdam was stuck with Stuyvesant until the bitter end, the people's protests finally brought them one victory. In 1653, their High Mightinesses ordered Stuyvesant to stop butting his nose into every petty dispute and allow New Amsterdam to set up its own municipal government – a date some historians consider the birth of New York City.

### **Stuyvesant's Amours**

**STUYVESANT, THE STIFFEST OF MEN** who was so outraged by immoral behavior, must have nearly burst in anger when "Broad Advice" was published in 1649. Purporting to

## Sex and the City: The Early Years

offer advice to the West India Company, this pamphlet really delivered a libelous screed against Stuyvesant and his predecessor Director Kieft.

The writer presumably was a sworn enemy named Adriaen van der Donck, who had led a delegation to Amsterdam to demand Stuyvesant's recall. He knew how to hit Myn Heer General where it hurt. As a young man, Stuyvesant had attended the University of Franeker in Holland. Though he failed to graduate, thereafter he signed his name not Peter but Petrus, the Latin variation because an educated man should have a Latin name.

Why did Stuyvesant fail to graduate? Broad Advice delivered the answer. The son of a Dutch Reformed minister "robbed the daughter of his host," or in more modern language, he couldn't keep his hands off his landlord's daughter or his prick in his pants. The university booted him out for seducing the young virgin.

Arguably the next charge enraged Stuyvesant even more, questioning as it did his service to the Company. Before coming to New Amsterdam, he commanded the Company's holdings in the Caribbean. With the Netherlands locked in a bitter war with Spain, he attacked the Spanish stronghold at St. Martin. A cannon ball tore his right leg off, forcing the Dutch to retreat.

Why had the Dutch lost the battle? Broad Advice delivered an answer for that question too. The puffed-up peacock Stuyvesant burned all the powder firing salutes to himself on the voyage to St. Martin. None was left to fight the Spaniards. Indeed when the very first ball from the enemy's cannon shattered his leg, Stuyvesant retreated so fast that the Dutch left everything behind, even their field pieces. After such an heroic action, was it any wonder the Company appointed him to Director in New Amsterdam?

A lost leg would kill a man of lesser steel. But Stuyvesant returned to the Holland home of his sister Anna to recuperate. Judith Bayard, the sister of Anna's husband, nursed him back to health. At thirty-seven, the nurse was a spinster long past marrying age. Three years younger and no spring chicken himself, Stuyvesant took a shine to Judith.

Stuyvesant told her brother that he intended to ask Judith for her hand. The brother scoffed. "You will never get the nerve," he claimed, and he would put his money on it. He proposed a bet of a considerable quantity of French wine.

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Stuyvesant's friend John Farret agreed. The two men were so close they wrote poems to one another. Upon hearing of Stuyvesant's wound, Farret had penned:

*My Stuyvesant, who falls and tumbles on his bulwark,  
Where, like a dutiful soldier, he taunted the enemy,  
To lure him into the field, on the Island of St. Marten.  
The bullet hits his leg; the rebound touches my heart.*

[Translation by Dr. Elizabeth Paling Funk]

Upon hearing of his friend's betrothal, Farret chose a different theme for the poem he sent. Priapus has died in you, my friend, he wrote, referring to a Greek fertility God. If wed, you will never consummate the relationship. Stuyvesant was furious. He charged his friend with trying to make him lose the bet of wine.

But Stuyvesant and his bride married before setting sail for New Amsterdam, probably toasting their nuptials with the wine he won. Farret had to eat his words. When the couple stepped onto the Manhattan shore, Stuyvesant was sporting a new wooden leg and Judith was four months pregnant with their first of two sons.



Priapus has died in you,  
my friend. If wed, you will  
never consummate the  
relationship.

*John Farret on learning  
of Stuyvesant's betrothal  
to Judith Bayard*

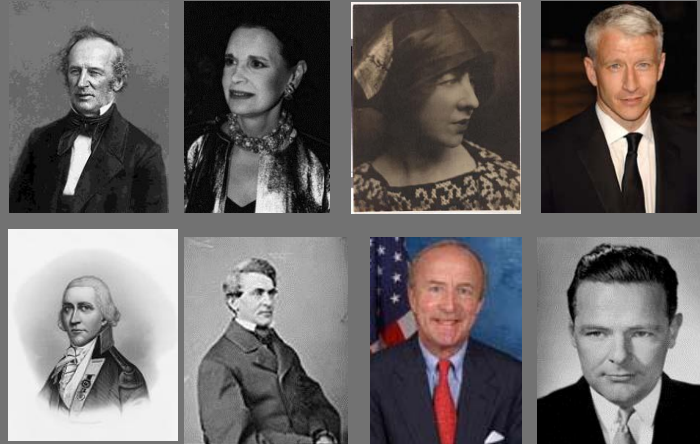
Sex and the City: The Early Years

**Griet's Offspring**

AS MANHATTAN'S FIRST WOMAN ON THE PROWL, Griet may be the spiritual mother of the Sex and the City girls. But her role as mother extends far beyond television. Five generations down, Griet and the Turk's descendants married into the clan spawned by another of New York's earliest couples. Catalina Trico and Joris Rapalje came as newlyweds among the first families the Dutch sent to the Hudson Valley. Catalina bore the first white child, a daughter named Sarah.

The union of these families produced Commodore Cornelius Vanderbilt, whose steamboats and railroads made him the richest man of his era. Through the Commodore, Griet was ultimately responsible for fashion designer Gloria Vanderbilt, museum benefactor Gertrude Vanderbilt Whitney, two Dukes of Marlborough and a host of Lords and Ladies they begat and CNN celebrity Anderson Cooper. Through another of her daughters, Griet led to several senators and congressmen in the Frelinghuysen family, including a current member of the House of Representatives, Rodney Frelinghuysen.

The Public Television news show Frontline has claimed that Griet also has as family a First Lady and a renowned Hollywood actor. It is not absolutely clear whether the claim is that Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis and Humphrey Bogart were great-grandchildren of Griet and the Turk several times over or niece and nephew by way of Anthony's supposed brother Abraham. Either way, New York's first whore passed something of herself to the city of today.



Griet's Offspring



# The Mevrouw Who Saved Manhattan

by Bill Greer

“A very authentic ring ...  
like etchings by  
Van Ostade and Steen.”

– Charles Wendell, Ph.D., President of  
the New Netherland Institute

## A Novel of New Amsterdam

When Mevrouw Jackie Lambert opens her New Amsterdam tavern in 1626, she jumps aboard a madcap ride through New York history. With a razor-sharp tongue and the tastiest beer on either side of the Atlantic, Jackie spurs the tiny Manhattan settlement toward a head-on collision with the tyrannical Dutchmen who rule it. Poison, blackmail, murder, all are fair game as she fends off threats to the family she yearned for growing up as an orphan. And when peggleg Peter Stuyvesant would rather destroy the town than surrender his honor, Jackie must take history into her own hands or lose everything she has spent a lifetime building.



## A Real Portrait

While a work of fiction, *The Mevrouw Who Saved Manhattan* paints a real portrait of life in New Amsterdam with all its humor, bawdiness, and conflict. It presents a window into how Dutch culture during the Golden Age of the Netherlands transplanted to the wilderness of the Hudson Valley. The thread of Jackie's life reflects the central theme of the Dutch period, the rebellion of the common people against their rulers, the Dutch West India Company and its Directors, a conflict that historians argue laid the foundation for the pluralistic, freedom-loving society that America became.

## About the Author

Bill Greer has spent much of his working life in the heart of New Amsterdam. He is a Trustee and Treasurer of the New Netherland Institute, a membership organization supporting research and education in Dutch-American history. Visit him at [www.BillsBrownstone.com](http://www.BillsBrownstone.com) for more on Mevrouw's world and old New York and to read an excerpt of fifty pages from *The Mevrouw Who Saved Manhattan*.

CONTACT: [Bill@BillsBrownstone.com](mailto:Bill@BillsBrownstone.com) / 347-204-1917

## Reviews

### From de Halve Maen, Journal of the Holland Society of New York

“[A] romp through the history of New Netherland that would surely have Petrus Stuyvesant complaining about the riot transpiring between its pages ... Readers are guaranteed a genuine adventure that will evoke the full range of human emotions. Once begun, they can expect to experience that rare difficulty in putting down a book before they have finished.”

### From Historical Novels Review

“Bill Greer has deftly blended fact and fiction in his humorous tale *The Mevrouw Who Saved Manhattan* ... The characters are rowdy, raunchy, loveable, and sometimes despicable, but thoroughly believable ... This is a thoroughly delightful story that brings the Dutch colonies to life. *The Mevrouw Who Saved Manhattan* is heartily recommended with or without a tankard of beer, not ale, to accompany it.”

Manhattan View Press, New York  
2009

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