



PRIMARY SOURCES OF THE THIRTEEN COLONIES AND THE LOST COLONY™

A Primary Source History of the Colony of
DELAWARE

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DELAWARE PUBLIC ARCHIVES

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The Rosen Publishing Group, Inc., New York

Dutch trade in the New World. Dutch trading posts were soon established along the Delaware River.

One of the first of these posts was called Fort Nassau, located where Gloucester City, New Jersey, now stands. Another early trading post, New Amsterdam, was located on the southern tip of present-day Manhattan. It would become the center of Dutch trading. As the Dutch West India Company grew more interested in the trade New Netherland offered, it encouraged patrons to move to the settlement with an offer of eight years of tax-free living. Any settlers who came to the colony had to pay the patrons rent, though they were also allowed to waive their taxes.

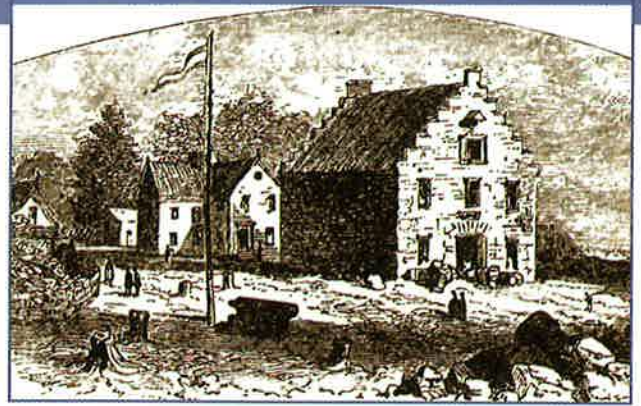
Valley of the Swans

Led by Samuel Godyn and Samuel Blommaert, a group of men started a Dutch settlement on the Delaware Bay. It acquired the services of Captain de Vries to help it. Approximately thirty men set sail from the Netherlands for the New World in December 1630. They sailed on a ship called *De Walvis* (the Whale), loaded with supplies. Peter Heyes captained the voyage. When they arrived in the New World, they established a settlement in Delaware on the west bank of the Lewes Creek. The settlers called the settlement Zwaanendael, which means “valley of the swans.” The poetic description was meant to entice future European settlers; colonists living in Lewes described it as a mosquito-infested swamp. In June 1631, colonists built a house on Lewes Creek, the first European settlement on land that is now Delaware.

Heyes soon returned to the Netherlands, but with only a small amount of the whale oil he had hoped to find. When a second voyage began, de Vries was at the helm. Before they set sail,

New Netherland

This engraving shows the warehouse of the Dutch West India Company in the city of New Amsterdam (New York) between 1623 and 1667. At the time, the Dutch held a monopoly over trade in the region, though it was never as successful as its sister company, the Dutch East India Company, which was active in Southeast Asian trading ventures. By 1794, the Dutch West India Company had completely dissolved.



however, they learned bad news from the New World. A conflict between the settlers and the Native Americans had led to a massacre at Zwaanendael. All its colonists had been killed. Nevertheless, de Vries and his group left the Netherlands in May and arrived at the charred remains of Zwaanendael on December 6, 1632. Today, the original site is located near the Lewes and Rehoboth Canal in Lewes, Delaware, and is commemorated by the Zwaanendael Museum.

De Vries learned that the massacre had resulted from a misunderstanding. Although he worked out a newfound peace between the settlers and the Native Americans, his group began preparing for departure to the Netherlands in April 1633. Zwaanendael had failed, and de Vries again returned with very little whale oil. In 1635, the men who had set out to buy into and help establish the first settlement in Delaware lost interest in their investments. They eventually sold their land back to the Dutch West India Company.

There were other Dutchmen who wanted to establish trade in the New World who were not connected with the Dutch West India Company. To inspire a greater interest in colonizing the region, a

The Colony of Delaware



King Gustav Adolph II of Sweden was a great military leader who often fought on the battlefield during the Thirty Years' War (1618–1648). Beloved as a Swedish hero, he died during the Battle of Lützen in Germany, when he mistakenly charged an enemy formation after being disoriented in a fog. Remembered for his amazing courage and for employing mobile artillery on the battlefield, Adolph was later named Gustav Adolph the Great. His daughter, Christina, became queen of Sweden after his death in 1632.

man named William Usslinx approached the Swedish king Gustav Adolph II. The Dutch who controlled the majority of the trade of the Baltic Sea came to the Swedes because of their military power. Although no New World trading system was established before Adolph's death in 1632, the relationship between Usslinx and Adolph created the link between Dutch and Swedish settlements in America. By 1637, the New Sweden Company formed under the rule of Adolph's daughter, Christina, who was now the queen.

The Rocks

In November 1637, a group of Swedish and Finnish settlers set sail on two ships, the *Key of Kalmar* and the *Griffin*. With Dutchman Peter Minuit (a former leader of the Dutch settlement in New Amsterdam who was angry at the way he was dismissed by Dutch West India officials) in command, the expedition