LEIDEN UNIVERSITY

Tolerance in (Old) New York

Its Origins in New Netherland Historiography

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Date:	June 2016

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Introduction

The year 2009 marked the celebration of four hundred years of friendship between the Netherlands and the United States of America. In 1609, English explorer Henry Hudson, hired by the Dutch East India Company, came upon Manhattan while trying to find a northern sea passage to Asia. His famous journey would result in the founding of New Netherland. What impact this founding had on American history and culture is a topic of debate. It has been widely accepted that the Dutch had some influence on the American English language with words such as *cookies, coleslaw, boss,* and *Yankees,* deriving from the Dutch *koekjes, koolsla, baas,* and *Jan-Kees.*[1] A Dutch legacy can also be found in many place names in regions colonized by the Dutch. In New York City alone, many street and borough names are remnants of a Dutch past. *Harlem* and *Brooklyn* come from the Dutch towns *Haarlem* and *Breukelen,* and those famous streets, *Broadway* and *Wall Street,* come from the Dutch names they had in New Amsterdam, *Breede Weg* and *Walstraat*.[2] But the influence of the Dutch went far beyond an influence on language and place names: at least, there are scholars who argue that the Dutch had an important impact on the development of the U.S. as a tolerant nation.

Historically the Dutch Republic is seen as one of the most tolerant nations of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. In the Low Countries there was more room for religious and intellectual debate than in other European countries such as France and Spain. There was no official state church, and the revolt against the Spanish had led to a strong resentment against oppression as practiced by the Inquisition. According to British historian Jonathan Israel, the Revolt "shattered the previously prevailing religious, academic, education and intellectual frameworks in the Netherlands, creating in the Northern provinces the conditions

[1] Nicoline van der Sijs, *Cookies, Coleslaw, and Stoops: The Influence of Dutch on the North American Languages* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2009), 124-125, 182, 194.
[2] Ibid., 51.

for a society more flexible and tolerant with regard to religious and intellectual dissent than any other in western or central Europe."[3] Though the degree to which there was tolerance in the Dutch Republic has been put into question, there is no denying that compared to many other European nations it was significantly less oppressive.

Still, tolerance remains a difficult topic of discussion in history due to its ambiguous nature; it means different things to different people. As historian Evan Haefeli puts it, "Tolerance and toleration are strange terms to rely on for historical analysis. Though many people believe their meaning is obvious, scholars are not so sure. Varying definitions of the terms exist, often linked to different approaches to studying the topic."[4] Some even go so far as to consider tolerance and toleration two separate things, but Haefeli rightly argues that the terms are so intertwined that drawing distinctions between them may only lead to more confusion surrounding the terms.

What is important about "tolerance" and "toleration" is that they both suggest the existence of a relationship between one or more groups in which one group has more authority than the other(s).[5] Authority is essential to the concept of tolerance. For, especially in a sixteenth- and seventeenth-century context, what tolerance most certainly was not, was a belief in equality. Though the Dutch were considered tolerant for their time, Dutch society was still hierarchical. The Dutch certainly did not think that men and women were equal, or that black people were equal to white people. Tolerance in the Dutch Republic was also not so much about "accepting" differences but rather more closely linked to "tolerating" or "putting up with" differences, a clearly more negative connotation.

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[3] Jonathan Israel, "The Intellectual Debate About Toleration in the Dutch Republic," in *The Emergence of Tolerance in the Dutch Republic*, ed. C, Berkvens-Stevelinck, J. Israel and G.H.M. Posthumus Meyjes (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 1997), 3.
[4] Evan Haefeli, *New Netherland and the Dutch Origins of American Religious Liberty* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 5.
[5] Ibid., 7-8.

Essential to the Dutch concept of tolerance was "liberty of conscience" (*gewetensvrijheid* or *geloofsvrijheid*), as established in the Union of Utrecht in 1579. This treaty, which unified the northern provinces of the Netherlands that until then had been under Spanish control, granted each individual freedom of religion and thought. It stated that "each person will be allowed to be free in his or her religion, and no person shall be investigated according to his or her religion."[6] Supposedly the Dutch brought this freedom of religion with them to their colonies. Yet this "freedom" was not as far-reaching as the term may suggest. The freedom of conscience was largely limited to private circles; everyone could believe what they wanted, as long as they kept it to themselves. This was most prevalent with regard to religion. Though there was no official state church in the Netherlands, the Dutch Reformed Church was considered the public church. No one was forced or coerced to join it, but publically preaching devotion to another religion was not permitted, especially concerning Catholicism, of which the Dutch were particularly suspicious due to its associations with Spanish rule. As Haefeli argues, "Dutch tolerance was designed from the beginning to cope with religious diversity, not to foster it."[7]

Nevertheless, compared with other European countries the Dutch Republic offered many minorities an alternative to oppressive governments. After the Spanish were driven out of the Republic, the population expanded greatly. This was partly due to a decline in the death rate and a return to better hygienic condition in the cities, but for the most part the growth in population was the result of an increase in immigration.[8] Minority groups fled to the Republic to escape both religious and intellectual persecution. Among them were Jews, English dissenters, French Huguenots and famous thinkers such as Descartes and Spinoza.

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[6] S. Groenveld and H.L.Ph. Leeuwenberg, *De Unie van Utrecht: wording en werking van een verbond en een verbondsacte* (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1997), 35. Author's translation.
[7] Haefeli, *Dutch Origins of American Religious Liberty*, 17.
[8] Prof. dr. I, Schoffer, H. van der Wee, and J.A. Bornewasser, *De Lage Landen van 1500 tot 1780* (Amsterdam/Brussel: Elsevier Historische Bibliotheek, 1983), 155, 172-173.

Though not allowed to publicly spread their beliefs and ideas, minorities were protected by liberty of conscience and also by the separation of church and state that existed in the Republic. The Dutch Reformed Church was considered the established church, but it was not an official state church and therefore could not put its stamp on society to the degree it wished to. This limitation allowed Mennonites, Lutherans, and eventually Arminians, to acquire the status of tolerated churches. Even Catholics, though officially banned until the end of the Dutch Republic (1795), were allowed to worship in private and sometimes even to have their own schools and poor relief programs.[9]

Liberty of conscience was not the only reason the Dutch were more tolerant than neighboring European countries. Economic interests have often been referred to as grounds for tolerant circumstances. The Dutch understood that tolerance provided minorities with a safe haven, while at the same time these immigrants brought with them economic benefits to the Dutch Republic. When Lutherans from Germany and Scandinavia arrived in the Republic in the 1620s, they for example provided the Dutch with a cheap work force; Sephardic Jews who flocked to Amsterdam provided the city with an international trade network, as well as significant investments to stimulate Iberian and overseas trade.[10]

The debate about seventeenth-century Dutch tolerance has received a lot of attention in recent years, in large part as a reaction to the publication of journalist Russell Shorto's popular history of New York, *The Island at the Center of the World*, in 2004. In this book he argues that the Dutch are to be credited for American notions of freedom and tolerance. Shorto based much of his work on the translations, by Charles Gehring, of a large bulk of primary sources from the colony of New Netherland which were only (re)discovered in the

[9] M.E.H.N. Mout, "Limits and Debates: A Comparative View of Dutch Toleration in the Sixteenth and Early Seventeenth Centuries," in *The Emergence of Tolerance in the Dutch Republic*, ed. C. Berkvens-Stevelinck et. al. (Leiden: Koninklijke Brill, 1997), 45.
[10] Michiel van Groesen, "Introduction," in: Jonathan Israel and Stuart B. Schwartz, *The Expansion of Tolerance: Religion in Dutch Brazil* (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2007), 7.

1970s. Some argue that the unveiling of these documents has provided scholars with new information about New Netherland, and has thus allowed for a greater understanding of Dutch policies of tolerance in the colony at that time. Besides Shorto, other contemporary scholars who have based much of their research on Gehring's translations include Evan Haefeli and Jaap Jacobs.

The question is if it is really these documents that have provided evidence for the Dutch bringing tolerance to the U.S.. In October 1903, an article appeared in the *Ladies' Home Journal* which stated that all truly American characteristics came from the Dutch, not the English.[11] According to the author, the magazine's editor Edward Bok, four vital institutions of American life had come directly from the Netherlands: free public education, freedom of religious choice, freedom of the press, and the secret ballot.[12] Bok's claims were not rare for that time. From 1890 until 1920 the US went through an episode of "Holland Mania" in which Dutch-American ancestry was widely celebrated. Among other things, the Dutch were applauded for their alleged love of liberty and their instinct of self-government.

But even before Holland Mania, American writers and scholars were writing about the Dutch colony on Manhattan and how it influenced the U.S. In 1819, Washington Irving, under the pseudonym Henry Knickerbocker, wrote a two-volume satirical piece on New Netherland titled *A History of New York: From the Beginning of the World to the End of the Dutch*, which received a wide readership. Works of a more scholarly nature were written as well, by Edmund B. O'Callaghan, an early New Netherland historian, for example. Suffice it to say, there was much interest in the history of New York and New Netherland and its impact on American society and notions of tolerance long before the twenty-first century.

Here, I wish to examine where these ideas about a Dutch influence on tolerance in the U.S. came from, and why it is still such a recurrent topic of debate among scholars today.

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[11] Annette Stott, *Holland Mania: The Unknown Dutch Period in American Art & Culture* (Woodstock, NY: The Overlook Press, 1998), 9.
[12] Ibid., 78.

How can the emphasis on tolerance be explained and why is it so important? Why does there seem to be such an urge to emphasize the Dutch roots of American tolerance? Where has this urge come from and what can explain it? The main argument of this thesis is that recent attention to the idea that the Dutch brought tolerance to the U.S. is only a reiteration of ideas already put forward by scholars from the nineteenth and twentieth century and cannot be severed from these scholars' nationalist self-appraisals. The primary aim is not to compare the ideas of different scholars about Dutch tolerance to see who is for or against the theory that the Dutch brought tolerance to the U.S., but to compare the ideas in order to understand *why* they are for or against it. It is important to look at what evidence these scholars provide in order to gain an understanding of where their claims originate, and how these arguments relate to their background and principles. The aim is thus to find out where ideas about a Dutch tolerance in American history and culture originated and why scholars place value on this topic.

Due to the historiographical nature of this project the works of scholars from different time periods will function as primary sources and the project will entail a critical analysis of these works. Authors to be examined include Washington Irving, Edmund B. O'Callaghan, Douglas Campbell, William Elliot Griffis, and Frederick J. Zwierlein from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and more recently, Russell Shorto, Evan Haefeli, and Jaap Jacobs. Situating these works in the context of phenomena such as Holland Mania and relying on biographical information, intellectual background, and political affiliation of the authors, this thesis examines what, next to scholarly arguments, might explain the arguments about Dutch tolerance in New Netherland and the U.S. and how these scholarly arguments and "other" elements are related.

Chapter 1: Nineteenth-Century Notions of Dutch Tolerance

In 1809 missing-person adverts for a man named Diedrich Knickerbocker appeared in several New York newspapers. The man, a historian, had supposedly gone missing from his hotel in New York City. The hotel placed a notice in the newspapers stating that if Mr. Knickerbocker did not return to pay his bill, they would publish a manuscript that he had left behind. Readers followed the story of Henry Knickerbocker and his manuscript with interest, and the New York police became concerned enough about the story that they considered offering a reward for his safe return. This would not be necessary as the whole story turned out to be a hoax started by Washington Irving as promotion for his new book, *A History of New York from the Beginning of the World to the End of the Dutch Dynasty, by Diedrich Knickerbocker*.[13]

Irving's book was a fictional satire of the history of New York and became the best known discussion of the colonial Dutch published before 1880. It was not so much a history as a critical evaluation of the political situation at that time; as a Federalist, Irving was skeptical of President Thomas Jefferson's focus on agriculture and his failure to see the importance of urban enterprise. At the same time, according to Irving's biographer Andrew Burstein, *A History of New York* was an escape from the present. "As Knickerbocker's creator, Irving is interested in making light of the real issues of the day, but only as his secondary objective; he is primarily engrossed in booking passage to a more innocent time and place, a fabled America that the forgotten Dutch of New Amsterdam days are in some ways made to represent."[14]

The problem with Irving's book was that many people accepted Irving's bias as fact. The Dutch were portrayed by Irving as lazy and unintelligent. "The minds of the good burghers of New Amsterdam seemed all to have been cast in one mould," and "the very words

[13] Andrew Burstein, *The Original Knickerbocker: The Life of Washington Irving* (Cambridge, MA: Basic Books, 2007), 71-72.
[14] Ibid., 84.

of learning, education, taste and talents were unheard of – a bright genius was an animal unknown…No man seemed to know more than his neighbor."[15] Even those who saw through Irving's spoof on history, such as Charles Dudley Warner, feared that this depiction of New Netherland history had become too entrenched in American culture to be changed. Not all historians would agree; according to Annette Stott, "The desire to correct Irving's image of Dutch Americans inspired some historians, artists, and writers at the turn of the century to promote the more positive characterization of the Dutch that dominated the period of Holland Mania."[16]

The period of Holland Mania was not the first time that Irving's characterizations of the Dutch were repudiated. In the 1840s through the 1860s American historian John Lothrop Motley published his most famous books, *The Rise of the Dutch Republic* (1855) and *History of the United Netherlands* (1867), of which the purpose was to arrive at the truth of Dutch historical events in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Unfortunately, his style of writing, which was highly romantic, caused his books to read more like thrilling drama and less like historical fact. Still, "by emphasizing the very traits [such as independence, courage, and tolerance] that most Americans would have used to describe their own national character in his description of a struggle that paralleled the Revolutionary War, he won the sympathy and admiration of his American audience for the Netherlands."[17]

Edmund B. O'Callaghan, another historian, also wrote about the Dutch, but more specifically about New Netherland and the direct Dutch history of the U.S.. Books like those by Motley and O'Callaghan provided other scholars with many of the arguments they needed to popularize the idea of a Dutch influence on the founding of the U.S. and American characteristics of freedom and tolerance. In the following section the works of early New

[15] Washington Irving, *A History of New York from the Beginning of the World to the End of the Dutch Dynasty* (Philadelphia: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1809), 171, 174.
[16] Annette Stott, *Holland Mania*, 205.
[17] Ibid., 80.

Netherland historians O'Callaghan, William Elliot Griffis, and Douglas Campbell will be discussed, with a focus on how they viewed the Dutch concept of tolerance.

Edmund B. O'Callaghan

Edmund B. O'Callaghan was born (most likely) on 1 March, 1800, in Ireland to Catholic bourgeois parents at a time that Ireland was still subjected to British rule.[18] O'Callaghan enjoyed a liberal education and received a Bachelor of Arts from an Irish college, after which he moved to Paris for two years to study medicine. In 1823, he moved to Quebec to complete his medical studies. He did not go alone; the 1820s was a period marked by a wave of Irish-Catholic emigration to the Americas caused in part by famines and economic recessions following the Napoleonic Wars.[19]

What O'Callaghan eventually became known for was not so much his medical qualities as his political involvement. Soon upon arrival in Canada, O'Callaghan became involved in several groups representing Irish immigrants such as the Society of the Friends of Ireland, Quebec Mechanic's Institute, and the Quebec Emigrant Society. Upon moving to Montreal in 1833, O'Callaghan became editor of the *Vindicator and Canadian Advertiser*, a political opinion journal owned by the famous *Patriote*[20] bookseller Édouard-Raymond Fabre. O'Callaghan was also part of the *Patriotes* and in 1836 he was elected to the Provincial Parliament. When the Rebellion of 1837 broke out he was accused of treason and fled to the U.S. where he took up residence in Albany. In Albany he developed an interest in history, and in 1848 he took up the position of archivist of the state of New York.[21] It was while he held

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[18] Jack Verney, *O'Callaghan: The Making and Unmaking of a Rebel* (Ottowa: Carleton University Press, 1994), 5-6, 10.
[19] Lawrence J. McCaffrey, *The Irish Catholic Diaspora in America* (Washington, D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1997), 64.
[20] The *Patriotes* were involved in the Canadian Rebellion of 1837-38. They were highly nationalistic and their ultimate goal was to rid Canada of British colonial oppression. For more info see: Allan Greer, *The Patriots and the People: The Rebellion of 1837 in Rural Lower Canada* (Toronto: Toronto University Press Incorporated, 1993).
[21] Jacques Monet, "O'Callaghan, Edmund Bailey," in *Dictionary of Canadian Biography* (University of Toronto/Université Laval, 1972-2015), http://www.biographi.ca/en/bio.php/id_nbr=5193.

this position that O'Callaghan published material on the colonial history of New York. His principal works on the subject include *History of New Netherland: New York Under the Dutch* (1848) and *Laws and Ordinances of New Netherland, 1638-1674* (1868).

O'Callaghan was one of the earliest writers on the subject of New Netherland history. He expressed his reason for writing about the colony in the Preface of *History of New Netherland*:

> Circumstance of a public nature induced the writer of the following pages to enter into a somewhat extensive course of reading, with a view to determine, for his own satisfaction, the nature, as well as the extent of the constitutional rights enjoyed by the American Colonies, previous to the Revolution of 1776. Such an inquiry necessarily led to the investigation, not only of the amount of civil liberty which the colonists possessed at the time, but to the examination of the ground on which that liberty rested, so as to distinguish between what had been guaranteed by charter and the common law, and that which the colonists won for themselves.[22]

He explained that though there was general agreement that the English conquerors of New Netherland had copied what had already been established by the Dutch, there was until then no clear history of what these established institutions were. O'Callaghan set out to discover the Dutch roots of the English system of rule and to correct any misconceptions that might exist about who established ideas of popular freedom in the U.S.. From the quote above it immediately becomes clear that notions of liberty were highly important to this scholar.

[22] Edmund B. O'Callaghan, *History of New Netherland: New York Under the Dutch, Vol. I* (New York: D. Appleton & Company, 1848), 5.

Though O'Callaghan did not focus specifically on the concept of tolerance, from his writing it becomes clear that he attributed aspects that exist under tolerance, such as popular freedom and fair treatment of minorities, to the Dutch. In his view the establishment of the council of Nine Men[23] was "proof that Holland was the source from which New Netherland derived its municipal institutions, and he marks how strongly its first settlers were attached to those freedoms with which they were so familiar in their Fatherland."[24] He was also convinced that if it had not been for the English take-over, the colony would have established a constitutional government much earlier. "It is not unwarranted to conclude that such a government would have been in operation, had not force stepped in to stop the movement by wresting the country from its lawful owners…The principle of Representative government was not admitted by the English until after a lapse of twenty long years."[25]

When describing that one institution which is often mentioned to undermine concepts of Dutch colonial tolerance, namely slavery, O'Callaghan described "the lot of the African under the Dutch" to be "not as hopeless as his situation might lead us to expect." Yes, he was enslaved, "but he could still look forward to the hour when he too might become a freeman."[26]

O'Callaghan also recognized the policies of liberty of conscience that existed in the Dutch Republic. If there was a lack of these policies in the Dutch colony he attributed this to the rule of Peter Stuyvesant. "Those who bled in New England for [freedom's] sake, could retire here [New Netherland], and for once find in the wilds of America liberty to commune with their creator according to the dictates of their own hearts," but the colony was bereft of

[23] The Nine Men were a council of residents of New Amsterdam who assisted Peter Stuyvesant in governing the province of New Netherland.
[24] O'Callaghan, *History of New Netherland, Vol. II,* 40.
[25] Ibid., 549-550.
[26] Ibid., 385.

that "wise and tolerant policy" because Stuyvesant "was persuaded to follow the odious example of his eastern neighbors."[27]

What drove O'Callaghan to support the idea that the Dutch brought principles of freedom and tolerance to the New World can be gleaned from his background. As a Catholic-Irish, educated man growing up in an Ireland still subject to British rule, he experienced the oppressiveness of traditional aristocratic governing bodies. As a liberal he became opposed to the rule by elites or powerful individuals, and therefore developed an aversion to the British ruling system. According to Maureen Slattery, O'Callaghan was not just a liberal but also a radical, largely because "Irish Catholics had been entirely excluded from parliament on the basis of their religion."[28] Since Canada was at that time also under British influence, the exclusion of Irish-Catholics was present there as well. It is not surprising that once O'Callaghan was forced to flee from Canada he would be intrigued by the liberties and representative government he experienced in the United States, and that he would want to find an explanation for these developments. Both the U.S. and Canada had been subjected (at least partly) to British rule but only the former had, in O'Callaghan's time, developed into a democratic republic. The explanation for this was, according to O'Callaghan, the early Dutch rule of New Netherland. For someone so suspicious of the British, the Dutch colonial period in American history offered the best explanation for this development. This focus on the Dutch was also a way for O'Callaghan to counteract notions of a Puritan origin of the U.S. The Puritans of New England were often criticized for their intolerance of other religions, and O'Callaghan would rather see his beloved America as stemming from a culture with a reputation of a having a more tolerant nature.

[27] Ibid., 316.
[28] Maureen Slattery, "Irish Radicalism and the Roman Catholic Church in Quebec and Ireland, 1833-1834: O'Callaghan and O'Connell Compared," *CCHA, Historical Studies* 63 (1997): 41.

Holland Mania: Campbell and Griffis

Between 1890 and 1920, the U.S. experienced a period of Holland Mania, which was part of a larger movement of competing ethnic claims about the origins of American identity that emerged at the end of the nineteenth century. This movement was inspired by the focus on the country's centennial and its colonial roots, as well as by a new wave of Eastern European immigrants who might threaten the cultural identity of America as established by its settlers. Ethnic studies were conducted to try to anchor American identity in each of the nations from which the earliest colonists had come, often consciously opposing the dominance of an English influence. Out of all these theories, none gained as much traction as those about the Dutch. Parallels between the two countries were easily found. "Physical appearance, social custom, Protestantism, republicanism, and perceived ideals of democracy and personal freedoms all struck chords of agreement in the two countries. In addition, similarities in the development of the two republics seemed to foretell a dazzling future for the United States."[29] The Dutch Republic, like the US, had freed itself from an oppressor and had rapidly risen to become a great economic power.

At the turn of the century Douglas Campbell and William Elliot Griffis were two historians who wished to confirm the idea of a Dutch influence on American society. The interest in Dutch history and society during Holland Mania had led to a revival of interest in Washington Irving's histories of Dutch New York, and with the expiration of his copyrights his works were accessible to everyone. Campbell and Griffis felt they had to rectify the ideas about the Dutch as put forth by Irving, who had described them as lazy and inefficient. In his popular book, *Brave Little Holland and What She Taught Us* (1894), Griffis did this by repeatedly describing the Dutch in highly praiseful terms: "resolute, serious, vigilant. The Dutch were the first to glorify art. They love science, literature, the fine arts, and religion,"

[29] Stott, *Holland Mania*, 10.

and the Dutch "have always been famous for quick brains and active mental initiative."[30] Moreover, the Netherlands was the "nurse of Puritans, home of republican government, written constitutions, free press, free schools, democratic rule in church, and popular power in state."[31]

Unlike other Dutch-American historians such as O'Callaghan and Campbell, Griffis did not write for his peers but for the wider public. Though primarily known as a scholar specialized in Japan, he wrote eight books and numerous pamphlets about New Netherland and the Dutch influence on the U.S. Griffis was born in 1843 in Philadelphia to parents of English descent and first came into contact with Dutch-Americans when he attended Rutgers University, which was originally Dutch-Reformed. Later he served in a Dutch Reformed church, which furthered his interest in the Dutch. In his book *An American in Holland* he described his budding love for the Dutch as follows: "How often did we talk of Motley and the glorious art and wonders of Holland, the land I was already learning to love. With most of them there was a sentimental and ancestral strain of admiration of things Dutch, which I, of English descent, could not share."[32] Griffis seems to wish that he could have shared this descent.

Though there is not much biographical information available about Griffis, his own written work provides insight into why he was so fond of the Dutch and why he believed it was they who laid the foundation for American concepts of tolerance. For example, from reading his works it becomes clear that Griffis believed in Jeffersonian ideals, such as those about the yeoman. In *The Story of New Netherland* (1909) he described the Dutch settlers as being neither "dreamers nor humorists," another stab at Irving, and as standing for "pure family life, for the Church and the school, and for farming, the true source of all legitimate

[30] William Elliot Griffis, *Brave Little Holland and What She Taught Us* (Detroit: Bay View Reading Club, 1894), 10, 112.
[31] Ibid., 10-11.
[32] William Elliot Griffis, *The American In Holland: Sentimental Rambles in the Eleven Provinces of the Netherlands* (Boston, New York: Houghton, Mifflin, 1900), 9.

national wealth of land-dwellers."[33] Within Jeffersonian democracy, the yeoman farmer was seen as an American hero of sorts. In contrast to urbanization, which according to Jeffersonians was characterized by a separation between the very rich and very poor, agriculture promised a satisfaction of all social demands. Unlike most city dwellers, farmers owned and lived on their own land and were therefore more independent than the rest of society. Farms could exist without cities, but cities were dependent on farms for food. Farmers, according to Jefferson, were a chosen people of God.[34]

Besides Jeffersonian ideals of the yeoman farmer, it is also clear that for Griffis the Dutch met all the requirements of Jeffersonian ideals of Republicanism. "In that struggle, giant Spain, representing feudalism, chivalry, romance, and Rome, was to be humbled by brave little Holland that stood for the *rights of the people* [emphasis added]."[35] The aristocratic aspect of the Dutch Republic's government, which Jeffersonians would have been vehemently opposed to, Griffis explained away by saying that the Dutch monarchy was one only in name.[36] This monarchy had come about after the Batavian Revolution of 1795, which resulted in the transformation of the Republic of the Seven United Netherlands into the Batavian Republic.[37]

The start of the Batavian Republic was marked by fragmentation, with on the one hand factions ranging from federalists to unitarists, and on the other hand moderates and radical democrats. After several years of disagreement, another Batavian revolution was orchestrated by Napoleon Bonaparte and a new constitution was established which sought to create a *juste milieu* that would find a middle way between the formerly sovereign provinces of the

[33] William Elliot Griffis, *The Story of New Netherland: The Dutch in America* (Boston, New York: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1909), 25.
[34] Tarla Rai Peterson, "Jefferson's Yeoman Farmer as Frontier Hero: A Self Defeating Mythic Structure," *Agriculture and Human Values* 7 (1990): 13.
[35] Griffis, *Brave Little Holland*, 128-129.
[36] Ibid., 10.
[37] Martijn van der Burg, "Transforming the Dutch Republic into the Kingdom of Holland: the Netherlands Between Republicanism and Monarchy (1795-1815)," *European Review of History* 17 (2010): 153.

Netherlands and the new unitary state.[38] Troubled by the constant instability of the new Batavian state, Napoleon believed a strong head of state in the form of a king was needed. Only a monarch could ensure the country would not succumb to British pressure or that it might revert to its old regime, and so it was for this reason that Napoleon appointed his younger brother, Louis Bonaparte, as king of the Batavian Republic.[39]

The reason Griffis referred to the Dutch monarchy as one only in name is because even though from the beginning the kingdom of Holland seemed to be a *fait accompli*, the Batavian Republic and its republican characteristics were always hidden beneath its surface.[40] After the rule of the Netherlands passed from the Bonapartes to the Oranje-Nassaus, the new Dutch king had to incorporate at least some popular sovereignty, as Dutch politicians were not keen on giving William I carte blanche given the Dutch history of republicanism and its suspicion of hereditary rule.[41] Therefore what on paper was a monarchy, Griffis viewed in reality to be a republic that supported freedom, equality, and tolerance.

Griffis expressed this tolerance repeatedly and explicitly in his works. In *Brave Little Holland* he dedicated a whole chapter to the topic. "One reason why so many Protestant people came to live under the Dutch flag was toleration. Nederland stood nearly alone in all Europe in offering religious freedom to all men." And it was "Nederland" which brought this tolerance to the U.S. and which led to it being the "corner-stone on which our Constitution rests."[42] Like O'Callaghan before him, Griffis explained away the challenge that slavery could present to this concept of tolerance by saying that "it was introduced into New Netherland by the WIC against the will of the people. The Dutch common people were

[38] Ibid., 155.
[39] Ibid., 156-157.
[40] Ibid., 159.
[41] Ibid., 164.
[42] Griffis, *Brave Little Holland*, 193-194.

opposed to slavery." Next to this, "Slavery in the Netherlands was very mild in form. The black slave scarcely felt his bonds."[43]

Overall it can be said that Griffis's belief in Jeffersonian ideals, together with his exposure to and admiration of the Dutch at an early age, led him to find parallels between the Dutch Republic and the United States, especially in relation to concepts of freedom and tolerance. Jeffersonians were avid supporters of republicanism, and despite the Netherlands being a monarchy, the country was also a republic, one with a separation between state and church, another Jeffersonian ideal. To a Jeffersonian, then, a Dutch heritage was much more appealing than a British one. The British system was deemed by Jefferson and his followers as being elitist, and one in which there was too much power in the central government and not enough in the hands of the people. The UK was part of the "polished society of Europe, with their artificial distinctions between social classes, their oppressive restrictions on human freedom, and their crushing burden of debt and taxes."[44] The Netherlands, on the other hand, put more power in the hands of its people, had separation of church and state, freedom of religion, free press, and no taxation without consent. The Dutch brought these concepts with them when they settled what is now New York, and thus, according to Griffis, it was the Dutch whom America owed these values and institutions.

If there is little to be found about Griffis's life, even less is known about one of Griffis's acquaintances, Douglas Campbell. What little is known about Campbell is that he was a lawyer, and that he, like Griffis, was a revisionist historian writing about what he saw as the misconceptions about the foundation of the U.S.. Campbell's self-proclaimed interest in the Dutch arose while he was researching colonial New York jurisprudence as a law student. He found "at every turn traces of institutions and ideas, generally supported to have been

[43] Griffis, *The Story of New Netherland*, 59-60.
[44] Robert W. Tucker and David C. Hendrickson, *Empire of Liberty: The Statecraft of Thomas Jefferson* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990), 6.

derived from England, or at least to be of New England origin, but which clearly, so far as concerned New York, were derived from a different quarter,"[45] namely the Dutch Republic.

Due to the lack of biographical information about Campbell, it is difficult to find an explanation for his admiration of the Dutch based on his background alone. Instead this information has to be gleaned from his written work. From reading his book *The Puritan in Holland, England, and America: An Introduction to American History* (1892), one explanation for his admiration of the Dutch can immediately be found: his dislike of the English. From just the preface of this book and quotes like the one mentioned above, it becomes clear that one of Campbell's reasons for writing was to discredit the idea that the U.S. "is a transplanted England."[46] Like O'Callaghan and Griffis, Campbell's distaste for the English seemed to stem from the fact that the U.S. was once subject to English authority. Campbell's aversion to English authority can partly be explained by the little biographical information there is about him. Like O'Callaghan, he was most likely not of direct English descent; instead he had either Scottish or Scottish-Irish ancestors,[47] the oppression of whom by the English could explain Campbell's sentiments towards them. This theory gains further traction when one reads Vol. II of his *Puritan in Holland*; several chapters of this book are dedicated to the positive Scottish-Irish influence on American Puritanism.

To an anti-English revisionist like Campbell, it was time for the U.S. to become completely independent. "The time has passed for conjuring with the wand of British authority. America is no longer on her knees; she has risen."[48] This conjuring with the British wand had also been present in American historical writing, which tended to be written from a British perspective. However, according to Campbell, "today is the day of iconoclasts. Under

[45] Douglas Campbell, *Puritan in Holland, England, and America: An Introduction to American History, Vol. I* (New York: Harper, 1892), xxiv.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Joost Baarssen, *America's True Mother Country: Images of the Dutch in the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century* (Zürich: LIT Verslag, 2014), 53.
[48] Campbell, *Puritan in Holland, Vol. I,* 5.

their blows our idols are crumbling to powder. They dig up the musty records from which history has been made," and they did this in order to find the truth. It is clear from his book that Campbell considered himself such an iconoclast even if he did not say so outright. Thus, for iconoclast Campbell, the Dutch were the perfect candidate to be part of the new truth; they were Protestant, they had a republic, and they were historically known to exhibit those qualities of freedom now considered American.

Like O'Callaghan and Griffis, Campbell was a fan of Jefferson. According to Campbell, Jefferson was "the representative of Democracy pure and simple,"[49] and thus, like nearly all Jeffersonians, one of Campbell's reasons for disliking the British was that their society was dominated by aristocrats who held special privileges in most aspects of life. According to Campbell, one of the extraordinary features of American culture was that everyone could own land. In the UK, on the other hand, "land is for aristocrats, and not for the common people. The result is that the great class of yeomen, the men who in bygone centuries have given England her greatness, has almost entirely disappeared."[50] The English aristocracy was also despised by most Jeffersonians for its adherence to the Confederate cause in the American Civil War. The Dutch, on the other hand, had supported the Union. "During our Civil War the bonds of the United States always found a ready market in Holland, and were bought there in vast amounts, while the English were investing in Confederate securities. The Hollanders believed in republican institutions; the leading classes in England had no such confidence, since their sympathies were mainly in the opposite direction."[51]

The protestant, or "Puritan," character of the Dutch offers another explanation for Campbell's admiration of the Dutch Republic. His purpose in writing *Puritan in Holland* was to "trace the origin and development of Puritanism, the greatest moral and political force of

[49] Ibid., 8.
[50] Ibid., 27.
[51] Ibid., 504.

modern times."[52] Campbell saw Puritanism in a broader sense than in the religious sense it is often used. In this way he could refer to all Dutch people as Puritans; his definition of Puritanism was not just based on religious values but on moral and political values as well.[53] According to Campbell the Puritan (of Holland) was in a way the creator of the liberties for which the U.S. was so well known. "The Puritan, who has done so much for the modern world, was born out of the uprising against the abuses of the Church of Rome. He came to maturity in upholding liberty against the assaults of kingly power. In him was represented the principle of religious and civil freedom."[54] While Americans had been oppressed by the English, the Dutch had been oppressed by the Spanish and consequently had developed an ideology of freedom. Campbell's adherence to this Puritanism can be easily explained. Besides his Scottish-Irish ancestry, he reveals in the preface of *Puritan in Holland* that some of his ancestors were among the Puritan settlers of New England. It is clear that Campbell took pride in his Puritan and Protestant background, which may seem odd given his dislike of the English. Yet, as mentioned, Campbell saw Puritanism in a broader sense, as a tradition that developed not just among the English, and later Americans, but also the Dutch. Criticism of Puritans as being cruel, and above all, ignorant, Campbell dismissed as being Anglo-Saxon in nature. "It was not the Puritan, but the Englishman, who perpetrated the offenses against humanity which want of knowledge charges to popular government and a Calvinistic faith." The Dutch, who were also devoted Calvinists and republicans, were lovers of liberty and tolerance and showed none of these tyrannical traits.[55]

Due to this love of Puritanism, but also because of the criticism that it received, the aspect of tolerance which Campbell found most important in relation to the Dutch was their idea of freedom of conscience and the religious liberty that came with it. According to

[52] Ibid., xxiii.
[53] Ibid., 90.
[54] Ibid., xxix.
[55] Ibid., xlix.

Campbell, it was no coincidence that New York – which had been under Dutch rule – was the first of the thirteen colonies, and in his words, "the first organized government in the world," to establish "the principle of full religious freedom" [56] in its constitution.

From the above it becomes clear that most authors writing about the Dutch Republic during the period of Holland Mania were strongly biased against Great Britain. Much of their anti-British sentiment can be explained by either their adherence to Puritanism – in the sense that they saw Puritans as anti-authoritarian, anti-monarchical and supporters of tolerance – and Jeffersonian ideals, or due to a history of oppression under the British, as was the case with O'Callaghan's Catholic ancestors and Campbell's Scottish-Irish ancestors.

For all three of the discussed authors, anti-aristocratic feelings as expressed by Jeffersonianism greatly influenced their arguments about the Dutch history of the U.S. Also important is that each was either citizen of or resident in the U.S.; they were writing from an insider's point of view, with an evident love and pride for the country in which they lived. They did not want this source of pride to be associated with the British system, which they viewed as oppressive. As Stott puts it, "residents of the newly constituted United States sought to separate themselves from England, not only politically and economically, but also culturally. Throughout the nineteenth century, a conscious effort went forward to produce an American culture distinct from, and yet equal to British culture."[57]

Much of this had to do with the fact that at that time Americans, but Jeffersonians especially, were highly suspicious of Great Britain. Walter Russell Mead explains in his book *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World* (2002) that there was a constant fear in the nineteenth century of war breaking out with Great Britain. "One should not underestimate the importance of the stormy state of Anglo-American

[56] Ibid., 251.
[57] Annette Stott, *Holland Mania,* 10-11.

relations during this era. A whole series of questions agitated the relations between the two Atlantic powers, keeping them continually at or near the boiling point."[58] Under President Martin Van Buren, for example, American support for rebels in Canada – the same rebels that Edmund B. O'Callaghan had been a part of – "brought the two countries within a hairbreadth of war."

Yet, not only was war a threat because Britain had the mightiest military force of the world, the countries also experienced constant tension because they were each other's biggest economic competitors. The American Civil War exacerbated the tension between the two countries. Northerners believed that much of Britain's upper- and middle-class, sided with the Confederate cause, resulting in much suspicion of the British government within the Union.[59] Of course, for the Jeffersonian historians discussed above, this offered further cause to distance American history from a British background. The constant tension between the two countries thus led to a widespread American dislike of the British that would allow the search for different cultural influences on American identity to flourish.

The religious, political, and residential background of the three discussed authors in this chapter is important because not all New Netherland historians agreed with their pro-Dutch sentiments about tolerance. Belgian-born historian Frederick J. Zwierlein, for example, completely repudiated any claims of a Dutch influence on tolerance in the U.S.. In his 1910 book *Religion in New Netherland: A History of the Development of the Religious Conditions in the Province of New-Netherland, 1623-1664*, as well as in an article titled "New Netherland Intolerance" (1918), he made it his mission to prove that the Dutch were not at all tolerant in

[58] Walter Russell Mead, *Special Providence: American Foreign Policy and How It Changed the World* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 20.
[59] Philip E. Myers, *Caution and Cooperation: The American Civil War in British-American Relations* (Kent, OH: The Kent State University Press, 2008), 1.

religious matters. In the preface of *Religion in New Netherland* he explained his reasons for writing:

> It has been the author's constant aim to learn in the famous phrase of Ranke, "wie es eigentlich gewesen ist [what actually happened]," by as close and extensive a study of documentary sources, as the time and the means of his disposal permitted…The lack of such a systematic study of the religious development of the province of New Netherland with a mistaken conception of the nature of religious liberty in the Dutch Republic has been the source of much error in many publications dealing with the beginnings of the State of NY.[60]

Zwierlein's book dates from 1910 and his article from 1918, making it clear that his writings were a direct response to those authors influenced by the episode of Holland Mania in the U.S.. From a reading of his book it quickly becomes clear why Zwierlein might have been so adamant in asserting his views of Dutch intolerance; his sentiments seem to have been strongly pro-Catholic. The first chapter of his book, for instance, contains a detailed description of the unfair treatment of Catholics in the Dutch Republic and explains that "although the edicts against the Remonstrants and other Protestant dissenters, such as Mennonites and Lutherans, gradually lapsed into desuetude," the States General "did not recede from its intransigent attitude towards Catholic worship."[61] In Amsterdam, for example, even "the Jews had their synagogues, the Mahometans their meetings and all kinds of sects their conventicles; the Catholics alone were excluded from all participation in the toleration of Holland."[62] According to Zwierlein there was no religious liberty in the

[60] Frederick J. Zwierlein, *Religion in New Netherland: A History of the Development of the Religious Conditions in the Province of New-Netherland, 1623-1664* (Rochester: John P. Smith Printing Company, 1910), v.
[61] Ibid., 31.
[62] Ibid., 23-24.

Netherlands and thus not in its colony New Netherland either. The only reason the WIC eventually loosened their tight grip on liberty of conscience was to serve their own interests, "as they feared injury to the material interests of the Company, unless some policy of religious repression was tempered by some moderation."[63]

Zwierlein's article erases any doubt about whether he might have been a Catholic, as he quoted one of his own critics who said "Mr. Zwierlein as a *Roman Catholic may be suspected of some bias*; but his conclusions are based on a very large amount of documentary material."[64] Though it is true that Zwierlein supported his theories with substantial evidence, it does not take away from the fact that his pro-Catholic sentiment acted as a limiting factor. By focusing so much on the religious aspect of tolerance in the Dutch Republic and its American colony, Zwierlein forgot there were other aspects of Dutch society he could have used to support his argument. Nowhere, for example, did he mention slavery as evidence that the Dutch were not at all tolerant. This would have been one of the easiest examples with which to counter his contemporaries who claimed the Dutch were tolerant.

It is not his religious background alone, however, that influenced Zwierlein; it is the combination of his religious background and his nationality that caused him to view Dutch policies of religious policies as non-existent. As noted, O'Callaghan was also Catholic, yet he very much supported the idea that the Dutch were religiously tolerant. The difference in nationality of the two men has everything to do with this. O'Callaghan and his ancestors experienced religious oppression from the English and were therefore biased against them, while Zwierlein, as a Belgian, only experienced religious oppression from the Dutch side, which had remained suspicious of Catholics ever since being subjected to Spanish rule.

[63] Zwierlein, "New Netherland Intolerance," *The Catholic Historical Review* Vol. 4-2 (1918): 216.
[64] Ibid., 190.

Chapter 2: Twenty-First-Century Notions of Dutch Tolerance

In December 2009, plans to build a Muslim cultural center near Ground Zero were announced in a *New York Times* article.[65] This announcement led to a fiery debate between those opposed to, and those in favor of construction of the center; a national controversy ensued. Michael Bloomberg, mayor of New York City at that time, spoke out in favor of the project. In a speech given at Governor's Island he said, "Of all our precious freedoms, the most important may be the freedom to worship as we wish. And it is a freedom that, even here in a city that is rooted in *Dutch tolerance*, was hard-won over many years [emphasis added]."[66]

It is no coincidence that Bloomberg mentioned the Dutch heritage of tolerance. In the past decade there has been a revival in the theories of a Dutch influence on tolerance in the U.S., following the publication of Russell Shorto's book *The Island at the Center of the World*, which came out in 2004. In this book, Shorto claims that practices of tolerance in the U.S. today were influenced by the Dutch colonization of New York. "When this society founded a colony based on Manhattan Island, that colony had the same features of tolerance, openness, and free trade that existed in the home country. Those features helped make New York unique, and, in time, influenced America in some elemental ways."[67] Shorto also says, "If what made America great was its ingenious openness to different cultures, then the small triangle of land at the southern tip of Manhattan Island is the New World birthplace of that idea, the spot where it first took place…Manhattan is where America began."[68]

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[65] Ralph Blumenthal, "Muslim Prayers and Renewal Near Ground Zero," *The New York Times*, December 8, 2009, accessed June 6, 2015. http://www.nytimes.com/2009/12/09/nyregion/09mosque.html?_r=1&sq=mosque%20ground%20zero&st=nyt&scp=1&pagewanted=all.

[66] Michael R. Bloomberg, "Mayor Bloomberg Discusses the Landmarks Preservation Commission Vote on 45-47 Parker Place," *NYC: Office of the Mayor*, August 3, 2010, accessed June 6, 2016. http://www.nyc.gov/portal/site/nycgov/menuitem.c0935b9a57bb4ef3daf2f1c701c789a0/index.jsp?pageID=mayor_press_release&catID=1194&doc_name=http://www.nyc.gov/html/om/html/2010b/pr337-10.html&cc=unused1978&rc=1194&ndi=1.

[67] Russell Shorto, *The Island at the Center of the World: The Epic Story of Dutch Manhattan and the Forgotten Colony That Shaped America* (New York: Doubleday, 2004), 6.

[68] Ibid., 3.

Oddly, the revival of interest in New Netherland history and concepts of tolerance is not really seen as a revival by those exploring it. Instead, it seems that some scholars writing about New Netherland think that the recent iterations of the Dutch influence on tolerance in the U.S. are something relatively new. Shorto claims that this new understanding of Dutch-American history is a result of the discovery of thousands of documents from the New Netherland period of American history by Dr. Charles Gehring. Once Gehring and his team are able to translate and decipher all these documents, they will "breathe life into a moment of history that has been largely ignored for three centuries."[69] Yet, the earlier sections of this thesis can be used to immediately repudiate these claims, as they show that the Dutch-American history of New Netherland has certainly not been ignored for the past three centuries. Though Shorto admits that "the idea that the Dutch colony made important contributions to America is not new," and that historians such as Edmund B. O'Callaghan "were intimately familiar with the Dutch sources," he also writes that these sources were overlooked and these historians ignored.[70] Nowhere does Shorto reference the other writers discussed above. Griffis, Douglas, and Zwierlein are ignored just as much by Shorto, as he claims they were ignored by others before him. Shorto disregards the period of Holland Mania, as described by Annette Stott, almost completely.

Shorto is not the only contemporary author on New Netherland who has disregarded Holland Mania. Evan Haefeli, for example, who argues in his *New Netherland and the Dutch Origins of American Religious Liberty* (2012) that the Dutch did not have a lasting impact on American tolerance aside from keeping the early colony out of British hands until 1670, only mentions Zwierlein in his work. Haefeli explains that most contemporary New Netherland scholars agree that the colony was marked by an intolerance to religious diversity and that this sentiment goes back to the "first proper study of this topic," conducted by Zwierlein. He also

[69] Ibid., 1.
[70] Ibid., 311.

recognizes that "Recent Dutch scholars may stress the lack of tolerance, but there is a strand of work that argues that the Dutch in New Netherland were in fact tolerant," and that "its first and perhaps best representative was Dutch Reformed scholar Albert Eekhof, whose thoroughly researched histories focused on the individuals who ran the colonial church." Yet, as this thesis makes clear, Eekhof was most certainly not the first to write about Dutch tolerance in New Netherland. Why, then, have both Shorto and Haefeli ignored scholars writing during Holland Mania and before? One explanation, at least on Haefeli's part, could be that he did not view these nineteenth-century authors as credible. Haefeli calls Zwierlein's work the “first proper study,” not just “the first,” which suggests he is aware that more has been written on the subject. Eekhof's work he finds to be “thoroughly researched,” inferring that earlier work may not have been. Shorto may have ignored the nineteenth-century scholars simply because their work could have made the ideas in his book seem less novel or because he did not come across their works to begin with. Nearly all the nineteenth-century works discussed in this thesis were accessed online through the website www.archive.org, an Internet library that provides readers with free access to documents of which the copyright has expired. They were all uploaded after 2004, the year in which Shorto’s *Island at the Center of the World* was published, and so this easy-access source was not yet available to Shorto while he was writing his book.

Whatever the reasons for ignoring early New Netherland scholarship, the question still remains if at least it is true that the documents revealed by Gehring have unveiled new aspects or arguments about a Dutch influence on tolerance in the U.S.. The following section looks at the works of Russell Shorto, Evan Haefeli, and Jaap Jacobs, who all based their work largely on Gehring’s translations, to see if modern claims of Dutch tolerance in the U.S. are novel or only reiterations of the existing ideas as discussed above, and to try to understand why there has been a revival of interest in New Netherland history. Do the works of contemporary

scholars support or counter the writings of the earlier scholars, or do they provide us with a completely new understanding of the origins of tolerance in the U.S., and why are they writing about it in the first place?

Modern Views on Dutch Tolerance in America

Russel Shorto

As stated, Russell Shorto is among the contemporary authors who argue that the Dutch had a profound impact on the development of tolerance in the U.S.. Much of his writing is therefore centered around showing that the Dutch had an impact on this development. It is interesting to see that many of the arguments Shorto uses were used by the nineteenth-century scholars before him as well, even though they did not have Gehring's translations at their disposal. Shorto's emphasis on the role of Adriaen van der Donck – one of New Netherlands' earliest lawyers – for example, though more developed than in the works of the earlier authors, is not unique. Van der Donck is seen by Shorto as "the pivotal figure in the history of the colony,"[71] and he is described by him as the hero of the story of New Netherland: "Adriaen van der Donck, who has been forgotten by history but who emerges as the hero of the story and who, I think, deserves to be ranked as an early American prophet, a forerunner of the Revolutionary generation."[72]

Van der Donck was for a long time the only immigrant in New Netherland who had received a university education and an education in law. He first came to New Netherland to work for wealthy Amsterdam business man Killian van Rensselaer who owned a large tract of land in what is now Albany, New York. For a while, Van der Donck held the position of *schout* (sheriff) of Rensselaers' estate Renssealerswyck, until the two fell out and Van der Donck moved to New Amsterdam which was at that time governed by William Kieft. Kieft

[71] Ibid., 142.
[72] Ibid., 9.

had enraged the city's colonists by taxing and starting a war with the local Indian population. Van der Donck sided with the colonists and wrote to the States General in the Netherlands urging them to put an end to the war. The States General agreed and Van der Donck was called upon to negotiate a treaty with the Indians. His work for the colony led Peter Stuyvesant, the new governor, to appoint Van der Donck as member of the Council of Nine, a group of advisors and legislators in New Amsterdam.[73]

Though Shorto is partially right in arguing that many historians have forgotten about Van der Donck in their telling of the story of New Netherland, it is wrong of him to say he has been completely neglected. Both William Elliot Griffis and Edmund B. O'Callaghan credited him for being important to the colony's development. Griffis said that Van der Donck "might almost be called the father of the real city of New Amsterdam…To him belongs largely the credit of changing the trading-post into a cosmopolitan city, in which twenty languages were spoken."[74] O'Callaghan, in turn, described Van der Donck as the man "to whom the most credit belongs for having contributed the most to bring this country before the public and improve its institutions."[75]

Concerning the subject of slavery, one of the aspects often used to undermine the claims of early Dutch tolerance, Shorto again presents similar arguments to those used by the nineteenth-century historians, basically arguing that the Dutch treated their slaves better than most other European masters. "It's necessary to erase from your mind the idea of the fully formed institution of slavery as it existed in, say, the American South in the early 1800s. The institution was in its early days, and *there was a strong belief in the Netherlands that it was morally wrong to buy and sell human beings* [emphasis added]."[76] Moreover, there were

[73] "Adriaen van der Donck [1620-1655]: Early Founder/Historic Leader," New Netherland Institute, accessed April 30, 2016. http://www.newnetherlandinstitute.org/history-and-heritage/dutch_americans/adriaen-van-der-donck/.
[74] Griffis, *The Story of New Netherland*, 114, 116-117.
[75] O'Callaghan, *History of New Netherland, Vol. II*, 550.
[76] Shorto, *The Island at the Center of the World*, 273.

instances of owners freeing slaves, as well as the fact that a number of Africans owned property and slaves had some legal rights such as the ability to file a lawsuit, even against a European.[77]

Next to this supposedly 'light' version of slavery, Shorto gives many other examples to support his theory of Dutch tolerance. For instance, by the time Van der Donck arrived in New Amsterdam there were around four hundred inhabitants who together made it "one of the most multi-cultural places on earth; in five years' time a visiting Jesuit priest would report that eighteen languages were spoken in its few dusty lanes."[78] Within this microcosm existed another microcosm called Nieuw Haarlem, now Harlem. Here thirty-two families from six different countries in Europe lived together. "Families that would have broken up into ghettos in Europe instead had come together, and learned a common language."[79] If this example was not enough to show New Amsterdam's tolerance of differences, Shorto adds to the example the fact that in New Amsterdam there was "a phenomenon that was unprecedented elsewhere in the colonies: intermarriage…and there are even instances of marriage between whites and blacks."[80] With this example Shorto does not just want to emphasize the tolerance of the Dutch colony, but also but we would now call multiculturalism, something which is often present in cosmopolitan areas, and which New York is still celebrated for today.

Throughout his book, Shorto repeatedly emphasizes that the documents unveiled by Dr. Gehring have allowed for a correction of misinterpretations of the Dutch colony, as shown through some of the examples given above. Yet, although the uncovering of these documents is of course significant to New Netherland history, the claim that they have led to completely new revelations are not supported by his arguments. Many of the claims he makes are only reiterations of the claims made by the earlier-discussed nineteenth-century scholars. Both

[77] Ibid., 273.
[78] Ibid., 107.
[79] Ibid., 272.
[80] Ibid., 273.

Shorto and these scholars, for example, argue that Dutch-American history has been disregarded because much of early American history was written by British authors. Shorto fails to point out that scholars such as O'Callaghan, Griffis, and Campbell, already tried to rectify this prevailing Anglo-American image.

What then, motivated Shorto, and other scholars, to write about U.S. tolerance from the American and Dutch perspective? For the nineteenth-century authors their motivations are clear; anti-British and Jeffersonian ideals played a large role in their trying to locate American history in a different background, while for Zwierlein his Catholic and Belgian background caused him to repudiate his contemporaries' claims. The motivations of the modern scholars are harder to determine.

Russell Shorto was born in Pennsylvania, a largely Democratic state, and attended George Washington University, which is considered to be fairly liberal. As a journalist Shorto frequently writes for *New York Times Magazine*, which, as a subsidiary of *The New York Times*, is known for being a rather liberal magazine. Topics he has written about include gay-rights and the abortion discussion. No speculation seems to be needed to conclude that Shorto is liberal, or a Democrat. He even defines himself as such: "I am politically left centered in most ways."[81] This could explain, in part, his admiration for the Dutch and their legacy in New York. In many ways the seventeenth-century Dutch were incredibly liberal for their time. However, Shorto's reason for writing about tolerance in New York lies deeper than simply an admiration of the Dutch. Shorto defines himself as a New Yorker, and this is very important in explaining why he has become such an avid supporter of the theory that the Dutch brought tolerance to the U.S.. He appears very proud of the fact that he is a New Yorker and comments on his decision to move away from the city with his family as follows:

[81] Russell Shorto, "Going Dutch," *New York Times Magazine*, April 29, 2009, accessed June 16, 2015. http://www.russellshorto.com/article/dutch.

"And yet. Not an hour passes in which, in maybe a half-dozen ways, I don't rue the decision to leave the city…Within, I am, I remain, City Boy."[82]

Shorto's books and vast array of opinion articles about New Netherland and New York make clear that Shorto is proud of what New York is and what it represents for much of the world. Being liberal, this pride lies largely in the fact that New York is, and always has been, multicultural, and that it has thus always been a place of tolerance and the acceptance of differences. It is not surprising that he puts much emphasis in his book on examples of multiculturalism, such as the one about intermarriage mentioned above. It seems that Shorto, living in New York at the time, was intrigued by what he saw and experienced around him and wondered where it all came from. In the preface of *The Island at the Center of the World* he explains that he often took his daughter to the church of St. Mark's-in-the-Bowery, one of the oldest of the city. There he came upon the tomb of Peter Stuyvesant where he says he "began to wonder, not so much about Stuyvesant…but about the original settlement. I wanted to know the island that those first Europeans found."[83] In a 2013 article he also explains that "As a writer I've always tended to seek out origins,"[84] which further explains his desire to understand how New York City developed.

Without question his uncovering of New York's roots would have led Shorto to the Dutch origins of the city. With this uncovering he developed a deep respect for the Dutch and their culture because, according to Shorto, it is the Dutch to whom New York owes its liberal and tolerant character. This admiration of the Dutch is not only found in *The Island at the Center of the World*, but also in a wide range of articles Shorto has published. It can also be seen in the fact that after writing this book he lived in the Netherlands for over six years and wrote a book about its capital, Amsterdam. The publication of his first bestselling book only

[82] Ibid.
[83] Shorto, *The Island at the Center of the World*, 7.
[84] Russell Shorto, "Digging Up Family Roots in Sicily," *The New York Times*, August 16, 2013, accessed June 17, 2015. http://www.nytimes.com/2013/08/18/travel/digging-up-family-roots-in-sicily.html.

two years after the attacks on 9/11 also cannot be a coincidence. With it Shorto has tried to remind Americans that from the beginning it has been in their nature to be tolerant and to accept others for what they are, and that their roots lie not so much in Puritan New England, as other scholars, such as Sacvan Bercovitch, have claimed, but more in Dutch New York. Like the nineteenth-century scholars before him, Shorto seems to have been looking for an alternative to the widespread idea in American history that many of the U.S.'s values stem from Puritan New England settlements.

Evan Haefeli

Unlike Shorto, historian Evan Haefeli treats Dutch tolerance in a much less straightforward way. Haefeli has been interested in the concept of tolerance since the 1990s, but he explains that only in the last decade "incidents and controversies on both sides of the Atlantic coupled with a new burst of more sophisticated scholarship have convinced me that tolerance is a much more complicated matter than we think."[85] Many of Haefeli's arguments in his book *New Netherlands and Dutch Origins of American Religious Liberty* (2012) are thus based around the idea that tolerance cannot be given a clear-cut definition:

> Too many accounts of tolerance either treat it along a judgmental and presumably universal spectrum running from more to less, arguing there was either too little or too much, or portray it as operating in a binary framework of tolerance versus intolerance. Such approaches tend not only to take sides, they also miss out on the politically contingent and locally specific nature of tolerance by assuming there is a single ideal to which all should adhere.[86]

[85] Haefeli, *Dutch Origins of American Religious Liberty*, viiii.
[86] Ibid., 9.

Notions of tolerance, then, Dutch ones included, are dynamic, complex, and constantly negotiated processes that can be called tolerant or intolerant. Haefeli's view of Dutch tolerance is different from that of Shorto. Though he calls Dutch influences "important," he also believes them to be mostly "indirect." In fact, "It was the English who took over from the Dutch who implemented the religious liberty that made the middle colonies, and thereafter the U.S., so famous as a haven and harbor for religious pluralism."[87] In the end, "the greatest Dutch contribution to American religious diversity was to hold the Mid-Atlantic out of the English orbit until this singular period in English history. Had the Mid-Atlantic become English earlier –or later– American religious history would be radically different."[88] So the Dutch played an important role in the history of the U.S. by keeping it out of English hands, but tolerance was not a legacy they left behind, Haefeli concludes.

Interestingly, especially considering the fact that Shorto and Haefeli have different views on Dutch tolerance, Haefeli also bases much of his research on the translations made by Charles Gehring, saying that "I have generally used the existing English translations of Dutch documents, preferring the recent translations of Charles Gehring to earlier ones whenever possible."[89] As stated, Haefeli, in contrast to Shorto, tries to take a less one-sided approach which better fits his belief that tolerance is complex in nature. Throughout his book it becomes clear that it is difficult to think of the Dutch in New Netherland and the Dutch Republic as simply being tolerant. Though they did not force anyone to join the official Dutch Reformed Church, the Dutch were tolerant in order to cope with diversity, not to foster it. This nuance is often overlooked and therefore Dutch tolerance has often been mistaken for religious freedom. "What to outsiders was a staggering degree of religious diversity was a carefully calibrated system of social and political stability."[90]

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[87] Ibid., 19.
[88] Ibid.
[89] Ibid., xiii.
[90] Ibid., 58.

Haefeli uses the concept of "connivance" to support his claims about Dutch tolerance. Unlike Shorto and the nineteenth-century scholars, he does not necessarily see liberty of conscience as proof of Dutch tolerance. Dutch toleration was actually more about connivance, or "to wink at" something. According to Haefeli, the Dutch use of connivance "did not compel conformity, but it encouraged assimilation. It provided just enough freedom for those not born and raised Dutch Reformed to appreciate the advantages of being a member of the church without alienating them by compelling them to join."[91]

Why Haefeli chose to write about New Netherland tolerance is somewhat difficult to discern. Unlike with Shorto, there is less biographical information available about Haefeli, and Haefeli has also written less popular pieces from which his background and ideas might be determined. In an interview with C-SPAN, however, some insight can be gained into Haefeli's motivations. In this interview he says:

> I undertook this study when I was a graduate student because I wanted to get at the story of American religious diversity. This struck me as a student as something that is *very interesting and important about America* that we have so many different religions, and yet we've never had one single official state religion like you have in England, or France, or Spain. And it seemed that there was some aspect of that fact as part of *what makes American society very different* from European societies where you did have those formally established churches [emphasis added].[92]

He goes on to say that "I thought that, by looking at what the Dutch did, we would, and this is what I had been led to believe by such scholarship as existed, that we would see the

[91] Ibid., 80.
[92] Evan Haefeli, interview by Peter Slen, *C-SPAN*, video, June 4, 2012, http://www.c-span.org/video/?306665-7/book-discussion-new-netherland-dutch-origins-american-religious-liberty.

beginnings of what is *a distinctly American way of handling religious diversity. A more tolerant way, a more loose, easy-going sort of attitude* [emphasis added]."[93]

It can be concluded from the above quotes, and especially from the emphasized sections, that Haefeli is displaying a certain degree of American pride, because, according to Haefeli, there is something about American religious diversity that is "distinct," "different," and "more tolerant" than other Western countries such as the United Kingdom, France, or Spain. However, Haefeli repudiates what the nineteenth-century scholars, Shorto, and others have claimed about the Dutch influence on American tolerance. Instead, Haefeli has reduced the impact of the Dutch to the simple fact that the Dutch kept the greater New York area out of English hands until 1664.

> The greatest Dutch contribution toward the growth of American pluralism was less a positive than a negative impact on early English colonization. New Netherland succeeded in keeping the Mid-Atlantic out of English hands. Had that not happened, it most likely would have been a region divided between a greater Chesapeake and a greater New England. In the end, then, we can thank the Dutch for the possibility that there could be a New York.[94]

What is clear from Haefeli's choice of topic, and which is something that counts for Shorto as well, is that there seems to be a growing need for historians to emphasize the importance of the concept of tolerance. One of the strengths of Haefeli's take on the topic is that he sees tolerance as a highly complex concept. He recognizes, however, that many others do not see it as such. "We often presume there is – and was – a shared understanding about tolerance, yet on closer inspection it becomes clear that advocates for tolerance vary in their visions for

[93] Ibid.
[94] Haefeli, *Dutch Origins of American Religious Liberty*, 287.

coexistence."[95] Tolerance is not as universal as it is believed to be in Western democracies, because it means different things in different cultures. "Toleration is a fundamentally relational phenomenon involving those who are tolerated and those who do the tolerating...In all cases it is very difficult – I would say well nigh inconceivable – to strike a satisfactory balance between the expectations of each group. Is there really a perfect condition of toleration that all concerned would assent to equally?"[96] This is a profound question that should be kept in mind by everyone involved in, for example, the post-9/11 immigration debates, which is one global topic in which notions of tolerance and intolerance play a large role. One of the most valuable aspects of the recent revival of interest in New Netherland tolerance is that it opens up a dialogue about tolerance and the complexity and hisotry of the concept, through which a better understanding might be gained about the interests of different parties involved in contemporary tolerance debates.

Jaap Jacobs

Dutch historian Jaap Jacobs agrees with Haefeli that the Dutch did not have a significant impact on the development of American tolerance. In fact, in his book *The Colony of New Netherland: A Dutch Settlement in Seventeenth-Century America* (2009), he writes in the Epilogue that "[e]specially when dealing with such complex issues as tolerance and diversity, claims as to the importance of New Netherland have been exaggerated. New Netherland was diverse in terms of the ethnic origin of its population, but less so in terms of its culture."[97] What he means by this is that while there was 'liberty of conscience' in both the Dutch Republic and New Netherland, "tolerance was a matter of practice rather than conviction."[98] While in most of Europe it was believed that diversity would cause chaos, the Dutch

[95] Haefeli, *Dutch Origins of American Religious Liberty*, x.
[96] Ibid., 8.
[97] Jaap Jacobs, *The Colony of New Netherland: A Dutch Settlement in Seventeenth-Century America* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2009), 255.
[98] Ibid.

understood that much of their economic prosperity came from toleration, or connivance, of differences. Many of the same policies were implemented in the colony of New Netherland, though admittedly to a lesser degree, mostly because it was believed that the fragile nature of a new colony was more susceptible to chaos than an established nation.[99]

The population of New Netherland was made up of a variety of ethnic groups. Shorto uses this as proof that the Dutch colony was tolerant of differences, and that the Dutch can thus be credited for laying the foundations of the cultural diversity that would become the melting pot of New York. In an interview with *De Groene Amsterdammer* Shorto says that "It was certainly the Dutch who laid those fundamentals. The question is to what extent that tolerance, that openness, that inviting of colonists from different parts of America, was also an ideology. I don't see it that way, but there are some striking things. For example, when Kieft [the director of the colony from 1638-1647] tries to lure English settlers, he says 'Come here, we are a tolerant place.'"[100] Jacobs, who also took part in this interview, responds by saying:

> That was mostly pragmatic thinking. The first time the English tried to take land on Long Island they were chased out; the second time, a year later, they asked permission beforehand. Kieft allowed this. The Dutch were used to immigrants of all sorts, including the Puritans, the Pilgrim Fathers. Ethnicity as we know it now didn't play such an important role in the seventeenth century. For Kieft it was nothing special to let the English settle under his jurisdiction.[101]

This Dutch characteristic of convenience is portrayed by Jacobs in another important example. In 1654 a group of Jews who had been chased out of Recife, Brazil, arrived in New

[99] Jaap Jacobs, "Between Repression and Approval: Connivance and Tolerance in the Dutch Republic and New Netherland," *De Halve Maen* 2 (1998): 9.
[100] Russell Shorto and Jaap Jacobs, interview by Koen Kleijn. *De Groene Amsterdammer*, November 19, 2004. http://www.groene.nl/artikel/de-hollandse-fundamenten-van-new-york. Author's translation.
[101] Ibid. Author's translation.

Amsterdam. Stuyvesant, who was known for being anti-Semitic, and his council quickly requested the WIC directors to refuse the Jews permission to settle in the colony. In response, a group of Jews living in Amsterdam petitioned the directors to allow their relatives and fellow Jews to remain in New Amsterdam, as well as give permission to Jewish merchants to trade with New Netherland. The directors eventually granted the Jews both permission to stay and to trade with New Netherland. Shorto sees this event as another example of Dutch tolerance. "Stuyvesant's superiors reminded him loftily of the 'each person shall remain free in his religion' (and added that certain influential Jews had invested a 'large amount of capital' in the West India Company), and ordered him to back off."[102] Jacobs disagrees with Shorto on this point, saying that the translation of the document on which Shorto based this argument is incorrect. "In my view this translation is faulty. A better version would be 'the large sums of money for which they are still *indebted* to the Company'[emphasis added]."[103] This alternate translation provides an alternate explanation for the permissions granted to the Jewish settlers. It shows that the WIC was not giving in to pressure from Jewish lobbyists because they had invested large sums in the company, as has often been suggested, but that the WIC let them stay because Jewish investors still owed them money.

Like Haefeli, Jacobs believes the Dutch had an impact on the U.S. in a more indirect manner, though his views on what that manner was are different from those of Haefeli, who arugues that the main impact of the Dutch was that they kept the colony out of English hands until 1664. Instead, Jacobs argues that just as the Swedes were allowed to continue their Lutheran worship after the Dutch take-over, the Dutch were allowed to continue liberty of conscience after the superimposition of the English. It was this superimposition that eventually led to the extension of freedom of conscience into freedom of worship in the

[102] Shorto, *The Island at the Center of the World*, 275.
[103] Jacobs, *The Colony of New Netherland*, 200.

colony of New York.[104] According to Jacobs, the English thus had a greater impact on the American concept of tolerance than the Dutch.

Jacobs only touches upon the topic of tolerance briefly in the epilogue of his book, because it is not his aim to defend or dispute Dutch notions of tolerance in the U.S.. Instead his aim is to correct the commonly held idea that New Netherland and the Dutch were merely a footnote in American history. His neglect of tolerance also has to do with the fact that he believes that there was little tolerance to speak of. In an interview with Wim Brands for the Dutch television program VPRO Boeken Jacobs explains that New Netherland was much less tolerant than the Netherlands, and New Amsterdam much less tolerant than Amsterdam. This had everything to do with scale. Being so small, New Amsterdam had a very different sense of community compared with the large metropolis that was Amsterdam. In Amsterdam, many things passed unnoticed, but in New Netherland everyone knew about everything. Thus, "the authorities saw the colony as a tree that has to be carefully tended to so that it grows in the proper shape."[105]

Why, then, do Russell Shorto and other historians hold on to this idea of the Dutch bringing tolerance to the U.S., Jacobs's interviewer wonders. Jacobs says it has everything to do with projection. He believes that many scholars, often unconsciously, project contemporary interpretations and aspirations onto the past. It is, for example, no coincidence that Shorto's book about tolerant multiethnic America was published shortly after the 9/11 attacks. During this time, more and more Americans became suspicious of "the other," specifically the Muslim other. Through the example of the Dutch, Shorto seems to be trying to foster a culture of tolerance and to convince the American public that from the beginning the U.S. has prided itself on such a culture. According to Jacobs, by doing this he is projecting the contemporary debate about tolerance onto the past. The same goes for the authors writing

[104] Ibid., 255.
[105] Jaap Jacobs, interview by Wim Brands, *VPRO Boeken*, September 13, 2009. http://www.vpro.nl/boeken/programmas/boeken/2009/13-september.html. Author's translation.

during Holland Mania. While studying the Dutch revolt against the Spanish they found countless parallels with the American Revolution and these parallels were then projected onto New Netherland and New Amsterdam. The English angle of influence on the U.S. can also be explained in this way. The influx of Catholic immigrants from Ireland and Italy, for example, was one of the reasons why notions of English, Puritan, and Protestant cultural legacies were emphasized by some.[106]

In a way Jacobs seems to see himself as unsusceptible to this bias, which is interesting considering the fact he is Dutch and it could have been easily expected that he would be inclined to encourage the idea that the Dutch brought tolerance to the U.S. He also suggests that he is more experienced and knowledgeable about the topic than scholars like Shorto:

> Often people aren't aware that they are projecting. The biggest problem with history is that we assume that things were the same in the past as they are in the present. But that's a faulty assumption. The past is a foreign country…I have a lot of respect for journalists who are writing modern history books about the past century, because you don't fall in that trap. But as soon as you go further back in time, then you really need years of study to really understand a topic.[107]

Jacobs's most important reason for writing about New Netherland, then, is to correct what in his view are incorrect ideas. For, even though the Netherlands may not have had the impact on the development of the U.S. as a tolerant nation as described by authors like Shorto, its contribution to American history is still important. By looking at history we can learn about the present, Jacobs suggests.

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[106] Ibid.
[107] Ibid.

> If we look at why New Netherland was intolerant and in which way and with which arguments then it will propel us to think about tolerance in our own time. The example of a Quaker's hat being ripped off his head because he refuses to show respect to the secular authority…how can we compare that to an imam who refuses to shake a woman's hand? Those are interesting questions. And I'm not saying I have an answer. But by looking at history in this way, we can start to better understand these types of questions.[108]

Yet, even the non-projecting, supposedly objective Jacobs is perhaps not free from nationalist self-appraisals. Though he repudiates the notion of a Dutch legacy of tolerance in the U.S., Jacobs still feels the need to show that the impact of the Dutch, his ancestors, was more than just a footnote in American history.

Nationalist Self-Appraisals and American Exceptionalism

Jacobs's arguments about projection are important in understanding why there has been a revival in writings about New Netherland. Shorto's book *An Island at the Center of the World* was followed by other works claiming a Dutch influence on the development of the U.S. as we know it today. Some of these works include Martine Gosselink's *New York – Nieuw Amsterdam: De Nederlandse oorsprong van Manhattan* (2009) and *Van Jan Kees tot Yankees* (2009) by Pascal Theunissen. These works, along with others, were written by Dutch authors in concurrence with the then upcoming celebration of the fourth Dutch-American centennial that took place in 2009. This new wave of writings about New Netherland can partly be explained by the focus on the country's centennial and its

[108] Ibid.

colonial roots, just as the earlier wave of Holland Mania was mostly centered on the third centennial.

As explained earlier, part of the writings of Holland Mania were inspired by the arrival of a new wave of immigrants from Eastern Europe, which to some posed a threat to the cultural identity of the U.S. as established by its early settlers. Scholars sought to anchor American identity in the national cultures of America's earliest settlers, often purposely avoiding the British angle. As shown in Chapter 1 of this thesis, many New Netherland scholars were outspokenly anti-British, causing them to look for other explanations for American ideals of freedom and tolerance; they found these within Dutch culture. Though indeed the Dutch had a republic and were fairly tolerant for their time, it can be concluded that it was often anti-British sentiments that caused the authors discussed in Chapter 1 to project their beloved American values onto the Dutch. The fact that recently, in line with another centennial, scholars are again writing about Dutch tolerance supports Jacobs's projection theory; however, this time it does not have to do with anti-British, but more with pro-Dutch sentiments as well as a pro multi-culturalist ideology. Both the Netherlands and the U.S. pride themselves on being meritocratic, tolerant, multi-ethnic, and multi-cultural nations. Yet, since the beginning of the century, starting with the 9/11 attacks, both countries have experienced a certain wariness regarding tolerance and openness. One could argue that scholars such as Shorto, writing in favor of tolerance, are trying to convince the public that tolerance is one of the most valuable aspects of Dutch and American society.

This need to convince the public of Dutch-American tolerance is especially interesting because the belief that the Dutch are responsible for the culture of tolerance in the U.S. is a popular idea. In most scholarly writing this idea is often repudiated, as this thesis shows in the cases of Jacobs and Haefeli. This difference of opinion can be explained by the difference between "public" and "professional" history. In *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity*

Question" and the American Historical Profession (1988), Peter Novick describes changing perceptions of "the objectivity question" among historians in course of the twentieth century. According to Novick, "At the very center of the professional historical venture is the idea and ideal of 'objectivity.' It was the rock on which the venture was constituted, its continuing raison d'être."[109] With the emergence of new schools of thought and new types of history the "objectivity ideal" has been challenged, public history being one such new type of history. Novick explains that public history is conducted outside university circles, often with a specific goal and public in mind. Thus, public history can often be referred to as "popular" history, because it reaches a wider public than traditional historical scholarship.

One problem with public history is that it is often "private" history done in the service of, for example, government agencies that have a certain agenda in mind.[110] Though Shorto and the nineteenth-century writers were not commissioned to write their books but did so out of their own interest, they still had their own purpose in writing these books, which was to convince the wider public of the Dutch influence on tolerance in the U.S. Novick and Jacobs would agree that agendas and projection corrupt historical objectivity. However, with such complex topics as tolerance, complete objectivity is hard to come by. In historical narratives nationalist self-appraisals often play a role, regardless of whether or not the storyteller is aware of them.

One reason why the idea of Dutch-American tolerance could become so popular in public history is because the American public likes to see its ancestors as stemming from exceptional figures, "heroes" so to speak. The Dutch and their history of tolerance fit well into this tradition of exceptionalism, which dates back as far as the Puritan colonies and later the American War for Independence, and which was already written about by Alexis de Tocqueville in his famous *Democracy in America* (1840). As Tocqueville wrote, "The

[109] Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The "Objectivity Question" and the American Historical Profession* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 1.
[110] Ibid., 513.

position of the Americans is therefore quite exceptional, and it may be believed that no other democratic people will ever be placed in a similar one."[111] Tocqueville also wrote about the Puritan beginnings of the U.S. and how these helped shape its middle-class, democratic society:

> In New England the nucleus of the Puritan movement continued to be in the middle classes, and it was from those classes that most of the emigrants sprang. The population of New England grew fast, and while in their homeland men were despotically divided by class hierarchies, the colony came more and more to present the novel phenomenon of a society homogeneous in all its parts. Democracy more perfect than any of which antiquity had dared to dream sprang full-grown and fully armed from the midst of the old feudal society…the whole destiny of America is contained in the first Puritan who landed on these shores."[112]

Renowned Canadian historian Sacvan Bercovitch would agree. In his book *The American Jeremiad* he argues that the America's development from colony to nation can be traced back to its Puritan settlers and their creation of an "American Jeremiad." The Puritans set out to New England – some via Leiden – in the belief that they had been chosen by God to create a New Jerusalem in the U.S., and to be an example for all of humanity. As John Winthrop, one of the first governors of the Puritan colony of Massachusetts, so famously put

[111] Alexis de Tocqueville, *Democracy in America, Vol 2.: The Social Influence of Democracy* (Philadelphia: J. & H.G. Langley, Publishers, 1840), 35-36.
[112] Tocqueville quoted in Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1978), 19.

it, "For we must consider that we shall be as a city upon a hill. The eyes of all people are upon us."[113]

Some of the first American settlers thus felt to be on a divine mission; they had an errand to accomplish. It is this errand, according to Bercovitch, which has defined the U.S. and its history. "A country that, despite its arbitrary territorial limits, could read its destiny in its landscape, and a population that, despite its bewildering mixture of races and creed, could believe in something called an American mission, and could invest that patent fiction with all the emotional, spiritual, and intellectual appeal of a religious quest."[114] From this mindset a new type of society, in which the middle-class and meritocracy were most important, was created, and which is another aspect that has set the U.S. and its history apart from other countries, as Americans like to emphasize. Bercovitch's exploration of the American Jeremiad is thus proof that from the beginning, Americans have set themselves apart from the rest of the world, especially through the organic development of a middle-class, which was characterized by the lack of a feudal and aristocratic past, something which the nineteenth-century historians discussed in this thesis were very proud of. Many historians argue that this middle-class character has been paramount to the U.S.'s development and has made the country unique, or exceptional.

The American founding fathers were among the first to see the U.S. as a new and exceptional nation. Jefferson, who was revered by most of the nineteenth-century scholars discussed in this thesis, believed that the U.S. should function as an "Empire of Liberty." He believed that the newly founded United States had been chosen to serve a greater purpose; it would lead the world from the old to the new, from repression to liberty. Central to his statecraft, then, was the idea that there were universal rights of man, of which freedom was considered the most important, and which the U.S. had a divine duty to spread to the rest of

[113] John Winthrop, "A Model of Christian Charity," 1630, accessed April 17, 2016, http://winthropsociety.com/doc_charity.php.
[114] Sacvan Bercovitch, *The American Jeremiad*, 11.

the world.[115] The British, who had been oppressive in the eyes of Jefferson and his followers, did not fit well into this picture of liberty. For the nineteenth-century writers, a Dutch ancestry offered a more heroic alternative to a British one, and so they projected their Jeffersonian ideals of tolerance onto the Dutch colonists. The same could be said for Shorto and other contemporary scholars writing in favor of the Dutch-American theory of tolerance. For Shorto his pride in being a (liberal) New-Yorker is especially important in explaining his projection of ideals of tolerance onto the seventeenth-century Dutch. For Dutch writers, their nationality and the celebration of the fourth centennial of Dutch-American relations could play a role.

The celebration of the fourth centennial of Dutch-American history in New York in 2009 received wide attention in the Netherlands: the week's events cost over six million euros (ten million U.S. dollars) and years of planning to organize, the King and Queen –still Prince and Princess at the time– flew over for the festivities, and about fifty reporters from the Netherlands were dispatched to report on the events. These events included a theater festival, performances by famous Dutch DJs such as Armin van Buuren, and the unveiling of a New Amsterdam pavilion donated to New York by the Dutch government.[116] The NY400 events were not only held in New York City, but in the Netherlands itself as well. Across the country events were organized to commemorate Dutch-American history. For example, in Middelburg, Dutch "Dichter des Vaderlands" (National Poet) Ramsey Nasr, was commissioned to write and recite three sonnets, and in Amsterdam four American photographers were invited by museum FOAM to explore and document Amsterdam from

[115] Robert W. Tucker and David C. Hendrickson, *Empire of Liberty: The Statecraft of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 11.
[116] A.G. Sulzberger, "400 Years Later, and Still Proud of New Amsterdam," *New York Times*, September 14, 2009, accessed April 15, 2016, http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/14/nyregion/14dutch.html?_r=0; Freek Staps, "Theaterfestival van 'NY400' is een Nederlands feestje," *NRC Handelsblad*, September 14, 2009, accessed April 15, 2016, http://www.nrc.nl/handelsblad/2009/09/14/theaterfestival-van-ny400-is-een-nederlands-feestje-11782299; Ramsey Nasr, "Dichter des Vaderlands Ramsey Nasr met drie sonnetten over 400 jaar Nederlands-Amerikaanse betrekkingen," *NRC Handelsblad*, September 2, 2009, accessed 15 April, 2016, http://www.nrc.nl/handelsblad/2009/09/02/dichter-des-vaderlands-ramsey-nasr-met-drie-sonnetten-11776524; Tracy Metz, "Nieuwe New Yorkse blik op Amsterdam," *NRC Handelsblad*, May 16, 2009, accessed April 15, 2016, http://www.nrc.nl/handelsblad/2009/09/02/dichter-des-vaderlands-ramsey-nasr-met-drie-sonnetten-11776524.

their point of view. Moreover, 2009 also saw the release of several books on Dutch-American relations, specifically in relation to New Amsterdam. Some of these include *Van Jan Kees tot Yankees in New York. Op zoek naar Nederlandse roots in de Big Apple*, by Pascal Theunissen, *Amsterdam Nieuw Amsterdam 1609-2009. De 400-jarige band tussen Amsterdam en New York* (2009), by Martin Pruijs, *New York/New Amsterdam: The Dutch Origins of Manhattan*, by Martine Gosselink, and *Four Centuries of Dutch-American Relations* (2009), edited by Hans Krabbendam, Cornelis A. van Minnen, and Giles Scott-Smith.

The first of these books is a travel guide that traces the Dutch heritage in New York, from street names to places where important events took place. The second book is a collection of essays about the four centuries of history between the Netherlands and the U.S.. The third accompanied an exhibition in the Netherlands and focuses more on the history of New Netherland. Using illustrated articles it explains what life was like for colonists in New Netherland.[117] The last book, *Four Centuries of Dutch-American Relations*, was published by the Roosevelt Study Center in Middelburg, a research institute devoted to the study of U.S. history and Dutch-American relations. Out of all the books mentioned above it is the most detailed and consists of over ninety articles by Dutch historians and American studies scholars. The authors' aim was to create, "for the first time, a comprehensive history of bilateral relations between the Netherlands and the United States,"[118] and to reclaim the Dutch element within the intermingling history of the U.S. with other nations.[119] It thus emphasizes that Dutch-American relations are much more than a shared colonial history of New Netherland. "The 1609-2009 anniversary offers an ideal moment to not only recapture a space for the Netherlands in North America but also to illustrate in detail both the diverse array of

[117] Lucas Ligtenberg, "Kapitein Henry Hudson had zijn eigen Nine-Eleven," *NRC Handelsblad*, September 11, 2009, accessed April 17, 2016, http://www.nrc.nl/handelsblad/2009/09/11/kapitein-henry-hudson-had-zijn-eigen-nine-eleven-11781092; Roelof van Gelder, "De wereld van Peter Stuyvesant," *NRC Handelsblad*, September 11, 2009, accessed April 17, 2016, http://www.nrc.nl/handelsblad/2009/09/11/de-wereld-van-peter-stuyvesant-11781089.
[118] Hans Kabbendam, Cornelis A. van Minnen, and Giles Scott-Smith, *Four Centuries of Dutch-American Relations: 1609-2009* (Albany: State University of New York, 2009), 15.
[119] Ibid., 19.

activities and the common interests that have propelled both relations through the last four centuries and into the future."[120] This suggests that the book had both a political and diplomatic purpose, diplomatic in that it can be used as an example of previous cooperation, and political in advocating the importance of such cooperation on a domestic front. It is no coincidence that the 2009 centennial celebration was largely sponsored by the Dutch government.

The centennial events were also covered by *The New York Times*. But, as becomes apparent from these articles, "aside from perhaps hearing cannon fire, spotting the stately profiles of the Dutch sailing vessels shipped across the Atlantic for the occasion, or bumping into a gang of blond, blue-eyed sailors in Brooklyn Heights, New Yorkers, a busy bunch and long accustomed to spectacle, basically went about life as usual"[121] and paid little attention to the festivities. Yet, even though Americans might have found the centennial of little interest, the amount of attention that was given to it by the Dutch media, government, and scholars shows that for the Dutch the event was incredibly important. It suggests that for them it is important to be linked to one of the world's most powerful nations. The literature that appeared around this time is evidence of this. The authors' aim was in many cases to reestablish the importance of the Dutch within American history. Moreover, the attention given by the Dutch to the fourth centennial shows that in the Netherlands there is a great deal of nationalist self-appraisal with regards to the subject of tolerance. There is an obvious need to remind people, on both a domestic and international level, that the Netherlands is a country founded on multiculturalism and the acceptance of differences, and that these principles should not be forgotten about in current debates on immigration and integration.

[120] Ibid., 22.
[121] A.G. Sulzberger, "400 Years Later, They're Still Proud of New Amsterdam," *New York Times*, September 14, 2009, accessed April 15, 2016. http://www.nytimes.com/2009/09/14/nyregion/14dutch.html?_r=0.

Conclusion

Since the 1970s Charles Gehring has been (re)translating a huge bulk of Dutch documents relating to the founding of New Netherland and New Amsterdam, later to become New York. According to many scholars the work being done by Gehring and his colleagues has provided people with a new understanding of the founding and development of the Dutch colony and New York City. Gehring's translations are important because, for a long time, New Netherland history was largely ignored in the telling of America's history. Gehring's translations have blown new life into New Netherland scholarship, and many contemporary scholars rely heavily on his work to gain insight into the colony's proceedings.

It is important to emphasize that New Netherland history was not always ignored, because until the beginning of the twentieth century it most certainly was not. In fact, between 1880 and 1920 New Netherland history was so popular that this period is sometimes referred to as being characterized by a "Holland Mania." During these decades many scholars emphasized the shared history between the U.S. and the Netherlands, especially in relation to concepts of tolerance and freedom. Scholars such as Edmund B. O'Callaghan, William Elliot Griffis, and Douglas Campbell sought to find an explanation for the tolerant nature of the U.S., arguing that it did not stem from a British background. Many of these scholars were influenced by Jeffersonian ideals such as the separation of church and state, republicanism, and notion that the U.S. was an empire of liberty. Not everyone, however, agreed with this Dutch-centered view of the origins of American tolerance. Frederick Zwierlein, for example, also writing during the period of Holland Mania, claimed that the Dutch were actually quite intolerant, using the Dutch repression of Catholics as an example. Whatever their sentiment towards the Dutch, many of the scholars' ideals cannot be severed from nationalist self-appraisals, which can be explained by looking at their background. O'Callaghan, being Catholic and Irish, had experienced religious oppression by the British government in both

Europe and Canada; Griffis was strongly opposed to feudalism and the aristocracy as they existed in Britain; Campbell's ancestors had likely also been oppressed by the British; and Zwierlein was Belgian and Catholic and had thus experienced Dutch oppression firsthand. Their backgrounds thus offer insight into why O'Callaghan, Griffis, and Campbell supported the idea of a Dutch-American tolerance and were avid Jeffersonians, and why Zwierlein rejected the concept of Dutch-American tolerance.

Unfortunately for these scholars, the interest in Dutch-American history was short-lived. The beginning of WWI and the resulting economic decline drew attention away from the Dutch and the period of Holland Mania came to an end. It was not until decades later, when a large bulk of historical documents fell into the hands of Charles Gehring that the interest in Dutch-American history was reignited. This newfound interest in New Netherland has led to an interesting discussion regarding the origins of the U.S., specifically relating to its culture of liberty and tolerance. This discussion was largely triggered by the publication of Russell Shorto's book *The Island at the Center of the World*, in which the author's main thesis is that the U.S. owes its tolerant character to the Dutch. According to Shorto, the Dutch brought with them the tolerance they were known for in the Dutch Republic and founded New York upon these same principles. The fact that New York is still seen as a melting pot, a multi-cultural and tolerant place, is in his view due to its Dutch founders. Shorto's book was well received by the public and quickly became a bestseller, making popular the idea that the Dutch are at the foundation of American tolerance and liberty.

Obviously, as this thesis shows, Shorto's ideas are not new; they are in many cases only reiterations of what the nineteenth-century historians discussed in this thesis had already claimed. Many historians, however, tend to disagree with Shorto's (and the older historians') ideas about a Dutch influence. Scholars such as Jaap Jacobs and Evan Haefeli would agree more with Frederick Zwierlein and almost completely repudiate Shorto's claims, arguing that

the Dutch colony of New Netherland was much more repressive of differences, and saying that New York's tolerance is better explained by the English take-over of New Netherland. Haefeli argues that the contribution the Dutch made was to keep the colony out of English hands until the 1664 take-over. If the English had obtained the colony earlier, then New York and the rest of the U.S. would not have developed the way they did. Jacobs also finds Shorto's arguments shortsighted, arguing that notions of tolerance are often exaggerated, that the Dutch used connivance out of convenience, and that the Dutch colony was inherently different from the Dutch Republic. Jacobs's most interesting argument comes from a 2004 interview with Wim Brands for the Dutch television program "Boeken." In it Jacobs claims that much of history is based on projection and that this is where Shorto's arguments come from as well. Jacobs believes that scholars often see in history what they would like to see, and that they project current ideals onto the past. For example, Shorto, being a liberal from New York, projects onto the New York of the past those ideals of freedom and tolerance that Americans hold so dear today, especially after the 9/11 attacks, which are often described as an attack on freedom.

Jacobs's theory of projection is especially relevant to this thesis because the main goal of this thesis is not to examine the arguments about the Dutch-American history of tolerance, but to examine where they came from: what drove the examined authors to write about this topic in a particular way, and what in their background explains their motivation and arguments. Nationalist self-appraisals seem to play a large role here. For example, despite recent iterations of the American Empire in decline, the U.S. is often seen as an exceptional nation with a special mission, especially by its own citizens. A heroic founding with heroic founding figures is part of this theory of exceptionalism, and thus writers throughout history have looked for characters to fulfill these roles. For some scholars, the – to them oppressive – British do not fit these roles and thus they have sought others to give them to. In the case of

tolerance, and the melting pot that is New York, the Dutch have proven to be the best fit, and this idea of a Dutch-American tolerance has now been perpetuated, not just by American scholars, but by Dutch scholars as well, for whom this connection to American history acts as their own form of Dutch nationalist self-appraisal. Being linked to the most powerful country in the world is no small feat. But claiming ancestry to that same country is even better. Thus, Dutch scholars have looked for ways to affirm the Dutch influence on the U.S., be it in the form of influences on tolerance, or, as Jacobs argues, in a more general impact such as on aspects of the Reformed Church and American governmental practices.

Think back to the quote by mayor Bloomberg that was referenced earlier in this paper. In reaction to events such as 9/11 and the Ground Zero Mosque controversy, the Dutch are often mentioned in having advocated tolerance in these types of discussions due to the attention works by Shorto and others have generated. This is problematic because recent Dutch historians in the field of New Netherland history agree that this Dutch tolerance has been exaggerated. Unfortunately, New Netherland history is still a mostly academia-driven enterprise and therefore the public relies on the views of more popular works that have been published, such as those by Russell Shorto.

Yet even in academia-driven works the subject of tolerance in New Netherland could be explored more. Jacobs, who adamantly opposes Shorto's claim that American tolerance finds its roots in Dutch tolerance and that he is using projection, only briefly touches upon the subject of tolerance in the epilogue of his book on New Netherland. At the same time, his book is an attempt to highlight the fact that the Dutch had a substantial impact on the early development of the U.S., even though it may not have been in relation to the development of tolerance. This suggests that even Jacobs is not as impartial as he thinks himself to be, and that even his ideas might be linked to nationalist self-appraisals.

Haefeli similarly argues that Dutch tolerance is not American tolerance's frontrunner, yet his explanation as to how the English were the ones that implemented tolerance in the U.S. will not be revealed until his second book about this topic will be published. It is this lack in scholarship that limits the scope of this thesis. Though many solid conclusions can be drawn from the nineteenth-century scholarship, it is difficult to draw similar conclusions for the modern scholars, because their opinions have not yet been set into stone, so to speak. Much can be gleaned from looking at the works of these modern authors and by listening to interviews, but opinions shift, and further research sometimes also influences scholars' interpretations, as could new translations such as those being done by Gehring and his team. Moreover, as is the case with some of the nineteenth-century scholars, the biographical information about the modern scholars is limited, though of course this could change as further research is conducted.

What can be concluded is that the discussion on Dutch-American tolerance is not as new as Russell Shorto has claimed it to be, that arguments about this topic are often related to nationalist self-appraisals, and that the translations of historical documents by Gehring and his team are not as crucial to arguments for or against the theory of Dutch-American tolerance as some claim them to be. This thesis shows that many of the same arguments are used by the nineteenth-century and modern writers. This does not mean, however, that these new translations are irrelevant. The more knowledge is gained about New Netherland history, the more opportunities are created to make the results of academic historical research accessible to a wider public. Such attention is important because tolerance remains a significant topic in today's society, especially in the Western world, which sees its ideals of tolerance being challenged by anti-western terrorist groups, but also internally by anti-immigration groups and politicians. It is important to understand where ideas about tolerance originated and why

people find them important, not only to understand western concepts of tolerance, but also to gain insight into the ideology of other groups and to recognize why certain choices are made.

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