



A TOUCH OF DUTCH

Maritime, Military, Migration and Mercantile
Connections on the Western Third 1616–2016



Coordinating Author

NONJA PETERS



Dutch Journeys to the Western Edge, Guest Curator Nonja Peters
Image Courtesy: State Library Western Australia (SLWA) Photographer

Nonja Peters

Nonja Peters was born in the Netherlands at the end of the Second World War and migrated to Australia with her parents in 1949. She is currently Senior Lecturer and Director of the History Of Migration Experiences (HOME), located in the Curtin University Sustainability Policy Institute (CUSP). In 2000 Nonja gained a PhD on Immigrant Enterprise. In 2002, *Milk and Honey But No Gold: Postwar Migration to Western Australia 1945-1964*, UWA Press was short-listed for three Australian Premiers' Literary Awards. In 2006 *The Dutch down under 1606-2009* was published for the 400 years Australia-Netherlands bilateral commemorations, followed in 2009 by *From Tyranny to Freedom: Dutch Children from the Netherlands East Indies to Fairbridge Farm School 1945-1946*, Black Swan Press. In 2010, she published *We Came By Sea*, WA Museum. Nonja is also a curator of museum exhibitions on migration.

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NOVA ORBIS TABVLA, IN LUCEM EDITA, A.F. DE WIT.



Frederick DE WIT, Nova Orbis Tabula in Lucem Edit, c.1680
Courtesy: Private Collection, Perth.

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Duyfken on her way: Courtesy: Dutch Maritime Artist, Leentje Linders www.leentjelinders.nl.

*This book is dedicated to
Rupert Gerritsen, friend and colleague,
who worked tirelessly to preserve
Dutch-Australian maritime history.*

Daily Life in NL in the 17th Century.
Inside the home with women putting away linen, Pieter de Hooch, 1663
 Courtesy: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.



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Nonja Peters

October 2016



Stadsgezicht, (cityscape)
Jacob Vrel, 1654 – 1662
Courtesy: Rijksmuseum, Amsterdam.



FOREWORD BY ANNEMIEKE RUIGROK

Former Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Australia

The relations between Australia and The Netherlands are manifold. They go back to the era of the VOC, the Dutch East India Company, whose captains explored the seas around present-day Indonesia and some of whom landed on Australian soil. Based on these first encounters more than 400 years ago, our countries developed strong cultural, people-to-people and historical links and a rich shared cultural heritage.

Within the scope of these ties between Australia and the Netherlands, a special connection exists between Western Australia and the Netherlands. And this book, edited and co-written by Dr Nonja Peters, shines a new light on this special bond. This connection found its source when the VOC vessel *De Eendracht*, under her captain Dirk Hartog, landed on the Western Australian coast in 1616. The arrival on this island at the West side of Shark Bay, now aptly called Dirk Hartog Island, marked the beginning of a period of over 150 years, in which many Dutch VOC ships explored and mapped the coastline of Australia before the arrival of Captain Cook in 1770.

Over time many of the hundreds of thousands of Dutch migrants who came to Australia, once known as New Holland, made a new home in Western Australia, especially in the aftermath of World War II; a war that strengthened the ties between our countries through our military alliance. After the war, the Dutch became a part of the Western Australian society, many of them starting up businesses and consequently leaving traces of mercantile heritage.

Dr Nonja Peters and her co-writers have assembled an amazing collection of stories and memories about this Dutch-Western Australian connection. Through her untiring efforts, Dr Peters has become an indispensable source of energy in the preservation and promotion of the Dutch-Australian Cultural Heritage.

As we look forward to the celebration of 400 years of historical ties that bind Western Australia and the Netherlands in 2016, I wish to express my gratitude to Dr Nonja Peters for keeping our shared cultural heritage alive.

Annemieke Ruigrok

Ambassador of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to Australia
2016

FOREWORD BY BRETT MASON

Ambassador of Australia to the Netherlands

The links between Australia and the Netherlands stretch back more than four centuries - back to those chance encounters by sailors of the Dutch East India Company, or VOC to give it its Dutch acronym. Driven off course by the elements, these seafarers became the first recorded Europeans to make landfall in Australia. And in so doing, Dutch cartographers, quite literally, drew Australia onto the map of the modern world.

These unexpected encounters initiated a pattern of contact that was to develop and evolve down the centuries. However, throughout that period and right up to the present day, Australia's "Western Third" as Dr Peters terms it, has remained central to that engagement. It is no surprise that Western Australia for so long held the name New Holland, and that so many place names up and down its coast proudly proclaim their Dutch origin.

These early contacts were followed by successive waves - which Dr Peters dubs the four M's - of mariners, merchants, military and, in the aftermath of World War II, migrants. The merchants are with us still, in the form of Dutch investors in the energy and gas sector, while those migrants, now through their children and grandchildren, continue to enrich and shape modern Australia.

As we approach the four hundredth anniversary of Dirk Hartog's landing at Cape Inscription in 1616, I am delighted to welcome this new volume which chronicles the contribution of the Dutch to Western Australia. It is a unique strand of Australian history that deserves celebrating.

Delving into history and reaching out to the community, Dr Peters and her co-authors have brought together stories and experiences which detail the diversity and richness of Dutch influence in Western Australia.

Australia and the Netherlands share a close affinity. And it is thanks to works such as this, that we are better able to appreciate our shared heritage and common values.

The Honourable Dr Brett Mason

Ambassador of Australia to the Netherlands
2016



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Figure 1
400 years of Dutch maritime, military, migration and mercantile links with Western Australia 1616-2016. Courtesy: 1. Stephen Brady, 2. Rupert Gerritsen, 3. Peters Family Collection 4. Rene de Kok.

GENERAL INTRODUCTION

Nonja Peters

This edited volume with contributions from 34 authors is the first ever comprehensive history of the Dutch in Western Australia (WA). It is structured around four main themes – maritime, military, migration and mercantile as these best characterise the 400 years that the Dutch have had links with WA. This period of contact began on 25 October in 1616, with the landfall, at Shark Bay, of Skipper Dirk Hartog and the crew of the *Vereenigde Oostindische Compagnie* (VOC or Dutch East India Company) trading vessel *Eendracht*.

From the late 15th Century the ‘trading routes’ into Europe, from countries along the Indian Ocean Rim, shifted from being land-based to ocean routes. The shift was spearheaded by the Portuguese, who as a result maintained a stranglehold on the Spice Trade until other European countries found their own way around the Cape of Good Hope into the Indian Ocean. Throughout the period which we now call the ‘Age of Exploration’- the Dutch, having established their own ocean route at the end of the 16th Century, began expanding their trading relationships by establishing trading posts at either the request of some countries wanting to rid themselves of the Portuguese or by force in others. The latter, being particularly the case in the area that we now call Indonesia. The ultimate outcome of these trading relationships was Colonialism, which in Indonesia if viewed from the Dutch perspective, lasted from the early 1800s until the end of 1949.

The history of the VOC exploits relating to WA and the rise of an ever-growing Dutch mercantile culture - known globally to have intensified during the Dutch ‘Golden Age’ - is noted in Section I of this book. The various VOC activities had also provoked sizeable numbers of Europeans to migrate in pursuit of wealth in far-flung places. Their trading activities, settlements and ‘love relationships’ with Indigenous peoples, generated many of those activities that we now associate with ‘shared cultural heritage’ and cultural heritage tourism. The shipwrecks along the WA coast are a prime example. The maritime connections were superseded in importance by the military relationships developed in defense of Australia and Colonial holding in the Indian Ocean region (IOR) during WWII, and these form the basis of Section II of this book. The upheaval of the second World War, in turn generated the post-war mass migration scheme that brought a large influx of migrants to Australia, including a significant number of Dutch. Elucidating and clarifying various aspects of the migration story is the focus of all authors in Section III of this book. The mercantile behaviours of Dutch-Australians and Dutch corporations based in the Netherlands - with a subsidiary in Australia - underpin the chapters in Section IV. The contributions that Dutch have made to the Dutch community - past and present, to the Australian

Arts scene, in Archives and also possibly the Indigenous 'gene pool', is the subject matter of Section V.

The authors in this book, who highlight the Dutch influences on the socio-cultural and economic development of WA from 1616, include experts in the fields of business, forensic science, the arts, cultural and physical anthropology, maritime archaeology and maritime and social history. Their chapters are interspersed with vignettes – stories by the lay public – whose insight offers a personal perspective on the themes raised in the chapters written by the academics. The opinions stated are those of the authors - they have not been modified.



The Dutch East India Company (VOC) was all about trade not settlement which this cartoon captures in one frame. ©Dean Alston - West Australian Newspapers Limited.