

LESSON C

SHALL WE GO DUTCH?

Standards: Geography Standard Three: Students will develop an understanding of the diversity of human culture and the unique nature of places.

History Standard Four: Students will develop historical knowledge of major events and phenomena in world, U.S. and Delaware history.

Objectives: 1) The students will explain how language and cultural differences encountered by the Indians and the Dutch lead to disaster for the first European settlement in Delaware.

2) The students will examine a Dutch document to see that the first settlers in Delaware did not use English as their main language.

3) The students will construct a response to the question - What could have been done differently by either the Dutch or the Native Americans to prevent the massacre?

Materials: 1) *Lesson C, Delaware Public Archives, Duke of York Record, Series Number 0000.04*
2) *1796 Delaware Map, Vertical File VI, Delaware Public Archives (Image Gallery)*

Procedures: 1) Divide the class into groups of four. Distribute copies of the Dutch/English document. Discuss why the Dutch set up a colony at Zwaanendael. (See background information – The teacher may want to read the background story to the students if there is no prior knowledge of the incident at Zwaanendael.) On the 1796 overhead map point out the location of Zwaanendael (Lewes) as well as the Delaware Bay - where the supply of whales was located.

2) Do you recognize any of the words in the Dutch section of the document? Give the students several minutes to compare the writing on the documents. Are there any similarities with the

English translation?

- 3) Do you believe the Indians and the Dutch had problems with communication since they did not speak the same language? (Students will probably answer “yes.”) Would English speaking settlers have the same problem? (Yes, because they still didn’t speak the same language.) What did the Indians want from the Dutch? (metal tools, woven cloth, guns) Why? (the Indians didn’t have these items) What did the Dutch want from the Indians? (animal furs) Why? (to resell them in Europe for clothing items such as hats and coats)

- 4) Explain the incident where the Coat of Arms was taken from the fort. Discuss the importance of symbols and why this was a serious offense in the eyes of the Dutch. What did the Coat of Arms mean to the Dutch? (It was a symbol of the Dutch presence in America and was held in high regard.) What did it mean to the Indians? (It had no significance to the Indians other than it was made of metal.)

- 5) Stop the story at the following points and ask the groups to discuss the problem in question and present a response for the class.
 - a. The Coat of Arms has been taken. What action should the Dutch take? Explain the action taken by the Dutch. (The Dutch became angry and told the Indians that the person who took the Coat of Arms should be punished.)
 - b. The Indians bring the head of the guilty individual to the Dutch. How do the Dutch respond? Explain the meaning of cultural differences in relation to this event. (In the eyes of the Dutch, the punishment did not fit the crime. It was too severe.)
 - c. Many of the Indians are upset by the death of their friend. Who should they blame? How should they respond? Look for predictions.
 - d. Explain the eventual massacre. (Some Indians also thought the punishment was too severe. In response, they held the Dutch responsible and retaliated by burning the fort to the ground and killing the Dutch settlers.)

- 6) Instruct the students to respond to the following journal prompt: What could have been done differently by the Dutch or the Native Americans to prevent the massacre? Support your answer with an

example.

TRANSCRIPTION OF THE DUTCH/ENGLISH DOCUMENT

Peter Stuyvesant in Behalf of the High and Mighty Lords the States General of the United Netherland and the Honourable Gentlemen the Directors of the Privileged West India Company. Director General of New Netherland, Curacoa, Bonnairo, Aruba and their Dependencies together with the honourable Gentlemen of the Council Witness and Declare that we on the Day of the Date underwritten have given and granted to Peter Ebel one Plantation situate on the South River of New Netherland at Fort Casmier bounded on the North by Jan Eckhoff and to the Southward by said Fort is large four Morgen with express Conditions &c. Done Amsterdam in New Netherland the 30th February Anno 1657.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

During the early 17th century the nation called The Netherlands (the Dutch) was a powerful, seafaring nation. Like other European nations, the Dutch wanted to take economic advantage of the new land in America. To carry out this move, the Dutch established several trading posts in America. In 1624, New Amsterdam was established on the southern tip of Manhattan Island at the present site of New York City. Named after the largest city in the Netherlands, New Amsterdam became the capital for all the Dutch colonies in America. Eventually, the British captured New Amsterdam and renamed it New York.

Following the establishment of New Amsterdam, the Dutch began building other trading posts along the east coast of America. In 1631 the Dutch created a trading post in Delaware near Cape Henlopen. The new settlement was located north of the present town of Lewes along the Lewes Creek. Because of the many swans in the area, the new settlement was named Zwaanendael, meaning "Valley of the Swans." The trading post was established for several reasons. The Dutch wanted to buy animal furs in order to resell them in Europe for clothing items, particularly hats and coats. Secondly, they wanted to take advantage of the large number of whales found in the Delaware Bay. Whale oil was used to fuel lanterns.

Approximately thirty men were involved in the settlement of Zwaanendael. There were no women among the first group of settlers. After constructing a fort for protection, the men planted crops and began hunting for whales in the Delaware Bay, They also befriended the local Indians. The Native Americans and the Dutch began to trade goods. While the Indians provided the Dutch with furs from such animals as fox, beaver, and bear, the Dutch offered iron pots, guns, metal tools, and woven cloth as items for trade. These items were unavailable to the Native Americans before the Dutch came to the area. Although the relationship between the Indians and the Dutch seemed to be one of friendliness and coexistence, one seemingly minor incident led to tragic consequences for the new settlers. One day, a Native American stole a metal Coat of Arms that the Dutch

had posted on a pole. The Coat of Arms was a symbol of the Dutch presence in America. Although the Dutch held this symbol in high regard, the Indian wanted it because the Coat of Arms was made of metal. With the Coat of Arms missing, the Dutch became angry and told the Native Americans that the person who took it should be punished. This reaction by the Dutch led some of the Indians to kill the guilty man and bring his head to the Dutch.

The men of Zwaanendael were shocked and saddened by what they perceived as an overreaction by the Native Americans. In addition, many of the Indians thought the punishment was too severe. Holding the Dutch responsible for the man's death, a group of Native Americans decided to attack and destroy the settlement. While the new settlers were tending their crops in the nearby fields, the Indians attacked and killed the Dutch and burned the fort to the ground.

In the following year, the authorities in the Netherlands appointed David Pietersen De Vries to be the new leader of the colony. Upon sailing from Holland to Zwaanendael, De Vries was shocked to find the fort destroyed and the first settlers massacred. Although De Vries hoped to start the colony again, the Dutch authorities decided the settlement had not produced enough whale oil to give the venture a second chance. It would be almost thirty years before the Dutch established another settlement in the Lewes area.

DOCUMENT BACKGROUND

Although this is a Dutch deed from 1657, this document is actually part of a collection called the Duke of York Record (Series Number 0000.04). This collection of land grants includes Dutch and English records. This document describes a piece of land near the present day site of the town of New Castle. The fort mentioned in the document, Fort Casimir, was built by the Dutch in early 1650s. An outgrowth of the fort was the establishment of a nearby town called New Amstel. When the English eventually took over Delaware they renamed it New Castle.