

its storage-life. Salted raw herring is still eaten as a special treat (the “Hollandse Nieuwe” is the first [new] edible herring of the season). Sometimes it is eaten with slices of pickled gherkin. In America a pickle is cucumber in vinegar or a sour syrup extract which is eaten with a hamburger or hot dog (see typical Dutch dishes).

**Pinkie** (Pinkje, pronounced as pinkie) Smallest finger. Can also be used in a derisive way as in Hey Pinkie / Hey little one....(shorty). (Pinkeltje is the name of a pink-sized pixie, the main character in a series of children's books by Dutch author Dick Laan). The Dutch word pink can also mean a small fishing vessel with only one mast and a flat bottom or a young cow (yearling).

**Pump** (Pomp) A pumping station. An installation to move a liquid (or a gas). Indispensable for keeping the low-lying land dry.

## Q

**Queens** Territory consisting of several settlements of the former Dutch colony. The English named it after Queen Catharina of Bragança in 1683.

**Quack** (Kwakzalver) An unqualified so-called medical man who sells potions and ointments with supposedly medical properties which have very dubious or no effect whatsoever. The barber also used to act as a surgeon on occasion because he was familiar with knives! The swindler relies on the gullibility and ignorance of his patients. A present-day doctor who has done a bad job is mockingly referred to as a quack.

## R

**Red Hook - Brooklyn** (Roode Hoek - Breuckelen) An oblong angular point in the Upper NY Bay named after the red glowing landscape because of the red clay soil. The English changed the name into the familiar sounding word Hook, because of the connection with the lifting of shiploads.

**Red light district** (de Wallen) Several defensive walls (ramparts or bulwarks) were erected in the inner city of Amsterdam. Within this area sailors from around the world were coming and going. They had just been on a long (“and lonely”) journey and had just been paid off. Female entertainment was freely available here and could easily be bought. Nowadays the meeting places are recognisable by red lighting in the rooms.

**Rensselaer** (Rensselaerswyck) The former patroonship of Killiaen van Rensselaer not far from present Albany.

**Rhode Island** (Roodt [Rode] Eylandt) Presumably named by explorer Adriaen Block because of the red clay that was found here. Names like Dutch Island and Dutch Harbor have been maintained and are reminders of the time of Nieuw-Nederland.



**Roster** (Rooster) A list of planned activities with a clear division of tasks coupled to names. In Dutch it also means a metal framework, i.e. on the barbecue, derived from “roosteren” meaning roasting.

## S

**Santa Claus versus Sinterklaas** On December 5 the Dutch celebrate the children's feast of Sinterklaas. On the night before, presents are put in the child's clog (shoe or boot) and sweets “speculaas en pepernoten” [spiced biscuits and spice nuts] are handed out on the day itself. Later, New Netherland colonists from other countries took on this family feast (of course, their children did not want to miss out). Nicolaas was born in the harbour town of Myra in Turkey, canonized on December 6, 343 and given the name of Sint Nicolaas (Saint Nicholas). Street parties were organised to honour and commemorate this illustrious saint. By tradition the poor could leave a shoe or clog in the church and the rich would fill them with presents or sweets. Dozens of churches still carry his name.

In the 17th century the Protestant rulers did not want to glorify a Catholic Saint (of the Spanish state religion) and the Saint Nicholas feast was prohibited. However, the feast was very popular and therefore it was celebrated indoors in the privacy of the home. The colonists brought the family feast with them to Nieuw-Nederland. In the Netherlands, a Dutch schoolmaster (Jan Schenkman 1806-1863) had produced a successful picture book with rhymes about the children's friend. The Saint supposedly came from (Catholic) Spain and had helpers named “Zwarte Piet” [Black Peter], derived from the Moors with their distinctive headwear (The Moors were dark-skinned Berbers and Arabs who ruled Spain in the 8th century but were later overcome / Black Peter had nothing to do with the black 18th century slave). The Saint carried a crosier and wore a mitre and naughty children were punished with the rod (a deterrent meant to keep order in class). The present feast of Saint Nicholas is based on this representation. Threatening the children with the rod or with being taken back to Spain in the (empty) presents sack is now considered unwise from an educational point of view and is not done any more. Only the Saint's attire is reminiscent of the historic Catholic Bishop. The Saint Nicholas feast of today has nothing to do with religion any more but with the belief of children in an immortal and generous children's friend.

In 1822 a Dutch professor, living in New York, wrote a poem for his children but adapted the story a little by writing about an old convivial (fat) little man with a red nose and cheeks and a white beard. A year later an American weekly published the poem and 20 years later again, this time accompanied by a fantasy drawing of Santa Claus. This brought about many reactions and the adapted story became firmly anchored in American society.

In 1931 Coca-Cola used the story for an advertisement but had the project



designed by a Swede and aimed it more at adult buyers than at children. The horse became a reindeer and Black Peter changed into an elf. The clog became a sock and Spain the North Pole. The date of December 5 was changed to December 25 which appealed more to the believing Americans.

The celebration of Santa Claus may be the most important lasting influence of the Dutch on American society. The feast is fun for parents, grandparents and children alike. Adults celebrate Santa Claus by giving each other presents. The old story of Saint Nicholas was specifically meant for the happiness of the (poor) child. An inquiry by the Dutch Folk Culture Center has shown the Sinterklaasfeest on December 5 to be the number one tradition in the Netherlands for most Dutch people.

**Scone** (Schoon) Neat, clean. Because the streets were dirty, the house was kept clean by taking off the clogs or loafers (shoes) at the door. Clogs were easy to take off, of course. The clog was then hung upside down on the wall next to the door so that no rain water could get in. The Dutch always liked to keep home and garden clean and even the natural surroundings were cleaned up. The natural forest was made into a park or a wood-producing plot. Morals have deteriorated as far as the cleaning of surrounding areas is concerned. The management of nature reserves has improved though. The insight to let nature take its course without human interference is gaining ground.

**Scow** (Schouw) A schouw is a type of boat with a very flat bottom (there are many types of flat-bottomed boats) making it easy to use in shallow water. The Dutch word schouw can also mean a mantelpiece or an inspection. This can be an inspection of a fleet or of water ways in a polder. The Netherlands has a large number of old sailing ships known as “the brown fleet” see page 56-57. Brown refers to the colour of the tanned sails. It is a unique and special legacy. Many are chartered for a weekend or for a company outing. Along the IJsselmeer, the former Zuiderzee, many picturesque old fishing villages are to be found.

**Saybrook** (Zeebroeck or Kievitshoek)

**Sewant** (Kralenketting) A Mahican word for bead chain, it was made from sea shells and used as currency. It was also called wampum.

**Skate** (Schaats – ice skating) The well-known skate, a metal blade fixed to a wooden base is a Dutch invention. The shoe or clog was tied to it with leather straps. An innovation like the modern clap skate is also Dutch. In the Middle Ages conditions were ideal for skating on ice. There were many relatively still bodies of water combined with cold winters. Conditions are not so good nowadays because of the drainage of warm waste water, wide overhanging bridges and mild winters. Long distance tours are rarely possible now because water ways do not freeze over regularly. For this reason roller skates or inline skates, to be used on asphalt, are becoming more popular. The first mention of a skating race dates back to 1466, noted down by a shield-bearer of Philip the Good (1396-1467). The Elfstedentocht



Cleanliness and tidiness used to be learnt at an early age. Child's labour was considered normal for a long time. Social contacts with the neighbours were maintained while doing the dishes in the fenced-off back yard. Who communicates daily with his neighbours nowadays? Nightly entertainment seems to have taken its place.

(Eleven City Tour, almost 200 km. long) passing through eleven Friesian cities is considered the ultimate skating challenge. When conditions allow for this tour to take place the skate-crazy Netherlands turns completely upside down. Up to date only 15 Eleven City Tours have taken place since 1909.

**Skipper** (Scipper – schipper / schip = boat see page 1) The person sailing or in charge of a ship.

**Sketch** (Schets) A sketch is a quick drawing, just giving the essential features.

**Schuylkill River** (Schuyl Kil) Derived from the word “schuilen” [meaning to hide or shelter], see also Kill. A concealed or hidden tributary of the Delaware River in Pennsylvania. The river may have been concealed behind vegetation but it also was a good place to hide a ship. The Delaware Indians called the river “Ganshowanee” – “turbulent and raging water”.

**Sleigh** (Slee) The word was used for a gliding vehicle that was pulled along on snow or ice.

**Slim** (Slim) Wise, crafty, clever. The (Dutch) word used to have a negative meaning; a deceitful swindler, for instance, would be called “slim”

**Sloop** (Sloep) Small open boat, used to go ashore from the big ship because the ship's draught was too deep. Today it is a lifeboat on a passenger ship. The word sloop (with double o) means a pillow case in Dutch.

**Slurp** (Slurpen) The sound made when sucking hot soup off a spoon, for instance. It is considered bad manners, but hungry sailors were not concerned about that.

**Smack** (Smak / slaan) A brightly coloured boat which is mainly used in coastal navigation to take fish, grain or cheese to the market. The cargo boat got its name because of the smacking (beating) sounds the sails made.



The typically Dutch gezelligheid [cosiness], the so-called “koffieleuten” [coffee gossip] does not exist in New York. There is no time for a social cup of coffee during office hours. The Westfriesian dancing group Schagen show their art and traditional costumes during a dancing event on a stage in the centre of Schagen, Noord-Holland. The church is traditionally the meeting point for practising hobbies and keeping up social contacts (and “social” gossip) in the community.