

NEWS FROM NEW YORK



Otesaga Hotel in Cooperstown

Hooray, Henry!
 New York Celebrates
 the 400th Anniversary
 of Henry Hudson's Voyage

by Sara Evans

overs of nature often wonder what Henry Hudson saw when he first sailed up the magnificent river named after him, in September 1609. Untouched and teeming with fish, deer crowding the banks, beavers, otters, rabbits, unimaginably abundant stands of timber, the Hudson was an Eden up for grabs.

New York and the Hudson region are celebrating this voyage in a very big way. A replica of the Half Moon plies the lower Hudson. There are

food and craft festivals, exhibits of Dutch crafts and products—and art events galore.

Among the many gifts of the Dutch to the New World was the invention of bourgeois comfort. Unlike the Puritanical Anglos to the North, the Dutch believed in keeping warm, in comfortable clothing, abundant food, and well-appointed and heated houses. A fabulous new exhibition at the Bard Graduate Center, presented in conjunction with the New York Historical Society, "Dutch New

York: Between East and West-The World of Margrieta van Varick" examines the world of Nieuw Amsterdam through the life of a woman who traveled amazingly in the 17th Century, from what is today Malaysia to Nieuw Amsterdam, where she had a textile shop. Through her silver, paintings, pottery and textiles, this exhibit conveys an intimate view of Dutch life in the city in the late 17th century. That the Dutch belief in domestic comfort persists today is warmly evidenced at the Cooper Hewitt



"Roman Campagna" 1858, by George Inness, New Britain Museum of American Art



"Roman Newsboys" 1848. Martin Johnson Heade.



Otesaga Hotel in Cooperstown, Veranda

"America's Rome: Artists in the Eternal City-1800-1900" is a superb exhibition of Hudson River School painters at the Fenimore Museum in Cooperstown. Absolutely stunning in its breadth and scholarship, this exhibit examines the myriad ways in which American painters were drawn to Rome, its ruins, people and the surrounding "Campagna" or countryside—and the powerful lessons they drew from the collapse of the Roman Empire. If this exhibition were in a major U.S. city, the lines would be out the door. (If you go, check out the Otesaga Hotel, one of our nation's truly grand resort hotels, celebrating its 100th anniversary this year, or the charming and hospitable Inn at Cooperstown). If a junket to Cooperstown is not on the cards between now and the end of December, the brilliant catalogue is definitely worth ordering (for \$29.95; www.fenimoremuseum.org).



New York Dutch Room, 1751 Albany County, New York from the Daniel Peter Winne house on the famed Van

school of painting, the movement that gave us our unique artistic identity, be sure to visit to Cedar Grove, the Thomas Cole homestead, perched over the Hudson. (www.thomascole.org). This beautifully restored house and studio, in Catskill, New York, lies at the foot of the mountain where the amazing Catskill Mountain House, an early and impressive hotel that drew artists and visitors from all over the new republic and from as far away as Europe. Cole, who traveled up by steamer to experience and to paint the glorious nature of the region, was dazzled by what he saw, and drew other painters to the area. It is Cole who first convinced us how lucky we are, how beautiful the Hudson Valley is, and how fragile our Eden is. Armed with their sketchbooks and paints in fragile fish bladders, the early painters set out to capture the evanescent light as it sweeps over the landscape. In his "Essay on American Scenery," the British-born Cole wrote, "Nature has spread for us a rich and delightful banquet. We are still in Eden...." ♦



Dutch textile designer Christien Meindertsma knits her commissioned wool rug in her studio. Photo: Roel Van Tour

Museum, which is showing the imaginative work of such contemporary Dutch designers as Hella Jongerius and Christien Meindertsma

The Metropolitan Museum is marking the occasion by opening a beautifully refurbished Hudson Valley Dutch period room. One could move right in; this room, part of the renewed American Wing, reinforces the Dutch notion of creature-comfort. The Met is also presenting an exhibition of Old Master paintings, including its wonderful collection of Vermeers and is showcasing a special guest, the painter's "The Milkmaid" on loan from Amsterdam. of Hudson River School paintings, by Cole, Church, Bierstadt, Cropsey, Kensett and others. (A beautifully produced catalogue, "The Hudson River School: Nature and the American Vision" by Linda S. Ferbe, is being published by Rizzoli-\$50).

