**A Condensed History of the Village of Menands:**

The European history of the Village of Menands begins with the 3rd voyage of English navigator Henry Hudson. In 1609 Henry Hudson was hired by the Dutch to find an elusive northern passage to the west and north of Europe in the hope of shortening voyages to conduct trade in the “Spice Islands” (or Asia), without having to sail the long and dangerous route around the Continent of Africa to get there.

Hudson disobeyed the contract he made with the Dutch which stipulated that he sail north and west to attempt to find that northern route to Asia. Instead, upon reaching the north-eastern areas of North America, Hudson turned the bow his ship the “Half Moon” southward along America’s east coast and began probing the different bays and river outlets.

In early September 1609, Hudson’s ship entered the bay of a large river outlet. By mid-September the Halfmoon made its way upriver to the latitude near present day Albany, almost 150 miles inland from the Atlantic Ocean. That river would later take on the namesake of Hudson.

On Sept 17, the Half Moon encountered “shoals in the middle of the channel and small islands with only seven fathoms of water around them*.”* The ship grounded twice and had to be hauled off the shoals by the crew using the ship’s anchor. Despite encountering a shallower river, Captain Hudson continued to push his crew and ship onward. The following day, the ship was near present day Albany where Hudson and his crew anchored and found friendly Native Americans to interact and to trade with. Some history books repeat an unsubstantiated claim that the French were here at Albany years before the Dutch, but the Indians themselves dispute this stating that:

“The Natives of the country, who are so old as to remember the event, testify that, on seeing the Dutch ships on their first coming here, they knew not what to make of them, whether they came down from heaven or were devils. --- Some of them on its first approach even imagined it to be a fish or some sea monster --- the Indians frequently say that they knew of no other world or people previous to the arrival of the Netherlanders here.”

On September 18, Hudson’s Journal recorded the ship was anchored at: “Latitude 42dg. 18’“, which, if the 1609 measurement was accurate, it would have placed the ship just south of present day Albany. Here the ship anchored and the crew interacted with friendly Native Americans, probably Mohican Indians.

Here, Hudson met an old man who was the Chief of a group of about 40 men and 17 women. The Chief invited Hudson ashore to eat and the Indians hastily shot 2 pigeons and a “fat dog” with their bows and arrows. The dog (a small bear possibly?) was quickly skinned using clam shells from the river and it was roasted. Hudson was invited to stay the night and his journal read: “They supposed that I would remain with them for the night, but I returned after a short time on board the ship --- The natives are a very good people, for when they saw that I would not remain, they supposed that I was afraid of their bows and taking the arrows, they broke them into pieces and threw them into the fire.”

On September 20, Hudson’s ship remained at anchor near Albany and Hudson sent the ships boat with several men up the river to continue sounding the channel northward nearly to present day Stillwater. They reported that “The channel was very narrow with only two fathoms\* of water beyond.” The narrowness of the channel and shallow depth of the river just north of Albany also perfectly describes the river where three landmark islands are seen even on some the earliest of maps of the Hudson River between Albany and Troy. \*[A fathom is equal to 6 feet]. (Insert early map of Hudson River here).

In the book: “The Hudson River” written by Wallace Bruce in 1907 describes the area of the Hudson between what is now Menands and South Troy: “The greatest number of bars is between Albany and Troy where the channel is narrow and at least six obstructing bars composed of fine and coarse gravel and coarse and fine sand are in existence. In many places between Albany and Troy, the navigable depth is reduced to 7 ½ feet by the presence of these bars.” Design drawings of Hudson’s Half Moon ship show that it drafted only 8 feet of water from the keel to the water line fully loaded. Could it be possible that Hudson’s Half Moon Ship itself actually made it beyond Albany to the narrow and shallow channel in between these islands in the area that is now part of Menands? Of course there is no proof of that, but the historic mechanics of the river and the design of the Half Moon ship, bolstered by Captain Hudson’s known zeal to push his ships (and crews) as far as each could possibly physically go, gives some thought to this possibility.

When Henry Hudson returned to Europe and word of his discovery of limitless forested lands, rich tillable soils and trade with friendly Native Americans for fur bearing animals (notably the beaver) spread through Holland, Holland’s merchants sent additional ships in the following years up the river to the area of Albany as warm furs were in high demand in Europe at the time. The Dutch established a small trading community on an island just south of Albany. This trading post was damaged by spring freshets of the river and was finally abandoned and a new trading community established on the west bank of the River. The small Colony was known as “Beverwyck”.

The area around Albany was soon settled including several tracts of farm land north of the city along the Hudson River in an area called “The Flatts”. The Flatts were formed of alluvial soils left behind by receding glaciers and thousands of years of spring freshets depositing rich silts along the banks of the Hudson north of Albany. Howell & Tenney’s Bicentennial History of Albany and Rensselaer Counties describes the Hills surrounding the Hudson River around Albany including the Menands area: “Most of the streams which run into the Hudson have worn deep gullies in the sand and clay. Some of these are a hundred feet in depth and extend nearly to the river flats.

The area north of Albany became all part of early VanRensselaer land known as “Rensselaerwyck”. (See: New York State Museum link describing Rensselaerswyck): <http://exhibitions.nysm.nysed.gov//albany/na/rensselaerswyck.html>

One of the earliest Dutch settlers north of Albany in the area now known as Menands was probably Cornelis Anthonisz van Schlick according to research conducted by the recognized historian, archaeologist, and genealogist; R. Arthur Johnson of Colonie and later Menands. In 1634 Cornelis had signed a contract with Killian VanRensselaer to come to America to do carpentry, bricklaying and farming or other work as ordered by VanRensselaer. He was about 30 years of age and became known to the Native Americans as “Broer Cornelis” or; (Brother Cornelis). He immediately obtained a lease of a large tract of land situated between the Mazelandkill (stream called “The stream that runs through the land of corn” which runs between Dutch Village and River Hill Apartments) northward to the Kromme Kill (stream called the “crooked stream” and the original southern boundary of the farm known as “The Flatts” first occupied by Ardent VanCurler and later by the prestigious Schuyler family for many, many generations. The land is presently owned by the Town of Colonie as the Schuyler Flatts Cultural Park which is on both a National Historic Register and National Historic Landmark site. See link from the New Netherland Institute regarding the history “The Flatts”: <https://www.newnetherlandinstitute.org/history-and-heritage/digital-exhibitions/arent-van-curler-and-the-flatts/>

The area of Menands remained largely undeveloped agricultural land.

(to be continued into more modern day Menands History with maps and photos)