



Susan L. Shafer

# ROAMING THE RIVER

FLOTILLA CELEBRATES HENRY HUDSON'S EXPLORATION OF HIS NAMESAKE RIVER

By Jenna DuChene

A cannon fires. Cheers erupt. Soon, beyond the crowd, a ship's mast comes into view. Ropes and flags dance in the breeze. You glimpse distant figures bustling about on the colorfully painted wooden water vessel. It is an old-looking ship, echoing a way of life long ago, and for a moment, you feel you have traveled back in time.

In early June, scenes like this were commonplace along the shores of the Hudson River as villages and cities along the river joined together to commemorate the 150-mile journey Henry Hudson made in 1609. A flotilla of modern and historic replica ships gathered to sail Hudson's

route in an eight-day Quadricentennial celebration that included the *Half Moon*, a replica of Henry Hudson's ship; the *Onrust*, a seventeenth-century replica of the first ship built in New York; and the sloop *Clearwater*. The U.S. Coast Guard and the tug *Governor Cleveland* also joined the journey.

Governor David Paterson met the flotilla in New York Harbor on June 5, and officially launched the ships with a Blessing of the Fleet. The flotilla began its journey on River Day, June 6, as DEC Commissioner Pete Grannis joined the public at a celebration in Battery Park.

As the flotilla traveled up the river, it

stopped at various yacht clubs, marinas, cities and communities and engaged the public in special events and educational programs at the ports. An estimated 100,000 spectators and 1,500 boaters joined the festivities with picnics, barbecues, fireworks, and live music. The Old Rhinebeck Aerodrome even performed flyovers. At West Point, the Hudson River Maritime Museum greeted the flotilla with a 16-cannon salute. The fleet's journey finally ended as it arrived in Albany on June 13th.

The journey will not be the last trip for some of the flotilla participants. In fact, this September, many of the same



James Clapper

The flotilla followed the same 150-mile course up the river that Henry Hudson traveled 400 years ago.

ships—including the *Half Moon* and *Onrust*—will meet in New York Harbor, this time with ships transported in container vessels from Europe.

While Henry Hudson was English, he was sailing for the Dutch East India Company when he discovered the Hudson River, and the Dutch also have plans to celebrate the Hudson Quadricentennial. The biggest celebration will take place on Harbor Day, September 13, at which time the Dutch

Air Force will make flyovers. Ships will leave New York Harbor and travel up the river, making stops along the way, and finally making port in Albany on September 19.

June's flotilla gave New Yorkers an opportunity to come together to celebrate 400 years of history, culture and innovation, and reminded us why we are proud to call the Hudson our own.

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With the rest of the flotilla, the replica, *Half Moon*, left New York Harbor on June 6.



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The sloop *Clearwater* was one of the many ships that made up the June flotilla.



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