

Dutch trip up Delaware River is documented

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A U.S. researcher has pinpointed 1616 as the year of the first European voyage up the Delaware River.

Jaap Jacobs, a senior fellow at the University of Pennsylvania's McNeil Center for Early American Studies, based his research on a document detailing the sworn testimony of sailor Jan Jacobsz Bens about a trip he took on one of the earliest recorded ships built in North America: the Iron Hog. He stated the trip occurred in 1616.

Jacobs, in studying the historiography of early Dutch exploration, determined the document detailed the first voyage up the Delaware by Europeans.

"The document I found provides the missing link in the early cartography of the Delaware River," Jacobs said. "This document is evidence the Dutch voyaged to America in 1616 and explored a large section of the coastline, claiming it for the Dutch Republic in the process."

History Professor Daniel Richter, director of the McNeil Center, said the finding casts a new understanding of the Philadelphia region's early colonial history.

Jacobs detailed his study in a paper -- "Truffle Hunting with an Iron Hog: The First Dutch Voyage up the Delaware River" -- presented during a McNeil Center seminar series last week.

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