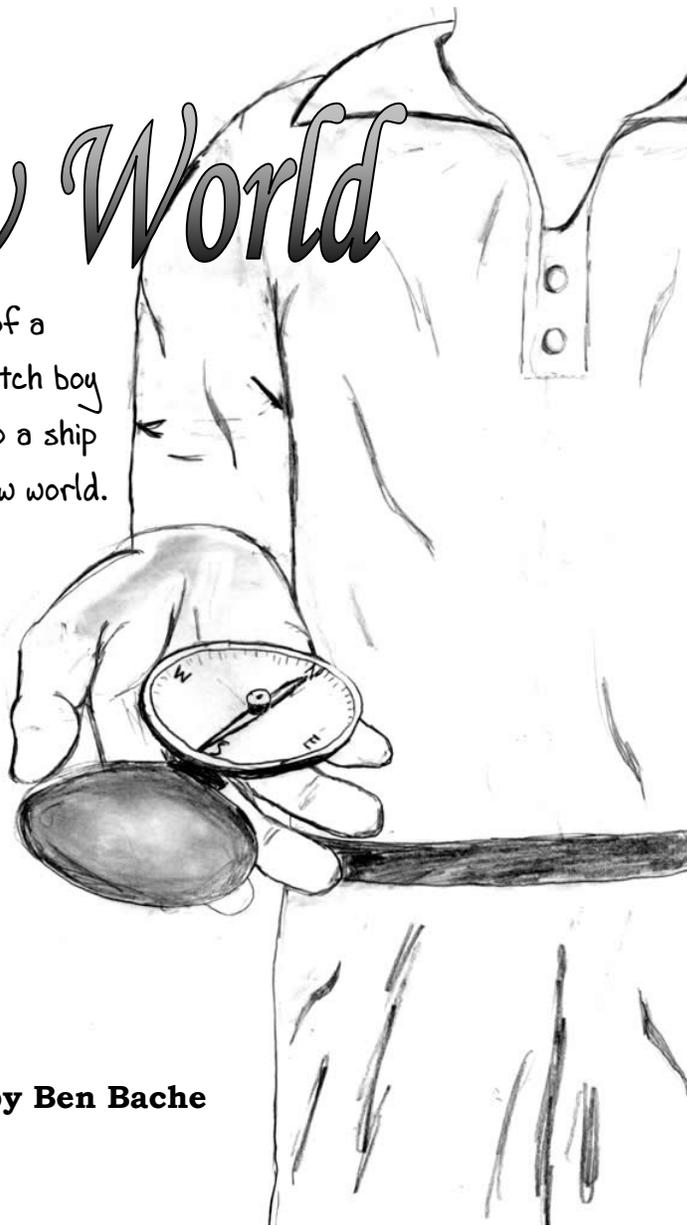


A New World

The story of a
12 year- old Dutch boy
who sneaks onto a ship
and sails to a new world.



written by **Ben Bache**

Homecourt  Publishers

■ Greenville, SC



We spotted
land in the
New World at
the beginning
of July.

5 - The New World

We spotted the New World at the beginning of July, after we had been at sea for three months.

“Come into my cabin, Willem,” Captain Hudson said to me as I was tying down a sail. I followed cautiously, since this was a rare request for any member of the crew who was not an officer.

My nerves were lifted when I walked into his room. Henry Hudson was in high spirits – I’d say he was even giddy. Frankly, it was a mood that looked funny on him.

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“Look at this map,” he said to me, spreading it out on the table. It was a map of the American continent – or at least what was known about it.

“We’re here,” he said, pointing to part of the coastline. “The English, Spanish, and French have all explored in this area,” he waved his hand below where he had originally pointed. “We’re north of all of that, and I think we might be the first Europeans to land here.”

Hudson continued, “My friend John Smith is in Jamestown, several hundred miles south of where we are. He sent me a letter telling me that the natives knew of a river to the north – where we are – that might take us to the west of the American continent. It was too far away for him to explore, but we can.”

I knew the name John Smith. He was sort of an enemy of the people in Holland, even though he probably didn’t know it. For starters, he was English (just like Henry Hudson). John Smith had been hired by the Virginia Company of London to build a settlement in the New World. It was their hope that he would strike gold – or anything – that could be sent back to England to make everyone rich.

The last I’d heard the colony was not doing so well. They were running out of food and supplies, not to mention the trouble with the local

Captain Hudson spoke about his



English friend,

John Smith, who

was trying to build

a settlement in

Jamestown.

natives. The settlers have done their best to start an industry in the area – timber, pitch and tar, even glassmaking – but nobody has gotten rich yet.

Still, I'm sure the people of England want Jamestown to thrive, if for no other reason than to give their country a foothold in the New World. Just before I left Amsterdam on the *Half Moon*, I heard news that England was sending another ship to Jamestown with new supplies. I read an article from an Englishman named John Rolfe who swears he can make the Jamestown settlement rich by growing tobacco there. I wish him luck – he'll need it.

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As my mind was drifting, Henry Hudson was pointing here and there about all of the places we could explore in the New World.

And then it hit me. The letter from his friend John Smith, the maps, the detailed plans to sail around America... Henry Hudson had *planned* to come to the New World. And if he hadn't planned it, he sure was happy to be here.

As if reading my mind, he said, "The nation of Holland will be proud that we are here. What we're doing is greater than just serving one nation. We're heading into unknown territory, and we'll explore it for all mankind."

Sure we would... I had my doubts about how concerned Henry Hudson was about the well-being of "all mankind." But who was I to judge? We were in the New World, about to go further than any European before us had gone. I couldn't speak for all of mankind, but *I* was excited.

Exploring turned out to be a tricky thing. We were literally rewriting the map as we went. When we came across a new landmark, like a peninsula or a bay, the officers would spend several hours analyzing it. They would take navigational readings, compare them with their maps and charts, and then try to decide if the

We spent the next few months trying to discover land in the New World.



landmark had been discovered before or if we were the first to stumble upon it.

It was sort of a backwards process. In order to discover something new, we had to know what was already there to begin with.

For some reason, I could relate to that strange concept. I had always felt like I was wasting my time with school instead of being out doing something “great.” Now I started to realize that if I ever wanted to do something great, I had be willing to sit in school and learn about it first. For the first time since leaving Amsterdam, I wondered if I had been taking my time in school for granted.

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In some cases, the officers declared that our ship had indeed discovered something new. Cheers went around the crew, and Henry Hudson quickly claimed the land for Holland. There was a Dutch flag flying over our ship, which meant any land we came across was ours.

Only we were never — *never* — the first men to discover a landform. The natives in the area knew about everything. I was no longer using the word “savages” to describe them. The word “savage” describes an animal, and the natives were not animals.

Don’t get me wrong. The natives we met were a long way from the Europeans I had grown up around. They covered themselves in animal skins and wore feathers on their head. They *could* be savage if they wanted to, but they could also be helpful and intelligent. Somehow, that made me more nervous. The natives were unpredictable.

It had become part of our common routine to meet and trade with the natives. In most cases, Henry Hudson brought out his big box of gifts (beads, blankets, jewels, and so on), and the natives agreed to be peaceful. I realized that no cargo on our ship was more valuable than his box of goodies.

We traded with
the Natives, but we
didn't trust them.
I don't think they
trusted us, either.



On one occasion, a group of natives even took a canoe out to our boat. As they climbed aboard, a dozen of the crewmen took out their guns and pointed them toward the unexpected guests.

The natives held up their spears and broke them in half, throwing the broken pieces into the water. They had come in peace. We spent the day trading with them, our trinkets for their furs and shells.

But things didn't always go so smoothly. One time, two of our sailors went out on a short hunt. Only one came back. The other had been shot and killed by an arrow.

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A couple of days later, a member of our crew used his shotgun to take revenge on a native he spotted walking alone in the woods.

The violence was always short-lived. Within a few days after a skirmish, everything would return to normal. Our crew would once again go on land to trade with the natives, and they would occasionally come to our ship.

But we didn't dare trust them. Something tells me they felt the same about us.

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