



# HISTORICAL SOCIETY *of the* NEW YORK COURTS

## THE NEW NETHERLAND LEGAL SYSTEM AND THE LAW OF TWENTY-FIRST CENTURY NEW YORK

### Essay Prompts

1. The New York State Attorney General traces the history of that office back to John Lamp, the first *Schout Fiscal* appointed in 1626. What were the powers and responsibilities of the *Schout Fiscal* in New Netherland? How do these powers compare with the powers and responsibilities of today's New York State Attorney General?
2. How did women fare in New Amsterdam under Dutch law? How did their situation compare to women living in Long Island where English law prevailed? Which system gave them rights most like those that women have today?
3. How did representative government begin in New Amsterdam? How did it develop under early English rule? How did these colonial institutions influence the structure of modern-day government of the City of New York (Mayor and City Council)?
4. What happened to the existing governmental institutions when the Dutch surrendered to the English, when the English subsequently surrendered to the Dutch, and when once again the English came to power? Are there analogies to be drawn with governmental transitions in the modern-day United States?
5. What circumstances caused the people of Flushing to write the protest known as the Flushing Remonstrance (1657)? How did the Flushing Remonstrance change policy in New Netherland? Did it influence the right to religious liberty under the United States and New York State Constitutions?