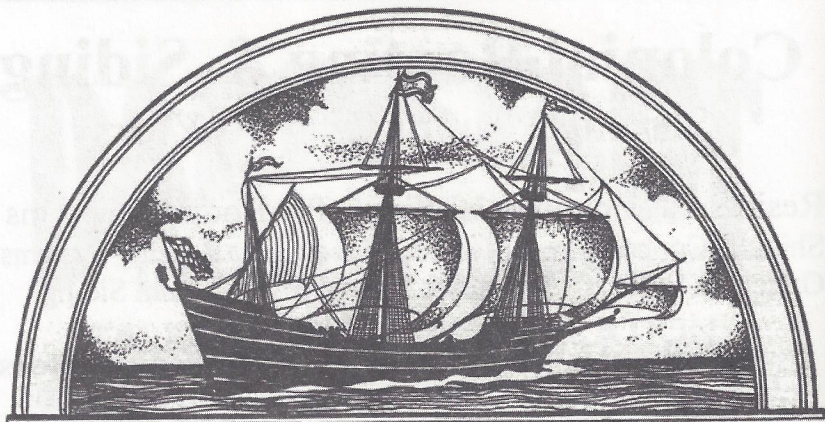




The *Half Moon* at Rondout , June 10th 2009

Photo by Chris Kendall

Hudson River Maritime  
Museum  
Pilot Log 2009 - 2010



*"A pleasant land to fall in with, men—A pleasant land to see."  
—Hudson.*

## HENRY HUDSON'S JOURNEY THROUGH THE FIRST MATE'S EYES

*by Lana Chassman*

Perceiving the history of the Hudson River, I am struck by how fortunate we are to have the writings and first-hand perceptions of Henry Hudson's literate first mate, Robert Juet, (along with a few surviving entries by Hudson himself) recorded on their exploratory 1609 voyage of the Dutch East India Company's vessel, the "Half Moon". Captain and crew certainly were adventurers; lay astronomers, scientists and seers, of a sort - they, indeed, had a mission.

Today, we consider the keeping of a daily travel journal or "ship's log" as commonplace. However, even though life in seventeenth-century Europe was a time of eager exploration, expansive trade and shared discovery about the world - its known and unknown perimeters - being literate was especially rare because very few of those who crewed on a water-worthy vessel could read and/or write. Information was passed down through the oral tradition and one's memory.

### Life On Board Ship

We learn from first mate Juet about the numerous, and sometimes relentless, conditions Hudson and his fellow crew encountered and endured: "... gusting weather with haile and snow..."; horrendous storms "... it blew so vehemently, and the Sea went so high and brake withall, that it would haue endangered a small ship to lye vnder the Sea."; a calm night "... this night we had sight of the first stars, and our water was changed colour to a white greene."; sightings of other

boats and fishermen "... we had sight of a sayle, but spake not with her." "This morning we were among a great Fleet of *French-men*, which lay Fishing on the Banke; but we spake with none of them."; and knowledge of other mariners' voyages: "... and this is that Headland which Captaine *Bartholomew Gosnold* discovered in the yeere 1602 and called *Cape Cod*, because of the Cod-fish that hee found thereabout."

Just acutely observes the heavens: "At mid-night I obserued and found the height to bee 44.degrees 10.minutes, by the North Starre and the *Scorpions* heart." And amongst all of his navigation notations, he even comments on the ship's cat: "This night our Cat ranne crying from one side of the ship to the other, looking ouer-board, which made vs to wonder; but we saw nothing.

We're able to track the navigation of the "Half Moon" through its journey from its beginning: "And because it is a journey visually knowne, I omit to put downe what passed, till we came to the height of *The North Cape of Finmarke*, which we did performe by the fift of May (*stilo nouo*) being Tuesday. On which day we obserued the height of the Pole, and found it to bee 71.degrees and 46.minutes; and found our Compasse to vary six degrees to the West: and at twelue of the clocke, the North Cape did beare South-west and by South, tenne leagues off, and we steered away East and by South, and East." to its end: "At noone I obserued and found our height to bee 39.degrees 30.minutes. Our Compasse varied sixe degrees to the West. We continued our course toward *England*, without seeing any Land by the way, all the rest of this moneth of October: And on the seuenth day of Nouember, *stilo nouo*, being Saturday : by the Grace of God we safely arrived in the Range of *Dartmouth of Deuonshire*, in the yeere 1609.

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The Half Moon, from a program of the 1909 Hudson-Fulton Celebration.

### The New World

Jet thoughtfully comments on the land and its resources: "This is a very good Land to fall with, and a pleasant Land to see."; "... and we caught one hundred and eighteen great Coddies, from eight a clock till one, and after Dinner wee tooke twelue, and saw many great Scoales of Herrings."; "... and found good ground for Corne, and other garden herbs, with great store of goodly Oakes, and Wal-nut trees, and Chest-nut trees, Ewe trees, and trees of sweet wood in great abundance, and great store of Slate of houses, and other good stones."

### Contact with the Indians

Jet has provided us with an incomparable insight into the variable encounters and trading episodes with this "new world's" indigenous peoples, ranging from tenuously positive:

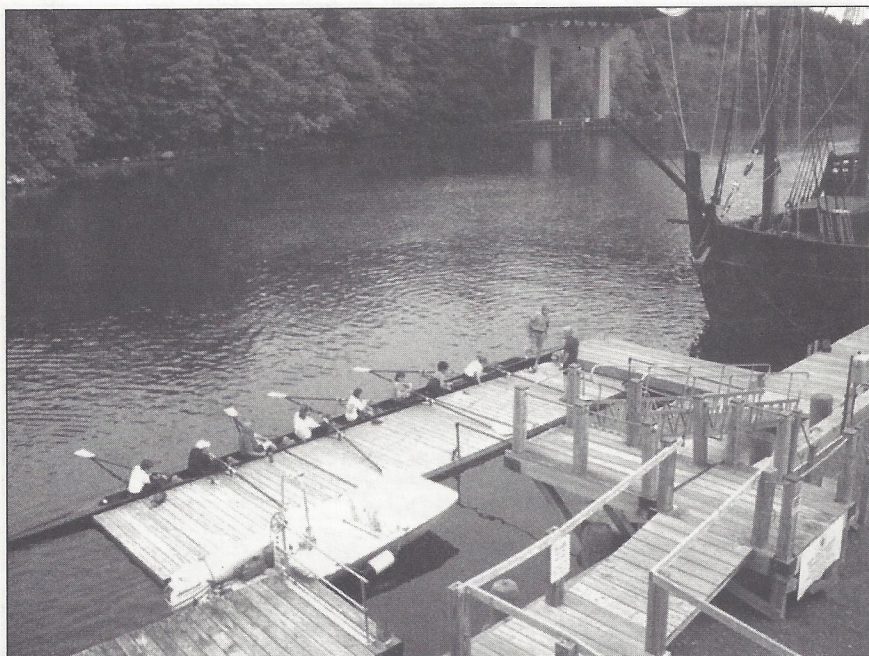
"This day the people of the Countrey came aboard of vs, seeming very glad of our coming, and brought greene tobacco, and gaue vs of it for Kniues and Beads. They goe in Deere skins loose, well dressed. They haue yellow Copper. They desire Cloathes, and are very ciuill ('civil'). They haue great store of Maiz or *Indian* Wheate, whereof they make good Bread. The Countrey is full of great and tall Oakes."; "The Lands trhey told vs were as pleasant with Grasse and Flowers, and goodly Trees, as euer they had seene, and very sweet smells came from them."; "The people of the Countrey came aboard of vs, making shew of loue, and gaue us Tabacco and *Indian* Wheat and departed for that night; but we durst not trust them."; "They brought great store of very good Oysters aboard, which we bought for trifles."

"This morning the people came aboard, and brought vs ears of *Indian* Corne, and Pompions, and Tabacco: which wee bought for trifles."; "In the after-noone our Masters Mate went on land with an old Saunge, a Gouvernour of the Countrey; who carried him to his house, and made him good cheere."; "The people of the Countrie came flocking aboard, and brought us Grapes, and Pompions, which wee bought for trifles. And many brought vs Beuers skinnes, and Otters skinnes, which wee bought for Beades, Kiues, and Hatchets."; "And our Master and his Mate determined to trie some of the chiefe men of the Countrey, whether they had any treacherie in them. So they took them downe into the Cabbin, and gaue them so much *Wine* and *Aqua vita*, that they were all merrie: and one of them had his wife with him, which sate so modestly, as any of our Countrey women would doe in a strange place."; "The people of the Countrey came aboard vs, and brought some small skinnes with them, which we bought for Kniues and Trifles. This is a very pleasant place to build a Towne on." to downright unpleasant and violent: "The night came on, and it began to rayne, so that their Match went out; and they had one man slaine in the fight, which was an *English*-man, named *John Colman*, with an Arrow shot into his throat, and two more hurt."; "This morning our two Saunges got out of a Port and swam away. After we were vnder sayle, they called to vs in scorne."; "This after-noone, one Canoe kept hanging vnder our sterne with one man in it, which we could not keepe from thence, who got vp by our Rudder to the Cabin window, and stole out my Pillow, and two Shirts, and two Bandleeres. Our

Masters Mate shot at him, and stroke him on the brest, and killed him.” “Then one of them that swamme got hold of our Boat, thinking to ouerthrow it. But our Cooke tooke a Sword, and cut off one of his hands, and he was drowned.”

“Then came one of the Sauages that swamme away from vs at our going vp the Riuer with many others, thinking to betray us. But wee perceiued their intent, and suffered none of them to enter our ship, Whereupon two Canoes full of men, with their Bowes and Arrowes shot at vs after our sterne: in recompence whereof we discharged sixe Muskets, and killed two or three of them. Then about an hundred of them came to a point of Land to shoot at vs. There I shot a Falcon at them, and killed two of them : whereupon the rest fled into the Woods.”

And so Juet comes to retain a special place in history alongside his ill-fated captain – he is both *beneficial*, by providing us with an informative guide to seemingly limitless natural resources - and *destructive*, by serving as a force behind the later mutiny of Hudson and his presumed subsequent fate or death, and by leading to the inevitable exploitation of this country’s human and native assets through his “travel log recordings” on this 1609 voyage. Having been literate proved to make Juet invaluable to Hudson, and ultimately to us. We are now able to see this famous voyage of discovery and confrontation of cultures through the eyes and mental perspective of someone living in a much different time. We get to live vicariously through the pages of Juet’s journal.



Kingston Rowing Club in an eight person rowing shell at HRMM dock. Historic Replica Nina seen at right.