

### The First Replica of the *Halve Maen*

Helping to celebrate Henry Hudson's arrival 400 years ago on the shores of what is now New York, will be a replica of his ship the *Halve Maen*. This ship has been sailing up and down the Hudson River for many years. Captain Chip Reynolds witnessed the attack on the Twin Towers on September 11 2001 while his *Halve Maen* was moored in the Hudson in New York City. This is the second replica of the *Halve Maen*, after the first came to a sad end in upstate New York.

One hundred years ago, in 1909, the city of New York organised festivities to celebrate the tricentennial of the arrival of Henry Hudson. The Hudson-Fulton celebrations of 1909 also commemorated the first sailing of Robert Fulton's steamboat in 1907. A replica of his ship, the *Clermont*, was built. The celebrations lasted for two weeks and were one of the highlights of the year.

In 1905, when the Hudson-Fulton celebrations were being planned, it was decided to construct a replica of the *Halve Maen*, the ship in which Hudson had crossed the Atlantic. The Dutch offered to build the vessel, even though the original ship's plans had been lost. The replica which was constructed was based on the plans of a sister ship, the *Hoop*, and the notes of Robert Juet and the knowledgeable historians of the *Halve Maen*.

The replica *Halve Maen*, which was built in less than six months, arrived in New York in July 1909 aboard the freighter *Soestdijk*. The ship was rigged and made ready to sail in New York harbour and up the Hudson. On September 25 the official part of the festivities started. Impersonators of Henry Hudson and Robert Fulton made long speeches about the importance of the events. By accident the *Halve Maen* and the *Clermont* collided, but without doing too much damage. The celebrations were a success. The intention was that the ships would find a permanent home in New York's Central Park. That plan came to nothing, however, because the mast of the *Halve Maen* was too tall to fit under the Elevated Railroad.

Another solution then had to be found, which unfortunately changed the destiny of the ship. It was decided that the ship would be berthed at Popolopen Creek in Palisades Park near the Hudson, some



Ship lifted aboard:  
the replica of the *Halve Maen*.  
Photo by P.F. v.d. Ende.

distance north of New York City. The Hudson-Fulton Commission imposed some demands: the ship should be kept afloat, it should be properly maintained, the public should have access to it and it must be available for important events. The transfer took place in July of 1910. About six years later the ship started to suffer from neglect and there were complaints. Following a period of cold weather the ship's bow was damaged and let in water. The park authorities said that they had had to maintain the ship at their own expense and appropriations from the state had been cut. In 1920 the Holland Society of New York, an organisation with a very exclusive membership of Roosevelts, Vanderbilts and other distinguished families of Dutch descent, tried to intervene in the *Halve Maen's* behalf. The park authorities again complained about the cost of upkeep and suggested that the Holland Society should donate 2,300 dollars to raise the ship from the water and place it on a concrete base. The Holland Society declined. Other attempts to obtain funds from railroad companies and – again – the New York State Legislature were unsuccessful.

In 1924 the mayor of Cohoes, New York, asked and was granted permission to adopt the ship and display it in his town. According to some experts, during his ex-

plorations in 1609 Hudson had sailed as far north as Cohoes, a little north of present-day Albany. The ship was now the sole responsibility of the town of Cohoes. The town installed it on dry land in East Side Park but did not actively maintain it. Eyewitnesses speak of the wood rotting away. On the evening of September 9 1933 vandals set fire to the ship. That was the second time a journey of a ship named the *Halve Maen* ended in Cohoes. Fortunately, in the late 1980s Andrew Hendricks, a dentist from North Carolina with Dutch roots, decided that a second replica should be constructed. May it survive at least another one hundred years.

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