The History of New York City

From Wikipedia, a free encyclopedia written in simple English for easy reading.

The oldest part of the city, the island of Manhattan, still has its original Lenape Native American name.

Although Native people such as the Lenape and Canarsees had lived there for many thousands of years, New York City was first explored by Europeans in the 1500's. Italian explorer Giovanni da Verrazano found the entrance to New York Harbor in the year 1524 and English explorer Henry Hudson found the Hudson River in 1609.

New York City was settled by Europeans from The Netherlands in 1624. The Dutch called the whole area Nieuw Nederland (New Netherlands) and they named a fort and town on the south end of Manhattan Island Nieuw Amsterdam (New Amsterdam), after the capital city of the Netherlands. When the English took over the colony in 1664 they changed the name to New York, to honor the Duke of York, who later became King Charles II of England. The Dutch surrendered Nieuw Amsterdam without fighting. They were afraid of the English Navy so they traded the town to England for the colony of Surinam in South America, which they thought was worth more money.

By the time the English came to New York, there were many other Dutch towns in what would become New York City, including Breukelen (Brooklyn), Vlissingen (Flushing), and Nieuw Haarlem (Harlem). There were already some English towns in the area also, such as Gravesend in Brooklyn and Newtown in Queens. Dutch and English people had been living together in New York for a long time.

New York quickly grew to become a large and important port city. Many important battles of the American Revolution were fought in northern Manhattan and in Brooklyn. New York was the capital of the United States from 1789 until 1800.

In 1898, the cities of New York and Brooklyn merged with the Bronx, Staten Island, and the towns in Queens County to form Greater New York. This is the total area of the City of New York today.

Five boroughs (major parts of the city that govern themselves) are in New York City:

Manhattan (New York County)
Brooklyn (Kings County)
The Bronx (Bronx County)
Queens (Queens County)
Staten Island (Richmond County)

New York City currently has a population of about 8 million people. Over 18 million people live in the city and nearby areas.

Government

The current mayor of New York is Michael Bloomberg, a Republican. The city also has a City Council that makes some local laws. Most laws in New York City are set by the State government in Albany.