

## Dutch Piet

In 1627 The United Provinces of Holland were at war. Spain ruled the united Provinces. The people who lived in the united Provinces were Dutch people. They did not want Spanish rulers. They wanted to rule themselves. They fought to be free.

The Spanish needed money. They had to pay their soldiers to fight the Dutch. They paid them with with gold and silver. Where did they get it? The Spanish ruled land far away in South America. They had mines there. They got gold and silver from the mines. The Spanish ships carried the silver and gold all the way across the sea to Spain. They paid their soldiers with the gold and silver.

Francis Drake was an English sailor. He sometimes caught Spanish ships. So did other English sailors. They took away their gold and silver treasure. Then the Spanish could not pay the soldiers. The English sailors liked the Dutch. They helped them.

Piet Heyn was a young man. He was the son of a Dutch sea captain. The Spanish caught him. They made him a slave. He had to row their boats for them. Day after day he had to row. He had no pay. He could not escape. He was a slave.

At last Piet was freed. The Dutch had caught some Spanish sailors. They swapped them for Piet and his friends.

Piet was a sailor once more. He joined some Dutch merchants. They sailed to Asia. Piet became the Captain of a ship. He got married and lived in Rotterdam. Then he became a vice-admiral. A vice-admiral is in charge of many ships. Piet's ships sailed to the West Indies. Piet



was very strict with the sailors. Piet made the sailors behave kindly to the people who lived in South America. Piet hated slavery. He had been a slave of

the Spanish himself. He knew what it was like.

It was on 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1627 that Piet won a famous victory. He beat the the Portuguese ships. The Portuguese were friends of the Spanish. Piet captured over thirty Portuguese ships. The captured ships carried sugar. Piet took it all away.

Piet Heyn, was promoted to admiral. Now he was in charge of other vice-admirals. He set off with his ships. Where were they going? They were going to capture the Spanish treasure fleet. The Spanish captured a Dutch cabin boy. He was made to tell them the Dutch plans. Now some of the Spanish knew what Piet was going to do. They could escape. But not all of them knew. There were Spanish ships that were leaving from Mexico. They did not know. Piet and his friends were out to get them!

The Dutch captured many big Spanish ships. They had gold and silver. They had valuable dyes. The Dutch did not take prisoners. How surprised the Spanish

were! Piet could speak Spanish well. He learned it when he was a Spanish slave. He spoke to the Spanish men in Spanish. He told them that they were free. He gave them the food they needed. This was merciful. The Dutch were often merciful. They thought in a Christian way. The Spanish were often cruel. They did not think in a Christian way. They were cruel to the Dutch in the wars. They were cruel to the people who lived in South America. Piet came home with the treasure. He was a hero. How pleased all the Dutch were! They rang all the church bells for joy.



Look at the picture of Piet Heyn. He was very brave. I think he has a kind face!

After this Piet was in charge of all the Dutch ships. He died bravely. He was protecting the Dutch ships. He is buried in the Old Church in Delft. To the Dutch, Piet Heyn will always be a hero.