

NEW YORK POST

BLOOMY'S S.I. BOAT TALE TAKES ON WATER

AP

February 21, 2007 -- Mayor Bloomberg missed the boat yesterday when he suddenly decided to deliver an impromptu lecture about the history of Staten Island.

Bloomberg - who was holding a news conference about other matters across the Narrows in Brooklyn - said that in the late 1600s, a governor used a boat race to settle a dispute over whether Staten Island should be part of New York or New Jersey.

"He set up a race - I forget whether it was rowing or sailing - around Staten Island, and New York won," said Bloomberg, who is originally from Massachusetts.

"And so we've got the great borough of Staten Island as part of New York rather than part of New Jersey."

But there's one problem with the story.

"It is absolutely a myth," said Carlotta DeFillo, librarian at the Staten Island Historical Society.

"It is a lovely, persistent myth, but it is a myth."

DeFillo said the origin of the oft-repeated legend is unclear, but it has been traced as far back as The New York Evening Post - now The Post - in 1873, and has popped up in other written histories since then.

The borough was named Staaten Eylandt in the early 1600s by the explorer Henry Hudson.

It became part of New York City in 1898, along with Brooklyn, Queens and The Bronx.

Bloomberg spokesman Stu Loeser said the mayor was telling a tale that he recalled reading long ago and that Staten Islanders had repeated to him over the years.



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