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Suriname and the Atlantic World, 1650-1800

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5. Migration circuits of European colonists

The routes that Europeans followed to and from the colony illustrate the changing structure of the Atlantic world and the place of Suriname within it.⁴³¹ The Dutch were not only a minority in the “Dutch Atlantic” compared to the slaves, also among the Europeans many came from other places than the Dutch Republic. Not only lower military personnel; also preachers, officers, planters, merchants, and governors were often non-Dutch in the Dutch West Indies. Europeans mostly came in from areas along the Rhine, Germany, and France. Also when moving out of the colony migrants did not necessarily stay within the Dutch parts of the Atlantic. Many of the colonists leaving Suriname would go to the Republic, but in periods when Suriname’s position in the Atlantic declined, migrants were also moving onward to the British Atlantic colonies to try their luck there.⁴³²

It should be noted that the Dutch colonial area was tiny, and few trans-migrants on their way to the Atlantic actually went to Dutch colonies. Of these Suriname was again quite insignificant with about ten thousand people moving to Suriname, two thirds of which moved out again. To populate its colonies on the Guiana Coast and on the islands with Europeans, the Dutch Republic could rely much less on its own populace than its Spanish, English and French competitors. The Dutch needed to recruit colonists and labourers from beyond the Republic.⁴³³ Subtracting the outward moving passengers from the inward moving passengers leaves an average of 54 staying colonists per year for the period 1745 to 1794. This figure was certainly lower for most of the years before that, when arrivals could be in bursts, with large groups of colonists arriving with Van Sommelsdyck in 1683, or in the 1730s, but generally only a few Europeans would move and stay in Suriname. Recruiting colonists in the Dutch Republic itself was not very easy, most likely because of the relatively high living standards of the Republic. Therefore people had to be found throughout Europe that would fit the profile of being willing to face an

⁴³¹ Part of the material in this chapter was first published as Karwan Fatah-Black, “A Swiss Village in the Dutch Tropics: The Limitations of Empire-Centred Approaches to the Early Modern Atlantic World,” *BMGN - Low Countries Historical Review* 128, no. 1 (March 19, 2013): 31–52.

⁴³² Examples are the English exodus from Suriname to Jamaica, see: Hartsinck, *Beschryving*, 1770, 2:587; The Palatines leaving from Suriname to Georgia in North America: R. Bijlsma, “Immigratie van Duitschers in Suriname, 1733 - 1740,” *West-Indische Gids* 1, no. 2 (1919): 413–417; And for the Jews leaving from Suriname to other Caribbean destinations see: Cohen, *Another Environment*, 34.

⁴³³ Beeldsnijder, “Om werk van jullie te hebben,” 16:364–366.

uncertain future, while not being the continent's riffraff that would threaten the colony's stability.

The white population of the colony came from a wide range of places in Europe, as well as from other Atlantic colonies. There were intercolonial arrivals of white settlers, the involuntary movement of convicts, orphans and poor people. The voluntary settlers were often fleeing from some form of religious persecution in Europe. This chapter deals with how these groups were recruited and what their migration circuits can tell us about the Atlantic network of migration that Suriname was connected to. The circuits through which the colonists arrived indicate linkages from Suriname deep into the European hinterland of the Dutch Republic. The historiographical debate in the Netherlands about the movement of people into the Atlantic has mostly been concerned with estimating the numbers of migrants leaving Europe through the Dutch Republic; movements within the Atlantic have not been mapped and analysed.⁴³⁴ When tracing the circuits through which Europeans arrived and left Suriname in the seventeenth and eighteenth century it becomes apparent that the colony was part of a wider Atlantic world of interconnections. The historiography on Suriname mentions these connections in passing, but the colony is primarily seen in terms of the Dutch and their empire, glossing over many other relations. European "foreigners" in the colony were only regarded as handmaidens of the Dutch colonization of Suriname.⁴³⁵

5.1. Inter-colonial movement

The inter-colonial movement of settlers was aided by the high demand for them, once one attempt at colonization failed, other colonies were eager to

⁴³⁴ Lucassen, Emmer, Klooster, Enthoven and Kruijtzter have debated the numbers of migrants to the Atlantic. Except for the work by Jan Lucassen there was little discussion on the origin of the migrants. Emmer, Klooster and Enthoven seem to have been concerned with deflating and inflating figures. Jan Lucassen, "The Netherlands, the Dutch, and Long Distance Migration, in the Late Sixteenth to Early Nineteenth Centuries," in *Europeans on the Move. Studies on European Migration 1500-1800* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994), 153–191; P.C. Emmer and W.W. Klooster, "The Dutch Atlantic, 1600–1800: Expansion Without Empire," *Itinerario* 23, no. 2 (1999): 48–69; Victor Enthoven, "A Dutch Crossing: Migration Between the Netherlands and the New World," *Atlantic Studies, Cultural and Historical Perspectives* 2, no. 2 (2005): 156–176; Gijs Kruijtzter, "European Migration in the Dutch Sphere," in *Dutch Colonialism, Migration and Cultural Heritage*, ed. Gert Oostindie (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2008), 109.

⁴³⁵ Examples of studies in which the colonising nationalities are studied, but in which the networks of these people into Europe remain unmentioned are: Wolbers, *Geschiedenis van Suriname*, 171; H. Pijtersen, *Europeesche kolonisatie in Suriname, een geschiedkundige schets*. ('s Gravenhage: W.P. Van Stockum, 1896); F. Oudeschans Dentz, "De Kolonisatie van Guyana," *West-Indische Gids* 25, no. 1 (1943): 248–254.

take the survivors in. Experienced colonists were a major asset for any colony; their inter-colonial movement often crossed imperial boundaries. Various types of diseases caused tremendous death rates amongst those arriving in American colonies directly from Europe compared to those who had survived the first years in the tropics. To give just one example of a history littered with disease and suffering; of the settlers who arrived in Suriname with the ship *Aerdenburg* only 10 per cent were still in the colony three years later, the others seem to have died or moved out again.⁴³⁶

The importance of inter-colonial movement is clearly illustrated by initial colonization of Suriname (before Dutch occupation). The arrival of the first Frenchmen and Englishmen in Suriname was similar to many privately organized colonization attempts in the Caribbean, especially in the rivers around Cayenne.⁴³⁷ Some colonists from Cayenne apparently settled on the Suriname River around 1640.⁴³⁸ During the English colonisation of the Suriname River a group of Frenchmen from Cayenne joined them, fleeing from Amerindian attacks. A new influx of French from other colonial destinations took place after the founding of the Suriname Company around the revocation of the edict of Nantes (1685), when Huguenot refugees from the French Antilles came to Suriname.⁴³⁹

The English and British colonists mainly arrived from Barbados, through the colonization attempt under the leadership of Lord Willoughby of Parham in 1650-1651.⁴⁴⁰ There had been an earlier failed attempt by Captain Maréchal who attempted to settle a tobacco colony along the Suriname River in 1630.⁴⁴¹ The English expedition of 1650 settled upstream the Suriname River, where they founded a village named Torarica and attracted Jews from

⁴³⁶ Nettie Swartz, "Emigranten of passanten? Met het fluitschip Aardenburg in 1671 naar het 'aerts paradijs' Suriname" presented at Inter-imperial encounters in the Dutch Caribbean (Amsterdam 2011).

⁴³⁷ Jan Jacob Hartsinck, *Beschryving van Guiana, of de Wildekust in Zuid-America*, vol. 1 (Amsterdam: Gerrit Tielenburg, 1770), 159.

⁴³⁸ S. Kalff, "Franschen in Suriname," *West-Indische Gids* 11, no. 1 (1930): 316–334; Someone like Nicolaas Combé is a good example of the early integration of Frenchmen into Dutch Surinamese society. He was part of the Zeelandic administration since they took over the colony in 1667. In 1669 he was the first deacon of the reformed church in Paramaribo. By the time of his death, around 1690 he had been church master and had fulfilled various administrative roles in Suriname's government. F. Oudeschans Dentz, "De Oorsprong van de naam Combe, de eerste buitenwijk van Paramaribo," *New West Indian Guide / Nieuwe West-Indische Gids* 39, no. 1 (1959): 28–34.

⁴³⁹ Kalff, "Franschen in Suriname."

⁴⁴⁰ Barber, "Power in the English Caribbean: The Proprietorship of Lord Willoughby of Parham."

⁴⁴¹ Hartsinck, *Beschryving*, 1770, 1:145.

various other colonies to settle nearby.⁴⁴² After the Dutch had been forced to leave Brazil, Jews who had settled there were granted the right to move to Cayenne, from where they moved to English Suriname.⁴⁴³ The inter-colonial peopling of the colony grounded to a halt with the occupation of Suriname by the Zeelanders (1667/8). Many of the erstwhile colonists moved from Suriname towards English Caribbean colonies such as Jamaica, starting what has called the “fifteen years of Dutch misery on the Wild Coast.”⁴⁴⁴ Whether a colonisation attempt either failed or succeeded was closely related to its ability to attract experienced colonists from across imperial borders.

Also for the settlers moving to the Atlantic from deeper inside Europe, their choice for either Dutch or English colonies was rather open. The Moravian brotherhood sent an emissary to negotiate terms and conditions with the Suriname Company while on its way to discuss the same for the Moravian migration to Georgia.⁴⁴⁵ Not much later the first of these *Moravian brothers* moved to Suriname. The choices open to the *Pfalzer* Germans seem very similar. The Palatinate in Germany sent migrants to Rotterdam from where they departed to the English American colonies. The migrants were on their way to the other side of the Atlantic; rather than specifically the Dutch domains. Palatines moved onward to Georgia once they arrived in Suriname, the majority went inland to settle. After the failure of their settlement some of them asked for permission to leave for New England. The Palatines argued that they wanted to move to the English colonies because they were used to the kind of farming practiced in temperate climates, rather than the Surinamese tropics.⁴⁴⁶ That the incidental pattern of the Palatines moving to the colony and again onwards to other Atlantic destinations was actually rather common is supported by the figures based on passenger data of the local authorities in Suriname. Besides the slave trade and the movement of military personnel, the net movement of people in the early 1730s of the eighteenth century to Suriname was about 51 per year, a figure that rose to 61 annually in the 1750s. After the 1750s the

⁴⁴² Nelly E. van Eyck-Benjamins, “Suriname van 1651 tot 1668. Een hoofdstuk uit James A. Williamson, English colonies in Guiana and on the Amazon (1604—1668),” *West-Indische Gids* 8, no. 1 (1927): 1–36; John H. de Bye, *Historische schetsen uit het Surinaamse Jodendom* (Schoorl: Conserve, 2002), 349.

⁴⁴³ Rens, “Analysis of Annals Relating to Early Jewish Settlement in Surinam.”

⁴⁴⁴ Victor Enthoven, “Suriname and Zeeland Fifteen Years of Dutch Misery on the Wild Coast, 1667-1682” (presented at the International Conference on Shipping, Factories and Colonization, Brussels, 1996).

⁴⁴⁵ SvS, *Resoluties 1733-1735*, toegang 1.05.03 inv.nr. 29.

⁴⁴⁶ Bijlsma, “Immigratie van Duitschers”; John H. de Bye, *Database on Passengers to and from Suriname* (Paramaribo, 2003).

net immigration to the colony dropped dramatically, mostly due to an increase of people leaving the colony for regional destinations. After the credit crisis of 1773, when the prospects for many planters began to worsen, there was a shift towards more inter-colonial emigration away from Suriname. In the 1770s an annual average of 36.2 people were officially registered as passengers moving out of the colony.

In the 1770s the regional emigration from Suriname impacted the migration figure of the colony negatively. While there was some growth in the number of passengers moving between Suriname and the Republic, the percentage of non-whites travelling both to and from the colony also increased. The movement of non-whites most likely indicates that more Europeans were taking their personnel with them on their trips to the Dutch Republic, as well as back. In the 1760s the Governor who administered passenger movement classified 18.61 per cent of the passengers moving to the Republic as non-white. While some of these people were free, many went together with a master, either as slave or servant. The rising number of non-white passengers suggests that those moving back and forth were rather affluent, probably planters and administrators travelling back and forth with their family and personnel.

Table 8 Annual average of civilian passengers moving to and from Paramaribo, 1729-1770s

	From Du. Rep. to Sur.	Percentage non-white	From Sur. to Du. Rep.	Percentage non-white	From region to Sur.	From Sur. to region	Net im-migration Suriname
1729-1734	115.2	3.30	59.4	13.47	3.8	8.6	51
1750s	157.3	8.52	89.8	13.70	3.4	10.1	60.8
1760s	178.3	10.43	117.7	18.61	8.1	15.6	53.1
1770s	197.1	9.08	135.5	17.64	7.4	36.2	32.8

Source: Passenger-data in the Governor's logbook, digitized by John De Bye. Soldiers and higher military personnel are not in these figures, neither are their families. The whites have been split (in so far as this was noted by the Governor) from the non-whites, regardless of their status. Non-whites in this case are everyone who received this categorization by the Governor, whether it was as Amerindian, mulatto, Maroon, black, or slave. Where it said 'servant' without an indication of skincolour or obvious slave name, they were counted as white.

The period between 1713 and 1738 was one in which the migration of European colonists was still considerably larger than the movement back to the Republic, or than regional trans-migration. This would change in later periods, but for the time being, Europeans moved to the colony to settle. The change that took place from the 1730s to the 1770s is that initially there were more people moving to the colony to settle, while later on, when production was booming, planters or administrators were traveling. These people did not just go back to Europe when they had made their fortunes, but also left Europe again to Suriname taking their personnel back with them, as indicated by the 10.43 per cent of passengers on their way from Europe to Suriname being classified as non-white.

The prevalence of migratory circuit from Suriname into the Caribbean and the Americas is well illustrated by the figures for Jewish migration in the later decades of the eighteenth century. When the economic position of the Jews in the colony deteriorated, many moved onwards to try their luck elsewhere. Between 1771 and 1795 322 Jews arrived in Suriname, and 311 departed. Half of those who left Suriname went directly to Amsterdam. The others left for the Dutch Caribbean island St. Eustatius, and North American destinations such as Rhode Island and Boston. The inflow of Jews was 85.2 per cent from Amsterdam and 14.8 per cent from the Caribbean and North America. Leaving the colony it was 50.5 per cent to Amsterdam, and the rest to the Caribbean and North America.⁴⁴⁷

⁴⁴⁷ Cohen, *Another Environment*, 27–34.

5.2. Problems finding settlers

Despite the favourable circumstances offered by the SC to new arrivals, those in charge of the colonisation of Suriname had quite some difficulties to find native Dutch to move overseas. Those who were willing to go to the colony came from all over Europe as well as other colonies, making the small group of whites religiously diverse and often personally and economically connected to other parts of the Atlantic, crossing imperial boundaries. J. Wolbers wrote in his history of Suriname that “many Germans, who saw Holland as an Eldorado, took up their walking stick, left their mountains and valleys to try their luck there.”⁴⁴⁸ This idyllic picture painted by Wolbers seems far removed from the troubles the directors had with recruiting. Soldiers often had to be recruited from beyond the Dutch Republic. Only between 20 per cent and 30 per cent of soldiers who served in Suriname during the first half of the eighteenth century were Dutch, the rest mainly came from Germany.⁴⁴⁹

Stimulating the migration of Europeans to Suriname was a central issue for those who tried to preside over its colonisation. After the exchange of Suriname between the States of Zeeland and the WIC in 1682, the States General drew up a charter with conditions under which the colony should be governed by the WIC. The charter of 1682 mainly focused on the way in which colonists could be motivated to settle and succeed in the colony. The charter contained lenient rules about the payment of taxes. All the colonists and inhabitants were freed from the need to pay taxes and other duties for a period of ten years. Duties for the weighing of goods and for the size of ships were not included in this freedom, but these most likely befell the captains of the arriving ships instead of the planters. The only payments to be done by the colonizers would be sanctioned by the Governor and the local governing council. The charter reasoned that since it was the planters themselves who formed the council, they would not object to these costs.⁴⁵⁰ The entire charter was geared towards convincing the colonists that they would not be unfairly treated, and that Suriname was a great place to start a

⁴⁴⁸ “Vele Duitschers, die Holland als een Eldorado beschouwden, namen den wandelstaf op, verlieten hunne bergen en dalen, om aldaar hun geluk te beproeven.” Wolbers, *Geschiedenis van Suriname*, 171.

⁴⁴⁹ Between 1696 and 1765 6835 soldiers were recruited for Suriname, only for the period 1696 and 1754 their origins are known. Of the 3557 recruits in that period at least 732 came from the Republic, of 605 their origin is unknown, and the others mostly came from Germany. In 1787 only 10 out of 54 officers came from the Dutch Republic, and almost half the officers were from Germany. M Lohnstein, *De militie van de sociëteit c.q. directie van Suriname in de achttiende eeuw* (Velp, 1984).

⁴⁵⁰ Hartsinck, *Beschryving*, 1770, 2:626.

business. Article five protected the colonists who could not immediately finance the slaves that they bought, by allowing them to spread their payment across three terms of a year. The charter furthermore promised to send enough slaves to the colony. It also stated explicitly that the Company would bring enough whites to the colony, and that ships could be obliged (in case the company requested) to take up to 12 passengers with them for only fl. 30.⁴⁵¹

In addition to the 1682 Charter of the West India Company, directors of the Suriname Company also drew up documents to further motivate people to move to their colony. In 1688 they made a list of 12 points titled “Means and motives serving to encourage those who want to move to the colony of Suriname.” The document envisioned Suriname as a golden opportunity. It suggested that in Suriname everything could be turned to profit, on land that was handed out for free. The settlers would be allowed to hunt, fish, cut wood, and even process this wood without restrictions. And not only on their own plot of land, but also on all the unclaimed territory. For the smaller and unbound craftsmen, Suriname was presented as the perfect place to settle. The document stated that all crafts and industries were free in the colony. They could be performed by anyone, without the need for special permissions (from the government or guilds). The twelve points suggest that there will be ample supply of servants and slaves to do the work. And that the Company would send enough women for the inhabitants and soldiers to marry.⁴⁵²

The number of free people wanting to settle in Suriname was small, and those who had come over as soldiers rarely pursued a career in the colony after their service was over. Some of these soldiers would work on the plantations, but only few of them transitioned from the position of soldier into that of colonists.⁴⁵³ Marsche and his cosignatories (see Chapter 3) argued that planters should be encouraged to take in white personnel as “overseers over the slaves, horses and animals. Or as hunters and fishermen.” These men were to come from “Saxen, Hessen, or Swabenland” to be hired at the “*West Indisch Huis* under the WIC *Articulbrief*, and transported by the SC.”⁴⁵⁴ These people would also serve as a reserve army, to be trained twice a year, and to be called in case of alarm. In such cases the planters would stay upstream and on the plantations. Their departure to

⁴⁵¹ Ibid., 2:629.

⁴⁵² SAA, Archief van Burgemeesters, Stukken betreffende verscheidene onderwerpen, *Middelen en motiven dienende tot encouragement van Luyden die sigh gaarne wilde transporteren op de Colonie van Suriname*, 1688, entry 5028 inv.nr. 543H.

⁴⁵³ Beeldsnijder, “*Om werk van jullie te hebben*,” 16:32–33.

⁴⁵⁴ SvS, OBP, “Request van J. van der Marsche”, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 125

defend Paramaribo during the 1712 attack had given many slaves the opportunity to flee,⁴⁵⁵ a situation that had to be prevented in the future. A method by which to increase the white population was to help “people of small means” to settle by letting them join those who had sugar mills but were unable to continue the upkeep, so as to create co-operatives.⁴⁵⁶ Few of these schemes worked to actually attract the right number and right kind of migrants to the colony. The consequence of this was that the SC tried to supplement the limited numbers of Europeans by actively recruiting colonists from the European hinterland.

5.3. Convicts and orphans

The SC directors also tried to solve their shortage of workers by bringing convicts and orphans to the colony. The convicts were mostly used to work on the defences of the colony. For example, Joost Roelofsz van Colverden was condemned by the criminal court of the city of Leyden on the 8th of January 1686 to be transported to Suriname and to stay there for a period of six years to work on the fortifications. The city of Leyden paid the 36 guilders transport costs for the prisoner.⁴⁵⁷ But using convicts from the Republic turned out to be more difficult than the directors had hoped. Joost and the others were causing problems. Johan van Scharpenhuijsen wrote to the directors of the SC: “the banished rogues are such a bad influence on the slaves and the other artisans that it is only causing the decay of the colony.”⁴⁵⁸ During the Sommelsdyck Mutiny of 1688 an alliance of soldiers and artisans had chosen a convict (a deserted German trumpeteer) as their leader, almost causing the fall of the colony.⁴⁵⁹ In an earlier incident the “fierce mob”, as Hartsick called them, managed to free themselves from their chains, stole several vessels and made it to the Orinoco River before they were caught.⁴⁶⁰

During his time in office (1689-1696) Van Scharpenhuijsen requested to stop sending over convicts; there had been several bad experiences with them over the years. Instead of having them work in a

⁴⁵⁵ Henk den Heijer, “To Ransack a Colony: Cassard’s Raid on Surinam in 1712 and Its Effect on Marronage” (presented at the AHC, Paramaribo, 2008).

⁴⁵⁶ SvS, OBP, “Request van J. van der Marsche”, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 125.

⁴⁵⁷ SvS, *Resoluties directeuren* (1685), entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 18.

⁴⁵⁸ “De gebannen guyten doen hier sooveel quaet onder de slaeven en andere ambaghtgasten dat het niet als een bedarf voor de Colonie is.” Jan Marinus van der Linde, *Surinaamse suikerheren en hun kerk: plantagekolonie en handelskerk ten tijde van Johannes Basseliers, predikant en planter in Suriname, 1667-1689* (H. Veenman, 1966), 57–58.

⁴⁵⁹ Hartsinck, *Beschryving*, 1770, 2:652.

⁴⁶⁰ *Ibid.*, 2:650.

gang, Johan van Scharpenhuijsen divided the convicts over various privately owned sugar plantations to work there separated from each other. According to the plaintiff in a case against Scharpenhuijsen this has been to the detriment of the SC since he then went on to hire labourers for the SC to work on the fortifications.⁴⁶¹ In 1701 Governor van der Veen told the directors of the SC that he tried not to let the convicts escape, but blamed the “captains or crewmembers” for letting such people escape the colony. They “even helped a group of slaves of bailiff Glimmer escape the colony.” Van der Veen complained that the “bandits and thieves” are “useless and harmful bread eaters” for the SC, arguing that the convicts were nothing but trouble and rather costly to the colony.⁴⁶²

The orphans made up a more substantial part of the white immigration to the colony to serve as maids or on the plantations as carpenters or in other crafts. According to van der Linde there were several transports of orphans to the colony. These orphans were not to be given to “Jews or other unchristians to be used as slaves”, but rather employed by reformed Christians, either in the house or learning a trade.⁴⁶³ The governing council requested the orphans for the colony. They want children “not younger than fifteen, and twenty girls, not younger than twelve.” They were distributed among the Reformed citizens, and serve under contracts. Those of fifteen serve six years, those of eighteen and older four years. The receiving families were obliged to clothe and feed them, and pay 25 guilders or five hundred pounds sugar yearly. The boys were requested to know the crafts such as “smith, cooper, carpenter, mason, shoemaker, tailor, et cetera.” The girls were to serve in the house.⁴⁶⁴ In 1685 a group of ten orphans arrived, in 1687 30, and in 1691 a total of 90 orphans, 70 boys and twenty girls. The increase in the orphans takes on such a scale that in 1690 every district in Suriname is assigned an “overseer for the orphans.”⁴⁶⁵ Despite this sizeable influx it is rather unclear how these people fared in the colony. From research on the deaconesses’ orphanage in Amsterdam it seems that they had at least some chance of building up a life in the colony. Johannes

⁴⁶¹ SvS, *Resoluties directeuren, 1696-1701*, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 21.

⁴⁶² “schippers oft bootsgesellen”, “banditen en dieven” and “onnutte en schadelijcke brooteeters” NL-HaNA, Tweede West-Indische Compagnie, *Letter from Paramaribo to the West India Company about the state of the colony* (29 januari 1701), entry 1.05.01.02, inv.nr 1282.

⁴⁶³ Linde, *Surinaamse suikerheren*, 56.

⁴⁶⁴ OAS, Raad van Politie, *Minuut-notulen van de ordinarijs en extra-ordinarijs vergaderingen van het Hof van Politie en Criminele Justitie, 1689 march 12 - 1692 January 10*, entry 1.05.10.02 inv.nr. 1.

⁴⁶⁵ Linde, *Surinaamse suikerheren*, 56.

Elders, who left for Demerara, made it to the position of *onderdirecteur* (assistant director) on the plantation Amsterdam. Frans van Vlier was sent over to work as carpenter with the extremely wealthy planter J.S. Neale. While Frans was able to get married in the colony to Elisabeth Timmering, he passed away before he was able to buy himself out of the contract with the orphanage.⁴⁶⁶ Many of the orphaned boys will not have made it through their first years in the colony, but those who did were most likely able to work their trade or make it to the position of overseer on a plantation.

5.4. French Huguenots

More successful than the coerced or contracted migration of Europeans were the attempts by Van Sommelsdyck and directors of the Suriname Company to look beyond the Netherlands and to tap into the streams of trans-migrants passing through the Dutch Republic. These migrants not only contributed to the peopling of the colony with colonists, but also created a network of ties deeper into Europe. The European network of these migrants to the Netherlands in turn provided connections through which sugar could be sold across Europe. The first arrival of the French in the Guianas was similar to many privately organized colonization attempts in the Caribbean. They settled on the Guiana Coast in 1624 under the direction of a company from Rouen, the same town from where the 1643 colonisation attempt on the Suriname River was attempted. As with many of such attempts by European settlers, they struggled to survive.⁴⁶⁷ The colonists who settled on the Suriname River, later supplemented by French refugees from Cayenne, a neighbouring colony that had been overrun by attacking Amerindians. Under English (1651-1667) and later Zeelandic (1668-1682) rule they assimilated into the European citizenry of the colony. In contrast to the position of the Jews, the French were not granted a special status.⁴⁶⁸ Someone like Nicolaas Combe is a good example of the early integration of Frenchmen into Dutch Surinamese society. He was part of the Zeelandic administration since they took over the colony in 1667. In 1669 he was the first deacon of the reformed church in Paramaribo. By the time of his death, around 1690 he had been church master and had fulfilled various administrative roles in Suriname's government.⁴⁶⁹ The French *réfugiés* made a clear break from any

⁴⁶⁶ Many thanks to Rinke Wiegerinck for sharing her findings. Rinke Wiegerinck, 'Godts zegen en geluk op haer reijjs' Weesjongens uit het Amsterdamse Diaconieweeshuis op de vaart naar de Oost en de West, 1657 - 1797 (unpublished MA-thesis, 2010, Vrije Universiteit, Amsterdam).

⁴⁶⁷ Hartsinck, *Beschryving*, 1770, 1:158–159.

⁴⁶⁸ Kalff, "Franschen in Suriname."

⁴⁶⁹ Oudeschans Dentz, "De naam Combe."

openly expressed loyalties to the French state overseas. During the two French attacks on the colony, in 1689 and 1712, the French Surinamese fought against the French assailants.⁴⁷⁰ The *réfugiés* easily assimilated into the colony and their names are found amongst many of the colony's high officials and Governors.⁴⁷¹ Commercial ties of the Huguenots did continue to bind the colony and its affairs to areas in Europe.

A second influx of Frenchmen occurred at the start of the reign of Governor Van Sommelsdyck (1683 – 1688). When he went to Suriname many French refugees came with him. According to J. Wolbers there were “many artisans, masoners, blacksmiths, carpenters and several farmers” among them.⁴⁷² Many of the French *réfugiés* came from the area around Bordeaux, Rouen as well as from La Rochelle.⁴⁷³ Already before the Edict of Nantes was revoked in 1685, French Huguenots were directed towards the colony. The number of arrivals in the Republic after 1685 motivated the Dutch to send the newcomers onwards to the East and West Indies. The director of the Suriname Company and former member of the Amsterdam city council Gilles Sautijn oversaw the sending of Huguenots to Suriname. He was commissioned by the burgomasters of Amsterdam to deal with questions relating to the French refugees in Amsterdam. S. Kalff claims that refugees also arrived from the French Antilles in Suriname.⁴⁷⁴ Although it is risky to reduce surnames to origins, the sheer number of French names suggests a sizable contribution of the *réfugiés* to the plantation economy at the time. Kalff found about twenty French plantation names with French named owners in Suriname at the end of the seventeenth century, and that the French plantations and planter were often found nearby geographical locations with French names, such as the Orleans Creek, suggesting that certain areas were predominantly colonized by Huguenots.⁴⁷⁵ Although the *Orleaan Creek* could also have been named after the export crop orleaan.

⁴⁷⁰ Kalff, “Franschen in Suriname.”

⁴⁷¹ “Francois Anthony de Rayneval, Jean Coutier, de beide broeders De Cheusses en Wigbold Crommelin, die wel is waar te Haarlem werd geboren, maar uit een familie van Fransche réfugiés. Hetzelfde was het geval met den gouverneur Jan Nepveu” *ibid*.

⁴⁷² Wolbers, *Geschiedenis van Suriname*, 56–66.

⁴⁷³ J. Sandick, *Het geslacht Van Sandick*, 1960, 30; Gülcher, “Een Surinaamsche koffieplanter.”

⁴⁷⁴ Kalff, “Franschen in Suriname.”

⁴⁷⁵ As example Kalff notes that nearby the Orleans Creek one will find “Thyronne, St. Germain, Mon Affaire, Ma Retraite, Sans Souci, Montpellier, Languedoc, Montauban, Argent-Court, Vuide-bouteille, La Campagne en La Sangsue.” Near Paramaribo one can find “Remoncourt, La Providence, La Diligence, La Confiance, La Simplicité, La Rencontre, Chatillon, Merveille, Ma Retraite, Tout-lui-faut, Peu-et-Content, Bel-a- soir, La Bonne Amitié,

The Huguenots provided the colony with connections into France as well as Switzerland. One such case is the family Van Sandick family. This plantation owning family was represented by Hudig and Bienfait in the Republic. Especially Bienfait was well connected to French markets through their Huguenot relations.⁴⁷⁶ A further example of such Huguenot networks into Europe is the legacy of the Tissot family in Suriname. When in 1692 a member of the Tissot family passed away, his plantation ended up in the hands of bill of exchange traders from Geneva, Fatio & son. In 1696 the family of Tissot and a group of others who had invested in the plantations tried to get the estates back. However, the supreme court in Bern had deemed Francois Fatio & Son the rightful owners of the two plantations. Fatio & Son – with the aid of Jean Tourton – were able to hold on to the estates.⁴⁷⁷

This involvement of Baselters in Suriname stretches back into the late seventeenth century, and is most likely connected to Huguenot migration. The full depth of the Suriname-Swiss connection is still unsure, but it is clear that it had military, commercial and migratory aspects. Not only lower military personnel; also preachers, officers, planters, merchants, and Governors from Switzerland were active in the Dutch West Indies. The recruitment of settler families could overlap with the recruitment of soldiers, but was mostly separate from it. The number of soldiers who switched careers to settle as planters in the colony was however very limited.⁴⁷⁸ A more prominent family of Sweizer *Tropenkaufleuten* was the family Faesch, members of which served throughout the Dutch army in the first half of the eighteenth century, and one made it to the position of Governor of Curaçao. Most of them retired back to Basel after their careers in the West Indies. The richest of the family was J.J. Faesch who in 1795 owned in Suriname, “shares of the plantation Marienburg, bonds for the plantations Waterland, Palmeniribo and Surmombo in Suriname; shares in the plantations Beeke Horst, Egmont and Rhijnbeek, bonds on the plantation Montresor, as well

Gage d'Amour, L'Inquietude, La Prosperité. Mon Divertissement, La Jalousie, Bergerac, Le Mat Rouge, Mon Trésor, Bellevue, Picardie, Ponthieu, La Singularité. Mon Souci, A la bonne heure, ... Liberté.”

⁴⁷⁶ Oostindie, *Roosenburg*, 321–322.

⁴⁷⁷ SvS, *Resoluties directeuren*, 1696-1701, entry 1.05.03, inv.nr. 21. In 1699 Fatio & Son owned one quarter of a plantation on the Cassewinica, the rest was owned by the Amsterdam merchant-banker and French *refugié* Jean Tourton. Jean Tourton was also director of the SC representing the family Aerssen van Sommelsdijck from 1698 until 1706.

⁴⁷⁸ Only 12 of the 249 soldiers in 1727 who were followed by Beeldsnijder owned slaves in 1736. Beeldsnijder, “*Om werk van jullie te hebben*,” 16:32–33.

as bonds for plantations in Essequibo and Demerara, on the plantation Vriendschap on Tobago as well as the Danish isles.”⁴⁷⁹

These ties into Europe far beyond the borders of the Dutch Republic were established through several different European migrations to the colony, and they continued to form networks of ownership, migration and information between the colony and the wider world.

5.5. Recruiting for the buffer villages

The forced migration of slaves to Suriname was vital for the colony's survival in the eighteenth century. Early modern colonization attempts on the Wild Coast by Europeans without the use of slaves all failed miserably. There was however no agreement on the use of slaves. In the 1680s a religious group, the Labadists attempted to start a colony upstream the Suriname River, but failed. Not only from a moral standpoint doubts were raised, but the colonization with only Europeans sounded appealing compared to the troublesome process of the slave trade and the associated high death rates and mass desertions. In the early eighteenth century it was already argued that migrants from Europe should replace the use of slaves in Suriname entirely.⁴⁸⁰ The use of slave labour was seen as causing moral degradation, and the colonization of Suriname using only whites remained a recurring theme.⁴⁸¹ Two attacks on the colony by the French at the end of the War of the Spanish Succession had given opportunity to slaves to flee, increasing the number of Maroons. The stabilization of the slave trade in that same period caused an influx of Africans who were more likely to escape than their conditioned and creolized fellow slaves. The decades after the Peace of Utrecht in 1713 therefore sees increased concerns from the SC directors with fighting the Maroons.⁴⁸²

The thousands of enslaved Africans who managed to break free from plantation-discipline, fled into the Suriname jungle where they settled in small villages. In the mid-18th century their number was estimated at five thousand, although such figures are unreliable. Also when they did not organize attacks on nearby plantations; the very existence of these free communities posed a threat to the power of the European colonizers.

⁴⁷⁹ Walter Bodmer, “Schweizer Tropenkaufleute und plantagenbesitzer in Niederländisch-Westindien im 18. und zu Beginn des 19. Jahrhunderts,” *Acta tropica : journal of biomedical sciences = revue des sciences biomédicales = Zeitschrift für biomedizinische Wissenschaften* (1946).

⁴⁸⁰ Beeldsnijder, “Om werk van jullie te hebben,” 16:33–34.

⁴⁸¹ Various plans to reinvigorate the colony can be found under: SvS, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 508-511.

⁴⁸² Heijer, “To Ransack a Colony.”

Governor Mauricius called them a ‘Hydra’ that had to be slain.⁴⁸³ The SC-directors employed several methods to deal with the marooned slaves and the potential threat posed to the colonists by those still enslaved. The SC encouraged planters to raise the number of white overseers on the plantations, they organized punitive expeditions against the Maroons and publically executed the ones they caught, they created a system of outposts defending the outer borders of the plantation area, attempted to settle a buffer-zone of European villages, and settled several peace treaties with the different Maroon groups. Many of the methods employed to maintain social and territorial control over the colony required white Europeans to move to Suriname. The numbers of white Europeans moving to the colony might not look very spectacular; these people did however constitute an important asset for the directors of the colony.

With the increasing attacks from the Maroons after 1712, and the growing enthusiasm about the cultivation of coffee after 1725, the SC directors saw the need to increase the number of settlers. The overall meagre response to these attempts resulted in 1727 in the appointing of a commission to investigate which Europeans, “*Paltise off Saxise*”, could be motivated to settle in Suriname.⁴⁸⁴ Commissioner Philip Hack, himself from Cologne, suggested tapping into existing German migration from the impoverished Palatinate, upstream from his birthplace. The SC commissioner Hack was not the first to suggest migration from the Palatinate. A similar plan had been suggested in 1696 when the directors had heard of people from the Palatinate who had a plan “to go to America and start a new colony there, or join one that was already populated.”⁴⁸⁵ In the 1770s director Hack personally went to Rotterdam to speak with migrants who were moving to an English colony.⁴⁸⁶ Commissioner Hack tapped into the same migration current in June or July of 1727 when he talked to several embarked Palatines in Rotterdam who had boarded a ship to an English colony on their own account. From them Hack heard that others “of their Nation” would be willing to sail to Suriname.⁴⁸⁷ This opened possibilities for the SC directors to offer more attractive conditions to the Palatines. A plan was made to let them start up small coffee plantations and provide them with

⁴⁸³ Peter Linebaugh and Marcus Rediker, *The Many-Headed Hydra: Sailors, Slaves, Commoners, and the Hidden History of the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Boston, 2000), 4.

⁴⁸⁴ SvS, *Brieven van de Sociëteit aan de Gouverneur*, (1727), entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 95.

⁴⁸⁵ SvS, *Resoluties Directeuren* (24 Aug 1696), entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 21.

⁴⁸⁶ SvS, *Resoluties van de Directeuren*, (23 Jan 1727), entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 27.

⁴⁸⁷ “om naar Amerika te gaan, ende aldaar of een nieuwen Colonie aan te leggen, off wel op de een ofte andere Colonie al bereijdt bevolkt hun verblijf te kiezen.” SvS, *Resoluties*, 1696, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 21.

various provisions to ease their settlement. Soon several groups of Palatines started to migrate to Suriname. The families mostly left the Republic “in March or April” and could be enticed if given “300 akkers” (the size of a small plantation) along the river.⁴⁸⁸

In the winter of 1734 Hack received a man from Silesia to discuss another migration of Germans, who seems to have used the demand for colonists of different colonial companies as a way to haggle on the terms and conditions of the migration. Spangenberg claimed that he was ready to get on his way to England to discuss with the Commissioners of Georgia the migration of several Protestants, although “from a very peculiar faith.” They lived in Heerenhud (Hernhut) in upper Lausnitz, the domain of Count Ludwig from Zinziendorf. The Count had given Spangenberg the commission to discuss the migration of his subjects, under which he came to the meeting of the directors to discuss with him directly.⁴⁸⁹ This mister Spangenberg was on his way to England where he was to meet the commissioners for the colony of Georgia. Spangenberg was able to discuss the terms and conditions on which these people could migrate with the SC directors, and managed to strike a good deal.⁴⁹⁰

The SC did not just except any migrant that arrived on their doorstep. In May 1730 the States General asked of the SC directors to take in co-religionists “uit de vallije van *Prangelas*” to be sent to Suriname to found a colony, or work in the service of the SC.⁴⁹¹ In January of 1731 a letter from the *Switserseprotestantse Eedgenootschap* (Swiss Confederacy) in Zurich arrived in which the States General was asked to take in *Waldensen* and other co-religionists. The SC directors wrote that they did not understand why the States General bestowed this upon them, and the demanded to know what the trades of these people were, if they could work as soldiers, and in that case, what language they speak.⁴⁹² At the same time the SC discussed further Jewish migration. They did need migrants, but were keen on attracting Protestants, and were giving Jewish migrants smaller land grants per head, and provided that they remained under the management of Amsterdam’s Jewish community. After some debate the SC and the Parnassim agreed in July 1733 on the terms and conditions for the migration of Jewish families to the colony. The SC directors promised to send over Jewish families on a regular basis. The families got a separate space between

⁴⁸⁸ SvS, *Brieven van de SvS aan de Gouverneur*, (1729), entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 95.

⁴⁸⁹ SvS, *Resoluties directeuren, 1733-1735* (1734), entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 29.

⁴⁹⁰ SvS, *Resoluties directeuren, 1733-1735*, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 29.

⁴⁹¹ SvS, *Resoluties directeuren, 1730-1732* (1730), entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 28.

⁴⁹² SvS, *Resoluties directeuren, 1730-1732* (1731), entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 28.

decks and received provisions (except meat and cheese) which they could take with them themselves. For the families a space of 25.000 *akkers* on the sea side of the Parnassusbergh was reserved, not too far from Jodensavanne so as to be protected against the Maroons. The Parnassim were to provide every family of five a piece of 250 ackers, 50 ackers less than the Protestant German families.⁴⁹³

The Governor intended the 12 Palatine families in a nearby area upstream, and assign them 300 *akkers* with the possibility to expand their property to 500.⁴⁹⁴ The son of the leading preacher arrived in 1734 with a second group of recruits from nearby Neuwied. Preacher Jan Martin Klein, who had left Suriname after religious conflicts, was recruited by the Suriname Company to move to his former residence of Neuwied to recruit more families. Klein's brother became correspondent for the Suriname Company in Neuwied in matters of migration. The Company produced a leaflet in German to convince the people from Neuwied to move to Suriname, and it was soon reported that "the people of the village think favourably of Suriname."⁴⁹⁵ The enthusiasm for the project was slightly less than expected, although in February 1733 the news came from Altwied (along the Wied, some miles before it joins the Rhine) that 6 to 8 families were willing to settle.⁴⁹⁶ The first group of Palatine migrants that sailed to Suriname on board the *Batavodurum* was made up of only two families from with ten children en two unmarried men who were to investigate the colony and report back to the others.⁴⁹⁷ Within a year after settling in the Surinamese countryside, all but one family returned to Paramaribo after their venture had failed and conflicts had broken out amongst them. They settled in Paramaribo and refused to return to work and demanded to be allowed to leave for northern English colonies.⁴⁹⁸ The last group of these Palatines arrived in Suriname in 1739. This was a group of nineteen families totalling 96 settlers.

The last attempt to recruit families from the Rhineland for Suriname was spearheaded by Louis De Bussy. In 1747 he received a commission to go to Basel and with the permission of Basel's local government recruit Protestant families. Under false pretences he managed to convince several of

⁴⁹³ SvS, *Resoluties directeuren, 1733-1735* (1733), entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 29.

⁴⁹⁴ SvS, *Brieven van de Sociëteit aan de Gouverneur* (1729), entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 95.

⁴⁹⁵ SvS, *Resoluties directeuren, 1733-1738*, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 29-30.

⁴⁹⁶ SvS, *Resoluties directeuren, 1733-1735*, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 29.

⁴⁹⁷ Ibid.

⁴⁹⁸ Pijttersen, *Europeesche kolonisatie*, 25–26.

them.⁴⁹⁹ Underlining the importance attached to the project of De Bussy by the company is their financial investment in it. De Bussy received fl 2,200 alone to cover travel expenses for bringing in the Swiss families.⁵⁰⁰ The families were lodged in Amsterdam until their departure and received free transport to Suriname. After their travel to the colony they were assisted by Governor Mauricius in getting some land, barges for transport, cattle, some slaves and soldiers for protection.⁵⁰¹ Soon two problems started to arise: the first was the difference between the conditions that the families had agreed to with De Bussy, and the conditions the SC had actually offered when instructing De Bussy. Second was De Bussy's character. Governor Mauricius wrote that De Bussy "is a man who is rather full of himself. He has overblown ideas about his commission, and imagines himself to be more than an Ambassador. He also thinks that the reward for his effort cannot be overpriced. He demands everything, based on his position, and if anyone opposes him, he evokes the lords in Basel as a threat."⁵⁰² It did not take long for the situation to spiral out of control, and a mutiny of the Swiss against De Bussy was the result. The ultimate result of the conflict was that De Bussy had to leave the colony. In the years that followed the Swiss village on the Para creek faltered and was overrun by Maroons in 1753.⁵⁰³

De Bussy's banishment from Suriname occurred when a Swiss soldier barred him from marrying a young woman with whom De Bussy had had a child out of wedlock. The soldier claimed that he knew De Bussy in Switzerland, and had seen his wife alive and well in Basel two years earlier. This testimony made any new marriage by De Bussy illegal. The woman De Bussy had wanted to marry was also from Basel. Their affair had started while sailing from Europe to Suriname. The young woman was part of a group of people from Basel who had been recruited by De Bussy to move to Suriname. That De Bussy encountered a soldier from that same town who knew his wife when he decided to marry the young woman was not just a coincidence. Switzerland was where many soldiers in Dutch service were recruited, and through the military many Swiss ended up in the Dutch West

⁴⁹⁹ Ibid., 25–30.

⁵⁰⁰ SvS, *Resoluties directeuren*, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 37.

⁵⁰¹ SvS, *Brief van Gouverneur Mauricius, 1747*, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 283.

⁵⁰² "DeBussy is een man, die veel noten op zijn sang heeft. Hij heeft so groten opinie van t aanzien en gezag zijner Commissie, dat hij sich verbeeldt, iets meer dan een Ambassadeur te zijn. Hij verbeeld sich ook, dat zijn moeite en beleid niet duur genoeg betaald kan worden. Hij eischt alles als magt hebbende, en als men hem de minste difficulteite maakt, dreigd hij met de Heeren van Basel." SvS, *Brief van Gouverneur Mauricius, 8-Feb-1747*, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 283.

⁵⁰³ Pijttersen, *Europeesche kolonisatie*, 30.

Indies.⁵⁰⁴ After the expedition under the leadership of Louis de Bussy failed, those who were left of the Germans and the Swiss were forced – under threat of imprisonment – to found Carolinenburg between the Suriname and Saramaca rivers. The German Baron Johann Ernst von Bülow received the position of Burgomaster of Carolinenburg, but sickness and attacks by the Maroons were overpowering the outpost.⁵⁰⁵ When Von Bülow was asked to qualify the inhabitants when taking a census, eleven heads of households were described positively as “good workmen”, nine were classified as incompetent, old, drunk or simply *schlegt* (bad) and another eleven received either a neutral or no description.⁵⁰⁶ This curious census is the last known record of the village; subsequent reports only mention it as a ruined and empty place. With the fall of Carolinenburg ended the last attempt by the Suriname Company at settling villages by recruiting settlers.

At every turn the actual recruitment of colonists required the conscious intervention of company directors, using their networks and money to persuade groups to come to the colony. Overall the migration from Europe paled in comparison to the African migration. Those who attempted to settle came from all over Europe, because the Dutch themselves were not easily motivated to move overseas. Those Europeans who tried to settle in Suriname without having enough capital to start a plantation with plenty of slaves encountered hardship in the colony.

⁵⁰⁴ From Lohnstein we also know that in 1787 only 10 out of 54 officers came from the Dutch Republic, and almost half from Germany. Lohnstein, *De militie*; The most famous Swiss officer is undoubtedly Fourgeoud, who led the main war of the colonists against the Maroons, see Stedman, *Narrative*; The two main Swiss governors both ruled Curacao, Isaac Faesch and later Johann Rudolph Lauffer. At the time of Louis de Bussy there was also a Swiss minister in Surinam. SvS Letter from Governor Mauricius to the directors of the SC, inv.nr. 283.

⁵⁰⁵ Pijttersen, *Europeesche kolonisatie*, 30–32.

⁵⁰⁶ SvS, *Generale Lijst der personen 1763*, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 318.