Suriname and the Atlantic World, 1650-1800

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4. Nodal point and hinterland

This chapter shows the drivers behind the increasing centrality of the city in to the colony, and highlights some of the limits to its growth.[275] The chain of production, distribution and consumption of drink and timber are followed by a discussion of river work and how local government changed Paramaribo's relationship with its hinterland. In this relationship the presence of markets in the town added more mercantile activity to the city, making it more than just a shipping point. However, given the nature of dock work in the colony where there is an abundance of both enslaved labour and sailors, the *Waterkant* did not develop into a fully functional port area. The driving forces behind the centrality of the city were both the attempts by local government to regulate trade, the change of plantation management into the hands of administrators (see chapter 7), the growing ability of the enslaved and formerly enslaved to peddle their wares in town and the growing number of free town dwellers in Paramaribo's new neighbourhoods. The dynamics of the colonial economy and government were such that they boosted Paramaribo's centrality in the colony. The limit to the city's growth was primarily that Paramaribo did not develop a large industrial (productive) sector. The paragraph on dock and river work illustrates how the presence of slaves and sailors as a flexible labour force hindered the development of port services. The paragraph on the peddling of goods shows that the city's markets were very attractive, but mainly to exchange agricultural produce. The role of Paramaribo as an administrative centre, both on the government and plantation level were the main drivers of its growth. The development of production (rather than services or hinterland agriculture) would have enabled further growth.

The centrality of Paramaribo was not predetermined by its geography. While the shell ridges were the first good place to land when coming from the Ocean, the river's muddy banks and strong tide prevented the building of docks for the arriving ships. They had to swing at anchor, making the loading and unloading of products a dangerous and troublesome activity. It would have been much better for the ships to sail straight to the plantations, which was possible both on the Suriname and Commewijne, but government regulations forced products to pass by the weighing house and barges departing to the interior to get a permission from the fort. The local government tried to regulate the movement on the rivers as well as centralise

[275] Part of the data in this chapter was first published in Karwan Fatah-Black, "Slaves and Sailors on Suriname's Rivers," *Itinerario* 36, no. 03 (2012): 61–82, doi:10.1017/S0165115313000053; Karwan Fatah-Black, "Paramaribo en het achterland in de achttiende eeuw," *OSO: Tijdschrift voor Surinamistiek en het Caraïbisch Gebied* 30, no. 2 (2011): 298–315.

market transactions in the town around designated market places. The local system of exchange that was created to service consumers in the city and on the plantations was mostly concerned with local produce. Wood production, food markets and the consumption of distilled drinks are taken as examples to highlight the relation between the urban nodal point, local production, transatlantic shipping and regional trade. The need for taxation forced many products to pass by the weighing house on Paramaribo's waterfront since the late seventeenth century. Despite the predominance of local production and the many direct connections between individual plantations, Paramaribo became the beating heart of a water transport network that touched all areas of the colony. When it came to local trading systems the 'unsupervised' movement of the enslaved were a special concern for the colonial government that was trying to combine the disciplining of enslaved Africans while simultaneously giving them just enough freedom to let the local transport system working smoothly.

4.1. Wood production and distribution

The marketing of locally logged wood was not restricted by the charter of Suriname Company or the West India Company, which made it a fairly unregulated market. Several ordinances concerning the wood market were issued. The unloading of wood damaged Paramaribo's waterfront and clogged up the docks so much that in 1755 a special wood market was founded to regulate the wood that was brought to the market in town.[276] Timber was an export product, as well as the main building material and fuel used in the colony. The tropical forest with a seemingly endless supply of various hardwoods compensated the lack of stone. Most buildings in the colony were therefore made of wood. Roofing material was initially predominantly straw (which was regarded as a great fire hazard) and the government tried to enforce the use of shingles, small wooden planks.[277] Due

[276] Bylaw 517, 26-Aug-1755, *Plakaatboek,* 624-626. Due to a conflict around 1770 Governor Jan Nepveu decided, with the consent of the Directors of the Suriname Company, to revert to the old (1759) regulations on the wood market instead of the amended version of 1763. See Bylaw 830, Regulation for the wood market, 25-Sep-1770, *Plakaatboek*, 994-995. The issuing of an ammendment to the regulation of the wood market in March 1781. Bylaw 843, *Plakaatboek*, 1012-1014; Amendment to the regulation of the wood market, 23-Mar-1781. The bylaw only changed the height of taxes for various kinds of wood compared to the older rules.

[277] They were later replaces by panes and flint. The early law on this was issued by the Zeelandic Governor and captain Lichtebergh in April 1669, and prohibited the use of 'Indian Roof' because of the perceived fire hazard in Torarica and enforced to use shingles. This ordinance was later repeated in combination with several others, including that the price of a thousand shingles was set at 250 pounds of sugar.

to the muddy grounds and the tidal changes in the water level, waterfronts needed wooden protection. The government regularly issued bylaws on the enclosing of grounds, both in the city and on plantations. [278] On plantations not only the buildings, but also the sluices, a wide range of local transport barges, and mills were made of wood. In the city most of the houses were wood, built on stone foundations. Wood was also used to make small repairs to ships that arrived in front of the town. Besides its use as a building material wood was used as fuel for cooking food, processing sugar, and distilling drink. Wooden barrels were also used for transporting sugar, [279] molasses as well as other plantation products. The wood offloaded in Paramaribo was predominantly building material of various qualities. There were also other types of wood, like purple, yellow, green and brown hardwoods as well as locust. From Holland came *Hollandsche deelen*, and from North America came pinewood. The Dutch wood was valued fairly little, just like mangrove, pine and the more general category of firewood. A break-down of the kinds of wood brought to the wood market in Paramaribo in 1784 shows that luxury woods made up 4 per cent, and high quality building material 9 per cent of the total wood brought to market. The bulk of the tax was paid for regular building material, at 67 per cent, with lower quality building material at 16 per cent. Firewood amounted to only 2 per cent, leaving another 2 per cent unknown. In Surinamese guilders the total yield of the wood market tax that year stood at *fS*. 4,218. [280]

The development of the local production and consumption of wood products illustrates the growing centrality of Paramaribo within the local economy. Not all wood was destined for the local market, *Letterhout* [281] was an exception in this respect since it was a luxury wood shipped to the Netherlands for making furniture or valuable wooden objects. The other woods served as building material and its production and trade was not restricted by the metropolis. There seems to have been little technological innovation over the course of the century. According to Blom most wood had to be cut into shape by enslaved Africans. This was either done on site

[278] Bylaw 17 and 22, 6-Apr-1669 and 13-Jun-1669, *Plakaatboek*, 39 and 44-46.

[279] Bylaw 205, Ordering sugar to be packed in barrels when shipped, 13-Jan-1700, *Plakaatboek*, 238-239'.

[280] Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Administratie van Financiën in Suriname, 'Register van opgave van te Paramaribo geloste houtwaren', entry 1.05.10.07 inv.nr. 347.

[281] J.Ph. Pfeiffer, *De Houtsoorten van Suriname*, vol. 1, Koninklijke Vereeniging Koloniaal Instituut (Amsterdam: De Bussy, 1925), 148 Letterhout is also known as letterwood, snakewood and leopardwood and is a name used for various kinds of Piratinera. The enslaved most likely called it letri or kappeweri letri. .

with manpower, or mechanically in lumber mills.[282] The trees were cut just above the ground and then turned into planks, beams or shingles. The pathways in the forest were often too wet for carts, so women would carry the timber to the carts.[283] From the plantation buildings it was shipped by barge to Paramaribo. The logging firms and plantations were also centres for collecting wood cut by Amerindians and Maroons.[284] Logging firms used forced labour in a different way than agricultural plantations did. To find hardwoods groups of enslaved Africans went unsupervised into the jungle, which gave them more freedom than on a plantation. It was also common for the transports of wood to the city or between a *houtgrond* (timberland) and plantations to be unsupervised by whites.[285]

There had been a proto-colonial timber trade between the Guiana Coast and the Dutch Republic as early as 1619. This wood trade was tapping into Amerindian logging activities and was not part of European colonisation efforts. An example of this trade is the case of David Pietersz de Vries who arrived on the coast in 1634 and collected about 30 tons of *letterhout* logged by Amerindians.[286] On the early maps from the English period we can see that the inland areas in the south east of Suriname are called "Speckle Wood Countrey." Speckle Wood is nowadays called snakewood or *letterhout* in Dutch. These names refer to the dark spots in the wood making it ideal to make into decorative objects. The transatlantic export of *letterhout* came to a standstill in the mid-eighteenth century.[287] Rather than from rainforest covered Suriname, the Dutch Republic's supplyline for West Indian wood in 1778 ran through St. Eustatius, St. Thomas and Curaçao.[288] The *letterhout* trade was separate from local consumption and played an important role in the start-up phase of the colony. The government was actively intervening in the export of both *letterhout* as well as regular planks to force plantation owners to change from logging to sugar planting. Heavy taxes were levied in the early years of the Dutch take-over of the colony: six hundred pounds of

[282] Bylaw 71, 19-Oct-1677, *Plakaatboek*, 90-91.

[283] Blom, *Verhandeling*, 311–312.

[284] Bylaw 821 14-Aug-1780, *Plakaatboek*, 985. Victoria is both the name of a military post and a company owned sawmill.

[285] Bylaw 665, 5-Feb-1765, Regulation on the transport of goods, *Plakaatboek*, 790.

[286] Peter Boomgaard, "The Tropical Rain Forests of Suriname: Exploitation and Management, 1600-1975," *New West Indian Guide / Nieuwe West-Indische Gids* 66, no. 3/4 (1992): 207–235.

[287] PSDC.

[288] J.P. van de Voort, *De Westindische plantages van 1720 tot 1795. Financiën en handel* (Eindhoven, 1973), 131.

sugar for a thousand *hiddingh*,[289] and a pound of sugar for every *voet* (length) and *duim* (breadth) wood.[290]

Philip Fermin and Antony Blom made an effort in describing the various kinds of wood and their uses and much of our knowledge therefore comes from their descriptions.[291] *Letterhout* had played a significant role especially in the early years of the colony, from the late sixties of the seventeenth century to the twenties of the eighteenth century. A price was set for *letterhout* in the cases when it was used to repay debts. To "cut short the disputes between creditors and their debtors" it was ordained that when one owes two pounds of sugar one can repay it with three pounds of *letterhout*.[292] According to ad-interim Governor Pieter Versterre (1671-1677) the *letterhout* production was harming the interests of the colony. He probably meant the interests of the Zeeland chamber of the West India Company. According to the "Prohibition to cut *letterhout"*, the wood production was preventing the planters from cultivating sugar and the price of *letterhout* was falling quickly according to the Governor due to the overproduction. To counter this it is prohibited to cut or ship *letterhout* for nine months.[293] After the nine month period the Governor decreed that since *letterhout* mostly grows on commons and the five year period of tax freedom was over, he would levy a tax of 30 (pounds sugar) per 100 (pounds *letterhout*).[294] Compared with *letterhout* the rules and regulations on the other woods were very few. *Letterhout* was clearly a different category from the less luxurious kinds of wood. The market for *letterhout*, and its relation to the colonial nodal point was therefore similar to the other colonial export products like coffee, sugar, lime juice and the other commodities destined for the European market.

Table 7 Annual average letterhout export to the Dutch Republic, 1690-1794

	Letterhout in lbs.
1690s	8,637.80
1700s	52,255.40
1710s	25,923.80

[289] Most likely poles to make fences around slots of land.

[290] Bylaw 32, 12-March-1670, *Plakaatboek*, 56-58.

[291] Fermin, *Nieuwe algemeene beschryving*; Blom, *Verhandeling*.

[292] Bylaw 39, 11-Dec-1670, *Plakaatboek*, 63-64.

[293] Bylaw 45, 8-Apr-1672, *Plakaatboek*, 68-69.

[294] Bylaw 52, 8-Jun-1673, *Plakaatboek*, 72-73.

1720s	41,528.10
1730s	2,573.00
1740s	32,153.90
1750s	6,825.90
1760s	479.40
1770s	450.00
1780s	0.00
1790s	140.00

Source: PSDC. These figures are higher than those provided by the *Essai Historique*. For the period 1700-1792 the PSDC has registered 1,622,595 lbs. and the *Essai Historique* 875,876 lbs. *letterhout* shipped from Suriname to the republic.

The difference between the production of *letterhout* and most of the other export products was that the start-up costs for logging were low. One needed only a few workers and not the intricate machinery of a sugar or coffee plantation. It could also be acquired by bartering with Amerindians. This made it a way for newcomers without much capital to carve out a position for themselves in the colony. Despite lack of enough solid data there are some indications for the importance of Surinamese wood regionally, especially in the early period of the colony.[295] In the early colonial phase of the seventeen sixties, wood was exported to Barbados to supplement the lack of wood on that island after the expansion of the sugar plantation there. The forests on Barbados had not only been cut to clear the land, but also served as fuel to boil the juice from the sugar cane after harvest. There was a long legacy of the Portuguese Jewish trading wood, going as far back as the family De La Parra settling on the upper Suriname river, and the activities of David Nassy in that same business. De La Parra owned a timberland that was already in operation in the English period and was still owned by that family at the end of the eighteenth century.

The abundance of wood in Paramaribo did not mean that no wood was shipped to the colony from overseas. In 1784 537,414 *voet* of wood in various forms and 406,000 shingles were registered and taxed by the market's administrator in Paramaribo. Fifteen different captains and individuals delivered around 80,714 *voet "Hollandse deelen."* These captains also delivered 3,000 staves for making barrels, 1,800 peddles, and 2,400 *voet* planks. The taxed value of the Dutch imports was very little, since *hollandse deelen* were only taxed very lightly per *voet*, but it did make up a considerable share of the wood brought to market in Paramaribo. The

[295] SvS, *Overgekomen Brieven en Papieren, 15-Apr-1688 – 11-Sep-1688*, 1688, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 218.

bulk of the locally produced wood was so-called *copie* wood.[296] This local product was always measured in the length of the planks, from 12 up to 25 *voet* and its breadth in *duim* between 1 and 3. As mentioned before, Maroons and Amerindians also sold wood to the colonists. In 1780 continuous problems with the payment of Maroons supplying wood to plantations, motivated the Surinamese government to issue a notification that ordered Maroon wood to be delivered to the military outpost and company sawmill *Victoria*. In 1784 the tax value of this wood was a meagre 148.5 Surinamese guilders, delivered to Paramaribo in seven portions, comprising of 18,884 *voet*.[297]

Much of the wood used by plantations was logged on privately owned grounds that do not show up in the tax record. These grounds were used to provide food and wood to main plantations of the same owner. Along the Suriname River timberlands belonging to distant plantations are found. Especially in the 1760s there was an increase in the number of such plantations. A plantation like *Remoncourt* is an example of this. It falls outside the wood tax, despite its wood production. It was exclusively used to supply wood to its 'mother plantation' *Rust en Werk*, and expanded several times when its grounds turned out to be devoid of useable timber. The government also operated in a similar fashion. If we compare the account of the Suriname Company managed sawmill *Weltevreden* with the tax record, we see some wood delivered by *Weltevreden*, but this was a fraction of the tax they should have paid if all they produced and shipped was taxed.[298] The same goes for the Company Sawmill *Victoria* which produced considerable amounts of wood but did not appear on the tax of that same year.[299]

The presence of timberlands upstream the big rivers provided an economic opportunity to those who were unsuccessful in other areas of production. Logging could be an economic escape route for colonists who were unsuccessful in setting up plantation production and switched to the less capital-intensive production of wood. Many of the small-scale firewood mongers also belong in this category. Some of the major suppliers, like Nanette Samson, or the widow of Elie Pennard fell from riches but still owned timberlands, which they controlled from Paramaribo. Their fall from

[296] Pfeiffer, *De Houtsoorten van Suriname*, 1:377. The scientific name is Goupia glabra Aubl..

[297] Bylaw 821, 14-Aug-1780, *Plakaatboek*, 985.

[298] HCA, The Illustrious President, captain Butler, *Account of the Lumbermill Weltevereden,* 1794, entry 30/377.

[299] HCA, The Illustrious President, captain Butler, *Account of Lumbermill Victoria*, 1794, entry 30/377.; Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Administratie van Financiën in Suriname, Boekhouder-kassier van de Gemene Weide, *Register van opgave van te Paramaribo geloste houtwaren*, entry 1.05.10.07 inv.nr. 347.

riches did not prevent them from maintaining expensive town houses on the prestigious streets of the city.[300] The heirs of Daniel Scheuneman are in a similar situation. They continued to send wood to the city from the Scheuneman plantations on the Suriname River and Para Creek. Many important timber lands were depleted sugar plantations: *De Vier Kinderen* turned from sugar to wood around 1768.[301] *Onoribo* did the same around 1752.[302] *La Diligence* was owned by Jews who arrived in the colony in the seventeenth century. It was a hybrid timberland and sugar plantation that turned exclusively to wood in the eighties after it had been badly neglected in the 1760s. However prominent these were as sources of wood in the 1780s and 1790s, the main suppliers were plantations expressly created for commercial logging.

Especially Portuguese Jews took refuge in wood production after they had to give up sugar production in the 1770s.[303] The Jews who had their businesses upstream the Suriname River were especially hard hit by the credit crunch of 1773 and the depletion of their plantations. They therefore resorted to activities that were less capital-intensive such as logging, or, as happened in Jodensavanne, families turned from producing for the European market to supplying the military outposts of the cordon.[304] In Paramaribo the Portuguese Jews became major players on the wood market. The association between wood trading and Jewry became so strong that the Surinamese historian Van Lier claimed that the complaints about the wood that lay in the city were a covert form of anti-Semitism.[305] Of course, wood production was not exclusively Jewish, and was not just an escape route for impoverished planters, but for many it functioned as such.[306] The switch to wood logging

[300]Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, College van Houtvesters en de Gemeene Weiden, *Housing tax*, 1781, entry 1.05.10.06 inv.nr. 2. E. Pennard lived in the Keijserstraat and paid 2400 FLS. housing tax. Nannette Samson had two houses in the Wagewegstraat for 2280 FLS. in tax.

[301]The notarial archives mentioned sugar fields in the 1763 inventory, but no longer do so in the 1768 one. (http://nationaalarchief.sr/geschiedenis/plantages/parakreek/vierkinderen/index.html).

[302]Boedel J.C. Welvaart en Nicolaas de Kruijf (http://nationaalarchief.sr/geschiedenis/plantages/parakreek/onoribo/index.html).

[303] Cohen, *Another Environment*, 70–82.

[304] Nassy et al., *Essai historique*, 55.

[305] Lier, "The Jewish Community in Surinam," 19–28.

[306]In the database on the wood tax the Jews make up more than half of the top fifteen wood suppliers. The largest individual contributor to the wood tax is Joseph Haim del Castillo. He operates from the area around the Marshall creek and the Suriname River, an area known for its timberlands. Also J.A. de Vries, Jacob Juda, and his son and I. Emanuels are major suppliers of wood.

could be quite successful, as was noted in the *Essai Historique*, although it was not as profitable as trading North American wares.[307]

Depletion of the ground was not the sole reason to switch from sugar or coffee to timber. A great advantage of wood production was that it required a relatively small number of enslaved Africans. In periods when African captives were not readily available for plantation owners because they lacked credit or supplies, a limited number of labourers was more easily mobilized for logging, rather than trying to produce sugar, which had relatively high start-up cost due to the number of slaves and the intricate machinery necessary. In some cases the enslaved themselves had a say in it, by refusing to move off a depleted sugar plantation. A well-known example is the unsuccessful attempt to relocate the enslaved from *Onoribo* to *Halle en Saxen*. The owner then decided to leave the slaves on *Onoribo* but started producing wood, after which it turned into one of the most productive timberlands of the colony.[308]

Lower on the ladder than the planters trying to sell the wood from their plantations were the firewood peddlers. Firewood was seen irregularly on the Paramaribo wood market, and it was mostly supplied in small quantities by individuals, instead of plantations. Firewood is an interesting commodity here. It rose sharply as a share of the total of taxed wood, together with low quality woods. The urban trading of low quality wood declined more slowly than the trading of other kinds of wood, and between the early and mid-1790s the amount of firewood unloaded in Paramaribo doubled, back to the level of the mid-1780s. Behind these numbers are real people making a living in the colony. Firewood (*brandhout* in Dutch) was brought to the market by individuals. Hardly ever did plantations or big suppliers bother to bring it in. Those supplying firewood were generally only bringing in this one product, measured per *vaam*.[309] The growth of

[307] "Nous ne disconvenons pas qu'il y a parmi jes Juifs des gens très riches: chez les Portugais, il y a des personnes & des familles qui prossedent encore depuis 50 juis. Ques meme 400 mille florins de capital; remassé en grande partie par leur capacité dans le négoce & le traffic du commerce Anglois &c. & d'autres qui auront encore depuis 20 jusqu'à 50 mille florins de capital, employés aux travaux de bois, qui rend un revenue annuel très avantageux."Nassy et al., *Essai historique*, 186.

[308] Something similar happened during the slave rising in 1757 when slaves along the Tempati River refused to be moved from a timberland to a sugar plantation. The rebels could not be subdued and formed the Auckaner maroon community. Ironically a community that later sold wood to the colonists under European rule.

[309] A *vaam* wood was taxed for 5 *stuyvers*, or 0.25 Surinamese guilders. The *vaam* is a Dutch measurement, also called *vadem* with great regional variation. It was approximately the length between the left an right hand when arms were spread. The Amsterdam *vaam* was

Paramaribo likely turned the collecting of firewood into a specialized profession, albeit not a very lucrative one. The main firewood monger Fleijschman was not a big economic player in the city. The growing firewood market might indicate that those living in the city no longer collected their own wood at all.

The government was a great consumer of wood, both as building material as well as fuel, often relying in part on wood mongers in the city. During the building of the fortress Zeelandia in 1771 the government spent quite some money on buying shingles and planks. Del Castillo and especially Raphael Fernandes were major wood suppliers then. However, neither Raphael, Isak nor any other member of the Fernandes family owned a plantation. Another wood supplier for the building of fortifications, Hallek, was not an administrators or plantation owner. Whether Del Castillo managed a plantation was unclear, but he did supply wood to the government. The government did not only rely on middlemen during big building projects, and these same men were still delivering wood to the government in 1774. There was a strict division between wood suppliers and those who sold the many other provisions required by the state apparatus. Only imported wood was supplied by middlemen who were also active in the trading of other products. The company Stolting and Oehlers (both also plantation managers) dealt in provisions as well as English planks.

Wood trade was a start-up trade. If a plantation areal had some valuable wood, this could be sold. In this we should include the planters who in the late seventeenth century did not start sugar production and preferred searching the forest for *letterhout* instead.[310] Samuel Nassy received a model of a saw mill from a Hans Simons in the seventeenth century, just after the SC had been founded.[311] The Parra and Nassy businesses might have functioned as an example to the others, since the place where they operated from became surrounded by timberlands in the eighteenth century. Another Jew in the wood business at the time operated from *Coermotibo*, in the outer North Eastern corner of the colony. From the wood logging business money could be made that could later be used to expand into other areas of production. Some plantations were exclusively founded to produce wood for the local market. *Bigrav* as well as *Berlijn* fall in this category. They were not in Jewish hands and had not initially produced sugar or some other colonial cash crop. *Berlijn* had been developed for the sole purpose of

1.69 meters, the Rhinland *vaam* 1.88 meters. A *vaam* wood would generally be understood to be a pile of 6 *voet*.

[310] Bylaw 45, 8-Apr-1672, Prohibition to log *letterhout*, *Plakaatboek*, 68.

[311] P. Knappert, "De labadisten in Suriname," *New West Indian Guide/Nieuwe West-Indische Gids* 8, no. 1 (1927): 193–218.

producing wood. Money was invested to do this: mill maker Jan Schot was brought in from Philadelphia in the late sixties to provide the plantation with a water-powered sawmill. Twenty years later *Berlijn* was still among the greatest wood suppliers in the colony. From that position small scale sugar and coffee cultivation was added to the plantation's operations a few years later.

Between 1781 and 1795 73 different plantations were offloading wood at the Paramaribo wood market. For that same period 320 different individuals, including skippers, inspectors, plantation administrators, curators and barge skippers (*pontevaarders*) did the same. The two categories overlap somewhat, but nevertheless it is clear that over a space of 14 years between three hundred and three hundred fifty people have been taxed for unloading wood at the Paramaribo waterfront. The figure also shows that many Surinamese entrepreneurs added to their income by selling wood. The number of people involved in the wood trade through the city was large when taking into consideration that there were at most double that number in plantations. These suppliers got their wood either from a plantation they owned or administered, bought it from planters as middlemen, collected it from commons, or imported it either regionally or transatlantically. The major wood suppliers owned timberlands, except for the fire wood suppliers or transporters. Many wood producing plantations paired logging with the production of coffee, sugar, cotton indigo or other products.

4.2. Imports and local production of drink

This paragraph argues that imported drink made out a substantial share of the available alcohol in the colony. By comparing local production of alcohol with imported drink it becomes clear that local production was sizeable, but imports made out more than 40 per cent of the available drink in the colony. While such high imports could be expected to contribute greatly to the nodal function by adding to the number of active middlemen, this paragraph shows that this was not the case, primarily because many of the incoming ships delivered to the plantation without the interference of middlemen.

What types of alcoholic drinks were consumed in the colony? The higher orders of colonial society and those emulating them imported exclusive drinks from across the Atlantic. Like in the British Atlantic, Madeira wine had touched the hearts of Suriname's elite,[312] and they also

[312] David Hancock, "Commerce and Conversation in the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic: The Invention of Madeira Wine," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 29, no. 2 (October 1, 1998): 58–59.

took a liking to *jenever*, French or Spanish wines and beer imported from Holland.[313] Soldiers, enslaved Africans and craftsmen drank the local moonshine, called *dram* or *killdevil*. The drinking of dram was regarded by contemporaries as something for the lower orders. It was distilled either directly from fermented sugar cane juice, or fermented molasses (the fluid by-product left after extracting sugar from cane juice).[314] The distilling was done locally and the crude rum was not aged in barrels. It resembled many of the home-made rough drinks typical of agricultural societies. Its name might have derived from the Scottish word for a drink, which is dram as well. The name *killdevil* is very likely also a remnant from the English period and is a name regularly used in the British Caribbean. The French equivalent for the term, *guildive*, referred to upper-class liquors instead of the poorer quality *tafia*.[315] The Dutch version of the name is *duivelsdoot* or *kilduyvel*, but is rarely found in contemporary literature and source material.[316] *Dram* was not the only local drink; some would also drink so-called sugar beer. An Amerindian drink was cassava beer, which was made by having "the oldest Women, and snotty Nose Children chaw [cassava bread] in their Mouths, and with as much Spittle as they can, throw into a Jar of Water" … "which becomes fit to drink in a few days."[317]

Dram "has such a harmful effect, that even the least taken by someone will make them love that stinking drink so much that they will drink themselves senseless and make themselves unfit for any task" complained the *Raad Fiscaal* (public prosecutor) in 1739.[318] Despite such drawbacks *dram* ('sopi' in Sranan) was an essential ingredient in the worker and soldier diet and was brought to fortresses, plantations, ships and outposts on a regular basis from different sugar plantations. Pouring a worker or soldier a drink could cause all kinds of trouble, not doing so even more. It was not only an important addition of calories to the diet of those who had to perform heavy physical tasks in a warm climate, but also served as anodyne in a harsh environment. Drink could be an important motivator for soldiers or workers on plantations and ships to rebel, but if they could count on a regular supply *dram* could be a great motivator to work. Drink was part of many social rituals such as drinking to someone's health. Rebellious slaves

[313] *Jenever* or genever is a juniper berry flavoured drink that originates from the Netherlands, and from which gin has evolved.

[314] Oostindie, *Roosenburg*, 53.

[315] McCusker, *Rum and the American Revolution 1*, 1:57.

[316] Berkel, *Amerikaansche voyagien*.

[317] Warren, *An Impartial Description*, 7.

[318] SvS, *Missieve van de Raad Fiscaal*, 12-Nov-1739, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 266.

would ritually drink to strengthen their bond.[319] Free men did the same, and also drank to seal business transactions or squash hostilities.[320]

Workers and soldiers did not just get by their drink through their owners or superiors. There are many references to enslaved Africans, European sailors and soldiers buying drink on credit or with money they acquired in some other way. To the innkeepers it probably did not matter who their customers were, although some innkeepers got into trouble when the sailors left the colony before paying their tab. The selling of drink to enslaved workers was prohibited early on in the colony. To avert trouble the government standardized the prices of drink, and enforced the hours at which drinking was allowed. The government was struggling to force innkeepers to take a licence, and pay for it as well. A licence would cost *fl* 200 for a regular license. The grand licence could be obtained for *fl* 300 a year. The landlords would pay for this in parts, sometimes per three months, sometimes per half year instead of a full year at once. In the first two months of 1773, 11 people bought a license, 5 of which bought a grand license. On a monthly base the government made about as much, if not more, from the license fees, than from the "wet wares" tax itself. [321]

The selling of dram and molasses gave sugar-oriented plantations an advantage over those that only produced coffee, for they had an exportable by-product that could serve as extra income to buy local and regional goods. According to van Stipriaan and Oostindie dram and molasses could make up one fifth of the total income of a plantation.[322] In plantation administrations a separate *dram rekening* (dram account) was kept. Molasses and dram were often regarded to fall within the same category by the planters. Molasses and dram consumed on plantations that did not produce sugar were passing through middlemen in the city or were directly traded between plantations. *Waterland*, since it produced sugar, also produced dram, more than it could use. Therefore the plantation functioned as a distributor of dram. On the molasses and dram account of the year 1794 we get an impression of the level of inter-plantation deliveries, and amounts going to the city. For the period February through to November, the plantation itself consumes 130

[319] Examples of this can be found in the Haitian revolution, as well as the Curaçao slave revolt of 1795.

[320] SvS, *Verklearing over het bijleggen van de ruzie tussen de Officier en de Engelse Capitein*, 27-Oct-1739, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 266. An impending brawl between Dutch soldiers and a British captain and his friends was squashed by shaking hands and having a drink with the public prosecutor.

[321] OAS, Administratie van Financiën in Suriname, *Journaal van ontvang en uitgaaf, 1772-1787*, entry 1.05.10.07 inv.nr 239.

[322] Stipriaan, *Surinaams contrast*, 167; Oostindie, *Roosenburg*, 281.

pul dram. It sends to the plantation *Adrichem* 72 *pul*. To Plantation *Hanovere* 62 *pul*. To *L'Inquitude* 45 *pul*. The amount of dram send to Paramaribo is 475 *pul*.[323] All the mentioned plantations are simply close by: *Adrichem* is a neighbouring plantation, *Hanovere* is up the Para, and the timberland *L'Inquietude* is on the Carolina Creek further up the Para.

For the wholesale and retail market in Paramaribo the two sources for drink were the sugar plantations and the incoming ships. Alcohol, both its intake and sale were regulated by the local government. The places to buy alcohol in the city were wholesalers and the (sometimes illegal) pubs where innkeepers sold drink to anyone willing to buy. There was also a substantial amount of drink that by-passed the city. Every fortress and outpost had its own supplier of dram which they were free to commission themselves. The drink for the plantation owners would come straight from the Netherlands and, exept for its taxation, largely bypassed Paramaribo. The *dram* that was not sold in the hinterland, was moved to the city. Not all of the imported drink that was taxed when ships arrived in Paramaribo was paid for by the skipper. Firstly, there was the category of *rabbattere*, which meant loss or reduction. This was the drink that had leaked, got spoiled, was destined to go somewhere else or drunk during the voyage. With the English captains we sometimes find that a part of their drink was reserved to be off-loaded at another port. Since skippers were ordered to sell their goods at a good price,[324] this might have meant that Paramaribo's prices were low compared to what skippers thought they could get for their drink. Another form, booked under exemption as well, was the drink that was directly bought from the skippers. This is an interesting category, since it reveals urban middlemen who functioned as resellers in the colony. Examples of such brokers are F. Gomarius and the widow Lemmers (formerly Kuhlenkamp) and her son.[325]

Military personnel above the rank of common soldier, and the members of the various governing councils got their drink less from skippers, and more from companies such as Dippold & Wirth. Military personnel, the members of the Council of Policy as well as vicars were registered in the exceptions account. They bought part of the consignments brought in from overseas, over which no tax was paid. In a six year period around 200 people in the colony used the possibility of being exempted from the wet wares tax because of their position in the state apparatus. Out of the

[323] HCA, The Illustrious President, Capt. Butler, 1795, *Account of the Plantation Waterland*, entry 30 inv.nr. 377.

[324] Pares, *Yankees and Creoles*.

[325] OAS, Administratie van Financiën in Suriname, *Grootboek van de ontvangst van impost natte waren: Schepen 1771-1774*, entry 1.05.10.07, inv.nr. 257.

35 consignments in 1775 for which the tax exemption was used, only ten were skippers. The rest was bought from resellers in town.[326]

The English captains' drink was sold in Paramaribo, rather than going straight to the plantations. Non-Dutch drink arrived from Martinique, Barbados and Rhode Island. Of the people who sold spirits to plantations in 1771, none were English. This is remarkable, since there were a lot of English ships in Paramaribo that year. The regional trade most certainly did add to the (nodal) function of Paramaribo, since they did not deliver their goods directly to planters and plantations, but sold to middlemen in town.[327] They carried wine and rum to the colony, always as part of a bigger consignment of various provisions. It was only little compared to the Dutch supply.[328] Luxuries, such as imported spirits, did not have regional trade as their main supply line. That trade connection was used for daily provisions, livestock and especially food (as we will see in the piece on victuals). Richard Pares mentioned merchants travelling on board the English ships to sell goods. From there it might have been sold to the pubs and inns in the city. These pubs had, according to Governor van Sommelsdyck, been one of the first buildings in the city.

The overwhelming majority of wine, beer and *jenever* deliveries to plantations were done by skippers. In 1771 34 different Dutch captains sent 125 taxed consignments to plantations. That same year, a total of 22 non-captains were taxed sending 49 consignments of drink.[329] Despite some unknowns, it is clear that the captains sent two and a half times the amount of barge loads of drink to the plantations.[330] Practically all the Dutch drink-hauling skippers arrived from Amsterdam, and occasionally Rotterdam.[331] In 1771, a total of 35 skippers are mentioned in the tax records on wet wares from ships (almost the same amount that sold drink to plantations).[332] This

[326]OAS, Administratie van Financiën in Suriname, Ontvanger der Modique Lasten, *Grootboek van exemptien van impost natte waaren. 1775-1789*, entry 1.05.10.07 inv.nr. 258.

[327]OAS, Administratie van Financiën in Suriname, *Grootboek van de ontvangst van impost natte waren: Plantages, 1766 – 1782*, entry 1.05.10.07 inv.nr. 256.

[328]OAS, Administratie van Financiën in Suriname, *Grootboek van de ontvangst van impost natte waren: Schepen 1771-1774*, entry 1.05.10.07 inv.nr. 257.

[329]These figures are not wholly accurate. A group of four individuals (most likely captains) sent 17 consignments. However, we cannot be sure at this point that they were Dutch captains. In six cases the sender of the drink was not mentioned by name.

[330]OAS, Administratie van Financiën in Suriname, *Grootboek van de ontvangst van impost natte waren: Plantages, 1766 – 1782,* entry 1.05.10.07 inv.nr. 256.

[331] John H. de Bye, *Database on passengers to and from Suriname* (Paramaribo, 2003).

[332] OAS, Administratie van Financiën in Suriname, *Grootboek van de ontvangst van impost natte waren: Schepen 1771-1774*, entry 1.05.10.07 inv.nr. 257.

means that maybe half the ships arriving from the Netherlands carried alcohol on their arrival in Suriname. For an idea of the contents of those shipments we look at the cargo of 12 random ships that carried drinks inwards that year.[333] These twelve ships carried 238 hogsheads of beer,[334] 76.6 hogsheads of wine,[335] 5.6 hogsheads of *jenever*,[336], and two thirds of a hogshead Madeira wine.[337] In the category *drank* (probably *brandewijn*, brandy) almost 28 hogsheads were imported.[338] The rum declared at customs was such a small amount that it would not be worth mentioning the quantity here. Totalling it for all the ships the entire year would mean that the import of alcoholic beverages surmounted to a total of 1,140 hogsheads[339] or 262,200 litres.

By comparing local production to imports their relative importance can be assessed. Estimating local production is difficult, but not impossible. The molasses used to produce *dram* contained far more sugar than today's molasses. Because of more primitive materials, techniques and sugar plants, the syrup left after crystallising sugar cane juice was still very sweet. The total yield of sugar can be used as a rough indicator of the total possible yield of molasses, and in turn an estimate of the likely production of dram from this. Another measure would be the ration per slave. *Dram* was clearly very rich in calories, which is a good reason to hand it out to labourers.[340] The ration per slave times the total number of adult labourers in the colony

[333] The total tax paid for drink imports was *f*S 7,568. The twelve ships under study brought *f*S 2,314. The sample was 0.34 of the ships, which brought in 0.3 of the tax paid by ships that year.

[334] They brought *f*S 714 worth of beer tax. at *f*S 3 per hogshead this would be 238 hogsheads.

[335] Wine income was *f*S 920, at a level of *f*S. 12 per hogshead.

[336] Jenever was at *f*S 336 taxguilders worth that year (of which *f*S 296 was carried by the Marria Galley). The tax per unit is not given by the laws and ordinances, but was likely to be *f*S 60 per hogshead.

[337] The record notes *f*S 8 Madeira wine, which is the price of 1 *aam*, or 4 *anker*, or 2/3 hogshead.

[338] *Drank* for those twelve ships was *f*S 334 in tax. Tax levied per unit of *drank* was *f*S 2 per kelder. A *kelder* is an *anker* which is 1/6 hogshead, so *f*S 12 was levied per hogshead drank.

[339] The total of hogshead was 348.5 for the 12 ships. The total tax was 3.27 times what the 12 ships had carried. So very likely 1139.6 hogsheads of alcoholic drink legally entered Suriname through the Paramaribo customs.

[340] It likely that this was one of the reasons for the British Navy to hand out rum instead of whiskey. Anthony P. Maingot, "Rum, Revolution and Globalization. Past, Present and Future of a Caribbean Product" (presented at the The Cuba Lecture Series, The Cuban Research Institute Florida International University, 2004), http://lacc.fiu.edu/centers_institutes/cri/rum.pdf.

could give an indication of the minimal production of dram needed by the plantations. The total production was most likely between the maximum total production and the minimum hand-out based on prevailing rations. One caveat is that *dram* was often part of outward cargoes together with molasses, either as bunker or as a trade good. A special export tax on *dram* was levied to support the defence works in the 1750s.[341] It was part of the regional trade and on ships to Middleburg, Rotterdam and Amsterdam.[342]

The maximum dram production based on the sugar production in the 1770s was fairly large. According to Alex van Stipriaan four kg. sugar would yield around one litre of molasses. Of this molasses around 70 per cent was exported.[343] For the year 1771 the production was 1,9420,312 lbs. or 9,515,952.88 kilograms (lbs. at 0.49 kg) of sugar (see PSDC). This weight of sugar according to the calculation of van Stipriaan would result in the maximum of 2,378,988.22 litres of molasses. The amount not leaving the colony for the North American trade (30 per cent according to van Stipriaan) would be 713,696.46 litres. Molasses was also fed to cattle and used for local consumption. If we assume that half the molasses was made into dram the planters could have produced 356,848.23 litres. When looking at this question from the demand side, Anthony Blom calculated that it was customary to give the enslaved Africans a glass of dram twice a week. According to his guide to plantation agriculture the slave-ration was 2 *pul dram* per 3 slaves annually (7.2 litres per slave per year).[344] At the time there were about 59,923 people enslaved in the colony, of whom 49,359 were of *dram* drinking age (adulthood starting at 12).[345] The 1.950 soldiers should be added to the dram consumers, as well as the sailors. The 3175 sailors that visited Suriname can be counted as 1,102 inhabitants.[346] There were 2671

[341] Bylaw 520 and 541 mention a tax of 15 and later 12 stuyvers a gallon.

[342] Bye, *Database on passengers to and from Suriname* mentions dram as part of a ships cargo. If this was really intended for the Netherlands, or to drink onboard is not completely clear. Also in McCusker figures are given about both exports of dram.

[343] Stipriaan, *Surinaams contrast*, 167.

[344] Herman Daniël Benjamins and Joh. F. Snelleman, eds., *Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch West-Indië* (Den Haag / Leiden: Martinus Nijhoff / E.J. Brill, 1914)) a pul is calculated as 3 gallons, which is 10.8 liter.

[345] Stipriaan, *Surinaams contrast*, 311; Ruud Beeldsnijder, *"Om werk van jullie te hebben" Plantage slaven in Suriname, 1730-1750*, vol. 16, Bronnen voor de studie van Afro-Suriname (Utrecht, 1994), 265 gives both the figure for adult and child slaves for 1754 when there were 5890 enslaved children and 27533 enslaved adults. It is assumed that the ratio of children per adult was the same in 1770.

[346] In total there were 3157 different crewmembers visiting Paramaribo. Taking into account the time their ships stayed in port this would mean that 1102.74 people can be added to the

free people in the colony at the time, of which maybe 2,000 were *dram* drinkers. All added up there were an estimated 54,411 people in the colony that drank *dram* around 1771. If these people drank a ration similar to the ration of the enslaved in Blom's account they would consume 391,759 litres of *dram*. This is more than the production of sugar would supposedly allow for, but not too far off to assume that the real consumption was somewhere between 391,759 and 356,848.23 litres.

The locally produced distillates contained far more alcohol per litre than the imported beers and wines aboard the Dutch ships sailing to Suriname. When judging the drinks irrespective of its alcohol content, the volume of imported drink was very high compared to the local production. Based on the figures presented above, the imports made up 41.2 per cent of the drink available in the colony at the time. Despite the assumption that much of food was produced locally, it turns out that quite a large share of the alcohol consumed in Suriname in the eighteenth century was produced overseas.[347]

4.3. Between ship and plantation

The *Waterkant* was a busy place where people were working to repair the incoming ships, unload trade goods, cooper barrels and load the return shipments. All this activity demanded a considerable amount of labour, but it did not result in a large docking sector in the city. Not only the availability of enslaved Africans, but also the presence of thousands of sailors manning the barges limited the development of a Paramaribo-based river and dock work. This paragraph details how river and dock work functioned, and how both the locally enslaved Africans and European sailors were used to varying degrees to work on the river. The shipping market largely determined if slaves or sailors did the work, but only very few professional barge skippers were active in the eighteenth century.

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figure of liquor consumers carousing on Waterkant. Calculation: In 1771 the 23 slave ships had average crews of 43 people that stayed for 60 days. For bilateral freighters 1771 has unrepresentatively high waiting times, so 1772 is used, when there were 51 bilateral freighters with an average of 28 crewmembers staying for 203 days. In 1771 a total of 74 non-Dutch ships had an estimated 10 crewmembers and stayed on average for 72 days. When the total days spent by sailors in Paramaribo are divided by 365 this result in an indication of the number of people that can be added to the liquor consuming population of the town. Slave ship crewmen amounted to 162.57 people for 1771, bilateral crewmen amounted to 794.2 for 1772 and the American and regional crewmen were about 145.97 for 1771.

[347] This figure differs from an earlier calculation. The calculation from 2011 used a higher figure for slave rations, based on rations found in a small sample of plantation administrations. However, that sample was probably too small to get an accurate view of overall consumption. Fatah-Black, "Paramaribo en het achterland in de achttiende eeuw."

Paramaribo was not a place where a lot of active trading in colonial commodities took place. During the eighteenth century plantations came to be increasingly owned by (or heavily indebted to) investors in the Republic. What was produced either served to pay for captives brought in by slave traders, or was shipped to the Republic to be sold there. While there was a lively trade in local consumption goods, there was no market for coffee and sugar to speak of. Also provisions from the Republic were either sent there by the bookkeepers of investment companies (and added to the debt of the planter at a handsome commission, or where paid out of the plantation's credit in the Republic). Some skippers bartered their goods for tropical produce on the plantation itself, or in town, but this was the exception. Ships rarely received plantation products on board through barge skippers, although this became more common during the 1760s. Some ships rented or bought a vessel[348] in town or from other captains who were done loading goods or let a representative of their company pass the vessel to another captain. [349] In the eighteenth century the ships mostly stayed on the Paramaribo waterfront or sometimes at *Braamspunt* at the mouth of the river.[350] The warehouses in the city were used to store goods so as to ensure short loading times for the arriving ships.

The safe arrival in the colony was a relief for the sailors. Stedman recounted how the crews were singing and dancing and a general festive atmosphere surrounded the arrival of his ship. One of the first things he noticed on arrival was the hustle and bustle of small vessels.[351] These would come to get news, sell food and drink or offer their services. The ships themselves would also start ferrying to the fort, *Waterkant* and other ships. Sailors in that period were sturdy rowers and every ocean going ship had a *jol*, *boot* or *sloep* on board to pick up provisions or go to land. Some of these vessels were rigged with sails.[352] Ships used their own vessels to take in

[348]The *Philadelphia* buys a barge. Ibid.; The Standvastigheid and Vigilantie both rent a barge. MCC, *Journaal van het fregat Standvastigheid, reis Guinee-Suriname, 1790-1792*, entry 20 inv.nr. 1070; *Journaal van het Snauw Vigilantie, Reis Guinee-Suriname, 1778-1779*; MCC, entry 20 inv.nr. 1125.

[349]MCC*, Letters from Neale to the MCC*, entry 20 inv.nr. 54 Letter of 23-8-1722 mentions that Neale has taken a barge left by a captain; MCC, *Letters from Gootenaar to the Directors of the MCC,* 25-Sep-1770.

[350]Mentions of freighters sailing up the rivers are mostly from the seventeenth century and early eighteenth century. Getting past the fortress Sommelsdyck, where the Cottica merges with the Commewijne was hard, but doable if the ship was helped by rowing boats.

[351] Stedman, *Narrative*, 14.

[352]They sell their sloop with all its parts including peddles, mast and sails. MCC, *Journaal van het fregat Philadelphia, reis Guinee-Suriname, 1760-1761*, entry 20 inv.nr. 922.

supplies, mainly water, firewood and food. The space between the ship and the plantation overlapped and fused: sailors were working on the docks and on the rivers; slaves worked on the same rivers and might have been employed as sailors on regional ships. Governor Wigbold Crommelin wrote that sailors were weakened and died because of the rowing. As a result the ships leaving Suriname were losing crew members, and either had to leave the colony understaffed, or had to take up to five extra sailors on board when they left the Republic to make up for loses to be expected in the colony.[353] Both in the hot dry seasons as well as in the rainy seasons the *pontroeijen* (barge rowing) was regarded as unbearable and deadly work. Depending on its size, between three and five men were needed on a barge.[354] According to Teenstra the rowing by sailors was banned by Governor Van Panhuis in the nineteenth century because many sailors died of the hard labour. From then on the barges were exclusively rowed by "negroes" and managed by poor whites that had no other means of making a living.[355] The sailors rowed between Braamspunt and Waterkant and also deep into the interior to get sugar and coffee. Some of the pickup points for provisions were close to the city, such as the plantation *Dordrecht*, but others could be quite far away. Plantation *Domburg* was 20 km up the Suriname and in a day's range from Paramaribo. Some barges ventured off to get supplies and tropical goods up the Para Creek, 40 km from town or even *Wijkslust* at 60 km upstream the Suriname. On their way there they could also bring supplies to the plantation.

[Figure 9]

Figure 8 Detail of a drawing of plantation Leeverpoel showing European sailors punting a barge and slaves rowing a tentboat, 18th century
Gezicht op de koffieplantage Leeverpoel in Suriname. Plantagie Leeverpoel Geleegen Rievier Cottica linksop vaarende. Collection Rijksmuseum, object no. RP-T-1959-119.

[353] Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, entry 1.05.03, inv.nr. 318, fo 173.5 maart 1763, W. Crommelin.

[354] Hartsinck, *Beschryving*, 1770, 2:684.

[355] Marten Teenstra, *De Landbouw in de Kolonie Suriname, voorafgegaan door eene geschied- en naturkundige beschouwing dier kolonie ... met kaarten en platen.* (Groningen, 1835), 242.

During the era of the monopolized slave trade the slave ships had an advantage when it came to acquiring return shipments. The WIC commissioner was assigned with the tasks of filling the company warehouse in Paramaribo with sugar so as to be ready for arriving slavers to fill their hold after they sold their captive Africans. Much of the return shipment of slavers consisted of sugar paid to them by planters who bought captives. If they still had cargo space left, they would drop the price of shipping from 5 to 4 or even 3 *duyten* per pound and take more sugar on board. From the 1680s until at least the 1720s the WIC had the practice of lowering their shipping price down to 4 *duyten* per pound.[356] Commissioners were allowed to drop the price of shipping with one *duyt* below the ordinary price to make sure they could load quickly and fully.[357] For bilateral shipping it was very hard to compete with them. For WIC slavers, most sugar was therefore either already in the city, or planters sent their barges with sugar to *Waterkant* to strike a good deal on the shipping cost of their sugar.

With the opening of the slave trade to private companies, middlemen in the city were bestowed the task of organising return-shipments. In the 1750s the slave ship *Het Middelburgs Welvaren* made several voyages, and while it was lying at anchor in the Suriname River the sailors were employed in getting fire wood, water and sand as ballast for the return voyage. The ship was a MCC ship, and therefore the MCC representative Pieter van der Werff sent several loads of sugar from a wide range of planters to the ship to be loaded on board. On their second voyage one low ranking mate on board the ship joined an expedition to get sugar, and once they used their own barge to get sugar, but mostly the broker in the city arranged how they received their goods.[358]

Barges that brought the bulk of tropical goods to the ships should not to be confused with tent boats. The *tentboot* was designed and equipped to be fast for bringing whites to and from the plantations. The *tentboot* (tent boat) is one of the icons of the inequality and oppression in Surinamese society in the period of slavery. In modern day fiction[359] and contemporary travel accounts the *tentboot* is used to illustrate the sharp contrast between hardworking rowing muscular enslaved Africans, and a genteel and relaxing

[356]MCC, *Letters Neale,* 22 March 1722.

[357]NL-HaNA, Tweede West-Indische Compagnie, Letter from the WIC to Gideon Bourse and Pieter Sanderus in Suriname, December 20-Dec-1691, entry 1.05.01.02 inv.nr. 69.

[358]MCC, *Journaal van het fregat Middelburgs Welvaren, reis kust van Afrika-Suriname, 1754 – 1756*, entry 20 inv.nr. 781.

[359] Cynthia McLeod, *The Cost of Sugar* (Paramaribo: Waterfront Press, 2010).

whites sitting under the cover speedily rowed to their destination.[360] The barge was much larger, slower, and most space was used for cargo. The Sranan word for such a barge is *pondo* and close to the Dutch word *pont* meaning barge or ferry. In contemporary texts several different words are used for the vessels, either referring to their function, their build, the people working on them, or the owner. Examples are *suikerpont* (sugar barge), *neegerpont* (Negro barge),[361] *matrozenpont* (sailor barge, not a sloop),[362] *tentpont* (tent barge, which the author differentiates from the *tentboot*),[363] and *societeits*- or *compagniespont* (company barge).[364] Local laws discriminated between the different kinds of barges based on their size. They distinguished the *scheepspont*, which was banned from the smaller channels and creeks from the *pontevaarder* (professional barge skipper) which was allowed on all the water ways (indicating that their vessels were apparently smaller).[365]

In the early eighteenth century plantation products were transported on the "large Barges" that were "rowed by negroes." The barges came from all directions to the general waterfront of Paramaribo, where the weighing house was.[366] It could take a barge up to fourteen days going back and forth between the ships and the plantations upstream.[367] To protect the cargo from rain the "clumsy vessels" were covered with a reed roof, which made them unsuitable for rowing. Their carrying capacity could vary between 30 and at most 50 hogsheads.[368] Sugar had to be loaded before other goods, since the leaking barrels would spoil the coffee and cotton on board. The barges were either sailing, pulled by a small sloop with two rowers or beamed along by

[360] Sack, *A Narrative* In the travel account of Albert Sack (who exotified slavery to a high degree) the moment of conflict between his privileged position and the plight of the slaves takes place onboard such a tentboot.

[361] OAS, Raad van Justitie, *Attestaties en Interrogatoiren voor het Hof van Civiele Justitie, voor het Hof van Politie en Criminele Justitie en voor het College van Commissarissen van Kleine Zaken*, 1774, entry 1.05.10.04 inv.nr. 1300, fo. 377.

[362] Teenstra, *De landbouw*, 242.

[363] Blom, *Verhandeling*, 82, 89.

[364] SAA, Notarieel Archief, Notaris S. Tzeewen,*Getuigeverklaring Omtrent Corruptie Door WIC Commies* (Amsterdam, August 26, 1716), entry 7597 inv.nr. 241.

[365] Schiltkamp and de Smidt, *West Indisch Plakaatboek*, 949, 1.32,1263–1264, 1276.

[366] Herlein, *Beschryvinge*, 64.

[367] OAS, Hof van Politie en Criminele Justitie in Suriname, 1669-1828, *Register Van Publicaties, Notificaties En Reglementen Betreffende Pontevaarders*, entry 1.05.10.02 inv. 953.

[368] Hartsinck claims that as many as a hundred hogsheads could be fit onto the largest barges. But he never visited the colony himself. Hartsinck, *Beschryving*, 1770, 2:242.

people on the bow and stern of the barge. With at most three people on board and maybe two rowers in a sloop the skippers depended on people at the plantation and on the ships for loading and unloading the goods. The small crews of these barges meant that they could get into considerable trouble if they got stuck or made water. Water was detrimental to the cargo of the barges, sugar would be spoiled and coffee bales would burst open if they got wet.[369] In such cases the cargo was lost, unless enslaved Africans from nearby plantations could be ordered to risk their lives emptying the stranded vessels.[370]

Sailors were busy with many different activities while in Suriname. The captains of slave ships were reluctant to send out their crew since they were also needed to guard the remaining slaves.[371] While lying in the river the crew could work on the *schiemannen* and *calfaten* of the ship (bringing in order the rigging and the hull of the ship). Then there was the on-going work of bringing on board fresh supplies. Once tropical goods started to arrive the sailors would be busy with the s*toeijen* or *stouwen* (stowing) of these goods. Processing one barge load of goods could take the whole day. If a captain rented enslaved Africans in the colony, they mostly did some work on board the ship[372] or coopering barrels.[373] Sailors and other crew members were not only engaged in loading goods on board their own ships. Other captains could use them to help,[374] or use the barges of other ships to transport goods.[375]

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[369]OAS, *Raad van Justitie, Attestaties en Interrogatoiren voor het Hof van Civiele Justitie, voor het Hof van Politie en Criminele Justitie en voor het College van Commissarissen van Kleine Zaken*, 1790, entry 1.05.10.04 inv.nr. 1318, fo. 135.

[370]Ibid., fo. 131. The barge of Benjamin Jacobs, under command of a mate hit a stump and the cargo had to be salvaged by slaves from nearby plantations.

[371]MCC, *Journaal van het fregat Prins Willem de Vijfde, reis Afrika-Suriname, 1753-1754*, entry 20 inv.nr. 973. The captain is reluctant to recover an anchor since he needs the crew to guard the slaves.

[372] HCA, Log of the Eagle, captain James Ross: Boston to Charlestown to Suriname to Boston and from Bermuda to New York, entry 32 inv.nr. 325.

[373] HCA, 32/447. The Sally, captain Thomas Valentine. Account of the costs for the ship Sally, captain Thomas Valentine while being in Paramaribo (Paramaribo, December 17, 1777).

[374]Attestaties en Interrogatoiren 1774, fo. 261. In a case of an escaped debtor Hans Jochem Stautzer, 47, a Lutheran from Hamburg, and opperstuurman for capt. Muntz had been in Suriname in 1773 with capt. Pleen, than as stuurman. He says that capt. Pleen ordered him to help carying boxes on board of the ship of capt. Jonker.

[375]Ibid., fo. 377. Statement of unloading goods in 'Negro barge' as well as a barge of another captain. They are a sundry of goods for different plantations. While the first three loads were carried in a 'negerpont' taking a few days to navigate from the ships to the plantations, the last load is carried in the barge of capt. Hans Willem who is also lying at anchor in Suriname.

Captains made deals with planters in Paramaribo about the delivery of sugar to their ships. The captains also went around to the different rivers on business trips, and barges with goods would arrive at the ship a day after his own return. It is likely that he was being rowed around on a tent boat. And on the lists of costs incurred in the colony we find that they paid for the delivery of sugar to the ship. There is some mention of the ship's higher personnel going up stream, but they did so on rented barges, and not the ship's own vessels.[376] In the 1740s goods were loaded on a daily basis, delivered from the city warehouses or from plantations.[377] In the beginning of the 1750s something changed. The ship's own vessels were sent to the interior to get products on board. Even though the amounts are small, the sailors were mobilised to row upstream. In this period the first mentioning of this in official sources also appears, most notably in a letter by Governor Wigbold Crommelin. From then on slave ship logs mention the vessels being sent to the interior and returning after several days with sugar or coffee. In the 1790s the practice had not disappeared, even seeing a mixed crew of both sailors and slaves both getting supplies.[378] Even though the vessels were relatively small, captains did send part of their crew away to plantations to pick up goods. The quantities of tropical goods that were brought per load by the ship's vessels were however smaller than those brought by the local barges. The trips that the sailors made often lasted several days, even if they just went to get provisions. When going upstream or into the city, the ship's mate would often be sent on board to manage affairs, such as the paying of taxes or other issues that could come up regarding the selling or buying of goods and to lead the crew.[379] In cases

[376] MCC, *Rekening van De Surinaamse Galey, Reis Suriname, 1723-1724,* entry 20 inv.nr. 1084; *Journaal Van De Surinaamse Galey, Reis Suriname, 1723-1724,* inv.nr. 1083; *Stukken Van De Nieuwerwerf, Reis Naar Suriname, 1723 – 1724* inv.nr. 874; *Stukken Van De Nieuwerwerf, Reis Naar Suriname, 1722*, inv.nr. 872; *Stukken Van De Maria Elisabeth, Reis Naar Suriname, 1722-1723*, inv.nr. 721; *Stukken Van De Maria Elisabeth, Reis Naar Suriname, 1721-1722,* inv.nr. 720; *Lias Van De Fluit Cornelia, Reis Suriname, 1721-1722*, inv.nr. 311; *Various Papers of Fluit Cornelia, Voyage to Suriname and Back, 1722-1723*, inv.nr. 312.

[377] MCC, *Journaal van de Afrikaanse Galije, reis Guinee-Suriname, 1740-1742*, entry 20 inv.nr. 185; Ibid.

[378] MCC, *Journaal Van Het Fregat Standvastigheid, Reis Guinee-Suriname, 1790-1792*.

[379] Attestaties en Interrogatoiren voor het Hof van Civiele Justitie, voor het Hof van Politie en Criminele Justitie en voor het College van Commissarissen van Kleine Zaken, 1789, Nationaal Archief, Den Haag, Oud Archief Suriname: Raad van Justitie, entry 1.05.10.04 inv.nr. 1317, fo. 59. 4-Mar-1789 M.J. Karseboom, Raad Fiscaal in the colony, caught the stuurman of Cap. M. Baudeliu and several sailors moving untaxed goods on a scheepsboot and barge in a city canal.

where the sailors did not row the barge "one hand" would be sent on board to go up the river for several days to get products from sugar plantations.[380]

The great influence of the tide on the Surinamese waterways determined the pace of river work. It was requisite to use the flow of the tide to move either down or up stream. Rowing or sailing against the tide with a heavy barge was impossible. To deal with this problem barges often had to get moving in the middle of the night when the tide turned, or make haste if they wanted to reach their destination before it turned again.[381] This came on top of the general perils of loading. Falling cargo could easily result in the sinking of the vessel and drowning of the crew.[382] Despite the dangers involved, water transport was the only feasible way to transport anything in the colony. With all the river traffic came problems of crime and control. The rivers were ideal for escaping the colony, either as stowaway on board ships to sea or on barges or canoes to the interior, as well as for smuggling goods to slaves, Maroons, or plantation overseers.[383] The local government was naturally intent on policing the movement across water. Several different systems were introduced to organise some form of regulation. At times all barges had to pass the fortress Zeelandia to get permission to go to the interior, or they had to have notes from planters stipulating the content and direction of the vessels.[384] Whether moving upstream or downstream into the town with taxed goods, notes had to accompany the barrels and boxes loaded on board. Sugar was not allowed to leave the plantation before it was tested and branded.[385]

Barge work (the transporting of goods, rather than the moving of people) became a specialised profession. Curiously there are never any

[380] HCA, Eagel, captain Ross, Log of the *Eagle* from Boston to Charlestown to Suriname to Boston and from Bermuda to New York, 1778, 32/325.

[381] Attestaties en Interrogatoiren 1790, fo. 63. Barge skipper mate Anthonius Klerin on the barge of Benjamin Jacobs. The forth or fith of this month, at night between Monday and Sunday around two or three, he was with the barge infront of the plantation *L'Avantuur*. He hit a stump under water after which the barge starts sinking. He went to planter J. Venendaal and slaves were called from the plantation to help to salvage the coffee in the barge.

[382] OAS, *Attestaties en Interrogatoiren* 1774, fo. 119. On 7-Feb-1774 a ship's crew was loading iron bars in a barge. Two bars fell which damaged the barge so badly that it sunk almost instantly. The testimony is made by Joseph Bandini (ship mate),Pieter Hagenberg, Jochem Gau, Jan Jansen, Jan Laurens, Wiebe Jacobs, Herman Sponhoff.

[383] Bylaw 440, 31-Mei-1745, *Plakaatboek,* 535-536

[384] OAS, Raad van Politie *Register Van Publicaties, Notificaties En Reglementen Betreffende Pontevaarders* (film 549).

[385] Bylaw 152, 5-Aug-1690, *Plakaatboek,* 188.

mentions of newly arrived enslaved Africans being shipped to the plantations from the city. To protect the cargo the professional barge skippers had to swear an oath, in 1798 there were 4 official barge skippers.[386] The barge skippers were low on the colony's European social ladder. Some barge skippers had their own slaves,[387] or could rent enslaved Africans for fl. 0.75 a day to help them move the barges to plantations.[388] In the 1760s the professional barge skippers had considerable competition from each other[389] as well as from the ship's vessels. All ships had their own sloops and barges which they used to get provisions and water on board, but which could also be sent to the planters with the ship's crew.[390] Barge skippers mates were generally despised, their income lower than the cost of renting a slave, which was in line with the general payment of unskilled free labour below that of the rent of slaves.[391]

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[386] *Surinaamsche Alamanach* (Paramaribo, 1789).

[387] It was very common for small business and artisans both white and black to have a few slaves, In the archives there are different cases where barge skippers are mentioned owning slaves. One example from the literature is Wolbers, Geschiedenis van Suriname, 131. In 1742 the barge skipper P. Hotzz had severely punished one of his slaves, who died half an hour later.

[388] OAS, *Attestaties en Interrogatoiren 1774*, fo. 151. Juriaan Nieuwendaal, on the 26-Mar-1774 rented a slave from J.A. Lionet, called Pasop, which Nieuwendaal had serving him on a barge for 15 stuyvers (fl0.75) per day. The price of fl 0.75 is the standard rent for a slave throughout the eighteenth century. The price for renting a slave was steady throughout the eighteenth century. Depending on if they were to be provided with food and drink the rent per day was fl 0.75 or fl. 0.60. Herlein, Beschryvinge, 48. In the 1770s on the waterfront ships could hire some extra hands to do work on board, or as coopers. The captain would pay them fl. 0.75 a day. Renting 'carpenter negroes' cost either fl. 1.20 or fl. 0.60 a day. Income for labourers 1762 entry 1.05.04.04, inv.nr. 318, fo 268 and 319. Also for the work on barges a slave could be rented for fl. 0.75 a day. Account of expences in Suriname by captain Russel of the *Dolphyn* (Suriname, 1778), The National Archive, Kew, HCA, 32/309, The Dolphyn, captain Russel. Attestaties en Interrogatoiren 1774, f. 151. The same price as in the 1780s, when Slaves were rented as carpenters for fl. 0.75 a day. SvS, Lijst der Huur Timmer Negers, 1-Sep-1781 – 31-Oct-1781, entry 1.05.04.05, inv.nr. 375.

[389] "Dikwils leggen er een meenigte ponden en Vaartuijgen gelijk die den een na den andere moeten wagten waardoor om de voorrang dikwils groote twist spruit soo dat het wonder is daaruijt geen moord en doodslag ontstaat." SvS, W. Crommelin, 5-Mar-1763, 1.05.03, inv.nr. 318, fo 173.

[390] Hartsinck, *Beschryving*, 1770, 2:684.

[391] In the 1770s barge skippers made fl. 0.75 a day. Manual labour as carpenter, schrijnwerker, or painter was set between fl. 0.28 and fl. 0.34 a day. SvS, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 353 fo. 250; Betaalingslijst der Inspecteurs Ambagtslieden en Bediende op het Fortress Nieuw Amsterdam van t primo to ultimo junij 1774, Actum Paramaribo den 30 junij 1774 was geteekend Jan Nepveu. White overseers made fl. 0.50 a day, but a well paid

The movement of black people was a special concern for the local government. One of the earliest laws passed after the colony had been taken from the English was to oblige black slaves to carry notes from their masters because "many negroes, under the pretext of being out for their masters are on the rivers thieving."[392] The free movement on the river was thought to have a bad influence on the "well intentioned negroes", because it would bring them into contact with guides to Maroon communities.[393] While it was impossible to prevent enslaved Africans from moving about in the barges, the government found it necessary to look for ways to maintain control. Special places were designated for (pacified) Maroons where they could wait for tide changes. A law was issued that forced any vessel on the river manned by blacks to land as soon as a white on the riverside called them to. If they did not comply they would be "regarded as enemies" and fire could be opened on them. The rule that every black crew had to be supervised by a white barge skipper was impractical, and the government decided that carrying a note from the master would be enough.[394] The enslaved Africans had to stop at every military post and show their "permission note." If they had a white on board, it had to be clearly visible from shore.[395] Rather than restricting the movement of enslaved Africans, this actually increased the space they could cover in the colony. The river work, the collecting of goods in the warehouses on *Waterkant* and the need to tax the outgoing goods increasingly made Paramaribo a meeting place of goods and people. The availability of both enslaved labourers and sailors limited the number of people employed as professional dock or river workers in Paramaribo itself.

4.4. Peddlers and the development of Paramaribo's street markets

The markets of the expanding town of Paramaribo became a pole of attraction for both enslaved and free. In the later part of the eighteenth century it is possible to see the beginnings of a more and more independent food production on *kostgrondjes* and the peddling of goods by enslaved Africans. This was a prelude to the change in the character of slavery in the

overseer could climb to as much as fl 0.77 a day. SvS, entry 1.05.03, inv.nr. 375, fo. 678.; In the 1780s a barge skipper would be hired for fl. 0.57 a day and the bookkeepers / overseer fl. 0.77. Monthly (labour) costs for a Salt factory at Redoute Leijden, SvS, entry 1.05.03, inv.nr. 375, fo. 554.

[392] Bylaw 22, 13-Jun-1669, *Plakaatboek*, 44.

[393] Bylaw 236, 2-Jun-1714, *Plakaatboek,* 302.

[394] Bylaw 85, 20-Nov-1679, *Plakaatboek*, 103.; Bylaw 378, 29-Apr-1738, *Plakaatboek,* 445.

[395] Bylaw 581*,* 17-Jan-1761, *Plakaatboek,*697.

nineteenth century,[396] and already had its influence on the centrality of the city of Paramaribo in the late eighteenth century. War and bad harvests in Europe could negatively influence the arrival of food, be it beef from Ireland or flour and cheese from Holland. In the late seventeenth century the Governor ordered planters to have "enough cassava, jams, and potatoes in stock."[397] Most plantations necessarily produced food to sustain themselves; in addition to this enslaved Africans had a little piece of land at their disposal and barges were sent into town to barter the remaining crops.[398] The town became a place to buy and sell daily provisions, not only on the markets but also in shops and by street venders. In the early decades of the Dutch take-over of the colony the plantations were almost self-sustained units far away from Paramaribo. This changed in the course of the eighteenth century when plantations moved from far away upstream locations closer to sea.[399]

From the interior Amerindians and Maroons also came to town to trade, but this was most likely only on a limited scale considering the distance between Paramaribo and the interior. As one contemporary described "Tamarind-street, in which I live, is the widest in all Paramaribo, and by many inhabitants is considered as the most handsome of all in town. In the middle is a spacious canal, which is kept pure by the flooding tides, and capable of containing boats of considerable size: here the Indians often pass in their canoes, exhibiting many curious articles for sale; at other times negroes in large fishing boats are rowing up, having caught a manatee (sea cow) or a large number of different species of fish."[400] This same buying and selling was noted by the British soldier John Waller who included a picture of the arriving Maroons and Amerindians in his book.

> "I observed here several specimens and productions of natural history collected by the officers which they had purchased from the Indians or aborigines of the colony. These last come daily to the town in large parties bringing with them whatever they can dispose of monkies, parrots, parroquets different species of animals and a variety of beautiful woods which they will often carve into swords and other weapons and afterwards polish very highly. I was much astonished at the weight and hardness of

[396] Alex van Stipriaan, "Tussen slaaf en peasant: de rol van de kleine landbouw in het Surinaamse emancipatie proces," in *De Erfenis van de Slavernij*, ed. Lila Gobardhan-Rambocus, Maurits S. Hassankhan, and Jerry L. Egger (Paramaribo: Anton de Kom Universiteit, 1995), 29–56.

[397] Bylaw 198, 14-May-1699, *Plakaatboek*, 232-234.

[398] Oostindie, *Roosenburg*, 21, 152; Stipriaan, *Surinaams contrast*, 351.

[399] Stipriaan, *Surinaams contrast*, 48–49.

[400] Sack, *A Narrative*, 44.

> some of these articles as well as the beauty of the veins. Bows and arrows are sure to be objects of commerce with these Indian parties and fire arms and ammunition form the most desirable articles of exchange. An old musket or pistol was an almost irresistible temptation and the most valuable collections of natural history might be procured for these trifles."[401]

The goods exchanged with the people living in the interior were probably provisions that would not expire easily, such as weaponry, salt and tools like axes, fishhooks or nets.

[Figure 10]

Figure 9 A Maroon delegation visiting Paramaribo, 19th century
***A chief of the Bosjesmans or Bush negroes on a visit to the Governor of Paramaribo. Arwawkas, and Charaibes or Caribbee Indians at Surinam.* John A. Waller, *A Voyage in the West Indies* (London 1820) facing 64.**

The products brought in by the Maroon and Amerindian trade were most likely limited to valuable and exotic goods, while slaves and the formerly enslaved peddled foodstuffs. Lamur noted that the produce that was not used up by the owners, was sold on the market by slaves. In most of the Caribbean the enslaved were granted some limited freedom to sell goods in the market places such as in Kingston Jamaica and Cap Francois they were exceptionally big with 15,000 and 10,000 attending respectively. Paramaribo's market was obviously much smaller given the smaller population of the colony. The enslaved made up the absolute majority of people ruled by the colonial government at any time in the eighteenth century, even though the relative amount of slaves per free inhabitant

[401] Waller, *A Voyage in the West Indies*, 64.

changed over time. The free, both white and black remained a tiny minority, always below 10 per cent of the population and often not even half of that. The study by Stipriaan showed that the late eighteenth century saw a great expansion in the amount of land allocated to the growing of food per slave.[402] These were not the kitchen grounds that the enslaved Africans would work on Sundays.[403] His estimates show an increase in the amount of ground allocated to produce food. The increase continued throughout the first half of the nineteenth century and until abolition. His conclusion was that these slaves might actually be turning into proto-peasants in the run-up to abolition. For the eighteenth century it meant that an increasing number of people were trying to make money on the local market of Paramaribo. The growing freedom in food production can also be seen in the increasing supply of fishing gear and the large quantities of salt to pickle vegetables and other foodstuffs to be sold on the market. This accelerated in the fifty years prior to abolition in 1863, but was already impacting the relation between the plantation hinterland and Paramaribo in the eighteenth century.

The local production and the irregular Dutch imports were not enough to satisfy the Surinamese market, and so the imports from North America continued to play a role throughout the eighteenth century. Slaves, both men and women smoked tobacco, and according to a contemporary they were not interested in the poor quality local tobacco. A Surinamese plantation owner discussed the cultivation of local tobacco as a way to circumvent the dependence on North American imports, but the enslaved apparently only had appetite for the North American produce. He wrote that he had done some test with the local tobacco, and also with tobacco from the Dutch city of Amersfoort, "however, that strand did not grow well, and the slaves can always taste it."[404] Tobacco's appetite-reducing quality might have played a role in the amount of food needed by enslaved Africans, but solid evidence for its effect in Suriname is hard to come by. It is nevertheless clear that importing tobacco was important to the colonists. The attempts to make Suriname into a tobacco-growing colony had failed in the seventeenth century and Surinamese climate made it more efficient to import tobacco

[402] Stipriaan, *Surinaams contrast*, 351.

[403] In his calculation we do not see the extra land planters owned solely for the production of food and provisions, an important category, as we saw with discussing wood production in the colony. Ibid., 352–353.

[404] "ik heb er reets proeven van gemaakt en ook van de Amersfoortse, dog daarmee wilde het op verre na zo goed niet lukken en de slaaven kunnen het altijd proeven." SAA, Archief van de eigenaren van het Huis Marquette etc., archief van Joachim Rendorp and Wilhelmina Hillegonda Schuyt, *Remarques over de kleijne Engelsche Vaart uit Noord America* [dated between 1775 and 1783], entry 231 inv.nr. 291.

from elsewhere. It was therefore a top priority for merchants organising regional trade.[405] Besides this tobacco, the plantation managers imported pickled or dried fish to distribute amongst their slaves. The amount of extra food bought varied. According to Blom on a sugar plantation an overseer would buy for fl 4 per slave per year to provide "tobacco, pipes, cod, herring etc." which would amount to fl 928 annually.[406] On top of that fl 2,100 in provisions for enslaved Africans (which would be fl 9 per slave), mostly clothing, and for the master and his servants another fl 1,000.[407] The goods mentioned were, with the exception of the textiles, mostly imported from North America.

English (or later American) ships arriving from North America with a sundry of different goods on board saw small numbers of different buyers taking the goods off the skippers. A skipper was asked by his "Friends and Owners" to buy "tobacco … flour, dry fish, pickled fish, or such other articles that you can get, & that you think may answer this market."[408] The goods on board the North American ships were very likely distributed in the colony through middlemen.[409] The North American trade supplemented the lack of produce grown on the plantations from the late seventeenth century onward, and continued to do in the eighteenth century.[410] The number of North American ships quite accurately follows the population increase in the colony, with the exception of a short and steep drop during the early eighties caused by the American War. The British caught a staggering 1500 American ships during the conflict with the rebellious colonies, among them several *en route* to supply Suriname with victuals.[411] Planters immediately

[405]HCA, Two Brothers, captain William McBride, *Orders from owners in Suriname for William McBride to sail to North America, sell goods and return with provisions to Suriname*, entry 332/467/5. The letter was dated Parmaribo 12-Mar-1778.

[406] Blom, *Verhandeling*, 85.

[407] Ibid., 88.

[408] HCA, Two Brothers, captain William McBride, *Orders from owners in Suriname for William McBride to sail to North America, sell goods and return with provisions to Suriname*, entry 332/467/5. The letter was dated Parmaribo 12-Mar-1778.

[409]HCA, The Sally, captain Thomas Valentine, *Account of sales in Suriname of the ship Sally, captain Thomas Valentine*, entry32/447. The account was dated Paramaribo, 15-Dec-1777.

[410] Examples from the seventeenth century until the end of the eighteenth century can be easily found, all showing similar produce in their cargoes. See chapter 2 for the early period and later for example SvS, *Inkoomende Carga van de bark Abigael schip Steph Grant koomende van Boston alhier arriveert op den 5-Oct-1738*, entry 1.05.03 inv.nr. 266 fo. 276. The account is dated 19-Feb-1739.; HCA, *Account of sales in Suriname of the ship Sally*, entry 32/447.

[411]HCA, *Index to High Court of Admirality Prize Papers 1776 to 1786*, entry 32 / 260-493.

complained about the lack of goods left due to the war. The English and later American captains arriving in Paramaribo and who were not directly sent by Surinamese traders often had independent merchants aboard, who sold the wares and bought wood and molasses for the return trip. These men occasionally stayed behind in Paramaribo when the ship left, since the value of the imports was far greater than the exported molasses and arrangements about payment had to be made.[412] These middlemen used the city of Paramaribo as their base of operation. The North American connection, and the inability or disinterest of planters to grow more food, tobacco, pickle their own fish, increased the importance of the city of Paramaribo. The North American trades also created room for Surinamese middlemen who sold their goods in bulk from shops or the warehouses on the waterfront.[413]

The waterfront was also a place for local peddlers to assemble. We can be sure that Paramaribo's markets were lively places judging by the stories told by contemporary travellers. Slaves did not only sell vegetables "[t]hey breed a considerable quantity of poultry, and plant a great number of vegetables, not only for their own use, but for sale at Paramaribo, where they dispose of them to advantage."[414] P.J. Benoit's nineteenth century description of these markets is probably meant to inspire readers by its riches and formidable produce, but even so we can safely assume that the markets played a central role in the colony's life.[415] Also Maroons and Amerindians would go to the city to trade.[416] Besides agricultural produce there was also a fish market on the waterfront. Not only enslaved Africans would sell what they had caught, but as previously mentioned, Amerindians were also known to sell Manatee (sea cow) to the colonists.[417] The increased independence by enslaved Africans to produce and sell for their own account was not exceptional, and many of the local by-laws were geared at regulating and sometimes banning these sales. In 1742 the Governor and council of the colony issued a bylaw discussing how enslaved Africans were sent out by their masters to sell goods. In exchange for this freedom the slave had to bring his or her owner a weekly sum. While this was initially under the

412 Pares, *Yankees and Creoles*.

413 "il s'est formé une quantité prodigeuse de boutiques, la pluspart situés au bord de la riviere; des magazins pour le comestibles & la pluspart des choies, apporté par les Américains pour l'approvisionnement des Negres des Plantations." Nassy et al., *Essai historique*, 43.

414 Various contemporaries are cited: Stipriaan, "Tussen slaaf en peasant", 38.

415 P. J. Benoit, *Reis door Suriname; Beschrijving van de Nederlandse bezittingen in Guyana* (Zutphen: Walburg Press, 1839), 34–35.

416 Stipriaan, "Tussen slaaf en peasant," 38.

417 Sack, *A Narrative*, 44.

pretext of selling goods for their masters, the bylaw was passed since these people were increasingly roaming the streets of Paramaribo and especially the *Waterkant* in front of the company's warehouse where they would harass slaves arriving with vegetables and poultry from the plantations.[418]

The sale of goods by slaves occupied the SC board immediately after the takeover of the colony when in 1670 they tried to stop the sale of stolen goods.[419] The laws in the early period were mainly concerned with banning street vending. The government tried to concentrate all selling of goods in the town and tried to make sure slaves could not hustle stolen wares. The peddling was curbed because it was thought to encourage slaves to steal. Nevertheless, street vending by slaves continued, and in 1684 there came a reissue of the law because trading with slaves would "train and feed their natural inclination to steel."[420] Compared to the cumbersome voyage all the way to Paramaribo, it was far easier to sell goods when encountering others on the rivers. Although it was illegal for slaves to travel on the rivers,

[418] "*dat wij dagelijks sien en ondervinden hoe veele ingeseetenen, niettegenstaande ons vastgestelde publicque mark in de Orangietuyn omme aldaar allerly goederen te koop te veylen, egter kunnen goedvinden met allerly soorten van goederen sonder onderscheyt daaglijks langs de straaten te loopen en deselve uyt te venten en ook eeniger hunne slaaven daertoe uyt senden, de welcke dan niet alleen daar meede langs de straatte loopen maar ook in de huysen der burgers met slaeven allerley negoties drijve, jae sommige niet gepermiteert sijn; en ook wel eenige derselve slaaven met hunne backen met goederen of sonder goederen op differente plaatsen en wel principaal aan de waaterkant voor 't edele compagnies packhuys gaan zitten, eenigen omme hunne goederen te coop te veylen en andere dewelcke door hun meester of meesteressen werden uytgesonden om overal negoties te drijve, welke alle vrijheyt genieten mits weekeleijks een tantum gelt aan haar meester off meesteres moetende opbrengen; waerdoor deselve slave sigh met allerhande negoties, jae meest ongepermiteerde negoties ophoude en uyt aankoomende boots of ander vaartuygen, van plantagies komende, de aartvrugten, pluymvee en andere gewassen op te koopen; jae selfs deselve slaeven van dusdaenige vaartuygen 't selve afdwingen en afneemen en veele insolenties pleegen en groot gewelt maeken, met welcke goederen deselve door alle straeten van Paramaribo rond loopen omme te verkoopen; waardoor niet alleen eenige ingeseetenen die hun tot 't verkoopen diergeleijke en andere goederen ter neederstellen werden benadeelt, maar ook sommige ingeseetenen van hun en hunner eyge slaeven niet kennen houden of te koop kreygen, alles tot merckeleyck naedeel der goede ingeseetenen."* Bylaw 405, 21-Apr-1742, *Plakaatboek,* 926-927.

[419] Bylaw 37, 10-Dec-1670, *Plakaatboek*, 61-62.

[420] "waerdoor deselvige naer hare natuerlijcke inclinatie tot het steelen worden gevoet en geoeffent." Bylaw 112, 17-Jun-1684, *Plakaatboek*, 142-143.

many of them came to the market.[421] It was clear that for both black and white it was attractive to mutual exchange, trading and gambling.[422]

To keep some semblance of control in the late seventeenth century the government was engaged in trying to centralize markets in town. There was a market set up in 1695 and the door-to-door selling was banned.[423] The enslaved Africans sold products that they received from the planters, as well as their own goods that they had grown on their kitchen grounds. Street sales and selling of goods on the market in the city remained a permanent factor in the colony. At times the Governor and councils tried to impose restrictions, but as the colony developed enslaved Africans began to barter their poultry for food and drink, but also gold and silver.[424] Slaves sold not only for themselves in the market, they were also sent out by their owners to sell goods.[425] This often resulted in confusion about how enslaved Africans had come around the things they had brought to market, and they could be accused of fencing.[426]

The increase of slaves and less affluent whites ensured that more people tried to sell goods on the street, or door-to-door. In the mid-1760s the government tried to handle the situation by allowing both black and white to milk and vegetables in the street.[427] For enslaved Africans, sales of goods bound by rules, but the number of restrictions did take off in the second half of the eighteenth century. Slaves were selling pastries, milk, fruit, eggs, firewood and other unprocessed timber on the street. On the street markets the enslaved Africans mostly sold vegetables and poultry. After the great increase of slaves in the colony in the 1770s the number of markets in the city expanded. According to the legislatures this was done because the streets sellers were blocking roads in the city "the so-called wooy-wooyemans or peddlers of vegetables, birds, etc. are making small markets wherever they like, not only blocking the way, but also causing many inconveniences."[428]

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[421] Bylaw 440, 31-May-1745, *Plakaatboek,* 535-536 and Bylaw 601, 4-Feb-1761, *Plakaatboek*, 731-732

[422] Bylaw 184, 1-Apr-1698, *Plakaatboek*, 218-219 and Bylaw 339, 2/7-May-1731, *Plakaatboek*, 400-401.

[423] Bylaw 171, 8-Jan-1695, *Plakaatboek*, 207.

[424] Bylaw 400, 9-May-1741, *Plakaatboek*, 481-484.

[425] Bylaw 405, 21-Apr-1742, *Plakaatboek*, 490-492.

[426] Bylaw 462, 4-Mar-1747, *Plakaatboek*, 562-563.

[427] Bylaw 654, 9-May-1764, *Plakaatboek*, 783.

[428] "dat de zogenaamde wooy-wooyemans off uytventers van groentens, vogels etc. op alle plaatsen waar het hun goeddunkt kleyne markten komen op te regten, woor door niet alleen

It is difficult to imagine the wide streets of Paramaribo obstructed by street vendors, but in 1781 the council appointed four designated markets in the Oude Oranjetuin, on the intersection of the Keyserstraat, Klipsteenstraat and Domineestraat, on the Jodenbreestraat and on the Waterkant.[429] These street markets did not provide enough opportunity to sell, or were simply difficult to police, because in 1787 the government decided that they should encourage street vending by lifting the ban on street vending for whites, or slaves out for their masters. The government reasoned that despite the bans on street vending in 1764 and 1777, it would be advantageous to "the inhabitants, both concerning the price and the ease of acquiring the goods" to lift the ban.[430] Paramaribo was not a large town, but the markets were mainly found in the less affluent parts of town, on the square near the church and on the waterfront. Over the course of the eighteenth century the town became increasingly central to the local economy creating several marketplaces and opportunities for street vending throughout the town.

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de passagie belet maar ook andere inconvenienten veroorzaakt worden." Bylaw 838, 14-Mar-1781, *Plakaatboek*, 1006-1007.

[429] Idem.

[430] "wij egter bij eenige geleegendheeden aan zeekere persoonen op hun verzoek wel hebben willen permitteeren hunne goederen in dier voegen uit te venten, waaruit gebleeken is zulks te strekken tot merkelijk gerief van onze goede ingezeetenen zo met betrekking tot de prijs dier goederen als het gemak om dezelve te bekoomen." Bylaw 887, 14/26-May-1787, *Plakaatboek*, 1109-1110.