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Suriname and the Atlantic World, 1650-1800

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Part III: Dutch collapse and Atlantic shift

The end of the Atlantic world has been notoriously difficult to establish. The disintegration of the Atlantic world, by definition, did not happen before the end of the slave trade. The end of the slave trade lies beyond the scope of this book, somewhere in the early nineteenth century. The legal abolition of the Dutch trade came in 1814, but smugglers continued to carry their captive cargo to the colony. On an Atlantic scale the slave trade also continued, despite the British ban, especially by Iberian and Brazilian merchants. One argument to claim that something changed in the Atlantic world has been the independence struggles in the colony. This is rather clear change from the 1770s onwards. Many colonies broke the political dominance of the metropolis. National boundaries also appear to have been drawn up more fervently in the period after the Napoleonic wars. For Paramaribo the situation was rather different. It did not see any independence struggle, metropolitan control continued and regional shipping across imperial boundaries increased rather than diminished. What did decline was Dutch power, and North American and British shipping took over many of the important shipping connections to and from the colony.