



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

“Better than we”: landscapes and materialities of race, class, and gender in pre-emancipation colonial Saba, Dutch Caribbean
Espersen, R.

Citation

Espersen, R. (2017, February 9). *“Better than we”: landscapes and materialities of race, class, and gender in pre-emancipation colonial Saba, Dutch Caribbean*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/45747>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/45747>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/45747> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation

Author: Espersen, R.

Title: "Better than we": landscapes and materialities of race, class, and gender in pre-emancipation colonial Saba, Dutch Caribbean

Issue Date: 2017-02-09

Chapter 4: Saba in the Documentary Record

This chapter outlines the processes involved in documentary research, and outlines the colonial history of Saba, from first sightings by Europeans to the early twentieth century, with the abandonment of Middle Island and Palmetto Point. A significant proportion of the history recounted herein is derived from original archival and historical newspaper research by the author, which is indicated by references to archive locations and their indexes that do not include an adjoining secondary source reference. In particular, it focuses on the oral and documentary history concerning free and enslaved Sabans of African descent. This includes the first arrival of enslaved Africans to the island, the rise and fall of the plantation economy, the emergence of free Sabans of African descent, laws pertaining to the institution of slavery, emancipation as it occurred on Saba in 1863, and its aftermath.

The sources and their history

A wide variety of sources were employed throughout this research in several collections worldwide. The most important sources for seventeenth and eighteenth colonial documents have been the Calendar of State Papers through the British National Archives (herein abbreviated to the BNAr), and the Dutch National Archives in The Hague (herein abbreviated to DNAr). The National Archives of Curaçao (herein abbreviated to the NArC) holds two important collections of correspondence between Lt. Governor Edward Beaks, Jr. and the colonial governors in Curaçao during the mid-nineteenth century. The Bancroft Collection at Berkeley University, U.S.A. holds a collection of documents concerning Saba and surrounding islands from around the early nineteenth century, notably the late Napoleonic period. However, they are in a poor state of preservation and were not accessible to the author, as archivists at the time of writing are currently engaged in their conservation.

Unfortunately, there are few primary sources from the seventeenth century up to 1781 that directly pertain to Saba. These are largely due to two single events. Upon the dissolution of the first Dutch West Indies Company in 1674, most of the correspondence and bookkeeping by company officials were either lost or destroyed, given that scant and incomplete documentation survives from the Company relative to the Second Dutch West Indies Company. Secondly, the government archives of St. Eustatius were largely lost during the hurricane of 1772 (DNAr 1.05.01.02 #629:15/12/1772),

and just nine years later, many others were presumed to be either burnt or lost during the island's capture by Rodney in 1781. This would have included many documents pertaining to Saba, since it was governed under St. Eustatius during the time. Regular bookkeeping by the Island Government relative to a yearly census, birth and death records, sales records, and imports and exports from the island did not occur until after 1816; prior to this time it was not a common practice to do so by government officials (DNAr 1.05.06.69 #185).

There are several collections on Saba that were of some use. Documents originating from Saba are primarily derived from several types of sources: government correspondence between Saba and other islands, usually St. Eustatius and Curaçao; government sales records, which only recorded large transactions such as real estate, debts owed, and sales of enslaved Africans; government court records of trials involving Sabans; probate inventories; manumission records; emancipation claims in 1863; and the marriage and birth registers of the Catholic Church. Saban documents were penned by very few individuals up to emancipation; these were usually the Gezaghebber, island council members, and the Island Secretary, as only a handful of Sabans were literate by the mid nineteenth century (Hartog 1975:87). There are no documents that have survived from the Anglican Church, since most of these were accidentally destroyed sometime in the mid twentieth century due to overzealous cleaning. The Saba Planning Bureau holds several important collections of documents. This includes the second part of the Saba Vendue Book (SVB), which dates from 1816-1876; an untitled collection of notarized documents such as sales as last wills dating 1865-1866; a collection entitled the "Saba Transfer Deeds 1840-1852" (STD); and collection entitled the "Book of Recorded Mortgages" which dates from 1865-1875 (SBRM). The first collection of documents is probably originally associated with the "Book of Recorded Mortgages". An untitled book of transfer deeds and last wills and testaments that ranges from 1853-1865 is referred to as the Saba Notary Book (SNB). The Island Government of Saba has a conspicuous lack of surviving documentation prior to the mid nineteenth century. During Johannes Hartog's research on Saba for his "History of Saba" book, he collected many original documents that left the island along with him (Will Johnson, personal communication 2013). Many have since gone missing, while part of the collection apparently rests with the Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology in Aruba. Hartog never referenced his sources or compiled a bibliography, thus it is impossible to verify the veracity of some of his claims where it is not otherwise documented elsewhere. British Newspapers Archive (www.britishnewspaperarchive.co.uk), Delpher Kranten (<http://www.kranten.delpher.nl>, last accessed 25 May 2014) and Ancestry.com (<http://www.ancestry.com>, last accessed 24 June 2014) provided news reports of important events concerning local and regional events pertaining to Saba, especially regarding illicit trade during the early nineteenth century, slavery, and the transatlantic slave trade.

Oral history forms an important body of data for this research. Will Johnson is a decorated former politician of Saba and the former Netherlands Antilles, has been actively researching Saba's history for over forty years, and continues to be an important source of Saba's oral history. Julia G. Crane's *"Saba Silhouettes"* is an ethnographic collection of oral history accounts recorded verbatim in the 1970's and 1980's from Sabans throughout the island. Countless conversations with Sabans by the author during nearly three years of living on the island have also been of invaluable use.

The earliest history of Saba written in the Rankean tradition was *"Naar de Antillen en Venezuela"* (1904), penned by Henri Hubert Kol. This was followed up by *"Windward Children"* (1960) by John and Dorothy Keur and *"Educated to Emigrate"* (1967) by Julia G. Crane, both written as a history and an ethnography; *"History of Saba"* by Johannes Hartog in 1975; and five editions of *"Saban Lore: Tales from my Grandmother's Pipe"* (1979, 1983, 1989, 1994, 2014) by local historian Will Johnson.

Several large documents contributed a significant body of data towards this section. Insights into the class, race, and gender on Saba can be garnered by studying documents relating to its internal economy, and those of nearby St. Maarten and St. Eustatius. The first is the *"Vendue Book"* (DNAr 1.05.13.01 #542) which represents the earliest known regular record of sales and probate inventories on Saba between the years 1780-1787, resuming again with regularity from 1815-1822, with some overlap in a second volume of sales records, manumissions, and bequeathals which extends from 1814-1876. This is herein referred to as the Saba Vendue Book 1780-1825, or SVB 1780-1825 as shorthand. Tax records for Saba, St. Maarten, and St. Eustatius from the early to mid-nineteenth century list commonly imported goods to the respective islands, which give insight to the relative self-sufficiency of Saban agriculture, and the breadth of the latest material culture on the island at given points in time. The Saba court records, which range from 1812 to the 1860's, provided unique insights into the daily activities and social relations of individual Sabans (DNA 1.05.13.901 #540.1). The Saba government log book 1816-1835 (DNA 1.05.13.01 #319) contains correspondences from Saban officials to others in St. Eustatius and abroad, and other miscellaneous information such as import tariffs, a list of household heads, and the island's military organization.

During the last British possession of St. Eustatius, a probate inventory of former Governor Johannes de Graff's estate was taken on 5 January, 1814 by British officials (DNAr 1.05.08.01 #732). While the inventory is extensive and descriptive, the items tend to be valued separate from their descriptions into large groups unlike the Saba Vendue Books. The inventory proceeded room by room, though the currency was tallied last regardless of its location. While these two inventories are contemporary, it must be kept in mind that the values ascribed to goods in the de Graaf inventory were completed by upper ranking British military personnel, and thus their sense of worth of particular

goods such as ceramics, houses, and tools will not be a direct reflection of these items' valuations on Saba. Items in the Vendue Books, conversely, were appraised by a variety of "good men" native to the island, and thus the valuations listed therein are relative to those trusted by the Island Council. In addition, since Saba was an island in the long midst of a currency shortage, the values given to similar items in the Vendue Books may be less as a result. Despite these shortcomings for cross-island comparison, the de Graaf inventory clearly demonstrates the material culture, land holdings, and levels of enslaved African ownership associated with the uppermost echelons of class in the northern Lesser Antilles during this time, which provides a necessary related external context to Saban databases.

Saba during the early colonial period

Saba would have undoubtedly been sighted by Christopher Columbus during his second voyage to the Americas, as he passed by and named the islands of St. Kitts and Nevis. Hartog claims that Sir Francis Drake described using Saba as a navigational waypoint en route to Puerto Rico, although as he did not provide references, this is not verifiable, and was not present Maynarde's (1849) publication of Drake's journal of this voyage. Hartog also cites an anonymous pilot's log of Saba from 1604:

Markes to know the Isle of Saba.

Saba is a little island, and around about it you shall see the bottome; but feare not, for there is no danger but that which you shall see; and round about it, it maketh as it were certaine heapes of white sand; and by the side there sheweth like a ship under saile: but follow that direction that I have given, and you shall see La Virgin Gorda." (Hartog 1975:16)

Although there is no documentation of sixteenth century landings on Saba by Europeans, it is very likely that the Spaniards set foot on the island at some point during that period, given the volume of traffic between northern South America and the Greater Antilles, and the island's utility as a fresh water source. There is no evidence for a permanent Amerindian presence on Saba during the early seventeenth century; however, the island, particularly Spring Bay, was likely frequented by Amerindians in the colonial period at least in order to obtain water. This is mentioned in a Saban folk tale called "The Tale of Johnny Frau", which describes a European colonist that fought with a large Amerindian man at Spring Bay over water, with both dying as a result of their fight. Two Amerindians were noted in a 1665 census of Saba, but this followed the island's capture by English buccaneers in 1665 (Hartog 1975). Amerindians were known to have been employed on buccaneer ships for their knowledge of survival on land and at sea, and early seventeenth century European colonies in the Caribbean were known to have used enslaved Amerindians, including St. Eustatius (Esquemeling 2007:199; Goslinga 1971:336).

Saba during the seventeenth century

“Concerning the history of the island, very little or nothing is known about that. This alone appears to me to be the most likely, that most of them are descended from three or four families from St. Kitts and elsewhere who abandoned there in order to avoid leprosy and elephantiasis, and in this supposition I am strengthened, in the first place while nearly all of them carry the last surname, and on the other hand while the mentioned illnesses is so generally spread among them, they say to have inherited these from their ancestors” (Nomina Geographica Neerlandica 1885:217; <https://thesabaislander.com/2016/06/>, last accessed 11 July 2016). Father G. C. Gast’s observations on Sabans’ own historical awareness in 1857 differs considerably from the present day, wherein a certain pride has taken hold in being “descended from pirates” who raided the island 1665. Nonetheless, there is a distinct possibility that Saba harboured small numbers of Europeans prior to Dutch settlement later in the century.

An attack on St. Christopher by the Spanish in 1629 forced the former French and English settlers, along with the latter’s Scottish and Irish indentured servants, to seek refuge on neighboring islands. Known islands include Antigua, Montserrat, St. Bartholomew, and St. Eustatius (Goslinga 1990:206). Saba is next closest island to St. Christopher after Nevis and St. Eustatius, and its steep topography and lack of quality anchorage make the island a natural fortress, where a small group of people could stay hidden if they so desired. The possibility of this early settlement attempt is described in detail by Espersen (2009). According to Hartog (1975:17), Saba was colonized in an official capacity sometime around 1640, by Dutch colonists from the Zeelandia area of St. Eustatius, due to the island’s proximity to the Saba Bank as fishing grounds. This is an oft repeated narrative regarding the history of Saba, but Hartog never cited his sources. Adam Anderson et al. (1778:388) specifically mention that Saba was settled in the year 1646 by Dutch residents from St. Eustatius, and that according to some unnamed sources, the Danes once disposed the Dutch from it at some point.

An English Navy dispatch dated 1680 (BNAr, Col. Papers, Vol. XLV., No. 69) states that St. Eustatius and Saba were originally settled by the English, captured by the Dutch during the First Anglo-Dutch War between 1652 to 1654, and retaken from the Dutch during the Second Anglo-Dutch War in 1665. This would also account for primacy of the English language on Saba by 1659, though while the island was Dutch, the residents requested an English speaking clergyman from St. Eustatius, as hardly anyone on the island could speak Dutch (Hartog 1975:19). Hartog claims that the first settlement was centered around Tent Bay, and a fort was constructed which was destroyed by a landslide in 1651. Interestingly, though, a fort kept reappearing on maps of Saba right up to 1816, but it was confirmed the Island Secretary of St. Eustatius in 1773 and later by Governor Edward Beaks Sr. in 1817 that no fort existed on the island by these times (DNAr 1.05.01.02 #629:2/2/1773; BNAr, CO

700/WestIndies33; DNAr 1.05.13.01 #319). However, other sources claim that the first settlement was at Spring Bay (Crespo Solana & Emmer 2011:455-456). The earliest known census of Saba dates to 1659, and consisted of 57 Dutch and 54 English, Irish, and Scottish residents, with no mention of enslaved Africans (Hartog 1975). During this year as well, a letter was sent to St. Eustatius requesting a clergyman who spoke English, as hardly any settlers spoke Dutch (Hartog 1975). Sporadic archaeological surface collections of ceramics amassed by the author in The Bottom and around the bluffs above the Ladder Bay area indicate that these regions were settled during the mid to late seventeenth century, which is a logical progression from an initial settlement at Tent Bay. A house and cistern were excavated by SABARC in 2014 upon a flat ridge overtop the Fort Bay Gut, halfway between The Bottom and Fort Bay, which dated from the seventeenth century to 1772 (Espersen & Haviser 2014). Menno Hoogland (personal communication 2015) has pointed out that the word “tent” is an older Dutch word to describe a small house made of canvas or wood (<http://gtb.inl.nl>, last accessed 19/01/2016). Indeed, the first colonization attempt in this area during the mid seventeenth century would probably have included domestic structures such as these, and provides an excellent correlation to the name “Tent Bay”.

The General Archives of the Indies in Seville has recently produced a collection of documents pertaining to the escape of 14 enslaved Africans as early as 1656 from Saba to Puerto Rico, under research by Josué Caamaño-Dones (2015). The following elements are derived from his research. Saba at the time was governed by Pedro de Bris, with a Dutch captain Floris Simón serving as secretary. These names appear to have been written as they would sound in Spanish, therefore Pedro de Bris may rather be “Pieter de Vries”, and the captain Floris Simonz as the surname appears in census documents later in the century. By 1656 the island’s population was estimated at about 500 residents, consisting of approximately 300 enslaved Africans, and 200 Dutch, French, and English residents, with the latter as the majority. The enslaved Africans, nine men and five women, had been living on Saba for several years between several owners and executed their escape on the night of 1 April 1656. They gathered on an unspecified beach on Saba and managed to capture a Dutch vessel anchored just offshore, which they navigated to Guayama, in southwest Puerto Rico. After being captured and brought to court, they all pled their cases for liberty on the premise that they were formerly free Catholic people that were taken prisoner by the English and Dutch, eventually winding up on Saba. Their case rested on the accord that they were never enslaved prior to their capture by the English and Dutch, and under Spanish law, free Catholics could not be enslaved. The testimonies provided by the enslaved Africans reveal a variety of Portuguese-related origins, with a common element of birth in Brazil, the island of Santiago in the Cape Verde Islands, or from parts of West Africa where the Portuguese had slave trading forts. The enslaved Africans included Manuel, between 24 and 30 years

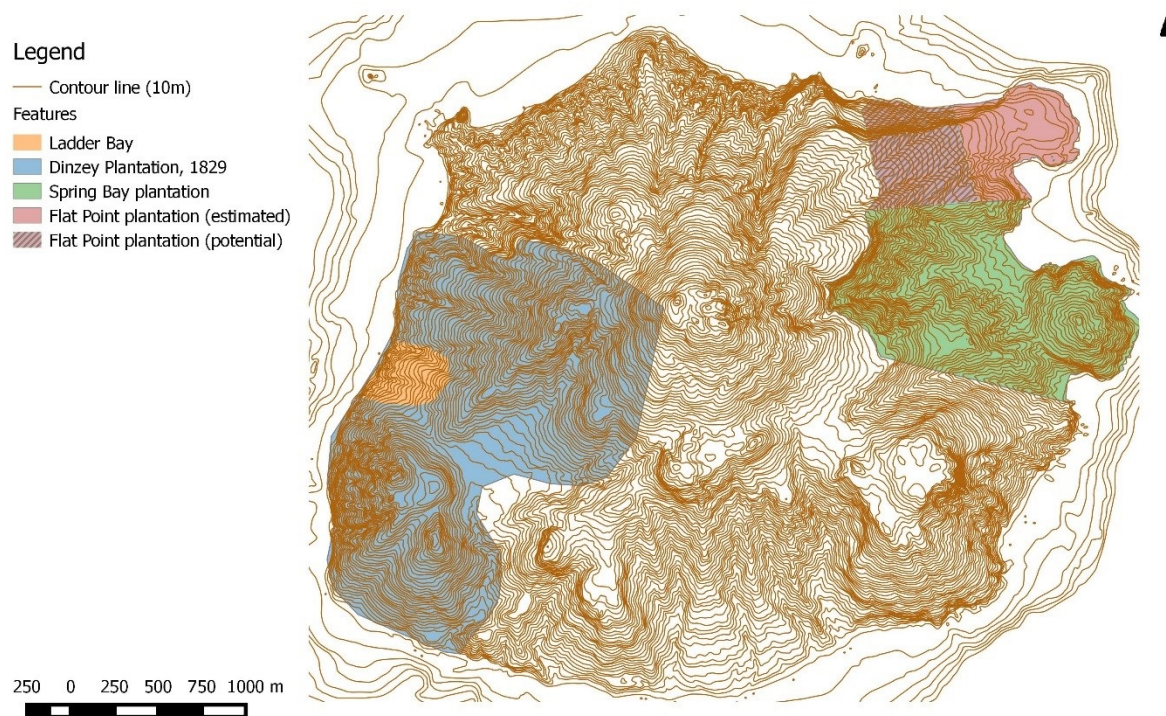
old and a native of Yagaboa in the Gambia River but raised in the Cacheu River and raised on the island of Santiago in Cape Verde; Jacome, age 24 to 25, fisherman and native of Brazil and born in the town of Puerto de Cabo; Manuel, also known as Mandú, age 28 to 30, born in the Kingdom of Angola and raised in Pernambuco, a city in the region captured and held by the Dutch between 1629 to 1645; Sunday, aged 22 to 23 and born around the Cacheu River in Guinea-Bissau and raised in Santiago Island in Cape Verde; Francisco, aged 30 to 32, a seaman born in Cacheu River in Guinea-Bissau and raised in Santiago Island in Cape Verde; Antonio, aged 20 to 35, a fisherman born in the Kingdom of Angola but raised in Rio de Janeiro in Brazil; Pedro, also known as Percio, aged 20 to 22 and native of Santiago Island in Cape Verde; Sebastian, aged between 20 to 38 and born in Guanda in Congo but raised in Brazil; Pedro, aged 13 to 14 and a native of the island of Barbados; Isabel, aged 24 to 25, married to Manuel and from Rio de Janeiro in Brazil; Ana, aged 20 to 24, married to Manuel (also known as Mandú) and from St. Paul of the Ascension of Luanda in the Kingdom of Angola; Francisca, aged 30, from around the river Jácome de Janeiro in Brazil; Isabel, married to Domingo, born around the Cacheu River in Guinea-Bissau; and Lucrecia, aged 20, married and born in the Congo (Caamaño-Dones 2015:8-9). The case concerning their ownership continued until 1673, but the end result is so far unknown.

These reports provide the most insight into the origins of enslaved Africans on Saba found yet to date in the documentary record. In addition, the asymmetrical population of 200 Europeans and 300 enslaved Africans points to early efforts at establishing Saba as a plantation-based colony. The prevalence of Brazilian-born enslaved Africans among those listed, notably Mandú from Pernambuco, indicates that Saba was among the destination islands for the Dutch colonists that were expelled from Dutch Brazil following its recapture by the Portuguese in 1654. In particular, these immigrants to Saba brought with them knowledge of sugar production as they did to other islands such as Barbados.

The sugar plantations at Spring Bay and Flat Point would have been established during this time, and almost certainly The Bottom plantation as well. This marked the beginning of the planter class' influence upon Saba's economy and landscape, and bifurcated the island between plantation and non-plantation landscapes. Figure 4 below shows the maximum extents of these plantations. It appears that a fourth plantation existed around Well's Bay, centered on indigo production, on a tract of land known as the "Goat Cleft". However, this is not shown on the map as its bounds are quite uncertain due to extensive divisions of the land during and after the late eighteenth century. The extents shown for The Bottom plantation are those as they were in 1831, following the death of owner Thomas Dinzey (SBRM:4/1/1831). The Ladder Bay tract of land, shown in yellow, was acquired during his ownership (SBRM:4/1/1831). There were multiple instances of small properties owned by others within the Dinzey plantation lands, especially in The Bottom and Middle Island by nineteenth century.

For the sake of legibility, these were not included. The bounds for Spring Bay were outlined in 1869, with no recorded changes throughout the century (SVB:125, 15/9/1869). To date no boundaries have been found for the Flat Point plantation in the documentary record, therefore the bounds for the plantation are estimated. The Flat Point plantation may have spread further up the slopes towards Hell's Gate than indicated on the estimate as this area was not settled during the early twentieth century, perhaps as a result of it being part of former plantation lands.

Figure 4: Saba's Major Plantation Bounds, Approximate Maximum Extents



During the last half of the seventeenth century, the Dutch, English, and French saw Saba as a strategic island in the region in terms of its location relative to St. Kitts, which was of considerable vested interest to the English, coupled with Saba's natural defensibility. In 1665, a group of approximately 650 buccaneers in nine vessels totalling 71 guns, led by Edward Morgan, the uncle of the more famed Henry Morgan, intended to capture Dutch possessions in the Caribbean in retaliation for Michiel de Ruyter's recent attack on Barbados (BNAr Col. Papers, Vol. XIX., Nos. 130, 130 I). This initial group lost two ships, and after another left for Virginia, the remainder under Morgan with about 500 men captured St. Eustatius. Morgan died during the invasion, and following its conclusion, Major Richard Stevens and Captain Jason Walker took to Saba with 68 men to effect the same, capturing Saba on 5 August that year. The booty taken off of Saba by the English privateers during the capture that year included "85 negroes and Indians and a small quantity of cattle, stock goods, and arms, whilst

64 English, Irish, Scots, and French took the oath of allegiance to his Majesty, and 87 Dutch and Indians were sent to St. Martin's (BNAr, Col. Papers, Vol. XIX., No. 126). In another account, between St. Eustatius and Saba, the capture amounted to "four colours, 20 guns, six barrels of powder, 192 small arms and ammunition, 942 Indians and negroes, besides horses, cattle, sheep, goats, and cotton" (BNA: Col. Papers, Vol. XIX., Nos. 130, 130 I). However, other sources state that these unfortunate Dutch residents on Saba were instead shipped to Barbados and sold into slavery (BNAr, Col. Papers, Vol. XIX., No. 124). The plantations on Saba and St. Eustatius were destroyed, and the copper kettles and other implements of sugar production were carried off along with the enslaved Africans to be sold in Jamaica (BNAr, Col. Papers, Vol. XIX., No. 124). It was recommended that the plantations on both islands be sold to Englishmen, with rent and tenure managed from there as well (BNAr, Col. Papers, Vol. XIX., No. 124). Notably, Amerindians were grouped with "negroes" in the first tally of spoils, which indicates that they were probably already enslaved and working on cotton, indigo, and sugar plantations prior to the invasion. No enslaved Amerindians are known to have worked in St. Eustatius and Saba after this time. The capture of less than 85 enslaved Africans on Saba in 1665, compared to an estimate of 300 living on the island prior to 1656 indicates either that this was a large overestimation for the year 1656, or that a significant depopulation event of enslaved Africans occurred between this time, perhaps due to the failure of several plantations.

Saba was retaken later that year in October by an expedition organized by John Sympson, then Governor of Dutch St. Maarten (BNAr, Col. Papers, Vol. XLIV., No. 59; BNAr, Col. Entry Bk., Vol. XLVI., pp. 426–429, annexes), but the island was recaptured by the English on 4 July 1672 and held until just prior to 6 April, 1679, when it was returned to the Dutch under the Treaty of Breda (BNAr, Col. Papers, Vol. XLVIII., No. 55, and Col. Entry Bk., Vol. XLVII., pp. 38–40). The earliest known sugar plantations on the island are found at Spring Bay and Flat Point; the first dates to the mid seventeenth century, while the latter dates to this period or slightly later. At the very least, the Spring Bay sugar plantation was destroyed by the English during the raid in 1665. However, the indigo plantations appear to have survived or have been soon reconstructed; by 1667, cotton and indigo production were listed as the two industries of St. Eustatius and Saba, though it was not specified whether they were limited to just one or the other (BNAr, Col. Papers, Vol. XXI., No. 175).

Saba in particular was an island of regional interest to the English. "These islands (Saba and St. Eustatius)," remarked Thomas Stapleton, then Governor-General of the English Leeward Islands, "are very considerable to St. Kitts, especially Saba, which is of great strength and easily defensible by a few against vast numbers..." (BNAr, Col. Entry Bk., No. V., pp. 115-121). This was also recognized by the French, who captured Saba from the English by 1668 and installed a Dutch governor on the island as a means of avoiding the restitution of the island to the English during any future peace negotiations

(BNAr, Col. Entry Bk., No. V., pp. 115-121). By 1671, the French had 50 musketeers installed at Saba, which, according to the English, “would be a thorn in the side of the Sandy Point French quarter, and it is near enough to Nevis for a bigger number to be set down on fit occasion” (BNAr, Col. Papers, Vol. XXVII., No. 52). The island captured again by the English in 1672, who installed a file of 40 riflemen, and Saba was held until 1679, when it was passed again to the Dutch (BNAr, Col. Entry Bks., Vol. CIV., pp. 61, 62, and Vol. XLVI., pp. 52, 53). During this seven-year period, Saba experienced little to no development under the English. Of all their possessions in the northern Lesser Antilles, only Anguilla, St. Eustatius, Saba, and Tortola were listed as having no island councillors or representatives (BNAr, Col. Papers, Vol. XLII., Nos. 98 I–XVII.; also Col. Entry Bks., Vol. XLVI., pp. 314–320, and Vol. CV., pp. 266, 267). The island was reported captured by the French by 25 April, 1689 without much resistance, but this was reported as false by 10 June the same year, as Saba was still held by 50 Dutchmen (BNAr, America and West Indies. 550. No. 6; America and West Indies. 550. No. 10, and Col. Entry Bk., Vol. XLVII., pp. 418–422). In fact, this attempted invasion by the French was repelled single handedly by Saban residents. By 1689 an effective breastwork was constructed along the Fort Bay Gut, which leads up to The Bottom, which was so steep and narrow that it could only be ascended in single file (Thompson 1814; Wood 1830). Sabans constructed rock deadfall traps along this path, which not only prevented eroding rock from the cliff sides from cluttering or burying the path, but that could be triggered when required. This deadfall trap was released while a French squadron under a certain Pinel was ascending the Fort Bay Gut, killing many of the men, and caused Pinel to flee (Labat 1724:341, 344). These breastworks were still in use by the late eighteenth century, described as the following:

This (Saba) is a steep rock, which is accessible only on one side, and one must climb almost to the top through a very crabbed artificial path to find any earth. In several places of this narrow way, the inhabitants, for greater security, have heaped up great stones on a kind of stages, so disposed, that, by pulling a cord, the stage will fall down, and pour such a shower of rocks and stones as would crush a whole army (Anonymous 1778:91).

Sabans engaged in regional trade with little regard for other nations’ trade restrictions, such as the English Navigation Laws. Sir Robert Southwell, writing from St. Christopher in a letter to Colonel Thomas Stapleton dated 1676, remarked that “in Statia and Saba, four files of men (are stationed), these islands of no advantage, but rather of disadvantage to his Majesty, being refuges for any who design fraud, and were better under water than above” (BNAr, Col. Papers, Vol. XXXVIII., No. 65). In the early eighteenth century, for example, up to 50,000 to 60,000 bales of ginned cotton wool from Anguilla was traded to St. Thomas, St. Eustatius, and Saba for “necessaries for themselves and negroes” (BNAr, C.O. 152, 9. Nos. 103, 103 i.; and 153, 11. pp. 438–444).

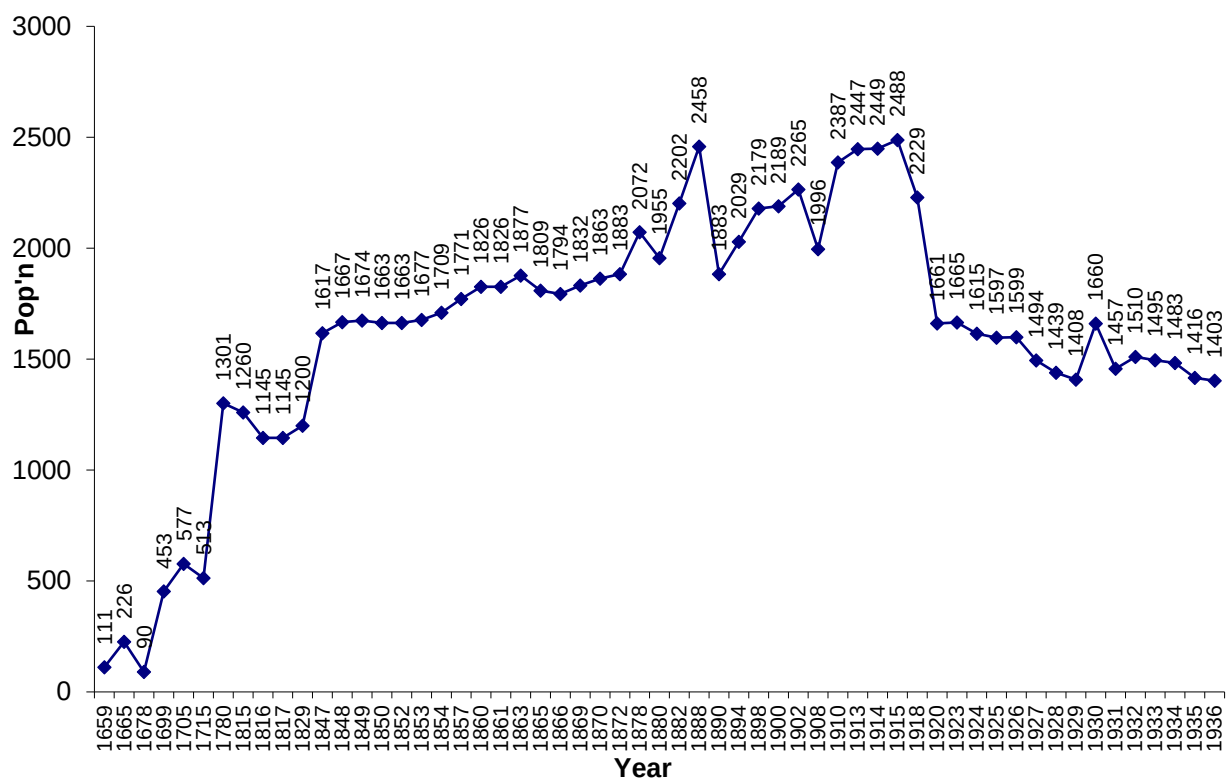
These first enslaved Africans on Saba were most likely obtained through the GWC, so they would have been brought to the island via Curaçao, which at this point was the most common destination for GWC slave ships after crossing the Middle Passage. The first arrival of enslaved Africans for resale by the GWC occurred in 1658, and this grew quickly between 1663 and 1667, as the GWC obtained a successive series of larger *asientos*, which were contracts to supply Spanish American colonies with predetermined amounts of enslaved Africans (Postma 2008:34, 35, 168-169). The GWC maintained the *asiento* with Spain until 1702, when it was managed exclusively by the French.

In the early years of the GWC's transatlantic slave trade, enslaved Africans were obtained West Africa, then known as Guinea, and the coasts of central and southwest Africa, which was termed Angola, or Loango for the northern part. Guinea was subdivided into regions by European traders based upon their most valuable export commodity at the time. The Slave Coast was area comprising the approximate coastlines of modern day Togo, Benin, and western Nigeria, the Gold Coast is a coastal area roughly contiguous with modern day Ghana; the Ivory Coast was composed of the area between modern day The Gambia to Ghana, and the area north of The Gambia to northern Senegal was known as Senegambia. Loango stretched from the border with the Slave Coast, running south approximately to the modern day border of Angola.

Between 1658 and 1674, 40.8% of the enslaved Africans obtained by the GWC originated from the Slave Coast, followed by 18.3% from the Gold Coast, 8.7% from the Bight of Biafra, 5.1% from Senegambia, 2.1% from the Ivory Coast, and 25% from Loango/Angola (Postma 2008:112). Determining the origins of enslaved Africans through their port embarkation alone is often misleading. Enslaved Africans brought to the European trading forts, such as Elmina, did not necessarily originate from nearby coastal settlements; rather, they came from throughout the region, including deep into the interior. In this example, a portion of the enslaved Africans noted as originating from the Bight of Biafra, the gulf west of the Slave Coast which separates West Africa from Central Africa, may have been actually been sold at the Dutch fort of Elmina on a consignment (Postma 2008). Determining general origin is possible by studying the names of enslaved Africans, if such data is available. This approach was demonstrated to be quite effective at the EUROAST conference on Gorée Island, Senegal, in 2014, whereby delegates originating from Senegal, Guinea, and Ghana were presented with ships' manifests of enslaved Africans obtained from specific slave trading forts, and were asked to determine their linguistic and tribal affiliation based upon their names. In several instances, it was determined that the "name" recorded by European scribes were not given names, but instead repeated phrases in regional languages such as "do not take me, do not take me!" Unfortunately, after 1650's, the earliest known mention of enslaved Africans by name on Saba only occurs by 1780, in sales records and probate inventories of residents (DNAr 1.05.13.01 #542).

The seventeenth century Saba economy was initially a potpourri of small scale subsistence surpluses such as fishing and agriculture, and progressed to the cultivation of cash crops such as indigo, tobacco, and sugar by the 1660's (Espersen 2009:40; Anderson et al. 1778:388; Smart & al., 1815 [vol II]:415; Anonymous 1778:91; Thompson 1814:359; Adams 1795:147; Wentworth 1834:301; Col. Papers, Vol. XXXVIII., No. 65). Saba was noted for its value as a provisioning island as early as 1665 by English authorities in St. Kitts following its first capture (Calendar Papers, Item 1045, Vol. 5, p. 320). Many authors have commented on the high quality of vegetables grown on Saba, especially with respect to Saba's famed giant cabbages (Adams 1795:147; Anonymous 1778:388; Thompson 1814:359; Wentworth 1834:301). The island, though, was apparently dependent on enslaved labour and perhaps shipping in the regional slave trade for their economies to function; it was remarked by Governor Lamont of St. Eustatius in the early eighteenth that if it were not for the slave trade, St. Eustatius and Saba would not be worth a hundred guilders (Knappert 1932:84).

Figure 5: Population of Saba, 1659-1937



The divisions of people on census documents is not consistent throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As seen in Saba's first census in 1659, followed by the one taken in 1665, residents are differentiated in terms of nationality, in the sense of being Dutch, English, Irish, French, or Scottish; or by being "negro" which in this context was synonymous with bearing the legal status of

a slave. A brief census taken of English islands in the northern Lesser Antilles in July 1678 emphasizes these divisions in detail:

“List of the names of all able men bearing arms, together with the number of women and children, as well whites as black, specifying whether English, Irish, or French taken 28th January 1678. In St. Christopher's... white men 695, women 539, children 663, negroes 1,436 men, women, and children, the Irish being 187, French 369, Dutch 11. In Nevis Island... Total number of whites, men, women, and children, 3,521, of which 800 are Irish and 51 Scotch, and 3,849 negroes. In Montserrat... Total number of whites, men, women, and children, 2,682, of which 1,869 are Irish and 52 Scotch, and 992 negroes. In Antigua.—List of men, women, and children, whites and blacks... Total number of whites, men, women, and children, 2,308, including 610 Irish and 98 Scotch, and 2,172 negroes. In Statia there are about 69 whites and 100 negroes. In Saba 90 whites. In Tortola 15, and in Anguilla 550 whites” (BNAr, Calendar of State Papers Vol. XLII., Nos. 98 I–XVII.; also Col. Entry Bks., Vol. XLVI: 314–320, and Vol. CV: 266–267).

Saba and St. Eustatius were evidently insignificant to the authorities as no division between gender or nationality was noted in this account from 1678. The absence of enslaved Africans on Saba, however, is striking. This suggests that either the enslaved Africans captured and sent to Jamaica in 1665 were either not replaced, or they were captured again and re-sold short-sightedly in 1672 by the English. It implies that the plantations that were destroyed by the first capture in 1665 had not been rebuilt. However, the figures may not be completely reliable as it would have been in owners' interest to under-report the numbers of enslaved Africans they owned as a means of avoiding taxation (BNAr, Calendar of State Papers Nov. 22 #1152). The use of the terms “white” and “negro” to differentiate between those deemed wholly of European descent and those of African descent is the earliest with regard to Saba, but this document was created by a high-ranking member of the English navy, based in St. Kitts, and therefore is not a locally-based differentiation. Later censuses of Saba in the early eighteenth century, created by island residents, do not employ the term “white”. It is also significant in that it ties the legal status of an individual as a slave with the term “negro”, a racial construction. To date the earliest use of the term “negro” to refer to enslaved Africans on St. Eustatius dates to a shipping document from 1744 penned on the island (DNAr 1.05.01.02 #1187).

The absence of enslaved labour on Saba indicates that plantation-level sugar production had ceased on Saba at least until the arrival of more enslaved Africans sometime between 1678 and 1686. A report from St. Eustatius dated 1688 describes five “sugar mills” in operation between it and Saba, with very high quality sugarcane cultivated in the latter (DNAr 1.05.01.02 #1180:17/4/1688). A document outlining the amount of sugar due to the Dutch West Indies Company (GWC) by residents of St. Eustatius and Saba, dated 1686, shows the quantities sold to the company by 69 individual planters between St. Eustatius and Saba (DNAr 1.05.01.02 #1180:6/7/1686; Johnson 2014). The document suggests that St. Eustatius and Saba were, at least implicitly, considered one in terms of administration, since the Saba planters were differentiated only by the word “Saba” next to their

name, but were still intermixed with those from Statia. The number of totals over or approaching 1,000lbs may be evidence that a sugar boiling house may have initially been constructed as a shared enterprise between residents, whereby they crushed their own cane in their own hand operated mills, and collectively processed the cane juice into sugar at a boiling house, with the produce presumably divided according to their proportion of their cane juice contribution. Hand mills persisted on Saba well into the twentieth century, and it was noted in 1828 that of an estimated 150 houses on The Bottom, excluding the few made of wattle, all of them had a hand-driven sugar mill (Teenstra 1977:367). The small scale, mixed agriculture of mid to late seventeenth St. Eustatius and Saba follows the pattern experienced on Barbados following the expansion of the sugar industry on the island, whereby small plots of land which formerly grew subsistence crops, and a small surplus of tobacco, indigo, cotton and later sugar, were purchased by enterprising individuals to be joined in single, larger lots for cultivating sugar cane (Dunn 2000:67). The table below lists the Saban planters mentioned in the 1686 document, and also provides an indication as the minimum dimensions of a planter's cultivated sugarcane. These are listed below for Saban sugar planters on Table 1, with the entirety including St. Eustatius planters listed in the Appendix, Tables 8 and 9.

Table 1: List of Saban Planters, 1686

Surname	First Name	Sugar (Dutch lbs)	Plot (ha)
Leverick	Willem	385	0,06
Simons	Jan	837	0,14
Haly	Dirck	75	0,01
Winsvelt	Matthij	2396	0,39
de Mulder	Philip	1900	0,31
Vallan	Jannes	453	0,07
Gravals	Anthonij	556	0,09
Maeghden(burgh)	Christ(offel)	1356	0,22
Turnaerts	Anna	1508	0,24
Simonsen	Floris	1392	0,23
Gernaer	Julij	1781	0,29
Vanderpoele	Willem	1556	0,25
Runnels	Pieter	416	0,07
Segers	Jan	5335	0,87
Total		19946	

The quantities of sugar originating from Saba are significantly less variable than for St. Eustatius. These range from as little as 10lbs due by Jannes Jaweert of St. Eustatius, to three who clearly owned plantations: Samuel George at 29,545lbs; Adriaen Sotgeloos at 24,045lbs, and Thomas Hijl at 18,000lbs. Jan Zeegers is notable in that he was Governor of Saba by at least 1690, and was the fourth largest sugar producer between the two islands (DNAr 1.05.01.02 #1180:4/2/1690). St. Eustatius Governor Simon Doncker, interestingly, did not own a sugar plantation or grow cane as his

name is absent from the list. The plot size was calculated based upon an average yield of 1 English ton of muscvado sugar per English acre during the late seventeenth to eighteenth centuries (Dunn 2000:192). The amounts of sugar sold the GWC in 1686 reveal that sugar was a small scale crop for most planters. Dirck Haly of Saba, who later moved to St. Eustatius, cultivated an area of just 10m x 10m for his crop, while Jan Segers' plot was approximately 93m x 93m. During the time of Teenstra's visit in 1828, the Dinzey sugar plantation in The Bottom was approximately 10 hectares in size, and produced about 25,000 pounds of sugar per year (Teenstra 1977:367). Since the total planted area in 1686 was just 3.24 hectares, this could have easily been planted entirely within the area of The Bottom. By extension, this strongly suggests that the sugar plantations at Flat Point (SB 001) and Spring Bay (SB 004) were not operating during this time, since each site had access to flat, readily cultivated grounds over 5 hectares each, and both featured four-pot boilers, which would indicate larger scale operations than what is evident for 1686.

The earliest firsthand account of Saba describes a small but somewhat prosperous island consisting of a multitude of small economies. The Dominican monk Jean Baptiste Labat visited Saba in 1701, where he met the Governor and many inhabitants, including some French "refugees". The Governor at the time was probably Jacob Leverock, who was in office by the end of the seventeenth century (Price 1934:6). Labat described the plantations as "small but well cultivated, and the whitewashed houses are pretty and well furnished" (Labat 1724:342). Labat also observed that shoe and boot-making was a thriving industry on Saba, and even the governor himself plied in the trade. "...with shoemaking and a little indigo and cotton, these people are well off and have slaves, good furniture, and plenty of money" (Labat 1724:342-343). Livestock was butchered and shared communally, and turtle meat and eggs were also supplemented in the diet when available. This sense of "oneness" among Saban residents was also noted in a report to the GWC in 1688 (DNAr 1.05.02.01#1180:17/4/1688). This relationship extended into farming well into the twentieth century, whereby tracts could be brought under cultivation by residents that did not own it, so long as the owner received one third of the harvest (Crane 1971:308). Later authors noted that cotton was cultivated on Saba and then spun and into stockings, and sold to other islands with considerable profit (Anonymous 1778:91; Thompson 1814:359; Adams 1795:147).

It is notable that Labat mentioned indigo production on the island but did not explicitly comment on sugar. He took an interest in the sugar industry and garnered considerable fame while in Martinique for developing new processes for its production. Exports of sugar from Saba are noted in GWC credit and debt documents for certain residents in 1691, in small amounts together with other goods such as cotton, coffee, and tobacco, which indicates that they were derived from small landholders. Production may have continued at Flat Point during this time, given its isolation from the

rest of the island. The plantation's produce would have shipped directly out of the bay itself, rather than carried far overland to Fort Bay or Ladder Bay, and therefore Labat may not have been aware of its existence.

Saba during the eighteenth century

The eighteenth century was characterized by a belated small-scale re-expansion of the sugar industry, continued exports of provisions to neighboring islands, population growth, and periodic instability, intimately tied with the fortunes and misfortunes of nearby St. Eustatius. Unfortunately, there is scant documentation concerning Saba, either directly or indirectly, between 1705 and 1780. The only known censuses taken on the island date to 1705, 1715, 1780, and 1790, and throughout the entirety to the Second Dutch West Indies Company collections of the Zeeland and Maas Kamers (Chambers), there are only two surviving correspondences between St. Eustatius and Saba; one concerning matters of governance between St. Eustatius, Saba, and St. Maarten, and the second which prohibits sheltering or aiding the fugitive Jan de Windt, a former planter of St. Eustatius, under penalty of confiscation of one's properties to the GWC. Many documents pertaining to Saba would have been lost during the hurricanes of 1772 and 1780, and the subsequent capture of St. Eustatius by the English in 1781. An account of the 1772 hurricane relative to St. Eustatius specifically mentions that the house of the island secretary was destroyed, the government house was badly damaged, and many documents were scattered to the winds (DNAr 1.05.01.02 #629:337-340). The first Sales records and shipping logs from both St. Eustatius and St. Maarten are the most substantial sources, as the purchasers' names are recorded along with their home island. During the eighteenth century, St. Maarten and Saba were governed through St. Eustatius, with each of the two former islands represented by a Lieutenant Governor. Despite the relegated role for St. Maarten, the Lieutenant Governor did send and receive missives from the GWC. The dearth of documentation relative to that of St. Eustatius and St. Maarten indicates both the island's irrelevance towards colonial authorities in the United Provinces, and the ambivalence of Sabans towards the GWC. While Saba was strategically important at the time due to its natural defensibility, its economic irrelevance, by extension, demonstrates a limited means for residents to project class both internally and regionally through wealth, plantation ownership, and by possessing a large number of enslaved Africans.

Between 1705 and 1790, Saba's population rose from 577 to 1301. The 1705 census (DNAr 1.05.01.02 #1180; Johnson 2014) is detailed, and is organized according to 88 heads of households, which includes the presence or absence of the household head's wife (so long as the head is not a widow), along with their offspring. The household's enslaved Africans are also included, similarly divided by age and gender. The census is listed in the Appendix, Table 11. The enslaved African

population was only one third that of the “white” residents of Saba, and there is a clear preference for adult male enslaved Africans, as there are 68 compared to just 38 women, 29 boys, and 35 girls. The households are evenly split between those that own enslaved Africans, and those that do not. Since no enslaved Africans were noted on the Saba in 1678, still thirteen years after Morgan’s forces sacked the island and carried away the whole of the first generation, this represents a nascent class divide expressed through ownership of enslaved Africans. This is closely tied to wealth or the ability to procure credit, and in many cases associated with small scale plantations. The predominance of the enslaved male population over that of women and children indicates that the white residents obtained enslaved Africans through purchases, rather than acquired through natural increases in their enslaved population through reproduction. Those residents with more than six enslaved Africans, particularly those with 3 or more men, probably cultivated small scale surpluses of cotton, indigo, sugar, or tobacco. Governor Jan Zeegers himself owned 3 enslaved men, one woman, and three boys, and was the largest producer of sugar on the island in 1686.

Goslinga postulated that economic development between St. Maarten, Saba, and St. Eustatius was inhibited due to constant infighting between local residents and the GWC throughout the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries until the Company began appointing creole settlers of prominent families to positions of power, such as Commander and Vice-Commander (Goslinga 1985:127). During the early to mid-eighteenth century, one can see the ancestral roots of Saba’s nineteenth century upper class residents through marriages and baptisms (Knappert 1932:158), especially in early census documents such as the 1705 census for Saba (DNAr 1.05.01.02 #1180), and the St. Eustatius census of 1709 (DNAr 1.05.01.02 #1180). Governor Jan Zeegers was replaced by Engel v. Beverhoudt on 15 October 1687, who in turn was succeeded by Adriaan Runnels Jr. in 1697, and Jacob Leverock shortly after. The Beverhoudts were a small family; Geloude van Beverhoudt, head of the only such family on Saba, owned 14 enslaved Africans in 1705, including 6 men, indicative of a plantation. By 1709, Lucas Beverhoudt of St. Eustatius, once again the sole such head, owned 30 enslaved Africans, 21 of which were men, indicating that he likely owned a plantation. The Beverhoudt surname, though, does not appear to have survived on Saba into the mid eighteenth century. James Hassel had a brief tenure as governor of Saba in 1699, and after St. Eustatius governor Lucas Schorer’s brief exile to Saba as governor (1699-1701), the title passed to Jacob Leverock. Governor Charles Simmons succeeded Leverock on 20 February 1720, and was married to Helena Hassell. Together they had at least three sons; Thomas, 28 March, 1723 on Saba, Abraham on 11 September 1724, and Peter, whose birthday is unknown. Charles Simmons also owned at least 9 enslaved Africans by the 1720’s (DNAr 1.05.01.02 #1182; #1183:4, 33). Charles died on 22 June, 1743, and was succeeded as governor by his son Peter Simmons, who in turn was succeeded by Thomas Dinzey in 1778. A prominent Saban,

Jacobus Simmons, married Elizabeth Leverock of St. Eustatius, and their daughter Johanna was born on Saba 19 May 1723. A Joanna Leverock in turn married Governor Thomas Dinzey, probably the daughter of the former Johanna, and together they owned a 4-hectare sugar plantation in The Bottom by the late eighteenth century. Class differences in early seventeenth century on Saba can then be characterized through ownership of enslaved Africans, family relationships among the upper classes, whole ownership rather than shareholding of a sugar boiling house or indigo vats, and wealth.

The potpourri of plantation industries that characterized the seventeenth century began to fade into the following century, becoming predominated by exports of coffee and sugar, and probably indigo. Archaeological excavations as part of this research determined that the Flat Point sugar plantation was constructed or reconstructed during the mid to late seventeenth century, and the Spring Bay Flat plantation was constructed and in operation by the early to mid eighteenth century (see Chapter 5). However, during the 1730's and 1740's sugar was occasionally imported to Saba in small quantities from St. Eustatius and St. Maarten (DNAr 1.05.01.02 #1184:62, 93; #1185:147; #1186:179; #1187:8). This indicates that the sugar produced on Saba was not sufficient to meet local demand, a situation that may have risen due to the potential for faster and higher profits for planters by selling to international markets via St. Eustatius rather than on the island itself. A similar situation arose for cotton and tobacco, which were both imported into Saba according to the same shipping lists, mainly from St. Maarten. The importation of cotton does not necessarily imply the collapse of the crop on Saba, however; at least by the late eighteenth century, Saba was known for cultivating "...cotton, and manufacture it into stockings, which are sold at 15 or 16 florins a pair; they likewise make a great many shoes, which they dispose of to advantage in the other islands" (Anonymous 1778:91).

St. Eustatius governor Johannes Lindesay owned land on Saba together with five enslaved Africans (one man, two women, and two children), one cassava pan, and one small iron kettle. These were noted in 1729 after in a probate inventory of his estates and possessions made by GWC officials on the island after he fled (DNAr 1.05.01.02 #1183:122). A separate document from the GWC Middleburg Kamer (DNA 1.05.01.02 #1186:46) lists half of his Saba plantation sold for 76.2.0 pieces of eight, and separately a "kogt (kocht) huis", literally translated as a "cook house", was sold for 303 pieces of eight. This was undoubtedly a sugar boiling house. The number of enslaved Africans in his possession, though, appears quite small for the full operation of a sugar plantation, but sales of other enslaved Africans may have been arranged previously or separately. In additionally, he may have also owned a small coffee plantation, given that the cassava pan and iron pot would have been well suited for roasting beans. During the early eighteenth century and perhaps earlier, a small coffee industry was established on Saba, both for domestic consumption and small scale export (DNAr 1.05.06

#1154). Exports of coffee from St. Maarten and Saba are noted on shipping lists in 1743, 1744, between 1759-1763 and continued up to at least the hurricane of 1772 as previously mentioned (DNAr 1.05.01.02 #1186:179; #1187:8, 53, #1190, #1191).

The prosperity described by Labat had dwindled by 1720, as Saba was in the grip of a prolonged drought which resulted in widespread poverty along with many other islands in the northern Lesser Antilles. These misfortunes of Saba and nearby islands were exacerbated by a strong hurricane on 29 August, 1707, which passed over these islands. It stripped most of the leaves and fruit from trees in St. Kitts, along with damaging or destroying ever house and sugar plantation, killed several prominent residents including the President of Nevis, and devastated St. Thomas, Saba, and St. Eustatius (BNAr, C.O. 152, 7. No. 36; and 153, 10. pp. 120–123). St. Eustatius was sacked by the French in 1709, who destroyed all buildings on the island, and this was followed by another French attack in 1713 (Postma 2008:198). Soils were exhausted on Anguilla, Tortola, and Crab Island; poverty on St. Eustatius was so high that most residents could not afford taxes and walked around barefoot (Knappert 1932:51-52). In 1717 both St. Eustatius and Saba petitioned the GWC for permission to colonize the island of St. Croix, as in the opinion of the residents, the islands were becoming overpopulated (Knappert 1932; DNAr 1.05.01.02 #1181:35-37). Another drought hit the islands in 1721, especially St. Eustatius, and the document's author prayed for the survival of the sugar cane which was apparently faring better on Saba (DNAr 1.05.01.02 #1187:15/1/1721).

St. Eustatius began to recover economically during the 1720's, and it appears that Saba did as well, based the purchase of at least 47 enslaved Africans from the former island throughout the decade. It was suggested in 1701 by Isaac Lamont, then commander of the island, that St. Eustatius would make an excellent depot for the transatlantic slave trade, but it was not seriously considered until 1713; and the first shipment of enslaved Africans did not arrive until 1721 (Postma 2008:197-198). Promoting a trade-based economy for St. Eustatius in 1721 rather than an export economy based on produce was probably no coincidence given the series of droughts that the island was subjected to so far in the century. The desire to turn St. Eustatius as regional supplier of enslaved Africans also coincided with the decline of Curaçao in the same (Goslinga 1990:184-185).

The transatlantic slave trade was fueled by a consistent demand for more enslaved Africans as the labour regime on sugar plantations was so harsh that natural reproduction was uncommon, and did not keep pace with the mortality rate. Therefore, the sale of enslaved Africans in the Caribbean became a lucrative trade, inextricable from sugar production. St. Eustatius' reputation as an entrepôt for enslaved Africans blossomed, but did not survive the decade. Between 1721-1727, at least 9,972 enslaved Africans were shipped to St. Eustatius to be resold at auction, and estimated 1,000 brought to the island illegally between 1719-1720 alone, making St. Eustatius the largest

destination for enslaved Africans in the Dutch colonies during this decade (Postma 2008:199). Planters from across the Caribbean and abroad flocked to St. Eustatius to purchase enslaved Africans, most notably the French from Guadeloupe and Martinique, but also from Anguilla, St. Kitts, St. Maarten, and Saba. By 1725 this even included merchants from New York (DNAr 1.05.01.02 #1182:56; 1.05.01.02 #1183:4, 33, 88; 1.05.01.02#326). The trade was halted in 1728, though, due to the irresolvable problem of corruption among governing officials on the island. The GWC also experimented with a regional trade through enslaved African auctions on St. Maarten at the same time, with modest sales recorded for the year 1723 (DNA 1.05.01.02 #620). During the trade on St. Eustatius, Governor Johannes Lindesay the island often extended credit to French purchasers, while pocketing as much as 60,000 pieces of eight in sales for himself, and most, if not all of this debt from Guadeloupe and Martinique planters was never recovered (Goslinga 1990). The French would also often pay for enslaved Africans in sugar rather than specie, and in several cases upon its arrival to the United Provinces, the barrels contained numerous stones hidden inside the barrels, though whether this was deceit on part of the French or officials on St. Eustatius is uncertain. Governor Lindesay was sacked by the GWC, and fled to St. Christopher disguised as a woman, while the Company replaced him with Everard Raecx (Goslinga 1990).

Based upon sales records of enslaved Africans sold on Saba from GWC ships under the Maas and Zeeland Kamers, a steady stream of Sabans purchased enslaved Africans between 1722 and 1727. These are outlined in Table 12 in the Appendix. Many of these vessels originated directly from Elmina (DNAr 1.05.01.02 #1183:54). Sabans evidently had a preference for male enslaved Africans, as they accounted for 40 of the 50 documented purchases. Saban governor Charles Simmons purchased no less than 10 enslaved Africans, consisting of 4 men, 4 boys, and 2 girls. There were only eleven enslaved Africans purchased singly by different individuals; most of the purchasers bought at least two during the course of six years. Unfortunately, as sales figures of enslaved Africans at St. Eustatius during this period are not available from the Amsterdam Kamer, only partial inferences can be drawn from the data. It is also unclear whether Sabans purchased with cash or were given credit. The purchases of Saban governor Charles Simmons, however, indicate that he may have owned a small plantation, probably situated in The Bottom.

In 1730, the Dutch transatlantic slave trade was opened to private vessels and companies to trade in the Caribbean, and most parts of West Africa, while the company maintained its monopoly on Surinam, Guyana, and the Gold Coast (Postma 2008). St. Eustatius ceased being a major destination for enslaved Africans after 1730, but it increased again following an economic surge after the WIC eliminated import and export duties for the two islands in 1754 (Postma 2008). St. Eustatius in particular benefited from this move to become the busiest trading port in the world from this period

until the close of the century, earning the nickname “The Golden Rock”. It was remarked in 1763 by Anthony Stokes that “in the former French war, before the English broke up the trade between St. Eustatius and the French Islands, he had seen upwards of two hundred and seventy sail of vessels in the road of St Eustatius at one time. I have lately been informed, by an acquaintance from the West Indies, that before Lord Rodney took St. Eustatius (in 1781), there had been six hundred sail of vessels in the Road of St. Eustatius together” (Stokes 1783:xiv).

While Saba, St. Eustatius, and St. Maarten experienced moderate successes as plantation colonies during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, the *klein vaart*, or Dutch regional trade, began to blossom. Recall that even while Saba was still in English hands, the Governor of the English Leeward Islands remarked that Thomas Stapleton dated 1676, remarked that Statia and Saba were “but rather of disadvantage to his Majesty, being refuges for any who design fraud, and were better under water than above”. While Sabans were not profiting from the plantations established on their own island, lucrative opportunities abounded in the region with the regional trade due to the mercantile systems enforced by England and France upon their nearby colonies. Such a policy restricted the availability of goods to these islands relative to the frequency that the motherland’s ships called into their islands, and the monopoly enjoyed by the respective country to trade with their colony resulted in unfavourable prices. While the GWC focused the economy of Curaçao around trade with the Spanish mainland, in direct contravention of Spanish mercantilism, the northern Dutch islands were considered plantation colonies by the Company (Goslinga 1985:126-134). The *klein vaart* commented upon by Stapleton was rather an enterprise undertaken by residents of St. Eustatius and Saba as a means profit abroad rather than upon their own islands, as their plantation-based economies were ruined as a result of the regional instability throughout the last two decades. In 1730, the *Heren X*, who were the directors of the GWC and known as “Their High Mightinesses” in documentatation, decided to begin openly supporting the *klein vaart* by partially dismantling the monopolies of the GWC. This extended to the slave trade, and a marked increase in trade activity out of St. Eustatius throughout the coming years and decades can be subsequently observed in GWC documentation of incoming and outgoing ships.

The development of St. Eustatius as an entrepôt for enslaved Africans, especially during the Golden Rock era, provided a ready market for salt fish and ground provisions, which Saba occasionally provided. After enslaved Africans arrived at port from the Middle Passage, it was common practice to delay their sale while they were fed sufficiently in order to restore their health, at least as appearances were concerned, prior to their sale. Saba would have also had an economic advantage over nearby islands for supplying provisions, as it was less than one day’s sail from Saba, thus lowering the transportation cost of goods. During the 1740’s, St. Eustatius and to a lesser extent St. Maarten

were the chief destinations for Saba exports, though after 1760 to 1795 it was almost exclusively St. Eustatius. Detailed shipping records of incoming and outgoing vessels for St. Eustatius are available for every year between 1744 and 1795, with the exception of 1781. These records list a vessel's origin, its captain, ships' names, and cargo. The volume of traffic between Saba, St. Eustatius and St. Maarten, for certain years, are shown below on Table 2:

Table 2: Incoming and Outgoing Ships, Saba, St. Eustatius, and St. Maarten

St. Eustatius			St. Maarten		
Year	In from Saba	Out to Saba	Year	In from Saba	Out to Saba
1722		1	1735	4	6
1733	0		1736	0	0
1734	0		1738	1	0
1743	19	32	1739	0	2
1744	56	70	1740	0	3
1759	20	25	1744	1	0
1760	57	71	1748	2	2
1761	68	107	1750	0	2
1762	40	63	1752	4	0
1764	80	103	1753	4	0
1765	52	79	1757	0	1
1770	26	99	1759	0	0
1776	70	56			
1785	106	92			

Source: DNAr 1.05.01.02 #1185 to 1194. Blank space is intentional and means data is unknown. The 1776 and 1785 data was derived from Goslinga 1971:205.

The large majority of ships bound to and originating from Saba relative to St. Eustatius and St. Maarten were listed as empty. Notably, in several instances in the St. Eustatius records concerning Saba ships, the entries were entered posthumously, which indicates that the actual traffic may have been higher. As a comparison to Saba traffic for later dates, the number of ships for the year 1770 from St. Maarten entering St. Eustatius was 102, while those departing to St. Maarten numbered 261 (DNAr 1.05.01.02 #1194). Unfortunately, there was no distinction in the records between the French and Dutch sides of the island. Shipping between Statia and Saba rises gradually with irregularities between the 1743 and 1785, while that between St. Maarten and Saba remained insignificant, demonstrating the social and economic importance of St. Eustatius to Saba.

During the first half of the eighteenth century, Saba's primary exports to St. Eustatius and St. Maarten were coffee and turtles, and between 1730-1745, this also included enslaved Africans for sale (DNAr 1.05.01.02 #1187:8). The turtles were likely obtained from other islands, such as Aves Island, which was frequented by Saba from the eighteenth century to the 1850's (NArC 103RT:11/2/1859).

Other export goods from Saba included sugar, lime, cattle, firewood, yams, cassava bread, “small wares” and occasionally enslaved Africans. Between 1740 to the 1770’s, Saba’s best recorded year for exports was 1760. The island exported 639 sacks of coffee, nine oxhoofden (the Dutch parallel of English hogsheads) of sugar, 100 tons of lime, seven turtles, and a ship of provisions to St. Maarten; and 6 “horned beasts” (cattle), 55 oxhoofden of sugar, and 228 sacks of coffee to St. Eustatius. The exports to St. Maarten may have been for local consumption or transshipment, as even though the island maintained duties on imports and exports, unlike St. Eustatius after 1756, the island was still frequented by ships from abroad, especially North America.

Curiously, no exports of indigo were noted in Saba’s exports to St. Eustatius or St. Maarten between 1743 and 1770. Since at least four indigo vats are known across the island, this may indicate that the indigo produced may have been used locally in the production of textiles. Exports of enslaved Africans from Saba is significant in that this indicates that childbirth was feasible in the Saban labour environment, and in such numbers so as to satisfy demand in the local plantation and non-plantation economy. By extension, this demonstrates that the majority of them were enslaved to Saban households rather than plantations. Other common goods that Saba would also have exported such as ground provisions and locally-produced textiles are rarely mentioned, but surely present on many vessels nonetheless; the sole documented instance for this century was for the year 1722, wherein 4,000 Dutch pounds of yams were exported from Saba to St. Eustatius (DNAr 1.05.01.02 #1182:14). These were probably included on shipments that on some occasions were recorded as diverse goods or “kleine ver”, presumably meaning “small wares”.

Goods imported to Saba included lumber and, interestingly, beef, pork, and unspecified provisions. These were undoubtedly mostly destined for enslaved Africans on Saba’s plantations, but this need for imported food demonstrates the inability of Saban produce to satisfy the plantations. This also illustrates a curious disconnect between provision suppliers on Saba and the plantation owners on the island. Yams were a staple food for enslaved Africans, especially those based upon plantations. Rations of yams, together with salt fish and cornmeal, are even the only foods directly specified in later Dutch laws regulating the treatment enslaved Africans by their owners towards the end of the century (DNAr 2.10.01 #3843). Notwithstanding poor communication between suppliers and plantation owners, which is likely given the absentee ownership at least two Saban sugar and indigo plantations, or high prices demanded of Saban produce thereof, it would otherwise make sense for Saba-based plantation owners to purchase locally produced staples for their enslaved Africans rather than import the same products from St. Eustatius.

Most striking about the traffic going to and from Saba via St. Maarten and St. Eustatius are the empty vessels. This was not unique to Saba; empty vessels entering and leaving St. Eustatius to

and from Guadeloupe, St. Bartholomew, Antigua, and Martinique were common, but this would have also been means of concealing the nature of actual goods present as it was illegal for the French and English to sell their sugar to foreign nations. Empty vessels were especially noted for St. Kitts. At the height of Statia's "Golden Rock" era, the island was exporting far more sugar allegedly grown and processed on the island that it could possibly produced, as this provided a means for French and English planters to launder their sugar (Gilmore 2005:49). The opportunity existed for goods to be laundered through Saba, however, since the incoming/outgoing vessel records for St. Eustatius only recorded the last port of call, and thus in certain instances, shipments from Saba included goods clearly not originating or produced from the island, such pipes of Madeira wine. In many cases, however, given the proximity between St. Eustatius, St. Maarten, and Saba, the empty vessels to and from Saba probably resulted from other necessities of ship life and logistics, such as crew changes, provisioning, obtaining water and firewood, and visiting family and friends.

The majority of the vessels with these routes were captained by Sabans, and the same vessels appear repeatedly in the records. A sample of these vessels are outlined in Table 28 in the Appendix. While the owners of the vessels are not known in all instances, several names of vessels appear to have been used across successive vessels from the 1740's all the way to the early nineteenth century. The boat *Tryale/Tryall* plied the waters between St. Eustatius, Saba, and St. Maarten in 1743 (DNAr 1.05.01.02 #1186), and a boat of the same name, though under a Swedish flag, was noted in 1830 (NArC, Archief St. Eustatius #259). This is also noted on the table for the vessels *Vriendschap* (Friendship), *Industry*. The *Industry* was noted in Statia's shipping records for the year 1757, captained by John Simmons. A vessel named the *Industry* was wrecked upon Saba in 1780 and its contents, hulk, and rigging auctioned off on the island (DNAr 1.05.13.01 #542:14/10/1780), and the name appears upon St. Eustatius' incoming/outgoing vessels list for 1830, under a Swedish flag. The use of the Swedish flag in the last instance demonstrates that the owners were formerly based in St. Eustatius and moved to the free port of Gustavia, St. Bartholomew, after Statia declined. The continuation of names also occurs for the *Zeebloem* (Sea flower), *Elizabeth*, *Twee Vrienden* (Two friends), and likely several others. A pattern was also noted among Saban-captained vessels regarding names that involve interpersonal relationships, such as the *Two Brothers*, *Cousins*, *Friendship*, *Two Friends*, *Three Friends*, and *Four Friends*. These names may reflect the relations between the ships' shareholders.

Sabans actively partook in the economic opportunities on St. Eustatius that were available to seafarers during the eighteenth century. During the early eighteenth century, Saba Governor Charles Simmons owned the regional trade vessel *Swallow*. His son Peter Simmons succeeded him as governor by the 1750's, and owned the bark *Rebecca*. John Simmons from Saba owned the bark *Charming Polly*, with one of his enslaved Africans serving on board as a sailor. In 1755 his vessel,

captained by fellow Saban Isaac Simmons, was apprehended along with seven others by the French out of Martinique for illegally trading with Neutral Islands (DNA 1.05.01.02 #1188:176, 177). Sabans served as captains across regional trade vessels based from St. Eustatius under the Dutch flag during most of the eighteenth century, and by late century and into the nineteenth and twentieth centuries were sailing under the colours of other nations such as Britain, Sweden, and the U.S.A. A pool of captains served aboard a variety of schooners, barks, and brigs based out of St. Eustatius during the eighteenth century. These vessels were owned mostly by St. Eustatius-based merchants and government officials, with cargoes commissioned by the owners or other merchants. The crews were cosmopolitan and often included enslaved Africans (DNA 1.05.01.02 #1191:13). Between 1743 and 1770 at least 20 Saban captains served in the regional trade aboard St. Eustatius-based ships, including Abraham Simmons, Henry Johnson, Hercules Hassell, Jacob (Jacobus) Hassell, James Simmons, John (Jan) Simmons, Isaac Simmons, William Johnson, Charles Hassell, Jacob Beak, James Hassell, Daniel Every, Hendrick Johnson, John Horton, Peter Hassell, John (Jan) Zeegers, William Winfield, and William Collins, with other identifiable Saban surnames such as Kelly and Vlaugn (DNA 1.05.01.02 #1186, 1187, 1188, 1190, #1191).

Shipping between St. Eustatius, St. Maarten, and Saba suffered increasing losses by English warships and privateers, and even occasionally pirates, throughout the period beginning with the War of Jenkins' Ear to the end of the Seven Years War, even though the Dutch remained neutral throughout both conflicts. The War of Jenkins' Ear was fought between Britain and Spain, but this resulted in an influx of Spanish British privateers throughout the Caribbean. St. Eustatius and Saba soon found themselves increasingly involved in hostilities. In one recorded instance in 1735, an English vessel, Captained by Thomas Gordon, was pursued by Spanish privateers to Saba. His ship ran aground on the island, and Sabans protected him from the privateers with small arms fire, for which they received a broadside of cannon in return (BNA, Calendar of State Papers 41:508i; DNA 1.05.01.02 #1184:64). A similar incident one month later involving a Spanish privateer was also averted by Sabans defending an English vessel with heavy small arms fire towards Spanish vessels (BNA, Calendar of State Papers 41:508v).

International trade increased on St. Eustatius during the 1740's, growing considerably even before the free trade policy was decreed in 1756. In 1744, origins and destinations of vessels included Turks Island, Newfoundland, the Canary Islands, and Salem (DNA 1.05.01.02 #1187). Sugar cultivation was experiencing moderate successes on St. Maarten, with 80 sugar plantations counted in 1747 (DNA 1.05.01.02 #1187:112). During this period, privateering became increasingly problematic into the 1740's as English privateers and warships began preying upon Dutch shipping, under the pretense that British residents of St. Eustatius were using Burghers as cover for trading with the enemies of Britain,

who at the time would have included the French and Spanish. The Dutch trade with the Neutral Islands, which at the time consisted of St. Lucia, Dominica, St. Vincent, and Grenada, was very profitable and lucrative, but vessels involved in this trade were subject to capture by both British and French ships. These islands were officially not recognized as colonies of any nation, although they each had their own European and European-creole residents along with their own internal economies and trade networks (Hauser & Armstrong 2012).

St. Eustatius at the time was attracting merchants and entrepreneurs from a potpourri of nations, including Sabans and natural-born British citizens, through the increasing economic opportunities available on the island. Many of these merchant-immigrants became naturalized burghers of St. Eustatius, and therefore citizens of the United Provinces. The legitimacy of the British immigrants' status as Dutch burghers was not recognized by British colonial authorities, however, and this was used as a justification for capturing Dutch vessels suspected to be shipping goods by these residents to French and Spanish destinations, as they were considered British citizens that were trading with the enemy. Anger at the repeated captures of Dutch vessels and cargoes by the British grew to a pitch by 1744. These were directed in particular towards Antigua, wherein it was reported by credible sources that "the Judge of Admiralty of Antigua has lately burnt in Effigy at St. Eustatia" (DNA 1.05.01.02 #1187:70). The fates of the cargoes and vessels varied. In some instances, the ship and cargo were ransomed, sometimes separately. In other instances, the cargoes were captured and resold at public auction, while in some cases, the entire vessel and cargo were seized and auctioned. Some vessels were repeatedly captured between 1740 and 1763, only to be bought or ransomed back by the owners, who continued trading as before. Benjamin King Esq., who became vice to John Codrington of Antigua, wrote such to Governor Abraham Heyliger of St. Eustatius: "If your honours will please to consider, you must allow (at least I apprehend it to be to) that such Burgherships or freedoms of the society of St. Eustatia only establish a local allegiance to the Government of that place, but can never defray the natural allegiance due to their own prince and the laws of their own society..." (DNA 1.05.01.02 #1187:70). This sentiment was echoed by the Court of Admiralty in Antigua. British-born merchants who became Dutch burghers in St. Eustatius penned a lengthy letter to the GWC, stating:

We have been received here as subjects, and as such have chearfully done our duty, and we hope satisfactorily and believ'd our selves |by the Law of Nations|, intituled to the privileges of subjects of their High Mightinesses, but to our great loss and detriment, find ourselves greatly frustrated in our expectations, by the iniquitous proceedings of above mentioned Judge; iniquitous we may venture to call them, he having contrary to every other Court of Admiralty's

Judgement, and against the opinions of the best advocates in this part of the world, condemned every vessel belonging to us, or that we had the least concern in, trading to the French Dominions in ever so regular a manner, as prescribed by treaties; publicly declaring that he would always condemn our vessels, effects, & every thing belonging to us, and that being born subjects to his Britannick Majesty, we were a pack of traitors, for being concerned in any such trade; vile, & injurious abuse! especially from such a bare faced, notorious perverter of the Laws of Society, in that important part, unhappily committed to his Administration; and from one so palpably ignorant of the Limits of Allegiance, & the Duties of a Subject.

The successes of St. Eustatius as the “Golden Rock” reflects the antagonisms between European colonial interests and the lived experiences and realities of creoles in the Caribbean colonies. While Britain continued to maintain a policy of mercantilism, which often worked against creole interests and was openly and continually thwarted by British citizens both on British and non-British islands, Dutch colonial policy on St. Eustatius, conversely, was content to work with creole interests. Through this approach, the GWC took advantage of human mobility afforded by open trade and easy naturalization processes for foreigners, to the benefit of the United Provinces. Indeed, St. Eustatius Commander Isaac Lamont once commented that “without trade, St. Eustatius would not be worth 100 guilders” (Goslinga 1985:211).

The onset of the Seven Years War (1756-1763) between Britain vs. France and later Spain resulted in a new British colonial shipping policy called the Rule of 1756, which held that if a belligerent nation’s trade had been closed to another nation during peacetime, then it could not be reopened during war, and further, neutral ships that violated this law were subject to seizure by the British for trading with the enemy. This was both a boon and thorn towards the Dutch, who stayed neutral in the conflict; France was a mercantilist nation as Britain, and therefore could not trade with the Dutch under this law. Therefore, Statia’s new status as a free port in 1756, in principle, created a loophole to circumvent the Rule of 1756. The French islands turned to neutral shipping for supplies, and trade at St. Eustatius grew considerably as a result, but this also greatly increased the number of captures of Dutch vessels by British warships and privateers. In 1761, a list of cargo losses from Statia-based shipping agents by British warships and privateers was compiled, which includes losses by several Sabans (DNA 1.05.01.02 #1191:13). A total of 227 vessels were captured and recaptured, with a total losses claimed at a staggering 1,212,824 pieces of eight. This list is displayed in its entirety in Table 28 in the Appendix. Most of the captured ships and cargoes were condemned at the Court of Admiralty in Antigua, and subsequently taken to other English islands such as St. Christopher, Montserrat, or

Jamaica. The list partially testifies to the extent of the trade with the French and Neutral Islands during the Seven Years War, as most vessels captured were either en route to or from Guadeloupe, Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Martinique, Grenada, Santo Domingo, and to a lesser extent Monte Christi. In several instances, captures by British warships and privateers verged on piracy, whereupon they preyed upon Dutch ships in open waters without regard for the destination, and others that were trading between Dutch colonies, such as St. Eustatius and Demerary. The captures were even indiscriminate to regional authority, whereby Saba Governor Peter Simmons' bark *Rebecca* was captured by the British, condemned at the Court of Admiralty at Antigua, and the ship and its cargo held for public auction at McCabe's tavern in Basseterre (The St. Christopher's Gazette No. 472 (7/2/1761, in DNA 1.05.01.02 #1191). The fact that these combined losses did not stop merchants from continuing to trade with the French and the Neutral Islands, but rather expanded in St. Eustatius, testifies to the huge profits available in these ventures.

The commercial success and rapid growth of St. Eustatius during the mid to late eighteenth centuries were not experienced on Saba. While these created opportunities for Saban seafarers and ship owners, and ready international market access for Saban sugar and coffee, the majority of Saba's residents subsisted through fishing and agriculture. By the mid eighteenth century, many Sabans began observing the social and economic disparities between Saba and other islands in the region, and emigration from Saba increased observably in the shipping records between Saba, St. Maarten, and St. Eustatius. Despite around one hundred years of sugar and indigo cultivation on the island, the wealth derived from these operations benefitted mostly their absentee owners on St. Eustatius. Governor Jan de Windt of St. Eustatius described Saba in 1773 as an island inhabited by poor people, who subsist on fish and turtles as a means to support their families (DNAr 1.05.01.02 #629:2/2/1773). This is reflected in the accounting books for the Dutch West Indies Company for St. Eustatius. In 1770, the GWC collected 10,211 pieces of eight (p/8) in income from Statia and Saba, of which only 52 p/8 were derived from Saba. This is nearly equal to the 53 p/8 in pasturage fees the GWC collected on St. Eustatius (DNAr 1.05.01.02 #629:folio 174). The following year, Saba brought in just 24 p/8, while income from pasture fees increased to 215 p/8 (DNAr 1.05.01.02 #629:folio 175). This level of income probably changed little from previous decades on Saba, indicative of the island's economy. In response, many Sabans began to find better fortune abroad. In 1744 alone no less than 178 passengers from Saba were recorded on incoming vessels to St. Eustatius, while only 43 are registered travelling between St. Eustatius to Saba (DNAr 1.05.01.02 #1187:8). In particular, two ships sailing three months apart in 1744 carried 40 and 46 passengers, respectively, from Saba to St. Eustatius. Given the lack of passengers returning to Saba, this indicates that residents were migrating either to St. Eustatius or elsewhere. In a letter dated 14 November 1765, fifteen heads of Saban families, sent

a petition to English colonial authorities in Grenada requesting to colonize the island of Bequia. It was noted that some of the petitioners owned between six to eight enslaved Africans, and that they would be allotted land grants up to 30 acres “according to their different means of cultivation” (BNAr T 1/442/91-94). While it is unknown if this original request was granted, emigration occurred after the 1772 hurricane, as Saban families are known to have emigrated to Bequia in the eighteenth century, and several Saban surnames can still be found there among present day residents (Will Johnson, personal communication 2013; DNAr 1.05.01.02 #629:2/2/1773). Unfortunately, shipping documents for St. Eustatius after 1759 cease to record incoming and departing passengers under cargo descriptions for vessels.

During the last third of the eighteenth century, the village of Palmetto Point was founded, resulting from a lack of arable land available to support a growing population in the southern half of Saba, and as a means to take advantage of the uncultivated northern and northwestern slopes of the island (Espersen 2009). The scale of horticulture around the village is evidenced by over six hectares of terraced slopes above the settlement, and along the western half of the North Coast Trail which have been noted by the author.

The second period of relative prosperity for Saban plantations during the eighteenth century was brought to a close after the hurricane of 31 August, 1772, followed eight years later by the “Great Hurricane” of 1780, which resulted in over 30,000 deaths across the eastern Caribbean. Locally, the 1772 hurricane among Sabans is known as the “Great Hurricane” rather than that of 1780. This would mark the beginning of a prolonged economic depression on the island, contributing to the prevalence of an economy increasingly reliant on remittances received from men working wage labour abroad, an increase in manumissions, and an improvement in race relations on the island. The hurricane of 1772 struck St. Eustatius hard, but was especially brutal on Saba. On Statia it damaged the government house, Fort Oranje, and many plantations, destroyed the Dutch Reformed Church and the houses of many wealthy residents, scattering their furniture, silverware, gold, and other values, and in particular, it levelled the house of the island secretary, taking along with it extensive government documentation (DNAr 1.05.01.02 #629:337-340). Saba was reduced to such destitution that the residents petitioned the GWC directly for aid, describing the plight of their island in detail, followed with the signatures of every household head on the island, but ultimately receiving nothing (DNAr 1.05.06.13 #1151; Johnson 2014).

...The humble petition of the Governor, the council, church and state and the burghers of this island, sheweth that whereas your petitioners have been sufferers above the inhabitants of all their neighboring islands in the West Indies, most of us have lost our little all, our houses, our clothes, our furniture, our crops, and even our coffee trees by the late dreadful hurricane of the 31st of August; and being reduced to the utmost distress, not only by the want of money, but of all the necessaries of life, and means of procuring them, having

140 of our dwelling houses, out of about 180 which were upon the Island, dashed to peices insomuch that numbers of our families, even at this distance of time, are obliged to shelter themselves from the inclemencies of the weather under rocks and caves of the earth, half naked and famishing with hunger; unable to help themselves, and others by reason of the universal nature of the calamity being unable to render them any effectual relief.

And (which affects us most of all) whereas, God hath been pleased, no doubt as a just punishment of our aims, to smite his own house among us and lay it in ruins, a great labour and expence which the poor inhabitants could hardly bear; so that we are at present without any place of worship, & have no prospect of being able to build one for many years yet to come, unless assisted in a charitable way by our Christian Friends, whose charity may prompt them and whose prosperous and affluent circumstances may enable them, to aid us, in what we hope they will judge so laudable an undertaking. And whereas we cannot with any propriety apply for such aid to any of their islands, who are all our fellow sufferers, and many in need of charity themselves, tho' none in the measure that we do; we have thought proper, urged by the most pressing necessity, to apply in their manner to you our European friends, who by your situation are happily exempted from these desolating judgements. Humbly beseeching you to take our distressed ruined, circumstances into mature consideration, and to do, with all convenient speed, what humanity and Christianity will dictate to you for our relief, on so melancholy an occasion; not only in helping us to build a house for God's public worship, but for the relief of numbers of families among us, which are reduced to beggary, & the most heart affecting wretchedness.

Will Johnson (personal communication 2013) claims that a relative of his, Jacob Vlaughn, was one of the unfortunate residents who lost everything in the hurricane, and lived in a cave in Hell's Gate which is known today as "Vlaughn's Cave". The Flat Point sugar plantation in particular sustained extensive damage during this hurricane and was not rebuilt (see Chapter 5). Misery was also rife on St. Eustatius; many houses were lost, especially those higher up upon The Quill. No flour or provisions were available on the island, and no shipments were expected until December (Caledonian Mercury, 18 November 1772). Nothing is known of the 1780 hurricane's impact on Saba, but given the absence of documentation concerning the matter, it was probably somewhat less severe than the former. The extent of damage sustained to Saba during both hurricanes, especially regarding the destruction of houses, would have had a massive economic impact upon residents across all classes across the island. In particular, it would have a pronounced effect upon the capacity of families and individuals to express class through one's house, wealth, and material possessions relative to those residents who were able to afford to rebuild versus those who could not, versus those whose houses were damaged or otherwise unaffected. Class consciousness would also have been challenged especially for those who were forced to live in caves, or wattle huts, who prior to 1772 would never have imagined they would find themselves in such circumstances. This situation would have almost certainly challenged ideology among residents relative to class, gender, and race, with many white residents reduced to economic and domestic circumstances more similar to that of enslaved Africans prior to the hurricane. It is therefore no coincidence that the first documented appearance of free Sabans of African descent occurred by 1780, given the increasing inability among owners of enslaved Africans to provide for their

wellbeing on an island shattered both structurally and economically (Saba Census 1780, Will Johnson Collection).

The hurricanes of 1772 and 1780 so thoroughly destroyed plantation-based agriculture on Saba that it prompted a sell-off of foreign-owned lands and former plantations on the island to Sabans. The SVB 1780-1825 that in 1782 Simon Donker sold lands “in flat point” for pcs. 13.4.0, three plots “in the goat cleft” for pcs. 16.5.0, and one “in the mountain” for 30.4.0 to three different Sabans, which are remarkably discounted prices (DNAr 1.05.13.01 #54). Another “1/4 part of the Goat Cleft” was sold in the same year by Joanna Robertson, a native of St. Eustatius (DNAr 1.05.13.01 #54). The high elevations of land “in the mountain” would have been excellent for coffee cultivation, while the lands “in flat point” would have been associated with the Flat Point sugar and indigo plantation. The sugar plantation in The Bottom, similar to those at Flat Point and Spring Bay Flat, appears to have been owned in absentia via St. Eustatius prior to its purchase by Dinzey (SVB 1816-1876:11/1/1831). The Saba sales records relates in a note concerning the heirs of his estate that he purchased lands from a variety of individuals, including Abraham Donker and Madam deGraaf. Both were from St. Eustatius, and the latter in this case would refer to the widow of Johannes deGraaf, the former governor of St. Eustatius who passed away with considerable wealth, seven plantations, and other large landholdings across that island upon his death in 1810. This purchase would have been completed prior to 1780, since there is no record of it in the SVB 1780-1825.

The 1780 census is organized according to the heads of households, and reveals several interesting aspects of race relations in eighteenth century Saba. It is listed as Table 13 in the Appendix. Immediately notable is the low number of enslaved Africans designated as “coloured” (28) relative to the population of free (6) and enslaved (534) “blacks”. This indicates that there were very few intimate relationships between white Sabans and enslaved Africans that produced offspring throughout the eighteenth century, which by extension suggests a strong social divide between the two which became less prevalent into the nineteenth century. Two of the free people of African descent have no last name, while the other two both share the last name “Markoe”, though they are listed as separate households, perhaps indicating that they are siblings. The surname Markoe among these enslaved Africans is probably derived from several planter families of the same name present on St. Eustatius censuses during the 1720’s to the 1740’s (DNAr 1.05.01.02 #1182, 1183, 1184). The appearance of free African descent Sabans is rather late compared to neighboring St. Eustatius, where the first free resident, “the free negro Frenke (vrij neger Frenke)”, was mentioned as early as 1724 (DNAr 1.05.01.02 #326:4). A defining but overlooked characteristic that separates enslaved Africans from the free, predominantly white populations is the possession of a last name; the absence of last names among

free people of African descent is somewhat indicative of their will to assimilate into the dominant “white” culture of the island.

Saba was captured soon after by the British by Lt. James Cockburn in February, 1781 under orders from Admiral George Brydges Rodney, who had just captured St. Eustatius. The latter island was captured as retribution for the volume of trade to the American rebels that occurred through St. Eustatius, while Saba’s capture was usually recorded as little more than a side note. This was to mark the beginning of a prolonged period of political instability between Saba, St. Eustatius, and St. Maarten that was to last until 1815. On St. Eustatius, Rodney confiscated all the wares of merchants on the island and sold them off at auction, even from British subjects, and continued to fly the Dutch flag after the island’s surrender as a means of luring more merchant ships into harbour to be captured as prizes of war. Saba and St. Maarten were spared this treatment. The islands were captured by the French ten months later, and were returned to the Dutch in 1784. Between this time to 1795, St. Eustatius re-emerged as a major trading center and destination for enslaved Africans until its capture by the French in 1795, followed soon after by St. Maarten and Saba. Import and export duties imposed upon vessels of all nations save the French and the new Batavian Republic, and a series of expensive military levies extracted from all the islands caused many residents to emigrate, especially from St. Eustatius (Goslinga 1990:147-148). Many merchants from Statia resettled in nearby Swedish St. Bartholomew, which was declared a free port in 1784 along the model of St. Eustatius (Wilson 2013).

Nineteenth century Saba

The GWC was dissolved in 1792, and the administration of Dutch American colonies were shifted directly to the government of the United Provinces. Saba was of little expense or profit to the company, thus it consequentially received little attention from colonial authorities. While other Dutch islands were reporting budget deficits, Saba had no deficiency; in some years Saba even had a budget surplus of 50 guilders (Hartog 1975:35). A Dutch government official who visited the island in 1853 noted that although the residents apparently paid no taxes, administering the island was no expense to the Netherlands (Crane 1971:237).

In 1801 Saba was captured by the English, in 1802 it became French under the Batavian Republic and was administered through St. Maarten rather than St. Eustatius. Saba was recaptured by the English in 1810 by the English under Brigadier-General Harcourt, and was returned to the Dutch in 1816. Interestingly, though, Saba was sent an official missive from the Governor of St. Maarten demanding Saba’s capitulation to the Dutch, with a veiled threat of military force, rather than a letter which simply informed Saba’s government of its return to The Netherlands from control of the British (Bancroft Collection, non-indexed).

Up until 1795, and for most of the nineteenth century, Saba was governed under St. Eustatius, and most government affairs were conducted through the island. Saba was not completely subordinate to St. Eustatius during the nineteenth century, though. This question was posed to the Governor of Curaçao in 1857, and he replied that Saba was its own entity under Curaçao, but for practical reasons St. Eustatius should always assist and advise Saba when necessary (NArC AN NAC 4 Gouverneur 4968:25/9/1857). The highest government office on Saba was that of the Lieutenant Governor, also known as the Gezaghebber, a position which is maintained up to the present day. Prior to 1870, when the position became salaried, the Governor of Curaçao considered the Gezaghebber of Saba to be an “honorary position” rather than an actual office such as the Gezaghebber of St. Eustatius, and thus the office holder was not entitled to compensation (NArC AN NAC4 4968:26/3/1861). The Gezaghebber was advised by a group of island council members, usually numbering between four to six men from prominent families on the island, often with the title “Esquire”. These members required the Governor of Curaçao’s permission to step down from these positions if they so desired (NArC AN NAC4 4968:3/12/1858). One of the Island Council Members, the Island Secretary, was responsible for summarizing the results of council meetings, court cases, and sometimes for transcribing government correspondence for the Gezaghebber. A Marshall was also appointed, though his responsibilities and job function are unclear. When in 1860 the Governor of Curaçao requested genealogies of all government employees in Curaçao and its dependencies, Gezaghebber Edward Beaks Jr. asked the Governor if this was also required for Hercules Hassell, the Island Secretary, and Richard Johnson, the Marshall (NArC AN NAC4 4968:10/7/1861).

During the islands’ brief period within the Batavian Republic, Saba was moved from the governorship of St. Eustatius, and instead placed under St. Maarten until 1824, when it was switched back to St. Eustatius. The first third of the nineteenth century was marked by political instability in the Caribbean, from the Napoleonic wars which ended in 1815, to the commencement of the South American Wars of Independence between 1810 and 1825. Although the transatlantic slave trade had been abolished by Denmark 1803, followed by Britain in 1807 and The Netherlands in 1814, there was still considerable demand for enslaved Africans in European colonies, especially in the burgeoning sugar industries in Santo Domingo, Cuba, and Puerto Rico, which was provided by the French and private transatlantic slave trading vessels willing to avoid capture and confiscation by the British. In 1818 a rebel vessel under the command of Pedro Luis Brion had captured a Spanish vessel laden with enslaved Africans off the coast of St. Bartholomew on its way to Cuba, and brought it to Saba, where they were sold (Morning Post:4/9/1818). This also marks the last known instance of enslaved Africans imported on to the island.

Beginning in 1819 until 1828, the Gezaghebber of Saba was engaged in an underground network of trade through St. Eustatius under its governor, William Augustus van Spengler. This involved covert trade with South American rebel privateers, pirates (privateers with expired letters of marque), and vessels engaged in the transatlantic slave trade, which were often outfitted at St. Eustatius and supplied with Dutch papers which were easily obtained by the governor (Emmer 2006:120-122; Espersen 2013). Captured ships were brought to St. Eustatius, had their goods unloaded at night, and if the ship was not intentionally sunk afterwards, it was sometimes brought to Saba and left at anchor, abandoned and empty. These ships were repaired by carpenters on Saba, and after its presence was announced on St. Eustatius, a merchant connected to the enterprise would claim the vessel as his own; in two recorded cases with was a Nathaniel Mussenden and a Charles Mussenden of St. Eustatius; the first both a merchant and the chief of police, and the second a merchant (British Foreign & State Papers 1825:249; DNAr 1.05.08.01 #727). The Gezaghebber of Saba received 500 pieces of eight as a cut each time Saba was used as either a transit point for illicit goods, or in the case of “abandoned vessels” repaired for claim via merchants in St. Eustatius (British Foreign & State Papers 1825:249; DNAr 1.05.08.01 #727). The volume of this trade dwindled significantly after the *Caraboo* incident of 1828, which involved a captured English ship brought to Saba in the manner described above (Wood 1830). This story became globally infamous, and Saba and St. Eustatius were featured in the press around the world. This trade continued on Saba until about 1835.

In 1816, Dutch colonial authorities requested a report from the Governors of St. Eustatius and St. Maarten detailing natural, social, and economical environments of the islands under their command (DNAr 1.05.06 #213). Before this report, the island did not keep a yearly record of births, deaths, and incoming or outgoing people (DNAr 1.05.06 #213). The political and economic instability between 1795 and 1815 was responsible for a drop in the island’s population from 1,296 in 1780 to 1,145 in 1817. Concluding the report, the Governor of St. Maarten recommended that efforts put into Saba to increase sugar production, and even suggested that Saba could support a cochineal production industry, which never came to fruition.

The population for 1816 included 656 “white”, 27 free people of African descent, and 462 enslaved Africans. The island was divided into six quarters, which included Palmetto Point, The Valley, Crispeen, St. John’s, Hell’s Gate, and The Peak. Tradespeople on the island, in this case all men, included four officials and one lieutenant governor, a school teacher, a cattle herder, fourteen carpenters, and one sail maker. Notably, of the twenty-seven free African descent Sabans, only four were men. Since field labourers were the most common profession of enslaved Africans regardless of gender, this demonstrates the continued preference on among owners for males in this endeavour, as they together account for less than 15% of the free population. Among the aforementioned free

men, two took to farming, one was a fisherman and seaman, while the other was a carpenter. Shoemaking probably continued during this time, although on a much smaller scale than one hundred years previous as observed by Labat. In 1847, a court case was brought against the estate of the deceased John and Mary Hassell, wherein the plaintiff, Henry Johnson, claimed that John Hassell, who was formerly enslaved to Henry, was to furnish him and his family with shoes so long as he is in existence (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:2/12/1847). In other instances, free people of African descent were also hired by white families as musicians during holidays or parties (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:4/1/1849). There is was no mention of professions among Saba's women in the document, whether free or enslaved, though Teenstra noted that women took to spinning and weaving during his visit in the 1820's (Teenstra 1977:368). Most residents, known as "small landowners" subsisted from fishing and lived off the land, producing little more than some cotton, maize (locally known as "indian corn", "small corn" or "guinea corn"), and unspecified fruits and vegetables. Any surpluses were generally sold to the Dinzey Plantation in The Bottom. Women cultivated and spun cotton, which was then used to fashion gloves, socks, and stockings for regional export (Teenstra 1977:367). Enslaved Africans owned by Sabans outside of plantation contexts were usually given to field labour, with smaller numbers working as domestic servants (DNAr 2.02.09.08 #246). Domestic labour was sometimes specific, including cooks, washers, "pasture boys", and house servants (DNAr 2.02.09.08 #246). In a few instances, enslaved Africans worked as sailors, "sellers", and even serving as agents in St. Thomas for residents living on Saba (DNAr 2.02.09.08 #246). Some owners took to hiring out their enslaved Africans to both white residents and free Sabans of African descent (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:14/12/1848). The ships' muster rolls for vessels calling into St. Eustatius reveal that sailing was not an uncommon profession for enslaved Africans, whether they were ships from Saba or elsewhere. The muster rolls for 1816 show at least 10 vessels with enslaved African sailors; 4 ships for 1817, and 21 for 1818 (DNAr 1.05.13.01 #151, 152, 153).

While porting was not specified as a profession in the 1816 review, it would have been a common task for enslaved Africans, and later a source of income for African descent Sabans following emancipation. While free porters did not earn a great income from this profession, their resilience and endurance are often highlighted in oral history. "Big Jim" was known for his strength and endurance (Johnson 1994:129). Another porter during the late nineteenth century, while carrying a 100-pound load on her head, stopped to give birth while ascending The Ladder and continued onward towards The Bottom with her cargo and newborn (Vito Charles, personal communication 2014).

The position of Lieutenant Governor was not a universal guarantee of an improvement in class vectors, and in fact could be detrimental to them, as evidenced through Edward Beaks Jr. As previously discussed, he held office on Saba during the 1820's and again from 1835 to 1863, was

counted among Saba's upper class, and owned many enslaved Africans along with a house in The Bottom sufficiently large for it to accommodate court sessions. However, he was deprived of two sources of substantial income throughout his tenure; first after his 500 p/8 cuts from laundering pirate goods through Saba ceased during the 1830's, and again after the fees for manumission were abolished. In addition, the position of Lt. Governor was not accompanied by a salary until late century. Consequently, his house, the prime vector for class on Saba, fell in to such a state of repair that he was very embarrassed; he began selling his enslaved Africans during the 1850's, and had to appeal directly to the Governor of Curaçao to effect repairs. His reputation on the island was dramatically sullied during the trial of Captain Peter Simmons Dinzey in 1862, so much that he offered his resignation to the Governor of Curaçao. Beaks died soon after, and residents of The Bottom were apparently so relieved with the change in governance that in 1865, the village was renamed "Leverocktown" after the new Lt. Governor, Moses Leverock. Beaks was Lt. Governor of a regionally-recognized poor island whose class within Saba was in continuous decline during his second tenure. On Saba, despite a decline in his class vectors such as his house, number of enslaved Africans, his wealth, and his reputation, through his position he still represented the uppermost of the upper class on Saba. Outside of Saba, his class would have only been compromised among those people privy to this saga, and again only among those who cared. His position as Lieutenant Governor, therefore, increasingly became a crutch for maintaining his class on Saba.

During the early nineteenth century, and afterwards, exports from Saba dwindled considerably; from 1817 to the 1830's, the only export from the island was live cattle (DNAr 1.05.13.01 #319). Agriculture was clearly central to the island's internal economy, however. In 1829, the famous Dutch traveller Maarten Douwes Teenstra visited Saba and made a detailed account of the island's state. He counted approximately 3 horses, 5 mules, 150 cattle, 300 sheep, 800 goats, 600 pigs, and an undisclosed number of chickens. Each house apart from some made of straw had a garden planted with sugar, cotton, and bananas, and were equipped with their own hand-powered sugar cane press, usually powered by two enslaved Africans (Teenstra 1977:367). Commonly cultivated food crops included potatoes, cassava, and cabbage, along with fruit bearing trees (Teenstra 1977:367). Although Teenstra does not specify the types of fruit, this likely included a bitter variety of orange, lemons, passion fruit, guavas, and breadfruit. Coffee trees were cultivated in The Gap in The Bottom, and also in lands in the upper slopes of Mount Scenery, along with Guinea corn. All sugar plantations on Saba except for the Dinzey Plantation in The Bottom had ceased production by 1815. The Dinzey plantation was producing between 20,000 to 25,000 pounds of sugar annually, with 150 barrels produced in 1828, but none of this was exported as its sale was apparently sufficient to satisfy local demand (DNAr 1.05.06.13 #215:6; Teenstra 1977:367). However, given the aforementioned irregularities on

eighteenth century official shipping registers from St. Eustatius especially with regards to vessels from St. Christopher and Saba, a portion of this sugar may have been exported and sold illicitly. Enslaved Africans on Saba, Teenstra noted, were treated well compared to neighboring islands and “hardly felt their bondage” (Teenstra 1977:371).

A strong hurricane struck the northern Lesser Antilles between August to September in 1819, which badly damaged St. Maarten. It impacted Saba between 12:00 to 19:00, and resulted in the complete destruction of 20 non-thatched houses and all of the thatch houses save for a few, the loss of “large and stately trees which were blown out by the roots”, damage to ground provisions, and with many injured residents. It also badly damaged the church in The Bottom, which was not rebuilt until around 1824 (DNAr 1.05.13.01#319:30/9/1819).

By the 1820’s, cattle raising on Saba expanded from a single herder in 1816. A report from the following year suggested that the island would benefit from the cattle raising, and during the 1820’s, cattle became the sole source of export duties for Saba (DNAr 1.05.13.01#319). In 1820, 147 Spanish dollars were collected from the export of 40 head of cattle, at the cost of 4-8 pieces of eight for a bull, and 0.2 to 2 p/8 for a calf (DNAr 1.05.13.01 #319). A report on the state of the island outlines the situation quite succinctly:

31 December 1820
Church to be repaired
No court house
No prison
No fort
No fortification
35 muskets
20 pounds of powder
25 pounds of musket balls
(DNAr 1.05.13.01 #319).

By 1823, funds were obtained “from our friends abroad”, including a Saba residing in St. Bartholomew, to begin repairs on the church damaged in the 1819 hurricane (DNAr 1.05.13.01#319:30/9/1819:133, 149). A prison was also constructed, and a court room was established in the house of the lieutenant governor of Saba (DNAr 1.05.13.01#319:30/9/1819:191).

St. Eustatius, meanwhile, never recovered its status as the “Golden Rock”. The period after 1815 was marked by a prolonged descent into irony, as by mid century it effectively became the “poor Saba” described by Johan de Windt 1774. Laws were passed by the English to prevent the theft and reuse or resale of bricks, and following the island’s restitution to the Dutch, bricks were exported off island, probably to St. Thomas and St. Bartholomew, who were both experiencing the fruits of free trade inherited from St. Eustatius (Gilmore 2005). A report of St. Eustatius for 1847 shows that Statia’s population had fallen from a height of 5,571 residents in the year 1790 to 1,908 (772 white and free

residents, and 1,136 enslaved Africans), close to that of Saba which in the same year had 1,667 (1,033 white and free residents, and 634 enslaved Africans) (DNA 1.05.01.02 #257; NArC St. Eustatius archief #84). Its plantation landscape had changed markedly, with the Schotsenhoek sugar plantation as the sole remaining producer. Some lands formerly cultivated with sugar were replaced by seven cattle plantations, and other lands were employed to farm provisions for local consumption and small scale export, such as yams and sweet potatoes. Most remarkable is that just three shipping merchants remained on the island in 1847, dropping to just one the following year; at Statia's height as the "Golden Rock", an estimated 200 warehouses were located in Lower Town that were engaged in regional and international trade (Gilmore 2005). For 1847 Saba's exports were described in a single sentence as maize (a variety known locally as "Indian corn") sweet potatoes, and miscellaneous fruits and vegetables. However, in 1852, boat builders on Saba constructed a 38-ton ship. The 1852 report for Saba apparently deemed the island's export trade so irrelevant that it was not even described, though the description of St. Eustatius was, in general, much more detailed than the previous year.

The descriptions by Father J. C. Gast during his time on Saba further illustrate Saba's social environment and the scale of the island's economy by the next decade. In 1857, Gast noted that lime continued to be produced on Saba during the nineteenth century, mostly at Hell's Gate, but curiously, the coral cobbles were collected from shore taken all the way up to Hell's Gate to be burned (*Nomina Geographica Neerlandica* 1885:213). He relates that most timber was fetched from around the peak of the mountain, which would by consequence describe a landscape around the settled areas and their peripheries as denuded of trees (*Nomina Geographica Neerlandica* 1885:213). He observed that thefts and public quarreling were common; items were hidden away at night as a precaution, and many guarded their crops in fields with guns (*Nomina Geographica Neerlandica* 1885:213). This appears to have been a problem throughout the early and mid nineteenth century, as incident in the Saba court records twenty years previous involved Wenter, an enslaved African, getting shot and killed in Hell's Gate for stealing crops (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:24/12/1835, DNAr 1.05.13.01 #319:331).

Gast's accounts describe Saba life at mid century in quite poignant detail: "The most important product here consists of the sweet potato which immediately after maturity is subject to spoilage... however as far as the cassava and maize is concerned, an ordinary harvest supplies sufficient food for the inhabitants, who generally are not accustomed to anything else. The American potatoes and the cabbage are generally exported. A small amount of corned fish which often arrives here from St. Thomas half or completely spoiled in general provides for breakfast, evening, and midday meals. Few are accustomed to bread and fewer still who are accustomed to meat; their goats, pigs, chickens, and eggs are transported to St. Thomas. For these articles and often by the same captain, flour, items of clothing, salt fish and such matters are brought back. Other imports, in general,

I am not aware of... In former times their trade was with the inhabitants of St. Bartholomew, nowadays, principally with those of St. Thomas. From St. Eustatius the much looked for rum is ordered" (Nomina Geographica Neerlandica 1885:212; <https://thesabaislander.com/2016/06/>, last accessed 11 July 2016). Gast observed no markets in Saba during this time, and rather produce and fish were probably sold instead through certain designated households (Nomina Geographica Neerlandica 1885:215). This has echoes into the twentieth century, as observed by John & Dorothy Keur (1960) in the 1950's, and the author in the present day, in that locally run bars, grocery stores, and hardware stores are known informally by the name of their owner rather than store's official name; E&H Hardware is known as "Harry's", "Unique Supermarket" is known as Addie's, "The Swinging Doors" bar is known as "Eddie's", and so forth. The continued use of merchants' names to refer to their respective shops would be reminiscent of household vendors in the nineteenth century.

From this description it is clear that poverty-like conditions were prevalent across Saba, and that subsistence agricultural characterized daily life for most residents. Despite the bleak description of this lifestyle by Gast, Saban farmers took pride in working the land and producing a good crop (Keur & Keur 1960), and this continues in the present among the few that still farm. This stands in contrast to St. Eustatius, where from the late nineteenth to throughout the twentieth century, farming was largely shunned as it was considered reminiscent of slavery (Keur & Keur 1960:87). This, together with the island's tendency to experience drought, has resulted in a series of failures in government sponsored agricultural projects (Keur & Keur 1960). Capitalism slowly began reaching Saba outside of plantation contexts through the island's gradually increasing reliance upon remittances sent in abroad from men engaged in wage labour, which intensified during the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. This began following the hurricanes of 1772 and 1780, and extended into the twentieth century. Sabans began to emigrate to other islands, and the free men of Saba sought wage labour on other islands as far away as Bermuda, while others took to the seas as deckhands, pilots, and captains as a means of income (Teenstra 1977:372-373). This occurred to such an extent that by the late eighteenth century, Saba was dubbed an "island of women" (Raynal 1782/V:147). Julia Crane's (1971) dissertation, "Educated to Emigrate: The Social Organization of Saba" focused on this social phenomenon from the nineteenth to twentieth centuries.

The social mobility afforded by wage labour was first apparent among those engaged in seafaring, either as sailors or captains. Despite the poverty-like conditions he observed during his stay, he remarked that "in general it cannot be said that prosperity is declining. It was so that during my stay that several new houses and ships were built. However, the opportunities to get rich do not exist here. The most homes are built from the income of wages, which they receive from working on vessels" (Nomina Geographica Neerlandica 1885:213; <https://thesabaislander.com/2016/06/>, last

accessed 11 July 2016). By 1857 there were no regular wage labourers residing and working on Saba. While some people could earn 0.5 to 0.6 guilders per day for manual labour, but Gast noted few that were paid wages for field labour. Rather the common practice was sharecropping, wherein one could regularly work land belonging to another in return for a third to one half of the crop, or over extended periods for full ownership (Harry Simmons, personal communication 2013; Will Johnson, personal communication 2013; Franklin Wilson, personal communication 2016). Despite Gast's observation, the wages earned by Saban seafarers and the subsequent purchasing opportunities this produced were not unique to the nineteenth century. Saban sailors and captains would have earned wages during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, and the monies accrued from few expenses over long periods on the open seas would have provided funds to finance house repairs, house construction, and limited purchases of goods normally associated with upper class upon their arrival back to Saba. Gast noted that Sabans only spent their saved money upon furniture and especially clothing, though this would also have included house repairs. "The craving for luxury in furniture, but especially in clothing, is great. It is therefore only for this that their money seems to be disposable" (Nomina Geographica Neerlandica 1885:213; <https://thesabaislander.com/2016/06/>, last accessed 11 July 2016).

By the mid nineteenth century, Saban women continued to produce textiles on a small scale, in addition to straw hats (Nomina Geographica Neerlandica 1885). Drawn thread work, stitched by hand, introduced to Saba in during the 1870's, became an important industry among women in Saba from this time into the twentieth century. The method and style is generally known as Saba Lace, but locally known as "Spanish Work". By 1907 exports of Saba Lace totalled 712 guilders, and by 1928 it reached a peak of 22,690 guilders, mostly shipped to customers in the U.S.A. (Hartog, 1975:65). Profits derived from the exports of Saba Lace would have been an important source of income for families, especially for those where the husband or father worked abroad. Sales of lace soon became a secondary source and even primary source of income for many households. In particular, selling lace work abroad by mail work provided steady income for households whose men and husbands were working abroad to send intermittent remittances, often for years at a time before returning periodically to the island. These sources of income benefitted Saba beyond the household level; cash received through remittances from wage labour abroad and from mail-order payments for lace introduced new supplies of currency to Saba, where it was in chronic short supply during the nineteenth century.

Accounts in the seventeenth, eighteenth, and the first half of the nineteenth century in St. Eustatius, St. Maarten, and Saba were kept in pieces of eight (p/8). One piece of eight was equal to eight bitts, and one bitt was equal to six stivers. Spanish dollars were sometimes employed in

documented trade during the nineteenth century, and were exchanged at one piece of eight for two thirds of one dollar by 1826 (SNB:20/10/1826). By 1841, government accounts and public auctions were accounted in Dutch guilders. In 1854, all of the Dutch coinage on the island was collected by the Gezaghebber and counted in order to be exchanged for a newly minted series; this amounted to just *f*500 in copper coin, and *f*1500 in silver coin (NArC AN NAC 4 Gouverneur 103 RT:18/7/1854). This was exchanged for *f*360 in 2.5 cent coins, *f*19.60 in 5 cent, *f*11.50 in 10 cent, *f*194 in 25 cent, and just *f*5 in 1 florin coins, for a total of *f*590.50. Sale prices of goods held in the former guilder were deflated to adjust to the new “standard” currency.

The paltry amount of new guilders provided to the island attests not only to the general lack of currency in circulation, but also to the significance of internal exchange networks on the island as a means to settle accounts. Exchange through barter rather than currency was a common medium in Saba’s internal economy, extending well into the twentieth century (Crane 1971:33-34). In the early nineteenth century, some vessels sent from Saba to St. Thomas bartered Saban produce directly for goods, and later, Saba lace was sometimes bartered via mail to companies in Canada and the United States of America (Crane 1971:33-34). Large bills could even be paid through a promise of lifelong service. The deal involving the aforementioned John Hassell, a cobbler who owed Henry Johnson and his family shoes for life in return for his manumission, originated from a bill of sale from Henry ten years previous to John’s death for \$141.55 Spanish dollars, which John was evidently unable to pay with cash. Interestingly, following John’s death around 1843, Henry brought his estate to court, claiming that he had not been adequately compensated for the bill of sale due to John’s passing (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:2/12/1847).

A male enslaved African, after 1854, could sell for between *f*80 to *f*120 in the new currency, which amounts to approximately one fifth to one sixth of all guilders in circulation on the island at the time. This by consequence necessitated other currencies, and the existence of debtors and creditors. By this time, up to six different currencies were circulating around the island. This included Portuguese dollars, also known as “joes” (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:18/1/1826), Spanish dollars, Dutch pieces of eight, American dollars, French Guiana livres, St. Thomas dollars, and later, the Netherlands guilder. During the author’s excavations on the island, a GWC coin was recovered from the surface at Spring Bay Flat dated 1716, while two late eighteenth century 2 sous coins from the Cayenne Colony (French Guiana) have been found at Palmetto Point and an enslaved African hut at Spring Bay Flat, respectively. Nineteenth century coins from the Netherlands, Danish St. Thomas, and the United States of America were also found in Trash Pit 1 at Palmetto Point. In the case of debts, many debtors would die before their debts were paid, which resulted in probate inventories of their house, lands,

and possessions to be auctioned off as a means to repay them. Any outstanding debts then became the responsibility of the estate's heirs.

The Vendue Books, the Book of Recorded Mortgages, the Saba Transfer Deeds book, and the Saba Court Records 1813-1865 (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1) each contain lists of debtors and creditors on Saba. Debts were collected in the Vendue Book while estates were settled, recorded as a form of notarizing for large purchases in the Sales Records, and documented in the later from debts that necessitated the courts to collect. The Vendue Books' debts are most revealing of the internal economy in Saba as all variety of transactions were recorded, from debts amounting to a few stivers, to mortgages on estates. The majority of the debts are not listed as to their reason, be it a mortgage or cash lent. However, these debts span a wide range from just a few stivers to over 2500 Spanish dollars. The most money lent to island residents did not originate from a small pool of creditors; rather, creditors and debtors both comprised a large variety of residents. Notably, some large debts listed were not charged interest. Small loans appear to have been kept between individuals, without the necessary purview of the courts. Loans via interest-bearing mortgages, usually at eight per cent, were given to individuals for collateral which included land, houses, and enslaved Africans. However, the preponderance of other forms of lending such as notes of hand, cash lent, and goods and services provided on credit indicates that mortgages or collateral were not common, at least for credit provided under 100 pieces of eight.

Out of all the documented creditors, the most prolific was Thomas Dinzey Winfield (most commonly referred to as Thomas Dinzey), the owner of the sugar plantation in The Bottom and the island Governor under a variety of titles. He was officially the Vice-Commander of Saba between 1778 and 1801, the Commander from 1801-1803, and Vice-Governor from 1803-1809 under the Batavian Republic. Dinzey's lending practices demonstrate that his wealth was recognized on both local and regional scales. In 1785 he lent 875 p/8, equal to 70 half joes, to a certain Herman Brouiver on St. Thomas (NArC, Archief St. Eustatius #345). On Saba, between 1784 and 1785, he collected over 680 pieces of eight in debt from six individuals. Of this total, Peter Simmons alone held nine debts totalling 517 pieces of eight. Dinzey's estate was still owed money by various individuals in the late 1820's following the death of himself and his wife in 1825 (SBRM:28/12/1826). Lending among (wealthy) Sabans was not limited to the island; one Dr. Ariel Blyden of St. Bartholomew owed 1,416 pieces of eight to no less than twelve residents by 1816, which were collected upon his death from the sale of his estate. The largest creditors to his estate were Joseph D. Horton (200), the aforementioned Thomas Dinzey (280), Marie Beaks (274), William Simmons (281), John Dinzey (97) and Moses Leverock (192). Some of children of all of these stated lenders with the possible exception of William Simmons married into each other's family. These relationships stretch back into the eighteenth

century, as the mother of Thomas Dinzey carried the surname Beaks (SBRM:27/1/1827). There is a repetition of many surnames among the largest lenders present in these documents with class as expressed through titles, profession, family relationships, and government connections, listed in Table 16, in the Appendix. Most of these small families also produced island governors. This included Thomas Dinzey, followed by the Beaks family who held two governorships between 1816-1865 with Edward Beaks Sr. and Jr., Charles Winfield, governor from 1828-1835, and Moses Leverock (Jr.) after 1865. Other names of small, prominent families of nineteenth century Saba noted on this list include Horton, Mardenburgh, and Monsanto, which will be discussed later in the chapter. It is readily apparent that surname and family connections are intimately related to wealth on Saba and St. Eustatius, as it was in other islands across the Antilles such as the Codrington family in Antigua and Barbuda.

Regarding the debtors, it is apparent that it was common practice to hold debts with others in Saba, even among some the wealthier residents. Moses Leverock, mentioned as one of the larger creditors, died in 1836 holding 248 pieces of eight in debt to six individuals. By 1845, Capt. Engle Heyliger was indebted to his aunt, Miss Anna Dinzey, daughter of Thomas Dinzey, to the sum of at least \$2500 Spanish dollars at eight percent annual interest. Capt. Heyliger sold an enslaved African to St. Eustatius soon after for f450, and two years later he sold 15 enslaved Africans to Anna Dinzey for f3,375, and one week later sold his house and land to her for f2,875, almost certainly in order to finance the repayment of his debt to her. The estate of Thomas Dinzey, however, was recorded as owing no debts upon its appraisal in 1831 (SBRM:4/1/1831). Debt holding was so pervasive that many accounts were only settled after their death, wherein it passed to the estate's heirs. This usually resulted in a full or partial auction of the estate to raise funds for repayment. There were only two recorded instances in the Vendue Books, however, wherein the sale of an estate was insufficient to cover the debts. These were met with a measure of compassion on the part of the creditors. Following Peter Simmons' death in 1785, for example, his debts amounted to 730 pieces of eight between 27 creditors. He owed Thomas Dinzey alone 517 pieces of eight, which included two unspecified debts, two notes of hand, two half barrels of beef, two instances of a cash loan, and eight goats. Peter Simmons is also the only recorded white Saban to have been indebted to enslaved Africans. He owed Dinah pcs. 1.0.3 for meat, and held two unspecified debts to Phoenix and Yankey for pcs. 1.7.0 and 0.7.3, respectively. The value of his estate, which included a house with affixed land and cistern for pcs. 250.0.0 along with two separate plots of land for pcs. 65, was insufficient to cover his debt. While in practice the house lot could have been purchased by anyone, Thomas Dinzey purchased the estate and held the house mortgaged at 10% interest so that the widow and children would not be left homeless. Importantly, Peter Simmons' debts also demonstrate that enslaved Africans on Saba not

only participated in the local economy regardless of race and legal status, but were able to amass personal wealth. The ability for white residents to engage in trade with enslaved Africans on Saba and St. Eustatius contrasts sharply with the contemporary social and legal environment of Curaçao. For white residents of Curaçao, this was punishable by a fine of f200 for the first offence, and f400 and a flogging for the second; enslaved Africans risked branding, flogging, or exile to Bonaire or Suriname (Goslinga 1985:554).

Due to the lack of currency circulating around the island, smaller debts would have been repaid with reciprocal goods and services. Barter was employed off island as well, whereby Sabans bartered island produce directly in St. Thomas for goods such as salt fish and eggs. Reciprocity through service was demonstrated in the case of the aforementioned John Hassell, who repaid his manumission from his former owner by providing his household with shoes for life. In other cases, small debts were still only payable upon the death of the debtor, and repaid through the sale of his or her estate. Class, therefore, was expressed through the mediums and magnitude of exchange. Barter occurred due to a lack of currency from one or both parties, and there are no records of wealthy, upper class Sabans participating in barter among each other.

Among the most revealing qualifiers of race, class, and gender are titles, prefixes, and racial designations that pervade colonial written discourse. Throughout the historical record of Saba, St. Maarten and St. Eustatius, first introductions of individuals by name in a given document are often characterized by race when if they are not considered white. This practice appears to have occurred with every instance of people of African descent in the seventeenth century, but the consistency appears to drop somewhat by the early nineteenth century in Saba, which is commensurate with a rise in free people of African descent on the island. In a similar vein to many Caribbean slave societies, the term “negro” in Saba’s documentary record is synonymous with slavery, and in the cases brought to court in the nineteenth century, it was never used to refer to free people unless hurled as an insult (DNAr 1.05.01.901 #540.1:7/20/1827; 8/4/1829; 9/6/1830; 29/12/1831; 9/2/1831; 6/4/1831). In the second case, the defendant, Miss Rebecca Horton, is purported to have called the plaintiff Mrs. Eliza Simmons “a thief, a whore, and told her she was no better than her negro woman Susanna”. The second two cases involve an ongoing dispute between John W. Dowlin and Jacob Every which was brought to court no less than four times between 1830 to 1831. It originated from an accusation that Jacob Every attempted to steal land from Elinor Beaks, wherein John called him a liar in court. Jacob Every brought the case back to court for a second time, accusing John W. Dowlin of saying that he was “a villain, and... that he was no better than a negroe”. The case was dismissed, and brought back again two months later for an identical insult, which was also dismissed. The case was brought back a third time on 6 April 1831, for the same insult, and the court eventually found John

guilty, having to pay the court costs of f6 “for the expression made use by saying he the plaintiff was not as good as a negroe”. Referring to “blackness” or “Africanness” in a derogatory way also occurred among Sabans of African descent themselves. A court case dated 5 Feb 1827, which was dismissed for lack of evidence, was recorded as follows (DNAr 1.05.01.901 #540.1:5/2/1827).

Celia Wood, a black woman, summoneth Miss Pleasant Hassell, free colour'd woman, to appear before an ordinary court held at the house of the vice commandant on Wednesday morning 9 o'clock the 7th instant, ten and there to answer for and make good what she had said by calling her a damn black thief for which she seeketh satisfaction.

When used to refer to individuals, race is almost always immediately followed or preceded by the gendered terms “man” or “woman”. With regards to African descent Sabans not in bondage, the term “free” always preceded the individuals’ race; for example, “the free black woman Flora Wood” or “Mary Elizabeth Hassell, free coloured woman” (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:16/9/1817). These terms were never employed when referring to white residents, but appear with high frequency even when referring to free people of African descent. Adult white residents’ names were prefixed with either Ms., Mrs., or Mr., dependent on gender and marital status. In a few circumstances in the mid nineteenth century these prefixes were also accorded to free African descent Sabans, such as the aforementioned cobbler Mr. John & Mary Hassell in 1848. After emancipation, the prefixes Mr., Ms., and Mrs. were given to all adults regardless of race in Saba’s documentary record. Race was referred to on Saba according to levels of known or perceived “Africanness”. To be “Black” meant to have or appear to have pure African ancestry, “Sambo” meant 75% African ancestry and 25% European ancestry, “Mulatto” was half of each, and “Mustee” meant having just 25% African ancestry or less. The latter term was also used on St. Maarten (DNAr 1.05.06 #213). In many other cases, the term “coloured” referred to any of the last three terms.

In light of the terminology employed on Saba and regionally when referring to people of African descent, the Wood vs. Hassell case reveals several important facets of race relations as they manifested in language. To be considered “black” by residents based upon one’s real or perceived degrees of African ancestry to distinguish another from being sambo, for example, creates an inherently inescapable and dehumanizing social position for them. The term “black”, used to distinguish their ancestry, is synonymous with a derogatory insult. If non-“black” people of African descent employed the term as an insult towards others, then this reveals a hidden dialectic between race and class among African descent residents themselves. The majority of those that were considered mulatto or mustee, for example, probably considered themselves superior in terms of class and race to those that were considered black. This kind of social stratification was not unique to Saba, and occurred throughout many slave societies of the New World, most notably French St. Domingue (Klein & Vinson 2007; Schwartz 1998).

Two titles were employed during Saba's colonial history, and were the exclusive domain of white men. These were the prefix "Captain" for those men who were captain of barks and schooners in the regional trade, and "Esquire", sometimes shortened as "Qz" or "Hz", but its origins and how it was accorded are uncertain. The title Esquire was used in St. Kitts (DNAr 1.05.06.13 #155:342), and probably across the English-speaking Caribbean. It has also been used in numerous instances on St. Eustatius, Saba, St. Maarten, St. Bartholomew, and Jamaica (DNAr 1.05.06.13 #155:153; Armstrong & Kelley 1999). The earliest appearance in Saba's historical record is from 1780, in reference to "the Honourable Thomas Dinzey Esquire governor of this island", while the latest dates to 1863, used by Governor Edward Beaks Jr., Abraham Davis, Abraham Simmons, and James Horton. In other instances, governors were simply referred to as, for example, "Thomas Dinzey Esquire". The title Esquire was not limited to governors, but appears in association with plantation owners and individuals that are or had served in certain positions of government or on a Delegated Bench of Justice, though not everyone in these positions earned the title, either, and in many instances the same individual that is noted with the title in the same series of documents can later appear without it. The title "The Honourable" is associated most with governors, but was also used when referring to Carl Seelig after his death, without the addition of Esquire, in a document regarding how to deal with the Spring Bay Flat plantation (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540:1/10/1817). From the Saba Vendue Book 1780-1825, there is a correlation between the title and wealth, as in the case of Peter Mardenborough Esq., but, of course, correlation does not equal causation. In any case, the title "Esquire" is associated with Saba's upper class.

The civilian title "Captain", most often written as "Capt." appears as a prefix to men in the Vendue Books, the Saba Notary Book, the Book of Recorded Mortgages, the Saba Transfer Deeds 1840-1852, the court records, the government log book, and the correspondences of Edward Beaks Jr. In the documentary records of St. Maarten and St. Eustatius, this title is not seen in any other circumstance other than to denote military rank, therefore this appears to be a unique honour accorded by Sabans to Saban sea captains. The island has a celebrated history of famous and successful naval captains (Simmons 2014; Johnson 2012), which is exemplified by this title and the class Sabans were willing to bestow upon them. No individual was found in Saba's documentary record that possessed both the titles Esquire and Captain, however.

By 1823, Saba residents had organized a militia, complete with military titles (DNAr 1.05.13.01 #319:196). The list of ranking members available for that year, but outside of this, no other reference to these positions are found in the documentary record except for a few in the mid nineteenth century concerning men jailed for dereliction of guard duty on the Fort Bay (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:4/1/1854). The list is located as Table 15 in the Appendix. Governor Edward Beaks Sr. Esquire

served as the Captain, below him were three lieutenants, (one of them being Daniel Every Esquire), followed by a Sargeant-Major and four Sargeants. One Sargeant was drawn each from The Bottom, Windwardside, St. John's, and Hell's Gate. Nine corporals followed, and below these were four "District Masters", each for Hell's Gate, Windwardside, St. John's, and Palmetto Point. Below these were unlisted militia members, presumably ranked as guards or soldiers. It is unknown whether this was a formal militia organized at the request of the former GWC or the Netherlands, or a local initiative. It is also unknown whether they received a salary, but dereliction of assigned guard duties was punished on several occasions with a few days in prison (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:4/1/1854). Outside of these specific references, no other use of military titles was included together with respective individuals in Saba's documentary record. The use of Captain as a title for sea captains is an important differentiation, which demonstrates that in outside of direct militia-related contexts, militia rank and membership were socially nominal on Saba.

Personal and household reputation was also important on Saba as a means of projecting and maintaining class. In the nineteenth century court cases, at an individual level, this reputation was referred to as "character", mirroring the British legal system. At least 29 cases between 1817-1878 involved defamation of character, and many of these were settled with the defendant retracting the comments, usually stating that they knew nothing "injurious against the character" of the plaintiff. In some instances, the plaintiffs' cases against the defendants stemmed from defamation of character by equating their character to somebody else who evidently carried a poor public reputation. One case was detailed as follows:

...summoneth Mr. Peter Simmons to appear before the court held at Government House on Friday morning precisely, at 9 o'clock, the 12th instant then and there to answer for, and make appear that which he said on the night of the 3rd instant at the Marshals House, that he thought no more of him than he did of a three legged dog and furthermore that he thought no more of him than he did of the negro man Phenise, and many other expressions which will be made appear by the Evidence that was present (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:11/9/1817).

Most punishments for slander involved an apology and retraction of the statement, or a small fine such as £7.5. Some of the cases involving slander or defamation of character were associated with very high fines; one case by plaintiff Edward Beaks Jr. vs. Captain Robert Stovels Dinzey amounted to a fine of £200, later reduced to £80 and £50 for court expenses, "after deliberation and request by Edward Beaks who is related to the captain" (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:3/4/1854). A second case involved a story retold by the same Captain R.S.D. Simmons concerning the details behind the death of Isaac Simmons ten years previous, wherein he suggested that Isaac Simmons' wife Eliza Simmons or John Simmons had actually arranged his murder at the hands of two enslaved Africans, Scipio and Cliff. R.S.D. Simmons did not expect to be brought to court by John Simmons for his accusations, and

could not back them up in court. He was found guilty of defamation of character against Eliza Simmons, and was fined £200, to be paid to Eliza (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:18/10/1858).

Fidelity among women carried a high social significance, and formed the grounds for the divorce request by the husband in the earliest documented case (NArC AN NAC 4 Gouverneur 103 RT:1/11/1862). The importance of fidelity is also characterized by the variety of insults in the nineteenth century that were directed at women that are described in testimonies in the Saba court minutes from between 1812-1865 (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1). The term “whore” was employed in no less than eight occasions, used in such varieties as a simply “whore”, to the “blood of a whore”, a “Martineller’s whore”, a “son of a whore”, and “good for nothing whore”. Reputation relative to fidelity also extended to the household level. One colourful rant by Mrs. Mary Winfield is outlined in full below, which unfortunately was prematurely cut off by the court secretary (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:3/3/1813, square parentheses inserted by the author for clarification):

Saba 3rd March 1813

Mr. Thomas Hassell summoneth Mrs. Mary Winfield to appear before the court ordinary held at Government House on Wednesday, the third Instant precisely at nine o’clock in the morning, then and there to make appear that the whores under his roof gave Peter Barns the drum to beat also that his house is a damn’d filthy house and all badness is carried on in it, and rouguishness [having a rogue-like character], and Peter Barns is one of the Rouges [rogues]...

One’s reputation for honesty also carried legal significance. In court, this could manifest in two ways. Individuals who were brought to court and lost cases centered on dishonesty or lies could either be forced to acknowledge themselves as a liar, or also be “recorded as a liar” by the court as part of their punishment (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:16/9/1817; 4/2/1824; 11/12/1851; 4/6/1857). Class was also tied to the sale of alcohol, which was only permissible through a license that had to be applied for to the government, and if approved, subsequently purchased for 8 pence of eight (Saba sales records 1825-1875:20/5/1838). The island government’s incomes for 1823 lists the following lawful rum vendors: Moses Leverock, B.R.W. Horton, Henry Hassell, Abram Hassell, P. G. Hassell, Thomas Every, Henry Hassell Jr., and Peter Mardenborough Jr. By cross referencing between the Vendue Books, the Book of Recorded Mortgages, the Saba Transfer Deeds, the Saba Notary Book, the court records, the government log book (which includes the 1823 burgher list), and the 1780 census, some insight can be gleaned into these men. This Moses Leverock (one three on Saba at the time, the other two identified as Moses Leverock Jr. and Sr.) and B. R. W. Horton were noted as Captain elsewhere in the contemporary documentary record. Both lived in The Bottom. B. R. W. Horton died in 1854 was buried one row ahead of Thomas Dinzey in the Thomas Dinzey cemetery in The Bottom, and the large, engraved marble slab which covers his cut-stone grave marker prominently features the Mason symbol; this is only one of two known to exist on the island. Henry Hassell was Captain of the Guard,

noted with the title Esquire, and sat upon the Delegated Bench of Justice by 1835, and lived in Windwardside. Peter George Hassell was the District Master for Hell's Gate, and was evidently a prominent resident of Hell's Gate as a special court session was held at his house in 1835 concerning the murder trial of the enslaved African boy Wenter (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:24/12/1835, DNAr 1.05.13.01 #319:331). Henry Hassell Jr. lived in Booby Hill and was the Saba Government Secretary in 1835. Peter Mardenborough Jr. was the son of Peter Mardenborough Esq., who himself was the son of the wealthy Peter Mardenborough (d. 1785) whose sizeable estate was auctioned off in the Vendue Book 1780-1825, discussed later in this chapter. Little is known of the other two men, Abram Hassell and Thomas Every, though the latter hailed from Windwardside. A common thread of upper class characteristics runs through most of the men on the list, from titles of Captains and Esquires, to those with government positions, and presumably good reputations, with all villages on the island represented with a registered vendor except for Palmetto Point. The lack of an alcohol vendor at Palmetto Point probably encouraged illicit importations of alcohol into Wells Bay, as this was known to have occurred at least by the early twentieth century according to a former resident of the village (Carl Zagers, personal communication 2008). It is evident that the Island Government selectively sold the licenses only to men which they considered to have "good reputations" or "good character", as a means of controlling the distribution of alcohol and perhaps to mitigate alcohol abuse. In addition, the cost involved in obtaining a license to sell liquor also would have made it difficult for Sabans with little to no access to money to acquire, thereby further reifying the association of liquor license possession with class. While the documentary record only describes liquor license holders for the 1820's, acquisition of a license was probably discouraged for women and barred to Sabans of African descent.

Literacy also bears a close association with class and titles. All instances of men with the title "Esquire" or those listed as "Captain" were literate, and literacy rates between men and women listed were approximately even. There does not appear to be a strong correlation between literacy and ownership of enslaved Africans except in cases of large scale ownership, being at least twelve or more, in which cases all owners were literate. The most insight into literacy rates across the island stems from the 1863 emancipation documentation. Otherwise, Nieuwindt remarked in 1834 that "except for a few, the 1,800 residents of Saba were illiterate" (Hartog 1975:87). Literacy rates on the emancipation document can be gleamed through the presence of owners' signatures on the emancipation documents, or, in the case of illiteracy, their "X" mark. In many occasions in the Saba Transfer Deeds 1840-1852 and the Book of Recorded Mortgages, a caveat was written below individuals that signed with an "X", usually written as "her X as she cannot write". Literacy rates among owners in 1863 are outlined below on Table 3.

Table 3: Literacy Among Enslaved African Owners

Village	Owners	Literate	% Literate Owners
The Bottom	29	20	68.97
St. John's	17	6	35.29
Windwardside	46	32	69.57
Booby Hill	5	1	20.00
Hell's Gate	10	5	50.00
Palmetto Point	4	0	0.00
Middle Island	1	0	0.00
Total	112	64	

An earlier document concerning a plot of land called the “Compagnie’s Land” in 1850 features the signatures of 115 men willing to provide testimony as to its history as former GWC land. The signatories are divided between those that were able to sign for themselves, and a second group of signatures beneath the heading: “the following persons who cannot write has fixed their crosses as their signatures” (NArC AN NAC 4 Gouverneur 103 RT:2/1/1850). A total of 54 men were literate, including all of the Island Government council members, while the last 61 were illiterate. The latter names probably include several free Sabans of African descent. Daniel Woods is readily identifiable, the only individual with such a name during this time, who was a free African descent Saban formerly enslaved at the Dinzey plantation in the 1820’s. This document demonstrates that literacy on Saba was significantly more pervasive than travel accounts had previously described, at least by the mid nineteenth century. While literacy in itself may not have been indicative of class, race, or gender in itself during this period, it would have facilitated entry into upper class positions, such as sea captains and government office, all of whom were literate in the nineteenth century.

Surnames are also associated with class to certain degrees during Saba’s pre-emancipation history, however their relevance is dependent upon the nuclear family and its immediate extended family. The preponderance of particular surnames within Saba’s nineteenth century documentary record provides some clear association of surnames with class. While there are certain surnames which appear in these contexts more often than others, in most cases a direct correlation cannot be made with surname without some other indicators. The Dinzey families in Saba’s history up to emancipation were small compared to others, and provide some good examples of such. Thomas Dinzey was not only governor of the island but also the wealthiest resident and owner of the largest sugar plantation. His daughters, Anna and Elizabeth Dinzey, inherited large portions of the estate (SVB 1816-1876:16/7/1846; 16/12/1846; 23/6/1848; 8/3/1854). Anna herself owned no less than six cooks and seven washers by emancipation (DNAr 2.02.09.08). Joanna Dinzey Horton also inherited a large number of enslaved Africans from the former plantation, and by 1863 she also owned 30, among them three sailors and five house servants. A branch of the Dinzeys became so prominent in nineteenth

century St. Bartholomew that they have several prominent, large grave markers clustered together in the cemetery in St. Jean. A plaque known as the “Richard Dinzey memorial” at the St. Bartholomew Anglican Episcopal Church reads “Sacred to the Memory of Sir Richard Dinzey, Knight, a native of the island of Saba, and for half a century a citizen of St. Bartholomew. He was made Knight of the Royal Order of Wasa, by King Oscar I for fidelity to his Sovereign and devotion to the interested of his adopted Country. A faithful friend of the Protestant Episcopacy, to him the professors of that faith in this Island are indebted for the religious privileges they now enjoy, of which this Church erected by his exertions and liberal gift, is a standing proof. He expired on the 15th of August, 1860.” While it is clear that these examples of Dinzeys are upper-class citizens on Saba and St. Bartholomew, respectfully, there were other Dinzeys on Saba who do not fit this paradigm. Other Dinzeys, such as Permelia and John Dinzey, appear only in a few petty court cases during the nineteenth century, but are nowhere near as ubiquitous in the documentary record compared to the presence of the aforementioned Saba Dinzeys (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:20/10/1859; 6/11/1816; 9/5/1840; 7/3/1858). Prior to 1863, newly-manumitted Sabans of African descent sometimes adopted the surname of their former owners, although this was not permitted during emancipation. Mary Dinzey, for example, was a free African descent woman in 1862 and was discovered as a stowaway on board an English schooner departing Saba (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:9/2/1862). As there were relatively few households during Saba’s history with the surname Dinzey, it can suggest upper-class, but this is clearly indefinite, and requires further context. This approach is even less reliable for common surnames such as Hassell and Simmons. However, for surnames prior to 1863, certain uncommon surnames do repeatedly appear in context with upper class individuals, such as Horton, Dinzey, Leverock, and Winfield. Therefore, since a surname alone is not direct proof of any particular class, a person’s repeated association with other individuals and households of a known class is more reliable means of inferring such.

A collection of names was amassed from the 1705 census, Vendue Book 1780-1825, the 1780 census, the 1823 burgher list, the court records 1812-1868, and the 1863 emancipation list. Not all the 1705 census names were not used as the scribe appears to have been Dutch, and may have wrote English names as their equivalent in that language, which makes their original form uncertain. These names were not included in the collection. The length of time between the creation of these documents together with the individuals’ origin allows duplicates to be eliminated. In cases where a common name such as “Peter Hassell” was mentioned in the court records without any other contextual information, the name was not recorded in the list. Name instances were recorded both for the total of each occurrence, so the names “Ann” and “Ann Elizabeth” count for two instances of “Ann”, and one for “Elizabeth”. The sample size of free African descent names was unfortunately too

small to derive any meaningful comparative data. Only two enslaved Africans, Mamboa and Tongerlu, bore West African names in the documentary record (Richard Ohene-Larbi, personal communication 2014). They are included among the sales in the Vendue Book 1780-1825 (DNAr 1.05.13.01 #542). The results are outlined in Tables 36, 37, 38, 39 below. For white males, the data is based upon 644 individuals with 57 unique name instances; for enslaved males it is 413 individuals with 104 unique names; for white females 122 individuals with 26 unique names, and enslaved females consisted of 487 individuals with 203 unique names.

Figure 6: Instances of Names, White Males

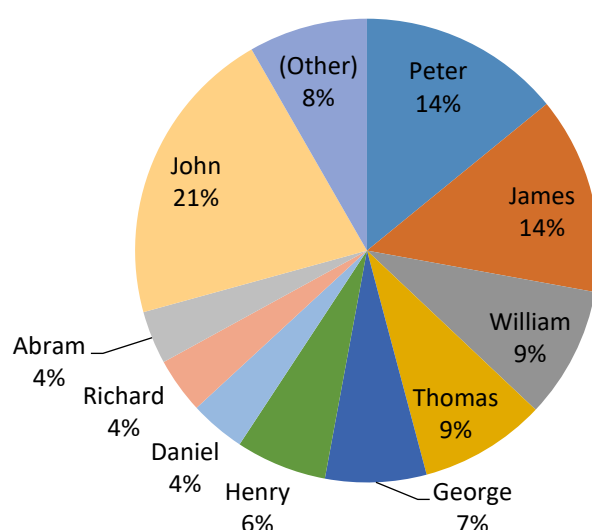


Figure 7: Instances of Names, Enslaved Males

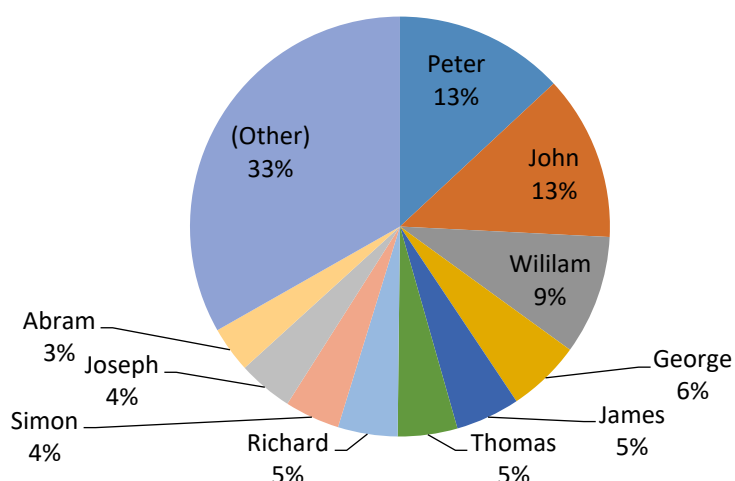


Figure 8: Instances of Names, White Females

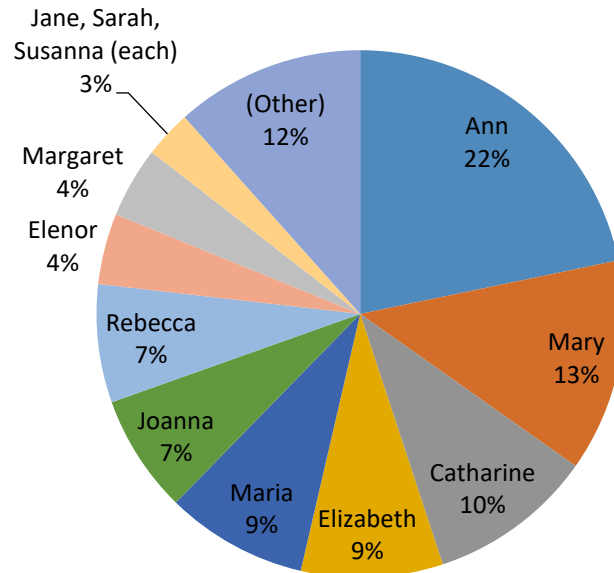
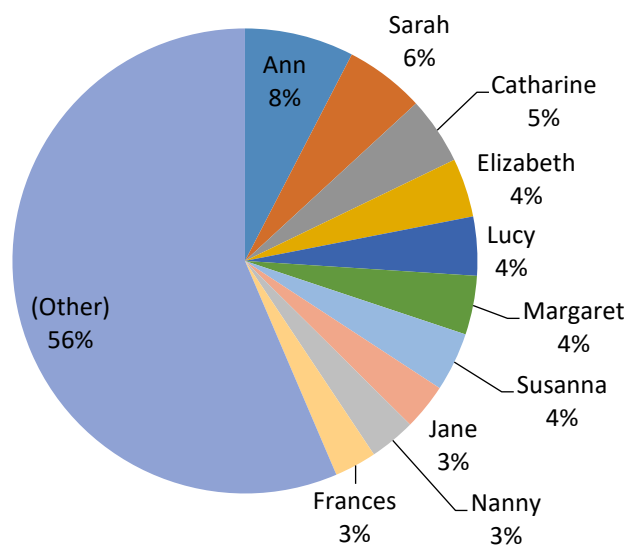


Figure 9: Instances of Names, Enslaved Females



The tables clearly demonstrate a strong white Saban tradition of naming children, probably drawn from family ancestry. Indeed, among white Saban men, only eight percent of names fell outside the common names such as John, Peter, and Thomas; and this trend was mirrored among white Saban women, wherein names other than the common pool constituted just twelve percent. White Sabans typically carried a first name and a middle name, and were commonly addressed by their middle name. This small pool extended to women, but mens' names could also be employed as a woman's first name, most commonly with the name "Peter", such as "Peter Ann".

The naming conventions among white Sabans were significantly less pronounced for enslaved Africans, though the ten most common names among the former are also among the most popular for the latter. There is a larger discrepancy between males and females in this regard, especially concerning the variety of names given to female enslaved Africans. Several names given to enslaved African suggest that it was the owners that maintained control over naming. This is evidenced through names such as "Black Betty" (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1) and "Black Jinny" (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1), and a lack of African-derived names except in the cases of Mamboa and Tongerlu, though this is probably due to a lack of enslaved Africans brought to Saba throughout the mid eighteenth century. In other cases, names of prominent figures, identities, and places, both present and historical, were bestowed among enslaved Africans. These male names included Yankey, William Wallace, Augustus, Titus, Don Carlo, London, Scotland, Washington, and Wellington, while a Cleopatra was noted among enslaved women.

Free island residents lived as members of a household throughout the seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, usually headed by a man or a widow in the case of the death of her husband. Unmarried women were considered the head of a household if she owned a house, but this title was forfeited upon marriage. Enslaved Africans were forbidden from marriage in the Dutch colonies (Goslinga 1990:270). Divorce was possible, at least by the mid nineteenth century, but one had to personally request it from the Governor of Curaçao. Children were considered adults around the age of 16, and could continue living as members of the household until they acquired a house of their own, either through inheritance, purchase, marriage, or construction. Due to the large number of small houses across the island in pre-emancipation Saba, together with the increasingly cramped conditions with large families inhabiting them throughout the nineteenth to mid twentieth centuries, it is difficult to engender domestic space with reliability, and by extension their material assemblages.

Marriage on Saba was normally for life, but in at least one case a petition for divorce was filed (NArC AN NAC 4 Gouverneur 103 RT:1/11/1862). The institution of marriage, though, was limited mostly to white Sabans prior to emancipation. The colour-line was also strongly observed on Saba during this time; as Gast observed, "the amount of mixed race people is very small in comparison to

the so-called whites. It is extremely seldom that a white man will take a black woman as a concubine” (Nomina Geographica Neerlandica 1885; <https://thesabaislander.com/2016/06/>, last accessed 11 July 2016). He also noted a large number of marriages between first cousins among the white population. The topic of incest or those relations that could be construed as incest are a sensitive topic among European-descent Sabans in the present, and many Sabans have claimed that travellers’ observations on this topic are exaggerated. Many marriages on Saba were conducted by civil authorities as the island often lacked a resident minister.

The earliest known for the eighteenth century was the Presbyterian minister Hugh Knox. Following the departure of Knox from Saba, who served on the island up to around 1780, he was replaced by the Rev. John Elsworth, who does not appear to have remained long on the island (McClure 1792). During his time on Saba he lived inside the residence of Governor Thomas Dinzey. They evidently maintained a close friendship even following his departure, as Elsworth spoke of “a grateful sense of those respectful attentions shewn to him, and kindness received... particularly from his Honor Governor Dinzey, and his family” (McClure 1792:vi). Saba would not have a permanent minister again until the mid nineteenth century. During this time the Lt. Governor performed marriages on behalf of the Dutch Reformed Church, even for Saba’s elite such as Thomas Dinzey (Jr.), son of the former governor (Saba Book of Recorded Mortgages:8/10/1823). The Wesleyan Methodist minister Rev. Thomas Coke visited Saba on 14 Jan 1790, after he was ordered to cease preaching and organizing assemblies on St. Eustatius by its governor during his second visit. Coke’s mission had drawn the ire of Statia’s Governor, in part due to his successes in drawing at least 238 converts to Methodism, but in particular that he targeted enslaved Africans (Anonymous 1815:201). Methodism was perceived as such a threat to the social fabric of the island that free converts caught praying by the authorities were sentenced to fines for the first two offences, and banishment from the island on the third offence; enslaved Africans were to be whipped for every offence (Anonymous 1815:200). Upon arrival to Saba he was warmly welcomed by Lieutenant Governor Dinzey and many other inhabitants of the island, and during his stay on the island preached three times in the church in The Bottom, “which is no contemptible building” (Anonymous 1815:259). “I informed them of our economy, and particularly of our grand and indispensable custom of changing our ministers. They were willing to comply with everything, to grant to our minister the parsonage-house and to allow him a sufficient maintenance” (Anonymous 1815:259-260). However, a minister could not be immediately spared to remain on the island, and soon after the Governor of St. Eustatius was alerted to Coke’s presence on Saba, and was ordered to leave the island. Coke departed and left a certain Mr. Hammet in charge of the new congregation, but soon after the Governor of St. Eustatius discovered

the mission's presence on Saba, and he ordered him dismissed from the island as well. Methodism failed to take root on Saba after Hammet's departure.

Coke first visited Statia in January 1787, and his group was welcomed on the island by "the captain of the (free) blacks" named Captain de Lion, who Coke had contact via mail while in St. Kitts, and soon found support among enslaved Africans through an individual named Harry, who was previously enslaved in North America and considered himself Methodist. Harry began evangelizing the next day among enslaved Africans, inducing them into a state that mirrors that of modern Christian evangelical churchgoers in thrall. "The Governor came to hear him (Harry), and approved of what he said; but in a little time the poor slaves were so affected under the word, that many of them fell down as if they were dead, and some of them would remain in a state of stupor for some hours. One night sixteen of them fell down in this manner" (Anonymous 1815:222). Harry was forbidden by the Governor to preach any further, and he would have been ordered whipped had the judge not ruled that Harry had done nothing to deserve corporal punishment. Later that year, Harry was, not coincidentally, resold to an owner in North America. Coke departed Statia, and returned on 12 December 1789, and noted that the governor, "who was a rough, rude man... would not suffer them (enslaved Africans) to preach: and the poor slaves, from one end of the island to the other, who met together to sing and pray, and talk on religious subjects, were cart-whipped, and many of them imprisoned" (Anonymous 1815:313).

The accounts of Coke's travels and missions to St. Eustatius and Saba are important in that they demonstrate colonial officials on St. Eustatius were opposed to the spread of Methodism among enslaved Africans, as it apparently fostered resistance to the institution of slavery. Such an attitude towards Christianizing enslaved Africans was also seen in Suriname, whereby Moravians were favoured over other denominations, since they stressed an acceptance to the world order, especially the institution of slavery (Oostindie 1996:157). In Saba, it appears that enslaved Africans were not Christianized, or denied recognition as converts. The St. Maarten Governor's report of Saba from 1816 states that the population consisted of 672 protestants, all Presbyterian, and 470 "not Christian", which consisted of the entire population of enslaved Africans on the island and some free Sabans of African descent. In Saba, the island had been without a minister for seventeen years, and although the Wesleyan mission account suggests that residents did not concern themselves with the denomination of Christianity, this was apparently more nuanced. Unfortunately, the documentary record does not specify whether Sabans of African descent or enslaved Africans participated on Saba during Coke's brief mission. However, the Wesleyan faith continued at least among some residents of Saba, as by 1834 the family of Moses Leverock requested a Wesleyan minister from abroad, a certain Mr. Jeffrey, to perform his funeral rites, even though the protestant minister John Toland was

since resident on the island (DNAr 1.05.13.01 #319:18/12/1834). Jeffrey, however, was ultimately not permitted to preach or perform the service in the church in The Bottom, and so it was performed instead at the house of the deceased. The Gezaghebber at the time, Thomas D. Winfield, expressed his reservations against Jeffrey's wish to return to Saba during the Holy Days to preach, as "very few in the island wishes the introduction of a W. Missionary, and those few does it more out of opposition" (DNAr 1.05.13.01 #319:18/12/1834).

Unlike the Catholic priests that he later competed for converts with, Toland does not appear to have been widely respected on Saba. Gast described his existence as meager, subsisting entirely on voluntary and agreed contributions from his parish's collection plate (*Nomina Geographica Neerlandica* 1885; <https://thesabaislander.com/2016/06/>, last accessed 11 July 2016). He was married, and owned at least one female enslaved African, named Pricilla, and continued to find himself in front of the Delegated Bench of Justice in several occasions as a defendant, and twice as a plaintiff, thus earning the dubious honour of being the only minister in Saba's history brought to court as either (DNAr 1.05.13.01 #319:18/1/1826; 14/1/1829, 5/7/1831, 9/1/1833, 23/6/1842, 11/5/1843, 8/6/1848). He defended himself in court after he had his provisions "passed through" (theft), and again after his enslaved African was beaten by another enslaved African named Scipio. Toland was physically assaulted by John G. Every "on the public road", and the following year in 1843 he received "several blows with a stick in the presence of said Jacob Every without the least provocation". Later he was accused by Henry Hassell Esquire of having called him a liar. Being the wife of pastor Toland was not enough to be spared from defamation, as she as the "blood of a whore" by Elizabeth Hassell, a free woman of African descent. Toland was still present on Saba in 1862 as an Episcopal Minister, and died on Saba the following year (NArC AN NAC 4 Gouverneur 103 RT:30/6/1862).

In 1836, Bishop Nieuwindt of the Diocese in Curaçao visited Saba, who was followed in 1843 by Bishop Joannes Kistemaker (Will Johnson, personal communication 2013). During Nieuwindt's visit he baptized six residents; five from The Bottom, and one from St. John's. One of the converts was a free African Saban by the name of Julia, daughter of Marina (Saba Catholic Baptismal Records, Church of St. Paul's Conversion, Windwardside, Saba). The baptismal records include the name of the person receiving baptism, the date it occurred, the lawful mother, the birthday of the baptized, the sponsors, and the name of the priest performing the baptism. Individuals in the records are listed with their surnames, thus in their absence prior to emancipation, those people can be safely assumed to be either enslaved Africans or free Sabans of African descent. Baptisms slowly increased, but this had only included a minimum of seven Sabans of African descent out of a total of 167 baptisms by 1856. Their sponsors, though, were white in all cases save for one. Catholicism on Saba, by this time, was predominantly white and spread primarily in St. John's, and Windwardside, with a notable increase in

converts from Hell's Gate between 1855 and 1857. The last wills and testaments of Sabans throughout the Saba Transfer Deeds 1840-1852 and the Book of Recorded Mortgages demonstrates that conversion to Catholicism was slow in The Bottom relative other villages. In every last will and testament within these collections, the testator or testatrix donated a small amount to a church for their funeral costs, ranging from eight bitts (SBRM:15/1/1827) to twenty guilders (STD:9/4/1850). The denomination of church was usually specified, and among those from The Bottom, the Catholic Church was rarely the subject of this donation during the 1850's and 1860's. Notably, none of the children of Thomas Dinzey or their spouses were Catholic. From 1857 to 1863, most baptisms were among residents of Windwardside and Hell's Gate, with a minority from St. Johns and The Bottom. The first baptism for Palmetto Point occurred on 12 Nov 1861 for the child of William & Joanna Zeagors, which was followed by the first pair for Booby Hill on 22 April 1862, and up to 1863, no baptisms were noted for Middle Island or Cow Pasture. Also by 1857, a surge in baptisms among enslaved Africans occurred. By cross referencing the baptismal records with the Vendue Books and the Emancipation List (DNAR 2.02.09.08 #246), several baptised individuals can be confirmed as enslaved Africans. Sally, for example, had her child Lettice baptized on 15 March 1857, sponsored by Susan Hassell, and both were owned by Thomas Johnson of Windwardside at latest by 1863. Patience had her child Maria baptized on 22 March 1857, and both were emancipated in 1860 by their owner James Horton Esquire. A zealous convert to Catholicism in Windwardside, Sarah Christopher Mardenborough, served as the sponsor for no less than 60 enslaved Africans, the majority from Windwardside, for the year 1857 alone. The sponsors for all baptisms up to 1857 are nearly all women, save for father G.C. Gast who is noted alongside S.C. Mardenborough during the formative years, and a Henry Prendengart in several instances in 1858.

By emancipation in 1863, the "new" Catholic religion on Saba spread quickly across the island in every village except, notably, The Bottom. The religion was adopted by considerably more women than men, whether free or enslaved. A total of 486 converts lived on the island by 1 July that year, but only 171 were male. The 486 Catholics also consisted of 183 were enslaved Africans, of which just 71 were male. Sarah Mardenborough was winning many converts in Windwardside, while by 1863, about $\frac{3}{4}$ of Hell's Gate had converted, including both free residents and enslaved Africans. Even Middle Island's sole enslaved African was baptized. Meanwhile, The Bottom could only count 25 converts, all white Sabans except for at least one free Saban of African descent, and nine enslaved Africans. The Catholic enslaved Africans, however, were all the property of Capt. James Hassell and William Mitchell, who owned another 20 who were Protestants. Since The Bottom had traditionally been the village of residence for protestant Christian ministers residing on the island, this may have turned the village into a sort of "stronghold" against the spread of Catholicism. The success of

Catholicism in other villages, especially Windwardside, provided a means for residents to differentiate themselves from The Bottom. While no direct correlations between regarding class can be confidently made regarding religion, its spread and adoption was clearly strongest among white women, and very few enslaved Africans and free Sabans of African descent had converted prior to 1857. This may have been a strategic move by Kistemaker and Gast. By focusing on converting white residents during the Church's formative years, they could avoid repeating the errors of the Wesleyan missionaries in evangelizing among free people of African descent and enslaved Africans, which was perceived as a threat to social stability by officials in St. Eustatius. However, since its spread among enslaved Africans between 1857 and 1863 can be credited almost entirely to Sarah Mardenborough, rather than a multitude of evangelists, this strongly suggests that enslaved Africans were in many cases systematically excluded from the religion due to race rather than a mission strategy.

Exclusionary and exceptional policies towards African descent people on nineteenth-century Saba extended into the legal system as well. While enslaved Africans were subject to different sets of laws than free citizens, in practice, free African descent Sabans were judged differently than white Sabans, and at times were allotted sentences exclusive to their perceived race. After 1815, crime and punishment on nineteenth century Saba was the responsibility of the Delegated Bench of Justice, presided over by the Governor, an Island Secretary who records the cases, and at least two other members, often with the title Esquire. Prior to this time, very little is known about the organization of government and the execution of justice. Each island was free to pass their own legislation regulating the institution of slavery, but Saba fell into a unique situation since in practice, all laws passed on St. Eustatius were also to be enacted on Saba, since the island was governed through Statia. Nonetheless, this appears to not have complicated the execution of justice on Saba, since it proceeded with "as it always has been", at least up to the 1830's when the sentences of several cases were brought to the attention of colonial authorities in Curaçao (DNAr 1.05.13.01 #319:314). Enslaved Africans could provide witness and testimony in court but not on oath (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1: 2/2/1860). Punishments usually resulted in fines and payment for court expenses, or apologies to the plaintiff for more trivial cases. More severe punishments for free Sabans included imprisonment, but this was in most cases no longer than ten days. Exile was the most severe form of punishment known to have existed on the island, which was meted out in response to murder, death threats, assault, and repeated counts of livestock theft. However, all documented cases of exile on Saba involved exclusively African-descent Sabans, whether free or enslaved. This punishment was enacted several times by Saba governors outside the authority of colonial officials in Curaçao. White Sabans guilty of similar crimes that resulted in exile for African-descent residents were either fined, or sent to St. Eustatius for trial and sentencing.

In one example, an enslaved African named William belonging to former governor Edward Beaks Jr. threatened the life of Captain B. R. W. Horton, adding that he would “have his satisfaction with him, whether now or one hundred years hence”, and it was noted that while in confinement, “he knew that the whites did not like his colour and he wished his colour was of his mind” (DNAr 1.05.13.907 #540.1:5/7/1831). William is implying that his sentence would have been more lenient if not for his African ancestry, as he was sentenced to exile from Saba, never to return, under penalty of death. In the span of three months in 1834 another two enslaved Africans were exiled from Saba. The first concerned a mulatto enslaved Saban of African descent named Jimmy, whose father, notably, was Richard Johnson Esquire of Saba. While he was being given lashes by Thomas Johnson as punishment, he returned each lash by striking Thomas, and he declared that he would return blow for blow. He was brought to court and sentenced to thirty-nine lashes and to be “sent off the island in 3 weeks if possible, or as soon after as it can be done” (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:5/2/1834). The second case, involving threats of murder by an enslaved Saban of African descent named Cato towards another enslaved individual, resulted in an identical sentence (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:7/4/1834). Later that year three enslaved Sabans of African descent, named Sam, Scipio and Davey, owned by Richard, Thomas, Elizabeth, and Anna Dinzey, were sentenced to fifty lashes and exile after returning musket fire to Moses Leverock Sr. and B. R. W. Horton while they were attempting to steal sheep (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:13/10/1834). After some deliberation, the case was referred to the Governor of St. Eustatius. The Dinzeys used their influence protested this sentence, claiming it would deprive them of labour, and punish the owners more than the enslaved Africans themselves as a result.

Another free Saban of African descent, Richard Andrew, was also exiled 1843, ordered to “depart from this island per first opportunity and never hereafter to return” for waylaying John James Simmons (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:7/10/1843). Meting out exile as punishment in this case is curious, as a notorious white Saba, Isaac Simmons, did the same twice to Louis B. Granger and Richard Dinzey. The first case resulted in Simmons paying a fine of 25 pcs eight, and after the second case he was fined 45 pcs eight (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:7/5/1824; 23/1/1827). The first case is outlined below from the following two accounts, and a third is included which is indicative of his “character”.

Saba 4th May 1824

Sir!

On Monday evening the 3rd instant Mr. Lewis B. Granger was at the house of Mrs. Rebecca Simmons and at an early hour of his departure from that place was accosted in the most scurrilous manner by Mr. Isaac Simmons son of the said Mrs. Rebecca Simmons. Mr. Granger being at all times a very peaceable young man thought proper to return him no answer. Which proceeded from no provocation whatsoever on the part of Mr. Granger.

I sent for Mr. Isaac Simmons this morning on order to effect is possible a reconciliation and to give him advice in what manner he should conduct himself in future.

I then asked Mr. Isaac Simmons if he called Mr. Louis Granger a son of a whore, he peremptorily answered me yes and that he would mash him up wherever he met him. I demanded of him to make an apology to Mr. Granger and he obstinately told me that he would not. I told him that he should be prosecuted for his infamous behaviour.

Mr. Granger going to his vocation having advanced about forty yards from my house the said Mr. Isaac Simmons was waiting premeditatively for Mr. Granger and was struck twice by him. Before I could get to his assistance his being more powerful than Mr. Granger I expected he would have effected his threats in consequence of which I took hold of him and had him confined, having no person to assist me but one man. Several being present I ordered that they should assist me in the name of the King, and they refused... Your Most Humble and Obedient Servant, Edward Beaks Jr (DNAr 1.05.13.01 #319:221).

7th May 1824

The Honourable Edward Beaks Vice Commandant of this Island summoneth Mr. Isaac Simmons to appear before the court held at Government House on Friday the 7th May, then and there to answer for and make appear that Mr. Louis B. Granger is a son of a bitch, as he peremptory acknowledges in his presence that he had called him a son of a bitch, and furthermore in the most daring manner defying his authority by threatening in his presence in Government house that he would beat and mash him up, which he attempted to do in a few hours after (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:7/5/1824).

1 June 1825

The Honourable Edward Beaks Vice Commandant of this Island summoneth Mr. Isaac Simmons to appear before the court held at the Government House on Wednesday the 1st June, then and there to answer for beating Mr. Thomas Simmons alias Tommy Nelly... and for laughing at some observations made to him on the subject by the vice commandant, defying his authority (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:1/6/1825).

Saba's only confirmed case of murder in the nineteenth century resulted in the accused and two accomplices sent to St. Eustatius for trial, to an undetermined result. In this case, John Every of Hell's Gate, accompanied by his brothers Robert and Peter, shot the enslaved African boy Wenter in response to Wenter's theft of their potatoes, and his subsequent threats their lives if they went and did the same to him (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:24/12/1835, DNAr 1.05.13.01 #319:331). These cases illustrate a further relationship between race and justice in pre-emancipation nineteenth century Saba. White Sabans were never exiled from the island for similar crimes committed by African descent Sabans during this time, even by repeat offenders. This may reflect the of *habitus* among white Sabans relative to their dominant position in the racial hierarchy faced with the proliferation of Sabans of African descent on the island starting in the nineteenth century, from just four in 1780. Prior to 1780, the island was divided between enslaved Africans and free white Sabans, but by the beginning of the nineteenth century, the emergence of free Sabans of African descent as a growing minority on the

island challenged class and race-based ideologies rooted from the earlier period. Race-based sentences therefore served as a means of maintaining existing power structures through Saba's legal system as a cloak of legitimacy.

Poverty was legally recognized on the island at least by 1823 through institutionalized charity on the part of the justice system. Infractions for laws that were crafted in Curaçao and St. Eustatius and implemented on Saba often carried fines, a portion of which were obliged to be redistributed by the Delegated Bench of Justice among the island's "poor" (SNB:1/6/1823, 15/1/1827; DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540:1/12/1825). This legal requirement would have forced Saban officials to compile a range of qualitative and perhaps quantitative measures to objectify certain previously low class residents as "poor", rooted in the officials' own class-specific designations of those deserving and undeserving of "poverty", effectively institutionalizing or reifying a class of Sabans by the island's governing class, following an external legal mandate. However, attempts by Saban government officials to alleviate poverty were not extended through any known class vector other than wealth via cash donations; nor was it masked through donations or other benefits that would obscure the lived realities of poverty through material vectors or others.

The laws concerning slavery on Saba that were passed between 1820 and 1840 created legal limitations regarding the lives of enslaved Africans. The building requirements for enslaved African houses passed in 1823 is archaeologically significant as it imposed restrictions on domestic architecture; no floors or house partitions were allowed unless it was originally acquired from a white person with proof. This style of housing was best expressed at Middle Island with House 3. However, although it conformed to the legal outlines, it may have been inhabited by free persons. Institutionalized donations during the nineteenth century to "the poor" through the legal system bifurcated a segment of Saba's lower class into the deserving and undeserving poor. This probably occurred through arbitrary judgements by relevant officials relating to a person's or household's wealth, reputation, domestic architecture and state of their house repair, landholdings, lack or absence of enslaved African ownership, race, and marital status, especially in the case of widows.

In order to understand the enslaved African experience in Saba, and by extension the dialectic of race and class with the island's social environment through time, it is important to discuss laws pertaining to the institution of slavery on the island and between the Dutch Antilles. The enslaved African experience on Saba was atypical of other contemporary Caribbean islands, in that Saba never fully developed into a plantation or trade-based economy. Enslaved Africans, and to a lesser extent free Sabans of African descent, consistently composed approximately fifty percent of Saba's population from the late seventeenth century up to emancipation. Two distinct lived experiences developed among enslaved Africans in Saba; those who lived and laboured in sugar and indigo

plantations, often owned by absentees based in St. Eustatius; and those owned by Sabans in non-plantation contexts. This division would have substantial impacts upon class relations, relative social “liberties”, diet, and material environment of enslaved Africans throughout Saba.

Dutch Antillean and South American colonies were free to pass their own laws governing slavery, which would in turn be backed by the mother country (Goslinga 1985:530). Saba created a special circumstance as it was governed through either St. Maarten or St. Eustatius throughout its colonial history, and thus in principle all laws passed on the governing island would also apply to Saba, though the legislation would not be a direct consequence of the social dynamics of the latter island. The ability of colonies to draft island-specific resolutions resulted in differences generally characteristic of the mercantile organization of the Dutch Caribbean versus that of the plantation-based economies of Surinam. While this is not intended to be an exhaustive study of the colonial legal literature, a short review of those laws in common between the islands relative to the treatment of enslaved Africans as expressed through their creation, evolution, and execution is paramount towards understanding enslaved African experiences in Saba. This will be followed by an analysis of all known laws passed on Saba, along with relevant laws from St. Eustatius, regulating slavery and enslaved Africans, to provide contextualized insights into race and class relations on Saba both relative to those facets of everyday life that required regulation by colonial officials, and those that did not.

Enslaved Africans in the Dutch institution of slavery were considered commodities which could be bought, sold, mortgaged, bequeathed, and even held in shares (SVB 1780-1825; SVB 1816-1876).

Figure 10: Sales of Enslaved Africans per Year, 1723-1862, Saba

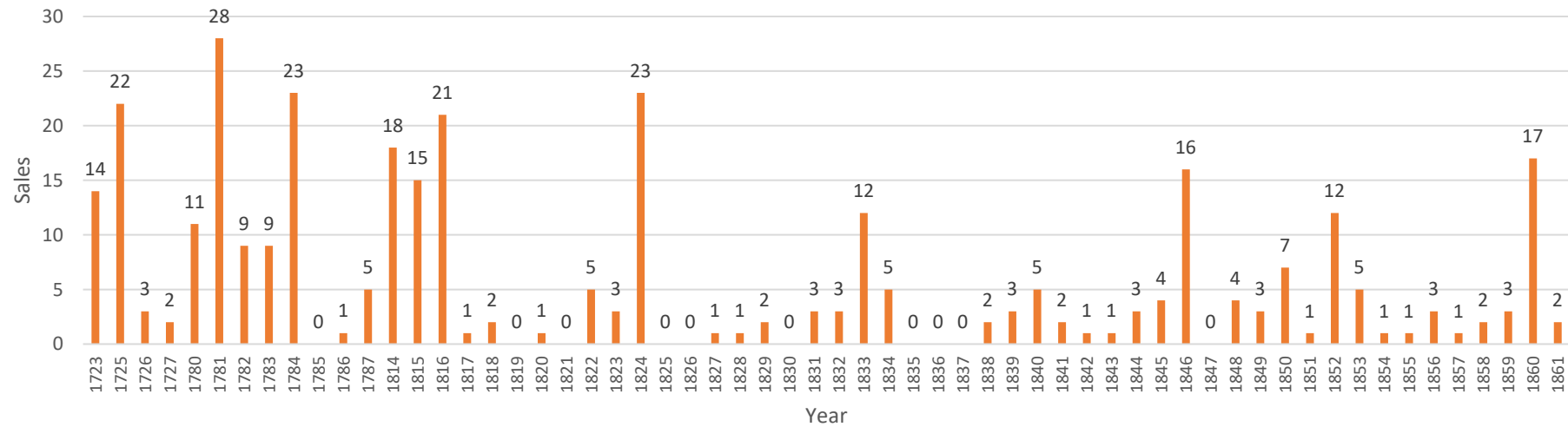
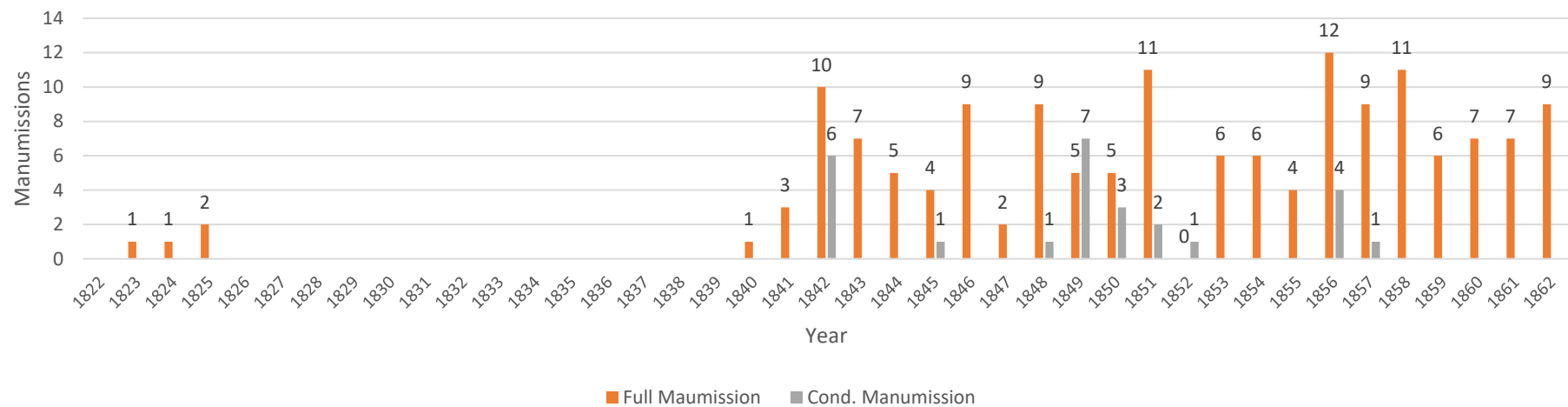


Figure 11: Recorded Manumissions, 1822-1862, Saba



However, they were different from other property, such as cotton or cattle, in that laws were required in order to regulate their conduct and reinforce their inferiority in Dutch colonial society, especially relative to their owners (Goslinga 1985:530). The distinguishing feature of European chattel slavery, whereupon mothers passed their bondage onto their offspring, was present in the Dutch system. Owners of enslaved Africans were responsible for providing them with food, shelter, and clothing, though they were not required to have them Christianized. All owners in the Dutch GWC colonies were required to pay a poll tax for each enslaved African in their possession, which began at 4 bitts per enslaved African in the ABC islands (Aruba, Bonaire, and Curaçao), and raised to one piece of eight by 1700 (Goslinga 1985:533, 535). It is unknown when the tax was instituted in St. Maarten, St. Eustatius, and Saba, but it was probably sometime in the mid eighteenth century (Goslinga 1985:536). In the ABC islands this levy was extended to all non-enslaved residents over the age of 12 after 1707, with many remarking that they felt humiliated as a consequence, since it put them on the same level of slaves (Goslinga 1985:535). The poll tax resulted in regular bookkeeping by colonial officials in the form of birth and death registers, as well as census records, but also encouraged owners to under-report their numbers of enslaved Africans. All the colonies created laws to restrict the movement of enslaved Africans without written permission of their owners, all of them forbade public assembly, bearing arms was strictly prohibited, and blowing horns or drums were illegal as they may have been used to convey messages between groups (Goslinga 1985:531; Schiltkamp & de Smidt 1979:96-97). Enslaved Africans, even at times free people of African descent, were commonly forbidden from being on public streets after 21:00 (Goslinga 1985:556). In 1810 on St. Eustatius, enslaved Africans on public streets after “the gun” was fired at 21:00 required a written permit from their owner along with a lighted candle. Those caught after hours without these necessities were to be publicly flogged, the owner fined one piece of eight for each individual caught, and the person who turned them in was awarded 4 bitts (DNAr 2.10.01 #3843:4). In St. Maarten, a similar ordinance was passed in 1783, except in addition, all enslaved Africans engaged in porting were required to wear a square piece of board or parchment around their neck, inscribed with their owner’s name (Schiltkamp & Smidt 1979:96-97). Free people of African descent, at least on Curaçao, were forbidden from associating with enslaved Africans during their festivals, upon penalty of re-enslavement (Schiltkamp & Smidt 1979). The laws restricting movement were seen as necessary to prevent theft, to minimize opportunities for organizing in groups as it could lead to planned rebellion, and to stymie efforts by enslaved Africans to escape.

A typeset document probably originating from colonial officials in The Netherlands from in the Dutch National Archives (2.10.01 #3843), found amongst other contemporary documents from early nineteenth century St. Eustatius, outlines specific regulations regarding the care and treatment

of enslaved Africans.. This appears to have been based from an earlier decree in Curaçao, in response to the 1795 slave uprising (Goslinga 1985:548). The former document states that for all enslaved Africans working on any type of plantation, work began at sunrise until 09:30 in the morning, wherein they were allowed breakfast for a half hour. They then worked from 10:00 until 12:00, after which they received a two-hour break for lunch, then proceeded to work until sunset. During cane harvesting season, the work day could be extended to one hour after sunset, and their food ration was subsequently increased. Enslaved Africans working in the boiling house during harvest season were excluded from this ordinance; they could work until 22:00 at night, and up to midnight on Saturdays. If they were worked as such, they were entitled to double rations. Sundays were a designated day of rest, free from forced labour. Prior this legislation, from the seventeenth to the eighteenth centuries, there were no government regulations regarding working hours for enslaved Africans, regardless of their duties; it was entirely the prerogative of their owners (Goslinga 1985:546).

According to the aforementioned document, by the early nineteenth century, the normal weekly rations for every enslaved African was set at either twenty pounds of yams or one gallon of cornmeal... or an equal proportion of salt fish; if no fish were available, then twenty-five pounds of yams or one and one quarter gallon of cornmeal would suffice. Children six years of age or younger were due half of the aforementioned ration. Rations for enslaved Africans were due regardless of the amount of produce cultivated on “Negro grounds”, which were plots of land allocated for enslaved Africans for subsistence agriculture. This particular law was evidently put in place as prior to its implementation, owners of enslaved Africans would reduce or even withhold rations if the “negro grounds” were productive enough to keep them alive, and enslaved Africans were often the first victims of starvation during periods where the food supply was limited.

By the early nineteenth century, under law, each plantation was required to have a designated building to care for sick or injured enslaved Africans, and owners were obliged to arrange their transportation to a better equipped facility if further attention was necessary. Every male enslaved African was to be provided with two pairs of long pants and a linen shirt, or two skirts and a jacket or shirt for women. In the month of November and for the “winter” months following, every enslaved African would receive a wool cap, each man and boy would receive a wool shirt, and a wool jacket for women and girls. If wool was not available, another suitable warm cloth type would suffice.

In a regulation that could be considered somewhat compassionate, no enslaved African below the age of six years could be sold without also purchasing his or her mother, unless she agrees to the release. This appears to have been practiced, at least in spirit, during the 1720’s on St. Eustatius during the island’s first brief tenure as a slave trading depot, where there were multiple instances of women sold along with their children or suckling infants (DNAr 1.05.01.02 #326, 1181, 1182, 1183).

Up to the eighteenth century, punishments for infractions were meted by the owner, with little to no oversight by colonial authorities. By the early nineteenth century, however, the capacity for owners to enact punishment upon their enslaved Africans was far more regulated. Enslaved Africans over fourteen years old could be given a maximum of twenty-five lashings with a whip or rod. Those exactly fourteen years old were due no more than eighteen strokes, and only permitted on the back. Those between the ages of ten to thirteen were due up to twelve lashes, but whips were prohibited. Children under ten years could only receive six lashes. No physical punishments were allowed in the planted fields except for small infractions, such as disobeying orders or dereliction of duty, in which case a maximum of six lashes with a whip could be given. An enslaved African could not be punished by the overseer more than twice per day for the same offence without approval of his or her owner, and once punished twice for the same infraction in a day, twenty-four hours must elapse until the individual could be physically punished again. All enslaved Africans engaged in domestic servitude were subject to the same regulations regarding those working manual labour.

There are several surviving ordinances relative to slavery and enslaved Africans on Saba between 1820 and 1840. The first three were found within the Vendue Book 1816-1876, and reprinted below:

Act.

By order of the Honourable Edward Beaks Jr. Vice Commandant ad Interim of this Island Saba, and the Honourable Members of the Court of aforesaid Island.

1. That all slave sellers shall be to their respective homes, or owners, before half pass six o'clock in the evening, or whatever they have shall be taken away, whether bought or carried out to sell, half for the apprehender, and the other half for the poor.

2. All fowls shall be taken away from any slave that cannot produce a ticket, and the slave brought to the Vice Commandant and receive 39 stripes or lashes. If they are bought from a white person, and he or her, who they are bought from does not furnish them with a ticket, he or she that sells them shall pay a fine of 5 pieces of eight. And the slave receive no correction. All owners of slaves whose slave has fowls to sell, shall give them a ticket for the same.

3. All persons who have taken license to retail spirituous liquors shall sell the same at their own houses or habitation, or send it out by their slaves, but the liquor shall not be given or left with any other person to sell under the penalty of 25 pieces of eight to be paid by the owner of said liquor, as well as by the seller and if a slave shall receive 39 lashes.

4. All retailers of spirituous liquors without licenses shall pay a fine of 25 pieces of eight, and the person who will give information of the same shall receive 5 pieces of eight from the Vice Commandant.

5. No slaves whatsoever shall be allowed to keep retailing a shop, either on a small or large scale, unless their owners inform the Vice Commandant of the same, and become responsible for the conduct of the slave, in acting contrary to this publication the person who gives the articles shall forfeit the same with a fine of 10 pieces of eight. And the Negro receive 39 lashes.

6. It is established by the Court that the fine for Captains landing or taking articles onboard on a Sabbath is 5 pieces of eight unless in cases of necessity when permission will be granted them.

7. All persons are forbid laying ratsbane in their provisions in a neighbourhood, under the penalty of 10 pieces of eight, but they may lay it in their outlands.

8. All persons are forbid setting fearing pegs in their provision in a neighbourhood, under a fine of 10 pieces of eight. They may set them in their outlands at night, but if found in said land in the morning or any other time of the day they shall pay also a fine of 10 pieces of eight. If a slave he or her shall be brought for Justice and receive 39 lashes.

Done and passed in Court June 1st 1823.

Charles Simmons, Secretary.

By order of aforesaid authority The Honourable E. Beaks Sr., and the Honourable members of the Court, the 4th June 1823.

That if any white person or persons should have any provocation from any slave or slaves, and their provisions, stock, etc. should be injured by the slave whomsoever the white person or persons, has been provoked by, shall be brought to Justice and receive 50 stripes or lashes, and all and every slaves' provisions shall be pulled up by the sufferer, also no slave shall be allowed to have a boarded partition or boarded floor, unless they can produce the white person, from whom they bought them, and that person must make oath to the same. All owners of slaves must particularly make known this publication to their slaves.

Done and passed in Court this 4th June 1823.

Charles Simmons, Secretary.

At a meeting of the Court the 13th January 1836, the following acts have been thought proper to be passed viz.,

Art. 1st. That at the Hour of 9 o'clock at night the Bell will be rung, and any slave found on the street after that unless producing some note or token from their owners going on a message or otherwise, shall be taken up, or reported against the following day, and publicly whipped.

2nd. That any slave found after the ringing of the bell, with any article or provisions, they shall immediately be taken up and brought to the Commander and if he or they cannot give a correct account of the same, the person so detected shall be whipped for breaking the clause of 1st article, and the person claiming the provisions to receive it; nevertheless if such person or persons claiming the right thereunto be found accomplice or speaking falsely, shall be liable to such compliment of stripes as the person detected in stealing the article.

3rd. That any person detected or fully proved to have pulled up and destroyed any provisions belonging to any person whether it be from whites, free coloured, or slaves, they shall be severely dealt with, and should the possess any ground provisions of their own the person losing the same shall reap as much amounting to his, or their loss.

4th. That any slave found quarreling in the streets shall be both, or if more taken up, and flogged according to the tenor of the complaints, and any slave detected in making use of any ill expressions, swearing etc., shall be complained by any person and severely chastised at the post, to receive from 39 to 100 stripes.

5th. That any slave found making use of any ill expressions, swearing etc., or quarreling in their owners yard shall if not immediately chastised by their owner, be sent for, and publicly whipped, nevertheless if the owner chastises them, and they persist in doing so, such chastisement will not in such case exempt them from a public whipping.

6th. That any slave detected in having any white or free coloured persons name in any song whatsoever, shall be taken up by any inhabitant and shall receive from 24 to 100 stripes according to his or her age, this is not to be confined to the common roads alone, but also the yards or other lands of their owners or others.

7th. That it is highly necessary that the island be furnished with a gaol for the purpose of securing all persons violating the law, which may tend (if enacted) to promote better regulations, and in order to facilitate the same, a list of inhabitants to be sent in by the 1st February and a certain tax be laid to defray the expenses.

8th. That in order no excuse of ignorance be pleaded by any slave, all owners are directed to make it publicly known to them.

By resolve of the Court,

H. Hassell, provisional secretary.

Drummed off in the Island Saba and stuck up at the usual place.

A last relevant law is found in the Saba court records (DNA 1.05.13.901 #540:7/2/1827), and is specific to the Dinzey plantation. The “bay” referred to in the law is probably either Fort Bay or Ladder Bay.

7 Feb 1827

Whereas a petition having been presented the court of this island under date of the 7th instant by Mr. Engle Heyliger individually as well as in his quality of attorney to the heirs of Mr. and Mrs. Dinzey deceased remonstrating against the frequent trespasses committed on their cultivated lands by persons making by paths through the same and pulling of grass and also cutting timber or firewood on their lands indiscriminately whether cultivated or not, purchasing of thatch from slaves belonging to said heirs employing said slaves carrying boats or other heavy burthens to and from the Bay and whereas such trespasses may be productive of serious injury, we the governor’s council having taken the aforesaid remonstrances in consideration, have affixed to such trespasses the following punishment:

- 1) Commencing with the trespassing of making of by paths and ending with cutting firewood on lands whether cultivated or not, any person or persons found guilty will subject themselves to a fine of 5 pieces of eight, if a slave shall receive 25 lashes.
- 2) Commencing with purchasing of thatch and ending with carrying of heavy burthens to and from the bay, any person or persons found guilty will subject themselves to a fine of 15 pieces of eight, if a slave shall receive 39 lashes.

Theft is a recurring theme in all of these ordinances, and the majority of articles passed in each are tailored to reduce the frequencies of theft by enslaved Africans, especially at night. The authorities were particularly concerned with thefts of ground provisions and chickens, and the article forbidding the possession of floorboards in enslaved African domestic structures not only demonstrates that these were used as hiding places for compromised goods, but also provides a telltale architectural feature specific to enslaved Africans is visible both directly and indirectly in the archaeological record. Notably, however, enslaved Africans are also granted some legal protections against others, specifically including white residents, in article 3 of the third ordinance. Enslaved Africans were also permitted, provided their owner assumes their responsibility, to sell goods at a retail store, demonstrating that they were able to openly participate in the local economy.

While in principle laws on Saba in the early nineteenth century were drafted and enforced for the benefit of “society”, it is clear that in some instances personal influence among those in power could be wielded to pass legislation specific to individuals or class interests. In 1827 a particularly specific law was passed by the Island Council on account of Engle Heyliger, an upper class man of The Bottom and also attorney to the heirs of Thomas & Joanna Dinzey’s estate. It was declared illegal for any person or persons to purchase thatch from enslaved Africans tied to the Dinzey plantation, or to trespass on to the property for the purpose of “making paths” and ending with cutting firewood (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:7/2/1827). This was made in response to apparent frequent trespasses upon the lands of the former sugar plantation. Thatch huts, except perhaps for a short period following the aftermath of the 1772 hurricane, were not architecturally characteristic of upper class Sabans, but rather a necessary domestic construction material for enslaved Africans and low class free residents. This is discussed further in Chapter 7. The bill to outlaw the collection and sale of thatch on the Dinzey plantation estate, therefore, is an example of the upper class legislating in terms of their own class interests.

Ownership of enslaved Africans crossed the colour line. While the first free Sabans of African descent were not noted until at least 1780, during the first half of the nineteenth century, at least two Sabans of African descent, Mary Ann Johnson and Pleasant Hassell, owned enslaved Africans (SVB 10/4/1842; STD 11/2/1851; DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:7/16/1829) for labour, rather than as a process of manumission for an enslaved friend or relative. The valuation of enslaved Africans on Saba between 1780 and 1861 varied widely. As in other slavery-based societies of the New World, age and health were the primary determinant of price, followed by gender and physical fitness. Most were sold individually; in five instances, a mother and her child were sold together, and there is only a single instance of unrelated enslaved Africans sold together as a group (three men and one woman). Based upon the amount of enslaved Africans sold compared to all other goods, especially considering that their average price rivalled that of the average house, their labour is clearly central to the internal economy of Saba. Later in the nineteenth century, Daniel Every purchased eight between 1815 and 1817 at a cost of pcs. 1,287; otherwise, most purchasers acquired no more than two or three in the records. Every was ranked as a 2nd Lieutenant on the island, the 4th highest ranking officer, and was a member of the Island Council by 1834, (DNAr 1.05.13.01 #319:196, 328) in which case he likely earned the title “Esquire”. He evidently he had access to a considerable sum of money to make these series of purchases, and was among the upper classes of the island according to his rank and probable title.

Unlike the variety of purchasers listed in the Vendue Book 1780-1825, 60% of the enslaved Africans sold had formerly belonged to a few Sabans. These included Ann Leverock (9); Anthony & Elenor Every (12); Peter & Rebecca Hassell (17); Peter Mardenburgh (17), whose son of the same name

appears in the Vendue Books with the title “Esquire”; and Josiah Peterson (11). However, the number of enslaved Africans owned by a household does not always directly correspond to class. The estate of Peter & Rebecca Hassell, for example, lists seventeen enslaved Africans. They composed of one man, four women, and twelve children; two of the women listed were sold together with their child. This indicates that their enslaved Africans were probably mostly acquired through reproduction among their own enslaved Africans rather than purchases. In addition, the only other items auctioned from their estate were land and house together for 308 pieces of eight, a chair, a bed and stand, a hoe, and a china plate. In terms of material and economic standards for the time on Saba, they were neither poor, nor wealthy.

By emancipation in 1863, there were 112 recorded residents that owned enslaved Africans. Table 20, in the Appendix, breaks down owners per village, along with the total number of enslaved Africans living in each. The numbers of enslaved Africans clearly resided in The Bottom and Windwardside, but the latter village had a lower proportion of owners to the enslaved. In The Bottom, large numbers of enslaved Africans were held by few individuals, mostly the heirs and relatives of Thomas and Joanna Dinzey’s estate, and governor Edward Beaks. Between six Dinzeys alone, they owned 74 enslaved Africans; when extended to Moses & Susanna Leverock, and Edward Beaks, they account for another 71. If the individual owners on the emancipation list are also generally representative of individual households, this total can then be compared to the 1861 census to provide an approximate proportion of households that owned enslaved Africans versus those that did not. The 1861 census (see Table 18, Appendix) was taken on a village basis, further dividing residents between free and enslaved men, women, boys, and girls born on Saba, those born in the West Indies, and those born outside the West Indies. If the number of free men between the villages, 324, represents an approximate number of households (the figure is probably higher since one has to account for widows and single women with their own households), then between one third to one quarter of Saban households owned enslaved Africans.

While no explicit ties are known in Saba’s documentary or oral history records between the act of owning enslaved Africans and class, ownership enabled individuals or households to increase their subsistence or industrial productivity through their labour. Owners could use enslaved Africans as a means to foster and increase interpersonal relations on the island through debt, either through “lending” or selling their labour to others, mortgaging them for cash or credit, or allowing them to serve as merchants. The capacity to engage in this was of course facilitated correspondingly by the number of enslaved Africans a particular person or household owned. However, households with little disposable income and limited access to arable land could be forced further into poverty if their enslaved Africans reproduced increasingly beyond the owners’ ability to meet the legal obligations to

provide food, shelter, and clothing to them. In one example, Gezagebber Edward Beaks wrote to the Governor of Curaçao on behalf of a group of Sabans who owed court expenses they could not afford to the Delegated Bench of Justice in St. Eustatius concerning some enslaved Africans condemned in court that they owned:

Herewith I have the honor to forward a petition addressable to Your Excellency from Miss Ann Louisa Hassell, Mr. Jacob E. Hassell, Thomas Johnson, Peter Hassell, Henry Hassell, and Henry Hassell, relative to the amount they are indebted for certain expenses for their slaves, condemned by the Court of St. Eustatius. Declaring their inability to meet said demand without a complete sacrifice of a part of their property (at present) and praying that Your Excellency will be graciously pleased to grant them the indulgence, until the same can be realized from said slaves or others that they own, when emancipation shall take place, a such time, that Your Excellency may be pleased to grant them (NArC AN NAC 4 Gouverneur 103 RT:20/8/1860).

The potential enslaved African ownership to exacerbate a free household's poverty would have increased if owners unable to find local buyers for their enslaved Africans, and if they lacked the means or social networks to engage in the underground slave trade following abolition in 1818. Their misfortunes would be further compounded if their enslaved Africans were unable to procure the necessary funds to pay for their manumission, especially prior to 1850 when manumission was also taxed. In particular, the costs associated with manumission may partly explain the penchant for owners manumitting their enslaved Africans as part of their wills following their deaths, when their estate was divided, and partially or wholly sold.

The experience of enslaved Africans and free people of African descent was notably different on Saba than it was for neighboring islands. A foundational aspect of this relationship rests in that Saba never fully developed a plantation economy. All three sugar plantations in operation during the most of eighteenth century were owned in absentia through St. Eustatius, and even then, these were small and modest plantations compared to those in St. Maarten, St. Eustatius, or St. Kitts, together accounting for probably no more than 140 enslaved Africans between them. The majority of enslaved Africans lived and laboured among Saban households in a significantly different social context from plantation slavery. Oral history on Saba commonly recounts that owners worked side by side with their enslaved Africans, whether on land or at sea. The hurricane of 1772 caused a near complete upheaval of Saba's social organization for several years as previously discussed, and by the nineteenth century, relations between white Sabans and Sabans of African descent improved considerably from the century previous. This was remarked upon by several visitors during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Teenstra remarked that "the slaves hardly feel their bondage" on Saba when he visited in 1829 (Teenstra 1977:371). Charles Kingsley, a traveller-naturalist who sailed across the

Caribbean islands in the mid nineteenth century, described Saba as a sort of sheltered, unspoiled social utopia for enslaved Africans:

But in Saba, it is said, the whites were really the slaves, and the Negroes the masters. For they went off whither and when they liked; earned money about the islands, and brought it home; expected their masters to keep them when out of work: and not in vain. The island was, happily for it, too poor for sugar-growing and the 'Grande Culture'; the Dutch were never tempted to increase the number of their slaves; looked upon the few they had as friends and children; and when emancipation came, no change whatsoever ensued, it is said, in the semi-feudal relation between the black men and the white (Kingsley 1871:42).

Kingsley's observations do reflect some of the more economic relationships between owners and enslaved Africans. As will be discussed later, by emancipation up to seven enslaved Africans registered on Saba and owned by Sabans were living in St. Thomas as agents for them. There are no records of enslaved Africans imported into the island after 1814, since after this period the Netherlands had abolished the slave trade, but also this was unnecessary since any purchases could be made between owners on Saba itself. Relations between free and enslaved, in practice, were more nuanced than the travellers' accounts, or commonly assumed universal frictions between the two. Despite the somewhat more congenial relations between enslaved Africans and their owners described in these accounts, a more detailed and pessimistic account was given to the Governor of St. Eustatius in 1823 by Joseph Dinzey, son of Thomas Dinzey:

... I crave also your Excellency's attention to the good of this poor little country oppressed as I before stated in the insolence of negroes whose tongues I assure you imprecated the most odious and abusive language, in presence of the Honorable Governor females or any other person, to the prejudice of the small children growing up all for the want of a good police. Negroes quarrel -fight- and if any white person interfere to disperse the mob he gets abused by them and if he defends himself by giving them what they deserve he is complained and required to come to Court to answer the complaint - a young man who is now summoned to come for flogging a negro girl of Mrs. Dinzeys, is well known to be one of the most Civil in the Islands - my father has a most insolent fellow, who some weeks ago was taken in the canes by one equally bad, of Mrs. Dinzey who very brutish chopp'd him so much as I believe he will never use his right hand well.

I believe negroes is not allowed in St. Eustatius to carry guns, cutlasses, or any other weapon, I therefore hope your Excellency will see to this here also, and as the insolence of negroes and every part of their improper conduct towards all classes of people, required to be advertised to be put a stop to forever; while your Excellency's stay is here, I hope you will have this done, as after your departure I am certain no more respect will be shown to the order if not put up in your presence then has hitherto been.

Generally in the quarrels of negroes; they bring their owners or some other white persons name in question, and when a white person interferes to make peace they threaten what their owners will do; another insolence, I think nearly equal to their abusive tongues, that of continuing to smoke and also not to move their hats when crossing a white person-

I feel persuaded your Excellency will do every good for the prosperity of this little country...
(DNAr 1.05.13.01 #319:194-195)

There are several significant elements of this testimony. Dinzey remarked on the normalized practice of enslaved Africans carrying guns on Saba, while this was not permitted on St. Eustatius. Enslaved Africans at Spring Bay Flat carried muskets, and even kept them in their homes as evidenced by the musket components found at Structures C and D, and several European gunflints. This almost certainly extended to enslaved Africans on Saba outside of plantation contexts. The ability of enslaved Africans to carry firearms is also a direct reflection of amicable relations between them and their owners. The owners felt sufficiently secure in their relationships with their own and others' enslaved Africans to permit this practice. Joseph Dinzey's remarks on enslaved Africans' use of abusive language bears certain elements of truth, as this is detailed in the 1836 laws passed on Saba as discussed, wherein three separate laws concern public quarreling amongst enslaved Africans, abusive language, and mocking others in song (SVB 1816-1876:13/1/1836). The account also reveals that despite any grievances between two enslaved individuals, in some cases, the shared experience of slavery between them allows them to overcome these differences in the context of resistance to slavery and challenging powered relations with white residents: "negroes quarrel –fight- and if any white person interfere to disperse the mob he gets abused by them...". The existence of Saban classes and class consciousness is also explicitly mentioned by Dinzey, which forms the root of his concerns to the Governor. Class structures were being challenged by enslaved Africans through their "insolence" and abusive language, and compounded by not observing certain class-specific customs rooted in powered relations. In this account, this included enslaved Africans having to tip their hat and refrain from smoking while a white person passes them outside in public.

However, despite the class antagonisms inherently fostered by the institution of slavery, not all relations between them can be characterized as such. There are certainly relations similar to the accounts of Kingsley and Teenstra that existed in nineteenth century Saba. In twenty-five instances enslaved Africans were manumitted upon their owners' deaths, and in seven other instances between 1815 and 1863, this extended to being included in wills as beneficiaries of their owner's estate, often granted land and a house. In one such instance, Elizabeth Peterson declared in her last will that her enslaved Africans (Rose, Genette, and John Henry) would be manumitted upon her death, and bequeathed to them her house and cistern, with the caveat that it would "not be sold to pay any debts which they might contract, only to disposed of to bury them when they die to the last of the three" (SNB:24/12/1856). This altruism also extended to white Sabans on behalf of free African descent Sabans. One record of such illustrates altruism and compassion on the part of the owner, whereby Ann Elizabeth Hassell, widow of Peter Hassell, gave "unto her faithful servant woman... her settlement within walls, to be possessed by her during her life time, and after her decease she then gives... the same unto her Black Boy Abram, son o the said Mary Ann, to enjoy, hold, and possess the same as

their own true and lawful property..." (SBRM:10/9/1834). Conversely, in other instances enslaved Africans were passed on as part of the estate to their owners' heirs. Some sales records also provide secondary information relative to sexual relations between white Sabans and enslaved Africans; for example, "John George Beaks sets free his grandson, a mustee lad aged eight years" (SVB 1816-1876:10/9/1834, 4/7/1843). The element of enslaved Africans being treated or considered as "family" by some Saban households, would have been especially nurtured in those situations where the owners possessed small plots insufficient in size to afford separate space for enslaved African housing. The oral-historical account of enslaved Africans being treated as "family", though, must be understood both relative to the nuances and reality of life under legal bondage, and modern attempts to downplay the presence of slavery in Saba's history. While there were clearly some relations between Saban owners and their enslaved Africans that could be characterized as "familial", "friendly", or "civil", in other cases their treatment was poor enough to encourage their escape from Saba, and eventual outright armed threats against Governor Edward Beaks.

Social relations between enslaved Africans and free Sabans of African descent were similarly nuanced. In terms of ownership, some free Sabans of African descent possessed enslaved Africans just as white Sabans. In several instances in the Vendue Book 1816-1876, free Sabans of African descent purchased enslaved Africans from other owners, only to subsequently manumit them shortly thereafter. Shared experiences of slavery among the enslaved and those that were manumitted, however, did not necessarily mitigate enmity between families or individuals. One case brought before the Delegated Bench of Justice involved "P. G. Hassell against a negroe woman named Nanny, belonging to P. G. Hassell, for having entered in the house of the plaintiff, and striking his negroe woman Leah in the mouth with a bottle" (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:23/4/1828). A second and more colourful case involved Pleasant Hassell, accused of arson against the enslaved African Felixia's house:

... Richard Johnson Esq. he was unable to attend, but that he had convened the present court in order to ascertain whether the free coloured woman Pleasant Hassell was the person that put fire to a certain place the last evening, by which means three negro houses were totally destroyed. The said Pleasant Hassell was then sent for by the president, and when called in court, was asked by him if she did put fire to the negro houses last evening. When the said Pleasant Hassell peremptorily said that she did put fire to the negro woman Felicia's house, but not to any of the rest, and that she had previous to her doing it made her intentions known to the rest of the negro slaves, whose houses was near to Felixia's she was going to set fire to said house (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:16/7/1829).

Pleasant was subsequently sent to St. Eustatius for trial, and there spent at least three years in prison, returning to Saba after her sentence had expired. Other relationships were much more cordial. Daniel Woods, considered black, was formerly enslaved on the Dinzey plantation by 1831 and manumitted by the 1840's, although no record of his manumission document could be found. By 1848 he

maintained a love interest in Miah (later known as Maria Heyliger after manumission), who herself was still enslaved (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:14/12/1848). By 1855 she was considered Daniel's consort, and he included her as a beneficiary to his estate (SNB 20/6/1855; Notary Book 1865-1866:13/9/1865).

Some free Sabans of African descent used their freedom as a means of assisting those that were still enslaved. In one particular case:

The honorable Edward Beaks Junr. Vice Commandant addresses the court stating that two complaints had been made to him, one from Henry Hassell Esq. member of the council & Mr. Daniel Hassell, against a negro man slave of Mr. J. J. Hassell (Hells Gate) named Wenter, the former was for stealing a goat and the latter for stealing cassava, the court first proceeded to the examination of the negro man slave Wenter, who immediately confessed that he was guilty of the charges brought against him, and that he conveyed the goat and cassava to the house of a free man named George, who was immediately called and examined, when he acknowledged that the man in question did bring to his house the articles above stated, the cassava first, which was by his associate a woman belonging to Mrs. E. Beaks prepared at his house and a few nights afterwards the goat, but he was not at the moment home when the latter was brought, but came in soon after, and during the night Mr. J. J. Hassell accompanied with a few other gentlemen came to his house in search of Wenter but he made his escape, and after which he the said George directed Wenter to take the goat from his house. The court then requested the parties to withdraw and after mature deliberation do condemn the negro man, slave Wenter to receive 50 rods, the negro woman Rose 25, and the free man George in the sum of fifteen pieces of eight or suffer imprisonment for 3-24 hours if not paid, and severe threats made him that if detected in the like crime to be sent to the island of St. Eustatius (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:15/6/1826).

The social hierarchy on Saba, well established at this time, began to take a turn by mid-century. On 24 September 1862, Edward Beaks Jr. received the 8 August missive from the Governor of Curaçao announcing emancipation across all the Dutch colonies effective 1 July 1863 (NArC, AN NAC 4 Gouverneur 103 RT:24/9/1862). Already by 1 November 1862, all children born to enslaved women were free. The issue of emancipation, however, was being discussed as early as 1847, marking the beginning of the period where both officials in The Netherlands and colonial officials in the Caribbean and Surinam agreed that emancipation across the Dutch colonies was eventually inevitable (Goslinga 1990:258-259). Difficulties in justifying and maintaining the institution of slavery were compounded following emancipation across the French colonies in 1848, especially between French St. Martin and Dutch St. Maarten. Emancipation without compensation for owners on St. Maarten was contemplated by Dutch officials, but never enacted, and the system continued as before Goslinga 1990:284). As a result, one month after emancipation was declared across the French colonies, 26 enslaved Africans from the Dutch side fled north to French St. Martin, and other enslaved Africans went on strike (Goslinga 1990:285). Enslaved Africans on the Dutch side continued their toils thereafter, but were generally only willing to work half as much as they did prior to 1848 (Goslinga

1990:286). It was soon inevitable that enslaved Africans on Saba became aware of the situation in St. Maarten, and they grew increasingly hostile and confrontational towards Saban authorities during the twilight years of slavery on Saba.

As the nineteenth century progressed, the irrelevance of Saba towards Dutch colonial authorities became more apparent. A record of ships calling into Saba in 1860 provides insight into the sources for goods entering Saba: “5 vessels under the Netherlands flag visited here 48 times during this period; 7 boats under the Netherlands flag visited 23 times during this period; 21 vessels under the British flag visited here 122 times during the above period; 1 boat from idem 1 idem idem; 4 boats under the Swedish flag have visited here 6 times during the above period. 3 vessels under the American flag have visited here 3 times during said period” (NArC AN NAC 4 Gouverneur 103 RT, 4 June 1861). It is apparent that trade with British Caribbean colonies was of more importance to Saba than between Dutch Caribbean colonies in the nineteenth century. There are several instances of Saban-born men serving as captains of ships in British vessels engaged in trade with Saba in the nineteenth century (NArC AN NAC 4 Gouverneur 103 RT, 4 June 1861). The distinction between boats and vessels provides evidence of regional trade. The Dutch boats would have originated from Curaçao, St. Eustatius or St. Maarten, the Swedish boat would have been from St. Bartholomew, while the British boat probably originated either from St. Christopher, Nevis, or Anguilla. The absence of Danish vessels calling into Saba indicates that trade with St. Thomas was mostly done by Sabans through British or Dutch flagged vessels; by 1863 there were six known cases of enslaved Africans of Saban origin, and registered to owners on Saba, who worked as agents in St. Thomas for them, in some instances continually since 1846 (DNAr 2.02.09.08 #246). The American vessels were from the Confederate states, and had arrived to purchase enslaved Africans directly from Saban owners (NArC AN NAC 4 Gouverneur 103 RT:12/5/1860).

This was not the first visit for Confederate vessels either. Although owners of enslaved Africans were aware that compensation packages would be offered in the build up to emancipation, the Confederate merchants were offering very lucrative prices for their enslaved Africans. Selling enslaved Africans which would result in departure from their island, however, was illegal under the Dutch abolition agreement with Britain in 1814. In 1860, nine enslaved Africans due to be sold to the Confederate ships took the opportunity to abscond from Saba in order to avoid this fate (NArC AN NAC 4 Gouverneur 103 RT:12/5/1860). The Governor of St. Croix sent a letter to the Gezaghebber of Saba, who recounts, that “...an boat containing six men, two women, and one child landed in the bay of this island... to carry their plan into effect, (they) seized upon a boat belonging to Captain Simmons, with the intention of sailing to the British Island St. Christophers, but mistaking their course, they arrived on this Island” (NArC AN NAC 4 Gouverneur 103 RT:12/5/1860). In addition to these

individuals, another 21 enslaved Africans had absconded from Saba between 7 October, 1859 and May 24, 1860. Two had escaped aboard English vessels calling into Saba, twelve escaped to St. Kitts in an undescribed manner, and the rest attempted escape to St. Eustatius. Another two enslaved Africans from Saba, and a free woman named Mary Dinzey were “discovered” in 1862 aboard the English vessel *Corsair*, and though the case was brought to the Delegated Bench of Justice, “no further cognisance could be taken of said case” (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:9/2/1862). While escape to Statia may appear superficially futile, landing on the north coast of Saba, such as in Jenkins Bay, allowed them to avoid being sighted by the island guard from Lower Town or from the east coast. They could then proceed overland, under cover, either to the crater of The Quill, or to the south face of the mountain, in order to proceed to St. Kitts. Boats are known to have been cached in the Quill’s crater in order to be launched from the south face of the mountain to escape to St. Kitts (DNAr 1.05.13.02 #30:5/6/1834).

Escapes by enslaved Africans and others within Saba itself was uncommon, but occurred nonetheless. In one instance, an enslaved African named Betty Richardson of St. Maarten escaped while being transported in a canoe between Saba and St. Maarten and as of 19 April 1819, “has been hiding for some months, every attempt to find her has proven ineffectual” (DNAr 1.05.13.01 #319:19/4/1819). In most other cases of enslaved Africans absconding on Saba in the known documentary record, they involved obtaining an open boat in order to reach another island. This was similar for St. Eustatius; a law was passed in 1810 declaring “that all boats and canoes should be hauled up at the scale house every evening, (as) some persons continue to haul up, and suffer their boats and canoes to lay in the different Bays and other landing places as well aback as in front of the island” in response to flights from the island at night by enslaved Africans (DNAr 2.10.01 #3843:27/7/1810). Some thirty-three years later, Saba issued a reprise of this law in response to an escape by six enslaved Africans. In a like manner, the Island Council threatened a fine of f100 to the owner or owners of any boat “should they allow their oars or sails to remain on the bay or bays or their vicinities” (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:4/9/1843). Escaping Saba under the cover of darkness in an open boat probably occurred in several occasions at the anchorage areas in Fort Bay, Ladder Bay, and Well’s Bay, where these would have been kept on shore. However, escaping from more northerly locations on Saba are much better choices if a boat could be brought down, since they are out of sight from most or all settled vantage points. The far central-north coast of Saba is not favourable for an escape; though it is the most remote area of the island, the steep cliffs make the shorelines so inaccessible that they can only be accessed by the sea itself, making their location to stage an escape rather moot. Spring Bay is a good choice given that it served as anchorage in the seventeenth century, and the nearby well provided a ready supply of water before the escape attempt. However, though it is not immediately

accessible from Hell's Gate or English Quarter, they provide excellent views of Spring Bay. The best choice in terms of proximity to villages, inaccessibility, and cover is Core Gut Bay. This bay is only partially visible from certain vantage points on The Level; otherwise, Old Booby Hill and the saddle connecting it to Spring Bay Flat shelters it from view from all other settled locations. The north half of Core Gut Bay is at present thickly overgrown with a pure stand of Manchineel (*Hippomane mancinella*), growing so thick as to provide a network of "tunnels" under the short canopy which would have provided excellent cover to cache a boat or raft, and served as a natural ward due to the trees' toxicity, so long as this stand existed prior to 1863.

Manumission provided a means for enslaved Africans to "content" themselves with their present circumstances, as provided a legal means to shed bondage without resorting to high-risk alternatives such as absconding. On Saba, manumission fees were usually paid for by the owner, but in some cases, such as in last wills, enslaved Africans were manumitted on the condition that they paid the fee themselves. Outright purchase of one's manumission by enslaved Africans themselves has not been documented on Saba, but was common during Statia's "Golden Rock" era (Gilmore 2005). Nonetheless, there were usually other requirements to be met for manumission to legally proceed. In Curaçao and Surinam, the owners allowing the manumission of one of their enslaved Africans had to prove to colonial authorities that the individual could be self-sufficient; for this reason, it was forbidden to manumit elderly enslaved Africans (Goslinga 1985:555). Those manumitted could be returned to a state of slavery if they were to ever physically injure their former owners, and if the individual died with no heirs to their estate, then the former owner received a 25% share (Goslinga 1985:556). In St. Eustatius, manumission occurred by at least 1721, possibly earlier, as the census for that year lists five male "free inhabitants" separately at the end of the document, immediately following a separate tally for six Jewish residents. All the other residents listed previous to these two were denoted as Christian residents. Interestingly, all the free inhabitants bore the surname Lordijk. Most were married with children, and two of them owned one enslaved African each (DNAr 1.05.01.02 #1181:124). In the 1723 census, all of the free Lordijks were included among the Christian residents, an important development which demonstrates the acceptance of free African-descent people into Christianity within Statia's social environment. On Saba, manumission was rare in the eighteenth century, with the first few aforementioned free people of African descent appearing in the documentary record only by 1780. The earliest accounts specifying manumission date to 1827, and gradually increased up to 1862. Manumission totals are outlined in Figure 11.

In some cases, enslaved Africans on Saba were offered conditional manumissions, whereupon they were legally obliged to offer their labour or skills to a designated individual until the death of either party, or until the end of slavery as a legal institution. This placed newly "manumitted" enslaved

Africans into a legal limbo, whereupon they were eternally indebted and legally obliged to provide regular labour as free citizens rather than enslaved Africans. This asymmetrical arrangement provided labour to the owner or designated party without the legal requirements of owners to house, shelter, and provide food for their enslaved Africans. Two of these involved John George Hassell in his last will. In the third amendment to his will, he declared that all his enslaved Africans would be manumitted on his death, but “...the males shall serve said Jacob E Hassell a day out of each week and the females to serve the said Judith E. Hassell a day out of a week as long as they live, or as long as slavery exists on this island” (Saba Transfer Deeds 1850-1852:4/5/1849). In a previously mentioned case, John Hassell was to furnish his previous owner’s household with shoes for the rest of his life as a condition of his manumission (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:2/12/1847). Conditional manumissions may have been exploited by former owners in states of poverty as a means to divest themselves of the costs involved in supporting enslaved Africans, while still benefitting from their labour in a state of freedom. It also implicitly served to ensure a continuous state of social and legal inequality between the former owner and the manumitted African descent Saban.

Up to 1850, the Gezaghebber of Saba received a tax of f20 on every enslaved African manumitted on the island, which was an important supplementary income following the decline and eventual termination of Saba’s involvement in trade with South American privateers and pirates by the 1830’s (NArC AN NAC 4 Gouverneur 103 RT:12/6/1858). By 1835, in order to receive the manumission letter, this was paid in addition to a security deposit of f200 on part of the manumitter as a guarantee that the freed individual would not leave the island (Goslinga 1990:283). This law was intended to curb emigration from the islands, but also encouraged owners to seek other means to divest themselves of their enslaved Africans, such as through illegal sales to Spanish colonies or the U.S.A. As a result, this tax was reduced to f100 in 1843, and eliminated altogether by 1850. Scrapping this tax likely resulted in the subsequent spike in manumissions for 1851, followed by a gradual rise in manumission rates relative to sales up until emancipation in 1863. All known sale instances of enslaved Africans, whether purchases from abroad or locally, are charted in Figure 10. The spike of sales in 1861 is somewhat artificial as it accounts for the purchase of Mrs. Mary Ann Leverock’s (née Winfield) inheritance of her parents’ estate, accounting for only 1/6 of all lands and 31 enslaved Africans. Mrs. Leverock, notably, was the wife of Moses Leverock, the man who succeeded Edward Beaks Jr. as Lieutenant Governor following his death in 1863.

By 1860, Gezaghebber Edward Beaks Jr. grew increasingly concerned with the social stability on the island. “I regret much to have to inform Your Excellency, that the slaves in general, appear to be very discontented, owing in a great measure, to they having for some time past, expected to have been Emancipated, and I apprehend, that more will abscond, if their expectations are not soon

realized, especially, as the local situation of the Island, being such, as to afford much facility for absconding (NArC AN NAC 4 Gouverneur 103 RT:24/5/1860). The increase in escapes from Saba by enslaved Africans by the mid nineteenth century, therefore, was related more so to expectations of emancipation in the Dutch colonies, exacerbated by previous declarations by other nations with neighboring island colonies, rather than general malaise concerning mistreatment by their owners.

Relations between enslaved Africans and white residents continued to deteriorate by 1861. The following year, Beaks requested “for a police force, of three, or four men, who can speak English, and to assure your Excellency, that they are very much required, to aid me in maintaining the Laws + Regulations, and the respect due to Government, which are violated with much impunity; and I further make known to Your Excellency, that unless you are pleased to furnish me with said force, that I fear much, the evil consequences, that will in all probability follow, for want of the required aid...” (NArC AN NAC 4 Gouverneur 103 RT:13/5/1861), underlined emphasis in original and punctuation). Exactly one year later, Beaks implored the Governor once again: “In consequence of the frequent representations, made to me, by the principal proprietors of slaves, that, their slaves, appear no longer, to consider themselves under their control, by their frequent disobedience, to their orders, added to which, their very riotous conduct frequently, and other unlawful acts – and also, the disrespect, that the Government + the Laws and regulations, continue to be treated with, by many of the inhabitants, urges me, to submit to your Excellency, serious consideration, the very deplorable situation which matters have now arrived to, owing principally for the want of a police force, that I seriously apprehend, from the disorder, that exist, that acts of serious consequences, are very likely to occur. I therefore beseech, Your Excellency, to aid me with four police men... I most respectfully ask, that Your Excellency, will please excuse my being so urgent on this subject...” (NArC AN NAC 4 Gouverneur 103 RT:13/5/1861:13/5/1862, original underlined emphasis and punctuation).

Beaks was not exaggerating the friction between enslaved Africans and free people on Saba. Just over two weeks later, he wrote another urgent letter describing the deteriorating situation: “On the 31st Ultio: when in the exercise of my duty, against two slaves, a man + a woman, for overbearing language to me, the former took up a stone, and the latter, raised a hoe against me. I succeeded to place them in prison, but with much difficulty, being obliged, to act as a police man, to effect it. The said slaves were on the 3rd Instant brought before the Delegated Bench of Justice, and sentenced to receive 40 lashes each, they being satisfied, with the sentence, it was put in force, without delay. When said slaves, were to receive their punishment, upwards of thirty slaves, congregated near the place, and after the sentence, being executed, they cheer’d, and several of them made use of, very impertinent, + threatening language. From the foregoing occurrences, I flatter myself, that Your Excellency will see, that our lives are in danger, and how necessary it is, to aid me, with a police force,

as early as practicable, to quell, the rebellious conduct of the slaves, as I cannot place, much confidence, in the white population... (NArC AN NAC 4 Gouverneur 103 RT:13/5/1861:12/6/1862, original underlined emphasis and punctuation). The Governor of Curaçao granted Beaks' request by 1 November the same year, supplying the island with two police men and f200 to repair the prison, but this was delayed as Beaks had to request him to order the Governor of St. Eustatius to forward the funds to Saba, the latter evidently intended to keep it for himself (NArC AN NAC 4 Gouverneur 103 RT:13/5/1861:1/11/1862). The arrival of the police men was also delayed due to a smallpox epidemic raging on Curaçao (NArC AN NAC 4 Gouverneur 103 RT:13/5/1861).

There is little in the surviving documentary record that provides insight into levels of anti-slavery sentiments among Saba residents through time. The only indication is outlined in large and well documented account concerning five enslaved Africans, belonging to the widow Joanna Dinzey Horton, the widow Catharine Hassell, and Thomas Johnson, whereupon 22 July 1862 they apparently escaped Saba aboard the English schooner *Gustina*, captained by Peter Simmons Dinzey, who lived on Barbados but had relatives on Saba (NArC AN NAC 4 Gouverneur 103 RT:14/1/1863). Presiding over the case were Moses Leverock, who eventually replaced Beaks as Governor, Peter Simmons, and Josiah Peterson Sr. The following account is derived from the testimony signed by Peter Hassell, a second signed by Thomas Hassell, owner of one of the absconded enslaved Africans, a third signed by Thomas Johnson and Catharine Hassell, and another signed by Peter Hassell, Thomas Johnson, Ann Leverock, George Hassell, and John Leverock. English vessels calling into to Saba had a reputation on the island for helping enslaved Africans abscond. Peter Simmons Dinzey had apparently carried some to St. Thomas previously, while others were brought to Barbados, and he was warned by the Delegated Bench of Justice, under suspicion of such during the second occasion, that if he stepped foot upon Saba again he would be placed under arrest. This incident which resulted in the trial was the third known occurrence of such involving this captain and vessel on Saba. The owners of the absconded enslaved Africans were, in particular, at pains to understand why no effort was made to search the vessel for enslaved Africans from the island since the vessel and captain had a reputation for assisting them. In Barbados, Thomas Johnson accused, an enslaved African previously belonging to Mrs. Catharine Hassell was now employed by Dinzey's wife. Johnson furthermore said that the *Justice* was known on Saba as "The Emancipation Vessel", and that before its last departure from Saba, Dinzey paid an enslaved African to shout across Saba that "the Emancipation vessel going down", and that the crier was subsequently chastised by Lieutenant Governor Beaks with his cane.

Beaks responded to the Governor of Curaçao that "Your Excellency is well aware, that in this Island, that there is no fort, or other means, of commanding shipping in the anchorage, and it would have led to serious consequences, had I acted in compliance with the wishes of the parties

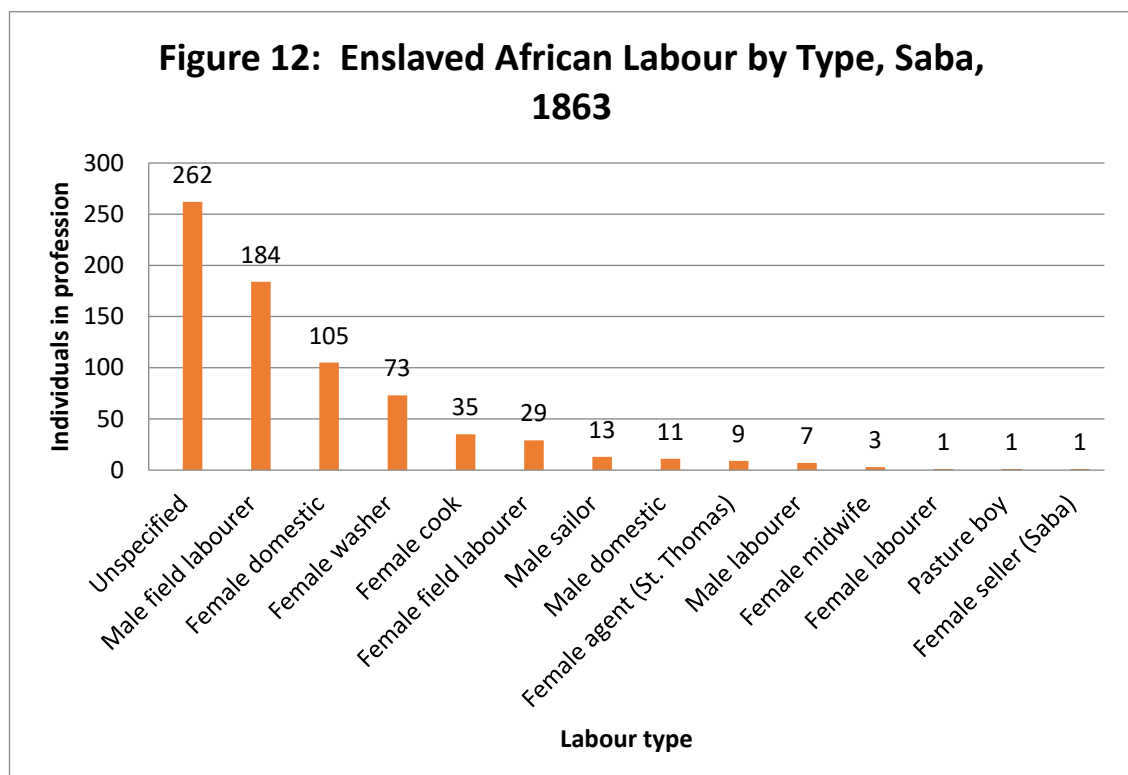
complaining. The Captain of the *Justina*, has in this Island, many relatives, and no doubt, a large party, would have sided him, in opposition to the parties who had lost their slaves, and their adherents. To have attempted to take possession of the schooner *Justina*, to send her to St. Eustatius, under those circumstances, may have led, to very unpleasant results. I therefore decided, to bring the case before the Court...that there was considerable excitement, is... therefore proved, the absolute want of a police force, to aid me, in keeping order...".

Peter Simmons Dinzey was apparently acquitted on his single testimony alone, without the opportunity for the owners of the enslaved Africans to present their evidence in court. The plaintiffs complained in letters to the Governor of Curaçao that they denied their right to present their case in court by Beaks, which Beaks subsequently denied to the Governor. While Beaks denied that the case was judged based solely on the testimonies of the defendants that were allowed as conclusive evidence, which was a "gross violation of custom and law" according to Peter Hassell, a member of the Delegated Bench of Justice. Beaks did not allow to sit on the Bench during the case, however, since he as the father in law of one of the plaintiffs. Hassell also alleges that "high words were used between both parties and that a threat of personal violence was made by the defendant". The judgment was controversial enough that Peter Hassell requested to the Governor of Curaçao to be discharged from the Delegated Bench of Justice. During the trial, which was held at Beaks' house in his hall (living room), enslaved Africans and other "coloured persons" congregated around the house, who voiced their support through "whoops and cheers", while others of the like congregated into the hall itself where they intimidated the plaintiffs from presenting their case. Another room of the house, which was normally served as the court room, as occupied by enslaved Africans and free people of African descent as a "drinking saloon to which every one had access, the Marshall and others was invited to imbibe". This statement by Thomas Johnson, Ann Leverock, George Hassell, and John Leverock is followed by a crossed out sentence this continued, "The Governor himself visited it several times during the day and invited others in". Beaks, however, completely denies that his house was surrounded with slaves and other coloured persons, and that one of my rooms was set apart as a drinking saloon, and that slaves hooped and cheered". Instead, "my sons gave a few gentlemen a little refreshment". At one point, according to Peter Hassell, "a rush was made by persons (that had no business before the court) that had been in and around the place all day. They at once surrounded the plaintiff and at the same time assured the defendant of their sympathy with him by asserting that he "need not fear they were there," I called upon the Governor to show his authority, but none was used by him, or so far as I observed made any effort to expel the intruders, fearing a scene of violence and personal assault upon the plaintiff. I then interfered so far as to get the plaintiff from among those that then surrounded him and we both withdrew from the court room at the same time

informing the Governor and Court that I did not intend to hold my appointment longer, and then we both proceeded home. Often before has the courtroom been a scene of confusion, but never like this. The whole course of the Governor was such as to clear the defendant from the charge against him which was admitted to be true by the defendant before the Court.” Hassell also stated that since the court had no power to try the case that it could have been referred to St. Eustatius, which was the common practice for more serious cases, but Beaks countered to the Governor of Curaçao that he did not deem it necessary. Following the closure of the court, the Captain and his crew were allowed to immediately depart, despite the point that the captain apparently did not have his passport. Following the departure, some assaults occurred by those assembled around Beaks’ residents, one upon one of the sitting members of the Bench of Justice, who “received some severe blows”. Beaks, apparently, sat quiet and did nothing to prevent the chaos, and it was suggested that two or three police men, if they were on the island as the Governor of Curaçao had promised, could have prevented the outbreak of violence and aided Beaks in administering proper justice. In the aftermath of the affair, “a great mass of the inhabitants have become disgusted with the Governor (Beaks, and) they will not aid him where he personally is concerned, and it is the... wish and prayer of all except a few of the Governor’s clique that a new Governor be appointed and that he be selected from some other place as one from here would soon from family connections and interest become bassel (basal) and continue the same course the present has so sadly begun. Believing your honor has the welfare of the colonies over which you preside at heart we pray you to take such measures that a new order of things may be instituted here by remodeling the Government by appointing one in the place of the present, that the laws may be respected and our rights protected.” Beaks replied to the Governor that if this is the sentiment of the mass of residents on Saba, then another governor should then be appointed. Beaks was replaced later that year by Moses Leverock, who was much better received by Sabans. A petition circulated later in the decade to rename The Bottom to “Leverocktown” (Hartog 1975). Since emancipation, there have not been any social unrest comparable to these events on Saba.

On 1 July 1863, 734 enslaved Africans on Saba were manumitted, which was announced by advertised posts in The Bottom and during church services (NArC AN NAC 4 Gouverneur 103 RT:3/11/1862). Originally, by 1857, the indemnification included eleven age categories, but with different compensation levels depending on the island. On all islands except Saba and St. Maarten it was pegged at f50 for childhood, peaking between the age of 25 to 35 at f500, and declining to 55 years and upwards to f50. For Saba, the compensations were considerably lower; for adults between 25-35 years f405 would be due, declining to f60, which, curiously, was f10 more than was set for the aforementioned islands. In this original draft, St. Maarten owners were to receive no compensation at all, due to the “relative freedom” enjoyed by enslaved Africans on St. Maarten relative to the

emancipation on the French side in 1848 (Hampshire Advertiser, Southampton 28/11/1857; Goslinga 1990:286-287). By 1863 it was settled that all owners across the Dutch Caribbean islands were to receive f200 for each enslaved African, regardless of age or gender, except for St. Maarten, where owners were only accorded f100 per enslaved African, which for them was not actually paid until 1878 (Goslinga 1990:286-287). Three medical doctors were dispatched to Saba in order to assess the health of enslaved Africans in order to deem the owners suitable or not for compensation. A standardized set of forms were completed by owners of enslaved Africans under supervision by the doctors, which included the name of each enslaved African owned, their gender, village or place of residence, age, religion, and trade. Two individuals assessed had elephantiasis, and their owners were not compensated. Another two were off the island working as sailors aboard Saban ships; unfortunately for their owners, they would not receive compensation for those absent during the assessment. Nine other enslaved Africans were absent and residing on St. Thomas working as agents for their owners, thus also depriving them of compensation. Figure 12 below shows the numbers of enslaved Africans engaged in the professions listed in the emancipation document, differentiated by gender. In most cases, children under the 12 years were not listed with a trade, however, in some cases children as young as nine months are listed as field labourers, and a one-year old child designated as a house servant. All of the males listed as “domestic servant” were under 15 years old. Interestingly, all of the enslaved Africans sent to St. Thomas as agents were female, which may be tied to a larger sense of trust among owners in female enslaved Africans than males with regards to absconding.



Labour types were clearly a gendered enterprise among enslaved Africans. The large majority of males were engaged as field labourers, while women's jobs were more dispersed; most were domestic labourers, but a significant proportion were also washers, cooks, midwives, and sales agents. Male labour, conversely, was limited either to the field or the sea. Field labour continued for males through life, with the oldest individual emancipated at 73 as a field labourer. The oldest female field labourer, however, was only 50 years of age; those above 50 to age 78 were listed as washers, midwives, house servants, and cooks. It is apparent that female enslaved Africans were granted more flexibility to change their professions with regards to their designated profession than men within their lifetimes. Notably absent from this list are any skilled trades such as carpentry or fishing; these are listed as trades by the Governor of St. Maarten in his report on Saba from 1816, and since these professions were surely present on Saba by 1863, they were occupied by free Sabans instead. The partial probate inventory of Thomas Dinzey's estate also included the professions of enslaved Africans attached to his plantation. These ranged from sailors, domestic servants, field hands, and boiling house operators (Partial probate inventory of Thomas Dinzey estate, Will Johnson collection).

The history of Saba as conveyed herein is characterized by persistent poverty by the early eighteenth century. Poverty is an ideological process, and therefore identifying poverty, being the "physical appearance of social inequality, exclusion, and the unequal distribution of wealth" (Orser 2011:538), necessitates an understanding of its roots and development in colonial Saba, along with its dialectic relative to class, race, and gender. Poverty was enabled early in Saba's colonial period, whereby the best lands upon an island with very limited tracts of flat land and sea access were occupied by cotton, coffee, sugar, and indigo plantations. These were owned almost entirely in absentia by merchants, planters, and government officials in St. Eustatius. This process started with Spring Bay and Flat Point as sugar and indigo plantations. This probably expanded soon after to The Bottom, whereby small plots of land were consolidated into the most enduring sugar plantation on the island. Labat described Saba as mildly prosperous and utopic during his visit at the dawn of the eighteenth century. However, widespread poverty occurred on Saba as early as the second decade of the eighteenth century, precipitated by apparent overpopulation and a prolonged drought. During this time, Sabans and St. Eustatius residents requested to emigrate from their islands to form new colonies on nearby, unoccupied islands such as St. Croix, as they considered both to be overpopulated. The lack of quality, arable land not occupied by plantations limited the options of Sabans to earn income through agricultural surplus, and thus many remained subsistence-level agriculturalists. Other Sabans took to the sea which provided opportunities for fishing and seafaring, and the potential incomes available from serving as sea captains and vessel owning or shareholding provided one of the

few profession-based vectors through which Sabans could achieve upper class upon their own island, and potentially abroad. Cobbling and shoe exports became the most important element of the economy by the first decade of the eighteenth century, but its profitability appears to have waned by mid-century. Although certain Sabans acquired sufficient wealth to purchase a combined total of 50 enslaved Africans from St. Eustatius during the 1720's, two decades Sabans continued to emigrate from the island during the 1740's to 1760's.

The 1772 hurricane served as a great ideological equalizer upon an island apparently already inhabited by poor people, according to an official from St. Eustatius. The destruction of almost every material vector for projecting class and race on Saba following the 1772 hurricane would have placed many newly-homeless Saban households within similar or identical material conditions as enslaved Africans, which would have certainly exposed the Saban habitus relative to race and class to all residents and fostered its re-evaluation later into the century and up to emancipation. Not coincidentally, the first Sabans of African descent appeared in the documentary record by 1780. However, the re-evaluation of Saban habitus appears to have been tempered by a certain gendered, labour-based pragmatism; by 1816, just four out of twenty-seven free Sabans of African descent were male. Two more strong hurricanes hit the island in 1780 and 1819, and the political instability of the islands between 1795-1815 exacerbated Saban poverty by restricting the regional trade relative to the nation which claimed the island.

By the time that the last sugar plantation ceased operations in the 1820's, Saba's population was continuing to expand once again, and nearly doubled fifty years later. By this time, the only recorded annual exports from Saba were several head of live cattle. Notably, this did not include sugar, even though the Dinzey plantation in The Bottom was operating during this time. As previously discussed, this was deemed a problem in the 1816 government report on the social and economic state of Saba, wherein economic diversification was recommended, such as increased sugar production and even cochineal cultivation. Among many subsistence agriculturalists, owning enslaved Africans became a redundant legal responsibility if their labour did not produce a surplus. For some, it may have developed into an increasingly unbearable expense as the nineteenth century progressed, especially after the agreement between the Netherlands and Britain in 1818, whereby the British increasingly pressured the Dutch to also abolish the regional slave trade between islands. As a consequence, it became difficult for Sabans to sell their enslaved Africans to other islands, evidenced by the relatively low costs of selling enslaved Africans between Sabans as compared the higher prices that could be fetched from a sale from Saba to St. Eustatius. Many Sabans would have been unable to afford the costs associated with manumission. In some cases, poor owners wishing to manumit their enslaved Africans had to wait until their own deaths, so that the proceeds derived from the sale

of their estate could cover the associated manumission costs. For those that were otherwise unable to sell their enslaved Africans, this locked the least-wealthy owners into a cycle of poverty due to their inability to divest themselves of the financial responsibilities which resulted from slave ownership, while simultaneously serving to maintain and even increase the enslaved population on Saba.

For enslaved Africans, manumission could well have transferred them from poverty-like conditions under slavery to a life of free poverty. Those who little to no wealth and personal possessions and unable to solicit aid from free or enslaved friends and relatives may have found themselves in worse material conditions than under slavery as their former owners now bore no legal responsibility to provide them with shelter, clothing, and food. This was explicitly recognized as a problem by some former owners; as previously mentioned, there were at least 25 cases of manumission upon owners' deaths that also included bequeathals such as land, housing, and cisterns to their former enslaved Africans. This would have provided them some foundation for self-sufficiency as free Sabans. The potential for this situation was also grounded in the Dutch emancipation law which stated that newly emancipated free African-descent residents could work four days per week for their former owners to keep their former lodgings under slavery. These issues surrounding poverty and manumission were probably evidenced in part during Gast's 1857 visit to Saba, where he remarked upon the general presence of begging, but did not observe vagabonage (*Nomina Geographica Neerlandica* 1885:213).

Saba's population had also been continuously growing throughout the nineteenth century. In 1816 there were 1,145 residents, climbing to 1,617 in 1847, 1,877 in 1861, and 2,072 by 1878. This would have nearly halved the availability of lands for housing and agriculture from the previous century, and many households did not make structural adjustments to their houses to accommodate the burgeoning population. Rather, a dozen family members or more often slept in the same house, sometimes just two rooms in size. This persisted into the mid twentieth century, even following the population nadir during the 1950's.

In Saba, prior to the twentieth century and especially before emancipation, residents of The Bottom considered themselves the "elite" of the island (Price 1934:13; Hiss 1943:20). Based upon names given in the Vendue Books, the Saba Notary Book, the Book of Recorded Mortgages, the Saba Transfer Deeds, and the government log book, most residents with the title "Esquire" lived in The Bottom. A researcher visiting the island in the 1930's commented that "they married only in their village or with a few newcomers, such as the children of clergy or doctors. A resident of more than eighty years told us that he remembered only two weddings between the people of Bottom and Windwardside" (Price 1934:13).

Crane states that village-centered endogamy was not unique to The Bottom, but was a characteristic common to all in Saba (Crane 1971:231). However, the Catholic marriage registers provide a more nuanced view. There were significant ties between Palmetto Point and Hell's Gate through marriage and sponsors for baptism, and there are many instances in the nineteenth century of children born out of wedlock across the island between parents of different villages (Espersen 2009:88-89). Therefore, the proliferation these "natural" births, as they are recorded in the Catholic baptismal records, served to mitigate the negative effects of village-based endogamy. One village in particular, Palmetto Point, was repeatedly singled out in traveller's accounts of Saba as being socially "backwards". A. Grenfell Price, who conducted a study on Saba with clear racist and social Darwinist intent, exemplifies this in his narratives of Palmetto Point. In addition to titling his section on Palmetto Point as "Marypoint: A Degenerate Community", his derision for the community pervades the article: "...and the present doctor has found no trace yet of hookworm, although one suspects its presence at Marypoint, where no sanitation exists... Yet, except in the tiny village of Marypoint, inbreeding does not seem to have destroyed fertility, stamina, or ability... The worst effects of isolation and inbreeding are to be seen in Marypoint. Here a community of some thirty to forty persons is composed almost entirely of seven families of Sagors, all closely intermarried and interrelated. The land seems fair, the settlement was once quite flourishing and progressive, and a few of the people still possess good physique. The diet is miserable, consisting mainly of bananas and sweet potatoes, cassava, and fish. Little effort is made to provide the children with greens or milk on an island where vegetables grow in profusion and goats are numerous. The people have even lost their former knowledge of baking and carry bread, biscuit, and condensed milk from Bottom by "head". (Price 1934:55, 56). Present day residents of "The Promised Land", a section of The Bottom which was reserved for evacuees from Palmetto Point by the Island Government 1934, are still often considered as socially "inferior".

A dialectic between village and race, in terms of free Sabans of African descent, did not quite manifest on Saba until after emancipation. This resulted in an influx of newly emancipated Sabans to Middle Island, and other districts such as English Quarter in Windwardside. It was not until the early twentieth century, however, that clear divisions were visible between villages according to race (Price 1934:52): "Bottom (800 feet) has become almost entirely black. Windwardside and St. John (1200 to 1400 feet) are partly white and partly colored. Hellsgate (1600 feet) is almost entirely white. Marypoint (about 1000 feet) is white but decadent".

Saba after emancipation into the twentieth century

Emancipation was to come along with certain responsibilities for the newly freed. In Surinam, previously enslaved Africans were required to undertake an "apprenticeship" period of 10 years, many

under their former owners; in principal this was to provide them with a trade or skill set to support themselves, but in practice they continued to perform their same duties as before (Emmer 2006:128; Goslinga 1990:310-311). This was not the case in the Dutch Antilles. However, Article 22 of the Emancipation Law received by Beaks stated that previously enslaved Africans were required to work to earn their lodgings four days per week (NArC AN NAC 4 Gouverneur 103 RT:3/11/1862). In the next few months following emancipation, Saba, along with other islands, were adjusting to new types of social organization. On Saba the issue of vagrancy and “idleness” among newly freed Sabans of African descent was addressed to the Governor of Curaçao, who replied that only those found guilty of those crimes by the Bench of Justice, or those condemned to hard labour, could be put to work to clear the step-roads of stones (NArC AN NAC 4 4969:1/11/1863).

All enslaved Africans freed during emancipation were required to register a surname, however, it was not permissible for them to adopt the surname of their former owners. While many on Saba took surnames that had no parallel on the island, other surnames were similar to the original surnames of their former owners, except for some minor changes. Due to the prohibition on adopting the surnames of former owners, in several cases the newly adopted surnames are very similar to that of their own or others’ former owners except for slight differences. Emancipation on Saba resulted in the adoption of 105 surnames between 125 households; among them, only one, Carter, has ever appeared as a resident in Saba’s documentary record prior to 1863 (Saba Census 1780). An early list of these surnames was in the possession of Arthur Anslijn of Saba, and recorded by Will Johnson (1994, 2012). These are listed in Table 14, in the Appendix. Two “Whitfield” names were registered, similar to the surname “Winfield”; and “Heyligo” was similar to “Heyliger”; “Sorton” is one letter short of “Horton”, and “Levenston” (in some cases spelled as “Levenstone”) uses stone as a synonym for rock relative to the surname “Leverock”. In other instances, surnames were adopted on Saba that belonged to regionally prominent families from other islands, exemplified by a Blyden, Mussenden, Selig, and Lake household on Saba. As discussed in Chapter 4, Nathaniel Mussenden was a wealthy merchant on St. Eustatius who participated in the network of trade between St. Eustatius and Saba with South American rebel privateers and pirates during the 1820’s and 1830’s, and Charles Mussenden was then Chief of Police for Statia. Several Blydens were wealthy plantation owners on St. Eustatius, Carel Selig was the last owner of the Spring Bay Flat plantation during the early nineteenth century as an absentee owner from St. Eustatius; and Nereston Lake was a foreign attorney of unknown origin that defended African descent Sabans in court in the mid nineteenth century (DNAr 1.05.13.901 #540.1:2/12/1847). These are direct examples of surnames as a vector to project class by association, in an identical vein to what was previously discussed with first names. Their proliferation after 1863 makes them very conspicuous indicators of African descent for the late nineteenth and

twentieth centuries on Saba. The social and economic fortunes of Saban continued to dwindle into the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The regional sea trade had collapsed, and Saban seafarers began seeking work further abroad. In particular, many found employment sailing out of New York (Johnson 2014:118-119). Poverty was widespread across the island. Henri Hubert Kol, who toured the Dutch Caribbean to recommend government policies towards the islands on behalf of the Dutch Tweede Kamer (Second Chamber), seriously suggested moving all of Saba's residents to St. Eustatius (Kol 1904:203). This, he mused, would ease the poverty and workload of Sabans, as the lands across the island were exhausted. They would bring their work ethic to farm St. Eustatius, where he noted this ethic was significantly lacking. This recommendation did not come to pass.

While Saba lace continued to be an important export up to the 1930's, the island grew increasingly dependent upon remittances sent in from men working abroad. In particular, there was a large exodus of Sabans that left to work the Lago oil refineries in Aruba and Curaçao. The degree was such that Saba had an all-time high of 2,488 residents in 1915, followed from 1916 to 1960 by a precipitous drop to just 981 (Johnson 1994). Between 1915 and 1920 alone, Saba lost 33% of its population largely to these refineries. However, the economic fortunes at these refineries were only open towards white Sabans, as Sabans of African descent were unwanted as employees by Shell. The depopulation of Saba by white Sabans resulted in increasing vacancies in space and housing, especially in The Bottom, as entire families moved abroad with no guarantee of return. Many of the vacant lands and houses in The Bottom were purchased by Sabans of African descent, to the point that by 1934, an American visitor noted that there were almost no white Sabans living there (Price 1934:52). "Bottom (800 feet) has become almost entirely black. Windwardside and St. John (1,200 to 1,400 feet) are partly white and partly colored. Hellsgate (1,600 feet) is almost entirely white. Marypoint (about 1,000 feet) is white but decadent".

The demographics relative to the surviving Saban villages mentioned have not changed substantially since this time. The Saban economy changed significantly by the 1980's, with a shift to education and tourism. The Saba School of Medicine opened in 1988, and hosts approximately 500 medical students per year (Lockie Johnson, personal communication 2015), and during this decade, scuba diving and eco-tourism established the second pillar of the island's current economy.

Saba's governance changed considerably in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. In 1954, Saba became part of the Netherlands Antilles, which was created as a constituent country within the Kingdom of the Netherlands. The Netherlands Antilles was composed of Curaçao, Bonaire, Aruba, St. Maarten, St. Eustatius, and Saba. Aruba, however, left the country in 1985 and obtained its own status as a constituent country. The rest of the Netherlands Antilles survived until 2010, when it was dissolved following the results of a national referendum on the status of each island. Saba and Bonaire

voted for closer integration into the Netherlands, while St. Eustatius voted to retain the status quo with the Netherlands Antilles. However, St. Maarten and Curaçao both voted for more independence, leaving Statia's vote moot. St. Eustatius was, somewhat controversially, drawn into closer integration with the Netherlands as a result, and now together with Bonaire and Saba composes what is commonly known as the BES islands, which are governed uniquely as "Public Entities" of the Netherlands.

Closing remarks

From the dawn of Saba's colonial era to the present, the island's history features a range of ideological constants, and others that have either changed or disappeared relative to shifts in governance, the island's economy, the institution of slavery, and emancipation. Some zeal was apparent in the decade following the island's colonization by the Dutch, witnessing the expansion of sugar plantations and the importation of several hundred enslaved Africans. However, Saba lost the interest of colonial authorities in succeeding centuries, being neither profitable nor an expense to govern, and characterized regionally as an island of poor people dependent upon fishing and agriculture. Indeed, poverty on Saba relative to the region can characterize a significant proportion of its population throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, exacerbated especially after hurricanes in 1772 and 1780. For a small minority of plantations owners, though, Saba was an island of profit. These plantations, however, were owned mostly in absentia from St. Eustatius, echoing the similar relationship of both islands relative to subsidiary governance. Saba, though, never became a full-fledged plantation colony, which served bifurcate the experience of slavery between plantation and non-plantation contexts. In the following chapter, the material and socio-spatial components of Saba's sugar and indigo plantations will be discussed from the results of archaeological excavations between 2012 and 2015.