

Anglo-Dutch Trade in the Chesapeake and the British Caribbean, 1621–1733

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Introduction

In recent years scholars have produced a flurry of work describing the Dutch influence on Britain and its empire during the early modern period. The celebration of the 400th anniversary of the arrival of Henry Hudson in what would become New York City and the publication of several new works has reinvigorated the study of Anglo-Dutch relations and cultural borrowing. This scholarship has charted Dutch influence on a number of English developments during the seventeenth century, including those in the fields of cartography, finance, national accounting, and even landscape design. Other works have concentrated on the strong cultural, political, diplomatic, and religious links that the Dutch and English shared and the ways that migration and commerce buttressed these bonds. In the aggregate these works have offered a thoroughly international history of the origins of the British state.¹

As scholars of early modern Britain have revised our understanding of statebuilding there, historians of the early modern Atlantic world have also been at work reconsidering the nature of Atlantic empires. Moving away from an earlier view that focused on the institutional character of early modern empires, Atlantic historians are increasingly finding that imperial economies grew out

1 For examples of scholarship considering Anglo-Dutch relations in the seventeenth century see Lisa Jardine, *Going Dutch: How England Plundered Holland's Glory* (New York: HarperCollins, 2008); Steven Pincus, *1688: The First Modern Revolution* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2009); Jonathan Scott, "'Good Night Amsterdam': Sir George Downing and Anglo-Dutch Statebuilding," *English Historical Review* 113, no. 47 (2003): 334–356; Thomas Claydon, *Europe and the Making of England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007); Alison Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560–1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008); Jacob Soll, "Accounting for Government: Holland and the Rise of Political Economy in Seventeenth-Century Europe," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 40, no. 2 (2009): 215–238. This scholarship, of course, has a long history and is best investigated through the volumes produced by the Anglo-Dutch Historical Conference intermittently since 1959. There were also a number of studies published surrounding the 300th anniversary of the Glorious Revolution. See, for example Jonathan I. Israel, ed., *The Anglo-Dutch Moment: Essays on the Glorious Revolution and its world impact* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

of local decision-making and self-organized, often interimperial, networks as much as they did from centralized planning and metropolitan coordination.² Scholars have uncovered particularly close ties between the commercially powerful Dutch Republic and England's fledgling colonies. Encouraged by the vulnerabilities of colonial life and less affected by the cross-sea rivalry that sometimes tempered Anglo-Dutch relations in Europe, English and Dutch colonists forged close cross-national relationships in the Americas that endured for more than a century.³

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- 2 For examples of the most recent statements of this argument see Games, *The Web of Empire*; David Hancock, *Oceans of wine: Madeira and the emergence of American trade and taste* (New Haven, Conn: Yale University Press, 2009); Michael J. Jarvis, *In the Eye of All Trade: Bermuda, Bermudians, and the maritime Atlantic world, 1680–1783* (Chapel Hill: Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, Williamsburg, Virginia, by the University of North Carolina Press, 2010).
- 3 Most work on Anglo-Dutch trade in the Americas has focused on Anglo-Dutch interaction in the Chesapeake and New Netherland/New York. April Lee Hatfield, "Dutch New Netherland Merchants in the Seventeenth-Century English Chesapeake," in *The Atlantic Economy during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries: Organization, Operation, Practice, and Personnel*, ed. Peter Coclanis (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 2005), 205–228; Hatfield, "Mariners, Merchants, and Colonists in Seventeenth-Century English America," in *The Creation of the British Atlantic World*, ed. Elizabeth Mancke and Carole Shammas (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 139–159; Claudia Schnurman, *Atlantische Welten. Engländer und Niederländer in amerikanisch-atlantischen Raum, 1648–1713*, *Wirtschafts- und Sozialhistorische Studien*, no. 9 (Cologne, 1998); Schnurmann, "Atlantic Trade and American Identities: The Correlations of Supranational Commerce, Political Opposition, and Colonial Regionalism," in *The Atlantic Economy*, ed. Coclanis, 186–204; Schnurmann, "Representative Atlantic Entrepreneur: Jacob Leisler, 1640–1691," in *Riches From Atlantic Commerce Dutch Transatlantic Trade and Shipping, 1585–1817*, ed. Johannes Postma and Victor Enthoven (Leiden: Brill, 2003), 259–283; Jan Kupp, "Dutch Notarial Acts Relating to the Tobacco Trade of Virginia, 1608–1653," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 30 (1973): 653–655; Victor Enthoven and Wim Klooster, "The Rise and Fall of the Virginia-Dutch Connection in the Seventeenth Century," in *Early Modern Virginia: Reconsidering the Old Dominion*, ed. Douglas Bradburn and John C. Coombs (Charlottesville and London: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 90–127. For works that also consider New England see Cynthia J. van Zandt, "The Dutch Connection: Isaac Allerton and the Dynamics of English Cultural Anxiety in the *Gouden Eeuw*," in *Connecting Cultures: The Netherlands in Five Centuries of Transatlantic Exchange*, ed. Rosemarijn Hoefte and Johnanna C. Kardux (Amsterdam: Vrije University Press, 1994), 51–76; Kim Todt, "Trading between New Netherland and New England, 1624–1664," in "The Worlds of Lion Gardiner, ca. 1599–1663: Crossing and Boundaries," ed. Ned Landsman and Andrew Newman, special issue, *Early American Studies* 9, no. 2 (2011): 348–378. Anglo-Dutch trade in the English Caribbean has received surprisingly little in-depth attention. See the works cited below and the several examples noted by Wim Klooster, "Inter-Imperial Smuggling in the

Intended to evaluate and characterize the nature and meaning of the American dimensions of Anglo-Dutch trade during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, this essay will examine the extent and scope of Anglo-Dutch colonial exchange, the ways Dutch and British merchants transacted business, the networks they constructed, and the colonial nodal points where trade was based. In assessing the importance of Anglo-Dutch trade for the British empire, it will also consider the ways that British colonists understood the meaning of these exchanges and in turn the character of their empire. Largely focused on the places where Anglo-Dutch trade was most significant – the Chesapeake and the British Caribbean – I argue that Dutch trade was important to the development of British colonies and thus the British Atlantic. More than providing needed trade, colonists' experience with Dutch commerce also spurred them to advocate for the flexibility to determine their own commercial futures even if this approach clashed with England's increasingly mercantilist empire. British colonists, in other words, always understood their Anglo-Dutch trade as political as well as economic. Dutch trade matters in our understanding of the evolution of the British Atlantic both because it aided economic development at the fringes of the empire and because it shaped the political economy of that empire.

The General Structure of Anglo-Dutch Trade in British America

Though Anglo-Dutch trade was a feature of nearly every British colonial economy during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, its intensity and the mechanisms merchants of both empires used to conduct trade varied over time and by location. Trade was most vigorous in the important agricultural staple producing regions, namely the Chesapeake and Caribbean, and was most common when English merchants could not meet colonists' needs for imports and shipping services, as was true before 1650 and during periods of imperial warfare thereafter. The chief determinant of the methods colonists

Americas, 1600–1800,” in *Soundings in Atlantic History: Latent Structures and Intellectual Currents, 1500–1830*, ed. Bernard Bailyn and Patricia L. Denault (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2009), 141–180, 157–162; Paul E. Kopperman, “Ambivalent Allies: Anglo-Dutch Relations and the Struggle against the Spanish Empire in the Caribbean, 1621–1644,” *The Journal of Caribbean History* 21, no. 1 (1987): 55–77. I have worked in this area as well and this essay follows the arguments I made in Koot, *Empire at the Periphery: British Colonists, Anglo-Dutch Trade, and the Development of the British Atlantic, 1621–1713* (New York: NYU Press, 2011).

used to trade was the relative intensity of commerce and the legal situation in which both groups operated. When demand for Anglo-Dutch exchange was highest, such as during the Caribbean and Chesapeake export booms of the 1640s and 1650s, Dutch and English actors alike built durable networks backed by credit relationships and facilitated by the presence of Dutch agents in English colonies to manage trade. As trade slowed or as English mercantile laws erected barriers to direct trade, both groups adapted, returning to less structured exchange relationships and moving their direct interactions to more receptive colonies, such as Dutch St. Eustatius or Danish St. Thomas.

While the frequency of Anglo-Dutch trade and the means of executing it varied according to economic and regulatory changes, what remained largely consistent over the course of the first century of settlement in the English Atlantic was the general pattern of trade. In most cases Dutch merchants provided English settlers with a range of products that supported their settlements and plantations. These included European manufactured goods, especially ceramics, textiles, and metal wares; provisions, including beer, wine, flour, cheese, and, for those not in the Caribbean, sugar and its byproducts; and livestock, mainly horses but also cattle and goats. Less common, but at times more valuable, Dutch traders also brought British colonists exotic goods such as spices and silks from the East Indies. In return for these items, Dutch merchantmen usually returned to the Dutch Republic from English colonies bearing tropical commodities, mainly sugar and tobacco. Even when demand for European goods was low, English planters still welcomed Dutch traders because of the relatively inexpensive shipping services they offered. Finally, Dutch merchants also sold enslaved Africans in British colonies, though the trade was numerically insignificant when compared to English slavers.⁴

Establishing Trade, 1620s–1630s

The first Anglo-Dutch commercial interactions in the Americas were an outgrowth of the nations' close relationship within Europe and Elizabeth I's commitment to provide troops to help the Dutch in their struggle against Spain after 1585. When the Virginia Company (1606) sought new leaders to bring order to their fledgling settlement at Jamestown in 1611 they turned to two English men with extensive military experience in the Netherlands, Sir Thomas Gates and Sir Thomas Dale. Though it is uncertain what specific commercial

4 For more on the Anglo-Dutch slave trade see note 48 below and Koot, *Empire at the Periphery*, 56–57, 127–129, 196–199.

connections these men encouraged between the new English colony and the Dutch Republic, it is clear that the States General was willing to release them to the Virginia Company because they believed the men would help the Republic “to establish a firm market there [Virginia] for the benefit and increase of trade.”⁵

As Virginians began to produce successful tobacco harvests in the 1620s, Dutch merchants capitalized on earlier inroads and quickly captured a portion of the colony’s exports. Although there is little detailed evidence of Anglo-Dutch exchange in these years it is clear that Dutch vessels were common in Virginia. After receiving a charter in 1621, the Dutch West India Company moved to gain monopoly control of the Virginia trade, banning private trade to the region and dispatching a vessel there. Meanwhile, English traders also learned to take advantage of Dutch markets for tobacco. Already by 1622, for example, the Virginia Company had begun to send tobacco to Flushing and Middelburg to circumvent James I’s efforts to limit England’s tobacco imports. By the end of the decade, however, the English Crown’s reluctance to embrace tobacco dissipated as officials became aware that Dutch traders’ domination of the Chesapeake’s tobacco exports prevented English merchants from engaging in this valuable trade.⁶ Selling tobacco to the Dutch was so appealing to English colonists in the Chesapeake because Dutch merchants both brought scarce European goods and offered better prices for their tobacco than planters could secure in England. Governor John Harvey of Virginia reported in 1632, for example, that Dutch masters offered as much as “eighteen peance p. pound” for tobacco, a price he claimed was greater than that which English traders offered. Meanwhile, Dutch vessels, well stocked with “sugar, strong waters,

5 “Petition of Sir Thomas Dale to the Noble, High and Mighty Lords, the Lords the States General of the United Netherlands,” January 1618, in *Documents Relative to the Colonial History of the State of New York*, ed. E.B. O’Callaghan, et al. (Albany, NY: Weed, Parsons, and Co., 1856) 1: 18 (hereafter *DRCHNY*); Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *The Jamestown Project* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 273–274; Enthoven and Klooster, “The Rise and Fall of the Virginia-Dutch Connection in the Seventeenth Century,” in *Early Modern Virginia*, ed. Bradburn and Coomes, 93–94; Charlotte Wilcoxon, *Dutch Trade and Ceramics in America in the Seventeenth Century* (Albany, NY: Albany Institute of History & Art, 1987), 19–21. Testifying to the commercial intelligence the Dutch quickly gathered about Virginia is Johannes Vingboon’s strikingly detailed 1617 chart of the James River. Michael Jarvis and Jeroen van Driel, “The Vingboon’s Chart of the James River, circa 1617,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser. 54 (1997): 377–394, 381–383, 385–387.

6 Enthoven and Klooster, “The Rise and Fall of the Virginia-Dutch Connection,” in *Early Modern Virginia*, ed. Bradburn and Coomes, 95–97; Wilcoxon, *Dutch Trade and Ceramics*, 20–21.

lemons, hats, shirts, stockings, frying-pans, &c” brought the kinds of necessities for which Chesapeake planters were always desperate.⁷

In the Caribbean, where the English established settlements in St. Christopher, Nevis, Antigua, Montserrat, and Barbados during the 1620s and 1630s, Anglo-Dutch trade was also an important feature of colonial life. Having already cooperated in privateering raids against the Spanish since the 1580s, it was not unusual for Dutch and English colonists to collaborate in the Caribbean. On English islands like St. Christopher these interactions usually entailed Dutch vessels calling to obtain water, provisions, and intelligence. For poorly supported colonists struggling to build viable settlements the arrival of Dutch vessels provided essential trade and information.⁸ Regular small-scale exchange between Dutch and English settlers in the 1620s blossomed into more sustained trade in the mid-1630s as planters began to introduce tobacco.⁹

Familiar with these islands and with Dutch colonies nearby, Dutch shipmasters almost immediately arrived to purchase tobacco. An outgrowth of their trade with Virginia, Dutch captains added the English Caribbean to what scholars refer to as the Dutch Atlantic cruising trade. Under this arrangement, one or more merchants hired a vessel in the Netherlands, loaded it with a cargo of provisions, wine and beer, textiles, glazed earthenware, and other manufactured goods, and engaged a captain and crew to transport the cargo to the Americas where the captain was instructed to exchange it for tobacco or other colonial produce. Because they had not arranged trade beforehand and usually did not have established contacts in the Caribbean, the organizers gave their shipmasters

7 Wilcoxon, *Dutch Trade and Ceramics*, 20; “Richard Ingle in Maryland,” *Maryland Historical Magazine* 1, no. 2 (1906): 131–132.

8 Henry Colt, “The Voyage of Sir Henry Colt Knight to ye Ilands of ye Antilleas,” circa 1631, in *Colonising Expeditions to the West Indies and Guiana, 1623–1667*, ed. Vincent T. Harlow, ser. 2, vol. 56 (London: Hakluyt Society Publications, 1924), 94; Koot, *Empire at the Periphery*, 34–35.

9 Depositions of William Roper, Thomas Horne, and James Barrey: N. Darnell Davis, ed., “Papers Relating to the Early History of Barbados and St. Kitts,” *Timehri* 6 (1892): 327–349, 333–337; Harlow, “Introduction,” xv–xxviii and “Relation of the First Settlement of St. Christophers and Nevis, by John Hilton, Storekeeper and Chief Gunner of Nevis,” 1675, both in *Colonising Expeditions*, ed. Harlow, 4–17; Carl and Roberta Bridenbaugh, *No Peace Beyond the Line: The English in the Caribbean, 1624–1690* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 29–34; Richard Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624–1713* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972), 118–120; C.S.S. Higham, *The Development of the Leeward Islands under the Restoration, 1660–1688* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1921), 1–27.

wide leeway in determining where they would trade. In 1635, for example, Guiliemeli van der Grindt instructed shipmaster Adriaek Turck to take the *St. Catarina van Grint*, from Amsterdam to Barbados and the other Caribbean islands. Turck ultimately visited both St. Christopher and Barbados and exchanged his cargo of salt, wine, bread, peas, and manufactured goods for tobacco. Other times, these Dutch vessels also included stops in Virginia or even New England, such as the 160-ton Dutch vessel that called at Marblehead in the Massachusetts Bay Colony in 1635 carrying “one hundred and forty tons of salt, and ten thousand weight of tobacco” from St. Christopher. Already having loaded salt and tobacco in the West Indies, this vessel was most likely completing its voyage by selling salt to Massachusetts’ cod fisherman before returning to Europe. Though less common, Dutch masters sometimes even sold on credit; in 1635, for example, the Dutch traders Gilles Vertangen, Gilles de Croede, and David Aijbrantsz traveled to Barbados and St. Christopher to collect more than 13,000 pounds of tobacco due to them as payment for an earlier delivery.¹⁰ Extending credit to planters on distant islands without a representative in place to manage their debts was a risky proposition and indicates the lengths some Dutch merchants were willing to take to gain access to English tobacco. At the same time, the fact that some traders were willing to offer credit suggests that they traded to English islands regularly enough to be confident that they could collect the debts. Although masters had to call at a number of ports to fill their vessels and the value of individual exchanges was often small, the cruising trade flourished during the 1630s. As English colonists learned about the benefits of Dutch trade they too began to more actively seek Dutch commerce.¹¹

10 21 November 1635, Amsterdam Municipal Archives Notarieel Archief, (hereafter SAA:NA) 671/355, not. J. Warnaeerts; 18 December 1635, SAA:NA 701/908, 672/56v, 695/256v, not. Jan Warnaeerts. See also 21 November 1634, SAA:NA 1225/fol. 49v, not. Isaacz Henricxsen v. Gierteren; 12 December 1635, SAA:NA 1043/p. 188, not. Joost van de Ven; 21 October 1644, SAA:NA 1861/462–3; 17 March 1646, Old Notarieel Archief, Rotterdam Municipal Archives (hereafter GAR:ONA), 334: 46/114, not. Arent van der Hraeff; 16 January 1644, GAR:ONA 248: 103/198, not. Jacob Duyfhuysen; 21 May 1635, *Winthrop’s Journal, “History of New England,” 1630–1649, Original Narratives of Early American History*, ed. James Kendall Hosmer (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1906), 151 (quotation). For more on the cruising trade see Klooster, “Anglo-Dutch Trade in the Seventeenth Century: An Atlantic Partnership?” in *Shaping the Stuart World, 1603–1714: The Atlantic Connection*, ed. Allan I. Macinnes and Arthur H. Williamson (Boston: Brill, 2006), 261–282, 267, 269–270; Enthoven and Klooster, “The Rise and Fall of the Virginia-Dutch Connection,” in *Early Modern Virginia*, ed. Bradburn and Coomes, 97–98.

11 Colt, “The Voyage of Sir Henrye Colt Knight to ye Ilands of ye Antilleas,” circa 1631, in *Colonising Expeditions*, ed. Harlow, 101; Deposition of Thomas Murthwaithe, 21 February

Soon, English authorities began to complain that Anglo-Dutch trade was eroding English custom duties, prompting Charles I to order colonists in the Chesapeake and the “islands of St. Christopher’s, Barbadoes, and the other Caribbee Islands” to end their trade with the Dutch. Particularly worrisome to Charles was the news that his colonists had become so dependent on Dutch imports of foodstuffs that they had not planted “corn and grain sufficient for the support of those plantations.”¹² Eager to capture the duties tobacco produced and hopeful that the colonies could become self-sustainable enough to produce even greater returns, the English government was beginning to understand that if they wanted to benefit most from colonial endeavors they would need to regulate trade. Colonists, though, saw things differently. Instead of trying to prevent foreign trade in Barbados, for example, Governor Henry Hawley decided to capitalize on it, requiring that all foreign ships that “Anchor here, for Relief, Refreshment, or Trade...pay to the Governor Twenty Shillings in Money, or Goods” and then a further “Seven *per Cent* on all the Goods” sold while in port.¹³ Not only would Anglo-Dutch commerce provide needed trade for Hawley’s nascent colony, it would also help to fund the island’s development.

As a whole, through the 1630s Anglo-Dutch trade in the Americas relied upon loosely organized speculative ventures that involved vessels arriving from great distances hoping to trade at English ports. Leading these ventures were most commonly Dutch sojourners looking for immediate trading opportunities. English colonists welcomed Dutch vessels but they played small roles in initiating trade. As ad hoc as this exchange was during the 1620s and 1630s, the growing metropolitan resistance to allowing foreign merchants to benefit from the English colonies reveals how prevalent it had become. These efforts

1632/3, Robert South and Maurice Thomson v. King, in *English Adventurers and Emigrants, 1630–1660: Abstracts of Examinations in the High Court of Admiralty with Reference to colonial America*, ed. Peter Wilson Coldham (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1984), 39; Deposition of Richard Cooper, 8 January 1639/40, Mary Limbre v. Willson, High Court of the Admiralty (hereafter HCA) 13/55, fol. 439, The National Archives of the United Kingdom—Public Records Office, Kew, England (hereafter TNA:PRO).

12 “An open warrant directed to his majesties Attorney Generall,” 24 February 1632, *Acts of the Privy Council: Colonial Series*, vol. 1, 1613–80, ed. W.L. Grant and James Munro (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1908), 174–176; “The King to [the feoffees of Jas. Late Earl of Carlisle],” April 1637, *Calendar of State Papers: Colonial Series, America and the West Indies, 1574–1660*, ed. W. Noel Sainsbury (London: H. M. Stationery Office, 1860), 251 (hereafter CSPC).

13 William Duke, *Memoirs of the First Settlement of the Island of Barbados, and other the Caribbee Islands* (London, 1743), 18.

to limit Anglo-Dutch exchange, in turn, indicate that within the first decade of settlement it was becoming increasingly clear that English colonists and metropolitan officials had begun to develop different understandings about the role Dutch trade should play in imperial development.

Building Networks, 1640s–1650s

With a firm foundation based on ad hoc interaction the domestic turmoil of the 1640s helped transform Anglo-Dutch trade in the Atlantic and thrust Dutch traders into a more central position in English colonial economies. Key to the evolution of more intensive Anglo-Dutch networks in these decades was the expansion of tobacco and sugar cultivation in the English colonies and the disruptions to trade the English Civil War (1642–1646) caused. These developments enhanced opportunities for Dutch traders who rushed to take advantage of English colonists' unmet needs. What metropolitan Dutch merchants found, however, was that in order to intensify their trade with English plantations in the Caribbean and Chesapeake, they would need to improve on the cruising trade which increasingly proved unsatisfactory in building stable trade. The Dutch shipmaster David Pietersz. de Vries realized this in 1635 when he called at Virginia. Sailing from the Caribbean to New Amsterdam De Vries hoped to purchase tobacco in Virginia before continuing on his voyage but "as it was out of season to obtain tobacco," he was forced to "let...[his] cargo lie [t]here." Giving "directions to trade [it] when the crop of tobacco should be ripe," he continued on to New Amsterdam. When he returned in September, however, De Vries found his instructions had not been followed and he was unable to obtain a cargo.¹⁴ The shipmaster's experience indicates the disadvantages inherent in the cruising trade: it depended upon arriving to trade at exactly the right moment and without a permanent Dutch presence in the colonies it was difficult to arrange convenient and reliable exchange.

To address these deficiencies Dutch traders began to rely upon local Dutch agents to direct trade. In the Chesapeake, Dutch firms accomplished this by either sending factors to live in English colonies, or by using those based in nearby New Amsterdam. Two of the most prominent Dutch agents to take up residence in Virginia during this period were the brothers Derrick Cornelisz. and Arent Cornelisz. Stam. The Stams arrived in Virginia as the representatives of Killiaen van Rensselaer, the founder of the colony of Rensselaerswyck.

14 David Pietersz. de Vries, *Voyages from Holland to America: 1632–1644*, trans. Henry C. Murphy (New York, 1853), 107–113.

Initially on the scene to organize trade for the patroon, the Stams decided to stay. By 1639 they had purchased property on Virginia's Eastern Shore, a place where Dutch traders found much opportunity, and were organizing trade for a number of Amsterdam merchants. In 1640 their network of planters was large enough to allow them to ship more than 60,000 pounds of tobacco to the Dutch Republic and a further 16,000 pounds to London. In 1641 the Stam's exports had reached 100,000 pounds, surpassing the trade of any individual London merchant.¹⁵

The growth of New Amsterdam as a commercial center in the 1640s further enabled Amsterdam firms to base their agents close to their tobacco suppliers. Living only a short sail from the Chesapeake, middlemen such as Govert Loockermans soon established strong ties in Virginia and Maryland. Loockermans, who had arrived in New Amsterdam as an employee of the Dutch West India Company (WIC), organized trade for years for the prominent Amsterdam merchant Gillis Verbrugge.¹⁶ Able to journey back and forth between his Dutch base in New Amsterdam and the Chesapeake plantations, Loockermans and others like him were able to efficiently manage their employers' fleets, coordinate the arrival of European goods, and prepare tobacco shipments. Moreover, with New Amsterdam's residents now producing grain and lumber and importing horses and salted fish, local Dutch factors could respond

15 "English Translations of Notarial Documents in the Gemeentearchief Amsterdam Pertaining to North America," 28 December 1639, 1499/pp. 179–180, not. Jan Volckaertsz. Oli, Historic Hudson Valley, Tarrytown, N.Y. (hereafter HHV GAA NA); 30 July 1640, HHV GAA:NA 1555/pg. 113, not. Jan Volckaertsz. Oli; 26 November 1642, HHV GAA:NA 1501/p. 165, not. Jan Volckaertsz. Oli; John R. Pagan, "Dutch Maritime and Commercial Activity in Mid-Seventeenth-Century Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 90 (1982): 485–501, 486–487; Kupp, "Dutch Notarial Acts Relating to the Tobacco Trade in Virginia," 653–655; Enthoven and Klooster, "The Rise and Fall of the Virginia-Dutch Connection," in *Early Modern Virginia*, ed. Bradburn and Coomes, 104–105 (quotation). For the Dutch presence on the Eastern Shore see Susie M. Ames, *Studies of the Virginia Eastern Shore in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Russell & Russel, 1973), chapter 3.

16 Verbrugge and Son to Loockermans, 17 December 1649, Stuyvesant Family, Misc. MSS, New-York Historical Society (hereafter NYHS); David M. Riker, "Govert Loockermans: Free Merchant of New Amsterdam," *de Halve Maen* 54 (1981): 4–10; Oliver A. Rink, *Holland on the Hudson: An Economic and Social History of Dutch New York* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1986), 177–180. For numerous examples of the commercial ties between New Amsterdam and Virginia see Kenneth Scott and Kenn Stryker-Rodda, ed., *New York Historical Manuscripts: Dutch, The Register of Solomon Lachaire, Notary Public of New Amsterdam, 1661–1662* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., 1978), esp. 27, 90–91, 126–128, 133–134, 159–160, 182–184, 196–197, 205–206, 213–216.

to Virginians' immediate demands better than those merchants who depended on supercargoes traveling directly from the Netherlands.

While most Dutch trade to the Caribbean and Chesapeake depended upon metropolitan organization through the 1640s, increasingly Dutch colonists living in New Amsterdam came to direct and initiate the Chesapeake's Anglo-Dutch trade themselves. As tobacco prices fell in the late 1640s and as English mercantilist laws and the First Anglo-Dutch War (1652–1654) made bilateral trade from the Dutch Republic more difficult, traders in nearby New Amsterdam found greater opportunities. With extensive experience as agents of Dutch firms, New Amsterdam traders like Loockermans soon gained control of Anglo-Dutch trade in the Chesapeake.¹⁷

In the English Caribbean where ready access to a nearby Dutch community was not an option, metropolitan firms and their agents remained in control of Anglo-Dutch trade into the 1650s. To overcome the managerial deficiencies of the cruising trade Dutch traders there began to take up residence in English colonies and to establish storehouses. By 1652 Dutch merchants living in the English Leeward Islands had established at least five warehouses in St. Christopher and several in Montserrat from which to direct their trade.¹⁸ Also serving Antigua and Nevis, these storehouses allowed Dutch traders to purchase tobacco, sugar, and other tropical produce over an extended period and then to quickly load it into arriving Dutch vessels. Being able to prepare cargoes in advance of ships' arrivals increased efficiency and lowered transaction costs. Moreover, having a physical presence in the islands made it easier for the agents to offer credit to planters who were desperate to meet rising capital costs. In turn, Dutch traders used their enhanced position to routinely beat English competitors on price. According to one official in St. Christopher, Dutch merchants sold "shewes at 12 [pounds of tobacco]...and shirts [,] Cassocks and drawers at the same price." Without Dutch trade, he contended, "the Countrey payes 40 and 50 [pounds]...ready tobaccoe for the like" goods.¹⁹

17 Hatfield, "Dutch and New Netherland Merchants in the Seventeenth-Century English Chesapeake," in *The Atlantic Economy during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. Coclanis, 205–228; Rink, *Holland on the Hudson*, 178–179. On falling tobacco prices, Russell R. Menard, "Plantation Empire: How Sugar and Tobacco Planters Built Their Industries and Raised an Empire," *Agricultural History* 81, no. 3 (2007): 309–332, 316–321.

18 "Mountserrat and Antigua accoumpts, 1654 to 1656," Egerton MSS. 2395, fols. 54–59, British Library, London, England (hereafter BL); "Nevis and St. Christopher's Accounts," Egerton MSS. 2395, fols. 69–77, BL.

19 William Johnson to Trustees, 10 March 1642, Hay MSS, BL, cited in J.H. Bennett, "The English Caribbees in the Period of the Civil War, 1642–1646," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 24 (1967): 359–377, 364–365; Christopher Jaeffreson to Colonel George Gamiell,

Not fully abandoning the cruising trade, Dutch merchants' decision to establish trading bases in the English Caribbean during the 1640s and 1650s indicates their optimism about the prospects of Anglo-Dutch exchange.

While the mechanisms they used to trade and the make-up of their networks changed during the 1640s and 1650s, the pattern of Anglo-Dutch exchange remained constant. Backed by the credit markets of Amsterdam and the commercial advantages of the Dutch empire, Dutch traders both beat English merchants on freight and merchandise prices and were able to supply goods when their English rivals could not. These included manufactured goods such as "browd-brimd white or black hatts," "new fashioned shoes," "whyted osenbridge linen," and glazed earthenware as well as provisions such as meat, butter, and wine. Dutch merchants were also important suppliers of horses to drive the planters' mills.²⁰ The situation was similar in the Chesapeake where, as the Directors of the WIC noted, English colonists "receive from their own nation in England no such goods as they need" and instead buy these things from the Dutch.²¹

The full extent of Anglo-Dutch trade is almost impossible to quantify, but nevertheless several snapshots of the situation during these decades reveal its growing importance. In Virginia, for example, David Pietersz. de Vries found that of a total of 34 vessels engaged in the tobacco trade there

12 May 1677, in "A Young Squire of the Seventeenth Century." *From the Papers of Christopher Jeaffreson, of Dullingham House, Cambridgeshire*, ed. John C. Jeaffreson (London: Hurst and Blackett Publishers, 1878), 1: 214–217; Lydia Mihelio Pulsipher, "The Cultural Landscape of Montserrat, West Indies, in the Seventeenth Century: Early Environmental Consequences of British Colonial Development" (unpublished PhD diss., Southern Illinois University, 1977), 38–43; Richard Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery: An Economic History of the British West Indies, 1623–1775* (Barbados: Caribbean University Press, 1974), 269–274.

20 "A Letter from Barbados by ye Way of Holland Concerning ye Conditcon of Honest men There," 9 August 1651, in *Colonising Expeditions to the West Indies and Guiana*, ed. Harlow, 51–52 (quotations); Richard Ligon, *A True & Exact History of the Island of Barbados...*, 2nd ed. (London, 1673), 30, 37. See also "The State of y^e Differences as it is pressed between y^e Merchants and y^e Planters in relations to free Trade att y^e Charibee Islands," [n.d., 1655–58], British Library Transcripts, Add. Mss. 11411 (original fol. 3v, 4v), 7–8, Library of Congress (hereafter LOC); Anon., "An Account of the English Sugar Plantations," (n.d., time of Charles II), Egerton MSS 2395, fols. 629–635, BL. For discussion of English planters' preference for Dutch traders during this period, see Bennett, "The English Caribbees in the Period of the Civil War," 362–364; V.T. Harlow, *A History of Barbados, 1625–1685* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1926), 93–94.

21 WIC Directors to Stuyvesant, 14 June 1656, *Correspondence, 1654–1658*, in *New Netherland Documents*, vol. 12, ed. Charles T. Gehring (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2003), 92–93.

in 1643, only four were Dutch. Five years later, however, that number had risen to 12 of 31. Historian John Pagan estimates that between 1643 and 1649 33 Dutch vessels voyaged to Virginia, up from four six years earlier.²² In Barbados, the island for which we have the best evidence, seven or eight and as many as 30 Dutch vessels a year called at Barbados between 1640 and 1660, making up between 10 and 20 percent of the total number of ships arriving at the port.²³

What statistics fail to capture are the circumstances under which Dutch merchants traded at English colonies like Barbados. These conditions reveal much more about the importance of Anglo-Dutch exchange to the English empire. The 1640s and 1650s were years of rapid transformation in Barbados as planters shifted away from tobacco, cotton, and ginger into sugar, a crop they had only recently learned to cultivate and process. While new research has overturned scholars' earlier belief that Dutch merchants introduced sugar to Barbados and financed its cultivation, it is clear that Dutch trade helped to sustain the colony.²⁴ Because planters had to import plantation supplies, manufactured goods, and a great portion of their provisions, access to ready trade at good prices was vital. And with English merchants often unable to meet their needs (especially when the Civil War disrupted trade), Dutch merchants who supplied English colonists with "manufactures, brewed beer, linen cloth, brandies,...duffels, [and] coarse cloth" were always welcome, especially when they could rescue English settlers from "exteme ruin" with "food and raiment" as one group of Dutch traders noted.²⁵ As islanders scrambled to cultivate sugarcane and invest in sugar-works in Barbados and to find markets for their tobacco in the Chesapeake, Dutch merchants helped support their plantations.

22 De Vries, *Voyages from Holland to America*, 112, 118; Hatfield, "Dutch and New Netherland Merchants in the Seventeenth-Century English Chesapeake," 205–228; and Schnurmann, "Atlantic Trade and American Identities," 187–189, both in *The Atlantic Economy during the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries*, ed. Coclanis; Pagan, "Dutch Maritime and Commercial Activity in Mid-Seventeenth-Century Virginia," 485–487.

23 Koot, *Empire at the Periphery*, 72.

24 Russel Menard, *Sweet Negotiations: Sugar, Slavery, and Plantation Agriculture in Early Barbados* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006), chapters 1–3, esp. 11–12, 50–51, 61; Larry Gragg, *Englishmen Transplanted: The English Colonization of Barbados, 1627–1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003), 99–100, 141; John J. McCusker and Russell Menard, "The Sugar Industry in the Seventeenth Century," in *Tropical Babylons: Sugar and the Making of the Atlantic World, 1450–1680*, ed. Stuart B. Schwartz (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 289–330, 294–306.

25 "Petition of certain Dutch merchants to the States General," November 1651, *DRCHNY*, 1: 436–437.

An even clearer indication of the importance of Dutch trade to English colonies was planters' reaction to English efforts to exclude the Dutch from colonial trade. As part of English state-builders' broader attempt to gain commercial dominance over the Dutch Republic, in 1650 and 1651 Parliament enacted the first two of what would be a series of provisions designed to take control of England's Atlantic colonial trade. Parliament aimed the Act of 1650 at subduing those colonies that still had not acknowledged their supremacy by placing an embargo on their commerce, in so doing making it clear that it was in their power to regulate colonial trade. The second more sweeping of these laws, the Act of Trade and Navigation (1651), attempted to damage Dutch commerce and to capture colonial trade for English merchants by confining overseas exchange to English ships and stipulating that the bulk of colonial trade must pass through England.²⁶

In response to metropolitan efforts to halt Anglo-Dutch exchange colonists petitioned their government to change course and restore the relatively free trade they had formerly enjoyed. It was in Barbados and Virginia where colonists most clearly articulated this position. Barbadians, for example, greeted Parliament's new laws with a robust defense of Dutch trade. "All the old *Planters* [of Barbados]," they wrote, "well know how much they have ben houlding to the *Dutch* for their subsistence, and how difficult it would have ben (without their assistances) ever to have settled" the island. In a period in which they had been desperate for goods it was Dutch merchants who had brought them "necessary comforts" and sold "their *Commodities*" much "cheaper" than did merchants of their "own nation." This feeling was so widespread, the Assembly and Council contended, that they could "not imagine that there is so meane & base minded a fellow amongst us, that will not prefer...[trade with] an honorable *Dutch*, before being bound by the regulations of the *Parliament*."²⁷

In Virginia, colonists likewise defended their colony's reliance on Dutch trade. Former Virginia merchant John Bland captured this position best. Targeting the

26 Lawrence A. Harper, *The English Navigation Laws: A Seventeenth-Century Experiment in Social Engineering* (1939; repr., New York: Octagon Books, 1964), 39–49; Charles H. Wilson, *Profit and Power: A Study of England and the Dutch Wars* (New York: Longmans and Green, 1957), 48–77; Michael J. Braddick, "The English Government, War, Trade, and Settlement, 1625–1688," in *The Origins of Empire*, ed. Nicholas Canny, vol. 1, *The Oxford History of the British Empire*, ed. Wm Roger Lewis (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 286–308, 292–296.

27 Council and Assembly of Barbados, *A Declaration Set forth by the Lord Lieutenant Generall and the Gentlemen of the Councell & Assembly occasioned from the view of a printed paper entituled An Act Prohibiting trade with the Barbados, Virginea, Bermudes and Antegoe* (The Hague, 1651), 2–3 (emphasis in original).

1660 Navigation Act Bland pointed out that Dutch trade was indispensable to Virginia because English merchants neglected the colony. “If the Hollanders must not trade to *Virginia* how shall the Planters dispose of their Tobacco... [if] The English *will* not buy it[?]” “Debarring the Hollanders” from the Chesapeake, he continued, “will utterly ruinate the colonies commerce and customs together in a short time; for if the Inhabitants be destroyed, of necessity the Trade there must cease.”²⁸ In an effort to alleviate the risk England’s mercantilist legislation presented to their livelihoods, Dutch and English colonists worked to formalize their commercial relationship. Most active in this attempt was New Netherland’s Director-General Petrus Stuyvesant who sent emissaries to Virginia and traveled to Barbados himself in order to negotiate free trade pacts. Unrecognized by metropolitan authorities these agreements testify to the importance colonists from both empires placed on Anglo-Dutch exchange.²⁹

British colonists’ heralding of the role Dutch traders played in their economies and their efforts to maintain these links during the 1650s reflects their view that it had been Anglo-Dutch trade in the previous four decades that had made settlement possible. For these colonists, writing in the midst of sustained British efforts to eliminate foreign trade in the colonies and to create an exclusive empire, the Dutch stood for an earlier cross-national legacy that they believed provided the best means to structure an imperial economy. Colonists’ celebration of Anglo-Dutch trade therefore was the product of both a distinctive interimperial commercial culture and of ongoing colonial efforts to resist what they considered burdensome and dangerous imperial policies.

New Strategies for Illegal Trade, 1660s–80s

Despite colonial resistance, between 1660 and 1688 England’s new Restoration government maintained and enhanced Commonwealth policies designed to

28 “The humble Remonstrance of John Bland of London, merchants, on the behalf of the Inhabitants and Planters in Virginia and Mariland,” in “Virginia and the Act of Navigation,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 1 (1893–1894): 141–155, 147, 151.

29 “Articles of amitie and commerce . . .” (1660) in *European Treaties Bearing on the History of the United States and Its Dependencies*, ed. Frances Gardiner Davenport (Washington, DC: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1929), 2: 55–56; Edward Winslow to Secretary Thurloe, 17 March 1654/5, in *A Collection of the State Papers of John Thurloe*, ed. Thomas Birch (London, 1742), 3: 251; Carla Gardiner Pestana, *The English Atlantic in an Age of Revolution, 1640–1661* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004), 173–174; April Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia: Intercolonial Relations in the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 49–50.

end Anglo-Dutch trade in the colonies. New laws and the Second Anglo-Dutch War (1665–1667) worked to make interimperial exchange more difficult but, because these laws did not eliminate the circumstances that made it desirable, the regulations did not end Dutch trade in English colonies. In fact in some ways the passage of additional Navigation Acts in 1660, 1663, and 1673 actually increased opportunity for illegal commerce and enhanced its importance for colonial economies. By restricting “enumerated goods” like tobacco and sugar to English ships and markets and giving English exporters a monopoly on supplying many goods to the colonies, the laws often inadvertently pushed down the prices planters received for their produce and inflated the cost of imports.³⁰ Planters in Barbados and the Leeward Islands noticed these effects almost immediately. In 1661 settlers there began to petition the king and parliament to remove the Navigation Acts and allow them “to transport their produce...to any port in amity with his Majesty” as a way of avoiding the “glut, and a still further fall in the value of sugar” that must be the result of having their sugar “forced into one market.”³¹ Meanwhile English West Indians also soon found that lower sugar prices reduced their wealth and diminished English traders’ interest. English “merchants,” they complained in 1661, “bring noe Commodities” to their islands but “emptie shippes” to load their sugar.³² In contrast, Jamaica’s governor reported that Dutch traders who benefited from low Dutch shipping costs and who avoided costly English duties routinely sold European goods in the West Indies and did so between 20 and 30 percent cheaper and “paye[d] deerer for American Goods.”³³ The concurrent lack of sufficient English shipping and the better prices Dutch traders offered meant that colonists around the British Atlantic worked to maintain Anglo-Dutch trade because it was economically rewarding.

In order to capitalize on the continued opportunity, both parties involved in Anglo-Dutch trade had to adapt the mechanics of their trade. The expulsion of Dutch residents from some English colonies and a more robust regulatory

30 There is a great deal of debate about the extent and role of illegal trade in British colonial economies. To begin compare John J. McCusker and Russell R. Menard, *The Economy of British America, 1607–1789, With Supplementary Bibliography* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985, 1991), 77–78 with Jarvis, *In the Eye of all Trade*, 182–184.

31 “Petition of the President, Council and Assembly of Barbados to His Majesty’s Commissioners for Foreign Plantations,” 11 May 1661, *CSPC*, 1661–8, 30.

32 The President and Council of Barbados to [Sec. Nicholas], 10 July 1661, CO 1/15, fol. 133r, TNA:PRO.

33 Sir Thomas Lynch to Lords of Trade and Plantations, 29 August 1682, CO 1/49, fol. 33v, TNA:PRO; Samuel Hayne, *An abstract of all the statutes made concerning aliens* (London, 1685), 10–14.

regime meant that it was more difficult for Dutch agents to remain in English colonies than it had been a decade before. The solution was for colonists to smuggle or to work within the regulatory framework to give a veneer of legality to what was more often illegal trade. Smuggling was the option that most Anglo-Dutch traders chose in the Caribbean. Here the close proximity of Dutch islands stocked with inventories of European goods and the difficulties authorities had in constantly monitoring miles of coastline scattered across a half-dozen or more English islands encouraged illicit trade. The Dutch colony most important in facilitating this exchange was St. Eustatius. Located amidst the English Leeward Islands and just a short sail from each colony, Dutch traders used Statia as a base from which they could venture to English colonies. The common practice was for Dutch merchants to call at English islands in small sloops and boats when tobacco and sugar harvests were coming in, a variety of trade at the water's edge reminiscent of that which colonists had used in the 1630s.³⁴ For planters in Barbados and Jamaica, Curaçao offered the same opportunities that Statia did for those in the Leewards, and trade between these islands was commonplace in the second half of the seventeenth century.³⁵ In the Chesapeake – which likewise had an extensive coastline – Dutch traders used similar methods and benefited from close access to New Netherland.³⁶

Reliant upon subterfuge and good timing, illicit commerce succeeded in allowing trade but it often worked against colonists' ability to build reliable and stable Anglo-Dutch networks. Nevertheless some in both North America and the West Indies did succeed in blending Dutch and English capital, experience, and connections to extend their trade. By employing

34 "Report of Captain George St. Loe," May 1687, CO 1/62, fols. 224–225r, TNA:PRO.

35 "Extraordinary session held in the residence of the honorable vice-director M. Beck," 21 February 1656 and M. Beck to P. Stuyvesant, 21 March 1656, in *Curacao Papers 1640–1665*, *New Netherland Documents*, vol. 17, ed. Charles T. Gehring and J.A. Schiltkamp (Interlaken, NY: Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1987), 87–88, 91; 31 August 1676, Mayor's Court Minutes (1675–1677), County Clerk's Office, Division of Old Records, New York City, unpaginated; Stephen A. Fortune, *Merchants and Jews: The Struggle for British West Indian Commerce, 1650–1715* (Gainesville: University of Florida, 1984), chaps. 3–4; Klooster, "Curaçao and the Caribbean Transit Trade," in *Riches from Atlantic Commerce*, ed. Postma and Enthoven, 203–218.

36 *The Register of Soloman Lachaire*, ed. Scott and Stryker-Rodda, 27, 90–91, 126–128, 133–134, 159–160, 182–184, 196–197, 205–206, 213–216; Hatfield, "Mariners, Merchants, and Colonists in Seventeenth-Century English America," in *The Creation of the British Atlantic World*, ed. Mancke and Shammass, 151–152; Dennis J. Maika, "Commerce and Community: Manhattan Merchants in the Seventeenth Century" (unpublished PhD diss., New York University, 1995), 120–123.

English partners alongside of those from the Dutch Republic, colonists had the added advantage of making Anglo-Dutch trade legal. The groups of merchants who most fully integrated Dutch and English networks were those Dutch colonists who remained in New York following the English conquest of 1664. After a brief period in which direct trade with the Netherlands was legal, the Navigation Acts increasingly complicated Dutch New Yorkers' access to former trading partners in the Netherlands and in turn hurt American planters who had come to depend on them as intermediaries for Dutch trade. To remedy the situation New Yorkers learned to exploit a provision in the Navigation Acts that allowed English vessels to travel between the colonies and foreign ports provided they stopped to pay duties in an English port. Benefiting from England's decision to give Dutch New Yorkers denization, merchants, such as longtime New Yorker Frederick Philipse, routinely sent their vessels between New York and Amsterdam during the 1670s, often stopping at Dover, Portsmouth, or Falmouth to pay duties. Over time traders like Philipse cultivated relationships with Englishmen in these ports to receive the vessels and pay the duties. Though many of these voyages were legal, New Yorkers also began to exploit the outport trade by concealing portions of their Dutch cargoes to avoid burdensome duties.³⁷ Other times New Yorkers stood in for silent Dutch partners who were the true freighters and organizers of some ventures, even going to significant lengths to make Dutch vessels appear to be English by hiring English captains and crews and falsifying registration records.³⁸

37 E 190/1044/18; E 190/1044/12; E 190/1045/26; E 190/833-1, E 190/833-2, TNA:PRO; *The Dongan Papers: Admiralty Court and Other Records of the Administration of New York Governor Thomas Dongan*, ed. Peter R. Christoph, *New York Historical Manuscript Series* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1993), 1: 171-172, 270-272; *Journal of Jasper Danckaerts*, ed. Bartlett Burleigh James and J. Franklin Jameson (New York: Scribner's Sons, 1913), 25-32; Maika, "Commerce and Community," 389-398; Robert Ritchie, *The Duke's Province: A Study of New York Politics and Society, 1654-1691* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1977), 109; Schnurman, "Atlantic Trade and American Identities," in *The Atlantic Economy*, ed. Coclanis, 192-196.

38 12 April 1670, HHV GAA:NA 3504 V/30, not. Gerrit van Breugel; 3 May 1670, HHV GAA:NA 3502 VI/22, not. Gerrit van Breugel; 6 June 1670, HHV GAA:NA 3494 I/44, not. Gerrit van Breugel; 11 June 1670, HHV GAA:NA 3504 I/40, not. Gerrit van Breugel; 5 August 1670, HHV GAA:NA 3501 VI/45, not. Gerrit van Breugel; 20 August 1671, HHV GAA:NA 2301/pp. 73-74, not. Jacob de Winter; *New York Historical Manuscripts English: Books of General Entries of the Colony of New York, 1664-1688*, ed. Peter R. Christoph and Florence A. Christoph (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing, 1982) 1: 235-238; Kupp, "Aspects of Dutch-New York Trade," 141-146.

Even in Barbados where there were few who had direct access to Dutch networks some colonists secured Anglo-Dutch trade through a similar blending of Dutch and English contacts. Rather than relying upon Dutchmen, however, Barbadians benefited from Bridgetown's Jewish population. Resident in Barbados from at least the 1650s, the mostly Sephardic Jewish community maintained extensive international networks that spanned the Atlantic. Profiting from these extensive connections and the lower transactions costs that kinship and religious ties provided early modern merchants, Jewish settlers, including the more than 300 who lived in Barbados in 1680, were important for Atlantic trade.³⁹ English customs official Samuel Hayne nicely illustrated an example of how Jewish traders connected English colonists with Dutch markets in a 1685 pamphlet. In 1680 Hayne intercepted the 300-ton *Experiment* bound from Barbados to Amsterdam. Though this vessel had landed in Falmouth to pay duties the master did not unload "her whole Cargo" as the law stipulated. When Hayne investigated further, he found "one hundred Butts and upwards" of sugar along with tobacco, ginger, and fustic (a dyestuff) belonging to more than thirty different Barbadians hidden in the hold. This voyage, Hayne later determined, had been instigated by a group of Amsterdam Jewish merchants who used family connections in Barbados and England to organize the venture.⁴⁰

In the face of increased English efforts to disrupt Anglo-Dutch networks, Atlantic traders from both empires adapted their practices between 1660 and 1688. No longer were their ties as close or permanent as they had been in previous decades, but nonetheless both groups still found ways to come together for profitable exchange. At the same time, these years saw colonists continue to

39 There is an extensive literature on the Jewish Diaspora and Jewish traders' role in commerce. For the Caribbean begin with Fortune, *Merchants and Jews*, 71–77; Gordon Merrill, "The Role of the Sephardic Jews in the British Caribbean Area during the Seventeenth Century," *Caribbean Studies Journal* 4 (1964): 32–49, 33–39; Daniel M Swetschinski, "Conflict and Opportunity in 'Europe's Other Sea': The Adventure of Caribbean Jewish Settlement," *American Jewish Historical Quarterly* 72 (1982): 212–232; and the essays in *Atlantic Diasporas: Jews, Conversos, and Crypto-Jews in the Age of Mercantilism, 1500–1800*, ed. Richard L. Kagan and Philip D. Morgan (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), especially Holly Snyder, "English Markets, Jewish Merchants, and Atlantic Endeavors: Jews and the Making of British Transatlantic Commercial Culture, 1650–1800," 50–74. For connections between the Jewish communities of New Amsterdam/New York and the Caribbean, Noah L. Gelfand, "A Transatlantic Approach to Understanding the Formation of a Jewish Community in New Netherland and New York," *New York History* 89, no. 4 (2008): 375–395.

40 Hayne, *An abstract of all the statutes*, 15–38.

push for a relaxation of the Navigation Acts so as to make Anglo-Dutch trade legal. This was particularly important when natural disasters or other exogenous events disrupted usual trade. Suffering from a deficit of trade during and immediately after the Second Anglo-Dutch War, for example, English West Indians launched a letter-writing campaign to the king and parliament which was typical of colonists' and their supporters' arguments for free trade in these years. In their petition, colonists used their suffering from the lack of trade and the danger this presented to both their own and the empire's wealth as evidence of the folly of trade restrictions. More significantly, colonists called upon their past experience with the benefits of cross-national trade in arguing for the right to "export...commodities to any place in amity with England, in English bottoms, on paying customs either in Barbadoes or in England."⁴¹ Evoking the wealth and success of their "former daies" during which "the *Dutch* were very beneficial to us," colonists urged a return to the policies that had enabled them to flourish. Such a move would, planters contended, in turn benefit the empire as their success translated into imperial success.⁴²

It is possible to see illegal Anglo-Dutch trade as driven by naked self-interest, and surely, for some, it was. At the same time, however, that colonists simultaneously smuggled and lobbied parliament and the crown to allow Anglo-Dutch trade throughout the second half of the seventeenth century suggests a more complicated story. For those who bore the risks, smuggling could be richly rewarding and politically powerful planters and merchants – including assemblymen, councilors and governors like Christopher Codrington of the Leeward Islands – engaged in illegal trade.⁴³ But that these same men also petitioned for Dutch trade to be made legal – an act which would eliminate the risks that made smuggling so attractive and had helped create their wealth – suggests that many colonists pursued illicit trade not only because of self-interest but also because they had made the reasoned decision that open trade

41 Gov. Lord Willoughby to the King, 12 May 1666, *CSPC, 1661–8*, 282–283; Willoughby and the Council of Barbados to the King, 29 September 1666, *CSPC, 1661–8*, 412–413; Willoughby to the King, July 1667, *CSPC, 1661–8*, 487; Petition of the Representatives for Barbadoes to the King, 5 September 1667, *CSPC, 1661–8*, 495 (quotation).

42 Edward Littleton, *The Groans of the Plantations: Or a True Account of their Grievous and Extreme Sufferings By the Heavy Impositions upon Sugar, And other Hardships Relating more particularly to the Island of Barbados* (London, 1689), 5 (second quotation), 16 (first quotation).

43 "Memorial of the Leeward Islands being complaints against the Governor & was sent to ye Board in a Penny post without date or name," 4 March 1697/8, CO 152/2, fols. 182r–85r, TNA-PRO; Vincent T. Harlow, *Christopher Codrington, 1668–1710* (1928; repr., London: St. Martin's Press, 1990), 32–34.

would best allow their colonies, and thus the empire, to prosper. In this way, British colonists' experience with Dutch trade continued to shape their understanding of the empire's structure.

Local Adjustments to War, 1690s–1730s

In the 1690s and first decade of the eighteenth century imperial developments once again made trade more difficult for all and thus encouraged intercolonial trade. The War of the League of Augsburg (1689–1697) and the War of the Spanish Succession (1702–1713) – chiefly Anglo-French wars – interrupted Atlantic trade, led to the capture of hundreds of English, Dutch (who fought alongside the English), and French merchantmen, and distracted European merchants. In British America the wars resulted in a scarcity of goods, higher freight and insurance costs, and a slump in trade.⁴⁴ While making transatlantic trade more burdensome and expensive, the wars had the opposite effect on intercolonial shipping. To meet their continuing needs many colonists increasingly sought out trade at surrounding colonies. Because geography facilitated this practice it was in the Caribbean where most Anglo-Dutch exchange continued after the 1680s. The decentralized and self-organized Atlantic commerce that emerged in this period helped support colonial economies and overcome wars' disturbances.

By using small vessels that embarked on short voyages colonial traders could better avoid the hazards of privateers and adjust to rapidly changing circumstances. Particularly important in this trade were Dutchmen operating in emerging commercial nodes such as St. Eustatius, Curaçao, and increasingly the Danish-owned but Dutch-dominated St. Thomas. Though Dutch shippers faced the same risks as English merchantmen during these two conflicts, many British colonists found that “the Dutch our neighbours” could sell goods they “wanted at easy rates.”⁴⁵ Dutch merchants had established this interisland

44 Gov. Codrington to Lords of Trade and Plantations, 4 June 1690, *CSPC*, 1689–92, 278; Gov. Kendall to Lords of Trade and Plantations, 22 August 1690, *CSPC*, 1689–93, 311; “Extract from a letter of Sir William Beeston to William Blathwayt,” 18 March 1697, *CSPC*, 1696–7, 403–404; William Thomas Morgan, “The British West Indies during King William’s War (1689–97),” *Journal of Modern History* 2 (1930): 378–409; Ralph Davis, *The Rise of the English Shipping Industry: In the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries* (Newton Abbot, England: David and Charles, 1962), 316–319, 324, 327–328, 334; Douglas Bradburn, “The Visible Fist: The Chesapeake Tobacco Trade in War and the Purpose of Empire, 1690–1715,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser. 68, no. 3 (2011): 361–386, 375–377.

45 “Extract from a letter of Sir William Beeston to William Blathwayt,” 18 March 1697, *CSPC*, 1696–7, 403–404.

West Indian sloop trade during the mid-seventeenth century but the warfare between 1689 and 1713 enhanced its importance for Anglo-Dutch trade, a situation which would persist in later decades. Moreover, with larger and more diverse mercantile communities developing in the first half of the eighteenth century, increasingly British colonists began to take the initiative in driving trade.

Every year hundreds of vessels engaged in the Atlantic coasting trade, but because the best evidence of this interimperial sloop trade comes from general descriptions and Dutch and English shipping registers, the precise shape of the networks that made it possible remain obscure.⁴⁶ It is likely, though, that this trade relied less on stable networks than on improvisational decision making. Merchants and shipmasters active in the sloop trade knew the location of markets and the timing of trade, but likely had little knowledge of whom they were going to trade with when they arrived in exchange nodes like St. Thomas, St. Eustatius, and Curaçao. Instead they relied upon their long experience, their familiarity with each port's mercantile community, and what intelligence they could gather about prices and commercial conditions to arrange wharf-side exchanges.

The makeup of interisland cargoes in the early eighteenth century generally resembled those of previous years. English West Indians continued to send sugar and other plantation goods to Dutch islands where they sought provisions, European goods, and other plantation supplies, like lumber and, over time, slaves. Again the extent of this trade is unclear. In 1701 Governor Christopher Codrington claimed that colonists secreted "many millions of sugars to St. Eustatius, Curaçao and Danish St. Thomas" from the Leeward Islands each year.⁴⁷ Though enslaved Africans never constituted a large percentage of Anglo-Dutch trade in the early modern Caribbean, it was during the warfare of the 1690s and early eighteenth century when they did expand their role.

46 The lists for Barbados can be found at CO 33/13–5, TNA:PRO; for the Leeward Islands at CO 157/1, TNA:PRO; for Jamaica at CO 142/13–15, TNA:PRO. For the Dutch records see the discussion in Cornelis Ch. Goslinga, *The Dutch in the Caribbean and in the Guianas, 1680–1791* (Dover, NH: Van Gorcum, 1985), 81–95, 189–200; Victor Enthoven, "That Abominable Nest of Pirates': St. Eustatius and the North Americans, 1680–1780," *Anglo-Dutch Revolutions*, ed. Nathan Perl-Rosenthal and Evan Haefeli, special issue, *Early American Studies* 10, no. 2 (2012): 239–301.

47 Gov. Codrington to the Council of Trade and Plantations, 30 June 1701, *CSPC, 1701*, 327–328. For two of the best descriptions of the sloop trade see Samuel Brise to the Council of Trade and Plantations, received 19 January 1710, CO 388/12, fol. 267, TNA-PRO; "Memorial of Mr. Holt relating to ye Trade carried on between Curacoa & St. Thomas and the British Plantations," received 15 December 1709, CO 388/12, fol. 251r–255r, 257r–261r, TNA:PRO.

The Anglo-French wars were especially damaging to the slave trade so when faced with shortages English planters turned to Dutch suppliers in Curaçao, St. Eustatius, and St. Thomas.⁴⁸

Continuing to make Anglo-Dutch trade possible were middlemen who were well-placed to smooth commerce. While Dutch merchants living in Atlantic trading nodes remained valuable, of growing importance in organizing the sloop trade after 1700 were middling British West Indian merchants sometimes described as “mean persons” by island elites.⁴⁹ A product of British America’s expanding and diversifying economy, this new group of merchants began to shift the make-up of Anglo-Dutch cargoes. Still sending sugar, molasses, and rum to Dutch islands in exchange for dry goods, these traders, often acting as their own supercargoes and sometimes the masters of their own vessels, also began to re-export flour, lumber, and beef they imported from Boston, New York, and Philadelphia to surrounding Dutch and French islands.⁵⁰ One portion of this commercial community that was particularly important in smoothing interimperial trade was the Sephardic population. With cross-national networks that spanned the Atlantic it was Barbados’ Jewish merchants, for example, that provided that colony with its strongest ties to Curaçao, through the Henriquez/Senior family. In Nevis, it was the Pinheiro family whose contacts included those in Curaçao, South Carolina, Boston, New York City, and Amsterdam.⁵¹

- 48 William A. Pettigrew, “Free to Enslave: Politics and the Escalation of Britain’s Transatlantic Slave Trade, 1688–1714,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd. ser., 64, no. 1 (2007): 3–38, 5n2; Johannes Postma, “A Reassessment of the Dutch Atlantic Slave Trade,” in *Riches from Atlantic Commerce*, ed. Postma and Enthoven, 134, 137; Johannes Postma, “The Dispersal of African Slaves in the West by Dutch Slave Traders, 1630–1803,” in *The Atlantic Slave Trade: Effects on Economics, Societies, and Peoples in Africa, the Americas and Europe*, ed. Joseph E. Inikori and Staley L. Engerman (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1992), 283–299, 293–297; Pedro Welch, “Intra-American and Caribbean Destinations and Transit Points for the Slave Trade,” *Journal of Caribbean History* 42, no. 1 (2008): 51–52.
- 49 William Popple to John Sansom, 22 January 1701/2, CO 153/7, p. 388, TNA:PRO.
- 50 “Memorial of Mr. Holt,” 15 December 1709, CO 388/12, fols. 251r–255r, 257r–261r, TNA:PRO; Samuel Brise to the Council of Trade and Plantations, received 19 January 1710, 388/12, fol. 267, TNA:PRO; “Peter Holt to Capt. William Billton enclosed in Nov. 4, 1709, Mr. Burchett to Mr. Popple,” *CSPC, 1708–9*, 505–506.
- 51 Isaac S. and Suzanne A. Emmanuel, *History of the Jews of the Netherlands Antilles*, 2 vols. (Cincinnati: American Jewish Archives, 1970), 1: 73, 76–78, 2: 739; Samuel Oppenheim, “An Early Jewish Colony in Western Guiana, 1658–1666: And Its Relation to the Jews in Suriname, Cayenne and Tobago,” *Publications of the American Jewish Historical Society* 16 (1907): 95–186; Eli Faber, *Jews, Slaves, and the Slave Trade: Setting the Record Straight* (New York: New York University Press, 1998), 102; Michelle M. Terrell, *The Jewish Community of*

Merchants hailing from other British American maritime colonies, like New York and Bermuda, also were key in helping to keep Anglo-Dutch trade flourishing. Employing their prized “Bermuda Sloops,” which evolved originally from a Dutch design, Bermudians offered freight rates that were among the most competitive in the Atlantic in the eighteenth century. Relying on a thoroughly maritime community and the efficiencies their vessels offered, Bermudians served as carriers for many British colonies; it was often these traders that owned and manned the small vessels that brought sugar into St. Eustatius and carried manufactured goods away.⁵² Likewise, New Yorkers, who benefited primarily from that city’s productive hinterland, were among the key suppliers of flour to the Dutch West Indies.⁵³

The involvement of island traders with little political power, those from other colonies, and Jewish colonists in Anglo-Dutch trade made it easy for British officials to continue to decry the trade as they had done since the 1640s. What was new after 1700, however, was that ever greater numbers of elite West Indian planters began to join them in opposing interimperial trade. Reinforcing this new opposition was a change in the structure of the sugar business. By the 1720s the first several generations of entrepreneurial planters who had introduced and perfected sugar cultivation and who had direct experience with Dutch trade were no longer on the scene. Plantation ownership, especially in the richest colonies of Barbados, Antigua, and Nevis, had largely passed to heirs who were likely to be absentees or to London firms who had gained control of large estates during the economic boom that followed the Treaty of Utrecht (1713).⁵⁴ As importantly, increased competition from the French and expanding worldwide production of sugar continued to push its price downward so that the global price of sugar fell below the British price. As a result British planters began to pivot in their support for trade restrictions. Previously frustrated that these laws raised the costs of imports and restricted their ability to find the best market for sugars, planters now came to see the protected British sugar market as vital to their success. At the same time, they also began to criticize British Americans, such as those in New York, who traded to the foreign West Indies. Because American traders supplied goods to these colonies and carried away sugar and its byproducts, planters and their London

Early Colonial Nevis: A Historical Archaeological Study (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2005), 51, 99–100.

52 Jarvis, *In the Eye of All Trade*, 120–182.

53 Cathy Matson, *Merchants and Empire: Trading in Colonial New York* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 77–79, 134–135, 184–185.

54 Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery*, 155–158, 172–176, 194–200.

allies argued, they were driving planters' costs upward while reducing their market for sugar. By furnishing the "French and Dutch Sugar Settlements in the West-Indies" with "those very Supplies, without which they could not enlarge their Plantations, as they daily do," British North Americans were undermining the British sugar trade. Hoping to forestall competition from these foreign islands British planters and their allies in London began to petition parliament to pass new legislation to end this trade.⁵⁵ The subsequent law, the Molasses Act (1733) was woefully inadequate in stopping trade but did signal a divergence in the way English colonists had begun to understand cross-national exchange. West Indian planters made the decision that Anglo-Dutch trade was now a threat rather than an aid to their success and thus mobilized their political power to end it.

A similar change in politics in the Chesapeake effectively finished most Anglo-Dutch trade in that region. As in the Caribbean, the several generations of early colonists with Dutch ties had mostly died by the eighteenth century and thus there were fewer residents who had first-hand experience with cross-national exchange. More importantly, though, an alliance of politically powerful London merchants and elite Virginia planters worked together to exploit the convoy system used to protect the tobacco fleet during the War of the League of Augsburg and the War of the Spanish Succession to capture much of the region's tobacco trade for themselves. One result of this process was that there was significantly less opportunity for Dutch traders and because the British naval power protected the fleets these vessels' presence in the Chesapeake further discouraged cross-national exchange.⁵⁶

Anglo-Dutch trade in British America did not end abruptly in the 1730s, but it was in this decade that its meaning for British colonists largely changed.⁵⁷ During the remainder of the eighteenth century, trade with other empire's

55 Thomas Tryon, *The Merchant, Citizen and Country man's Instructor: Or, a Necessary Companion for all People* (London, 1701), 221 (quotation); Richard B. Sheridan, "The Molasses Act and the Market Strategy of the British Sugar Planters," *Journal of Economic History* 17 (1957): 62–83, 64–69, 73–75; Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 61–64; Frank Wesley Pitman, *The Development of the British West Indies, 1700–1763* (1917, repr. Hamden, CT: Archon Books, 1967), 190–218.

56 Bradburn, "The Visible Fist: The Chesapeake Tobacco Trade in War and the Purpose of Empire," 361–386; Enthoven and Klooster, "The Rise and Fall of the Virginia-Dutch Connection in the Seventeenth Century," in *Early Modern Virginia*, ed. Bradburn and Coomes, 114–115.

57 For continued trade see Enthoven, "That Abominable Nest of Pirates," 239–301; Jarvis, *In the Eye of All Trade*, 115–117.

Caribbean colonies, especially the French, became more important to British Americans. As the economies of New York, New England, and Pennsylvania continued to expand and diversify in the eighteenth century, merchants there who were already trading with British and Dutch colonies in the Caribbean expanded their routes and more frequently called at French islands. With abundant fresh land and encouragement from their government, French planters rapidly increased their sugar cultivation. Between 1713 and 1730 the number of sugar works in Martinique, Guadeloupe, and Saint-Domingue doubled. By the 1760s French planters produced more sugar than did the British. Eager to supplement what many saw as insufficient opportunities for trade in the British West Indies, New Yorkers now regularly supplied French planters with “Boards, Shingle, Joist, Plank, Hogshead-Staves, Hoops, Horses, Bread, Flower, Gammons, Salt Fish, and many other [goods of] the like.”⁵⁸ Whereas it had been Dutch merchants who had traded these goods to British planters desperate for supplies, British America’s own colonies were now, as one former captain noted, playing the role of “the *Dutch*” to the French colonies.⁵⁹ New commercial opportunities for British American traders in the French colonies did not mean an end to Anglo-Dutch trade in the Americas, but this trade was now only one (increasingly minor) part of American colonists’ broader interimperial exchange. So that, for example, when New Yorkers opposed the Molasses Act more often than not it was French, not Dutch, trade that colonists said they most hoped to preserve.⁶⁰ No longer would British colonists single out the Dutch as instrumental in their economic success as they had done fifty years before.

Conclusion: Interimperial or Supranational?

British colonists’ pivot towards driving their own intercolonial trade in the eighteenth century and British planters’ (in the West Indies and Chesapeake)

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- 58 Pritchard, *In Search of Empire*, 173–186; Robert Stein, “The French Sugar Business in the Eighteenth Century: A Quantitative Study,” *Business History* 22 (1980): 3–17, 3–4, 6, 8; Sheridan, “The Molasses Act and the Market Strategy of the British Sugar Planters,” 63–64; O’Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided*, 60–62; Thomas M Truxes, *Defying Empire: Trading with the Enemy in Colonial New York* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2008). Robert Robertson, *A Detection of the State and Situation of the present Sugar Planters of Barbadoes and the Leeward Islands* (London, 1732), 58–59 (quotations).
- 59 Fayer Hall, *Considerations on the Bill now depending in Parliament, concerning the British sugar-colonies in America*. . . (London, 1713), 11–12.
- 60 Hall, *Considerations on the Bill now depending in Parliament*, 4; Matson, *Merchants and Empire*, 193–196, 204–205.

embrace of mercantilist policies that protected their interests reminds us that the politics of empire always mattered in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The impressive achievements of those cosmopolitan and entrepreneurial traders who built durable interimperial networks spanning the Atlantic creates the temptation to abandon nationalist frameworks in our understanding of Atlantic history. To the extent that it helps us recognize the important self-organized and cross-national origins of Atlantic empires and complicates the rise of colonial economies, this shift in thinking is productive. But if we begin to see early modern actors in the Atlantic as truly supranational and thus as belonging to a community that transcended national boundaries, we run the risk of pushing the argument too far. The use of the term “supranational,” a word that emerged in scholarly discourse between the mid-nineteenth and early twentieth centuries as political thinkers strove to understand the power of proposed international political and economic bodies, suggests that individual actors in the Atlantic lived outside their national contexts and created a community beyond the authority of any one empire, and that they in turn existed independently of those empires.⁶¹ While often able to function with impunity at the fringes of European empires and to unite actors across empires, interimperial networks were always entangled with empires. Undoubtedly these networks and communities shaped imperial projects and were a significant aspect of colonists’ lives, but European settlers were never able to stand beyond empire.⁶² Oftentimes it was precisely the workings of empire – the instability imperial warfare caused and the openings for profit that mercantile restrictions created – that fostered interimperial communities during the seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries.

Meanwhile, as the decision of English sugar magnates to change course and pursue greater commercial regulation in the 1730s suggests, colonial actors did not create intercolonial networks for the sake of solely building a transnational community. Rather they did so because their lived experience taught them it was the logical choice as they struggled to build successful economies at the edge of the advancing empire. Their subsequent efforts to reshape imperial policies based on their local experiences indicates their continued engagement with imperial politics. As English colonists’ petitions attest, they came to understand their economic success, even if buttressed by Dutch trade, as

61 “supranational, adj,” OED Online, June 2012 (Oxford University Press), <http://www.oed.com/view/Entry/194766?redirectedFrom=supranational> (accessed 5 August 2012).

62 Nathan Perl-Rosenthal and Evan Haefeli, “Introduction: Transnational Connections,” in *Anglo-Dutch Revolutions*, ed. Perl-Rosenthal and Haefeli, special issue, *Early American Studies* 10, no. 2 (2012): 236.

productive for the British Empire as a whole. They often disagreed vehemently over the terms and character of the empire, but they supported and worked to advance it.

As we continue to trace the kinds of transnational networks that allowed economic and cultural exchange within the Atlantic we need to keep in mind developing European states and the role they played in shaping colonists' affections and behavior. One way to do this, as I have contended here, is to constantly evaluate the ways that interimperial trade shaped the make-up of Atlantic empires. This appeal to remember the imperial contexts within which colonists conducted transnational trade is not meant to suggest that interimperial networks and the cosmopolitan mindset they created were not real and did not matter. Rather it is a reminder that we also must think about how they mattered to the empires that colonies constituted. Uncovering the material contributions this trade made, how its participants understood themselves as commercial actors, and the ways it shaped imperial development are key to understanding the rise of Atlantic economies.