WAYS OF PAYING IN THE NEW NETHERLANDS, AT DUTCH GUIANA AND IN THE FORMER DUTCH COLONIES OF BRITISH GUIANA.

BY

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When the Dutch established the New Netherlands in America, it was natural that their first way of bargaining with the Indians should be by exchange of natural objects, and by using, at least at first, the Indian way of paying. But it is peculiar that, relatively, these native ways of paying remained in use for a long time, not only between colonist and Indians, but also among the colonists themselves.

No description how the Indian "money", the beads were made from clam shells will be given here. The beads were called seawan (of which the Dutch made: "zeewant") by the Indians of Manhattan, also "wampun" (from one of the New England Indian dialects according to Prof. A. J. Chamberlain). Yet to this time the wampun is used for payment in the United States, as Dr. Dorsey showed to the members of the Congress of Americanists in the Field Columbian Museum at Chicago, namely by the Pomo tribe in California. Wampun was also used for embroidery and ornamentation, and in record belts. The following extract may give an idea of their interest in the New Netherlands. (see the records of New Amsterdam, Vol. I, 1897 Translation of the Minutes of the Court of Burgomasters and Schepens. Published under the authority of the City of New York by the Knickerbocker press. page 15.):

"Whereas we see and for some time have seen the decline and depreciation of the loose wampun among which is found much unpierced and only half finished, made of stone, glass, bone, shells, horn, nay even of wood and broken."

"Therefore we have resolved that henceforth no loose wampun shall be current unless strung upon a wire" — "trade wampun

"shall pass as good pay as here-to-fore at the rate of six white or three black beads for one stiver" ... etc. Done, resolved and decided this 30th of May 1650 at our meeting in fort Amsterdam, New-Netherlands.

In the "*Beschryvinge van Nieuw Nederland*" by, Adriaen van der Donk, -1655, we are told, however on page 68 that gold and silver currency comes more and more into use in the colony. Miss Harriet Phillips Eaton mentions in her interesting book "*Jersey City and its Historic Sites*", published by the woman's club of Jersey City, 1899, that wampun was used among the white colonists until late in the 18th century and that the Dutch early manufactured wampun at Hackensack.

Another way of paying was in beavers (beaver-skins), as follows from the provisional instructions for the sheriff, burgomasters and schepens, of the city of Nieuw-Oranje (New-Orange)., done 15 January 1674, mentioned and translated in: "*New Amsterdam, New Orange, New York*, by Charles W. Darling, 1889: "All cases relatively to the police, — etc., "shall be determined by definite sentences by the *schout*, *burgomaster* and schepens, to the amount of fifty beavers and below it" — etc. The same author says that about the same year the government officers were paid in seawant or beavers.

Traders were giving 10 or 11 guilders in loose wampun for a beaver (Records of N. A., page 10), and one American dollar was worth eight guilders in seawan (Miss Eaton).

About Dutch Guiana (Surinam) we found incidentally, that in that colony sugar was a medium for payment, at least between the colonists and the Government, the West India Company. Our only proof is a pamphlet entitled: "*Considerationen van Bewinthebberen der Generale Geoctroyeerde West-Indische Compagnie deser landen over de Directie van de Colonie van Suriname ende het Gouvernement van den Heer van Sommelsdyck aldaar*" probably published in 1688, which we got at an auction.

In a list, dated "*Surinamburgh*", a name soon replaced by Paramaribo, and dated also 28 April, 1683, a great number of colonists is mentioned, who are indebted to the Noble "*Geoctroyeerde West-Indische Compagnie*", at the Chamber of Amsterdam, for the purchase and delivery of slaves from the ship *d'Orange Boom*" ("the Orange tree), for men as for women, at three thousand Pounds "the piece", 455.800 pounds of sugar. In the list we

meet with the names of families still living in the colony, Nassy, de Silva, de Mesa and Monsant, from Portugese-Jewish origin.

And now for British Guiana. In 1730 the directors of the colony of Berbice made a representation to their Hight Mightinesses of the States that the colony should be placed on the same footing as that of Surinam. Thereupon in 1732 an octroy made its appearance which empowered the directors to enact a capitation tax. This capitationtax, consisting of fifty pounds of sugar, or cash equivalent to 50 stivers, was exacted indiscriminately from the whole population, both white and black, children under ten years being charged only half that amount. These facts, given by H. G. Dalton in his *History of British Guiana*, London, 1855, page 187—189, leave no doubt about the custom in British-Guiana, then a Dutch colony, and give also much probabillity that about the same time sugar was still in use as payment in the colony of Surinam.