In Stedman's famous *Narrative* (1796), several pages are devoted to a description of the material life of African slaves and free Indians, as he witnessed it during his 'five years' expedition' to Suriname in the 1770s. His book also contains invaluable engravings, made after his own drawings, of a number of artifacts: twenty-four examples of 'arms, ornaments and furniture of the Indians,' in Plate 40 (with an item-by-item description in the text) and eighteen examples of 'musical instruments of the African Negroes,' in Plate 69 (with even fuller item-by-item descriptions).

To our knowledge, scholars have long assumed that the actual artifacts depicted by Stedman were simply sketched *in situ*, or, if they were collected, had long since disappeared. It was with great excitement, then, that we recently came upon 'archival' materials permitting us to trace the history of these pieces, and to locate some of them in the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde in Leiden, where they have been stored, with no indication of their provenience or importance, since 1883.

For students of Bush Negro art, the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde represents an important repository, in particular, perhaps, because of its large '360 series,' which formerly constituted the ethnographic portion of the Koninklijk Kabinet van Zeldzaamheden (Royal Cabinet of Curiosities).\(^1\) In 1970, Jean Hurault published three calabashes from this 360 series (1970: Plates III-VI) and identified them as 'objects collected at the end of the 18th century among black plantation slaves in Suriname' (1970: 115), thus suggesting that these represented some of the earliest extant ex-
amples of Afro-Suriname art. When we visited the museum, however, the Director, P.H. POTT, assured us that there in fact existed no documentation which would date any Suriname object in the collection before 1816, and that two of the three objects pictured by HURAULT (his Plates IV-VI, Leiden's 360-7071 and -7104) belonged to a portion of the series for which there existed no accession documents at all (see below). For these, he explained, one could establish only that they had been deposited in the Dutch Royal Cabinet of Curiosities at some time between 1816 and 1883, when they were then transferred to the Leiden museum. It was in the subsequent investigation of a calabash rattle (360-1602), that turned out to be the one pictured in HURAULT's Plate III, that we began exploring the circuitous trail which eventually led us to the Stedman collection.

A bit of museum history may be helpful as background for an understanding of our 'search.' Between 1816 and 1883, the Royal Cabinet of Curiosities (which was officially established in 1823 in the Mauritshuis in The Hague) accumulated a varied collection of ethnographica from around the world. By 1883, when this collection was transferred en bloc to the Rijksmuseum voor Volkenkunde in Leiden, it consisted of over 10,000 items. Preparatory to this transfer, in 1880, an inventory was prepared and each object assigned a number. For objects numbered 1-6128, the descriptions that were placed in the inventory book (provenience, function, and so forth) were copied, insofar as possible, from letters, deeds, and other documents written at the time that each object was acquired by the Royal Cabinet. (For objects after no. 6128, which are listed in vol. II of the inventory, no accession documents were available, and the descriptions were made 'at sight' by the cataloguer.) Today, the two-volume handwritten inventory book, as well as the original accession documents relating to the first 6128 objects, are available at the museum. The 10,444 numbered objects that comprise this collection are all prefixed by the series number '360,' which identifies this collection as the 360th to be logged into the museum's records.

Although the research trail from the aforementioned calabash rattle to the Stedman collection was rather indirect, a summary recapitulation of it bears relevance for an understanding of the cur-