

The Dutch Archives
and
American Historical
Research

BY

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Dr. Engel Sluiter has graciously consented to the reprinting of this article, and has given me permission to bring it to the general knowledge. Dr. Sluiter, who for a good many years, has devoted himself to the study of the colonial history of Western America, touches upon the vast field of study not yet explored by Americans making an investigation of the colonial history of The Netherlands in the East and West Indies.

A synopsis of the material that may be found in the Netherlands Archives, as well as the publications that have appeared on the subject, are two sources which are fully covered, and the references given, will be found to be in a practical and convenient form for the American student.

Since a large number of the books referred to in Dr. Sluiter's book were published by my firm, and since for many years I have had the pleasure of being in close touch with a great many American scholars and Learned Societies, I feel it my duty to make this valuable material widely known.

M. N.

*For the titles of the books published by Martinus Nijhoff
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The Dutch Archives and American Historical Research*

The fame which John Lothrop Motley won as a writer of Dutch history has not yet been forgotten on either side of the Atlantic. In the Netherlands he is gratefully remembered for the unique service which he rendered to Dutch historiography, that of writing brilliantly and dramatically in a world language the history of the rise of the Dutch state.¹ In the United States, on the other hand, we are proud to count him, with Prescott and Parkman, as one of the three most gifted historians of the "literary age" in American historiography.

More than half a century has passed since Motley wrote, but today he is still the only American who has really distinguished himself in the field of Dutch history.² This fact seems no less than

*This paper was read at the annual meeting of the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Association at Mills College, California, December 28, 1936. [EDITOR]

¹ P. J. Blok, "John Lothrop Motley as historian (1814-1877)," in *Lectures on Holland* (Leyden, 1924), 67-75.

² There has been useful work by Americans on certain phases of Dutch history, especially on the Dutch in New York and, to a lesser extent, on Dutch-American relations. E. B. O'Callaghan, J. M. Brodhead, B. Fernow, A. J. F. Van Laer, and J. F. Jameson, for example, have published valuable documents relating to New Netherland. Mrs. Schuyler van Rensselaer's *History of the City of New York in the Seventeenth Century* (2 vols., New York, 1909) covers the Dutch period and is the best work on the subject. Jameson has written an excellent monograph on Willem Usselinx (*Papers of the American Historical Association*, II (1887), no. 3), an article on St. Eustatius in the American Revolution (*American Historical Review*, VIII, 683-708), and

extraordinary in the light of the abundant work which has been done in other fields strictly foreign to our national history. One is prompted to put the question whether Dutch history has not been worthy of our mettle, or whether we in the United States have neglected a fruitful field of inquiry.

What claim to importance has Dutch history? What has been the extent of Dutch achievement, and how significant has it been for the larger history of modern times? A brief sketch of Dutch development can give a clearer answer than anything else to these broad questions.

Nothing was more important for the commercial and maritime development of the northern Netherlands than the fact that these territories were located on the sea, halfway between the north and the south of Europe. Proximity to the sea bred familiarity with it, quickly led to fishing and shipbuilding, and then to trade. At first these pursuits were local, but soon they spread to the Baltic. Already in the thirteenth century the seaports on the eastern shore of the Zuiderzee had established a busy trade to the north, joined the German Hanse, and shared in the commerce between Scandinavia, Russia, and Poland on the one hand, and England, the Netherlands, and Germany on the other.³

The rise of the cities of Holland and Zealand dates from the fourteenth century, and was the result principally of a growing prosperity in the herring fishery, which at this time was still car-

collaborated with G. L. Burr in preparing the historical material on the Dutch in Guiana in *Report and Accompanying Papers of the United States Commission on Boundary between Venezuela and British Guiana* (Washington, D.C., 1897), Vol. I. On Dutch-American relations F. Edler, *The Dutch Republic and the American Revolution* (Johns Hopkins University *Studies in Historical and Political Science*, xxix, no. 2, Baltimore, 1911) and P. Hoekstra, *Thirty-seven Years of Holland-American Relations* (Grand Rapids and Patterson, 1916) may be mentioned. Also, Ruth Putnam has done a useful life of William the Silent (2 vols., New York, 1898).

³ J. E. Elias, *Het voorspel van den eersten Engelschen oorlog* (Hague, Nijhoff, 1920), 1, 3. Hereafter cited as Elias, *Voorspel*; P. J. Blok, *History of the People of the Netherlands* (New York and London, 1898), I, 249-250. Hereafter cited as Blok, *Netherlands*.

ried on in the Baltic. On the peninsula of Scania the Dutch secured strips of land for preparing their catches, and very soon these became centers of trade, not only in salted and smoked herring, but also in dairy products, linens, and cloth brought from their own provinces, and in salt and wine carried by them from France.⁴

The fifteenth century put an entirely different complexion on Dutch development. As it opened the herring moved from the Baltic to the North sea, and a Zealander discovered how to cure herring.⁵ An expansion of the fisheries resulted, which stimulated every other branch of Dutch trade and industry, particularly ship-building, salt refining, and the carrying trade to the Baltic for timber and grain and southward as far as Lisbon for salt and wine.⁶ Amsterdam, specializing in the northern trade, grew rapidly, and became not only the storehouse of grain and timber for the entire Netherlands, but also the city with more wealth in ships than any other in western Europe.⁷ What Amsterdam and her sister cities won in the north, the Hanse irretrievably lost, being powerless, even though it resorted to naval war (1438-1441), to restore its Baltic monopoly or to halt the Dutch ascendancy.⁸

America and the sea route to the East Indies were now discovered, and in 1516 the Netherlands, both north and south, became part of a Spanish empire which included many possessions in Europe and, in addition, the two Americas.

For both of the Netherlands their incorporation within the Spanish empire offered a rare economic opportunity which they were quick to seize upon. As Spanish, and also Portuguese, resources in ships and men became ever more absorbed in exploiting and colonizing America and the East Indies, their agriculture, industry, and trade in Europe declined, and they became more and more dependent upon Dutch carriers for their large imports from north-

⁴ H. Brugmans, *Opkomst en bloei van Amsterdam* (Amsterdam, 1911), 26-28; Elias, *Voorspel*, 1, 4.

⁵ A. Beaujon, *Overzicht der geschiedenis van de Nederlandsche zeevisscherijen* (Leiden, 1885), 2-7.

⁶ J. Reygersbergh, *De oude chronijcke ende historien van Zeelandt* (Middelburch, 1634), 168, 244-245; Elias, *Voorspel*, 1, 6.

⁷ H. C. Diferee, *De geschiedenis van den Nederlandschen handel tot den val der Republiek* (Amsterdam, 1908), 83-88; Blok, *Netherlands*, II, 335 ff.

⁸ Blok, *Netherlands*, II, 335-337.

western Europe.⁹ The exports of the Peninsula, East Indian products, and American goods were also carried northward from Lisbon and Sevilla to Antwerp and Amsterdam chiefly in Dutch ships.¹⁰ As a result, Antwerp's capital and Amsterdam's ships in the first half of the sixteenth century virtually engrossed the trade of the Iberian peninsula, and with it that of the two Indies. Antwerp became the greatest single center of the world's commerce; Amsterdam, permanently outstripping the Hanse, the dominant power in the Baltic and the chief carrier of Europe.¹¹ Thus favored it is small wonder that the Dutch had no incentive in this period for expansion outside of Europe.

Now came the revolt against Spain.¹² The entire Netherlands rose up, but only seven provinces in the north maintained a successful resistance. In the first stages of the struggle Antwerp's prosperity was ruined; her most enterprising merchants fled with their resources to already powerful Amsterdam and there continued commercial operations.¹³ On the shores of the Zuiderzee now arose a new world emporium, merchant and carrier in one, more prosperous than Antwerp had ever been.

⁹ K. Häbler, *Die wirtschaftliche Blüte Spaniens im 16 Jahrhundert und ihr Verfall* (Berlin, 1888), 22-90.

¹⁰ S. van Brakel, *De Hollandsche handels-compagnieën der zeventiende eeuw* (Hague, Nijhoff, 1908), xii-xiv; R. Ehrenberg, *Capital and Finance in the Age of the Renaissance* (London, 1928), 233-235, 263-280; R. Fruin, *Tien jaren uit den tachtigjarigen oorlog 1588-1598* (5th ed. Hague, Nijhoff, 1899), 188.

¹¹ After 1500 the Hanse more and more declined, and the Dutch dominated the Baltic trade increasingly. This can best be seen in the extensive Öresund customs records edited by Nina Ellinger Bang and Knut Korst, *Tabeller over Skibsfart og Varetransport 1497-1783* (Copenhagen, 1906-1933), I-III. For the period 1497-1700, out of which the records for 147 years are preserved, nearly 300,000 Dutch ships, tabulated according to the home port of the vessel, passed through the Sound, which number comprises over 55 % of the European grand total. During the same two centuries the German cities and the Hanse together made passages to the extent of 22 % of the grand total, Scandinavia and Finland 13.5 %, and England and Scotland 8%.

¹² 1568-1648, broken by a truce (1609-1621).

¹³ Fruin, *Tien jaren uit den tachtigjarigen oorlog*, 190-191.

Despite the war with Spain the trade of the Dutch, even with the Spanish peninsula, prospered and increased.¹⁴ For decades Philip II did not dare to lay violent hands on Dutch ships in his harbors because the cargoes they brought were so indispensable to him. Spasmodically after 1585, however, he began to harass and arrest them, thereby threatening to cut off the Dutch source of supply for salt, spices, and American wares and to deprive them of an important market for their Baltic staples and their manufactured goods.¹⁵ The natural result was that the United Netherlands – in capital, ships, and seafaring men the richest land in Europe – began an expansion overseas to the production centers in Asia and America.

From 1580 the Dutch, as carriers for the Portuguese, had made voyages to Brazil, but their independent expansion really dates from 1590.¹⁶ That year four Dutch ships with Baltic grain entered the Mediterranean; four years later there were four hundred.¹⁷ A shortage of salt drove Dutch ships in great numbers to the Canary Islands, and then to Punta de Araya in Venezuela, where by 1600 a hundred Dutch vessels a year were loading salt.¹⁸ Before the end of the sixteenth century, Dutch ships had appeared hundreds of

¹⁴ Thoroughly investigated recently by J. H. Kernkamp, *De handel op den vijand 1572-1609* (2v. Utrecht [1931-1934]).

¹⁵ J. K. J. de Jonge, *De opkomst van het Nederlandsch gezag in Oost-Indië 1595-1610* (Hague, Nijhoff, 1862), 1, 4-7. Hereafter cited as *De Jonge, Opkomst*.

¹⁶ A remarkable summary of the earliest Dutch trade with Brazil is given in a memorial entitled: "Deductie vervaetende den oorspronck ende progres van de vaert ende handel op Brasil," in J. W. IJzerman (ed.), *Journael van de reis naar Zuid-Amerika (1598-1601) door Hendrik Ottsen* (*Werken uitgegeven door de Linschoten Vereeniging*, xvi, Hague, Nijhoff, 1918), Bijlage III, 96-106.

¹⁷ De Jonge, *Opkomst*, I, 7-8; K. Heeringa, *Bronnen tot de geschiedenis van den Levantschen handel* (*Rijks geschiedkundige publicatiën*, ix, Hague, Nijhoff, 1910).

¹⁸ For example, on May 22, 1602, Diego Suarez de Amaya, governor of Cumaná in Venezuela, wrote to Spain that during the preceding twelve months 107 Dutch ships had been at Punta de Araya alone to obtain salt. P. A. Euwens, "Wat zijn 'Frejelindes' en 'Frechlingas'?" in *De West Indische Gids* (Hague, Nijhoff, 1931), XIII, 351-354; Elias, *Voorspel*, II, 112-113.

miles up the Amazon and Orinoco rivers, on the Guiana coast, in the West Indian islands, on the Newfoundland Banks, and at the mouth of the Rio de la Plata.¹⁹ A flourishing trade had also been opened to the west coast of Africa.²⁰

Better known is the Dutch drive to the Far East. Since 1578 the Dutch had traded in the White Sea, and therefore it was natural that they should attempt to find a northeast passage.²¹ While three voyages failed, Spitzbergen was found,²² and the successful voyage of 1595 around the Cape of Good Hope, followed in the next six years by twelve other expeditions, laid the foundation of the Dutch power in the East.²³ Before 1601 two expeditions also passed through the Straits of Magellan and up the west coast of America, one ship probably reaching Upper California, another landing in Japan, and a third under Olivier van Noort completing the fourth circumnavigation of the globe.²⁴

¹⁹ De Jonge, *Opkomst*, I, 32-55; IJzerman, *Journael van de reis naar Zuid-Amerika*.

²⁰ "Remonstrantie van traffiquanten op de custe van Guinea" (MS. General State Archives, Hague, Nijhoff). De Jonge, *Opkomst*, I, 36-40.

²¹ De Jonge, *Opkomst*, I, 9 ff.

²² S. P. L'Honoré Naber (ed.), *Reizen van Jan Huyghen van Linschoten naar het Noorden 1594-1595* and *Reizen van Willem Barents Jacob van Heemskerck Jan Cornelisz Rijp en anderen naar het noorden 1594-1597* (*Werken uitgegeven door de Linschoten Vereeniging*, Hague, Nijhoff, VIII [1914], XIV, XV (1917)).

²³ H. T. Colenbrander, *Koloniale geschiedenis* (Hague, Nijhoff, 1925), II, 82-92; F. W. Stapel, *Geschiedenis van Nederlandsch-Indië* (Amsterdam, 1930), 34-54.

²⁴ Sluiter, *et al*, "New light from Spanish archives on voyage of Olivier van Noort: the vice-admiral ship, the *Hendrick Frederick*, on the west coast of the Americas (1600)," in *Bijdragen voor Vaderlandsche Geschiedenis* (Hague, Nijhoff, 1937), Ser. VII, vol. VIII, 34-48; F. C. Wieder (ed.), *De reis van Mahu en De Cordes door de Straat van Magalhaes naar Zuid-Amerika en Japan 1598-1600* (*Werken uitgegeven door de Linschoten Vereeniging*, XXI, XXII, XXIV, Hague, Nijhoff, 1923-1925); J. W. IJzerman (ed.), *De reis om de wereld door Olivier van Noort 1598-1601* (*Werken uitgegeven door de Linschoten Vereeniging*, XXVII-XXVIII, Hague, Nijhoff, 1926).

Even greater were Dutch achievements in the seventeenth century. In 1602 the mammoth Dutch East India Company was formed, and a sixty year struggle was begun against the Portuguese, and indirectly against the Spanish and English, for commercial and naval supremacy in the East Indian archipelago and south-eastern Asia.²⁵ The Dutch succeeded completely. A foothold was obtained in the Moluccas in 1605, Malacca was captured in 1641, and Ceylon and Negapatam a few years later.²⁶ Portugal, almost dispossessed, was glad to make peace in 1661. At the same time the English, far less robust, had been forced out of the East Indian archipelago, and the Spanish prevented from going westward from Manila.²⁷

Having ousted all rivals and consolidated their power in the East Indian archipelago, the Dutch now expanded their trade to the mainland of Asia; to Arabia, Persia, India proper, China, and Japan. East of the Straits of Malacca they achieved a commercial monopoly.²⁸ They owned Formosa for almost forty years, and were the only Europeans, after the Portuguese fell into disfavor, who had access to Japan.²⁹ West of the Straits of Malacca, although they shared the trade of Arabia, Persia, and India proper with other European nations, the Dutch factories were the most prosperous

²⁵ Stapel, *Geschiedenis van Nederlandsch-Indië*, 44-49. The Dutch East India Company was capitalized at 6,500,000 florins, or more than sixteen times the amount of the better known English East India Company (1600). The States General granted it a trade monopoly east of the Cape of Good Hope and west of the Straits of Magellan. It was the world's greatest commercial company for more than a century, a fact attested by the wealth, power, and territory which it won in the Far East.

²⁶ Colenbrander, *Koloniale geschiedenis*, II, 95, 148-161.

²⁷ Elias, *Voorspel*, II, 1-46.

²⁸ Elias, *Voorspel*, II, 47-51; Colenbrander, *Koloniale geschiedenis*, II, 227-230.

²⁹ Formosa was Dutch from 1624-1662. Stapel, *Geschiedenis van Nederlandsch-Indië*, 108-109; W. Campbell, *Formosa under the Dutch* (London, 1913). The Portuguese were expelled from Japan in 1638. Elias, *Voorspel*, II, 50; O. Nachod, *Die Beziehungen der Niederländischen Ostindischen Compagnie zu Japan in siebzehnten Jahrhundert* (Leipzig, 1897).

ones during the entire seventeenth century.³⁰ A fortified supply and sanitary station, which grew into a colony, was established at the Cape of Good Hope.³¹ Australia was discovered in 1606 and circumnavigated by Tasman in 1643, who also discovered Tasmania and New Zealand.³² About the same time Maarten Gerritsz Vries searched for a fabulous continent in the Pacific, northeast of Japan, and there was serious talk of Dutch expansion from the East Indies to Chile.³³

Meanwhile, extensive Dutch expansion had taken place to Africa and the Americas. Before 1621 it was private enterprise; Dutch traders swarmed the American littoral from Rio de la Plata to Hudson's Bay.³⁴ Notable discoveries were made. In the employ of the Dutch East India Company Henry Hudson accidentally entered the mouth of the river which bears his name and opened a new field for Dutch exploitation.³⁵ Lemaire on an East Indian and Australian voyage rounded the tip of South America and named

³⁰ H. Terpstra, *De opkomst der Westerkwartieren van de Oost-Indische Compagnie* (Hague, Nijhoff, 1918); Elias, *Voorspel*, II, 51-59.

³¹ Stapel, *Geschiedenis van Nederlandsch-Indië*, 104-105, 177-178.

³² J. E. Heeres, *The Part Borne by the Dutch in the Discovery of Australia* (London, 1899); R. Posthumus Meyjes (ed.), *De reizen van Abel Janszoon Tasman en Franchoy's Jacobszoon Vischer (Werken uitgegeven door de Linschoten Vereeniging, XVII, Hague, Nijhoff, 1919).*

³³ *Reize van Maarten Gerritsz Vries in 1643 naar het Noorden en Oosten van Japan* (Amsterdam, 1858); Colenbrander, *Koloniale geschiedenis*, II, 154-155. Several Governor-Generals of the Dutch East India Company in the Far East favored voyages across the Pacific to Chile and other parts of America, but the Directors at home refused to support their plans. This can be seen in the letter of September 9, 1645, from the Council of Seventeen Directors to the Governor-General and Council (Colonial Archive 455, General State Archives, Hague).

³⁴ De Jonge, *Opkomst*, I, 32-55.

³⁵ S. P. L'Honoré Naber (ed.), *Henry Hudson's reize onder Nederlandsche vlag (Werken uitgegeven door de Linschoten Vereeniging, XIX, Hague, Nijhoff, 1921).*

it Cape Horn in honor of his native city.³⁶ Furs and fish brought Dutch ships to the Newfoundland Banks, the St. Lawrence and Hudson rivers; sugar, tobacco, and dyewood to the Amazon and Orinoco, the Guiana coast and Brazil. Dutch trading stations on the Amazon were eventually destroyed by the Portuguese, but on the Hudson, Essequibo, and Pomeroun became settlements.³⁷

One of the great events in Dutch expansion, and indeed in all European expansion, took place in 1621 when the Dutch West India Company was organized.³⁸ Like its great prototype in the East, it aimed at trade, privateering, and conquest at the expense of Spain and Portugal. Capitalized at seven million florins it operated on a huge scale. Its first expedition in 1624 captured Bahia, the capital of Brazil, but held it less than a year.³⁹ Simultaneously, a Dutch war fleet blockaded the coast of Peru, sacked Guayaquil, and ruined Spanish Pacific coast trade.⁴⁰ Annually huge company fleets cruised in the Caribbean and destroyed Spanish commerce.⁴¹ One of these, under the famous admiral, Piet Heyn, captured the

³⁶ R. C. Bakhuizen van den Brink, "Isaac Lemaire," in *Studien en schetsen over vaderlandsche geschiedenis en letteren* (Hague, Nijhoff, 1877), iv, 225-290; J. G. van Dillen, "Isaac le Maire en de handel in actiën der Oost-Indische Compagnie," in *Economisch-Historisch Jaarboek* (Hague, Nijhoff, 1930), xvi, 1-165; J. A. J. de Villiers (ed.), *The East and West Indian Mirror... and the Australian Navigations of Jacob Le Maire*, in *Works of the Hakluyt Society* (Ser: II, Vol. xviii, London, 1906).

³⁷ G. Edmundson, "The Dutch on the Amazon and Negro in the Seventeenth Century," in *English Historical Review* (London, 1903), xviii, 642-663; P. M. Netscher, *Geschiedenis van de koloniën Essequibo, Demerary en Berbice* (Hague, Nijhoff, 1888).

³⁸ O. van Rees, *Geschiedenis der staathuishoudkunde in Nederland tot het einde der 18de eeuw* (Utrecht, 1868), II, 72-142.

³⁹ G. Edmundson, "The Dutch power in Brazil (1624-1654)," in *English Historical Review* (London, 1896-1900), xi, 231-259, xiv, 676-699, xv, 38-57.

⁴⁰ *Journal vande Nassausche vloot ofte beschryvingh vande voyagie om den gantschen aerd-kloot ghedaen met elf schepen onder't beleydt van den Admirael Jaques l'Heremite...* (Amsterdam, 1643).

⁴¹ S. P. L'Honoré Naber (ed.), *Joannes de Laet Iaerlyck Verhael van de Verrichtinghen der Geoctroyeerde West-Indische Compagnie*

Spanish silver fleet in 1628.⁴² The loot sold for fifteen million florins. It was the greatest single capture ever made at sea.

In 1630 the Dutch West India Company embarked on a larger career of conquest. Pernambuco was captured and a firm foothold obtained in Brazil, so that during the next quarter century the northern half of Brazil remained Dutch.⁴³ From it as a base Dutch expeditions conquered Portuguese territory in west Africa, where slaves for Brazilian sugar plantations were to be had.⁴⁴ The islands of Curaçao, Aruba, Bonaire, St. Eustatius, St. Martin, and Saba in the West Indies were occupied.⁴⁵ These are Dutch today. As Zealanders colonized in Essequibo, Berbice, and Pomeroon, Amsterdam capitalists extended trade and settlement on the Hudson. From Brazil also a Dutch expedition attacked the Spanish in Chile (1643).⁴⁶

Outside of Europe the Dutch in the seventeenth century possessed a commercial-colonial empire in four continents. The fifth continent, Australia, they discovered and explored, but did not occupy. All of this empire, except for Brazil, which they lost in 1661, and New York for which they received Surinam (1667), remained intact almost to the end of the eighteenth century.⁴⁷ Then Essequibo,

in derthien boecken (Werken uitgegeven door de Linschoten Vereeniging, xxxiv-xxxv, xxxvii, Hague, Nijhoff, 1931-1934).

⁴² S. P. L'Honoré Naber and I. A. Wright (eds.), *Piet Heyn en de Zilverloot (Werken uitgegeven door het Historisch Genootschap, 3rd ser., no. 53, Utrecht, 1928).*

⁴³ P. M. Netscher, *Les hollandais au Bresil* (Hague, Nijhoff, 1853).

⁴⁴ S. P. L'Honoré Naber (ed.), *De Nederlanders in Guinee en Brazilië (Geschiedkundige Atlas van Nederland, Hague, Nijhoff, 1931).*

⁴⁵ J. H. J. Hamelberg, *De Nederlanders op de West-Indische eilanden (Bijdrage tot de jaarverslagen van het Geschied-, Taal-, Land-, en Volkenkundig Genootschap der Nederlandsche Antillen gevestigd te Curaçao, 4v. Amsterdam, 1901-1909).*

⁴⁶ A. Telting, "De Nederlanders in Chili (1643)," in *De Indische Gids* (Amsterdam, 1893), xv, 2012-2037.

⁴⁷ Dutch power in Brazil really came to an end with the surrender of Pernambuco in 1654, but the colony was not formally relinquished until 1661, when the general treaty of peace between Portugal and the United Netherlands was signed. H. Wätjen, *Das holländische Kolonialreich in Brasilien* (Hague, Nijhoff, and Gotha, 1921), 172-178.

Demerary, Berbice, Ceylon, and Cape Colony were lost to England.⁴⁸ But what the Dutch retained is still the third largest and the second most valuable colonial empire in the world. It embraces a territory one-fourth as large as the United States, and it has half as many people.⁴⁹ For more than three centuries, therefore, the Netherlands has been an important colonial power.

Such in outline has been Dutch achievement. It is far from negligible, but it has received little attention from Americans. Immense archives, however, exist in the Netherlands, virtually unexplored by our historical scholars, from which the story can be written. My purpose is not to describe all, or even many, of these in detail; rather it is to select a few of the most important and to indicate their sphere of usefulness.

Public archives in the Netherlands include national, provincial, municipal, waterboard, and special archives. The most important repository of historical materials, however, is the General State Archives at the Hague.⁵⁰ It is not the only place where national archives are kept – there are also lesser repositories in the capitals of the respective provinces – but it is the central one. Its importance rests upon the fact that it contains the following broad classifications of material. First of all, it is the repository of the archives of the central government of the Dutch Republic to 1798, and the archives of the different central governments since that date, insofar as these have been made public. Secondly, it contains the archives of the most important province, Holland, from the earliest times to 1850; and finally, a broad class of materials which we may call “colonial archives.”

There is time for only a word about each of these three classifications. The central government archives are obviously important. They contain in the period of the Republic (1576–1796), for example, such important blocks of material as the archives of the States General, one of Europe’s great deliberative bodies, the archives of the Council of State, of the Chamber of Accounts, of the Foreign Consuls and Legations, and of the various Admiralty Boards, so important for Dutch maritime activity.

The archives of the province of Holland are hardly less important.

⁴⁸ Colenbrander, *Koloniale geschiedenis*, II, 319-323.

⁴⁹ The total area of the Dutch colonies of today is over 800,000 square miles.

⁵⁰ A brief but useful guide in English to this archive is: *The General State Archives and their Contents* (Hague, 1932).

Always the richest, most populous, and the most powerful province of the country, in government, as in trade and navigation, it thoroughly dominated the rest. The Grand Pensionaries of Holland, such as Oldenbarnevelt and Johan de Witt, headed the delegations of their province to the States General, and there exercised very great authority. It is natural, therefore, that the archives of this province should be important, particularly such subdivisions of it as the archives of the Estates of Holland and of the various Grand Pensionaries.

But it is the colonial archives which really are a revelation to the historical scholar. Here, in thousands of neatly bound bundles, is the immense archive of the Dutch East India companies, starting in 1594 and running to 1796. This is, without a doubt, the greatest single archive for the history of European activity in the Far East before the year 1800 in existence anywhere in the world. To this were added in 1862-63, by transfer from the government archives at Batavia in the East Indies, the mass of papers relating to Dutch activity in India, Ceylon, at the Cape of Good Hope, etc., and the papers from the Dutch factories in India, China, and other parts of Asia. An absolutely unique archive is that of the Dutch factory in Japan, covering the period 1609-1842. A decade ago Japanese historical scholars recognized the great importance of this material, and Dutch copyists have been transcribing it for them bundle by bundle ever since.

Of particular interest to students of western hemisphere history are the archives of the Dutch West India companies (1621-1795), of the Direction of Berbice (1720-1795), of the Society of Surinam (1683-1795), and a large collection of miscellaneous West Indian documents. To these must be added the archives transferred from the Dutch possessions in America since 1915. These include the archives of Surinam (1669-1845), the archives of the Dutch-Portuguese Jewish Communion in Surinam (ca. 1678-1864), the archives of Curaçao, Bonaire, and Aruba to 1845, and of St. Eustatius, St. Martin, and Saba to the same date.⁵¹

These collections, so valuable for western hemisphere history, are not contained in a few bundles; they comprise hundreds upon hundreds of bundles. The old story that almost the entire West India Company archives were hauled away by the junk man, and that therefore the Dutch archives contained little for western

⁵¹ There are published inventories of the last four of these in *Verslagen omtrent 's Rijks oude archieven* (Hague, Nijhoff, 1916-1927).

hemisphere history, is largely a myth.⁵² What was lost principally were most of the papers for the thirteen years (1623–1636) in the archive of the First West India Company (1621–1674). Our emphasis in the United States on the Dutch in New York, really a most insignificant tail on the dog of Dutch expansion, has kept us from carefully exploring the Dutch archives and from discovering this error.

But there are other archives in the Netherlands to which our attention must briefly be directed. Of the ten lesser repositories of national archives in the capitals of the provinces I shall speak of only one, that of Zeeland at Middelburg. If there were bolder seafarers and more adventurous traders and privateers than the Hollanders, they must have been Zealanders. The latter are of particular interest to students of western hemisphere history because they showed a definite predilection in their trading voyages and colonizing ventures for the Caribbean area and South America in general. They were the great Amazon and Orinoco traders, and the Guiana coast settlers. The name of their chief port, Vlissingen (Flushing), was corrupted to “Pichilingue” in the mouths of Spaniards, who soon applied it to all Zealanders, then to all Dutchmen, and eventually to all interlopers into Spanish America.⁵³

The Zeeland State Archive might be expected to, and does, contain much which supplements the western hemisphere materials in the General State Archives. One example must suffice, that of the *Comercie Compagnie* Archive. This company was organized for world-wide trade and privateering at Middelburg near the close

⁵² By emphasizing what has been lost Wätjen, for example, perpetuates this impression. *Das holländische Kolonialreich in Brasilien*, 2.

⁵³ R. van der Meulen, “Over een woord voor Hollanders in Spaansche archivalia,” in *Mededeelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afdeling Letterkunde* (Amsterdam, 1931), Deel 71, Serie A, no. 2, 11-45; “Nogmaals over een woord voor Hollanders in Spaansche archivalia,” in *Mededeelingen der Koninklijke Akademie van Wetenschappen, Afdeling Letterkunde* (Amsterdam, 1932), Deel 73, Serie A, no. 2, 35-58; *supra*, footnote 18. For a thoroughly disproved explanation see: Adolfo Bonilla y San Martín, “Pichelingue-Pechelingue,” in *Revista de Archivos, Bibliotecas y Museos* (Madrid, 1910), xxii, 432-445, and Modesto Chavez Franco, *Crónicas del Guayaquil antiguo* (Guayaquil, 1930), 524-526.

of the seventeenth century and sent out hundreds of ships during the eighteenth century. Each ship kept a journal, and a great number of these, besides records of outfitting, cargo, and the like, are now preserved in the Zeeland State Archive. One useful Leyden University doctor's thesis has been written out of the *Comercie Compagnie* records, but this quite obviously does not exhaust them.⁵⁴

The municipal archives of the Netherlands are also important, particularly those of the two great trading cities, Amsterdam, and Rotterdam. During the seventeenth century Amsterdam carried very nearly one-half of the entire trade, foreign and domestic, of the United Netherlands, and Dutch sea commerce was about one-half of that of all Europe.⁵⁵ It is small wonder, therefore, that Amsterdam should have voluminous and important archives for the economic history, particularly commercial and financial, of Europe. The preponderance of Amsterdam was equally great in the Dutch East and West India companies, and New Amsterdam on the Hudson was christened and nourished by the old Amsterdam in Holland.

Rotterdam's importance, in the main, is of a later date, although its share in Dutch trade was already considerable in the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth and nineteenth it became very important as a base for European emigration to the United States, and, with Amsterdam, supplied the developing American nation with capital and a great variety of manufactured goods.⁵⁶ For the development of the United States, and of the western hemisphere in general, its municipal archive, therefore, contains much of value.

In function the municipal archives of Amsterdam and Rotterdam are linked with the special Archive of Economic History at the Hague, an outgrowth of the increasing emphasis in the twentieth century on economic history. This comparatively new archive already comprises thousands of bundles of material, largely records of Dutch exporting, importing, and commercial firms of the

⁵⁴ Adrian Wisse, *De Comercie-Compagnie te Middelburg van haar oprichting tot het jaar 1754* (Utrecht, 1933).

⁵⁵ Brugmans, *Opkomst en bloei van Amsterdam*, 118-119; *supra*, footnote II.

⁵⁶ See, for example, P. J. van Winter's *Het aandeel van den Amsterdamschen handel aan den opbouw van het Amerikaansche Gemeenebest* (*Werken uitgegeven door de Vereeniging Het Nederlandsch Economisch-Historisch Archief*, VII, IX, Hague, Nijhoff, 1927-1933).

eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.⁵⁷ Such materials are of the type which usually never reach a public archive, although they are important for the historian.

Although there are many other archive collections in the Netherlands, some of which, approached from another angle, might be more important than those mentioned, the limits of this paper do not permit of any reference to them. The purpose here is to be suggestive, not exhaustive. Manifestly there is significant Dutch history, much of which is tied up ultimately with our own, and there are voluminous Dutch archives from which it can be written more correctly and completely.

There have been, and remain, various barriers which have kept us from studying Dutch history in the past. In the main, we have regarded it with indifference. Washington Irving once laughed it out of court. Then there is the problem of language, but it is not insurmountable. Dutch is more akin to English than is German; Frisian, in fact, is a direct bloodbrother. Moreover, we need a reading knowledge of Dutch to keep abreast of the abundant and excellent product of Dutch historical scholarship, particularly on economic and colonial subjects.

Finally, may I suggest a few of the many possible subjects, alone in western hemisphere history, which need to be written and for which the Dutch archives would be indispensable. Let us take the Caribbean area. Here, if anywhere in our part of the world, is history a dozen layers deep, and several of them are Dutch. Who has written the very significant part played by the island of Curaçao in the smuggling and slave trade to Spanish America by western Europeans during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries? Jameson, in a much more special connection, has already shown what can be done in his "St. Eustatius in the American Revolution."⁵⁸ There would be far more than enough material in Dutch and Spanish archives for a good doctoral dissertation on the subject of the Dutch salt trade at Punta de Araya and on the Lesser Antilles, not an insignificant chapter in the early economic history of the western hemisphere.⁵⁹

⁵⁷ The society which sponsors this archive (De Vereeniging Het Nederlandsch Economisch-Historisch Archief gevestigd te 's-Gravenhage) publishes *Economisch-Historisch Jaarboek* (Hague, 1916-), and *Werken* (Hague, Nijhoff, 1919-1933).

⁵⁸ *Supra*, footnote 2.

⁵⁹ My work at the Archivo General de las Indias in Sevilla

A good history of the slave trade, embracing the whole hemisphere, would depend upon the Dutch archives at least as much as on the Portuguese, Spanish, English, or Italian. There is important western hemisphere naval history of the seventeenth century to be written. The great battles of the first half of the century, and there were many, were exclusively between Dutch and Spanish-Portuguese fleets. For instance, in a three-day battle on the coast of Brazil in 1640 one hundred and twenty-seven ships were engaged.⁶⁰ Such events are important in the history of the hemisphere.

There were many Dutchmen more prominent in western hemisphere history than Willem Usselinx and Pieter Stuyvesant, who have found American biographers.⁶¹ Count Johan Maurits of Nassau-Siegen, Governor-General of Dutch Brazil (1636-1644) and Piet Heyn are two examples. We lack histories in English on the Dutch in Brazil, the Dutch in the Caribbean, and the Dutch on the Pacific coast of America. Due attention to almost any one of these would offer an opportunity to produce another American Motley.

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has convinced me that the archives of Spain are fully as rich as those of the Netherlands for this study.

⁶⁰ Wätjen, *Das Holländische Kolonialreich in Brasilien*, 99-103.

⁶¹ *Supra*, footnote 2; B. Tuckerman, *Peter Stuyvesant* (New York, 1898); H. van Loon, *Life and Times of Pieter Stuyvesant* (New York, 1928).

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