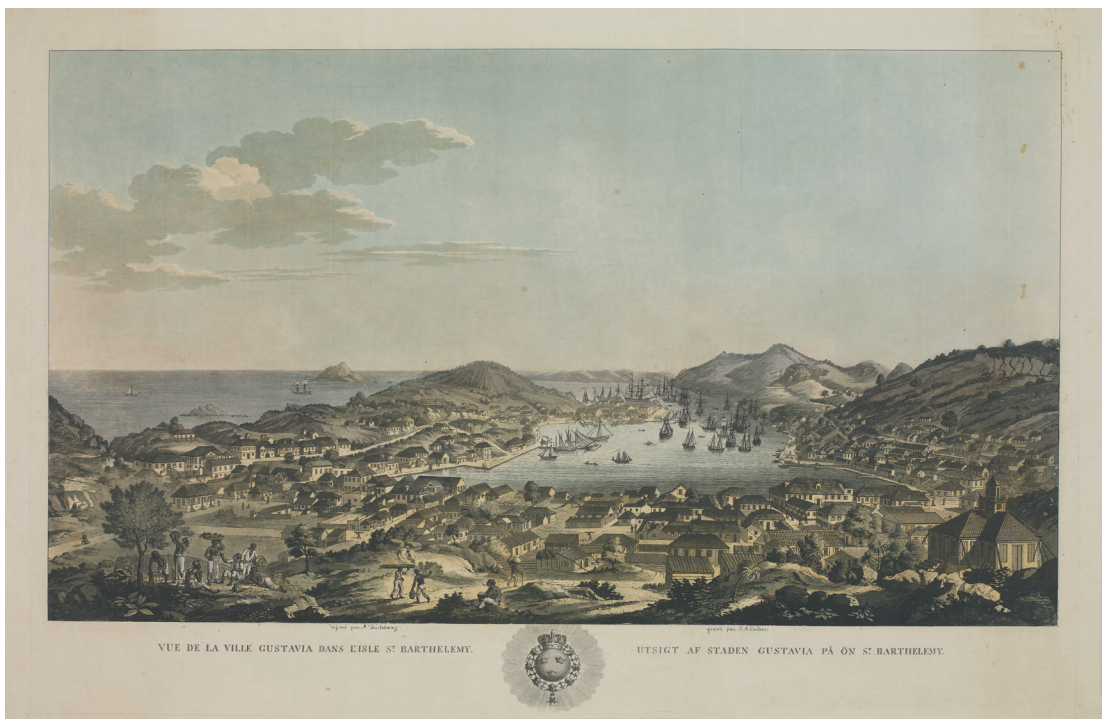


Victor Wilson

Commerce in Disguise

War and Trade in the Caribbean Free Port of Gustavia, 1793–1815





Victor Wilson

Born 1984.

Masters degree in history, Åbo Akademi University, 2010.

Åbo Akademis förlag | Åbo Akademi University Press

Tavastgatan 13, FI-20500 Åbo, Finland

Phone: +358 (0) 2 215 3478

E-mail: forlaget@abo.fi

Sales and distribution:

Åbo Akademis bibliotek | Åbo Akademi University Library

Domkyrkogatan 2-4, FI-20500 Åbo, Finland

Phone: +358 (0) 215 4190

E-mail: publikationer@abo.fi

Cover image: *Vue de la ville Gustavia dans l'isle Saint-Barthélemy*
(ca. 1790–1805) Courtesy of Uppsala University Library.

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Åbo, Finland, 2015

CIP Cataloguing in Publication

Wilson, Victor.

Commerce in disguise : war and trade
in the Caribbean free port of Gustavia,
1793–1815 / Victor Wilson. - Åbo : Åbo
Akademi University Press, 2015.

Diss.: Åbo Akademi University.

ISBN 978-951-765-806-5

ISBN 978-951-765-806-5
ISBN 978-951-765-807-2 (digital)
Painosalama Oy
Åbo 2015

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Abbreviations

ADM	Admiralty (National Archives, London)
ANOM	Archives Nationales d'Outre-Mer (Aix-en-Provence)
BT	Board of Trade (The National Archives, London)
CO	Colonial Office (The National Archives, London)
DNA	Danish National Archives (Rigsarkivet, København)
FO	Foreign Office (The National Archives, London)
FSB	Fonds Suédois de Saint Barthélemy
NARA	National Archives and Records Administration (Washington)
PRO	Public Record Office (The National Archives, London)
SNA	Swedish National Archives (Riksarkivet, Stockholm)
TNA	The National Archives, London, United Kingdom
UUL	Uppsala University Library (Uppsala universitetsbibliotek)
WO	War Office (The National Archives, London)

Acknowledgements

During my work with this thesis, I have accrued a large number of debts. It would not even have seen the light of day had it not been for professor Holger Weiss, who believed in me enough to finally convince myself that I was equal to the task at hand. His energy and enthusiasm has propelled myself as well as other fellow researchers towards the work and craft of the historian. A special mention should also be afforded to Jan-Erik Till for largely the same reasons. Tilli's inspirational education and encouragement are the sources for my initial interest in history.

I cannot recount how many debts I owe to my second supervisor, PhD Fredrik Thomasson. Suffice it to say, this thesis would look much different if it had not been for the different efforts and qualities of Fredrik. Sealed archives would have remained under lock and key, obstinate institutions would have been unyielding, and technical and linguistic barriers would have been insurmountable in the time allotted to complete this text.

The work with this thesis would not have been materially possible without the generous grant of the Academy of Finland, which founded the EGL project of which I am part. I have been especially privileged to travel extensively to foreign archives and sites which has been absolutely essential for the results of the study. Additional grants were supplied in the first year of my work by Svenska litteratursällskapet, Ragnar, Ester, Rolf och Margareta Bergboms fond, and Waldemar von Frenckells fond. The early travel grant by Åbo Akademis jubileumsfond 1968 made an initial sojourn in the Swedish National Archives possible, during which I started to acquaint myself with the Swedish history of St. Barthélemy.

During that first visit, I met briefly with Per Tingbrand, whose mammoth efforts in uncovering, cataloguing, and recording the extant archival sources have been invaluable for myself as well as other researchers. I am sorry for not having the opportunity of discussing St. Barthélemy at length with you. Suffice it to say, a large part of the primary research done before the completion of this thesis would not have been possible without your efforts. I owe you my most heartfelt gratitude.

During my research trips abroad I have benefited from friends and family with an open home and place to rest. I would like to especially thank Emil and

Sofia Sandholm in Stockholm who took care of me despite that I occupied most of their living-room space for several months at a time. I would also like to thank Anders Huldin and family for housing me in Stockholm during the same period, as well as my sister Lotta Wilson-Bruun and family who saw to my accommodation in a stint at the Danish National Archives in Copenhagen. I would also like to thank the aid and assistance of acquaintances connected to different archival institutions and libraries. The help and expertise of Jean-Yves Dissais with the old Swedish municipal archive of St. Barthélemy, housed at the ANOM in Aix-en-Provence, has been invaluable to the digital reproduction of it, and in extension to mine and fellow researchers' projects. Jacques Dion deserves thanks for making the whole process possible in the first place. Anne Lebel thankfully provided the possibility of a sojourn at the ADM in Gourbeyre, Guadeloupe, whereas Gerard Lafleur took good care of an itinerant researcher during his first visit in a Caribbean island. Arlette Magras made sure that I found my way around St. Barthélemy and the peculiar traces of its Swedish history. To Han Jordaan I owe many of my insights into the history of St. Eustatius and its sources. It was a valuable and enjoyable experience to collaborate and work with you, as well as with Jessica Vance Roitman and Gert Oostindie. I thank the latter two for their diligence and patience during a late book project. I take the opportunity also to thank my colleague Ale Pålsson of Stockholm University, who has also worked with a thesis of his own about the history of St. Barthélemy, and who has accompanied me during long hours of photography and cataloguing of the archives in Aix-en-Provence, as well as the 2013 ACH conference in Belize.

When I have occasionally shown up in the corridors of the history department of Åbo Akademi University, I have always found myself surrounded with helpful and resourceful colleagues. The historical research seminar has always been a source of useful dialogue and reflection, assisted by the meeting of widely differing topics and research themes. I would like to direct special thanks to Professor Nils-Erik Villstrand as one of the leading voices of this seminar, as well the particular insights he has offered me as an expert on Swedish history. Other teachers and mentors which deserve mentioning both for their aid during my work with this thesis as well as during

my years as an undergraduate are Laura Hollsten, Rolf Enander, Ann-Catrin Östman, and Joachim Mickwitz.

My colleagues have made life as a PhD student brighter. I would like to especially thank Stefan Norrgård and Anna Sundelin for their genial manner when I first started to settle down at a desk at our department, and also Miriam Rönqvist for our frank discussions about work and working life. During our coffee breaks, I have found invaluable advice, support, as well as general amusement in the office next door, which also doubles as a coffee room. Frequenters and (un)fortunate occupants of said room include, but is not limited to: Mats Wickström, Robert Lindberg, Patrik Hettula, Oscar Winberg, Matias Kaihovirta, Hanna Lindberg, Johanna Wassholm, Anders Ahlbäck, Janne Väistö, and Fredrik Petersson.

At last I would like to thank my family which has supported me through the years, despite my constant absent-mindedness and preoccupations while immersed in this project. I thank my parents Bo-Gustav and Helena Wilson for their unflinching support. My sister Anna Sjöblom deserves thanks as a key person that finally convinced me to continue working with what I enjoy most. At last I would like to thank my own family. My wife Sara has had to put up with a lot of my idiosyncrasies during the years, but she has never wavered in her support for me. Our sons Åke and Allan, born in 2013 and 2015, have offered a healthy perspective on life during the last years spent putting this text together.

Backgränd, Karis
December 2015



Figure 1.1 St. Barthélemy ca. 1800

Source: Samuel Fahlberg, *Charta öfver Ön St. Barthélemy*, 1801, Krigsarkivet.

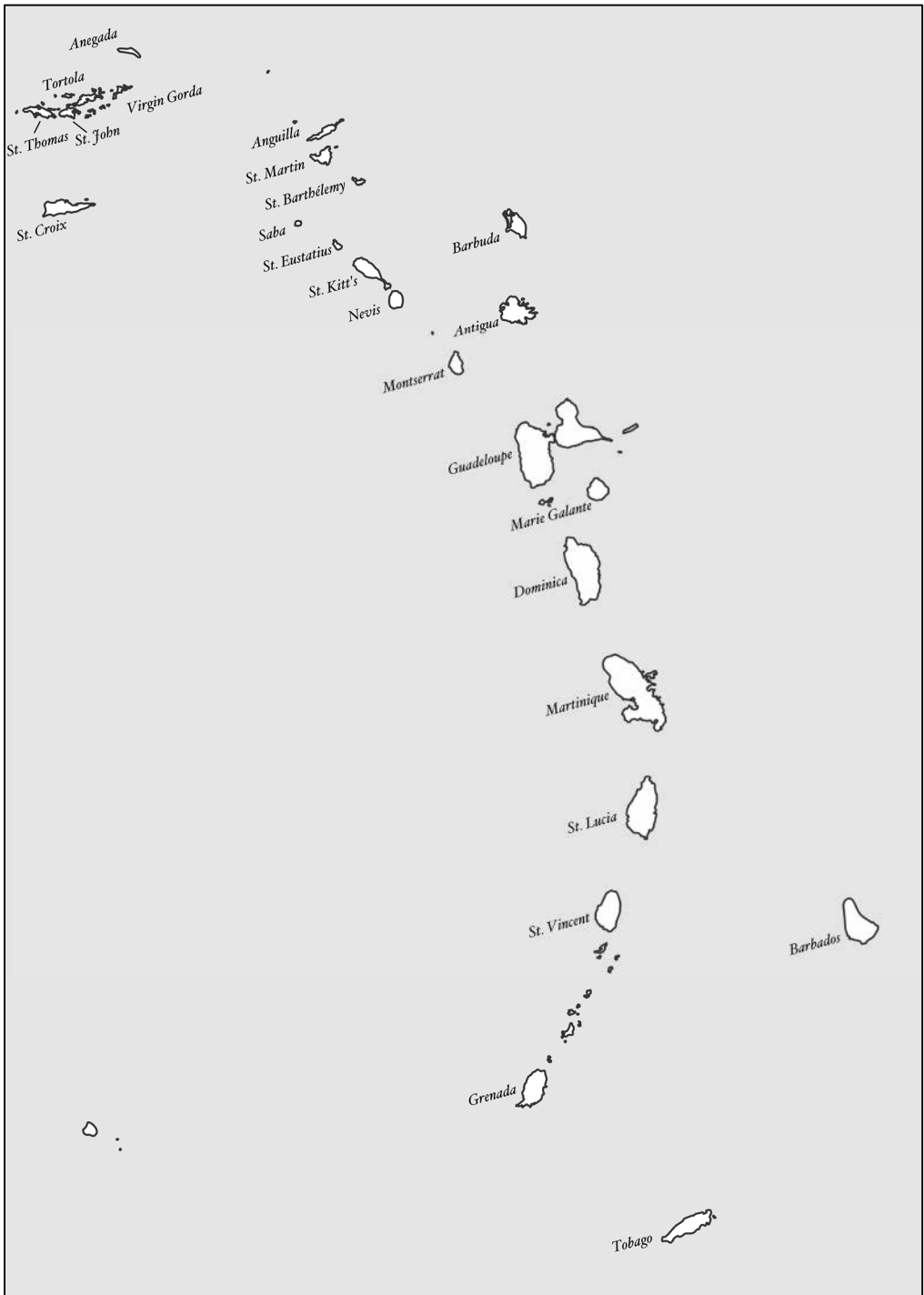


Figure 1.2 The Lesser Antilles

I Introduction

1.1 Images of a Prosperous Port Town

In October 1805, the British lawyer James Stephen published the legal polemic *War in Disguise; or, the Frauds of the Neutral Flags*. While the principal target of Stephen's treatise was the burgeoning neutral American carrying trade, other minor neutral trading nations did not escape his arguments and invectives. Stephen claimed that "Denmark and Sweden each possessed islands in the West Indies", St. Thomas and St. Barthélemy, "which might be made *entrepôts* between their European dominions and the French colonies".¹

The island of St. Barthélemy had since the initial Swedish acquisition become the home of an international mercantile community which was centered in a new town, christened Gustavia after king Gustav III. Shortly after the first Swedish settlement, the town was proclaimed a free port. In 1800 the island had reached its demographic apex of 6,000 inhabitants. In terms of its population, Gustavia became one the largest cities in the Swedish kingdom. In 1819, four years after the end of the great European conflict, Olof Erik Bergius published *Om Westindien*, a general overview of the West Indies, based in large part on his experience as colonial judge in the Swedish colony of St. Barthélemy. His depiction of the regional trade conducted from the island's free port of Gustavia essentially confirmed Stephen's assumptions. During the late war, asserted Bergius, the local merchants had "supplied the French colonies with French wines, the English islands with American timber, the United States with English and

¹James Stephen, *War in Disguise; or, the Frauds of the Neutral Flags* (London: C. Whittingham, 1805), 38.

East Indian merchandise, France with St. Domingo coffee etc.” While he hardly defined this trade in more precise political and legal terms, it would have no doubt been just the kind of commercial activity that Stephen would have termed ‘war in disguise’.²

Stephen called for the abolition of the carrying trade of neutral nations, with special reference to the commerce between France’s Caribbean islands and Europe. Having practiced at the bar in the Vice Admiralty Court of St. Kitts, he had had the opportunity to witness contraband trade in the Caribbean under the guise of neutral flags. He was also a member of parliament, and the ideas he espoused in *War in Disguise* became the basis of British commercial warfare against France, embodied in the Orders in Council of 1807. It was passed in order to keep any neutral nations from trading between enemy ports. It was answered in France the same year with the Milan Decree, which declared that all neutral shipping using British ports, or paying British tariffs, were to be regarded as British and as such seized and condemned. Despite this state of affairs, the trade of Gustavia ostensibly flourished.

For Stephen and his peers, neutral transit trade constituted a kind of clandestine warfare, but reality belied such simple distinctions. The profusion of shipping routes and trade flows described by Bergius can hardly be characterized as a commercial movement that exclusively served the interests of a single national interest. Free ports were by definition open to ships of all nations, and were exploited by the commercial actors of all nations. The Dutch free port colonies of Curaçao and St. Eustatius as well as the Danish colony of St. Thomas had since the 17th century been international emporiums of free trade in the region, and its inhabitants shared a renowned history of smuggling and interloping throughout the Western Hemisphere. Free trade in this context refers to the trade that transgressed national and imperial borders throughout the history of colonial societies in the Americas, irrespective if it was regarded as legal or

² Olof Erik Bergius, *Om Westindien* (Stockholm: Gadelius, 1819). For a brief but insightful analysis of the work and its influences, see Harald Elovsson, *Amerika i svensk litteratur 1750–1820: en studie i komparativ litteraturhistoria* (Lund: Gleerup, 1930), 123–24, 284–287.

illegal. Historians have in recent times tended to speak about “informal economies” as a catch-all category, instead of limiting the discussion to definition-defying phenomena such as smuggling or illicit trade. The term transit trade owes its use to the character free port trade as a mediator, connecting markets otherwise closed from each other.³

The once bustling activity of St. Eustatius, nicknamed “the Golden Rock”, as well as Curaçao was however close to extinguished towards the end of the century when the Dutch Republic was subsumed by France. Danish St. Thomas was occupied by British forces in 1807 as a result of the Danish course in the Napoleonic Wars. The effects of these circumstances have not been well understood in current historical research. The effects appeared however to be quite tangible for the Swedish colony. On location in St. Barthélemy during the height of the Napoleonic Wars, Bergius even ventured to claim that “gold flowed out in streams out of the very rock of the island”, an allusion to the hundreds of ships which could be seen frequenting the colony to trade and barter their cargoes at a daily basis. It is also an image that is highly reminiscent of the near mythical past wealth of St. Eustatius. Indeed, while Bergius’ description of a prosperous St. Barthélemy is highly colorful, it is a characteristic sentiment which is often mirrored in other sources. Abraham Runnels, a former inhabitant of St. Eustatius, compared the histories of St. Eustatius and St. Barthélemy in 1814 and claimed that “what one [St. Eustatius] owed of her celebrity to the War of American Independence, the other [St. Barthélemy] owes to the Wars of the French revolution.” At the time of his statement, Runnels was living on St. Barthélemy, and had become a naturalized Swedish burgher. Runnels was one of many ‘Statians’ that had moved from the Dutch colony to St. Barthélemy during the turmoil of the 1790s. Before Runnels and family members had become Swedish subjects, he had been

³ Although the term “informal economy” has been primarily applied in the social sciences since the 1970s, it has been incorporated in historical scholarship as well, cf. for example Lance Grahn, *Political Economy of Smuggling: Regional Informal Economies in Early Bourbon New Granada* (Boulder, CO: Westview, 1997); For an overview, see Mark G. Hanna’s entry: “Smuggling” in the *Atlantic History* section of Oxford Bibliographies Online: <http://www.oxfordbibliographiesonline.com>.

part of a community which had been trading from Dutch Caribbean colonies for generations, but had since then shifted national affiliations in order to continue their livelihood.⁴

A History Fallen into Obscurity?

Why is it, however, that St. Barthélemy remains understudied in Swedish and international historiography? Against the backdrop of narratives about Dutch commercial primacy through their Caribbean free ports and interloping trade, one is at a loss to find any mention of the commercial importance of St. Barthélemy. In 1784, St. Barthélemy was acquired by the Swedish crown from the French. It is one of the smallest islands of the Lesser Antilles, and at the time of acquisition, the island was home to only a few hundred French settlers and their slaves. It was one of the least economically and politically important islands in the Caribbean. It was however, the end-result of Swedish colonial ambitions at the close of the eighteenth century. It was decided that the only way to exploit the island was to encourage the transit trade within the region in a similar manner as had been done by Dutch and Danish colonies in the region, as well as to try an attempt to participate directly in the West Indian trade. And with Swedish acquisition also came – eventually – a substantial transformation of the colony. The Swedish colonial efforts were focused at creating a free port town around the rim of Le Carénage, a protected cove on the southwest shore.

The colony's small imprint on the Swedish economy is however only one aspect of its obscured past. There has been uneven attention paid to international history in Scandinavian and northern European states. Historical conditions have likely led to this state of affairs, as northern European states have not experienced significant phenomena of

⁴ The quote from Runnels to Skogman, 9 June 1814, SBS 3 A, SNA; Han Jordaan and Victor Wilson, "The Eighteenth-century Danish, Dutch and Swedish Free Ports in the Northeastern Caribbean: Continuity and Change," in *Dutch Atlantic Connections*, ed. Gert Oostindie and Jessica V. Roitman (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 278–308.

decolonization, such as postwar migration from former colonies, demands of reparations and reconciliation with a colonial past, or any kind of demand or institutional support for any coherent tradition of colonial history in higher education.⁵

This detachment from a colonial past has not always been as it is in Sweden today. In pre-World War II-Sweden, colonialism was still an unproblematic subject. After the war Swedish scholars and writers however marginalized colonialism from its place in Swedish national narratives, and it became more common to stress the insignificance of Swedish colonial projects, as it did not fit very well into the historical Swedish self-view as a progressive and liberal welfare state. As a result of this development, Swedish colonial history has never been politicized, that is, up until very recently. In 2014 Sweden was included in the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) list of states held to be responsible for the effects of colonialism and slavery, and thus possibly liable for reparations. The country's colonial past has also garnered some recent media attention towards current research on St. Barthélemy.⁶

Another reason for the relative disinterest into the Swedish colonial period of St. Barthélemy is due to the circumstances surrounding the sources. Swedish historians have mainly utilized the available material in the Swedish National Archives (SNA), which primarily consist of the surviving colonial records and reports sent to Stockholm as well as the relatively extensive archive of the Swedish West India Company (SWIC).

⁵ For a discussion of Scandinavian and northern European colonial history, see the introduction to a special journal issue on the topic by Pernille Ipsen and Gunlög Fur, *Itinerario* 33, no. 2 (2009), 7–16; For the Swedish situation, see Stefan Eklöf Amirell, "Den internationella historiens uppgång och fall: Trender inom svensk internationell historieforskning 1950–2005," *Historisk Tidskrift* 126, no. 2 (2006), 257–78.

⁶ The quote from Gunlög Fur in "Colonialism and Swedish History: Unthinkable Connections?" in *Scandinavian Colonialism and the Rise of Modernity: Small Time Agents in a Global Arena*, ed. Magdalena Naum and Jonas M. Nordin (New York: Springer, 2013), 17–36; May-Britt Öhman, "Sweden Helps': Efforts to Formulate the White Man's Burden for the Wealthy and Modern Swede," *Kult*, no. 7 (2010): 122–42; Alexander Loit, "Sveriges kolonilöster," in *Den dolda historien. 27 uppsatser om vårt okända förflutna*, ed. Ronny Ambjörnsson and David Gaunt (Stockholm: Författarförlaget, 1984), 376–95; Rolf Sjöström, "'En nödvändig omständighet' – om svensk slavhandel i Karibien," in *Svenska överord: En bok om gränslöshet och begränsningar*, ed. Raoul Granqvist (Stockholm: Sympison, 1999), 41–58.

The local government archives of the island council were however left on the island when Sweden finally sold St. Barthélemy back to France in 1878. These are now held at the *Archives nationales d'outre-Mer* (ANOM) in Aix-en-Provence. The records, the *Fonds Suédois de Saint-Barthélemy* (FSB) have suffered through adverse climate, neglect, as well as fires, and are as a result in a very bad state of conservation. Large parts were probably destroyed and lost forever during periods of foreign occupation of the colony.⁷

One of the arguably most important explanations, however, is the weak link between international and domestic research on Nordic colonialism. There are only a few exceptions, where international scholarship has taken note of the colony's economic role. Albert Keller noted in his great synthesis on colonization that during the British occupation of the Danish Caribbean colonies in 1807–1815, “American products were diverted and passed over St. Bartholomew, which at the time enjoyed an ephemeral importance.” Eric Williams also afforded a paragraph to the Swedish island in his seminal *Capitalism and Slavery* when he discussed the need of convenient transit harbors in the Caribbean for neutral American traders.⁸

There are multiple explanations behind the relative omission of the colonies of the Nordic countries in international research, not least of which are the linguistic and archival exigencies involved. Another aspect, finally is the fact that the historiography of the West Indies and the Western hemisphere in the Early Modern period has long focused on plantations rather than cities as the hearts of colonial economies and

⁷ Rolf Lamborn, “The Archives of Saint Bartholomew Rediscovered,” *The Swedish Pioneer Historical Society* 15, no. 1 (1964), 33–44; Ingvar Andersson, “Arkivalier från S:t Barthélemys svenska tid,” *Arkiv, sabbälle, forskning* 8 (1965), 7–13; Dan Brändström, “Det svenska arkivet i Västindien,” *Västerbottens-kuriren*, December 12, 1967; Björn Lindh, “Det svenska Saint-Barthélemy-arkivet,” *Arkiv, sabbälle, forskning* 16 (1974), 21–25.; Anne Lebel, “Saint-Barthélemy et ses archives: une connaissance historique éclatée,” *Bulletin de la société d'histoire de la Guadeloupe* 159 (2011), 91–102. Lebel's survey is the most recent and initiated treatment of the archival history of the FSB, and sheds some light on the problems associated in the early days of its organization, as well as the potential this material has for future research.

⁸ Adrian J. Pearce, *British trade with Spanish America, 1763–1808* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2007), 201, 245; Albert G. Keller, *Colonization: A Study of the Founding of New Societies* (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1908), 506; Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1994), 122.

societies. Furthermore, little or no attention has been made to connections across imperial borders in the colonies themselves, either in the form of migration flows, the transfers of ideas and information, or the complex networks created through trade and commerce. The history of St. Barthélemy, in short, has been largely treated as an isolated Swedish affair, and it follows that the relationship between St. Barthélemy and the surrounding region is not clearly understood.⁹

This study, however, takes the free port town as a point of departure. Unlike the plantation colonies, free port towns such as Gustavia were created in order to circumvent imperial monopolies rather than uphold them, for the gain of individuals as well as national treasuries. I argue that the historical role of St. Barthélemy in the economy of the Caribbean is not properly understood, and that it is more significant than previous research has found it to be. More importantly, I argue that the history of St. Barthélemy is important for the understanding of the longer continuity of free trade in the region, and in extension, the different colonial societies both in the Caribbean and in the North and South American continents. The study of free ports and similar subterfuges during times of international conflict serves to investigate regional networks and relationships integral to the reality of mercantile order in the colonies.

Situating St. Barthélemy in a Regional and Transnational Perspective

St. Barthélemy has not been incorporated into larger frameworks of analysis or syntheses in modern historiographies. Scholarly studies as well popular histories have been published around the topic of the Swedish

⁹ Anne Pérotin-Dumon, “Cabotage, Contraband, and Corsairs: The Port Cities of Guadeloupe and their Inhabitants,” in *Atlantic Port Cities: Economy, Culture, and Society in the Atlantic World, 1650–1850*, ed. Franklin W. Knight and Peggy K. Liss (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1991), 58; Anne Pérotin-Dumon, *La ville aux Iles, la ville dans l’île: Basse-Terre et Pointe-à-Pitre, Guadeloupe, 1650–1820* (Paris: Karthala, 2000), 12–13.

colony, but they all share the same basic framework, that of the colony as a project connected solely to the agency of the metropole or the nation state, a common idea in the treatment of European colonialism. To firmly place the free port of Gustavia within a larger context, I argue that its history should be linked with the continuity of free trade of the West Indies in a long historical perspective, from the days of early colonization to the repeal of mercantilist barriers during the course of the 19th century.¹⁰

In short, this study aims to place the economic history of St. Barthélemy within a longer historiographic tradition of comparative organizations of free trade in the West Indies. At the core of this tradition is the ambition to explain how it was virtually impossible for colonial powers to attain the ideal of mercantilist and exclusive colonial systems. Imperial borders and national privileges were in reality constantly challenged, and they often yielded to internal economic necessities, ambitions of gain, and pragmatic government policy. I argue that it is the most suitable and conducive context in consideration of the economic history of St. Barthélemy.

1.2 Topical Research, Perspectives and Theory

Strictly speaking, there is no historiographic tradition of transit trade *per se*, let alone an integrated field of historical research. But it is however a discernible genre of colonial history with a long continuity. One of the earliest examples is Richard Pares' *War and Trade in the West Indies* (1938),

¹⁰ Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler, "Between Metropole and Colony. Rethinking a research agenda," in *Tensions of Empire. Colonial Cultures in a Bourgeois World*, ed. Frederick Cooper and Ann Laura Stoler. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997); For a short but precise overview of smuggling in the Americas, see Wim Klooster "Inter-Imperial Smuggling in the Americas, 1600–1800," in *Soundings in Atlantic History: Latent Structures and Intellectual Currents, 1500–1830*, ed. Bernard Bailyn and Patricia L. Denault (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009) 141–80.

in which the interdependence of different British and French colonies' commercial and political interests is explored, not in the least the relationship between the North American colonies and the West Indies, particularly the readiness of American merchants to trade with the enemy during the wars of the 18th century. He further elaborated on this historical relationship in *Yankees and Creoles* (1956). A recent work on the same theme is Thomas Truxe's *Defying Empire: Trading with the Enemy in New York* (2008), in which he details the methods and ambitions of New England merchants that continued to exchange British goods for French sugar and Spanish silver during the Seven Years' War (1756–63). In a broader popular treatment, Peter Andreas has focused on the significance of smuggling in U.S. history from colonial to modern times in *Smuggler Nation* (2013).¹¹

The contraband trade between North American colonies and the French West Indies became a problem within the British Empire during the 18th century and was part of the impetus behind the British project to establish a network of Caribbean free ports. The first study of this project was published in 1953 by Frances Armytage, *The Free Port System in the British West Indies*. Through the free ports, the British government also sought ways to circumvent its own Navigation Acts, by enabling coveted trade contacts in Spanish colonies with which direct, legal trade was otherwise impossible. The issue of British commercial ambitions in Spanish colonial America has been detailed in a more recent study by Adrian Pearce, *British Trade with Spanish America, 1763–1808*, which builds further upon the work of Armytage. Pearce empirically confirms that the British goal had always been unrestricted trade with Spanish America, that both government and merchants alike were complicit in ignoring treaties,

¹¹ Richard Pares, *War and Trade in the West Indies, 1739–1763* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1936); Richard Pares, *Yankees and Creoles: The Trade between North America and the West Indies before the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956); Thomas Truxes, *Defying Empire: Trading with the Enemy in Colonial New York* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008); Peter Andreas, *Smuggler Nation: How Illicit Trade Made America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013).

Navigation Acts, and condoning every sort of interloping and smuggling imaginable.¹²

Within the same framework one can assign different works on the Dutch West Indies during the recent decades. Before Wim Klooster's *Illicit Riches: Dutch Trade in the Caribbean, 1648–1795*, the transatlantic trade of the Dutch Republic had never received the same scholarly attention as the Dutch Asian trade. Klooster's study of the Dutch free ports on Curaçao and St. Eustatius shed new light on the Dutch transit trade with Spanish and French colonies. The study added empirical weight in many ways to the long-standing narrative of Dutch traders as the perennial middlemen of different colonial trade networks, as well as discovering that the Dutch transatlantic trade was larger than what was previously thought. Klooster has continued to emphasize the role of smuggling and illicit trade within the wider early modern Atlantic world. Of the few other historians who have concentrated on greater overviews and theories of illicit trade in multiple empires, the most notable is Alan Karras.¹³

There is a relative dearth of smuggling studies within the French and Spanish historiographies. In the French case there are many factors which have contributed to the relatively low yield of colonial studies overall. The field of Atlantic History has after all been conceived within the Anglo-Saxon academic world, and the French historical tradition has developed independently during the 20th century under the *Annales* school with its new orientations, away from ideologies of colonialism, imperialism, and nationalism. In the context of French colonial trade, Jean Tarrade's 1972

¹² Frances Armytage, *The Free Port System in the British West Indies* (London: Longmans, Green & Co., 1953); Cf. Adrian J. Pearce, "British Trade with the Spanish Colonies," *Bulletin of Latin American Research* 20, no. 2 (2001): 233–60; In a recent interesting analysis, Javier Cuenca-Esteban builds upon Pearce's estimates of the British trade into Spanish America and posits that they could be revised upwards of 29 percent or more. Javier Cuenca-Esteban, "British "Ghost" Exports, American Middlemen, and the Trade to Spanish America, 1790–1819: A Speculative Reconstruction," *The William & Mary Quarterly* 71, no. 1 (2014): 63–89.

¹³ Wim Klooster, *Illicit Riches: Dutch Trade in the Caribbean, 1648–1795* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 1998); 141–180; Alan Karras, "Smuggling and its Malcontents," in *Interactions: Transregional Perspectives on World History*, ed. Jerry H. Bentley (Honolulu: University of Hawaii, 2010), 135–49; Alan Karras, *Smuggling. Contraband and Corruption in World History* (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009).

volumes on the *Exclusif mitigé* is still the definitive study, spanning the last quarter-century of the *l'ancien régime*. It differs from many of the above works in that it is communicated through the perspective of the French monarchy, and its attempts to negotiate the markets of its colonial empire with and without Colbertian principles of metropolitan monopoly. It also differs somewhat in that Tarrade is almost exclusively concerned with the trade between France and its own colonies, as opposed to the informal economies with other territories which thrived the peripheries of the French empire.¹⁴

It is somewhat more difficult to pinpoint book-length surveys of Spanish colonial trade, but economic studies of Spanish America have generally given extensive treatment to the issue of contraband and attempts to curtail contraband within the Spanish Empire. For instance, the larger theme in Stein and Stein's *Edge of Crisis* (2012) is the decline of the Spanish empire and the colonial heritage of Latin America from a dependency-theory perspective. Similar to Tarrade's study, it focuses meticulously on the peninsular policy making of Spain and the subaltern colonial relationship of Spain with the other Spanish colonies in the Caribbean. In their exposition, the reorganizing of New Spain's trade in 1789–93, the *Comercio Libre*, served to create new fissures within an already unstable empire. John R. Fischer's *The Economic Aspects of Spanish Imperialism in America, 1492–1810* (1997), as well as surveys by Horst Pietschmann are older entries in the research into the economic spheres of Spanish imperialism, but no less valid. Fischer's work is on a grander scale as it addresses how the Spanish government treated the economic

¹⁴ Jean Tarrade, *Le commerce colonial de la France à la fin de l'Ancien Régime : L'évolution du régime de « l'Exclusif » de 1763 à 1789*, 2 vols. (Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1972); For a discussion on illicit trade within the French West Indies, see Kenneth Banks, "Official Duplicity: The Illicit Slave Trade of Martinique, 1713–1763," 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); The relative paucity of French works within colonial history is explored in Cécile Vidal, "The Reluctance of French Historians to Address Atlantic History," *Southern Quarterly* 43 (2006): 153–89; For a current French work that engages in the Atlantic World, see Sylvia Marzagalli, cf. *Guerre et économie dans l'espace atlantique du XVIe au XXe siècle*, ed. Sylvia Marzagalli and Bruno Marnot (Bordeaux: Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 2006).

aspects of its empire, whereas Pietschmann's overview handles the systemic corruption and illicit trade in Spanish colonial society.¹⁵

Scandinavian Colonialism and Historiography

Within the Nordic countries themselves, colonial studies have been limited. The historiography on the Swedish colonial period of St. Barthélemy has focused solely on the relationship between metropole and colony, and in extension, the colony's importance for the Swedish economy. The only works which have arguably situated the colony's history in more sizeable contexts are Sven Ola Swärd's study on Sweden's early 19th-century diplomacy and trade with Latin America, as well as the smaller case studies of St. Barthélemy's connections with South American rebels and insurgents by Carlos Vidales.¹⁶

Eli Heckscher, the dominant figure of economic historical research in Sweden as well as an important name in international circles of the discipline, summed up the history of St. Barthélemy as "unimportant". The conclusion was a side-note in a wider sweep of Heckscher's general critique of Swedish commercial policy during the 18th century. Later scholarship has nuanced and modified his interpretations, whereas his verdict on the economic value of St. Barthélemy has hardly been challenged.¹⁷

¹⁵ Barbara H. Stein and Stanley J. Stein, *Edge of Crisis: War and Trade in the Spanish Atlantic, 1789–1808* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012); John R. Fischer, *The Economic Aspects of Spanish Imperialism in America, 1492–1810* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1997). The original Spanish edition of this book appeared in print in 1991; Horst Pietschmann, "Burocracia y corrupción en hispanoamérica colonial: Una aproximación tentativa," *Nova Americana* 5 (1985): 9–37.

¹⁶ Sven Ola Swärd, *Latinamerika i svensk politik under 1810- och 1820-talen* (Uppsala: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1949); Vidales' works are spread over a number of articles and book chapters, but notable contributions are Carlos Vidales, "Corsarios y piratas de la Revolución Francesa en las aguas de la emancipación," *Iberoamericana* 19, no. 2 (1989): 247–62; Carlos Vidales, "St: Barthélemy: en svensk koloni i frihetskämparnas tjänst (1810–30)," in *Sverige – Latinamerika. Förbindelser och samarbete och samarbete*, ed. Weine Karlsson and Åke Magnusson (Stockholm: Latinamerika-institutet, 1992), 25–33.

¹⁷ Eli Heckscher, *Sveriges ekonomiska historia sedan Gustav Vasa* (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1936), II: 666–667.

The most serious effort to do this was however made in a dissertation by Ingegerd Hildebrand, published in 1951. Hildebrand's is the most widely cited secondary work on the colony's Swedish history. For its limited time period (1784–96), it is a thoroughly researched work, much occupied with the intricacies of political and diplomatic history, as well as the first study to investigate some of the economic networks and connections in which the Swedish colony was involved, but the main focus still remains within the metropole-colony framework.¹⁸

The shifting interest in Sweden about its former West Indian colony has produced a range of shorter and longer specialized treatments of its history. There is the sounding into the legal history of St. Barthélemy by Birger Wedberg (1936), the short study of slave demography by Hannes Hyrenius (1977), but also exhaustively researched studies like the ecclesiastical and religious history of Jan Arvid Hellström (1987). Hellström's work created one of the first comprehensive bibliographies and resources of St. Barthélemy history.¹⁹

The irregular attention to colonial history in Sweden and in the other northern European states has, however, in recent years come to change. Arguably because of international trends in colonial history, northern European scholars have started to attempt the integration of the field of Scandinavian colonial history. Interpretative models and frameworks have been found readily available not in the least from the field of Atlantic and Global history. *Global historia från periferin: Norden 1600–1850* (2010)²⁰, is a recent anthology which is concerned with early modern northern Europe

¹⁸ Ingegerd Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin S:t Barthélemy och Västindiska kompaniet fram till 1796* (PhD diss., Lunds universitet, 1951); Sture M. Waller, "Det svenska förvärvet av S:t Barthélemy. Huvuddragen av de svensk-franska förhandlingarna och parternas syften," *Historisk tidskrift* 3 (1953): 231–55; Sture M. Waller, *S:t Barthélemy, 1785–1801. Yttre förhållanden, handelspolitik och statsfinansiell betydelse* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1954), 1–35.

¹⁹ Birger Wedberg, "S. Barthelemy febern" and "Lag och rätt på S. Barthelemy," in *Tärningskast på liv och död: rättshistoriska skisser* (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1935), 39–51; Hannes Hyrenius, *Royal Swedish Slaves* (Göteborg: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1977); Jan Arvid Hellström, "... åt alla christliga förvanter..." *En undersökning av kolonialförvaltning, religionsvård och samfundsliv på S:t Barthélemy under den svenska perioden 1784–1878* (Uppsala: Erene, 1987).

²⁰ Leos Müller, Göran Rydén and Holger Weiss, eds., *Global historia från periferin: Norden 1600–1850* (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2010).

from a global perspective. A result of a Scandinavian scholarly network, it contains a number of contributions that illustrate how a focus on the consumption of Atlantic products, such as sugar, coffee, and rum, is a way of writing Atlantic history for regions that did not have strong colonial empires. There are also current works that display a willingness to examine some of the larger questions concerning the role of colonial trade for European economic growth, rather than simply the presentation of new empirical information. An example is Klas Rönnbäck's dissertation, *Commerce and Colonisation* (2009).²¹ There has been some interesting new developments in the research strictly concerning St. Barthélemy as well. Leos Müller's *Consuls, Corsairs, and Commerce* (2004)²² concentrates on the eighteenth century Swedish long-distance trade and shipping and the establishment of Swedish consular services around the world, and a survey of St. Barthélemy's role in the Swedish transatlantic trade. Holger Weiss has surveyed the current state of knowledge about the involvement of Denmark-Norway, Sweden, Courland, and Brandenburg in the slave trade and shows how the geopolitical positions of these states conditioned the way they participated in the slave trade. It also pinpoints lacunae in the research, particularly concerning Swedish slave trade and slavery. He is also among the first to study race and urban slavery in Gustavia at the end of the eighteenth century.²³

There are however several forthcoming studies on St. Barthélemy. The first is the research project of Fredrik Thomasson of Uppsala University, which will result in a book on the legal system of St. Barthélemy, centering on the law and praxis of slavery in the colony. The other is a thesis by Ale

²¹ Klas Rönnbäck, *Commerce and Colonisation: Studies of Early Modern Merchant Capitalism in the Atlantic Economy* (Unpublished PhD thesis, Göteborgs universitet, 2009).

²² Leos Müller, *Consuls, Corsairs and Commerce: The Swedish Consular Service and Long-Distance Shipping, 1720–1815* (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Upsaliensis, 2004).

²³ See for example Holger Weiss, "Danskar och svenskar i den atlantiska slavhandeln 1650–1850," in *Globalhistoria från periferin: Norden 1600–1850*, ed. Leos Müller, Göran Rydén and Holger Weiss (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 2010), 39–74; Holger Weiss, "Det svenska kolonialprojektets komplexa rum: om slaveri under svensk flagg i slutet av 1700-talets karibiska och atlantiska värld," *Sjuttonhundratalet: Nordic Yearbook for Eighteenth-Century Studies* (2012), 59–92.

Pålsson, with a focus on the multicultural society of Gustavia and its political culture. Both of these works are due to be finished or published in 2016. Holger Weiss has continued work on the Swedish slave trade through St. Barthélemy, as well as a study on the spatial dimension of race and urban slavery in Gustavia in the late 18th century.²⁴

Perspectives on International Smuggling and Informal Trade

One could well place the commercial history of St. Barthélemy within the organizing frame of reference that is ‘Atlantic history’. The rise to primacy of the European economy and the increase in Atlantic trade during the Early Modern period have been highly significant events in the history of the world, and the linking of the two has given rise to the vast body of work contained within Atlantic history. There is however a pronounced difficulty in situating the needle’s eye of Gustavia within such a large framework. True enough, it can be argued that the colony inevitably played a minor role of the wider machinery of merchant capitalism that was so prevalent within what historians call the Atlantic World. Still, I argue that the body of evidence unearthed during the course of working with this dissertation comes out heavily in favor of a sub-regional rather than supra-regional perspective. This could be described as an inverted variation of Peter Coclanis’ criticism of Atlantic history. Whereas Coclanis has argued that the analytical unit of the Atlantic Sea may be too confining, I argue that there may be regional relationships which may be

²⁴ Fredrik Thomasson, “Thirty-Two Whiplashes at Quatre Piquets: Slave Laws and Justice in the Swedish Colony Saint Barthélemy around Year 1800,” in *Ports of Globalisation, Places of Creolization: Danish and Swedish Possessions in the Atlantic World in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Century*, ed. Holger Weiss (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming); Ale Pålsson, “Our Side of the Water. Political Culture and Representation in St. Barthélemy in the early 19th century” (Unpublished PhD-thesis, Stockholm University, forthcoming); Holger Weiss, *Slavohandel och slaveri under svensk flagg: Koloniala drömmar och verklighet i Afrika och Karibien 1770–1847* (Helsingfors: Svenska Litteratursällskapet i Finland, forthcoming); Holger Weiss, “A Divided Space: Subjects and Others in the Swedish West Indies during the Late Eighteenth Century,” in *Sweden in the Eighteenth-Century World – Provincial Cosmopolitans*, ed. Göran Rydén (Farnham: Ashgate, 2013), 275–300.

overlooked if the supra-regional perspective takes precedence. There are other objections to the choice of Atlantic History, for instance the overemphasis on the core-periphery relationship between colony and motherland. There is also a tendency within Atlantic history to focus politically confined Atlantics, such as the “Dutch Atlantic,” or the “Danish Atlantic.” Even though Atlanticists often explicitly reject the national confines of traditional imperial history, boundaries based on territory and even language are often the chief considerations which define the frameworks of individual studies in Atlantic History. For this reason, Atlantic historians have been criticized for the inherent arbitrary and ahistorical elements which their work can sometimes display, but the recent trend in Atlantic History is to increasingly focus on inter-imperial and transnational aspect, and many have deliberately marginalized the old metropole-colony or core-periphery relationships.²⁵

If the focus is not on national frameworks or empires, the picture can be rendered quite differently. A viable alternative is to concentrate on the general history on regional trade and smuggling. Research centering on the phenomenon of smuggling and illicit trade has elicited a few recent debates regarding merchant commerce within and between empires. A related study, Cathy Matson’s *Merchants and Empire. Trading in Colonial New York*, examines attitudes towards mercantile regulations and the subsequent crisis in imperial relations between the United Kingdom and their American colonies. Her study displays very clearly the difficulty in pinning down any consistent economic ideology among merchants who continuously traded across imperial borders, and with enemies of their

²⁵ Peter Coclanis, “Drang Nach Osten: Bernard Bailyn, the World-Island, and the Idea of Atlantic History,” *Journal of World History* 13, no. 1 (2002): 169–82; Peter Coclanis, “Atlantic World or Atlantic/World?” *The William & Mary Quarterly* 63, no. 4 (2006): 725–42; Pierre Gervais, “Neither Imperial, Nor Atlantic: A Merchant Perspective on International Trade in the Eighteenth Century,” *History of European Ideas* 34 (2008): 465–473; Michael Jarvis, *In the Eye of All Trade. Bermuda, Bermudians, and the Maritime Atlantic World, 1680–1783* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010); For recent trends, see Manuel Covo, “Baltimore and the French Atlantic: Empires, Commerce, and Identity in a Revolutionary Age, 1783–1798,” in *The Caribbean and the Atlantic World Economy: Circuits of Trade, Money, and Knowledge, 1650–1914*, ed. A.B. Leonard and David Pretel (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 87–107.

sovereign. Her explicit attempt at problematizing and understanding merchant ideology and mentalities is one of the few of its kind, as most authors and scholars rarely question or scrutinize smuggling and informal modes of economic activity, let alone make it a central focus of their work.²⁶

In general, historians have tended to be highly ambiguous in the overall treatment of smuggling. Smuggling as a phenomenon has several conceptual problems as well as with empirical evidence. Illicit trade could go on seamlessly if officials and bureaucrats were in compliance, and reliable quantitative data is therefore very rare. It is also hard to define a given commercial transaction between nations or between regions as legal or illegal, as that distinction often hinged on imperfect and diverging law texts, and, most importantly, their interpretations. In reality, one nation's legitimate merchant was another nation's smuggler. Among scholars, the unproblematic acceptance of smuggling as a matter of fact tends to prevail, and it is present for instance in the work of Truxes, whose Irish merchants in New York were loyal subjects to the Crown but merely considered their "business to be business," even if it entailed trading with the enemy. In accordance with this perspective, smuggling and interloping were simply staples of colonial life. It was a condition grown naturally out of the prevailing governance based on the 'salutary neglect' of relatively decentralized empires such as Great Britain. One extreme view however sees smuggling as a purely illegal activity, perpetrated by avaricious merchants and pursued by conscientious administrators, a story of good and evil very much present in Pares and others' expositions. More recent contributions such as Pearce have however shown quite convincingly that this is in many cases a false dichotomy. According to this perspective, inter-imperial smuggling furthered national interests through the access to foreign markets and was indeed very much supported in the strategic thinking of imperial leadership. This view holds that neutral traders and smugglers were simply go-betweens, even "dogsbodies and pawns" of

²⁶ Cathy Matson, *Merchants and Empire. Trading in Colonial New York* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1998), 313–18.

imperial policy. This argument also serves as an explanation why neutral trade was exercised and tolerated to such a large extent.²⁷

Indeed, similar arguments are not confined to colonial empires within the Western Hemisphere. An example is the Danish East Indian trade during the late eighteenth century. Through his doctoral thesis, *India Trade under the Danish Flag* (1969), Ole Feldbæk raised very serious doubts about just how Danish this trade was. He argued that the Danish India trade was an element in European expansion in India and that it cannot be viewed as an isolated Danish activity but was instead largely based on the capital which British subjects, both those in the employ of the East India Company and those who were not, brought back to Europe. This so-called remitted Anglo-Indian capital was brought home by ships flying the Danish flag, because it had often been acquired in an illegal manner directly or indirectly at the expense of the British East India Company, as the latter had a monopoly on direct sea journeys between India and Britain. During the American War of Independence, the Danish Asiatic Company thus financed almost the whole of its India trade with capital it had borrowed from the employees of its British competitor company. Feldbæk's book therefore supports the view put forward by Holden Furber that all the other European nations involved in India contributed willingly or unwillingly to the establishment of British domination in the sub-continent. It is also a valid question if a similar development could be traced in the Americas and West Indies at the beginning of the eighteenth century, where the Caribbean Sea not only became a British territory due to its maritime superiority, but due to commercial circumstances as well.²⁸

²⁷ Simon Middleton, review of *Defying Empire. Trading with the Enemy in Colonial New York*, by Thomas Truxes, *Reviews in History*, no. 740, <http://www.history.ac.uk/reviews/review/740>, date accessed: 2 April 2015; John J. McCusker, review of *British trade with Spanish America, 1763–1808*, by Adrian J. Pearce, *Economic History Review* 63, no. 1 (2010): 250–51.

²⁸ Ole Feldbæk, *India Trade under the Danish Flag 1772–1808. European Enterprise and Anglo-Indian Remittance and Trade* (Lund: Studentlitteratur, 1969); In 1971 Ole Lange published an article on the Danish China trade during the nineteenth century. It shows how British merchants in Canton used the *Dannebrog* (the Danish national flag) as a flag of convenience. See Ole Lange, "Denmark in China 1839–65: A Pawn in a British Game," *The Scandinavian Economic History Review* 19 (1971): 71–117.

Feldbæk's dissertation was criticized by some Danish historians at the time of publication, among whom it has been traditional to interpret the Danish East India trade as an arena of commercial prowess of domestic mercantile dynasties rather than as a straw man for foreign smuggling. The extant research on Danish West Indies displays similar national interpretations. For instance, the main town capital of the Danish colony St. Thomas, Charlotte Amalie, and its history as an international entrepôt in the Caribbean, has tended to be treated more as an anomaly rather than as the integral economic society of the early modern Caribbean that it arguably was.²⁹

The general reluctance to adopt a more pragmatic view of smuggling and illicit trade, and to interpret border-traversing merchant activity in the early modern period as driven by something else than treacherous greed and self-interest is largely due to the nation state paradigms, but it might also find part of its explanation in a long-standing consensus of sorts among historians. The "mercantilist consensus" is the tendency, particularly among Atlanticists, early Americanists and British scholars of empire, to stress the centrality of mercantilism in the organization of the pre-revolutionary Atlantic, and the assumption that there was a consensus of mercantilist thought in European commercial and high society. It might go a long way in explaining the discrepancy of narratives of mercantile behavior, as its inherent logic quite easily leads to the interpretation that smugglers and interlopers were simply persons who subverted the prevailing mercantile order solely for private gain. Up until recently, there has been very little new debate regarding the true nature and operation of mercantilist consensus, but scholars have begun to question the very

²⁹ The only article which soundly contradicts this statement about St. Thomas scholarship is Svend-Erik Green-Pedersen, "Colonial Trade under the Danish Flag. A case study of the Danish slave trade to Cuba 1790–1807," *Scandinavian Journal of History* 5 (1980): 93–120. For the criticism against Feldbæk, see Povl Bagge's review in *Historisk Tidskrift* 12, no. 4 (1970): 584–95.

existence of it, and consequently its logical extensions and conclusions for economic history.³⁰

There is, however, a general agreement that the mid-1700s ushered in a new period of debt-driven pan-European imperial reform in the wake of the Seven Years' War which created entirely new circumstances for colonial commerce and a movement towards more free forms of trade. Historians have started to pay increasingly more attention to various developments in this period, and consequently the perspectives on inter-colonial networks and merchant activity have become more diversified and nuanced. It has also become more common to move away from the perspective of empire, the nation state, as well as centers and peripheries. A range of new works emphasize inter-colonial networks and developments not under imperial purview, but through the self-organization of peoples within the colonial territories.³¹

1.3 Questions, Prospectus, and Methodology

The overarching question this study strives to answer is simply what role the free port of Gustavia came to play in the Caribbean transit trade during the international conflicts between 1793 and 1815? A fundamental element of the study is the assumption that smuggling – all part and parcel of the regional transit trade – was a natural and integral element in the Caribbean, especially during wartime. Against the background of debates about smuggling in the early modern Atlantic world, it will be of particular interest to investigate whose interests the existence and operation of the free port ultimately favored? Should Gustavia and its commercial

³⁰ Steve Pincus, "Rethinking Mercantilism: Political Economy, the British Empire, and the Atlantic World in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries," *The William & Mary Quarterly* 69, no. 1 (2012): 3–34.

³¹ For recent developments see for instance Cathy Matson, "The Atlantic Economy in an Era of Revolutions: An Introduction," *The William & Mary Quarterly* 62, no. 3 (2005).

operation be viewed as an isolated Swedish project, or as an institution that was a convenient subterfuge for commercial actors of one or several nations, or as part of a larger imperial design, where neutral traders simply functioned as middlemen? Can and should Gustavia be included in a longer narrative of free trade in the Western hemisphere?

The study is limited to the period of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars because it represents the only period during which Gustavia enjoyed considerable commercial activity. As will be showed further on, Gustavia descended into a rapid economic decline after the conclusion of hostilities in 1815. However, it is not possible to completely adhere to the natural terminus of 1815 in a few instances where it becomes too restrictive. In the context of this thesis, there are two such cases. One is the transatlantic and intra-Caribbean slave trade covered in chapter 3, which, contradictory to the general development, was a feature of Gustavia trade well into the 19th century. The other case is the relationship of Gustavia with the privateering economy of the South American Wars of Independence, which lasted until the consolidation of independence of most insurgent states towards the end of the 1820s. This relationship is developed in chapter 5.3.

Structure of the Study

The chapters of this study are organized according to different research topics and questions. Chapter 2 and its subchapters mainly explore the contextual questions surrounding the Caribbean region's political and economic history, highlighting the integral importance of smuggling and illicit trade for colonial societies for centuries since their first settlement and exploitation by Europeans. It also contains the background of Swedish colonization and its preconditions, ambitions and outcomes. The chapter attempts an analysis of the ultimate significance of the colony for Sweden and Swedish interests. It further investigates the institutional conditions and possibilities offered by the neutral free port of Gustavia for international commerce. It also strives to answer contextual questions

surrounding the nature and operation of illicit trade, as well as highly related phenomena such as piracy, privateering and maritime warfare conducted through Gustavia. These institutional preconditions will be analyzed critically in order to assess the viability of the free port in the wider commercial activity of the Caribbean.

Chapter 3 is a systematic account and assessment of the St. Barthélemy's involvement in the transatlantic and intra-Caribbean slave trade. It includes a general survey of the character and function of St. Barthélemy in the wider slave trade enterprises of the Atlantic world, as well as a general history of Swedish involvement in the slave trade and its development towards abolition. Finally, a statistical assessment of the scope, frequency, and trajectory of the St. Barthélemy slave trade concludes the chapter. A central problem for the chapter is the nomenclature of *Swedish* slave trade and the categorization of different slave trade enterprises affiliated in any manner with the Swedish colony. Chapter 4 arrives at the central section of the study. Through a chronological exposition, the history of the transit trade via Gustavia is investigated, and key events and turning points are analyzed. The chapter employs the bulk of empirical findings through a combination of database and source analysis.

Analytical frameworks – the Inter-Imperial Microregion

A compelling alternative framework of analysis has been proposed by Jeppe Mulich in the form of the *inter-imperial microregion*, based on the geographic experience of the Danish West Indies. Mulich submits that the Danish West Indies could be best understood through an understanding of the inter-imperial microregion it was situated within, the Leeward Islands (Figure 1.1). As an analytical construct, the inter-imperial microregion focuses on the density of networks and interactions found in certain areas with multiple competing polities. The Leewards certainly was such an area. Though its islands are comparatively smaller to the wider Caribbean, with Saba being the smallest at 13 sq. km and Guadeloupe the

largest at 1,628 sq. km, it nevertheless included territories claimed by no less than five colonial powers. The British dominated ownership with some of its lesser colonies in the wider Caribbean region, administratively split between the British Virgin Islands to the northwest and Anguilla, Antigua, Barbuda, Montserrat, St. Kitts and Nevis in the core islands. They were also separated from Barbados to the far windward, the oldest British colony in the region.

France held the largest agricultural colonies in the region, Guadeloupe and Martinique in the far southeast. While the French occupied the largest relative amount of territory in the Leewards, the British presence was dominating. Royal Navy patrols were based on the chief Caribbean station at Antigua, while subordinate stations were localized on Jamaica and Barbados. The Vice Admiralty Court of Antigua handled cases of maritime predation and seizure, and its subordinate courts in Tortola, St. Kitts, Nevis, Montserrat and Dominica were equally competent in issuing letters of marque to privateers. In times of war, therefore, British maritime power was highly tangible in the Leewards. The French colonies of Guadeloupe and Martinique, while substantial producers of tropical staples, were minor possessions compared to the wealthy sugar economy of Saint-Domingue. But after the latter colony's trajectory towards rebellion by its freedman and slave population, which led to sovereignty from France, Guadeloupe and Martinique remained as strongholds of French interests in the region. Guadeloupe became a bastion of Revolutionary military efforts after 1794, as the local *commissaires* reorganized the armed forces and authorized hundreds of privateers to attack shipping throughout the West Indies. The privateering economy of Guadeloupe brought great wealth to the French colonies in lieu of plantation agriculture. Like Saint-Domingue, however, the French colonies in the Lesser Antilles were also left deeply affected by the Revolution, and experienced decades of social upheaval in the wake of internal conflicts between royalists and patriots, the latter of which introduced and implemented the ideas of the French

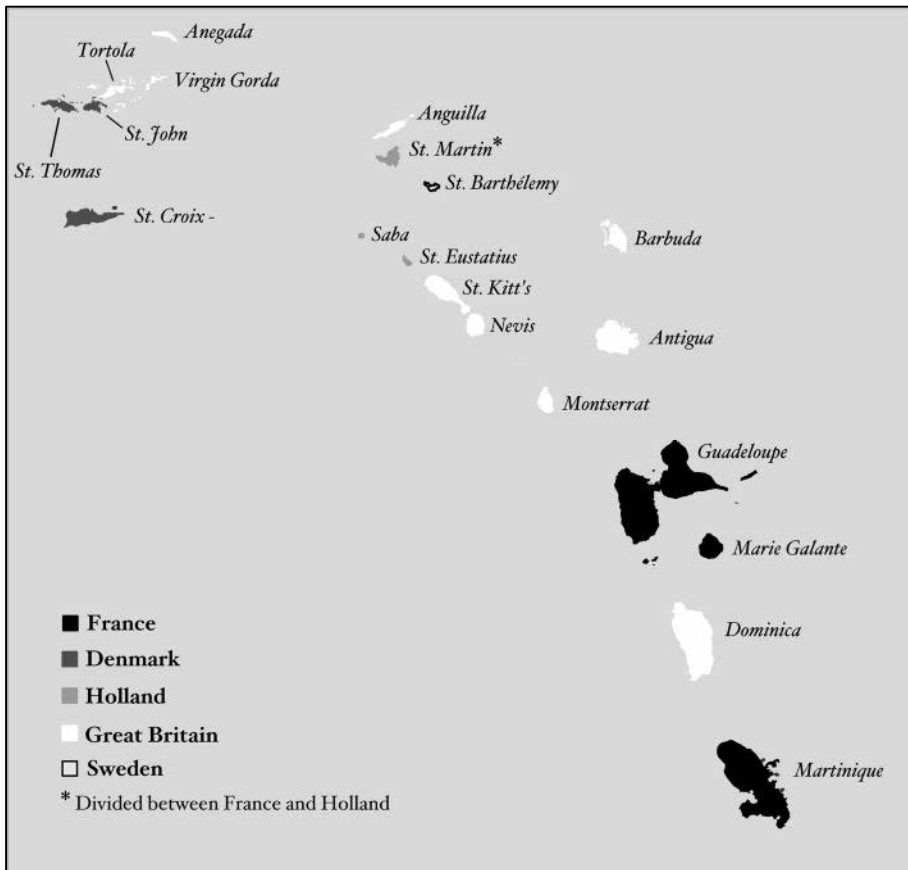


Figure 1.3 The Leeward Islands and their polities, ca. 1785

Revolution in the colonies. These developments in turn spilled over into neighboring colonies in the region, who were affected not in the least by the resulting migration movements and maritime warfare. Aside from the regional power structure which created real barriers for free movement and trade, there were also aspects which furthered the communication over imperial borders- Institutions of finance and postal services were for instance located in the colonies of larger empires, especially Britain. Inhabitants of the lesser colonies depended on these for their own immediate and long-term needs. Networks of kinship and commerce transcended any and all borders, and the proclivities of supply and demand created the incentive to traverse them. The Leewards were interspersed

with smaller Danish, Dutch, and Swedish colonies. The free ports were special institutions situated in St. Eustatius, St. Thomas, and St. Barthélemy all created a sort of imperial crossroads where even representatives of warring nations could meet and barter on neutral ground. The nature and function of various free ports will be further discussed and elaborated in chapter 2.1.

Whatever the relative merits of this construct, one should of course keep in mind that it contains its own arbitrary and constraining elements. Economic, political, and social connections can be discerned in every direction outside the Leewards. St. Thomas and St. Eustatius certainly had established trade contacts with more westward Spanish and French colonies like Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo, Cuba and Saint-Domingue, while almost every colony in the wider Caribbean had close contacts with American merchants. In fact, the Chesapeake as well as other maritime ports in the circum-Caribbean could easily be added to compose a wider inter-imperial *macroregion* if one were so inclined. In a reflection on the Atlantic economy during the late 18th-century period of revolutionary unrest, Cathy Matson has pointed out what has long been a truism in the colonial history of the Americas:

[...] the economic opportunities and failures of every region in the Western Hemisphere became interdependent, shaped by Continental European wars, the vagaries of the weather, internal agricultural markets, consumer demand, personal commercial networks, and government policies.³²

The crucial point here is not to construct the most rigidly defined regional perspective, but merely to make visible the contours of regional networks and relationships in focus. The sub-regional perspective in use in this study puts its primary attention on the immediate relationships between the Leeward Islands and their particular place within the circum-Caribbean, without neglecting the wider relationships with Northern and Southern America, Europe, and Africa.

³² Matson, "The Atlantic Economy," 358–57.

Whatever the changing geographic perspective, the object of the research in this study is *trade*. As stated above, this trade can have a number of different labels, ranging from smuggling, contraband trade, informal trade, transit trade, all used interchangeably. The only common denominators for this trade was that it was supranational, i.e. inter-colonial, and that it was some form of commercial transaction that could be considered illegal at least from the vantage point of at least one of the colonial powers involved. Insofar as an effective geographic demarcation is concerned, this study is solely interested in any trade under the auspices of the Swedish colony of St. Barthélemy, either Swedish-registered or simply passing through Gustavia.

Archives, Sources, and Methodology

This study makes use of a large corpus of a previously unexploited sources, the FSB or the local St. Barthélemy government archive. The material, consisting of the Swedish administrative records of St. Barthélemy. Portions of this collection have been microfilmed in turns beginning from the 1950s, and kept in copies both at ANOM and SNA. Unfortunately these reproductions are inadequate for extensive reading and interpretation, and the majority of the volumes have remained unreproduced. Only a small number of Swedish and French authors have made use of this material. The archive yields unique opportunities to understand and make light of the Swedish colony's economic role in the Caribbean transit trade. It is an exceptional source for the maritime and commercial life of the Caribbean around the beginning of the 19th century. Headed by Fredrik Thomasson of Uppsala University, a small number of scholars including the author was given access to the previously closed archives of the FSB in through a project in 2011. Since then, the material has gradually been digitally reproduced. The work with quantitatively useful material has necessitated the creation of databases in order to collect, record, organize, and analyze large quantities of information. In this thesis, three separate datasets have been created for various purposes.

These are (1) the Wilson dataset on the transit trade of St. Barthélemy and St. Thomas, (2) Wilson dataset on the Swedish slave trade, and (3) the Wilson dataset on St. Barthélemy mariners. Throughout the thesis they are referred to in the presentation of various charts, tables, and aggregate figures on economy, statistics, shipping and demography. The datasets have been constructed from a wide range of different sources not restricted to the FSB. In total, they contain nearly 10,000 separate entries on ship registrations, voyages, as well as individual actors collected over a span of five years. Despite the varying quality of the records and the information they contain, the creation of aggregates and statistics through database software has made analyses of general trade patterns and individual merchant activity possible. Further details and examples of the datasets involved are found in Appendix VI.

Assessments and analyses of the sources have however at least three major limitations in this context. The first concerns the state and composition of the archive. It is in many instances impossible to make good quantitative datasets as the sources lack in chronological continuity (long time-series), contain limited or incomplete information, as well as the fact that a great of the material is too damaged or illegible for extensive use. The other limitation is due to the nature of the subject at hand. Illicit or informal trade leaves comparatively little in the way of reliable documentation, except in certain cases were traders were apprehended and prosecuted. While this means that accurate figures and estimations of commercial activity are near impossible to surmise, it is however possible to supplement available evidence with other quantitative indicators such as public revenue figures and statistics, as well as with qualitative statements and testimonies. The third and final limitation is the elementary problems associated with a critical reading of the sources. Both quantitative figure as well as correspondence and reminiscences are highly complicated historical sources in terms of what kind of information they carry. They are shaped and fashioned according to the tendencies and whims of their authors as well as the contemporary circumstances they were created in. These problems are of course not confined only to this material, they are ubiquitous in all the material used by the historian. To

this end sources will be compared, contrasted, and scrutinized accordingly, in order to arrive at plausible conclusions and interpretations.

The primary source material is not confined to the administrative archives of St. Barthélemy. In order to answer the comparative ambitions of this thesis, a range of different national archives have been consulted. In total, the national archives of Sweden, Denmark, France, Great Britain and the United States all contain pertinent records to provide comparative insights into the role of St. Barthélemy in the Caribbean. These range from diplomatic and consular correspondence to administrative reports and compiled statistics. The United States posted consuls in St. Barthélemy and neighboring colonies starting from 1797, who answered to the Secretary of State. Their reporting contains invaluable information about the American commerce directed via St. Barthélemy. Reports from governors and magistrates in the British and French colonies likewise contain a wealth of information about the Swedish colony and its inter-colonial relationships. For comparative purposes the trade and activities of other free ports is analyzed when appropriate. The material in the Danish National Archives that is used in this study pertains solely to the records of St. Thomas, as it is an important source on the free port trade in the region. This method is adopted to contrast and gauge the relative importance of Gustavia with other free ports in the regional transit trade.

2 The Free Port Institution of Gustavia

2.1 A History of Free Trade in the Circum-Caribbean

The political and economic geography of the eighteenth century Caribbean was highly heterogeneous. While empires had laid claim to vast stretches of territory in Caribbean waters, the nature of these claims were limited to the effective control over narrow corridors and strips of land, small enclaves, fortified towns, and the sea-lanes in between them. Territorial control has, furthermore, not been the principal aim of most empires in history. Early modern European maritime empires display this point emphatically. It has been observed, for instance, that both Spain and Portugal understood the Treaty of Tordesillas not as an agreement to split the globe into realms of sovereignty, but rather spheres of influence. The centuries-long scramble for colonies by European empires made its mark on the Caribbean Sea, as conflict and rivalry ensured that there was no ‘peace beyond the line’. The expression denominated the world west of the longitude of the outermost of the Azores and south of the Tropic of Cancer. The concept of ‘the line’ was often a representation of the lawlessness of the New World compared to the lawful, well-defined realms of European rulers.¹

But there was also an opposite tendency in the form of colonial and inter-imperial networks, which seemed to emerge seamlessly despite bitter and continuous colonial rivalries. Economic necessities, ambitions of

¹ Lauren Benton, “Legal Spaces of Empire: Piracy and the Origins of Ocean Regionalism,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 47, no. 4 (2005): 706–21; Eliga H. Gould, “Zones of Law, Zones of Violence: The Legal Geography of the British Atlantic, circa 1772,” *The William & Mary Quarterly* 60, no. 3 (2003): 471–510; Carl Bridenbaugh and Roberta Bridenbaugh, *No Peace Beyond the Line. The English in the Caribbean 1624–1690* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 3–5.

wealth, and regional trade patterns all conspired to forge informal networks of information and contraband trading that clashed with the protectionist goals of legal frameworks. Furthermore, the proximity between empires of different nations mattered immensely for the inter-imperial bonds that cropped up in the Caribbean. It has been argued that there was “a Caribbean reality of a regional community where geographic proximity was often more important than national boundaries.” Nowhere in the world did such a dense collection of colonies exist with different imperial allegiances. These regional conditions as well as their consequences will be the subject of this chapter, leading finally towards the major role of free ports in furthering regional contacts.²

Monoculture, monopoly, and colonial dependence

The cultivation of sugarcane and its refinement into sugar, molasses, and rum became the cornerstone of most West Indian colonial economies. Depending on the circumstances, other crops added to the variety of cultivation. Caribbean staples included tobacco, cotton, coffee, cocoa, indigo, as well as other dyestuffs, fruits and spices. But among all of the staple crops produced in the Caribbean, sugar dominated. During the seventeenth and especially the eighteenth century, sugar production experienced unprecedented growth as the demand swelled in European markets. The production of colonial staples created enormous wealth and it shaped the social conditions involved in its production in a fundamental way. It engaged thousands and thousands of settlers, cultivators, planters, agents, merchants, mariners and craftsmen. Its labor-intensive needs led

² The quote is from Julius Scott III, “The Common Wind: Currents of Afro-American Communication in the Era of the Haitian Revolution,” (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Duke University, 1986), 68; Klooster, “Transnationalism ‘Beyond the Line’, 1655–1763,” (Paper presented at the 19th International Congress of Historical Sciences, Oslo, 6–13 August 2000), 11.

to the enslavement of millions of Africans, who toiled and suffered through “one of the harshest systems of servitude in history.”³

The relative value of sugarcane over any other crop led to the sacrifice of all the best land in the colonies. Often perceived as the principal object of colonization in the West Indies, sugar prevailed over bare subsistence crops and pasture for livestock. Sugar monoculture in the Caribbean had many extreme expressions, but Barbados are among the foremost of them. Eighty percent of the land in Barbados in 1767 was devoted to sugar cane. Some of the Caribbean island economies were more diversified, especially the larger islands with more geographic variation such as Jamaica, Saint-Domingue and Cuba. These had greater preconditions for self-sufficiency, but were nevertheless in essence agricultural economies dominated by colonial staples intended for export. West Indian societies, with their large chattel workforces, in the face of which most white elites lived in constant fear, were dependent on the outside world. They depended on importations of food. They needed grain, livestock and fish to feed large slave populations. They depended as well on the necessities for island infrastructures, ship- and housebuilding, and the artisan industries. Deforestation, hurricanes and the volcanic geology of most islands necessitated importation from external sources most of the required lumber, lime, stone and metal. Vast amount of wood and staves were simply needed for the manufacture of crates and barrels essential to export the produce of plantation labor. Households and administrative bodies needed the smallest refined products such as paper, paint, oils, fats, ink and candles. There was hardly any indigenous production of these necessities of life in the highly specialized and bureaucratic societies of the colonial Americas.⁴

³ Richard S. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624–1713* (New York, 1973), 224; Carole Shammas, “The revolutionary impact of European demand for tropical goods,” in *The Early Modern Atlantic Economy*, ed. John J. McCusker and Kenneth Morgan (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 163–185; Douglas R. Egerton et al., *The Atlantic World: A History, 1400–1888* (Wheeling: Harlan Davidson, 2007), 217–50.

⁴ Pares, *War and Trade*, 403–418, 475–94; Klooster, *Illicit Riches*, 117–34.

Colonial empires early on strove for the principle of exclusivity, attempting to contain all trade within its own territories. The effort to do this within the Spanish empire was articulated by the *carrera de las indias*, a system of regular transatlantic shipments and convoys. The *carrera* as well as other schemes nevertheless quickly turned out to be insufficient. Shipments were seldom large enough to meet colonial demand, and they were furthermore often infiltrated by foreign cargoes. Dutch and English merchants were among the first entrepreneurs to exploit the convoy systems, who sold their merchandise to Spanish merchants or simply used them as figureheads for their own commercial voyages. After centuries, Seville and Cádiz became home to sizeable cohorts of foreign merchants actively engaged in the trade with South America. When they finally settled in colonies of their own instead of simply encroaching on Spanish territories, other European powers harbored ambitions of unrestricted trade with bullion-rich Spanish America. Silver was, in the eyes of the governments of fiscal-military states, a premium commodity. The *asiento de negros* can be said to be an illustration of these conditions. The *asiento* was the license given by the Spanish government to other countries for a monopoly on the African slave trade to Spanish territories in the New World. On the one hand, it exemplified the Spanish empire's inability to supply its growing plantations with enough slaves, and the pragmatic attitude to foreign profits in colonial trade. On the other hand, the *asiento* came to be regarded as the ultimate prize by European governments, who competed to secure it for themselves.⁵

In reality, imperial regulatory power was often more circumscribed than what many scholars have characterized them to be. Inter-imperial smuggling became a time-honored tradition with some strong elements of communal solidarity in colonies in the face of imperial authority. Smuggling was often condoned or overseen by colonial magistrates, who either were forced to accept its necessity for the economic life or indeed survival of the societies they were appointed to govern. In other cases, it was socially necessary for the colonial administrator to look between his

⁵ Pearce, *British Trade*, 11–15, 18–25; Klooster, “Inter-Imperial Smuggling,” 154–56, 165.

fingers because suppression of illicit commerce would elicit widespread protests or even persecution. In the colonial Americas, there were numerous accounts of customs collectors and coast guards whose work was obstructed, even to the point where coast guard vessels were burned and offensive characters were tarred and feathered by angry mobs. Restrictive measures could lead to full-blown rebellions, as enforcement of unpopular laws were seen as an affront to colonial inhabitants' way of life.⁶

However, the authorities' limited means to exert power alone do not explain the complicity in contraband trade or other irregularities. Officials of every rank had to foment good relations with colonial elites, and it was these elites that quite often had a large stake in illegal imports and exports, if not also the officials themselves. Officials connived at the contraband trade, then, for they were after all members of the communities in which they resided and had to maintain their most important personal relationships. Connivance had its roots elsewhere than only the corruptibility of officials. Local elites exerted a strong pressure on colonial authority and the practice of everyday decision-making. Sentiments and loyalties could go any which way. Connivance for colonial authorities was simply a way in which to respond to the mixture of loyalty and opposition they encountered among the local elite. Compromises were deemed necessary, for strict adherence to the law might prove untenable in a colonial situation, or even incompatible with the interests of colonial commerce. Enforcing the law was on occasion considered a greater threat to communal peace than connivance. Peace and quiet often trumped over strict considerations of law and prohibition. Occasionally the officials took the issue of law enforcement seriously, if only to play to the gallery in the metropole. They could always sidestep restrictions by issuing temporary trading licenses to foreigners, by invoking public needs in the face of emergencies such as hurricanes, earthquakes, and fires.

⁶ Klooster, "Inter-Imperial Smuggling," 170, 175.

Occasionally, however, governors only fabricated or misrepresented the existence of an emergency in order to bypass inconvenient restrictions.⁷

Sometimes even national policy came into play when trade restrictions needed to be skirted. Great Britain, with its dominating navy, had since the period of the Seven Years' War asserted control over colonial waterways and set about disrupting transports of colonial produce from the West Indies to France. France countered by lifting its prohibitive colonial policies and promptly opened up its trade to neutrals. Neutrals, in this context, effectively meant the Dutch. The purpose of this move was to take advantage of the simple fact that Britain had since long a "free ships-free goods" commitment to the Netherlands dating from a treaty in 1674. The measure naturally provoked a strong response from the British Government, which saw fit to invent a far-reaching judicial doctrine, which came to be known as the "rule of 1756." The doctrine held that as a matter of general international law, as opposed to the limited scope of any treaty interpretation, neutrals were not to be allowed to enter into a new trade relationship during wartime which was closed to them in peacetime. The positive effect of this doctrine was now that any neutral ship is good prize if it sails under enemy license or charter. The rule could be summarized as holding that neutrals were entitled to trade *with* the enemy, but not *for* him.⁸

Neutral traders however quickly devised various stratagems and techniques to circumvent it. One of the most obvious and important methods was to launder enemy colonial goods by simulating their entry

⁷ Klooster, "Transnationalism 'Beyond the Line,'" 6–8; Jacques Mathieu, *Le commerce entre la Nouvelle-France et les Antilles XVIIIe siècle* (Montréal: Fides, 1981), 212–13; Sherry Johnson, *Climate and Catastrophe in Cuba and the Atlantic World in the Age of Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 193–202.

⁸ Stephen Neff, *The Rights and Duties of Neutrals: A General History* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2000), 65–66; Stephen Neff, "Britain and the Neutrals in the French Revolutionary Wars: The Debate over Reprisals and Third Parties," in *Trade and War: The Neutrality of Commerce in the Inter-State System*, ed. Koen Stapelbroek (Helsinki: Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies, 2011), 229–50; Victor Enthoven, "Neutrality: Atlantic Shipping in and after the Anglo-Dutch Wars," in *Mercantilism Reimagined: Political Economy in Early Modern Britain and Its Empire*, ed. Philip J. Stern and Carl Wennerlind (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014), 328–47.

into a neutral port. Thus a merchant vessel would land, or at least certify a landing in writing, a cargo in a neutral port after arriving from an enemy market, only to carry it further to the enemy motherland, i.e. France. On the first leg of this voyage, the cargo would be safe from capture, because it would consist of neutral goods, that is, goods consigned to a neutral party in a neutral state, while the goods still came from an enemy colony. On the second leg of this journey, the goods would also be protected from capture, provided that they were carried on a neutral party's own account, and not consigned to any identified enemy party in the destination, the enemy state. Various instances of this method, particularly performed by merchants in the Thirteen Colonies, was already common during the Seven Years' War, and the British quickly introduced an additional rule, or, the continuous-voyage doctrine, holding that such interrupted-voyage schemes actually constituted one continuous voyages and thus were in violation of the rule of 1756.⁹

Whereas smuggling in itself often found tacit or open acceptance by colonial leadership, the role of foreigners in domestic and colonial trade was always viewed to be detrimental. Colonial societies were often ethnically mixed and large cohorts of foreigners usually made up a significant portion of populations. The Dutch were often viewed as a problem. The crucial role of the Dutch in the carrying trade of several nations was indeed a large part of the impetus behind exclusivist trade policies such as the Navigation Acts of 1651. The role of the Dutch in French domestic commerce was crucial, and was mirrored by similar activities in the French colonies. A great number of Dutch traders lived and worked in the French Caribbean during the course of the 17th century, and sizeable portions of the French residents in the colonies were debtors in Dutch banks and commercial firms. The most extreme form of French mercantilist measures took place in the French part of St. Kitts in 1663, when over sixty Dutch warehouses were set on fire, and was followed by a

⁹ Neff, *Rights and Duties*, 65–68.

range of prohibitions and other legal measures by the French to reassert their authority in the colonies.¹⁰

In the long run, however, smuggling and border-crossing trade intensified, and was already universal at the beginning of the 18th century. A great source of smuggling endeavors besides the Spanish-bound commerce was the shipping of British North America. Respective problems with their mother countries brought on a close relationship between the British colonies and the French West Indies. An expanded demand in British North America for French colonial sugar and its by-products spelled out a solution for aggrieved French sugar cultivators, who had problems selling their rum and molasses to France. The illicit imports of sugar, rum, and molasses into the British North American colonies from foreign colonies was a thorn in the side of the British planters and the British West Indian interests in general. In 1733 Whitehall passed the Molasses Act in response to the dwindling legal trade of the sugar islands. The Molasses Act imposed heavy duties on rum, molasses, and sugar imported into the American colonies from foreign colonies. The British West Indian interest, a powerful lobby in parliamentary circles, hoped thus to force British American colonists to buy from only their own, more expensive sugar products. In the ports of New England, the stipulations of the Act were however subject to routine evasion and obstruction. Bribery at a customary rate which was only a fraction of the statutory tax share of the value of foreign goods to customs officials was generally enough to clear customs at New York and Massachusetts.¹¹

During the conflicts of the 18th century, however, smuggling and illicit trade could not operate by way of direct exchanges. Neutral shipping and free ports became crucial institution by which the continuity of the system was guaranteed. Their establishment and history is paramount to the understanding of trade in the region.

¹⁰ Klooster, "Inter-Imperial Smuggling," 158–59.

¹¹ Klooster, "Inter-Imperial Smuggling, 170–71; Victor Enthoven, "That Abominable Nest of Pirates': St. Eustatius and the North Americans 1680–1780," *Early American Studies* 10, no. 2 (2012): 239–301.

Free Ports and Neutral Subterfuges

With the passage of time, neutral free ports gradually emerged as convenient marketplaces that facilitated commerce between traders of various nationalities. These ports were either formally declared free ports, or had simply evolved into de facto free ports after decades of established practice. Immediately from its first colonization, the English at Jamaica exploited the island's strategic location in the center of the West Indies to make it an entrepôt in the Spanish colonial trade. Merchants settled in Jamaican Port Royal conducted their commerce all along the Spanish Main and in the traditional smugglers' dens in the islands. By providing slaves, these merchants were also capable of trading at the principal ports of Portobello, Cartagena, and Havana. This trade, a precursor of the sugar economy of the island, accumulated riches and allowed the prospering merchants to invest their windfall into the island's plantation hinterlands. The prosperous period was however cut short when Port Royal was destroyed by a devastating earthquake in 1692, causing large portions of the town to fall into the sea.¹²

There were other locales of informal trading which essentially were not port towns or proper marketplaces. In 1750, by royal dispensation, the Spanish crown had granted San Fernando de Monte Cristi of Santo Domingo the right to trade for ten years with ships of all nations that were at peace with Spain. Monte Cristi was a sparsely settled village on the northwestern tip of Santo Domingo. At the time Monte Cristi was not even a proper seaport. The entire Bay of Monte Cristi, was little more than the home of a few fishermen and their families. Its proximity to the Saint-Domingue border and its free trade status however made it to one of the largest commercial subterfuges during the Seven Years' War. There

¹² Nuala Zahedieh, "The Merchants of Port Royal, Jamaica, and the Spanish Contraband Trade, 1655-1692," *The William & Mary Quarterly* 43, no. 4 (1986): 570-93; Nuala Zahedieh, "Trade, Plunder, and Economic Development in Early English Jamaica, 1655-1689," *The Economic History Review* 39, no. 2 (1986): 205-22; Allan Christelow, "Contraband Trade between Jamaica and the Spanish Main, and the Free Port Act of 1766," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 22 (1942), 312.

emerged at Monte Cristi became a thinly disguised market for North American, Irish, British, and neutral European provisions, lumber, and naval stores, as well as slaves and the usual, large variety of manufactured consumer goods. The return cargoes in exchange for these wares consisted of the produce of the Saint-Domingue plantation economy. Short smuggling runs to Cap François on the French side could be arranged by having the crews of foreign ships replaced with a Spanish ones in the Bay. The new crews would then head westwards by sea while the original crew took the land route to market in Cap François. As much as 150 vessels could be moored in the Bay at a given day, and made it essentially into a floating city, where goods changed hands on seaboard rather than on shore.¹³

The Dutch were however the most established operators of Caribbean free ports. The Caribbean islands of Curaçao and St. Eustatius were the essential hubs through which the Dutch interacted with and traded in the region. These colonies also became two of the most important subterfuges in established colonial systems. The shippers and traders of these colonies employed the strategies and tactics of the *kleine vaart* (small navigation), that is, expeditions with small, fast-sailing boats in an unfettered inter-island commerce. Access and closeness markets were key in this trade, which explains why Curaçao traded mainly on the Caracas coast and St. Eustatius traded principally with the French Antilles. While European goods flowing to the Caracas coast became the essential condition for Curaçao, the burgeoning American trade to the French colonies became the hallmark for St. Eustatius' trade. Curaçao's immense trading operations on Spanish settlements on the Caracas coast (present-day Venezuela) held sway for nearly two centuries. Dutch shippers carried huge quantities of cacao, hides, tobacco, and other products from the Spanish colonies in exchange for Dutch and German textiles and manufactures which were in high demand. Treaties between Spain and the Dutch Republic as well as Spanish law essentially forbade these activities, but the relationship was important enough to risk retribution for both

¹³ Truxes, *Defying Empire*, 72–86.

sides. The ingenuity of smugglers as well as the connivance of Spanish officials would always ensure the continuity of the illicit traffic.¹⁴

From St. Eustatius, the Dutch were integrated into the French colonial sphere in a similar way, siphoning off large shipments of French sugar that were fed into the colony's bilateral trade to the Dutch Republic. A travelling British woman visiting the Lower Town of Oranjestad in 1775 commented that "From one end of the town of Eustatia to the other is a continued mart, where goods of the most different uses and qualities are displayed before the shop doors," She was impressed with the "rich embroideries, painted silks, flowered muslins, with all the manufactures of the Indies." She claimed never to have seen such commercial variety elsewhere, with different merchants bartering their goods in their stalls "in Dutch, another in French, and a third in Spanish." While the colony built on a long tradition, its illicit imports of rum, sugar, and molasses from the French and Spanish West Indies to the North American colonies was always nuisance for planter interests in the imperial metropolises. The British Molasses Act in 1733, directed against the importation of foreign sugar and molasses from foreign colonies into North American colonies, actually ended up adding incentive to sustain this illicit trade through free ports. After the declaration of the act, a majority of the imported sugar and molasses into New York had its origin in St. Eustatius.¹⁵

There were other free ports with highly similar characteristics as the Dutch colonies. On a smaller scale, French settlers in the Caribbean traded with their British neighbors. Danish St. Thomas furnished some possibilities for Franco-British trade. During the Nine Years' War (1688–

¹⁴ Klooster, *Illicit Riches*, 49–68; Wim Klooster, "Curaçao as a Transit Center to the Spanish Main and the French West Indies," in *Dutch Atlantic Connections, 1680–1800: Linking Empires, Bridging Borders*, ed. Gert Oostindie and Jessica Roitman (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 275–308.

¹⁵ The quote is from a *Journal of a Lady of Quality*, ed. Evangeline Walker Andrews and Charles McLean Andrews (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921), 135–38; Enthoven, "That Abominable Nest of Pirates," 270–72; John J. McCusker and Russel R. Menard, *The Economy of British America, 1607–1789*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991, 161–64; Alvin Rabushka, *Taxation in Colonial America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), 305, 449, 735; Jarvis, *In the Eye of All Trade*, 165; Matson, *Merchants & Empire*, 213–14; Pares, *Yankees and Creoles*, 59–61.

97), it assumed somewhat of a role as a local entrepôt, and while the War of the Spanish Succession (1701–14) lasted, rum, sugar, cotton, and indigo from the Leeward Islands were diverted through the colony to the French islands, as well as provisions from Boston, Carolina, Pennsylvania, and New York. The governor of Barbados stated that the Danish island “in time of war ever has been and is the staple for all sort of indirect and illegal trade and commerce.” It also assumed close contacts with its neighbors in the Spanish colonies, especially in Puerto Rico where St. Thomas as well as St. Croix traders were buyers of sugar.¹⁶

The Caribbean in an Age of Reform and Revolution

The colonial societies of the Caribbean underwent radical transformations in the decades leading up to the 19th century. Revolutionary fervor followed in the Thirteen Colonies in the wake of the imperial crackdown after the Seven Years’ War, leading finally to the division of the British Empire in the West Indies. After U.S. independence, British imperial policy immediately underwent a process of review. The question of commercial relations between the newly created United States and the British colonies was the first concern of a British Committee of Trade created in 1784. After years of deliberation, the Americans were permanently excluded in 1788. American ships were also, importantly, not admitted into the British system of free ports.¹⁷

In the view taken by Whitehall, there was a crucial distinction between the tropical colonies of other European powers, for which the free port trade had been intended, and the sovereign United States. Along the lines of this logic, there was an existing direct trade with the United States in British manufactures that should not depend on the free port channels.

¹⁶ Klooster, “Inter-Imperial Smuggling,” 165; Quote from Angel López Cantos, “Contrabando, corso y situado en el siglo XVII: una economía subterránea,” *Anales: Revista de Ciencias Sociales e Historia de la Universidad Interamericana de Puerto Rico Recinto de San Germán* 1, no. 2 (1985): 31–53.

¹⁷ 28 Geo. III, cap. 6. American ships were only admitted into British colonies again in 1822.

Secondly, it was reasoned that the American products needed in British factories would arrive faster by going directly from American ports rather than being transhipped from British colonies. The prime reason for the exclusion of American ships was however the very natural fear that Americans would become the carriers of British colonial produce to Europe, and so injure British shipping which was the linchpin of the Navigation Acts. Individual British merchants and planters did however not agree with the government's line, and time to time stressed their own dependence on the North American trade. Despite their sometimes vociferous protests, the matter was a foregone conclusion in government circles. In the designs of certain British statesmen, the Northern American territories would supplant the former Thirteen Colonies as the prime supplier of the British Caribbean colonies.¹⁸

The United States was in its early years of independence a fledgling agricultural-commercial state with an underdeveloped internal economy and very narrow industrial sector. Furthermore, it was still reeling from the effects of the war and legacy of historical economic ties with Great Britain. Its economic policy became as a result increasingly tied to the hopes of an economic policy of foreign trade founded on liberal commercial principles. Early U.S. efforts were geared towards Caribbean markets as treaties with European powers often failed to produce the desired freedoms of trade. U.S. overtures concerning possible trading entrepôts were however frustrated time and time again. Despite the limited concessions France had made to American trade in the West Indies, the way towards opening markets further was met face-on by compact mercantile opposition in an economically depressed France. Spain and Portugal also refused to open up their Caribbean and continental ports for American ships. The Dutch were another matter, as they readily agreed to allow American trade with its Caribbean colonies of St. Eustatius, Curaçao, and St. Martin, as well as Surinam, Berbice, Demerara, and Essequibo. After all, St. Eustatius had

¹⁸ Armytage, *The Free Port System*, 34, 53, 55–56, 130–34; Anna Cornelia Clauder, “American Commerce as Affected by the Wars of the French Revolution and Napoleon, 1793–1812” (PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1932), 15–26.

already established itself in the past as a vital commercial link for the rebellious Thirteen Colonies during the newly concluded war. Yet there were some serious limitations even in this instance. The Dutch restricted what Americans could import and export, especially the most important cargoes such as coffee and sugar. Still, even in the face of such restrictions, quantities of prohibited goods continued to be smuggled under the guise of carrying legal cargoes. The neutral colonial powers were ever-present in the thinking of American statesmen. John Adams asserted that “the Dutch and Danes will avail themselves of every error that may be committed by France or England. It is good to have a variety of strings to our bow.”¹⁹

In the West Indies, conditions became volatile on account of revolutionary unrest and international conflict. Most colonies suffered either foreign invasion or internal revolt, with tens of thousands of soldiers poured into the region between 1793 and 1815, thousands of refugees were displaced and local shipping was disrupted on an unprecedented scale. Slave rebellions had been commonplace in plantation societies for centuries, but when the community of the enslaved and free black population revolted in Saint-Domingue in 1791, the pillars of white rule in the region were shaken in their foundation. The rebels’ defeat of French, British, and Spanish armies and the independence of Haiti in 1804 were sources of constant consternation and fear among white colonial inhabitants, fearing that revolutionary sentiment might spread to slaves elsewhere in the Caribbean.²⁰

Despite the general wartime disruption as well as the removal of vast plantation output and the market of Saint-Domingue, the colonial

¹⁹ McDonald, “The Chance of the Moment: Coffee and the New West Indies Commodities Trade,” *The William & Mary Quarterly* 62, no. 3 (2005): 454–55; Merrill D. Peterson, “Thomas Jefferson and Commercial Policy, 1783–1793,” *The William & Mary Quarterly* 22, no. 4 (1965), 585–86; see also Thomas Jefferson to James Madison, 8 May 1784, in *The Papers of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Julian P. Boyd (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1953), VII: 231–35; Adams’ quote in John Adams to Robert Livingston, 16 July 1783, in *The Revolutionary Diplomatic Correspondence of the United States*, ed. Francis Wharton (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1889): VI, 551.

²⁰ David Patrick Geggus, “Slavery, War, and Revolution in the Greater Caribbean, 1789–1815,” in *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean*, ed. David Barry Gaspar and David Patrick Geggus (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 1–50.

economies of the Americas surged during the turn of the 19th century. Slave imports to the Caribbean fell comparatively slowly in the 1790s from their peak level in the 1780s. For instance, Spanish West Indian sugar production tripled, and plantation agriculture in the British and Danish colonies expanded insofar as it compensated for the fall in regional French and Dutch production. Taking in the fact of rising markets prizes, increased customs duties, freight and insurance rates, the value of Caribbean commerce grew significantly during the wars around the turn of the century.²¹

The entrepôt of St. Eustatius had been destabilized ever since the British and French invasions in 1781. The British occupation of St. Eustatius in 1781 only lasted for ten months but had caused an immense amount of damage: all merchandise, specie, and to some extent also the private property of resident merchants and planters were seized. Although substantial, the losses did not topple the colony as a regional entrepôt. But there were serious worries, about nascent competition from neutral colonies of St. Thomas and St. Barthélemy, and about various free trade experiments in the region by the Spanish, French and British. The situation only turned acute when the WIC decided to introduce a new tariff on imports and exports which suddenly turned the prospects of the island towards a very uncertain future. The two commercial colonies, Curaçao and St. Eustatius, it was thought, were to be made more profitable for WIC. For St. Eustatius, this meant that an eight percent tariff would be introduced on most articles from both Europe and the American colonies that were exchanged on the island. This led to a discussion concerning how all the economic interests of all parties involved in Stavian trade could best be served. The most vehement protests against the measures came from the Stavian merchants, who carried the sentiments in lengthy petitions and letters. The measures were widely regarded as a deathblow to the island's commerce, its only livelihood. Several prominent

²¹ Seymour Drescher, *Econocide: British Slavery in the Era of Abolition* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977), 76–91, 116; Douglass North, "Ocean Freight Rates and Economic Development 1750–1913," *The Journal of Economic History* 18, no. 3 (1958): 537–55.

merchant houses moved to St. Barthélemy in protest, because it was expected that Sweden would remain neutral in an eventual international conflict. The demise of the Danish free port of St. Thomas followed in 1807, as it was placed under British occupation as a consequence of Danish foreign policy during the later stages of the Napoleonic Wars. In this completely altered economic constellation in the Caribbean, St. Barthélemy emerged in a novel position as the sole neutral free port in the region.²²

The maritime warfare of the region in 1793–1815 was predominantly of an informal type. As per an old tradition in the Americas, swift coasting vessels were converted into corsairs and privateers and wrought havoc among regional shipping. It was a generally recognized precept of international law that each belligerent in wartime had the power to set up prize courts for the adjudication of enemy prizes. As such, these Courts were temporary, separate, and amenable to statutory regulation. Prize cases were theoretically subject solely of international laws of contraband and blockade as modified by treaties, but they were adjudicated in courts that were closely under the control of one nation, by laws completely accepted only by that nation. The cases that caused the most disputes were the ones in which the application of prize law were tried on neutrals, which were also the ones who suffered the worst depredations. In this hostile environment, the free port trade through St. Barthélemy could still thrive in the face of risk and adversity. The operation and nature of the Swedish free port will be discussed in the following chapters.²³

²² Öström to Rejmers, 10 January 1795, *Handel och sjöfart*, vol. 169, SNA; Jessica V. Roitman and Han Jordaan, “Fighting a foregone conclusion. Local interest groups, West Indian merchants, and St. Eustatius, 1780–1810,” *Tijdschrift voor sociale en economische geschiedenis* 12, no. 1 (2015): 79–100; See also Linda Rupert, “Inter-colonial networks and revolutionary ferment in eighteenth-century Curaçao and Tierra Firme,” in *Curaçao in the Age of Revolutions, 1795–1800* (Leiden: KITLV Press, 2011), 75–96.

²³ Michael Craton, “The Caribbean Vice Admiralty Courts, 1763–1815; Indispensable Agents of an Imperial System,” (McMaster University, unpublished PhD-thesis, 1975) 129–130; Michel Rodigneaux, *La guerre de course en Guadeloupe, XVIIIe–XIXe siècles ou Alger sous les Tropiques* (Paris : L’Harmattan, 2006), 25–43, 57–69.

2.2 Swedish Colonialism and the Foundation of Gustavia

Despite its diminutive size and its relatively low value to the Swedish Crown, St. Barthélemy still faced its owner with the same questions of control, stability, and territorial sovereignty as larger colonial empires. Strong exertions of pressure both from external powers as well as local elites in the colonies. It has been argued that in the colonial societies of the West Indies, “the new social class of colonial settlers, planters and entrepreneurs were at once, in the English settlements, Anglo-Saxon and anti-English, in the Spanish settlements pro-Hispanic and anti-Spanish, in the French settlements Gallic and anti-French.” With a weak military and administrative infrastructure, metropolitan authorities in St. Barthélemy displayed some unique and pragmatic thinking when faced with the problems of colonization.²⁴

Sweden formally acquired the French colony of St. Barthélemy on the 1st of July 1784. It thus received the island in a relatively calm period in the Caribbean, well before the region experienced the great upheavals at the close of the century. Sweden’s late acquisition of a colony was however not a consequence of lacking ambition. There were other limitations at play. Situated in the northern periphery of Europe, the kingdom of Sweden faced serious practical and political obstacles in the face of colonial plans. The colonies of New Sweden in Delaware (1638–55) and the Swedish slaving fort at Cabo Corso (1650–63) on the African West Coast were ambitious Swedish endeavors carried out with government support and financing. But they also owed substantially to the efforts of foreign actors. Dutchmen in particular supplied their personal capital and expertise, and were often the primary drivers behind many projects. Dutch entrepreneurs often used Swedish institutions as a front against the Dutch chartered companies which they themselves opposed. Indeed, foreign expertise and investment

²⁴ Quote from Gordon K. Lewis, *Main Currents in Caribbean Thought: The Historical Evolution of Caribbean Society in its Ideological Aspects, 1492–1900* (London, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), 75.

was and would remain a salient feature of Swedish colonial and commercial efforts throughout the 17th and 18th centuries.²⁵

The development of early Swedish colonies were also constantly hindered by foreign powers. Swedish colonists faced obstruction and aggression from neighboring colonies with more resources and more experience. New Sweden was seized by the Dutch in 1655 and Cabo Corso was taken over by the Danish in 1658. Most Swedish imperial ventures were however mostly directed towards its territorial borders and the countries of the South Baltic. Expansion finally ceased in the beginning of the 18th century. Sweden then suffered significant territorial losses, as the Baltic provinces were conquered by Russia and the territories in northern Germany reduced.²⁶

During the 18th century, Sweden experienced a dramatic shift in its political system, commonly referred to as The Age of Liberty (1718–1772). The disasters in the Russo-Swedish wars heralded this transition, as the Swedish monarchy became circumscribed and gave way to the parliamentary oligarchy of the Swedish Diet. The period is significant in the context of colonial ventures and foreign trade as it brought with it reorientations in economic policy. In general, the chief aim was to make Sweden more independent in the spheres of trade and industry. One of the first and most successful measures of the period was the mercantilist Navigation Act of 1724. It was modelled closely after its English precursor, and its primary target was Dutch shipping, which had since long dominated the grain imports into the Baltic. During the course of the century, Swedish shipping expanded considerably both quantitatively and in geographic scope. The Swedish share of shipping through the Sound (Øresund) rose from 50% in 1734 to 80% in 1776. Prior to 1700, Swedish

²⁵ Leos Müller, "Great Power Constraints and the Growth of the Commercial Sector: The Case of Sweden, 1600–1800" in *A Deus ex Machina Revisited. Atlantic Colonial Trade and European Economic Development*, ed. P.C. Emmer, O. Pétré-Grenouilleau and J.V. Roitman (Leiden: Brill, 2006), 317–51; György Nováky, *Handelskompanier och kompanihandel. Svenska Afrikakompaniet 1649–1663. En studie i feodal handel* (Uppsala: Acta Universitatis Uppsaliensis, 1990).

²⁶ Nováky, *Svenska Afrikakompaniet*, 201–07; Michael Roberts, *The Swedish Imperial Experience, 1560–1718* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979).

ships rarely left the Baltic and the North Sea. Sweden also signed formal successive treaties with the so-called Barbary States during the course of the 18th century. A steadily rising numbers of Swedish ships began navigating in Portuguese and Mediterranean ports. An extensive Swedish consular network was established in the 1720s and 1730s from Malaga to Marseille, Venice, Alicante, Livorno, Alger, Tunis, Tripoli, and Morocco.²⁷

Chartered companies were projects in a similar vein. The single most successful enterprise was the Swedish China trade under the helm of the Swedish East India Company (SOIC). Created in 1731, the company focused on Canton and the tea trade, usually pursuing one or two expeditions annually. SOIC traded in Canton under the same conditions as the other European companies. Its imports of tea into European ports were substantial, and almost all tea was re-exported from Gothenburg. It was distributed (and smuggled) to the Dutch Republic, the Austrian Netherlands, France, and Britain. Despite its Swedish charter, the company initially in fact was a joint effort between the Swedish state, Swedish merchants, Scottish personnel as well as Dutch capital. There was a strong link between the dissolution of the Ostend East India Company (1727–31) and the foundation of SOIC. Its shareholders would however be comprised of more and more Swedish merchants over time. The company ran through three successive charters before it was liquidated in straitened circumstances in 1813. SOIC's business, although profitable for a long time, started to falter when the British and the Dutch imposed more effective controls of their imports of tea in the 1780s.²⁸

Despite the absence of remote territorial conquests, Swedish ideas of settlements were never completely abandoned. Long in the wake of New

²⁷ Heckscher, *Sveriges ekonomiska historia*, II: 669–78; Müller, "Great Power Constraints," 337–38; Müller, *Consuls, Corsairs, and Commerce*, 40–45, 49–165; An old but still valid treatment of Swedish relations on the North African Coast is Johan Henrik Kreüger, *Sveriges förhållande till barbaresk staterna i Afrika* (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1856).

²⁸ Leos Müller, "The Swedish East India Trade and International Markets: Re-exports of teas, 1731–1813," *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 3 (2003): 28–44; Müller, "Great Power Constraints," 338–42; Christian Koninckx, *The First and Second Charters of the Swedish East India Company (1731–1766)* (Kotrijk: van Ghemert, 1980), 15–17, 38–42, 51–54.

Sweden and Cabo Corso, there followed a string of different projects to acquire a colony of some kind. In the West Indies, a recurring design were Swedish dynastic claims to the island of Tobago, by virtue of the Swedish royal relations to the Duchy of Courland. The question was discussed in the Privy Council (*Riksrådet*)²⁹ and in the Board of Commerce, but never amounted to much in the way of concrete action. Tobago was one of the so-called Neutral Islands in contestation between France and Britain after the island had been all but abandoned by Couronian interests.³⁰

A short-lived project was the first Swedish West India Company which had its charter issued in 1746. The project was quickly thwarted at least in part by foreign suspicions of Swedish interloping trade. The charter had been awarded to the family firm of Arfwedson in Gothenburg, who had abandoned their rights to the company in 1747 after the Spanish minister in Stockholm had voiced the policy of the Spanish crown against any possible incursions of foreign trade in Spanish America. A share in smuggling and illicit trade indeed were among the prospects. Such an ambition was present in a project which involved the establishment of a trading post around the river Barima. The plan had its origins in a circle of Amsterdam merchants in 1728, who sought Swedish support and financing for it. A Swedish expedition was organized as a result, through the means of a few members of the mercantile elite in Gothenburg. The expedition reached its destination, and a treaty was signed with local Indians as a

²⁹ The term Privy Council can incidentally refer to another Swedish government body, *sekreta utskottet*, whose primary concern was foreign policy. The composition of the *riksråd* and *sekreta utskottet* were however very much overlapping, and Privy Council will be used as a translation of the former, unless stated otherwise.

³⁰ The most extensive treatment on the subject of Swedish colonial projects during the eighteenth century is given by C.K.S. Sprinchorn, "Sjuttonhundratalets planer och förslag till svensk kolonisation i främmande världsdelar," *Historisk tidskrift* 43 (1923): 109–162. On the so-called neutral islands, see Pares, *War and Trade*, 195–202, 208–11.

patent for further settlement, but nothing else did however follow out of this effort.³¹

The ascension of King Gustav III after his 1772 coup was a watershed in colonial questions. During his early rule, further economic reform programs were undertaken, and colonial trade and production were seen as potential revenue devices for long-ailing state finances. Gustav III had an intense personal interest in overseas colonies, and would later prove instrumental in the negotiations with France that led to the acquisition of St. Barthélemy. Gustav voiced many familiar arguments in favor of a Swedish colony. A share of the world's sugar production was a highly coveted goal of his, and Gustav was also convinced that a tropical colony could bring nothing but benefits to domestic manufactures as well as to commercial and maritime interests.³²

In 1784, the same year that St. Barthélemy was finally ceded from France, the poet and writer Johan Kellgren published an essay which specifically promoted the idea of a West Indian colony. It promoted colonialism in Sweden, and summarized the past colonial debate as nothing more than empty discussion. Of note, the essay also echoed the same pro-colonial opinions and arguments as the king. There is good reason to suppose that the essay was written on the request of Gustav III.

³¹ Sprinchorn, "svensk kolonisation," 118–20, 122–25, 129–130; Ivar Simonsson, "Abraham Arfwedson," in *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon* 2 (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1920), 160–61; Axel Paulin, "Skeppet Fortunas expedition till 'Wilda Kusten af Södra America'," *Forum Navale*, no. 10 (1951): 38–95; Edgar Anderson, "Mysterious Swedish settlements at Tobago and Barima," *Swedish Pioneer Historical Quarterly* 12, no. 4 (1960), 132–145; George Edmundsson, "The Swedish Legend in Guiana," *The Historical Review* 14 (1899): 71–92; For an example of how prospects in Tobago and Barima were expressed in the thinking of government circles, see for instance von Höpken to Scheffer, 3 November 1756, in Carl Silfverstolpe, ed., *Anders Johan von Höpkens skrifter, samlade och i urval utgifna af Carl Silfverstolpe* (Stockholm, Norstedts, 1890): II, 275–79.

³² Gustav III to Creutz, 10 September 1779, F 479, UUB. Gustav III also saw a prospective colony as a convenient destination where domestic troublemakers, "touttes les tetes inquiettes du Royaume", could be deported; Åke Essén, "Wilhelm Boltz und die schwedischen Kolonisierungspläne in Asien," *Bijdragen voor Vaderlandsche Geschiedenis en Oudheidkunde* 7, no. 5 (1935), 83–101; Holden Furber, "In the Footsteps of a German 'Nabob': William Bolts in the Swedish Archives," in *Private Fortunes and Company Profits in the India Trade in the Eighteenth Century*, ed. Rosane Rocher (Aldershot: Variorum, 1997); Robert J. King, "Gustaf III's Australian Colony," *The Great Circle* 27, no. 2 (2005), 3–20.

Kellgren was close to the king and well-informed of his colonial ambitions. The essay also borrowed heavily from a longer treatise authored by the nobleman Ulrik Nordenskjöld, published anonymously in 1776. Nordenskjöld was more focused on the prospects of West African colonization even though his treatise formally included the West Indies as well. Drawing largely on contemporary literary sources on the African continent, he saw the West African Coast as teeming with riches, free for the taking by enterprising colonists. Nordenskjöld was one of the earliest Swedes to take a serious interest in the colonization of Africa.³³

A short expedition consisting of a few Swedish surveyors was eventually dispatched to Senegal in 1787. The ambitions behind the voyage was a peculiar blend of commercial enterprise and religious idealism. It was funded by royal means, but was spearheaded by representatives of the highly idiosyncratic Swedenborgian movement, which was intent on creating new utopian societies in colonial territories. The expedition lasted only a few months, and was of small gain for its financier and its participants. By this time however, negotiations on a new colonial outpost had long since been concluded, and a first expeditionary force of Swedish officials and soldiers were already engaged in constructing the first foundations of a city on the island of St. Barthélemy in the Lesser Antilles. The tangible results of Sweden's colonial efforts would remain within this tiny territory, despite future opportunities and ambitions. The long-lived ideas of other Swedish settlements in the West Indies never fully expired after its acquisition. As it was, Sweden would for some time regard St.

³³ Johan Henric Kellgren, "Förslag til Nybyggens anläggande i Indien, och på Africanske Kusten," *Nya Handelsbibliotheket* 1 (Stockholm: Nordström, 1784); Cf. Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, 41; Harald Elovsson, "Kolonialintresset i Sverige under 1700-talet. Några drag," *Samlaren* 9 (1928), 207–211; Lasse Berg, *När Sverige upptäckte Afrika* (Stockholm: Rabén Prisma, 1997), 131–32; Deirdre Coleman, *Romantic Colonization and British Anti-Slavery* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 91; Åke Essén, *Johan Liljencrantz som handelspolitiker. Studier i Sveriges yttre handelspolitik 1773–1786* (Lund: Gleerup, 1928), 255–56.

Barthélemy as only the first stepping-stone in a potentially wider West Indian empire.³⁴

The Acquisition of St. Barthélemy

The possibility of a Swedish Caribbean colony had finally arisen during the War of American Independence. At an early stage of the conflict, the French put forward the proposition that Sweden could obtain a West Indian colony, or specifically a British colony soon to be conquered by the French in the upcoming naval conflict. As an exchange, Swedish military aid to the American rebels was proposed. The idea did not find particular favor, especially as it involved a strong deviation from the neutral stance Sweden strove to hold in the conflict.³⁵

Although such an arrangement was impossible, the prospect of a colonial acquisition in the West Indies certainly interested the Swedish government. The Caribbean war theater was consequently of special interest to Swedish diplomats in Paris, and news such as the French conquest of St. Vincent was received with particular Swedish enthusiasm. Options were discussed, and Tobago was, as often before, a focal point of discussion. There were also similar suggestions put forward to the Bourbon

³⁴ For the 1787 expedition, see Sten Davidsson, "Det gudomliga samhället: Swedenborgskt Afrikaprojekt och religiös utopi," (Unpublished master's thesis, Uppsala University, 1975), 16–24, 68–71, 89–91, 150; Coleman, *Romantic Colonization*, 69; Klas Rönnbäck, "Enlightenment, Scientific Exploration and Abolitionism: Anders Sparrman's and Carl Bernhard Wadström's Colonial Encounters in Senegal, 1787–1788 and the British Abolitionist Movement," *Slavery and Abolition* 34, no. 3 (2012): 425–45.

³⁵ Waller, "Det svenska förvärvet av St Barthélemy," 231–255; Cf. C.T. Odhner, *Sveriges politiska historia under Gustaf III:s regering* (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1896), II: 78–80, 325–41; Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, 2–3; Léo Elisabeth, "La cession de Saint-Barthélémy à la Suède (1779–1785)," *Annales des Antilles. Bulletin de la Société d'Historique de la Martinique*, no. 31 (1997): 77–93; Swedish officers served in both the French and British forces during the war. For the complicated Swedish stance in the American War of Independence, see H.A. Barton, "Sweden and the War of American Independence," *William & Mary Quarterly* 23, no. 3 (1966): 408–30; Cf. Adolph Benson, *Sweden and the American Revolution* (Newhaven: Tuttle, Moreshouse & Taylor, 1926) and Amandus Johnson, *Swedish Contributions to American Freedom* (Philadelphia: Swedish Colonial Foundation, 1953).

court in Spain during this time. A primary focus in this effort was the quite audacious idea of receiving Puerto Rico.³⁶

Despite the frustrated French war effort in the Caribbean after the British defeat at Yorktown, negotiations on the colonial question between Sweden and France continued. In lieu of a British conquest, alternative French colonies were now being discussed. It was clear now, then, that Tobago would not be ceded under any circumstances. There were several reasons behind the willingness to cede a colony to the Swedes. It has been suggested that there was a growing impetus in the French government for appeasing gestures towards the Swedish crown. In the background was the precarious international standing of France after the war, as well as French concerns over Sweden's closer relations to Russia in 1783–84.³⁷

Another explanation was that the French government was trying new ways to improve its terms of trade with Sweden. After the conclusion of the war, the new discussions gave rise to the idea that some kind of mutual measure was expected in the event of a cession. The old Franco-Swedish trade treaty of 1741 had given French ships staple rights in Swedish Wismar, an old Hanseatic harbor that had not served French commercial interests particularly well. The French balance of trade with Sweden had since long suffered a deficit, and French staple rights in another Swedish port were deemed necessary. Gothenburg was offered as an alternative instead.³⁸

There were other economic considerations that served to frame the discussion. In particular, there was the argument that the French West Indies would benefit from the presence of a neutral Swedish colony. This would, in conjunction with the opening of French West Indian ports to

³⁶Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, II, 21–22; Åke Essén, *Johan Liljencrantz*, 227–29; Sprinchorn, "svensk kolonisation," 156–62.

³⁷Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, 19–24, 33–39; Odhner, *Sveriges politiska historia*, II: 325–337; Olof Jägerskiöld, *Den svenska utrikespolitikens historia* (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1957), II:2, 287–305.

³⁸Paul Walden Bamford, "French Shipping in Northern European Trade, 1660–1789," *The Journal of Modern History* 26, no. 3 (1954): 207–219; Essén, *Johan Liljencrantz*, 231–35; Jean Tarrade, *Le commerce colonial*, II: 549–50.

Swedish ships, mean that the French would have a suitable substitute for the Dutch carrying trade which supplied its colonies in times of need. The diplomatic records nevertheless suggest that the colonial supply through means of neutral shipping was never a pressing concern for the French government. The neutral trade argument was mostly employed by the Swedish side.³⁹

Early suggestions for islands included the French part of St. Martin and Marie Galante, but eventually the final French offer arrived at the small, sparsely populated island of St. Barthélemy. It is an arid and mountainous 20 sq. km-island in the Lesser Antilles, in the close vicinity of St. Eustatius, Saba, St. Kitts to the south and southwest, and St. Martin and Anguilla to the northwest. Under French dominion it never became a plantation colony. The island's colonization had initially been organized by the Maltese Knight Phillippe de Longvilliers de Poincy in 1648 from St. Kitts. It came into the formal possession of the Order of Malta in 1651. In 1687 the population reached the number of 501 inhabitants, whereas it modestly increased to 523 inhabitants in 1776. The island was not known to be more than a home to this small population, and as an occasional haunt for privateers and freebooters during the course of the eighteenth century, due to its relatively secure cove, *Le Carénage*, situated on its southwest side.⁴⁰

The choice was a shrewd one from the French perspective. It was neither of much value to the French crown nor any French commercial interests, and it was all but unknown to the Swedish officials involved in the discussion. The suggestion finally won acceptance by the Swedish court, despite misgivings about the nature of a trade-off between

³⁹ Waller, "förvärvet av St. Barthélemy," 248–49; Cf. Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, 29, Hildebrand has argued that the benefits of a Swedish colony to the French colonies was a real consideration behind the French propositions. This view is reproduced in recent scholarship, for instance Leos Müller, "Sweden's Neutral Trade under Gustav III: The Ideal of Commercial Independence under the Predicament of Political Isolation," in *Trade and War: The Neutrality of Commerce in the Inter-State System*, ed. Koen Stapelbroek (Helsinki: Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies, 2011), 143–60.

⁴⁰ Hildebrand, 38–39; *Den svenska kolonin*; Per Tingbrand, "Saint Barthelemy före svenskarna," *Piteå segelsällskaps sjörulla* (1980): 79–91.

appreciable staple rights and the ownership of a distant territory of little or unknown value. The Swedish ambassador in Paris was granted authority by Gustav III to work towards a final convention on the matter in May of 1784.⁴¹

The negotiations were finally concluded with a formal visit by Gustav III in Paris. On the last leg of a year-long journey abroad, Gustav arrived in France in early June to meet with the French court and government. His visit included greater issues of foreign policy, not merely the signing of the colonial treaty. Gustav's aggressive designs for Norway had been temporarily embarrassed by the cool reception by Catherine in Russia. He found himself obliged to lean on French financial and military support. At the end of talks during the summer of 1784, France secretly pledged a subsidy of 6 million livres outright and French maritime assistance in the event of a war between Sweden and Denmark-Norway. Even if Gustav had insisted on more sizeable French payments, this was the real political success of his French diplomatic visit. Troubling questions surrounding the traditional French-Swedish bond had been resolved, and amicable relations restored. The cession of St. Barthélemy to Sweden, while a result of longstanding negotiations and clear Swedish ambition, served in the long run more as a convenient cover for the secret subsidy agreement. Nevertheless, when Gustav returned to Stockholm, measures were quickly undertaken to survey the newly acquired island and to take measures for formal possession.⁴²

The Organization of Colonial Trade

When reviewing Swedish commodity trade with the West Indies prior to 1784, it is obvious that Sweden had very little in the way of existing networks to build a colonial trade on. The ambiguous meaning of the term

⁴¹ Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, 38–39, 48–53; Essén, *Johan Liljencrantz*, 234–35.

⁴² Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, 33–39, 56–57; Essén, *Johan Liljencrantz*, 235–41; Waller, "förvärvet av S:t Barthélemy," 243–55.

West Indies in Swedish trade statistics already sheds some light on the issue. The Caribbean islands as well as the Americas were subsumed under the same term, without any clear distinction between the two. There was no sustained trade between Sweden and the West Indies before the war years of 1776–83. Swedish imports from the West Indies chiefly consisted of tobacco, coffee, and sugar. In 1782, imports first exceeded a noticeable value of 11,000 rixdollars. They surged to over 100,000 rixdollars in the following years, but dropped as quickly after the war in 1784. In turn, Sweden mostly exported herring – but no iron – to the West Indies. The fisheries of the Swedish west coast held a small share in the transatlantic exports of herring to feed slaves at the plantations of the Caribbean.⁴³

Even so, the totals of imports and exports to the West Indies paled in comparison with the rest of Sweden's foreign trade. At the height of the wartime boom, imports of 100,000 rixdollars only represented about 2 percent of total foreign imports (5 million rixdollars). There were very few Swedish merchants engaged in this business, as opposed to the iron and timber exports to European ports. The occasional ventures of SOIC into West Indian expeditions quickly outpaced even the most ambitious combined efforts of individual entrepreneurs. In general, the limitations set by the low degree of Swedish commercial representation abroad was a constantly debated 18th century problem.⁴⁴

Swedish officials at the time knew little about the new colony. First insights were gained from printed sources and a suite of different informants. Summary intelligence about St. Barthélemy was received in August 1784 from the Swedish consul in L'orient, Simon Bérard. His description was brief and to the point. The island's soil was poor, its main products consisted at most of cotton and salt. Potentially the island could produce more than it did, but its main use could not be derived from agriculture. Furthermore, the authoritative work of Raynal, the *Histoire des*

⁴³ Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, 315–18; Essén, Johan Liljencrantz, 175; Müller, *Consuls, Corsairs, and Commerce*, 182–84.

⁴⁴ Müller, *Consuls, Corsairs, and Commerce*, 184–85; Kurt Samuelsson, *Köpmanshusen i Stockholm: en studie i den svenska handelskapitalismens historia* (Stockholm: Ekonomisk-historiska institutionen, 1951), 45–54; Essén, *Johan Liljencrantz*, 79–83.

deux Indes, was cited in government proceedings on account of its brief passage on the island. Its portrayal of the island was not encouraging:

On lui [St. Barthélemy] donne dix à onze lieues de tour. Ses montagnes ne sont que des rochers & ses vallées que des sables, jamais arrosées par des sources ou par des rivières, & beaucoup trop rarement par les eaux du ciel. Elle est même privée des commodités d'un bon port, quoique tous les géographes l'aient félicité de cet avantage.⁴⁵

Aside from being represented as a speck of paltry Caribbean wasteland without even a decent anchorage, the *Histoire* also described its population in deploring terms. It claimed that the colony was the only one in the New World where the white owners were forced to participate in the work of their slaves. A tradition held that upon occasional visits of privateers and smugglers, they would give morsels of their cargo as alms to the island's poor settlers, out of pity.⁴⁶

A Swedish expedition to formally acquire the island was promptly organized and sailed from Gothenburg in December of 1784. The frigate *Sprengporten* carried the colony's first governor, Salomon Mauritz von Rayalin, as well as a garrison of 50 soldiers, commanding officers, a priest, and a physician. The frigate reached its destination in early March the next year, but was preceded by the Swedish merchant ship *Enigheten*, which had arrived in late January with a commercial cargo. The first impressions among the Swedes confirmed the information about the island that had been available until then. *Sprengporten's* ship chaplain, Sven Dahlman, found the existing buildings in the bay of the *Carénage* to consist of "5 or 6 ragged cabins", the inhabitants to be "poor and wretched", and their

⁴⁵ Guillaume Thomas François Raynal, *Histoire philosophique et politique des établissements et du commerce des Européens dans les deux Indes* (Genève: Pellet, 1780), t. VII, 141; The use of the *Histoire* is interesting, as it had been banned in Sweden since 1781, a response towards its controversial content by the increasingly autocratic reign of Gustav III. See Harald Elovsson, "Raynal och Sverige," *Sammlaren* 9 (1928): 18–81; Fredrik Thomasson, "Royal Propaganda and Colonial Aspirations," in *Raynal's 'Histoire des deux Indes': colonialism, networks and global exchange*, ed. Cecil Courtney and Jenny Mander (Oxford: Voltaire Foundation, 2015), 201–15.

⁴⁶ Raynal, *Histoire des deux Indes*, t. VII, 142–43.

plantation grounds “desolate and uncultivated”. Governor von Rayalin reported laconically on the challenges facing the new settlers, as they were compelled to commence extensive building, raking, and road construction before they could survey the land of the wider interior more closely. Von Rayalin wrote to Stockholm after some cursory observation that the land appeared “unfit” for the plantation of either coffee or sugar.⁴⁷

Despite these sobering accounts about the colony, Swedish officials were keen on exploiting it in whatever ways possible. In an early stage of government discussion on the colony, influential Stockholm merchants were approached by high-ranking officials. They were asked for their observations on colonial matters, and were requested to organize a commercial expedition to the island. The expedition carried the first cargo of necessities for the first settlement. In return the Swedish government would try to exact a license for the ship to buy its return cargo in Martinique. A small coterie of influential Stockholm merchants were quickly up to the task, among whom were Carl Arfwedson, Lars Rejmers, and David Schinckel. Along with a few additional investors, they financed and equipped the voyage of the ship *Enigheten*, the first Swedish ship to reach St. Barthélemy. They all held positions in the Trade Society of Stockholm (*Stockholms grosshandels societet*). Carl Arfwedson was one of the wealthiest persons in the kingdom, and was the son of Abraham Arfwedson, one of the persons behind the charter of the first West India Company in 1746. Arfwedson was one of the key exporters of Swedish iron, and were also successful in banking and finance, with significant connections to international credit networks.⁴⁸

At any rate, the preconditions for colonial agriculture and production never took center stage in their discussions. Instead, the idea of constructing a port town and conferring it with the status of free port was

⁴⁷ Sven Dahlman, *Beskrifning om S. Barthelemy, Swensk Ö uti Westindien* (Stockholm: Nordström, 1786), 17, 20–23; von Rayalin’s reports of 8 March 1785 and 1 June 1786, SBS 1B:1, SNA.

⁴⁸ Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, 58–61; Ivar Simonsson, “Arfwedson, Carl Christopher,” in *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon*, vol. 2 (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1920), 161–64; Samuelsson, *Köpmanshusen i Stockholm*, 26, 30–32, 35, 183, 190.

the guiding principle of the organizing efforts. The prospect of creating a free port akin to St. Eustatius or St. Thomas was seen as the most attractive course, as their former success was well known. The absence of other means of exploitation indeed would make it the *only* possible course. In fact, the final decision was probably anticipated in a very early stage as von Rayalin's instructions, issued barely two months after acquisition, included an order to proclaim the island a free port as soon as possible after his arrival.⁴⁹

There were many early proponents of the idea. Gustav Philip Creutz, the Swedish minister in Paris during the early negotiations, had frequently alluded to the possibility in connection with the negotiations with France. St. Eustatius was seen as an ideal. St. Eustatius, after all, was also a small island with few natural resources, but had nevertheless prospered. Creutz remarked boastfully at one stage that the French king and his ministers supposedly shuddered at the late realization that contraband trade from St. Barthélemy could easily find its way into French ports. Even if this statement was primarily intended to put the king's actions in a positive light, it shows that the members within Swedish government showed some optimism over the possibilities that could come with a neutral colony in the West Indies.⁵⁰

The Stockholm merchants that were consulted in the matter had also expressed the need to establish a proper trading post on St. Barthélemy. Attempts by government were made to this end by pleading with the Paris-based merchant Niclas von Jacobsson. Von Jacobsson was part of the Gothenburg family network headed by Christian Arfwidsson. Christian Arfwidsson's company owned the largest merchant fleet in the city, and was a large exporter of iron, timber and herring. Christian Arfwidsson was one of few Swedish merchants with a prior established interest in the West India trade, primarily through the herring trade. Von Jacobsson also had a

⁴⁹ Gustav III's instructions to von Rayalin, 22 September 1784, SBS 1A, SNA; Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, 64–65.

⁵⁰ Minutes of the Swedish Privy Council, 3 August 1784, SNA; Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, 48–49.

varied record of colonially oriented ventures. He owned a sugar refinery in Gothenburg, and had attempted to trade slaves during the American Revolutionary War. As a means of encouragement, the government offered a support of 1,000 rixdollars for the establishment of a Swedish firm on St. Barthélemy. Von Jacobsson however declined the offer on account of prior commitments, as well as infirmity and old age. Arfwidsson and von Jacobsson would instead dispatch their own agents to St. Barthélemy at a later stage, without government solicitation.⁵¹

Free ports were far from a novel concept. During the preceding century, there was a recurring discussion about the utility of a Swedish free port in the Baltic. In fact, the continuity of this idea can be traced at least as long back as the 17th century, always as a possible means to lessen the dependence upon Dutch shipping. Gustav III's minister of trade and finance, Johan Liljencrantz, had since long envisaged Swedish ports as transit points for Russian commodities and naval stores. Russia, similarly to Sweden, was a large exporter of naval stores, iron and wheat, but had no sizeable merchant fleet. Consequently, Russia's trade was carried in British and Dutch keels. Liljencrantz hoped to divert the majority of Russian goods through Sweden. He had started to develop this plan during extensive foreign travels in 1758–61, having observed the transit trade in the Netherlands, as well as in the free ports of Livorno and Marseille. The reasoning presumed two Swedish free ports: one in the town of Slite on Gotland, and one on the Swedish west coast, on the far side of the Sound and its accompanying taxation. Despite that these ideas were shared by many in the Swedish Diet and commercial circuits, the plan could never be fully realized. It met with powerful political opposition which argued against free ports as a speculative and hazardous scheme. Additionally, Russian political support was required for an integral part of the plan to work, which in the end proved impossible to obtain.⁵²

⁵¹ C. Hattendorf, "Arfwidsson, Christian," in *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon*, vol. 2 (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1920), 170–74.

⁵² Essén, Johan Liljencrantz, 86–110; Heckscher, *Sveriges ekonomiska historia*, II: 665–67.

Only the free port on the west coast was realized in the end. Marstrand, a small town situated to the northwest of Gothenburg in the outer archipelago, was endowed with free port rights in 1775. Another important aspect was the freedom of burghership, which was an old rationale embedded in the idea of the free port. Free ports were originally created in part to attract the settlement of wealthy foreigners to promote trade. Religious freedom and the absence of guild associations were integral elements for this purpose, and Marstrand included both. Swedish naturalization of foreigners was made possible, and its only prerequisite was that the prospective settler owned enough property or capital. The declaration also included an exceptional paragraph, which offered asylum for debtors and persons convicted of crimes. This was a component adopted from the regulations of Livorno, and would have to be changed in the future on account of its peculiar consequences.⁵³

The trade at Marstrand expanded promisingly over the course of the American War of Independence, and became a notorious meeting place for French and American merchants as well as privateers. Prize vessels caught by French and American privateers found a ready market in Marstrand during the war. In 1782, half of Marstrand's exports went to North America. When peace resumed, commerce in Marstrand nevertheless waned. The town failed to promote the transit trade it was presumed to receive, especially as it was close to larger markets like Copenhagen and Gothenburg. The same year, Gothenburg received general liberty of entrepôt for foreign merchandise (*nederlagsrätt*), which made it the closest thing to a free port there was on the Swedish west coast for years to come. Gothenburg merchants also secured certain exceptions from the Navigation Act, with a view for American ships to be able to load appropriate return cargoes. The possibilities of American-Swedish trade

⁵³ During its time as a free port (1775–94), Marstrand received over 500 Swedish persons seeking protection on account of insolvency and debt. Eskil Olán, *Marstrands historia: Krigsminnen och badortsliv* (Göteborg: Elander, 1939); 22–32, 105–07; Paul Masson, *Ports francs d'autrefois et d'aujourd'hui* (Paris: Hachette, 1904), 160–85; Essén, *Johan Liljencrantz*, 111–16; Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, 99–100.

as seen in Marstrand had not been lost on Swedish commercial interests.⁵⁴ This situation in Marstrand had naturally also caught the eye of the British and elicited their protests. Sweden kept an accommodating posture towards Britain while doing very little to interfere with entrepreneurs active in the Marstrand trade. Indeed, during the war, the free port trade became significant enough to profit the state financially, which might explain the reluctance to control it too strictly.⁵⁵

The partial success of the Marstrand free port also served to inspire the institution of a free port on St. Barthélemy. Its problems as well as its benefits foreshadowed much of the future issues of Gustavia. A royal proclamation dated the 7th of September 1785, seven months after the *Sprengtporten* made landfall, established St. Barthélemy's free port status. It is a remarkable document in its sheer brevity. Despite the precedent of the Marstrand project, it is remarkable how little direct influence it seemed to have on this decision. Whereas Marstrand's privileges were fleshed out in detailed and exhaustive paragraphs, the St. Barthélemy proclamation of 1785 only explained that the island was open to the ships and goods of all nations, that people of whatever description were invited to settle there, and practice their own religion freely. Debtors were also offered the customary protection, albeit limited to a duration of ten years. Finally, the text did not omit to proclaim the island's "favorable location, healthy climate, and good harbor".⁵⁶

⁵⁴ Heckscher, *Sveriges ekonomiska historia*, II: 666; Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, 250–51.

⁵⁵ The town's inhabitants, who had themselves pleaded for the adoption of free port rights, had grown weary of the downsides of commercial and social freedom. It was reported that Marstrand became increasingly exploited by foreign smugglers, individual adventurers, as well as fleeing convicts and debtors. The initiative to end its privileges came from the inhabitants themselves, only twenty years after they were instituted. In 1794, the town's free port status was rescinded. See Olán, *Marstrands historia*, 22. A forthcoming study by Rikard Drakenlordh will investigate the diplomatic ramifications of the free port in the relationship between Sweden and Great Britain. See Rikard Drakenlordh, "The British-Swedish Relations in the Era of the American Revolutionary War: A Study of Diplomatic, Military, and Economic Relations, 1773–1783" (Unpublished PhD-thesis, forthcoming).

⁵⁶ The proclamation actually incorporated the whole island, as the city that was to become Gustavia was only founded officially in 1787. A copy is found in C 256, FSB, ANOM.

Swedish officials believed they had good reasons to be brief. What mattered in the short term was the immediate construction of a Swedish administrative and commercial presence. The Swedish acquisition in the West Indies had already attracted some attention. Mercantile interest in the colony had one of its earliest instances in the personal effort of a Bremen merchant, Henrich Wilmans. Wilmans had almost two decades of trading experience in the West Indies, particularly in the Dutch and Danish colonies. Wilmans offered his views and suggested possible measures in a correspondence with the Stockholm government. Unsurprisingly, he espoused the institution of a free port, but added that the customs duties at St. Barthélemy would have to be lower than on St. Thomas and St. Eustatius. This latter suggestion might seem odd coming from Wilmans, who at the time co-owned a merchant firm in St. Thomas. But he candidly explained that regional competition would “be attended with great benefit to us in St. Thomas, as the Danes must do the same to retain merchants among them.”⁵⁷

The projects of opportunistic merchants such as Wilmans were a source of welcome consultation, and many of his further suggestions on administration and colonial jurisprudence would, in fact, be implemented. It also gives a hint of what some merchants active in Caribbean trade circles expected of the Swedish colony. Indeed, merchants from neighboring colonies had already started to arrive in St. Barthélemy by 1785, purchasing land and adding to the early commercial infrastructure of the Swedish colony. A number of Dutch locals from St. Eustatius moved in, according to von Rayalin, because of their “malcontent with new constraints and charges inflicted upon them by their government.”⁵⁸ Even so, the nature of the Swedish free port was still hardly clear even in its

⁵⁷ Wilmans’s memorandum, 18 October 1784; SBS 1A, SNA; Wilmans to Creutz, 24 May 1785, SBS 1A, SNA; Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, 87–93; Han Jordaan and Victor Wilson, “The Eighteenth-Century Dutch, Danish, and Swedish Free Ports in the Northeastern Caribbean: Continuity and Change,” in *Dutch Atlantic Connections, 1680–1800: Linking Empires, Bridging Borders*, ed. Gert Oostindie and Jessica V. Roitman (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 283–84.

⁵⁸ von Rayalin’s report, 8 March 1785, SBS 1B:1, SNA; Jordaan and Wilson, “Free Ports,” 296–98.

contours. No detailed set of regulations had as yet been issued on such basic matters such as naturalization and trading rights. For instance, when rumors of an impending war started circulating in 1785, von Rayalin wrote to ask if he could furnish foreign ships with Swedish flags, as “had been customary in St. Thomas during the late war”. There was as yet no instruction on how wartime neutrality could be exploited.⁵⁹

Before further details could be settled, Swedish officials considered the possibilities of the relationship with the newly independent American republic. Despite its reservations about the political nature of the new state, Sweden showed an early and keen interest in establishing trade contacts. This was in part because of the prospective markets for Sweden’s main exports, iron. But it was also part and parcel of the original rationale behind the Baltic transit trade. Swedish politicians were eager to invite Americans to trade in the Baltic, which they in fact already had done during the war. This was one of the reasons why Sweden signed, as the first unsolicited neutral state, a Treaty of Amity and Commerce with the American republic in 1783. The treaty had been negotiated between Benjamin Franklin and the Swedish minister Creutz in Paris.⁶⁰

The treaty largely followed the French-American treaty of 1778, with the customary most-favored-nation clause included to prevent discrimination against the United States as compared with other states. Additionally, it addressed the conditions of neutrality. However, as per the instruction of Congress to Franklin, “the direct and essential object” was simply the recognition of U.S. independence by another European power, even if Sweden certainly expected commercial gains from the new relationship. The treaty also included the mutual right of appointing consuls. As early as 1783, Gustav III appointed the first Swedish consuls, Richard Söderström for Boston, and Carl Hellstedt for Philadelphia. The next year Adolf Schough was appointed for Charleston. Consulates for

⁵⁹ von Rayalin to Ruuth, 20 May 1785, SBS 1A, SNA.

⁶⁰ Treaty of Amity and Commerce, and Separate Articles, between the United States and Sweden, 3 April 1783, *Treaties and Conventions Concluded Between the United States of America and Other Powers since July 4, 1776* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1889), 1042–52; Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, 25–26; Odhner, *Sverige politiska historia*, II: 116–19.

New York and Baltimore would follow, in 1799 and 1810. It would take until 1797 for the United States to post their first consul in Gothenburg.⁶¹

At the time of negotiating the treaty, Franklin was acting as a member of a European-based commission appointed by Congress to reopen commercial and diplomatic relations with foreign powers. Aside from pursuing treaties, the early economic policy of the United States included inquiries into possible foreign trading posts in the West Indies and on the other side of the Atlantic. As a direct consequence of the acquisition of St. Barthélemy, this commercial diplomacy also made its appearances in talks with Sweden. In late 1784 Thomas Jefferson conversed at length in Paris with Per Olof von Asp, the Swedish embassy secretary. Unaware of the Swedish plans for its new colony, Jefferson briefly observed that the island could be best exploited by granting it an unrestricted freedom of trade. He stated his unequivocal belief that the island could be used as a useful depot for the exchange for West Indian and American merchandise. In February of 1785 Jefferson reported to James Monroe on the frustratingly slow progress of commercial discussions with the greater West Indian powers. He however remarked in this context that the West Indian trade may go on despite the absence of legal treaties, and that “Holland, Denmark, Sweden may be of service too.”⁶² Marking a apparent mutual interest, the Swedish minister in 1786 approached Jefferson in turn, now inquiring in what ways St. Barthélemy could “be rendered instrumental for promoting commerce between Sweden and the United States,” an explicit

⁶¹ Vernon G. Setser, *The Commercial Reciprocity Policy of the United States, 1774–1829* (PhD-diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1937), 56; Congressional instruction to Franklin, 28 September 1782, in *Journals of the Continental Congress from 1774–1789*, ed. W.C. Ford et al. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1914), XXIII, 623–24; Müller, *Consuls, Corsairs, and Commerce*, 181–82; Merrill D. Peterson, “Jefferson and Commercial Policy,” 584–610; For a list of American-based Swedish consuls, see Appendix V.

⁶² Transcript of a discussion between Jefferson and von Asp, Stael von Holstein’s dispatch, 28 November 1784, A 45, *Diplomatica Gallica*, SNA; Jefferson to Monroe, February 1785, in *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. Paul Leicester Ford (New York: Putnam, 1894), IV: 31.

formulation of the Swedish ambitions to reach the American market through its colonial outpost in the West Indies.⁶³

Jefferson's reply was as interesting as it was prescient. First of all, the actual question received a glossed-over response. He simply demurred that the United States could have use for Swedish iron, and that American traders would be forthcoming with:

[...] flour, saltfish, & other things wanting in the other ports of America, which by the Swedish merchants at St. Bartholomew, will be run into those ports and exchanged for precious metals or commercial commodities: or the American merchant taking on himself those operations will run his flour or salt fish into those ports himself, take cash or such commercial articles as suit Sweden, & go with these to St. Bartholomew to pay for the iron he wants.⁶⁴

With similar arguments, Jefferson devoted most of the letter making a case for St. Barthélemy as an entrepôt for North American and Caribbean goods. While free port status was already conferred - as Jefferson most certainly knew - he adamantly argued for a free port institution "without a single restriction". Only in this way would St. Barthélemy draw to itself the transit trade which found its way through St. Eustatius and St. Thomas. These islands were at present, in Jefferson's words, "only half emancipated from the fetters of commercial prejudices." While Dutch colonial officials had since long allowed American trade with its West Indian colonies, the competition between the Dutch and American carrying trade constituted a barrier in trade relations. Officially, American ships were strictly allowed only to ship molasses from the Dutch colonies themselves. All other tropical commodities had to be shipped in Dutch vessels. Smuggling under

⁶³ Jefferson to Stäel von Holstein, 12 June 1786, *Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, IV: 238-245; Knute Emil Carlson, *Relations of the United States with Sweden* (Allentown: Haas, 1921), 73-74.

⁶⁴ Jefferson to Stäel von Holstein, 12 June 1786, *Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, IV: 242.

the guise of the molasses trade was still possible, but it was still thought preferable to pursue reliable, legal markets wherever possible.⁶⁵

Jefferson was very unclear on how Swedish trade could be furthered in the process. He only vaguely surmised that Swedish trade would have no trouble deriving its due proceeds if the island was indeed a free port. The only aspect he made perfectly clear was that at least some degree of illicit commerce would be inevitable in order to do so. While Jefferson admitted that this suggestion might appear objectionable for a number of moral or legal reasons, he maintained that the “oppressive rescripts of Metropolitan cupidity” made it a necessity. After all, in a colonial world officially governed by mercantilist laws issued in the metropolis, there were few ways for outsiders to legally conduct business. From the minutes and records of Swedish government, it is clear that illicit trade and smuggling were anticipated as a result of a free port. The experiences of Marstrand is one of the most evident examples of this circumstance. Swedish officials were not overly concerned or averse to the consequences.⁶⁶

The organization of domestic commercial relations with the new colony was another matter that received extensive treatment in the early discussion. It did not take long to raise the question about the possibility of a chartered company. The proposals on the matter were however far from unanimous. The Wilmans memorandum had unsurprisingly advised against a company, seeing as that would only constitute an unwanted competitor on the scene. Simon Bérard posted with Swedish consular functions in L’Orient, had suggested the creation of a company, but was answered by an early disapproval of Liljencrantz. Liljencrantz was no unequivocal opponent of trading companies, as he had indeed promoted their establishment in the past. However, in the present case he thought that a chartered company would go against the spirit of the free port institution.⁶⁷

⁶⁵ McDonald, “The Chance of the Moment,” 452–53; Jefferson to Stäel von Holstein, 12 June 1786, *Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, IV: 244–45.

⁶⁶ Jefferson to Stäel von Holstein, 12 June 1786, *Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, IV: 245.

⁶⁷ Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, 94; Essén, *Johan Liljencrantz*, 243–44.

A very plausible motivation behind Liljenkrantz's sentiments is that he was deterred from the recent experience of the Danish West India Trading Company (*Vestindisk Handelsselskab*), which ended in a spectacular failure. The company had been founded immediately after the outbreak of the war in 1778 in an effort to exploit wartime neutrality, with a particular attention to the international coffee trade.⁶⁸ The company's West India branch was located to St. Thomas. The company broke with prior practice in that it was the Danish government that took the initiative to create it, as well as placing considerable sums of capital at the company's disposal until their shares could be sold. The short history of the company can only be described as a colossal failure. It was dissolved shortly after the conclusion of peace in 1783. The Danish crown took over its assets and liabilities and repurchased all its shares at prices which offset all losses to the investors. This controversial liquidation put to light a range of failed and unrealistic business ventures, mismanagement, incompetence, and most of all, egregious losses for the Danish crown chest.⁶⁹

Ultimately, the most forceful interest behind the idea of a Swedish chartered company were the Stockholm merchants invested in the *Enigheten*-expedition, and they would soon realize their bid. The initial offer to von Jacobsson was quickly passed on to Jacob Eliasson Röhl and Adolf Fredrik Hansen, second cousins hailing from a family dynasty of crown bakers and merchants in Stockholm. Between the two, they shared decades of extensive commercial experience in both Europe and in the East and West Indies. Röhl had also been one of the early applicants for a consulate in the United States after the treaty of 1783. They were closely associated with the organizers of the *Enigheten* venture. They arrived at St.

⁶⁸ There were two other Danish companies established around the same time. They were the Baltic-Guinea Trading Company (*Østersøisk-guinesisk Handelsselskab*), established in 1781, and the Trading and Canal Company (*Handels- og Kanalkompagniet*), established in 1782. The three companies were similar in many aspects, from government involvement to their ultimate outcomes: none of them survived the transition from war to peace.

⁶⁹ Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, 94; Ole Feldbaek, "The Danish Trading Companies of the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century," *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 34, no. 3 (1986), 204–218; P.P. Sveistrup, "Det Kongelige octroyerde Vestindiske Handelsselskab 1778–85. En driftsøkonomisk undersøgelse," *Historisk tidskrift* 10, no. 6 (1942), 385–427.

Barthélemy with the same expedition, and bought portions of waterfront land in *Le Carénage* on behalf of the expedition's patrons, anticipating future investments. Their primary task was however to establish a Swedish merchant firm on St. Barthélemy. Röhl also drafted a comprehensive memorial about the commercial prospects of the island. Like so many others before him, he was not very impressed by the Crown's new possession. But he conceded the fact that the island was situated favorably in the middle of very important colonial markets, and possessed a good enough harbor.⁷⁰

Exploitation of this trading post, however, could only be achieved through smuggling. The limited free trade concessions of nearby French colonial ports only catered to American, not Swedish, products. Röhl however thought it would be possible to obtain secret access to trade in colonies such as Guadeloupe and Martinique. Dutch contacts had informed Röhl of the close relations between the French colonies and merchant firms from the Dutch and British colonies. The access to French markets was always obtainable through bribery Röhl's rather detailed proposals for illicit trade included the development of island agriculture and small industrial facilities, especially rum distilleries. These would however not serve mainly for profit, but rather as convenient cover for Swedish ships who could then pass off their cargoes as domestic production with some degree of credibility.⁷¹

More to the point, Röhl concluded that a chartered Swedish company was the only means for domestic interests to gain a share in this trade. He argued that this was the only way to promote the Swedish carrying trade and the dissemination of Swedish goods. In other cases, the colony would simply amount to nothing more than a convenient mart for Americans and

⁷⁰ Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, 69–70; Goës, "Minnen från S:t Barthélemy," *YMER* (1882): 155–57; Tingbrand, *Who was who*, 283–84, 501; For the memorandum, see Jacob Eliasson Röhl, "Wördsamt Memorial", 14 January 1786, Vitterhetsakademiens handskriftssamling, F 16, ATA; This document has not been used by Hildebrand or in later research until very recently in Holger Weiss, "Det svenska kolonialprojektets komplexa rum: om slaveri under svensk flagg i slutet av 1700-talets karibiska och atlantiska värld," *Sjuttonhundratalet: Nordic Yearbook for Eighteenth Century Studies* (2012), 71–72.

⁷¹ Röhl, "Wördsamt Memorial".

their inter-island smuggling business. Von Rayalin had incidentally envisioned basically the same scenario, reporting that the Americans “counted on” the island in the future.⁷²

Individual efforts of Swedish merchants would most likely fail according to Röhl, as they would be frustrated by competition and lack of adequate resources. Only a chartered company, in which individual merchants could participate through the purchase of shares, would ensure the continuity and stability of Swedish trade to the West Indies. A company was also more likely to be able to defray the costs and risks associated with ventures such as African-bound slaving expeditions, an important pre-condition for colonial development according to Röhl.⁷³

Röhl emphasized the connection between a prospective company and the investors in the first commercial expedition. The memorial swells with praise over their “patriotic zeal, unanimity, courage, and enterprise.” When the final issues of colonial administration were being decided in September of 1786, a group of Stockholm merchants headed by Carl Arfwedson presented their observations to an appointed colonial committee. Their observations repeated many of the pro-company arguments in the Röhl memorandum almost verbatim.⁷⁴

The committee was inclined to agree that the creation of a chartered company was the most prudent option. Neither did Liljencrantz voice his earlier objections against such a decision. His reversal cannot, however, only be ascribed to the influence of the merchant bourgeoisie of Stockholm. He was most likely moved towards acceptance on account of the high costs and risks involved in the colonization of a remote territory. A commercial organization financed in large part by the country’s mercantile elite was finally seen as the best alternative to offset future liabilities. A great deal of these considerations became embodied in the charter of the Swedish West India Company (SWIC) as well as the first

⁷² Röhl, “Wördsamt Memorial”; von Rayalin’s report, 16 December 1785, SBS I A, SNA.

⁷³ Röhl, “Wördsamt Memorial”.

⁷⁴ Röhl, “Wördsamt Memorial”; Cf. Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, 93–94.

comprehensive set of administrative regulations for St. Barthélemy, both issued on the 31st of October 1786.⁷⁵

SWIC was awarded the rights to trade with St. Barthélemy, the West Indies, North America, and the West African coast for an initial period of fifteen years. It was a joint stock company with a limited charter, meaning that other Swedes or foreigners were not barred from the commercial intercourse with St. Barthélemy. Nevertheless, SWIC enjoyed extensive reductions in domestic taxes and tariffs, which gave it a privileged position vis-à-vis other Swedish actors. It also enjoyed the right to establish factories and warehouses in foreign West Indian colonies, and had jurisdiction over its own personnel. Finally, it would receive three quarters of the total incomes from St. Barthélemy customs, the collection of which it would organize with its own means. The company leadership itself answered to the Swedish Board of Commerce in matters concerning the West Indian trade at large.⁷⁶

In return for these various privileges, SWIC was burdened with the maintenance of the colony's public works and infrastructure. This entailed the dredging and keeping of the harbor, the construction of a wharf, development of the island salines, and the payment of salaries to a significant part of the Swedish colonial officials. This trade-off was an expression of the government's cost-adverse minimalist approach to colonial governance, which had developed during the first two years after the acquisition.⁷⁷

The regulations for St. Barthélemy were a mix of the cumulated projects and propositions considered up until that time. Thus the island's (limited) defense and official representative duties would be combined in the powers of the Governor. The main executive and legal body, the council

⁷⁵ Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, 94–95; Essén, *Johan Liljencrantz*, 243–45; Kongl. Maj:ts Nådiga Privilegium, Til Uprättande af et Swenskt WestIndiskt Handels-Compagnie, Gifwit Upsala Slott Then 31 October 1786 (Stockholm: Kongl. Tryckeriet, 1786); Kongl. Maj:ts Nådiga Reglemente, Angående Styrelsen å Ön St. Barthelemy i West-Indien, Gifwit Upsala Slott then 31 October 1786 (Stockholm: Kongl. tryckeriet, 1786).

⁷⁶ Kongl. Maj:ts Nådiga Privilegium, §1, §8–9, §12, §14–15, §17.

⁷⁷ Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, 95–98; Kongl. Maj:ts Nådiga Privilegium, §12.

(*konselj*), was modeled on the government of St. Eustatius as Wilmans had suggested. This model supported the inclusion of local inhabitants into the council, four of its “permanent residents,” elected among themselves. The remaining four council members consisted of the Governor, acting as chairman except in judicial cases, when the judge (*justitiarie*) would preside. The remaining two seats would be filled by representatives of SWIC. Coincidentally, the judge was to be salaried by SWIC, not the crown. The judge was also vested with the powers of notary public. One can see here the considerable leverage offered to the company in colonial administration, which would make its own peculiar imprint on the future history of the colony.⁷⁸

The SWIC was modelled very closely on the Swedish East India Company, albeit with a few significant differences. One was the heavy involvement of government, both in its initial stages, and as owner. The king was formally entitled to appoint the directors of SWIC. Gustav III was content with appointing only one director, Eric Ruuth, who had succeeded Liljencrantz as minister of finance in 1786. The four other directors were chosen among the initial shareholders, and included the financiers of the *Enigheten* as well as Niclas Pauli, another noted Stockholm merchant. Ruuth would long remain as the chairman of the board of directors, holding the largest single share in the company, 8,000 rixdollars, on behalf of the king.⁷⁹

Another characteristic was the absence of foreign capital in SWIC. The company was in fact Swedish-owned, and included the capital of a significant portion of the mercantile bourgeoisie of Stockholm and Gothenburg, as well as a few notable noblemen and government officials. The Swedish colonial project had thus, it seemed, gained momentum in

⁷⁸ Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, 110–21; Wilman’s memorandum, 18 October 1784; SBS IA, SNA; *Kongl. Maj:ts Nådiga Reglemente*, §1–2

⁷⁹ Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, 117–21; Essén, *Johan Liljencrantz*, 246–50; Müller, *Consuls, Corsairs, and Commerce*, 178–79; Ulla Johansson, “Anders Reimers,” in *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon* 29 (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1997), 765; Ulla Johansson, “Pauli,” in *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon* 28 (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1994), 752–53; Leif Gidlöf, “Eric Ruuth,” in *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon* 30 (Stockholm: Bonniers, 2000), 782–89.

joining the forces of government and the mercantile elite. The combined institutions of free-flowing commerce and chartered trade would however prove problematic.

The Growth of a Transient Maritime Society

During the first few years under Swedish governance of St. Barthélemy, Gustavia was built up from ground, and in the beginning resembled little less than a temporary campsite around the cove of Le Carénage, virtually uninhabited prior to the arrival of Swedish expeditions. At the time of acquisition, there lived on the island 458 white settlers, 281 slaves, and 10 free blacks. To this number was soon added a small troop of Swedish officials and functionaries as well as a small contingent of Swedish troops. As this was hardly enough to get construction going, the first Governor von Rayalin expropriated daily slave labor from the slave-owners on the island in order to build the earliest roads, fortifications and buildings. Gustavia soon emerged as a string of seafront buildings, the principal ones being the property of the Swedish crown and SWIC. While foreign settlers were anticipated, it would take some time until actual settlement from neighboring colonies would begin in earnest. The colony began attracting interest soon enough, when news of its free port privileges were dispersed in print in neighboring colonies. By 1786 a motley group of 18 settlers had moved in from St. Martin, St. Kitts, and St. Eustatius.⁸⁰

From the very beginning the Swedish colony relied, very much as its Danish counterparts, on colonization by invitation. Migrants and settlers from nearby Caribbean would become the backbone of the growing urban population of Gustavia. The strategy to invite foreign settlers to its colony was deliberate rather than borne out of necessity over a long period of time, as it had been in the case of the Danish West Indies. The Swedish government even saw itself prompted to prohibit the “imprudent” desire

⁸⁰ Chevalier de Durat’s undated document, *Observations sur L’Isle de St. Barthélemy*, SBS 1 A; Dahlman, *Beskrifning om S. Barthelemy*, 17, 21–23.

of a popular peasant movement in Finland to emigrate to what it saw as a promised land in the New World.⁸¹

The settler society of St. Barthélemy was to have very diverse origins. Bengt Anders Euphrasén, a student accompanying a Gothenburg merchant ship to the colony in 1788, commented on the growth of the colony and its heterogeneous makeup of “Swedes, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Danes, Jews and Americans” in the town. There were also groups of German, Italian and Dutch-speaking residents. By the time of Euphrasén’s description, the city housed 1,131 inhabitants, of which nearly half were enslaved. Gustavia had grown larger than the original settlements of French Catholic planters dispersed around the island. There began to be a pronounced distinction between Gustavia and the settled hinterlands. Very few settlers bought land explicitly for plantation ventures, except for a “few Englishmen”, who had bought plantations on which they resided a few months of the year. The distinction of town and countryside persisted throughout Swedish possession of the island and into modern times, as evidenced by the remarkable cultural continuity and isolation of the French families living on the island to this day. The rural population were relatively secure in their religious and property rights afforded to them in the provisions of the French cession.⁸²

Still, the society witnessed by Swedish observers at the close of the eighteenth century was only the beginning of the burgeoning free port that Gustavia was growing into. The town can be described as a heterogeneous, polyglot society whose population was characterized by a high degree of mobility. Settlers were seldom sedentary urban dwellers, but rather undertook constant voyages throughout the West Indies, and had families

⁸¹ Birger Wedberg, ”S. Barthélemyfebern,” 51–62; Pekka Masonen, ”Kustavilainen siirtomaapolitiikka ja Saint-Barthélemy’n kuume,” *Historiallinen aikakauskirja*, no. 3 (2007), 330–345.

⁸² Bengt A. Euphrasén, *Beskrifning öfver svenska vestindiska ön St. Barthelemi i Westindien, samt öarne St. Eustache och St. Christopher* (Stockholm: Zetterberg, 1795), 20–21; Julianne Maher, *The Survival of People and Languages: Schooners, Goats and Cassava in St. Barthélemy, French West Indies* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); Julianne Maher, “Fishermen, farmers, traders: Language and economic history on St. Barthélemy, French West Indies,” *Language in Society* 25, no. 3 (1996): 373–406.

and property in other colonies. Populated by mostly Protestant settlers, enterprising actors in Gustavia of different vernaculars favored and conformed to business dealings in English. Other indications point towards the nature of Gustavia as a highly anglicized community. Official communications and statutes were printed in English and French. The island newspaper, *The Report of Saint Bartholomew* (1804–19) ran most of its content and editorial matter in English.⁸³

The source of the island's growing population was not as much a result of the appeal of economic privileges and exemptions as much as to destabilizing crises in the region. The ruptures of the French Revolution in neighboring colonies were the first of these movements. The merchant Daniel Öström commented in a letter to SWIC director Rejmers that “articles of provisions etc. are exceedingly expensive on account of the arrival of about 1 500 Frenchmen, which have also made household rents as well as food very dear.” There were undoubtedly a large contingent of French refugees, but these are not so easily noted in the censuses of the colony during the early revolutionary years.⁸⁴

Table 2.1. shows a modest population growth in the early revolutionary years. Between 1789 and 1790 the town population even dropped significantly. The simple explanation is that the majority of the French refugees did not choose to settle in the island, and instead migrated to other locales in the Caribbean as well as North America. The first significant growth in the urban population occurred between 1793 and 1796, when the town received nearly 800 new inhabitants, of which almost 500 were slaves. While it can be discounted that this was partly an effect of the slave trade, it suggests that new colonists with households and capital, i.e. slaves, were settling down in a growing pace. Drawings and maps of Gustavia from the period 1792–99 (Figure 2.1) supports this

⁸³ Roderick Cave, *Printing and the Book Trade in the West Indies* (London: The Pindar Press, 1987); Roderick Cave, “Early Printing and the Book Trade in the West Indies,” *The Library Quarterly* 48, no. 2 (1978): 163–92.

⁸⁴ Quote from Öström to Rejmers, 10 January 1795, SNA.

Table 2.1 Population structure of St. Barthélemy, 1765–1897

Year	Gustavia				Rural St B				Gustavia total	Rural St B total	Island total
	Slaves	Free Black	White	Slaves	Free Black	White	Slaves	Free Black			
1765	-	-	-	113	-	258	-	-	-	371	371
1767	-	-	-	251	-	328	-	-	-	579	579
1775	-	-	-	334	-	419	-	-	-	754	754
1784	-	-	-	282	10	458	-	-	-	739	739
1787	242	-	244	415	-	519	-	-	486	934	1,420
1788	192	80	301	464	8	535	-	-	573	1,007	1,580
1789	279	-	377	464	-	543	-	-	656	1,007	1,663
1790	230	-	292	469	-	565	-	-	522	1,034	1,556
1791	282	-	352	465	-	523	-	-	634	988	1,622
1792	258	-	290	465	-	455	-	-	548	920	1,468
1793	482	-	505	488	-	509	-	-	987	997	1,984
1794	554	-	590	521	-	547	-	-	1,144	1,068	2,212
1796	981	388	682	528	28	585	-	-	1,752	1,141	2,893
1800	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	*6,000
1806	1,424	802	835	-	-	-	-	-	3,061	-	-

1812	1,818	1,025	1,038	588	90	933	3,881	1,611	5,492
1819	-	-	-	-	-	-	2,910	1,677	4,587
1828	867	-	1,444	91	-	1,613	2,311	1,704	4,015
1835	528	706	552	-	-	-	1,786	-	-
1838	338	-	1,074	353	-	1,200	1,412	1,553	2,965
1840	240	-	830	366	73	1,041	1,070	1,480	2,550
1846	200	641	290	334	147	1,018	1,136	1,499	2,635
1854	-	839	304	-	458	1,225	1,143	1,683	2,826
1866	-	-	-	-	-	-	908	1,990	2,898
1875	-	-	-	-	-	-	793	1,581	2,374

Source: Census records for St. Barthélemy 1787, 1788 & 1796, SBS 28, SNA; Aggregate figures for censuses 1787–94, FSB, Serie PO, vol. 292, ANOM; The same aggregates are found in an appendix to Governor Bagge's report, 15 August 1795, SBS 1 B:2; 1806 figures in a memorandum of Bergstedt and Fahlberg, 24 December 1806, SBS 1C, SNA; 1812 figures from Governor Stackelberg's report, 5 October 1812, SBS 2, SNA; B.A. Euphrasén, *Beskrifning öfver svenska vestindiska ön St. Barthelemi i Westindien, samt öarne St. Eustache och St. Christopher* (A. Zetterberg, Stockholm, 1795), 20–21; Yolande Lavoie, Carolyn Fick and Francine-M. Mayer, "A Particular Study of Slavery in the Caribbean Island of Saint Barthélemy: 1648–1846", *Caribbean Studies* 28, No. 2 (1995), 384; Yolande Lavoie, "Histoire sociale et démographique d'une communauté isolée: Saint Barthélemy (Antilles françaises)", *Revue d'histoire de l'Amérique française*, vol. 42, no. 3 (1989), 414; Fredrik Edvard Fähræus, "Statistiska upplysningar rörande svenska kolonin St Barthélemy," *Statistisk tidskrift* 2 (1865): 256–57; Hannes Hyrenius, "Royal Swedish Slaves," *Reports of the Demographic Research Institute* 15 (1977): 13, 22–23.

Note: Where yearly census data on the free black population is missing, it only means that the data is included in the figures of either whites or slaves. There was never an established convention of covering this population category.

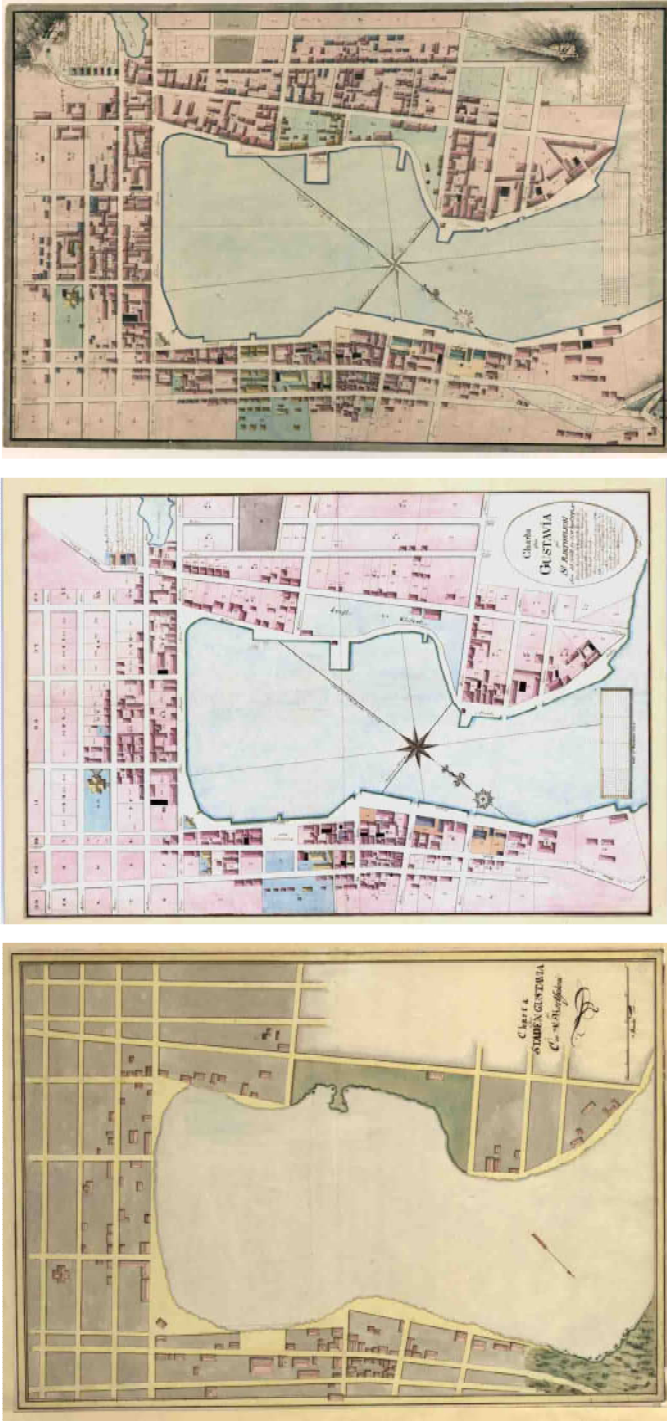


Figure 2.1 Urban development of Gustavia, 1792–1799

St. Barthélemy experienced a surge of settlers to the colony towards the end of the 18th century. One of the results was that urban construction and residence in Gustavia gained momentum. These maps give an impression of this development. They are dated, from left to right, at 1792, 1796 and 1799. Swedish Military Archives (Krigsarkivet).

argument, as it is evident that considerable construction was underway in the town, and that lots of land were being bought and occupied at an unprecedented speed. Whereas population figures around the turn of the century are sparser, it was reported that the total population exceeded 6,000 inhabitants. In 1806, when more reliable figures are again available, the total population of Gustavia stood at 3,061 inhabitants. Despite the lack of precise data for the rest of the colony, it is evident that the town superseded the countryside during this period. Relative to the size of the island, Gustavia became a bustling urban center. Considering its number of inhabitants even during its most active period, it was a middling settlement in comparison with commercial centers such as Havana, which had over 40,000 inhabitants in 1791. Larger port towns in North America and on the Spanish Main exceeded 20,000 inhabitants during the same time, and Gustavia was also smaller than its most comparable urban equivalents, the free ports. Willemstad on Curaçao had over 11,000 inhabitants in 1789, Charlotte Amalie had 2,085 in the same year, and the total population of St. Eustatius in 1790 was 7,830.⁸⁵

The island council gave a detailed report in 1801 of the growing contours of the shoreside city. Gustavia had then become the home of about 40 wholesale merchants with real estate property. Among the wealthiest merchants who had settled to St. Barthélemy were a number of former prominent St. Eustatius merchants who had relocated from the Dutch colony after 1795. One example was the house of Vaucrosson & Son. The father and head of the family firm, Anthony Wachter Vaucrosson, had been one of the two merchants which had dominated the sugar exports on St. Eustatius, the other was the Bermudian-born Richard Downing Jennings, who instead had relocated to St. Thomas. The elder Vaucrosson, who had been active in the remonstrations against the planned redirection in Stavian economic policy, took out Swedish burgher rights as early as July 1786, in search for, as he put, a more tranquil environment after the Dutch

⁸⁵ Population figures of various port towns in Wim Klooster, "Curaçao as a Transit Center to the Spanish Main and the French West Indies," in *Dutch Atlantic Connections, 1680–1800: Linking Empires, Bridging Borders*, ed. Gert Oostindie and Jessica V. Roitman (Leiden: Brill, 2014), 44–45; Enthoven, "That Abominable Nest of Pirates," 247.

were caught up in the international conflicts of the time. It would take until 1793 for the whole family along with their property, to make a complete resettlement in Gustavia from Oranjestad. In the Lower Town the family left a renowned family and business residence, with rooms that “were richly upholstered and from the upper gallery a bridge spanned the street to a garden laid out on the roof of a warehouse”⁸⁶.

Even though there are no details that suggest that the Vaucrossons built equally conspicuous buildings in Gustavia, their dwellings would have had to hold a sizeable household, consisting in 1796 of 23 people, of which 5 white men, 1 white woman and 17 slaves. The elder Vaucrosson, who died an old man in St. Barthélemy in 1813, was survived by his eldest sons, Jacques Antoine and Jean Jacques Vaucrosson, who carried on the business of their family well into the 1830s.⁸⁷

Another wealthy Statian merchant that settled in St. Barthélemy during the 1790s was John Joseph Cremony, who had been born in Gaeta in the kingdom of Naples. Cremony and his business house seem to have been established in Gustavia by 1796 at the latest. He was a merchant with a wide network and no clear field of specialization. He held shares of plantations in Guadeloupe and in the French part of St. Martin during his lifetime. His business activities necessitated the use of a small staff of clerks in Gustavia, as well as an agent stationed in St. Eustatius. He himself

⁸⁶ On Richard Downing Jennings, see Jarvis, *In the Eye of All Trade*, 354, 406–07; and “List of the most prominent merchants of St. Thomas,” C 260, FSB, ANOM; Jordaan and Wilson, “Free Ports,” 285, 296, 303; Quote from Johan Hartog, *History of St. Eustatius* (Aruba, De Wit Stories, 1976), 43–44.

⁸⁷ Per Tingbrand, *Who Was Who in St. Bartholomew during the Swedish Epoch?* (Stockholm: Swedish St. Barthélemy Society, 2001), 566–569; *Handlingar Uti Det Hos Kongl Majt anhängiga Mål, angående den af handelsbuset på Öen St. Barthélemy, Vaucrosson & Son, i underdånighet förde klagan öfwer wäldsamt medfart af Gouverneuren och Conseillen på nämnde Ö, m.m.* (Stockholm, A.J. Nordström, 1799), 19, Sten Simonssons samling, vol. 7, SNA.

acted from time to time in the capacity of agent for commercial actors elsewhere, for example Liverpool-based slave traders Robert Todd & Co.⁸⁸

Later settlements signaled the arrival of significant merchant wealth that would have a longer intertwined history with the island. The German business house of Elbers and Krafft was a representative of this kind of movement. Johann Bernard Elbers and Johann Philip Krafft were natives of Mülheim an der Ruhr in North-Rhine Westphalia, who had arrived to the Swedish colony a few years into the new century, as testified by their maritime activities in 1804. Their business was quickly established as one of the most prominent in the island. They built their imposing mansion, *Mühlheim*, not in the streets of Gustavia, but reclusively to the north shore in a little bay west of Saint Jean. It was of a peculiar octagonal design, built out of marble to bear witness of the success of their business as well as to the status of the merchant elites in the region.⁸⁹

Settling merchants with these kinds of financial and social resources invariably became influential members of island society. The Vaucrossons, Cremony, Elbers, Krafft and several others from time to time became members of the council, aldermen, delegates and representatives of commercial committees. As such, they became the principal actors with which the Swedish council had a mutually dependent relationship. This relationship was often double-edged. On the one hand, their wealth

⁸⁸ Probate inventory of John Joseph Cremony, 18 October 1820, S 310, FSB, ANOM; Tingbrand, *Who Was Who*, 152–153; For Cremony's slave trading activities, see chapter 3; For some details regarding the Cremony family and their plantations on St. Martin, see John Hackett, *Narrative of the expedition which sailed from England in 1817, to join the South American Patriots* (London: John Murray, 1818), 35–41. John Joseph Cremony's tombstone is situated on Loterie Farm (Formerly Lottery Estate) on French St. Martin, where he settled in his later years.

⁸⁹ Tingbrand, *Who Was Who*, 198–99, 325; Erik O.E. Högström, "St Barthélemy under svenskt välde" (Unpublished PhD-thesis, Uppsala University, 1888), 35, 40, 47, 52, 57–58; For the description of the Elbers & Krafft estate, see Goës, "Minnen," 163–64. The description by Goës is based on his own visit to the ruins of the estate in the 1880s. Governor Stackelberg inhabited the estate after 1815; On a general note, see also Klaus Weber, *Deutsche Kaufleute im Atlantikhandel, 1680–1830*. (München: Beck, 2004), 37–86; Klaus Weber, "From Westphalia to the Caribbean: Networks of German Textile Merchants in the Eighteenth Century," in *Cosmopolitan Networks in Commerce and Society 1660-1914*, ed. Margrit Schulte Beerbühl (London: London German Historical Institute, 2004), 53–98.

financed important infrastructure and communal projects, their commercial activities drew revenues to Swedish state coffers, and their advice and expertise was needed in the unceasing flow of administrative matters. On the other hand, the council's relationship with them had to be constantly negotiated and re-negotiated. Their interests and personal dealings often came head to head with the governance and jurisprudence of the Swedish colonial administration. They often used their relative power as council members as they saw fit, either hindering or furthering the work of the administrative body. Some of them seriously challenged the Swedish administration in matters of politics and jurisprudence. Elbers and Cremony were among the ringleaders responsible for the mutiny of 1810 which ousted the judge and government secretary from the island. The mutiny is further described in the following chapter.⁹⁰

Masters and Mariners

Another picture of the colony's cosmopolitan make-up is provided by surviving muster-rolls from 1814–15. The muster rolls holds records of individual mariners' age, task, pay, race, as well as birthplace or place of residence. Most masters and seamen were white creoles and hailed from nearby Caribbean colonies. An overwhelming majority came from Dutch colonies or from colonies with a strong Dutch cultural dominance. Curaçao, St. Eustatius and St. Martin was the birthplace of many, while Saba was the greatest source of maritime professionals engaged in the shipping of St. Barthélemy. Names like Barnes, Beakes, Beal, Dinzey, Hassell, Heyliger, and Simmons were commonplace Saban family names active in the transit trade in small vessels, names which particularly survive on St. Barthélemy to this day. There was also a significant contingent of French regulars that came primarily from Guadeloupe and Martinique, but also Saint-Domingue, Les Saintes, and Marie Galante. From the other

⁹⁰ Petition of St. Barthélemy merchants, 14 November 1810, Ankarheim's report, 14 June & 7 September 1811, SBS 1C, SNA; Tingbrand, *Who was who*, 63, 198–99.

colonies, St. Thomas, St. Croix and Puerto Rico were among the most notable sources of maritime personnel, but comparably few came from British colonies. Only Anguilla, Bermuda and St. Kitts had any real representation among mariners.⁹¹

It is telling to note that among the European mariners (612), a majority were in fact Swedes either from Sweden proper or from the recently ceded Finnish territories (288). There were many reasons for this relatively high concentration of Swedish mariners. First of all, there was a demand for Swedish masters and skippers onboard neutral Swedish vessels registered in St. Barthélemy, as it enhanced the appearance of legitimate trade in the eyes of foreign privateers and cruisers. On another note, there were comparably many Swedish sailors that absconded to southern waters, attracted by high wages, especially onboard American-owned ships as well as the prospect of evading domestic conscription in the wake of Russo-Swedish conflicts.⁹²

The remainder of the Europeans mainly had origins in Italian (68), French, (65) or Spanish (28) port towns, as well as a plethora of maritime centers in the Mediterranean. There were many records of mariners from Galicia, Genova, Leghorn, Lissabon, Malta, Marseille, Nantes, Naples, Oporto, Sardinia, Sicily, Ragusa, Trieste, and Venice. Comparably few came from the regions of the Baltic and North Sea, with only a few mentions of Altona, Amsterdam, Copenhagen and Hamburg. Most of them were German natives of Stralsund (25), and were recorded as Swedish subjects. A nationality almost as heavily represented among the mariners were the Americans (206). Most of them were simply recorded “America” as their birthplace but there unsurprisingly high numbers of people from New York and Philadelphia and their respective hinterlands. There were

⁹¹ Wilson dataset on St. Barthélemy mariners (2015), extracted from 1814–15 muster rolls, in AM 265, FSB, ANOM. The dataset includes a total of 275 registered vessels and a total of 1,980 mariners. The total figures do not represent altogether unique vessels and persons, as there are numerous double entries due to the fact that vessels were registered more than once during these years.

⁹² Müller, *Consuls, Corsairs, and Commerce*, 188; The Swedish mariner problem is mentioned in several of consul Söderström’s letters to the Board of Trade between 1786–90, vol. 1, *Diplomatica Americana*, SNA.

a few mariners from diffuse South American origins (29), such as “Brazil”, “Oronoco”, or simply, the “Spanish Main.”

As vessel owners likely hired whomever was available, there was little regard paid to the national or ethnic compositions of crews. Especially the larger ship crews could be a real mix of worlds, like the ship *Norrköping* of 235 tons and a crew of 14, owned by the aforementioned J.J. Cremony and registered in July 1814. The master was from Rhode Island, the skipper from Campeche, the boatswain from Wolgast, while the seamen hailed from Portugal, Uddevalla (Sweden), Curaçao, the Azores, Marguerite, Gothenburg, Jamaica, and Philadelphia. Only rarely did the ship-owners bother to assemble more homogenous crews. A shipowner who did this fairly constantly was the English-born William Cock, one of the richest and most respectable merchants of St. Barthélemy, who also sat several terms in the island council. He registered his hermaphrodite brig *Eliza* twice in 1815. One of her voyages carried a crew of 14, consisting of 5 Swedes and the rest of Americans from the continental United States. The other voyage carried 15 crew members, of which 12 were from Sweden and Finland while the remainder were French or American. Regional affinities or family networks also seemed to have an effect on crew composition. Saban ship-owners were comparably often also the master onboard their relatively small vessels, carrying with them a limited crew of Sabans and their own slaves.⁹³

Members of the black population, both free and slaves, were a significant portion of the composition of crews, 354 out of 1,980, or nearly 18 percent according to the muster-rolls of 1814–15. Larger ships regularly carried a few slaves as cooks or “boys”, while the smaller, particularly the ones owned by Sabans or natives from other neighboring colonies could consist of a majority of slaves. For instance, the schooner *Intrepid*, owned by Pierre Arnaud, was captained by the Saban James Vaughan, the only white man onboard, the remaining six seamen were all slaves. The

⁹³ “Mr Guillaume Cock, le plus riche et respectable de nos négociants et un des membres du Conseil d’Administration et de finance; possédoit un Brick, appelé Eliza, qu’il envoya avec un cargaison de valeur au Brasil [...]” Norderling’s report, 3 September 1817, SBS 5A, SNA.

schooner *Lisa* of tons, was manned by two whites from St. Martin and St. Lucia, the rest were slaves; Mingo, Tom, Jack, Will, John, and two named Peter. They were all the property of the shipowner Auguste Rabainne. Usually the slaves who were part of the crew belonged to the ship-owner, but there are numerous records of slaves who were rented out by third parties for individual expeditions. There were a few free black ship-owners, of which William Panilio was the most prominent in 1814–15. During that time he had registered *Basseterre* of 35 tons, with a crew of two whites and seven slaves, and *Penelope* of 20 tons, with an all-free, creole crew. The slaves all belonged to Panilio, and he was indeed one of the largest slave-owners among the merchants directly involved in shipping. He also had the distinction of having the only recorded free black person as master of a vessel, the “Negro” Dominic Mathias Rafael, a 30-year old Curaçaoan who helmed the *Penelope*.

Urban Life and Commerce

The commercial society of Gustavia included its cohorts of retail traders, hawkers, hucksters, shopkeepers and insurance brokers. In 1800, the city had 37 on record. An example was Joseph Hart, a North American who had settled in St. Barthélemy around the beginning of the 19th century. He rented a house on East Strand-Street where he retailed American goods such as “Beef, Pork, Hams, Cheese, Corn, Codfish, Lard, Soap, Candles, Tar & Potatoes.” Gustavia was also home to a range of artisans and professionals catering to different needs, including 6 tailors, 8 masons, 18 carpenters of different descriptions, 6 bakers, 4 butchers, 2 hatters (including 1 *modiste*), 6 surgeons, 3 shoemakers and cobblers, a blacksmith and a watchmaker. In this commercial variety there is still the clear imprint of maritime enterprise and its needs. A special indication of this is the abundancy of taverns, inns, grog-shops and billiard houses. There were 8 buildings recorded as lodging-houses, and 22 establishments with license to serve liquors and “keep billiards”. Different forms of gambling, cockfights and card games were popular preoccupations in the town, but

none were apparently as popular as billiards. It was a typical mid-day amusement, when the air was too hot for most to work or conduct their business. During games people drank wine, rum, punch, grog, lemonade or water, and the losers would traditionally foot the bill of the last few rounds. Rum- and grog-shops were often a source of nocturnal unrest and consternation, despite the officially strict curfews and regulations pertaining to them. Drunken brawls and disputes among mariners and soldiers of the garrison were not uncommon. Dances were permitted on weekends for “Negroes in the Town” until eight o’clock in the evening, providing that they should not “exceed a Number, from which dangerous Consequences may be suspected.”⁹⁴

As in any other Caribbean colony, the economy was based on slave labor, despite the fact that there was no intensive, large-scale agricultural plantations as in the large sugar islands. Sweden had no experience of managing the complex legal framework of slavery, as it had abolished serfdom in the 14th century. Slavery was regulated by a Swedish *ordonnance de police*, containing 34 articles. It was a slightly abridged version of the French *Code noir*, and was introduced on the island in 1787 as a confirmation of the previous situation during French rule. It has been argued that because St. Barthélemy did not possess large plantations, it did not feature the darker, bloodier forms of slave exploitation that went with it. But the fact is that wherever slavery was a cornerstone of society, violence was key and duly administered in the face of possible slave rebellions and insurrections. In fact, St. Barthélemy had a fair share of racial tension and public incidents, primarily present in the strenuous relation between whites and the free black population. As in other colonial

⁹⁴ Joseph Hart’s advertisement in *The Report of St. Bartholomew*, April 30, 1804; Högström, “S. Barthélemy”, 15–16; Euphrasén, *Beskrifning*, 55; Regarding slave dances, see article 31 of the *Ordinance of Police relative to the Treatment of Black and Colored Persons*, 30 June 1787, SBS 1 A, also printed in *The Report of Saint Bartholomew*, 5 April & 7 May 1804.

societies, a consistent policy towards the free blacks was difficult to uphold, given their legal status between slaves and whites.⁹⁵

At least a few of the taverns in the city doubled as brothels. This is clear owing to the fairly frequent references to prostitution and *filles de joie* in court cases as well as governor's reports. As in other urban societies in the Caribbean, prostitution exclusively befell Afro-Caribbean women. Methodist preachers visiting the city in the 1820s observed as much of the "wicked" and "depraved" youths living in the city, whose poverty-stricken parents saw no other financial outcome than to have their "black daughters [...] live with white men".⁹⁶

This is not to suggest that prostitution was the only resort for the impecunious and racially segregated female population of Gustavia. Afro-Caribbean women, both free and slaves, were in the majority among females in the city. In the Gustavia census of 1796, there were 996 women out of a recorded total population of 1,752. A free black female majority was a common characteristic of regional urban demographics, which is usually explained by the relatively high occupation of domestics and servants employed in households, which however does not hold true for Gustavia. In Gustavia there was a sexual balance among the slaves as the town's trade, warehousing, construction, and portuary activities necessitated a variety of skilled and unskilled labor. Free women of color precluded the reliance upon domestic slaves as they provided basic service as laundresses and seamstresses. In a 1787 census, the proportion of households headed by women are high among the free blacks of Gustavia,

⁹⁵ Fredrik Thomasson, "Contre la Loi mais en considérant les Circonstances dangereuses du moment'. The Swedish court of law at Saint Barthélemy during the revolutionary period." (Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Association of Caribbean Historians, Curaçao, May 2012), 7–8; Rosenstein's report, 6 July 1787, SBS 1B:1, SNA; For a typical representation of slavery on St. Barthélemy, see Per Tingbrand, "A Swedish Interlude in the Caribbean," *Forum Navalae* 57 (2002): 64–92; Sjöström, "En nödvändig omständighet," 42–44.

⁹⁶ Rolf Sjöström, "Conquer and Educate. Swedish colonialism in the Caribbean island of Saint-Barthélemy 1784 – 1878," *Paedagogica Historica* 37, no. 1 (2001): 74–75; Norderling to af Wetterstedt, 4 May 1820, SBS 7A.

43 percent, as opposed to white households, where there were only 11 female heads in a total of 112 households.⁹⁷

Free black women were also frequently independent business-owners rather than menial workers. They sold their merchandise on the streets or from their own shops, and held their own lodging-houses and taverns. In 1802, a town tax record shows 13 taverns and three billiards, out of which five are registered under female owners. Furthermore, slave-owning women often rented their slaves for different kind of work as a principal income, as was common among the island's slave-owning population. As Ale Pålsson has noted, whereas women's share of the internal commerce of St. Barthélemy reached significant values, their involvement in the maritime professions and trade was virtually nonexistent. In this divide between the maritime and the non-maritime world there was a significant distortion of wealth, where only the wholesale merchants active in shipping were the ones who accumulated large fortunes and capital.⁹⁸

The polyglot society of Gustavia was the single most important consequence of the Swedish acquisition of St. Barthélemy. The majority of this new population proved to be transitory in nature, in fact settlers had sought out the Swedish colony to settle permanently. They were in most cases seeking refuge or testing the prospects of a convenient port to conduct business which had been made difficult elsewhere, such as St. Eustatius. In large part, the settlers became formally sworn Swedish subjects, but there was no Swedish cultural hegemony that followed by the event of naturalization. As will be explored in the next chapter, the Swedish administration in the colony would have problems accommodating its newly acquired subjects both politically, economically,

⁹⁷ Yolande Lavoie, Carolyn Fick and Francine-M. Mayer, "A Particular Study of Slavery in the Caribbean Island of Saint Barthélemy: 1648–1846," *Caribbean Studies* 28, no. 2 (1995): 369–403; Cf. for instance the exposition of the urban demographics of Charlotte Amalie in Neville Hall, *Slave Society in the Danish West Indies. St. Croix, St. John, and St. Croix* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 88–91; The Gustavia town census of 1796 in SBS 28, SNA. There were 323 women out of a total of 682 among the whites, 192 women out of 388 among the free black population, and 481 women out of 981 in the slave population.

⁹⁸ The town tax record of taverns and billiards in 1802 is found in CP 75, FSB, ANOM; Pålsson, "Our side of the water," 70–71.

and socially. The Swedish foray into the free port trade of the Caribbean as well as the commercial organization of the Swedish West India Company would have several challenges to face.

2.3 Colonial Ambitions and Colonial Realities

What kind of commercial system sprung out of the Swedish colony? On the surface, free ports such as Gustavia were devoid of most commercial restrictions common to the 18th-century Caribbean, and as such constituted an attractive subterfuge for merchants willing to circumvent various trade restrictions. The free port and the commercial society it fostered could possibly be understood as an economic institution, devised to structure political, economic and social interaction. As described in a seminal 1991 article by Douglass North, such an institution can be said to consist of both informal constraints as well as formal rules. While informal constraints include various sanctions, taboos, custom, traditions, and codes of conduct, formal rules are codified in constitutions, laws and property rights. The institutional perspective is important as institutions determine transaction and production costs, and hence the profitability and feasibility of engaging in a given economic activity. The lax regulations and liberal trade policy of Gustavia, coupled with the neutrality of Swedish shipping, then, could be understood as the chief components of Gustavia's institutional composition.⁹⁹

But how successful was this combination of ostensibly beneficial liberties and rights? The political and legal context in which maritime commerce took place in the Caribbean and Atlantic was after all highly complicated, volatile and constantly dynamic. Even though neutrality held avenues of commerce open in times of war, neutral merchants and shippers still faced the hazards of maritime depredations of warships or state-sanctioned privateers, and the subsequent costs of seizure and legal procedures. Wartime conditions nevertheless created opportunities for extraordinary profits for those willing to brave the daunting risks involved. Colonial magistrates too faced a daunting task of securing the rights of its Swedish subjects, indeed even the territorial sovereignty of island waters.

⁹⁹ Douglass North, "Institutions," *The Journal of Economic Perspectives* 5, no. 1 (1991): 97–112.

As soon as the war broke out in 1793, Gustavia at once became subject to a range of commercial, political, and social effects of wartime settings in the Caribbean. Commercial traffic boomed as the utility of neutral free ports gained in importance, but the local shipping also became exposed to new perils at sea, and the inevitable involvement in privateering economies entailed novel and challenging diplomatic disputes for the colonial magistrates, who had limited means of securing and prosecuting neutral rights.

To highlight the institutional limitations of the free port society of Gustavia, one could paraphrase a concise characterization originally made by Neville Hall in the context of the Danish West Indies, that is, a “colonial power without dominion”. Similar to Denmark, Sweden did not need and indeed could not establish and maintain possession to a degree that previous European settlements in the West Indies had to do. Akin to the Danish process of settlement in their limited Caribbean empire, Sweden claimed sovereign control over its colony through formal legal channels and purchase, and then invited foreign settlers and merchants into its colony. In a parallel development, the Swedish government and leading Stockholm merchants attempted to organize a direct commercial link with the new colony, backed by company charters and privileges not readily entitled to naturalized settlers of the colony. This chapter will try to assess the impact of Swedish trade through the colony as well as the relative importance of neutral international trade that the colony facilitated in regional trade networks.¹⁰⁰

Company and Private Swedish Trade

SWIC commenced its activities in 1787. An early problem was to attract the interest in company stocks, and the initial mass of stockholder capital never reached adequate levels to finance larger long-term investments such as ships and cargoes, and the directors saw themselves obliged to dig deep

¹⁰⁰ Neville Hall, *Slave Society in the Danish West Indies*, 1–33.

into their own accounts to meet immediate financing needs. Funding and overhead costs were serious strains throughout the company's brief history. SWIC was beset from the beginning with a range of other problems, both in Stockholm and in the colony itself. These aspects of SWIC's history are relatively well known since initial studies in the 1950s, but this section will present research and analysis on the problems which led to the quick disappearance of the company, and the circumvention of Swedish trade *per se* from the transit trade of St. Barthélemy.¹⁰¹

The brief history of SWIC can in fact be viewed as a never-ending string of misfortunes, missed opportunities, and outright disasters. SWIC went through its first fifteen years of the initial charter only to suffer severe losses in the face of a British occupation of the colony in 1801–02, as its stores and property were plundered and destroyed by British forces. The charter was renewed ad interim during the occupation with a view to allow the directors the time to reorganize and to claim just compensation. And while in the end the claims against the British were pressed home successfully, this process endured until 1808 and only resulted in a pittance of the initial claims. Long before the resolution of that particular problem, the question had arisen whether SWIC's charter should be renewed. In March 1804 the directors held what was to be the last meeting of SWIC stockholders at the Stockholm Stock Exchange. At this moment the directors unveiled in detail the difficulties the company had had to endure.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Ingegerd Hildebrand's thesis on the Swedish colony and SWIC has the obvious drawback of only covering the period up until 1796. Therefore, it is not surprising that it lacks in more definite conclusions about the company's achievements, see for instance the summary in Ingegerd Hildebrand, "S:t Barthélemy," in *Den svenska historien* (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1968), VII: 88–90, 96–97; Subsequent research largely builds on this work, cf. for instance Leos Müller, *Consuls, Corsairs, and Contraband, 175–180*; Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, 145, 153.

¹⁰² "Herrar hufvudparticipanter Berättelse till interessenterne", litt. B., 12 February 1804, SWIC Minutes, 17 March 1804, Handel och sjöfart, vol. 157, SNA; For the Swedish claims, see the undated appendices in the same minutes. SWIC made claims for 38,170 Spanish dollars, most of which was rejected by the British government. In late 1804 SWIC accepted the repayment offer of 18,161 dollars, which was mostly comprised of the estimated value of goods procured and sold from its warehouses in Gustavia. See also "King's warrant for payments due to the Swedish St. Barthélemy claims," 27 March 1805, WO 1/120, TNA.

The first commercial expedition, *Enigheten*, returned to the Baltic only to be seized and condemned by Russian naval forces, a fateful consequence of the Russo-Swedish war of 1788–90. During the total twenty year-period of company charter from 1787 to 1806, the company dispatched a total of 21 voyages, three of which ended in shipwrecks, and three others which ended up in the possession of belligerent forces. Two additional vessels, which were purchased in the West Indies in order to facilitate inter-island trade under company auspices, were captured and condemned during their maiden voyages under Swedish flags.¹⁰³

A critical blow to the company's business on the domestic market occurred in 1794, when the Swedish government reinstated a ban on coffee and other luxury commodities, which had been a recurring imposition on consumption in Sweden during the course of the 18th century. During the existence of the company, coffee became the company's mainstay of homebound cargoes, as it was a comparably accessible commodity in the West Indies and easily sold at a profit at Stockholm auctions. After the 1794 ban, coffee could still be landed into Swedish harbors, but only on the condition that it would be sold to foreign markets and not for consumption within the kingdom. At this juncture, the company directors directed a plea to the Swedish government, as the ban was seen as too injurious for the company to continue. If the company could not be given some form of dispensation, the only other viable alternative was to ask the crown to buy the company stock in its entirety, as had been done by the Danish crown when it bought the stocks of the ill-fated *Vestindisk Handelsselskab*. This fact was explicitly mentioned in the directors' suggestion to the government in the wake of the coffee ban, but was

¹⁰³ For details on SWIC ships and expeditions, see Appendix VII.

however promptly turned down, and the question was never raised again as the ban was again lifted in 1796.¹⁰⁴

Acquiring competent local agents and maintaining good working relations with them was another precarious aspect of company business. The first company superintendent arrived in the colony in 1787 only to develop a grave mental illness, fever, and die within a year. Subsequent iterations of agents and company clerks were hired and dismissed in rapid succession, all according to their individual lack of competence or support from company directors. Governors and other magistrates were fast to point out whether company hands failed to meet the right criteria. Many agents were found to lack in necessary linguistic, book-keeping, or trading skills, and were promptly dismissed if they were not up to their tasks. After the superintendent's death, the business house of Röhl & Hansen were finally appointed as company agents as late as 1790, but soon incurred the disapprobation of stockholders for different reasons. Their handling of a company-affiliated shipwreck case was deemed dubious and too costly for the investors. Röhl & Hansen were suspected of pocketing a share of the bottomry loan of the ill-fated ship. Additionally, Röhl & Hansen were not salaried agents, but received commissions on a share of the company profits. This was a condition which particularly fell out of favor with the directors. Röhl & Hansen were also rumored to have a poor business reputation in French colonial markets vital to company interests. After their dismissal in 1794, the new agent Gustav Wernberg demanded commissions instead of a fixed salary, only to see himself dismissed within

¹⁰⁴ The ban was in effect 1794–96 and 1799–1802. See Leos Müller, “Kolonialprodukter i Sveriges handel och konsumtionskultur,” *Historisk tidskrift*, no. 2 (2004): 225–48; For the directors' suggestions, see the undated and unsigned document “Reflectioner”, in *Handel och sjöfart*, vol. 190, which was in undoubtedly recorded by the board of directors early in the year 1794; Cf. Duke Carl to the SWIC board of directors, 6 February and 4 December 1794, *Handel och sjöfart*, vol. 190, SNA; Hildebrand, *Det svenska västindiska kompaniet*, 291–94.

less than a year. The directors cited his demands as a breach of contract. He would instead become an associate of the firm of Röhl & Hansen.¹⁰⁵

The last agent of the company, Carl Dreyer, assumed his position after Wernberg's departure and made a promising start. He was responsible for the company's business on St. Barthélemy from 1796 to 1801, and enjoyed a degree of support from the directors which his predecessors never had had. But in the end he would however become the single most expensive catastrophe for the company under its initial charter. Shortly after his employment had commenced, concerns were raised over irregularities in the accounts current. It was only in the middle of 1800 when detailed accounts were received that it was revealed that Dreyer had racked up an alarming personal debt to the company. In 1801, Dreyer's balance in the ledgers amounted to a tremendous sum of 90,288 rixdollars, nearly a third of the total recorded capital (See Table 2.1).

Table 2.2 Yearly capital accounts of the Swedish West India Company, 1790–1805, in Swedish rixdollars

1790	51,154	1796	111,418	1802	271,365
1791	-	1797	124,299	1803	253,545
1792	55,057	1798	145,654	1804	298,262
1793	-	1799	181,401	1805	366,164
1794	91,190	1800	212,167		
1795	-	1801	278,787		

Sources: Swedish West India Company journals 1790–1805, vols. 107–118, Swedish West India Company general ledgers 1790–1805, vols. 90–101, *Handel och sjöfart*, SNA; Lennart Bondeson, "Bokföringen i Västindiska Kompaniet," *Affärsekonomi*, no. 20 (Stockholm, 1951), 1353.

Quite understandably, the directors were both infuriated and embarrassed by the whole affair. The Crown and other shareholders were not notified until two years after the board of directors caught wind of the

¹⁰⁵ For discussion on the SWIC agents, see von Rosenstein to Ruuth, 10 June 1788, SBS 1 A, and von Rosenstein to Ruuth, 1 September 1788, SBS 1 B:1, SNA. Interestingly, Governor von Rosenstein wanted SWIC to hire Fredrick Sugnin, a Swiss merchant recently moved from St. Eustatius to St. Barthélemy; Cf. Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, 167–170, 191, 230.

situation.¹⁰⁶ In the meantime, Dreyer was given the opportunity to repay his outstanding debt, but as it quickly turned out, he was in no way capable of balancing his economy. The matter soon became very inflamed, and the company withdrew his employment as agent and made arrangements for the seizure and sale of his property. Dreyer however suffered a sudden and untimely death in 1802 before a full investigation into the state of his economy had been mounted, and the company could only recoup a fraction of their losses from the whole ordeal. The exact reasons behind his debt were never resolved, but it was never seriously suspected that he embezzled the funds. The prevailing belief was that he had either made private expeditions which had resulted in serious losses, or that he had been swindled by his business associates in neighboring colonies. Whatever the true reasons, he had entrenched himself neck-deep into debt by borrowing into the Swedish West India Company stores, with the ultimate losses accruing to the company itself.¹⁰⁷

The yearly accounts of the company in Table 2.1 gives a rather fair picture of its funds. After an unassuming start, consolidation seems to have taken place towards the end of the century, and the years leading towards the abrogation of the company's charter gives the impression of a commercial association that had gained some considerable traction. As has been detailed above, the accounts however concealed some underlying negative developments. There were others besides spendthrift agents. The British occupation of 1801–02 was another net loss, as well as individual ill-fated expeditions already mentioned. It should be pointed out in this context that the company guarded itself well against the risks of its ventures. Cargoes and ships were insured and full repayments were almost always guaranteed, as the directors prudently portioned out their policies on private insurers in Stockholm, London, Amsterdam, and Hamburg.

¹⁰⁶ SWIC Minutes 24 July 1800, Handel och sjöfart, vol. 156, SNA; Af Ugglas to Gustav IV Adolf, 28 July 1802, SWIC Minutes 16 July 1802, Handel och sjöfart, vol. 157, SNA.

¹⁰⁷ SWIC Minutes 17 March 1804, Handel och sjöfart, vol. 157, SNA; Among the sequestered and sold property were his domestic slave Betzy and her child – Dreyer's son – born shortly after his death in 1802. See Fischer & Stenqvist to SWIC, undated letter, Handel och sjöfart, vol. 170, SNA.

Here too, however, misfortune could strike. When one of the company's ships, *L'Amérique*, was shipwrecked in the English Channel with total loss of cargo and crew, only a portion of the insurance could be retrieved. That was because one of the policies taken out in Marseille could only be received in worthless revolutionary *assignats*.¹⁰⁸

There were positive developments too. The company's rights to most of the public revenue of St. Barthélemy entailed that the company benefitted from the expansion of maritime commerce in Gustavia. Towards the close of the century, public revenue made out anything between 10–20 percent of yearly net profits. For a commercial organization that received public revenue and thus comprised a part of the public authority and island government, the company was however distinctively a non-entity. This condition led to serious criticism towards the role of the company in the island administration. In 1789 Jean Turcon, a French wine merchant who had been one of the first to become a naturalized Swede after colonization, wrote a scathing treatise directed at the inactivity and failures of the company as well as the incompetence of colonial magistrates in general. The situation in 1789 was fast approaching a critical point for its new settlers, claimed Turcon:

[...] La devastation de cette nouvelle ville gustavia, fairoit [feraient] tout de peines, au peu de personnes qui y sont Encore, et Le Ridicule qu'il se

¹⁰⁸ Tom Söderberg, *Försäkringsväsendets historia i Sverige intill Karl Johanstiden* (Stockholm: P.A. Norstedt & söner, 1935), 254–60; for the affair involving the Marseille *assignats*, see SWIC Minutes, 14 March, 29 March, and 29 October 1798, *Handel och sjöfart*, vol. 156, SNA; The share of public revenue in the SWIC's capital is often hard to calculate, owing to the recording consequences of quarterly collections and the division of revenues between the company and the crown, but at least from 1799 it stayed at around 10 percent, and in good years such as 1804, it may well have been well in excess of 20 percent. Compare e.g. the SWIC general ledger, vol. 97, and the SWIC journal of 1799, vol. 113, *Handel och sjöfart*, with the council's ledgers and books 1799, SBS 25 B. See also for reference Fredrik Fåhraeus, "Statistiska upplysningar rörande svenska kolonin S:t Barthélemy," *Statistisk tidskrift* 2 (1865): 256–65. It should also be added here that double-entry accounting in 18th-century trade was less about the exact measurement of profit and loss than the tracking of all-important credit flows. See Pierre Gervais, "Why Profit and Loss Didn't Matter: The Historicized Rationality of Early Modern Merchant Accounting," in *Merchants and Profit in the Age of Commerce, 1680–1830*, ed. Pierre Gervais, Yannick Lemarchand and Dominique Margairaz (London: Pickering & Chatto, 2014), 33–52.

seroit acquis dans L'Etendüe de cette amerique, qu'on ne peut Le cachër, n'y ay Roy n'y a La compagnie, afin d'y Remedier, ou il faut Entierement L'abandonnër [...]¹⁰⁹

He explained that the slow and unproductive manner in which the company conducted its business caused financial harm as well as sowed prejudice and discontent among the island's trading population. Shipments from Sweden were eagerly anticipated by local merchants, but they often waited in vain for long stretches of time. When Swedish cargoes occasionally arrived, they "came and went", claimed Turcon, "without much ever having transpired either for the good or bad of the colony."¹¹⁰

It is perhaps not surprising that the budding society of Gustavia merchants did not take well to a serious competitor protected by royal privilege, but the perceived harm was serious enough that criticism also found its voices among Swedish officials. At the turn of the century, Governor Ankarheim opined that the company charter should be revoked and never reinstated. He observed the hemlock that was imposed on local trade by the protections inherent in company privileges. Even as the company was bound by its own charter to use its assets to develop island infrastructure, little in way of public projects was ever undertaken. Among local merchants, the company's monopolies as well as its apparent lethargy in questions for public good created an atmosphere of hostility towards it. They also naturally saw with distaste that the greater part of official revenues, money paid from their pockets, went straight into company coffers.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁹ Jean Turcon, "Traité de commerce pour Gustavia Isle St Bthmy – du vent de L'Amerique," Manuscript of 84 pages in *Handel och sjöfart*, vol. 190, SNA. Besides being a critique of governance and trade in St. Barthélemy, the bulk of the manuscript's content consists of an introductory manual on the trade of the West Indian and European ports, which Turcon sent to the board of directors with a view to inform and educate.

¹¹⁰ Turcon, "Traité de commerce," *Handel och sjöfart*, vol. 190, SNA.

¹¹¹ Ankarheim to von Fersen, 30 April & 15 July 1801, *Hans Axel von Fersens samling*, vol. 12, SNA.

Two decades later, Johan Norderling, then newly inaugurated as Governor, recalled the same dismissive sentiments of the company in a retrospective on his earlier tenure as colonial judge in 1788–92:

Dans les tems de la soidisant Compagnie des Indes Occidentales, de triste memoire, même misere et apathie; le gain de ces gens-là était les $\frac{3}{4}$ des revenus de l'isle, que le Gouvernement avait été assez bon de leur accorder, pour faire rien, ah! J'ai tort, ils gouvernaient l'isle, en nommant aux places principales, et avec un discernement, don't nous nous souviendrons longtems ici.¹¹²

It is important to note that in his office as judge, Norderling had been salaried by the company. Vocal objections such as these were all important considerations, when, in 1805, the Swedish Board of Commerce finally reviewed a possible renewal of the company charter. The Board took written suggestions by the directors of the company as well as private merchants, represented by the Association of Stockholm merchants. While assessing the development of the company's charter during the preceding twenty years, grave criticisms were voiced over the company's abuses and shortcomings. The private actors of merchant associations were naturally privy to repeal the yoke of privileged trade, but the weight of evidence was also against the company. The company had not been able to fulfill its ambitions of furthering Swedish commercial interests in the West Indies, let alone perform its most rudimentary public responsibilities as per its initial charter.¹¹³

The Board of Commerce proposed that the present charter should be revoked, but left an opening for a new association to be formed with a much more limited set of privileges. Among the key adjustments to the new projected charter were that the company would not receive any part of the public revenues of St. Barthélemy, and its personnel would not have any seat in the colony council. The proposal was accepted in the King's

¹¹² Norderling's report, 20 November 1819, SBS 6 A, SNA.

¹¹³ Board of Commerce to Gustav IV Adolf, 9 April 1805, *Kommerskollegii skrivelser till Kongl. Maj:t*, SNA.

council despite the protests of the company directors, who let it be clear that they would not helm a future company under such poor auspices. No one else stepped forward either, which instantly terminated any lingering presence of a Swedish commercial association on the island. The trade company project had come to an end, and the free port was left to run itself without a distinct Swedish commercial interest.¹¹⁴

The company's dismal achievements was in no way atypical for the kind of Scandinavian chartered companies of the time. Their general marginal success has been understood as an outcome of the fundamental problem that faced Scandinavian maritime expansion, the markets. During the 17th century, the Swedish home market was characterized by marginally developed economy and a high degree of self-sufficiency. This kind of market had a limited ability to receive colonial goods, seeing also that a large portion of the sugar, coffee, and other tropical imports into Sweden came from Copenhagen as Danish re-exports. Conversely, in foreign markets, the Swedes had to compete with traders of other European nations without the benefit of domestic privileges.¹¹⁵

This was all the more clear, since despite the recent opportunity left by the company's disappearance for private trade, there was no renewed movement of private Swedish expeditions to St. Barthélemy. During the first two decades of Swedish ownership of St. Barthélemy, there had been no shortage of interest in Sweden outside company circles. Between 1785 and 1805, there were at least 35 private Swedish expeditions conducted to the island from the Baltic (See Appendix VIII) The Gothenburg-based Christian Arfwidsson & Sons, whose close associate Niclas von Jacobsson had been offered the first position as company agent, was one of the early key players. Arfwidsson sent a commercial expedition, to the colony as early as Christmas Eve 1785, the ship *Fred och Ymnoghet*. It carried a cargo calculated for the West Indian trade as well as a young agent and relative of Arfwidsson's, Paul Gustaf Teuchler. Shortly thereafter, Teuchler along with another associate opened the business house of Teuchler & Schürer

¹¹⁴ SWIC Minutes, 6 March 1805, *Handel och sjöfart*, vol. 157, SNA.

¹¹⁵ Ole Feldbæk, "The Danish Trading Companies," 204–18.

& Co. “Co.” was nothing but a thinly veiled placeholder for Arfwidsson himself. Teuchler & Schürer set up their business and went about conducting their affairs.

Their initial spirit of enterprise notwithstanding, the members of the business house soon experienced harsh goings when they tried to convert their merchandise into cash or exchange goods. After trying their hand at creating some contacts during the summer of 1786, they found themselves without any partners and an almost unsold inventory. Circumstances for the house had already turned critical when they learned in October that one of their bills of exchange had been protested in London. It was only one of many to follow. The reason for the vanished credit was that the firm of Arfwidsson & Sons suddenly plummeted towards bankruptcy amid a scandalous case of loans fraud. Creditors quickly closed in on Teuchler & Schürer, and their complete mass of property, stocks, and slaves were seized. Teuchler ignominiously left the island in 1787 with unpaid debts and a tarnished reputation as a swindler, while Schürer remained for many years on St. Barthélemy, working in turns as shopkeeper and merchant, but also as official translator, interpreter and vice government secretary of the island council.¹¹⁶

Despite the hints at foul play, the commercial failure of this particular Swedish firm displays many of the inherent difficulties that outsiders faced in establishing a business operation in the 18th century Caribbean. Creating working business relations required time, as well as important building blocks of competence and trust, in the form of linguistic skills, kinship links, religious connections, and so on. While Arfwidsson’s agents certainly did not lack in financial backing - at least from the outset - it is very doubtful whether they possessed the necessary competence to garner trust and to build stable commercial relations. When their wealthy patron became insolvent, their operations finally unraveled. The Arfwidsson family itself moved towards a concentration on domestic mines and

¹¹⁶ Tingbrand, *Who was who*, 507, 540.

ironworks, and there was no other speculator in the West Indies trade after Christian Arfwidsson died in 1799.¹¹⁷

There were however Swedish entrepreneurs who fared better in the commercial riptides of the West Indies and managed to establish viable business houses. One such person was Daniel Öström, established in the island at the same time as Teuchler & Schürer. He started out by bartering small wares, and sold provisions and rum mainly to the Swedish garrison in partnership with an Englishman named Kelly. He later expanded his business operations and founded the business house of Öström, Procter & Co. At the height of his career, he had established a regional trading network which included contacts in the United States. His apparent success was displayed through the size of his town property, a “commodious” residence in Gustavia on Kungsgatan which counted “a large Hall, six Chambers, two Galleries, a large and convenient store with Compting-Room, shelves & Counter” as well as “three small pleasant Chambers in the Yard, a large Cistern, Negroe-Rooms, Kitchen, Cellar, [and] Pantry [...]” One obvious key to Öström’s success was his ability to create commercial ties in the region and beyond, through his partnerships with Anglo-Saxon actors and firms. Crucially, he married into an English family in 1790. He however did not trade primarily in Swedish-produced goods, but in British manufactures. Daniel Öström died in 1803 or 1804, without a successor to continue the family business. Daniel Öström is thus an example of Swedes who were proficient and competent enough to make a living as merchants in the Swedish colony, but his business did not do

¹¹⁷ Although undoubtedly far more common, mercantile failure is less frequently described in scholarly research on the 18th century Atlantic World. For an interesting example of such a description, see Manuel Covo, “I, François B.: Merchant, Protestant and Refugee – A Tale of Failure in the Atlantic World,” *French History* 25, no. 1 (2011): 69–88; Jan Ekerman, “Svindlande affärer i Gustavia,” *S:t Barthélemyjournalen* (1999); Müller, *Consuls, Corsairs, and Commerce*, 184–85; “Arfwidsson, Christian,” 173–74; Christopher Carlander *Resan till S:t Barthélemy. Dr Christopher Carlanders resejournal 1787–88*, ed. Sven Ekvall and Christer Wijkström. (Falköping: Gummesons Tryckeri AB, 1979), 73; Magnus Andersson, “Trade, Credit, and Trust. Examples from Gothenburg’s Merchants in the European Market at the End of the 18th Century,” in *Preindustrial Commercial History. Flows and Contacts between Cities in Scandinavia and Northwestern Europe*, eds. Markus A. Denzel and Christina Dalhede (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2014), 238–40. I am indebted to Jan Ekerman regarding information on Teuchler & Schürer & Co.

much to tie any links of Swedish industry and trade to the region. Precisely as others similar to him, his success was a highly individual one.¹¹⁸

Finally, a condition that worked against the establishment of St. Barthélemy as a gateway for Swedish exports was the slow development of the commercial exchange between Sweden and the United States. High hopes were entertained in Swedish maritime and commercial circles when the U.S.-Swedish trade treaty was signed in 1783. The United States would indeed become, alongside with the United Kingdom, one of Sweden's most important export markets. Yet, this development is of a considerably later date, American-Swedish trade failed to materialize in a significant way until at least 1809, when trade picked up for reasons which will be discussed in more detail in chapter 4. The reason for the initial slow advancement of this trade this lies in a manifold set of factors. The dynamic patterns of the international iron trade were crucial. The possibility for another export market for iron in the United States aroused some expectations in the Swedish iron industry, but Russia had managed to supersede Sweden in the exportation of iron to the United Kingdom after 1780, and Russian iron was also favored by American buyers. Additionally, the U.S. – Swedish trade treaty did not accord Americans any exemptions from the Swedish Navigation Acts, and they traded at a distinct disadvantage in Swedish ports. It is also of note that the market at St. Petersburg could absorb a greater quantity of goods than Gothenburg or Stockholm, so the Russian market attracted the majority of American trade with destinations in the Baltic. The Baltic trade as a whole, from the

¹¹⁸ Tingbrand, *Who was who*, 597–98; Carlander, *Resan till S:t Barthélemy*, 73, 79; Öström to Rejmers, 10 January 1795, *Handel och sjöfart*, vol. 169, SNA; *The Report of Saint Bartholomew*, 11 May 1804. The foundation and walls of Öström's old property still exists. It served as the Governor's residence during the middle of the 19th century, and as the French departmental mayor's office for a long time after France reacquired the island.

American perspective, remained a supplemental and experimental source of business for a long time.¹¹⁹

Even when Swedish goods did arrive in the Caribbean, they were often regarded as oddities in a commercial world accustomed to certain standards, fashions, and tastes. Swedish rope and cordage, for instance, was found too thick and too richly tarred by presumptive buyers, in comparison with more popular Dutch variants. Market preferences applied to a wide variety of goods from small nails to spars, lumber, and ironware, and there was never any apparent success in meeting the customers with small adjustments or changes in the production of Swedish goods. Company agents and officials often complained of poor assortments in outward cargoes. To meet certain demands, outward company ships often had foreign goods loaded, such as Russian canvas and naval stores, which always found ready buyers. Perhaps the single most convincing indicator of the weak link between the Swedish and Caribbean market was that after the revocation of the company charter in 1805, there is no record of a Swedish ship clearing for St. Barthélemy until 1812. The first ship entered the Sound from St. Barthélemy in 1810, but then again this was an American ship under the command of a captain named James Armstrong, headed for Rostock. Naturally, this condition should be viewed in light of the considerably higher risks for transatlantic trade in the age of the Napoleonic Wars and the Continental System. But even so, it shows rather clearly that if St. Barthélemy occupied an economic role of

¹¹⁹ Rolf Adamson, "Swedish Iron Exports to the United States, 1783–1860," *Scandinavian Economic History Review* 17, no. 1 (1969): 58–114; Müller, *Consuls, Corsairs, and Commerce*, 196–198, 222–24; Leos Müller, "Swedish-American Trade and the Swedish Consular Service, 1780–1840," *International Journal of Maritime History* 1 (2003): 1–16; Daniel A. Rabuzzi, "Cutting Out The Middleman? American Trade In Northern Europe, 1783–1815," in *Merchant Organization and Maritime Trade in the North Atlantic, 1660–1815*, ed. Olaf Uwe Jansen (St. John's, Newfoundland: International Maritime Economic History Association, 1998), 175–197; Swärd, *Latinamerika i svensk politik*, 33–42; cf. also Heckscher, *Sveriges ekonomiska historia* II:2, 666–667.

whatever importance imaginable, it was never that of middleman in the commercial exchange between metropole and colonial markets.¹²⁰

Free Port Trade and Privateering

The arrival of the war in 1793 also signaled the return of outright commercial warfare in the West Indies. Britain promptly resurrected the old rule of 1756 which had been dormant since the conclusion of the Seven Years' War, albeit in a more severe form than before. In 1793, Britain promulgated orders that barred neutrals not merely from carrying goods between enemy colonies and the mother country, but also from carrying goods from the enemy colonies to the neutrals' own home territory for domestic consumption. The rule however was extremely difficult to enforce effectively. In the British West Indies, the role of enforcer and prize adjudicator was assumed by the Vice Admiralty Courts. They were indispensable in helping the British Royal Navy and the privateers defend the islands and prosecute the war. By the end of the 18th century, there was a dense network of British Vice Admiralty Courts in the West Indies. Beginning in the 17th century, there were permanent courts established in Jamaica, Barbados, Bermuda, Bahamas, St. Kitts, Nevis, Montserrat, Dominica, Tobago, Tortola and Trinidad. The practice of establishing temporary wartime courts in captured enemy colonies also added to the list Santo Domingo (1794), Martinique-St. Lucia (1795), Curaçao (1801), St. Vincent, St. Croix (1809) and Guadeloupe (1811).¹²¹

¹²⁰ On buyer preference and their opinions on Swedish merchandise, see for instance Dreyer to SWIC, 25 May 1797, *Handel och sjöfart*, vol. 169, SNA; On the apparent disinterest of Swedish merchants in the Caribbean trade for many decades, see Norderling to Wetterstedt, 14 December 1822, SBS 8A, SNA; On the general summary, cf. Heckscher, *Sveriges ekonomiska historia*, 666–667, and Müller, *Consuls, Corsairs, and Commerce*, 186; See Appendices VII and IX for information on the Swedish trade with St. Barthélemy.

¹²¹ Craton, *Vice Admiralty Courts*, 43; David J. Starkey, "The Origin and Regulation of Eighteenth-Century British Privateering," in *Bandits at Sea. A Pirates Reader*, ed. C.R. Pennell (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 69–81.

Privateering efforts during wartime could also be a response to progressive economic and political marginalization, as it became in the French colony of Guadeloupe under revolutionary leadership. In an early stage of the war, Guadeloupe became entrenched in prolonged turmoil after internecine clashes between royalists and patriots. The factional conflicts also gained another dimension after the abolition of slavery and proclamation of free black populations' rights. After changing hands a number of times between 1789 and 1793, Victor Hugues reclaimed the island for France and instituted a range of deep-going societal changes. A significant alteration was the liberation of slaves, the latter of which numbered around 90,000 in 1789. Conversely, the white population was decimated as a large majority of the 13,000 whites either fled or were guillotined by the revolutionaries in the wake of the upheavals. The economic structure founded on agriculture was thrown into disarray, and an extensive policy of privateering was instituted in order to maintain the colony both economically and politically in the midst of the maritime conflict with Great Britain.¹²²

When the British conquered Martinique in 1794, Guadeloupe was the only colony left under French control in the Eastern Caribbean. The Guadeloupe caboteur tradition during the second half of the 18th century had thrived on smuggling as well as privateering, and was deeply dependent on the extensive port networks which facilitated trade between the southern North American colonies and the Spanish American mainland. St. Barthélemy was a recent addition to this network at this time, along with the Danish and the Dutch islands which were long since established. The intercolonial relationship between St. Barthélemy and the surrounding French colonies after the revolution would assume more complicated forms, at once mutually beneficial as well as increasingly

¹²² Rodigneaux, *La guerre de course*, 56, 60–66 ; Frédéric Régent, *Esclavage, métissage, liberté : La Révolution française en Guadeloupe, 1789–1802* (Paris : Grasset, 2004), 355–71; Anne Pérotin-Dumon, *Être Patriote sous les Tropiques : La Guadeloupe, 1789–1794* (Basse-Terre : Société d'histoire de la Guadeloupe, 1985), 205–25; See also Goncal López Nadal, "Corsairing as a Commercial System," in *Bandits at Sea. A Pirates Reader*, ed. C.R. Pennell (New York: New York University Press, 2001), 125–36.

problematic. As soon as the war broke out in 1793 many French coasting craft were fitted out as corsairs in Martinique and Guadeloupe. As a result, the buccaneering aggressions of the French revolutionary authorities would be operated largely out of the port cities of Guadeloupe. The corsairing ships were manned by an increasing number of privateers (*corsaires particuliers*), owned and commanded by local caboteurs. The increasing armament of privateers was a direct consequence of rapidly dwindling naval forces sent from France in 1794 and 1799, operating as letters of marque (*corsaires de la République*). In general, the distinction between privateers and letters of marque was straightforward. Letters of marque were primarily merchant vessels which conducted regular trading voyages, but were empowered by state authorities to attack and capture enemy vessels while at sea. Privateers on the other hand were solely occupied with cruising for enemy prizes. To support the French privateering ventures in the Caribbean Sea, revolutionary authorities set up *agences de prises*, or bounty courts, in neutral islands to oversee the sale of privateering prizes and to repair, equip and supply their own ships.¹²³

Whereas St. Barthélemy was situated directly in the middle of a net of British Vice Admiralty jurisdiction, a French bounty court was set up in Gustavia itself under the guidance of a local French citizen, Balthazar Bigard, around 1794. The bounty courts were not legal institutions *per se*, the actual decisions and condemnations were effected in Guadeloupe. The bounty courts only functioned as the handlers and auctioneers of seized enemy property, as well as mediators and middlemen between privateers and local authorities. Thus, in St. Barthélemy, Bigard was also the resident French consul. The presence of the bounty court was beneficial for locally settled merchants, insofar as cheap cargoes and ships were to be had when French corsairs brought them into Gustavia. They served as an outlet for seized colonial commodities, spoils of war, and a purchase center for the provisions, military supplies, manufactures and food products the

¹²³ Rodigneaux, *La guerre de course*, 73; Pérotin-Dumon, "Cabotage, Contraband, and Corsairs," 66; Anne Pérotin-Dumon, "Témoignages sur la Guadeloupe en 1794", *Bulletin de la Société d'histoire de la Guadeloupe*, no. 47, 1981, 5–33; Pérotin-Dumon, *La ville aux Iles*, 223–39.

Republic no longer sent to its Caribbean colonies. In the ports where French bounty courts were present, Guadeloupe also exported its reduced crops of sugar, coffee and cotton.¹²⁴

For better and worse, St. Barthélemy and its merchant community became more closely associated with the French privateers and letters of marque than with their British counterparts. In a letter to the American consul in St. Barthélemy, the Swedish Governor af Trolle transmitted the claims of Gustavia merchant firm Messrs. Terrasse père & Ebbens, on sundry goods, as well as the claims of Alexander Wardrobe, on 100 beams of writing paper, all laden on board the French letter of marque *Buonaparte*, which had been caught by “one of the United States’ ships of war”. Af Trolle asked for the recovery of these goods as they had been “bona fide Swedish neutral property”. As long as the relationship between St. Barthélemy and Guadeloupe was tenable, there were often mutual benefits in the offering. Hugues himself asserted in official correspondence that with the assistance of benevolent Swedish governors, Guadeloupe had a ready means of supply of both victuals and firearms.¹²⁵

But the institution of the French bounty court in Gustavia also became an economic nuisance for resident merchants, and ultimately, a political liability for the Swedish government. The activities of French corsairs was at times all-pervasive in the small free port, and they would occasionally jump on the opportunity to harass visiting merchant vessels. An infamous case strained relations between the revolutionary authorities on Guadeloupe and the administration on St. Barthélemy to a breaking point. In early November of 1796, a French privateer seized an outgoing Danish sloop in the road of Gustavia, and forced the vessel into the custody of a French bounty court in St. Martin for adjudication. Despite emphatic

¹²⁴Af Ugglas to Gustav IV Adolf, 10 December 1803, SWIC Minutes 10 December 1803, *Handel och sjöfart*, vol. 157, SNA; Rodigneaux, *La guerre de course*, 73; Pérotin-Dumon, *La ville aux Iles*, 241–46.

¹²⁵Af Trolle to Job Wall, 26 October 1799, M72, RG 59, NARA. Job Wall forwarded Af Trolle’s request to Pickering on the same day; Rodigneaux, *La guerre de course*, 73; For the French weapons trade over St. Barthélemy, see especially Bagge’s report, 28 July 1795, SBS 1B:2, SNA.

objections among the inhabitants and a few Swedish officials the corsair was later allowed by the Governor to return to anchor in Gustavia. Besides infuriating other members of the St. Barthélemy council, this incident was the source of popular protest among town merchants. The heated discussions following in the wake of the incident eventually resulted in an official plea for protection for their commerce as well as a request that the governor af Trolle denounce this violation of neutral commerce. The authorities on Guadeloupe quickly caught wind of the ongoing protest in St. Barthélemy, and followed suit with their own rebuttal against the reaction of the town's merchants. The St. Barthélemy judge, Johan Norderling, was especially targeted for his involvement in the reactions. His tenure would not survive this affair, as he was recalled in 1798 by the orders of the Swedish West India Company. The Company directors saw independent actors such as Norderling as rogues and a grave threat to peaceful relations with neighboring islands.¹²⁶

The presence of a French consul can be contrasted with the attempts of the United States to establish a consulate in St. Barthélemy. The American government had seen fit to commission a consul on the island since 1799. The appointment of U.S. consul had been received by Job Wall, an American but also Swedish burgher. He nevertheless failed to be recognized by the Swedish Governor. In fact, no American consul was accepted by the Swedish authorities until 1821, despite that several were sent out until that time. All of them met with refusal. The St. Barthélemy governors time and again explained this course with similar reasons. An American consul could issue various legal documents instead of island authorities and would thus deprive them of a share of their emoluments. The council however never had the political leverage to oust the French consul from his position, even though were good enough reason to do so.

¹²⁶ SWIC Minutes, 21 July 1797, *Handel och sjöfart*, vol. 156; Norderling to SWIC, 28 May 1797, *Handel och sjöfart*, vol. 169, SNA; Governor af Trolle's report 27 May 1797, SBS 1B:2; He was also accused of administrative misconduct, mostly for the issuance of illegal sea-passes together with the former Governor Bagge. Especially the latter affair was controversial within the SWIC. His role in this particular incident was unclear, however, and his conduct in the relations to Guadeloupe was used as the foremost argument in the decision for his dismissal.

Ironically, the refusal to recognize any U.S. consul was motivated by negative past experiences the French consulate and the bounty court in Gustavia. Finally, American merchants and seafarers alike did not necessarily see an American consul in a free port as an unequivocally positive situation. The presence of an American consul would also, in a sense, entail the presence of American law. American shipping passing through Gustavia was after all often engaged in branches of trade which were prohibited by domestic laws.¹²⁷

Meanwhile, the question of privateering activity in the port of Gustavia was a difficult one which continued to engage colonial magistrates as well as the government in Stockholm. At an early stage, Governors voiced the request that the Swedish colony should be able to admit foreign privateers of all nations as well as their bounty, as this had been an established practice in other free ports such as Charlotte Amalie for decades. The argument in favor of this praxis was that it was impossible to prohibit individuals in the participation of privateering economy of the region, and that the Swedish crown should at least exact the customary taxes and port charges for privateers in order to gain some revenue in return. The response of the Swedish government, however, was a categorical refusal to permit such a policy.¹²⁸

Whether this sentiment was sincere or if it was only a convenient stance to apply in official diplomatic relations, it was in any case impossible to maintain in practice. In a reflection on colonial affairs, the Swedish minister von Asp pithily asserted that:

In a West Indian possession, be the oversight as adequate as it may be, it will always be impossible to prevent the Inhabitants to pursue such

¹²⁷ Wall to Pickering, 30 June 1799, M72, RG 59, NARA; Wernberg to SWIC, 5 May 1795, Handel och sjöfart, vol. 169, SNA; Söderström to af Trolle, 28 September 1799, SBS 1 B:2, SNA; af Trolle to Söderström, 27 November 1799, SBS 1 B:2, SNA. In 1804 a proclamation was issued to the effect that no consul of any nation whatsoever could be recognized without the expressed consent of the Swedish court. *The Report of Saint Bartholomew*, 19 September 1804.

¹²⁸ SWIC Minutes, 10 December 1803, Handel och sjöfart, vol. 157, SNA; Gustav IV Adolf to SWIC, 28 January 1804, Handel och sjöfart, vol. 190, SNA.

commerce that is prohibited in the quarters of the region, or to lend their assistance to the same; - and, especially in wartime, it would be vain to try and restrain all actions, which would give reason to the protests of foreign powers. It could never be in the power of Sweden to meet with armed force those aggressions which time after another would be occasioned from such trade.¹²⁹

Colonial administrators had a difficult task of staking out some kind of middle ground between the protection of their subjects' commercial interests, and the cautious diplomatic stance towards foreign powers. The Swedish government could in his view never afford to think that it could control its overseas subjects completely in terms of trade policy. Nor could it realistically hope to claim justice for its naturalized subjects involved in neutral or illicit trade, as it would occasion too high a material and political cost.

In practice, foreign privateers were seldom refused entry into Gustavia. At any rate, it was also beneficial for the colony. The SWIC agents were quite open with the fact that a large part of their purchases during the 1790s were often from British prize-vessels, escorted by French privateers from Martinique and other privateer hotbeds. It was often the only way for them to get reasonable prizes on sugar shipments to Stockholm. Sometimes it was hard to control the transactions in nearby territorial waters belonging to the Swedish crown. Ile Fourchue to the southwest of St. Barthélemy, or Five Islands as it was also known, became a notorious rendezvous point for privateers and smugglers. It was simply a convenient place to regroup and liquidate cargoes with the aid of willing merchants and collaborators on nearby islands, including the burghers of Gustavia but without the supervision of Swedish authorities. While inside Swedish

¹²⁹ Per Olof von Asp, "Om Ultramarinska Besittningar; i anseende till den nytta eller skada som, före Europeisk Magt af 2^{ta} eller 3^{je} ordningen, kan af dem härröra", 12 February 1802, F 812g:7, Per Olof von Asps handskrifter, UUB. Author's translation: "Uti en WästIndisk Besittning, tillsynen må wara så god man wille, blir det alltid omöjligt att hindra Inbyggarne att drifwa sådan handel som är förbuden å orter i nejden, eller att låna deras biträde till sådant; - och, särdeles i krigstider, sökte man fåfångt förekomme allt hwad der kunde gifwa, andra magter anledningar att Öfwer sådant beswära sig. - I Sweriges förmåga kan det aldrig blifwa, att med krigsstyrka mota de wäldsamheter som sådant tid efter annan kunde åstadkomma."

territory, it could not be controlled effectively by Swedish forces. As such, it became a kind of free port unto itself, where transactions of the most illegal and questionable kind could and did take place.¹³⁰

The engagement of Swedish subjects in privateering and their attempts to arm and equip vessels registered under Swedish colors were however promptly prosecuted. Moses Mendez, a Gustavia burgher who had naturalized in 1793, had his property sequestered by the Swedish council in 1799 when it was unearthed that he had equipped privateers under the flag of the French republic. The Swedish administration was quite consistent in regard to this praxis, and many others who attempted similar operations met with the same fate. An official proclamation to the effect of these decisions was made in 1808. This also entailed that individual merchants faced serious obstacles even if they wanted to arm their own commercial vessels only for their own protection.¹³¹

Commercial Warfare and Commercial Risk

Individual merchants and seafarers engaged in regular trade, in turn, had to run the gauntlet during their inter-island voyages during the wars. The fate of vessels and others taken by privateers and naval vessels varied. At worst, both cargo and vessel were lost, awarded as prizes to the captain and crew by whom they were taken. At best such vessels were detained, often for long periods, while a prize court decided their fates. In the latter case, owners lost the use of their vessels for an indeterminate time and often incurred substantial losses because of changes in the market prices of

¹³⁰ Wernberg to the directors of the SWIC, 24 April 1795; Regarding the islet of Fourchue, see Per Tingbrand, "Femöarne – f.d. svenskt territorium," *Piteå segelsällskaps sjörulla* 17 (1991): 136–62.

¹³¹ Regarding the Mendez case, see SWIC Minutes, 10 July 1799, Handel och sjöfart, vol. 156, SNA; Another case which was similar to Mendez's was the French privateer *La Supérieure*, see Goyon to Stackelberg, 13 May 1812 and Stackelberg to Goyon, 18 May 1812 SBS 2, SNA; The proclamation, titled *Kongl Maj:ts Nådiga Förbud emot Enskilte Fartygs inredning till armering utan Kongl Maj:ts särskilda Nådiga tillstånd*. Given Stockholm Castle 25 February 1808, in SBS 11, SNA.

commodities detained, spoilage and lack of return on capital invested in sequestered cargoes. The privateers and even the lawyers and officers of the Vice Admiralty Courts themselves were dependent on the earnings from prize sales, a situation which lended itself in times to corruption and other effects of vested interests. Verdicts of condemnation could at times fall at the presence of the flimsiest of pretexts. Even if the vessels were finally acquitted, court and procedure costs often befell the owners of seized ships. In British Vice Admiralty Courts, for instance, this was made possible by the institution of the Writ of Probable Cause. According to this prescript, the judge of the Vice Admiralty Court could certify, when seized vessels or cargoes were acquitted, whether the seizers had been justified in their suspicions. If so, the unfortunate defendant was held liable for the costs of his otherwise successful case. This was another instance of the generosity that the British Crown bestowed upon informers, seizers, and captors, in order to prosecute its maritime war against foreign powers.¹³²

In addition to the perils of due process, the violence and avarice of privateers and their crews were especially notorious in the eyes of neutral traders. A Danish merchant trading out of St. Thomas, Johan P. Nissen, described Tortola privateers as the worst kind of seaborne ruffians imaginable. Violence and robbery was their business, and they typically cruised in small schooners with 25 to 30 men on board. This relatively large crew was maintained so as to be able to steer both the privateer and the prize vessel to the nearest British port with a Vice Admiralty Court. It was not unusual that captives complained of theft before the matter of their case was decided. Money, clothes and liquors were among the first articles that privateer crews cleared from cargo holds. British privateers cruising the road of Gustavia regularly showed their audacity by pursuing their targets almost right into Le Carénage. During the few years after 1793, St. Barthélemy was virtually blockaded by them. The town batteries were quite frequently forced to fire at ships preying on arriving craft, and the

¹³² Craton, "Vice Admiralty Courts," 67–68.

musket and grapeshot fire aimed at fleeing merchantmen sometimes sprayed the shores of the road.¹³³

While they brought danger and a risk-filled existence, war also provided opportunity. General earnings from a successfully completed voyage wages skyrocketed in wartime, as well as sailor's wages and complementary trades. Merchant vessels that tried their luck in the face of hostile waters thus could offer wages far higher than others. Nissen, who described his encounters with Tortola privateers, was "captured and plundered" seventeen times by British privateers during the wars, but he nevertheless thrived as a well-to-do wine merchant in St. Thomas, despite his losses. Additionally, the business of privateering offered mariners to make another kind of living as well as to express political commitments and affiliations, especially during the French Revolution. For free blacks and slaves, work onboard a privateer could be the difference between servitude and freedom. It has also been suggested that privateering enabled seamen of different persuasions to remain outside of the imperial framework. A Spanish agent visiting St. Thomas in 1795 observed the presence of several French privateers in the harbor of Charlotte Amalie, but he could only single out a minority of Frenchmen among their crews. Instead, the privateers were operated by a small number of Danes and Italians along with a majority of mariners whom he termed as "people without a fixed place of residence."¹³⁴

Finally, means of circumventing commercial thresholds were offered by the competing colonial powers themselves. Britain finally came to the conclusion that the continuous legal wrangling with neutrals over the rule of 1756 was fruitless, as neutrals were always adept at circumventing innovations and adjustments in prevailing legislation. Instead, it was

¹³³ J.P. Nissen, *Reminiscences of a 46 Years Residence in the Islands of St. Thomas in the West Indies* (Nazareth: Senseman & Co., 1838), 38; Governor Bagge's report, 2 January 1795, SBS 1 B:2, vol. 2, SNA; Wernberg to SWIC, 25 May 1797, *Handel och sjöfart*, vol. 169, SNA; Governor af Trolle's report 23 April 1800, SBS 1 B:2, SNA.

¹³⁴ Nissen, *Reminiscences*, 38, 194–98; Julius C. Scott, "Crisscrossing Empires: Ships, Sailors, and Resistance in the Lesser Antilles in the Eighteenth Century," in *The Lesser Antilles in the Age of European Expansion*, ed. Robert L. Paquette and Stanley Engerman (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), 128–43.

proposed that neutrals were to be permitted to carry enemy goods to France, albeit under British-issued licenses, which would provide a new income for the British treasury as well as alleviate the complications arising from the many cases pending in prize courts in the colonies. The licensing scheme, however, was only put into action in the later stages of the French wars, and was instituted in a number of Orders-in-Council in 1807. This rerouting of neutral trade was combined with other elements of economic warfare, such as the mass smuggling of British goods into French domains. Still, the combined efforts of British naval vessels and privateers led to the seizure of thousands of vessels. The period between the beginning of 1807 and the middle of 1808 was coincidentally the busiest for the Caribbean Prize Courts during the entire Napoleonic War. The activities of French privateers in Caribbean waters were continuous during the war, only ceasing completely after the British occupations of Guadeloupe and Martinique in 1810. In 1794–98, the prize court of Guadeloupe alone had adjudicated the condemnation of 890 seized vessels. The high tide of seizures was largely a result of a post-revolution conflict between the United States and the French Republic, which escalated into the so-called Quasi-War (1798–1800). The frenzied pace of seizures continued towards the close of the century, but was significantly tempered after the resolution of the undeclared state of war between the United States and France. The departure of Victor Hugues from Guadeloupe in 1799 after he had fallen out of favor with the French Directory was also a factor in this decrease.¹³⁵

An illustrative case of both the kind of disguised foreign shipping that was the norm of wartime Gustavia as well as the belligerents' view of it is

¹³⁵ 4 Geo. III, c 15 f.46; Craton, "Vice Admiralty Courts," 126–127, 324, 338; Neff, *Rights and Duties*, 77–75, 79–80; Stephen Neff, "Britain and the Neutrals in the French Revolutionary Wars: The Debate over Reprisals and Third Parties," in *Trade and War: The Neutrality of Commerce in the Inter-State System*, ed. Koen Stapelbroek (Helsinki: Helsinki Collegium for Advanced Studies 2011), 229–50; It was James Stephen who reluctantly proposed the British licensing scheme. See Stephen, *War in Disguise*, 169–173; Rodigneaux, *La guerre de course*, 342, 344, 346. See also Greg H. Williams, *The French Assault on American shipping, 1793–1813: A History and Comprehensive Record of Merchant Marine Losses* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland, 2009), 7–36.

shown clearly in the process of the St. Barthélemy-registered and Swedish-flagged schooner *Malmö* in 1809. *Malmö* was seized while sailing a two miles off the western shore of Grande-Terre, Guadeloupe by the British privateer *Spitfire* and brought into Antigua for adjudication. The small schooner with a crew of 4 Americans, now naturalized Swedes, was reportedly on a round trip from St. Barthélemy to Marie Galante, and was carrying a cargo of “American goods”. Besides sailing outside a French colony, there were many other factors which made the crew of the British privateer suspicious. For instance, the crew had an American flag onboard, allegedly to “hoist in case they should have been spoken to by a French privateer.” On the way to Antigua, the crew of the *Malmö* seized their captors and threw their arms overboard, but “finding that the vessel could not be retaken unless the Captors were killed,” the crew relented from any further resistance. The evidence was already quite unfavorable for the crew members, but the Vice Admiralty Court of Antigua seized upon the nationality on the crew members and owner as the definitive proof of foul play. The deck hand Matthew Aken testified as having a wife and family in Boston, but nevertheless considered himself a Swedish subject. The guilty verdict was brought home with reference to the owner, Emanuel Rey, because he was a Frenchman by birth.¹³⁶

As far as British wartime doctrines were concerned, the verdict was correct. There was little that was frivolous in the accusations against the *Malmö* and its owner. Emanuel Rey was a Frenchman who had resided in New York before he settled and applied for Swedish naturalization in St. Barthélemy in February 1809, only few months before the *Malmö* was seized. The schooner itself had also undergone a recent naturalization process, and was previously named the *Trial* under American colors, built in Cape Ann, Massachusetts. The Antigua court records suggest that its master Thomas Jones was its real owner, having sold it fictitiously to Rey after the latter had acquired Swedish burgher documents in Gustavia, to facilitate a quick neutralization of the vessel. It appears that Rey and his

¹³⁶ Copy of the Minutes and interrogatories of the Antigua Vice Admiralty Court, 28 March, 29 March, and 19 April 1809, AM 275 bis, FSB, ANOM.

compatriots did not make any serious attempt at redress, but possibly just bought the schooner back after it was condemned. As late as March of 1815 is the final registration of a ship named *Malmö*, this time again by Rey, albeit with an expanded and ethnically more diverse crew. This also illustrates the continuity and tenacity of this kind of trade in the face of many challenges.¹³⁷

One of the most curious Swedish cases that were brought before the Vice Admiralty court of Jamaica was the ship *Medborgaren*, of 200 tons. The ship had been sighted as early as July of 1797 by a SWIC agent in Gustavia, who reported that the ship had anchored in the port under the command of a captain A.N. Schale. It had reportedly sailed out from Gothenburg where it had been sent out by the owner, L.E. Yvon. It carried a shipment of wines and assorted dry goods addressed to a local Swedish merchant house in Gustavia, and was apparently headed back towards Europe, to Bordeaux, with a return cargo of coffee and sugar.¹³⁸ No record is available on the ship's departure from the island, but she turns up in Vice Admiralty minutes the next year, as she was captured off Jacmel on the 2nd of December 1798 by the *H.M.S. Diligence*, and sent into Jamaica for adjudication. The ship was now helmed by a man named Eyserman, and it was reported at this instance that the ship had set out from Gothenburg to the United States by way of St. Barthélemy, but after leaving the Swedish colony, while driven off course by bad weather, she was taken by a French privateer, carried into Santo Domingo and condemned in the Spanish Admiralty Court. Repurchased by the supercargo, she was impressed by the Spanish authorities and sent to Jacmel with "154 slaves and 29 passengers." It was on this leg of the journey that she fell in with the British naval ship. On the 28th of February 1799 the vessel was acquitted, but the cargo of African captives was decreed as British recaptures. The ship's misfortunes were, however, far from over. After leaving Jamaica without a cargo, she was seized by another British ship, the *H.M.S. Abergavenny*, on

¹³⁷ Notarial record of Emanuel Rey's naturalization, February 1809, CP 75, FSB, ANOM; Muster roll of the ship *Malmö*, 9 March 1815, AM 265, FSB, ANOM.

¹³⁸ Dreyer to SWIC, 4 July 1797, Handel och sjöfart, vol. 169, SNA.

the 21st of May 1799. This time, the same Vice Admiralty court uncovered frauds in the alleged ownership. The original owner were said to have been not L.E. Yvon of Gothenburg, but Öström Procter & Co. of St. Barthélemy. Somewhere down the line, she had been sold to a member of the Danish Haasum family of St. Thomas. Ultimately, then, the ship was condemned as French property on June 24, 1799, being said not to have been on her way to St. Barthélemy but to Hispaniola.¹³⁹

The case is important in the wider context of neutral free port trade of this time, as it illustrates just how deceptive the records surrounding it can be. As there were exceedingly few Swedish ships arriving from the Baltic to St. Barthélemy, never mind a ship this size or with such an uncommon name, there is good reason to suggest that the ship *Medborgaren* reported by the SWIC agent and the ship subsequently seized by British naval cruisers were one and the same. At the very least, the ship documents scrutinized by the Vice Admiralty court of Jamaica probably had the same origins as the ones possessed by the *Medborgaren* sighted at Gustavia in 1797. One reasonable conclusion is that the ship was engaged in some form of tramp shipping until landing in Gustavia, at which point she was sold or passed on to actors in need of genuine Swedish ship's documents, for whatever convoluted purpose. In any case, one is still at a loss as to arrive at any certain conclusions regarding the exact plans and ambitions of this particular expedition, as the only surviving documentation display such an array of smoke-and-mirrors-tactics from her owner(s) and crew to distort the truth behind her voyages.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ Craton, "Vice Admiralty Courts," 293–295.

¹⁴⁰ Additional information on *Medborgaren* in Dreyer to SWIC, 4 July 1797; Note that this vessel has not been recorded as a Swedish slave ship in the Wilson dataset on the Swedish slave trade (2015). The complete list of the dataset is shown in Appendix IX.

The Relative Benefits of Neutrality and Free Trade

As it was not a European power of the first rank, it is not surprising Sweden had its colonial sovereignty compromised two times during the Napoleonic Wars. The first occupation occurred in 1801–02 by the British and again in 1807 by the French. As shown in the previous chapter, St. Barthélemy sometimes assumed a role of political satellite to neighboring colonies, especially the French for long periods of time, but as a free port, it was readily exploitable for any actor with similar ambitions.

In a very early stage, Swedish government officials quickly recognized that it would be too costly and unrealistic to establish any attempt at a credible external defense. Defense of the harbor and road of Gustavia as well as a small military garrison for internal policing was seen as sufficient. The garrison tasked with duties of defense and police could number as much as 50 soldiers, but was generally much less than that. Maintaining a functioning military force was a constant problem. Concerns with health and discipline were commonplace, and the rate of mortality among regular troops was very high. Soldiers lost their lives to tropical diseases, dangerous manual labor, as well as cheap rum. There was only one soldier who ever died in combat. He perished when he fell in with ambushing French forces during the night of the Guadeloupe expedition in 1807, described further below. In the early years of the colony, a guard-ship was also on duty to patrol the road and perform inspection duties on visiting ships. This was quickly found to be too costly to maintain, and the ship was left to rot to pieces in the harbor when its hull became prey to the wasting effects of the Caribbean Sea. Gustavia was the only fortified enclave on the island, cornered by three batteries of cannon, two posted at the sides of the mouth of La Carénage, and one guarding the southward cliffs of Gustavia. There was at times a battery on the north coast of the island, in Anse de Saint Jean, but it could rarely be manned effectively for long periods of time. Surveillance and lookouts could seldom patrol the mountainous and convoluted terrain in order to have sight in all directions. This is exactly why a small French force could land in a cove east of Gustavia in the night

in November 1807 and overwhelm the small Swedish forces after a short skirmish. Six years prior the islanders had the opportunity not to engage in hostilities in the face of overwhelming military superiority. When a small British fleet appeared on the southern anchored outside of Gustavia in March 1801, an ad hoc defense council unanimously opted for surrender. The British force was allowed to embark and occupy the colony without any resistance.¹⁴¹

While this pragmatic approach to defense on a small remote island was the only one that was found realistic, there were still concerns raised over sovereign duties of protection. The most pressing point was the protection of shipping by convoys or other means. The question of convoying quickly became a linchpin in matters of taxation. In the spirit of the free port idea, a poll tax was not exacted from the settlers and newly naturalized Swedish subjects in the earliest days of colonization. When the council decided to gradually levy new taxes towards the close of the 18th century, they found it impossible to justify, as local settlers accurately pointed out that the Swedish administration could not guarantee the safety of regional shipping leaving or entering the harbor. Discussions borne out between representatives of local merchants and the administration resulted in a request for a Swedish man-of-war as a convoy ship. The company directors, who handled the request in Stockholm, exacted the cutter brig *Huzaren* to be dispatched to St. Barthélemy from its post in the Mediterranean. The idea was that it would function as an itinerant convoy ship for Swedish ships in the region, and that local merchants would be levied small increases in port charges in order to finance its operations. The crux of the matter that made the expedition irrelevant, however, was that the commander of the *Huzaren* had received some very exact instructions not to convoy any other than Swedish ships *proper* that were homebound to Swedish ports. Naturally, the merchants were disinclined to pay for the protection of the few yearly Swedish West India Company and private

¹⁴¹ Ankarheim's report, 21 March & 18 August 1801, and Trigge to Ankarheim, 20 March 1801, SBS 1C, SNA; Ankarheim to von Fersen, 30 March 1801, Hans Axel von Fersens samling, vol. 12, Stafsundsarkivet, SNA; SWIC Minutes, 25 April 1801.

Swedish ships returning to the Baltic, rather than for the protection of their own property. The ship stayed in the colony for almost a year before returning to its initial post. A replacement was planned, but the project finally was finally abandoned after the British occupation in 1801.¹⁴²

This concluded the attempts of maritime protection in the colony, and consequently also the matter of direct taxation. There were certainly inklings of projects and attempts to resurrect the old question but they were ultimately unsuccessful. The settlers and naturalized burghers of St. Barthélemy were as a result taxed very lightly. The only necessary duties came in the form of payment for different bureaucratic services and documents.¹⁴³

Already vulnerable to external attack, colonies like St. Barthélemy with an open colonization policy received a substantial number of foreign Europeans for whom the normative cultural values of the metropole mattered very little, and who could challenge the authority of the Swedish administrative presence. Uprooted colonial residents who had fled in the wake of the Revolution were often seen as a source of instability in the small free port colony when they settled there. It was widely rumored that the Guadeloupe expedition to St. Barthélemy in 1807 was aided by local French expatriates. The object of the French attack was the property of a recently settled American merchant, William Israel, whose main business, trading with revolutionary Saint-Domingue, was a serious enough affront to the French interests as to mount an attack on the Swedish colony. Runnels, a Dutch settler from St. Eustatius, placed the incident in a wider context when relating it to a Swedish official:

¹⁴² Minutes of the island council and committee of commercial interests, 9 July 1799, PJ 143, FSB, ANOM; Minutes of the SWIC, 13 December 1798, 26 January, 23 April, 10 July, 29 July, 27 November 1799, 13 March, 10 April, 24 July 1800; vol. 156, Handel och sjöfart, SNA; af Trolle's report, 23 April 1800, SBS 1 B:2, SNA; Cf. also Per Tingbrand, *Med svenska örlogsmän till S:t Barthélemy, 1785–1994* (Marinlitteraturföreningen: Stockholm, 1997), 58–59.

¹⁴³ "His Majesty's Gracious Taxation Act", 26 March 1804, *The Report of Saint Bartholomew*, 26 September 1804; Cf. Minutes of the SWIC, 2 September 1803, appendix A, vol. 157, Handel och sjöfart, SNA.

[---] if we have been able to wean ourselves of Native prejudices, or to learn in Theory even, to look up to Sweden as a Mother Country, and to feel that we are Essentially incorporated with that Nation, and hold a common Interest with her, will be best determined by an Examination of the occasions which have called for display of those sentiments, and especially that one which occurred in November 1807. Driven here, some by accident but more by desire of subsistence and gain; we have not yet thrown off our early local prepossessions, or acquired new state-affections: nor can we in sincerity claim credit for more real sympathy in your concerns or the great Interests of the Nation, than if you were detached from this planet altogether.¹⁴⁴

In the face of internal stability and security, then, colonial magistrates often toed a fine line. As the present garrison was not sufficient for internal defense, a solution was proposed in the formation of a colonial militia, consisting of all free, able-bodied men of sufficient age. Many attempts were made at the creation of this form of auxiliary military force to supplement the corps of Swedish soldiers. The task was not easy, as settlers with more means were unlikely to find the time away from work and daily business to do this type of service. Another cause for consternation was that many white settlers positively resented falling into line with free blacks, as if they were their peers. It is important not to understate this point, and it is the reason why there were different companies of white and black militiamen, however always commanded by a white officer.¹⁴⁵

The formation and dismemberment of different militias ensued several times during the Napoleonic Wars, but the last and most significant occurred after the short French invasion in 1807, when an enthusiastic effort to create an auxiliary defense was mounted by the Swedish judge

¹⁴⁴ Runnels to Skogman, 31 March 1812, SBS 2, SNA.

¹⁴⁵ Bergstedt to Ankarheim, 8 September 1809, SBS 1 C, SNA; See also the Minutes of St. Thomas Burgher Council, 13 March 1801, vol. 705, St. Thomas borgerråd; Forhandlingsprotokoller 1783–1855, Vestindisk lokalarkiv, 17.1.1–2, DNA, where the Danish burghers did not mount any resistance to the British occupation in part because they were “not yet reconcil’d to the Idea of being in an unprecedented manner posted in a Garrison where the duty allotted them was of all others, the most painful to their feelings and dishonourable to their Public situation.”

Anders Bergstedt. If earlier militia projects had been met with popular discontent and protest, this one presented the Swedish administration with perhaps a more serious threat to colonial sovereignty than either of the foreign invasion during the present decade. In September 1810, members of the white militia companies took to the streets of Gustavia and mutinied, arrested judge Bergstedt, put the Governor in house arrest, and put the remaining number of Swedish officers, fiscals, and magistrates under lock and key. After the initial unrest had settled, the mutineers, represented by some of the wealthiest merchants on the island, simply demanded the expulsion of judge Bergstedt, himself commander of the militia. They succeeded in their demands, and also managed to have another Swedish official and militia officer, Samuel Fahlberg, deported. Fahlberg was accused of having given the order to fire upon the mutineers from one of the town's batteries. The Swedish soldier given the order was according to popular belief to have refused to follow the command, and became subject of public adulation afterwards.¹⁴⁶

The underlying conditions for this individual rebellion was not merely a protest against the much reviled auxiliary military service. There were long-standing grievances between the local merchant elite and the Swedish magistrates, particularly the judge and his *de facto* rule over colonial life. There were several persons who felt they had been wronged by the judge in juridical matters and in individual cases pending before the court. There were many who voiced complaints when, in 1805, a committee of commercial interests had been disbanded. The merchants comprising this committee had hoped to have a real say in colonial affairs, but the formation of the committee had served the Swedish administration mostly as a forum for communicating with the population at large. Among leading colonial residents, there was a distinct distrust against the island council.

¹⁴⁶ See for instance a petition by St. Barthélemy burghers against Bergstedt and Fahlberg, 10 November 1810, SBS 1C, SNA; For accounts of the mutiny see Governor Ankarheim's report to the island council, 22 September 1810 and Governor Ankarheim's report, 24 September 1810, SBS 1C, SNA; See also Bagge to af Wetterstedt, 25 January 1811, SBS 3, SNA. There are also a few volumes collected by Lamborn that are entirely devoted to sources concerning mutiny. See Lamborn collection, vols. 127–29, SNA.

After the demise of the company and its officials, it was not thought that the island council fared any better at promoting matters of public good. The often staunch response of officials to popular criticism led to an atmosphere of antagonism. As an example, popular sentiment was sometimes ridiculed in the island newspaper. The publication of the newspaper was closely tied to the council, especially judge Bergstedt, who had introduced it to the colony in 1804. According to a short satirical text in an 1806 issue, the so-called Street Corner Club of Gustavia was having one of its regular discussions, where one of the members, “Mr. Curilurio,” asked: “Why Gentlemen how is this? Police and Oeconomy left in the hands of three persons. How will that succeed? I look upon the Country as ruined, and it will be ruined, and shall be ruined as sure as - as - as my name is - as - Curilurio.”¹⁴⁷

It is not significant here to recreate the specific course of events. It is only important to note the ease of success that the mutineers had in their ambitions. When the offending Swedish magistrates had been removed, tranquility and stability seemed to return as quickly as the mutiny had been mounted. The mutineers addressed a letter to the Swedish Crown in which they apologetically explained their actions, and reaffirmed their oaths of allegiance to Sweden with an affectionate language very contrary to the apparent indifference towards the motherland that Runnels had described. The mutineers themselves were never tried in court or questioned by royal inquiries afterwards. Bergstedt returned to live a life of prolonged poverty in Sweden, followed nearly to the end of his life by a redress of a judicial proceeding that he started in St. Barthélemy in 1797 against a merchant house, a case in which he was found to have gravely misconducted. Fahlberg was involved in later complications following his own deportation which resulted in a verdict of high treason. He died in exile on St. Eustatius in November 1834 before he could receive news of his pardon, issued in Sweden a few months earlier. The remainder of the

¹⁴⁷ For information about the colonial newspaper *The Report of Saint Bartholomew* and its first publication, see especially SWIC Minutes, 26 March 1804, vol. 157, Handel och sjöfart, SNA; The quote is from *The Report of Saint Bartholomew*, 29 December 1806.

Swedish administration acquiesced to what had passed, and the work of the council and garrison resumed shortly afterwards. Only in 1815 was the garrison relieved by reinforcements, and Swedish magistrates never again put arms in the hands of the colony's inhabitants.¹⁴⁸

The incident also puts light on a difficult issue in Swedish colonial administration. Colonial officials and magistrates were not likely to offer each other support in situations like these, let alone openly condemn actions such as those made in the mutiny of 1810. The Swedish administrative history of St. Barthélemy is marred by acrimony, infighting, squabbling over details of hierarchy, internal political struggles, as well as ambitious competition for titles and employment. There were certainly signs of the kind of "imperial boredom," experienced by colonial officials, often men with a military background, in the face of the everyday tedium of colonial bureaucracy. When Governors were not tired of uninteresting work, they were tired of unruly subordinates and the troublemakers and radicals among the colony's population. Subsequently, Governors' reports strikingly often were endless jeremiads, punctuated by offers of resignation and pleas for transfers to other posts.¹⁴⁹

It has been argued that the Swedish officials were torn into different factions as they were caught up in the European power struggle that had spilled into the colonies, either landing them with pro-French or pro-British attitudes and affinities. Whereas this explanation certainly has its merits in some contexts, it is nevertheless an oversimplification of a complex matter. Judge Norderling for example complained of a kind of "jealousy between military and civil men" when he explained the continuous rifts between himself and the men who served as Governor of the colony. This was an obvious reference to social distinctions, as military officers were most often members of the nobility. But there was a power

¹⁴⁸ Commissaries for the inhabitants of the town of Gustavia, to Charles XIII, dated 12 September 1811, 1811:14:122, Bernadotteska familjearkivet; I am indebted to Ale Pålsson for sources concerning the mutiny.

¹⁴⁹ Jeffrey Auerbach, "Imperial Boredom," *Common Knowledge* 11, no. 2 (2005): 283–305; For a typical plea of resignation as well as general lament, see af Trolle's report, 26 June 1800, SBS 1B:2, SNA.

struggle between the Governor and the judge inherent in the very foundation of Swedish colonial law. The island council, the highest executive power in the colony, could have various different compositions depending on the matter at hand during a given session. Often the judge rather than the Governor would preside over the most important cases and discussions. Moreover, the judge acted as first notary public as well as prosecutor, which vested the office with significant practical power relative to the Governor, whose duties in practice were often ceremonial and bureaucratic. When Governor Ankarheim arrived at his post early in 1801, he complained that he felt that the colonial hierarchy was lopsided, and that he received more rather than gave orders to the presiding judge.¹⁵⁰

Whatever effect the power structure and hierarchical implications of Swedish colonial rule, it is also clear that some of the debilitating quarrels had their source in personal idiosyncrasy. There were no more bizarre examples of high-handedness and arbitrary justice than under the short period of Governor Stackelberg, who stunted the work of the Swedish administration by his constant bickering with judge Bergius. After a period of several incidents where the Governor had harangued him both in public office and in person, Bergius left for Sweden via a purported sojourn in the United States and never returned. Stackelberg also had a number of other running enmities, such as one with the Swedish doctor, whom he had jailed for a short stint after losing to him in a game of cards. Stackelberg was also accused of embezzling large funds from the colonial chest, containing all the proceeds from tariffs and taxations due to the crown.¹⁵¹

What today would be considered as widespread corruption was a mere collection of symptoms of an administrative system that differed significantly from the ideal. Local colonial authorities drew a fixed salary which was supposed to make them well-off and therefore not dependent

¹⁵⁰ Norderling to SWIC, 12 November 1796, Handel och sjöfart, vol. 169, SNA; Ankarheim to von Fersen, 30 March 1801, Hans Axel von Fersens samling, vol. 12, Stafsundsarkivet, SNA; Ankarheim to Gyllenborg, 20 October 1801, Fredrik Gyllenborgs brevsamling, UUB.

¹⁵¹ Bergius to af Wetterstedt, 14 January 1816, SBS 4A, SNA; af Wetterstedt to Stackelberg, 19 April 1817, C 258, FSB, ANOM; of special interest is also Stackelberg's official and personal financial reports 1812–16, in SBS 26A, SNA; Tingbrand, *Who was who*, 526–27.

on emoluments and other incomes. Nothing was however farther from the truth. The salaries were calculated in the amount of rixdollars that was the norm for personnel in public office, but they did not account for the difference in cost of living between Sweden and the Caribbean region. The governors, judges, agents and notaries could not be men of property based on their fixed income alone. Emoluments for official documents, translations, and the like became essential additional incomes for the officials vested with the power to exact such payments. It is not suggested here that official greed or the ambition for personal enrichment were the prime driving forces of corruption. Rather, high costs of living often necessitated a certain degree of conformity with the established praxis of *laissez-faire* colonial governance usual in many Caribbean colonies. The Governor, for instance, had to maintain a certain esteem for the Swedish crown in matters of official representation, largely footed by his own personal capital.¹⁵²

Popular discontent also had its source in the often confined possibilities of free trade in the war-torn West Indies. Operating as a neutral Swedish burgher in a free port did not in itself offer limitless opportunities for free trade. One key aspect was the limited rights endowed by registering a Swedish neutral vessel. The registers, or sea-passes, as they were called in official documents, were issued for a fixed period of time, usually six months, during which time the registered vessel could travel any number of voyages anywhere throughout the Western Hemisphere as well as the West African coast. European destinations were however only limited to Swedish ports. This was an immensely important detail which created problems for local merchants as well as the colonial magistrates. The limitation was naturally set in place to direct colonial trade to Sweden as well as to limit the risk of contraband trade to European ports, which were bound to create diplomatic complications. The restriction was however subject to a continuous stream of protests, even

¹⁵² For a description of living costs, relative purchasing power, and the situation of Swedish officials in St. Barthélemy, see the apostilles of a letter from Ankarheim to von Fersen, 15 July 1801.

early on from colonial administrators who felt that the stipulation was harming the colony economically. Judge Bergstedt pleaded for the expansion of rights in 1803, and claimed that local merchants always had recourse for European-bound voyages, but could only in their present situation pay freights for “Americans, Hamburgers, and Danes” in order to send their consignments away to Europe. During the charter of the SWIC, there was however no ambitions in Stockholm to expand the seafaring rights of local St. Barthélemy merchants.¹⁵³

This limitation would however, despite numerous protests and constant lobbying be in place during the whole duration of the French Wars. This occasioned a steady demand for foreign vessel registrations and consignments, and conversely lessened the demand for Swedish vessel registrations. Whereas foreign ship documents and naturalizations were easily enough obtainable for a proper sum of money, it sometimes demanded some unscrupulous methods. In 1814 under the close of the War of 1812, the German merchant Elbers designed to have one of his brigs seized outside the road of Gustavia by a small British privateer, and had it condemned in St. Kitts. The vessel was then repurchased as British property and with a British sea-pass, but still with Elbers remaining as sole owner. Despite the possibility of similar procedures and the apparent compliance of both British privateers and colonial official, it was a road much less traveled because of the high costs involved. For instance, the charade that Elbers construed in concert with the British cost him a prohibitive 1,000 Spanish dollars in all.¹⁵⁴

Abraham Runnels, a former St. Eustatius resident often consulted in commercial matters by the council and the Swedish government, expanded on the multiple problems facing local merchants in a letter, and asserted that:

¹⁵³ Anders Bergstedt, undated P.M., SWIC Minutes, 2 September 1803, Handel och sjöfart, vol. 157, SNA; The negative response from the SWIC directors to Bergstedt regarding sea-passes in SWIC Minutes, 26 March 1804, Handel och sjöfart, vol. 157, SNA; *Ordinance in order to prevent foreign Vessels from sailing under the Swedish flag*. Given Gustavia 25 May 1804. In *The Report of Saint Bartholomew*, 28 May 1804.

¹⁵⁴ Bergius to af Wetterstedt, 13 October 1814, SBS 4A, SNA.

[...] three essential links in the chain is wanting. Namely the confidence of the Merchants in Sweden, the facilities of Markets for colonial produce within her Territories and the faculty of navigating with the vessels of this colony in the European Seas & Ports. If the comparison [of St. Barthélemy with St. Eustatius] be rendered complete by supplying the chain with these three links, we might be unconcerned about the rivalry of any new free ports (which could grow out of a new order of things) possessing no greater physical means that we do; but possibly not so favoured in the matter of jurisprudence.¹⁵⁵

This lack of confidence is perhaps best illustrated by the weaning commercial transatlantic link between Sweden and its West Indian colony. Since the dissolution of the Swedish West India Company, it had never amounted to anything substantial. In 1814, when Runnels penned this letter, it had been at least ten years since any regular traffic had been seen between metropole and colony. But the lack of communications did not merely imply a dearth of saleable merchandise from the metropole, it also brought with it the consequent problem of lacking credit. Accustomed to the readily available financial and commercial institutions in Amsterdam during the heydays of St. Eustatius' commercial life, Runnels saw the relationship with Stockholm and Gothenburg as poor substitutes. Naturalized Swedish merchants in St. Barthélemy were well advised to direct their loans and investment elsewhere in Europe. There was simply not much investment in the West Indian trade in Sweden. In extension, Runnels also saw the lack of markets in Sweden as well as the restriction in European ports of destination as a particularly hampering condition. St. Barthélemy vessels were for the most part of the French wars prohibited to sail to any other European ports than those in Sweden. As this was seldom worth the effort, European-bound expeditions were rare in St. Barthélemy.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁵ Runnels to Skogman, 9 June 1814, SBS 3A, SNA.

¹⁵⁶ Runnels to Skogman, 9 June 1815, SBS 3A, SNA; These conditions and developments are detailed in an undated memorial by Governor Ankarheim, probably produced in 1814, in SBS 3A, SNA; See also Norderling's reports of 15 October & 20 November 1819, SBS 7A, SNA.

The most striking effects of the limitations was uncovered in a case of Swedish passport forgery in 1815. Accusations of forgery had been rife during the wars, coming both from consuls posted in the United States as well as embittered Gothenburg merchants whose ships had encountered false Swedish ships while plying American waters. Despite receiving a multitude of similar complaints, governors and magistrates of St. Barthélemy vehemently denied any involvement. But when the sergeant of the police and marshal of the island council, Peter Löfman, died in February 1815, the administrators had to admit that forgeries had indeed been distributed in St. Barthélemy and that the perpetrators had been hiding in plain sight. Due to suspicions against Löfman, the posthumous investigation of Löfman's estate found incriminating documents that implied that he and other Swedish officials as well as the local island printer had been manufacturing and selling forged Swedish passports and documents for a long time. As the involved Swedes had close ties to the colonial council and its members, they had had access to all the necessary material for such forgeries, as witnessed by the subsequent discoveries of seals, stamps, signatures, and other paraphernalia in the suspects' homes.¹⁵⁷

Further inquiries led to the discovery that another former Swedish fiscal in St. Barthélemy had made several trips to New York with the documents, and had sold them locally. The documents included all applicable formalities of Swedish naturalization and shipping registry, from oaths of allegiance, muster rolls, manifests, clearances as well as the actual passports. All in all, they at least two principal purposes, either to impose a false registration of a Swedish vessel, or a simulated entry and clearance into Gustavia. This fit quite well with the former reports of forgeries and falsified Swedish vessels recorded on the North American coast during the wars. There is however no means to estimate how many forgeries that had been made and sold. The Swedish officials who unearthed the affair found dozens of readymade documents, and the

¹⁵⁷ Council minutes, 27 February & 27 March 1815, PJ 174, ANOM; Speyer to Monroe, 19 November 1812, T230, RG 59, NARA.

operation had by all appearances been going on seamlessly for a number of years.¹⁵⁸

The incident highlighted a number of institutional limitations present in the free port colony. On the one hand was the incentive towards foul play created by some of the restrictions inherent in the free port trade. Merchants who did not wish or simply did not have the time to naturalize themselves as Swedish burghers could by way of these forgeries purchase neutralizing documents. On the other hand there was the complete lack of oversight by colonial magistrates in the control of their own bureaucracy. The matter at once caused a few important changes in the technicalities of passport issuances, for instance the requirement to specify the port of destination in passports instead of a simple date of expiry as before. Another substantial alteration was that all passports were issued with bonds as a security for the return of the passport.¹⁵⁹

Incidentally following these changes, St. Barthélemy vessels were also finally endowed with the right to depart for all European ports granted the trade was supported by international treaties. The late grant of this coveted right was however not received with collective praise in the colony. Almost as soon as the governor had received the new law from Stockholm, he wrote a critical response. His main objection was with the clause that the new passport with stated destinations entailed that vessel owners had to renew their passports with each individual journey, something which would unavoidably bring with it higher costs for shippers. Prior to this alteration, passports were granted for 12 months at a time. The governor feared that this change might drive merchants and vessel owners out of colony into nearby free ports with more lax regulations. Coincidentally, the corruption of colonial magistrates alluded to previously would nevertheless always ensure a certain flexibility in the interpretation and enforcement of the rules. Therefore it was possible for enterprising individuals to bend the rules just enough for the safeguarding

¹⁵⁸ Council minutes, 12 May 1815, PJ 174, ANOM; Kantzow to Monroe, 10 January 1814, M60:1, RG 59, NARA.

¹⁵⁹ Proclamation of 14 March 1815, *The Report of Saint Bartholomew*, 18 March & 25 March 1815.

of individual privileges and rights in their business ventures. Governors and magistrates often acted for what they saw as the greater good of the colony, even when it meant skirting established laws and practices. Their independent actions were indeed acutely necessary because of the large communication gap between motherland and colony, and were often sanctioned afterwards by officials in Stockholm who realized this fact.¹⁶⁰

The Colonial Realities of a Neutral Free Port

The nature of the Swedish colonization project, then, led to a weak military and administrative infrastructure, and the long-term national interests, embedded in the failed goals and ambitions of the Swedish West India Company, had to be sacrificed for short-term expedients. What those entailed were colonial stability and self-sufficiency, as far as it could be realized within the framework of the free port. In the wake of early Swedish settlement, a polyglot society of maritime and commercial actors sprung up. As evidenced by the mutiny of 1810, its settlers could turn against the Swedish crown representatives. This did not entail, however, that disobedience and objections against the metropole amounted to full-blown doctrines of insurrection and treason. Grievances were often particular rather than general, directed personally at salaried functionaries and officials as well as the monopolies of company charters. Finally, the limitations of St. Barthélemy's liberal trade police and Swedish neutrality led to many instances of extralegal conduct by naturalized Swedish burghers themselves. The demands of commercial enterprise and individual avarice during the wars were simply not fulfilled by the mere presence of neutral free ports. It can be observed that there is much that holds true in a terse observation made by the Swedish colonial judge

¹⁶⁰ Stackelberg's report, 15 March 1815, SBS 3B, SNA.

Bergius in 1819: “A free port is nothing but a marketplace that is rented to foreign merchants, nothing more.”¹⁶¹

Nevertheless, the free port only suffered a few short periods of interrupted trade, which is remarkable by the fact of its isolated position and role as a neutral subterfuge, which was often found offensive to the military arm of larger colonial empires. Whereas the revolutionary authorities of Guadeloupe had found in St. Barthélemy a means to extend the network of its own maritime predatory economy, the course of the war after the Peace of Amiens pitted the French colony against its former proxy. This was however less due to international politics than to regional realities, where the actions of individuals could violate existing power relationships. In this case also the Swedish free port colony was left to recommence its daily operations after the offending element had been removed. To snuff out the Swedish colony permanently was by all appearances a too costly and unnecessary an effort. Furthermore, its continued existence, as will be shown in the following chapters, was an enduring resource for other colonies in the region. It would soon be the only free port left in the Lesser Antilles.

¹⁶¹ This can also be contrasted with the differing attitudes towards imperial rule in the British West Indies and the Thirteen Colonies, cf. the discussion in Andrew J. O’Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 238–48; Quote from Bergius, *Om Westindien*, 123.

3 Gustavia in the Atlantic and Regional Slave Trade

3.1 Slave Trade Connections

Andrew Steinmetz was born on St. Barthélemy in 1816. As an heir of a wealthy family with roots in St. Eustatius, he left the colony for an education in London when he was fifteen, and would later become a barrister and author. One of his publications was the highly declamatory and sentimental *A Voice in Ramah, or, the Lament of the Poor African*, an abolitionist poem about the horrors of the slave trade.¹ In a line in its second canto, he depicts a slave-ship departing towards the West African coast, destined to brave “Plague and Famine’s agony.” Steinmetz was building on a long established tradition of abolitionist prose, but he also drew from his own first-hand accounts of the debilitating health conditions that so often became the fate of the slaving crew and its captives during the middle passage. In a note, he mentions a memory of his as a young boy, as he had seen sailors of a slave-ship repairing into Gustavia after having disembarked their human cargo in one of the neighboring French colonies. The vessel had come to the Swedish colony to refit, and some of her crew had to be treated for a range of diseases. Steinmetz explained that mariners’ “wan and hideous appearance” had left a deep impression on him.²

Whereas Steinmetz’s text is a rare eyewitness account of the transatlantic slave trade from within the Swedish colony, very little has been known about the slave trade conducted under Swedish flags or through St. Barthélemy.

¹ Andrew Steinmetz, *A Voice in Ramah; or; Lament of the Poor African, A Fettered Exile, Afar from his Fatherland. A Poem in Five Cantos* (Harvey & Danton, London, 1842), x–xi. Andrew Steinmetz (1816–1877). His father was John Henry Steinmetz, a merchant of English and German descent, and his mother was Jane Rose Bernier, of French and African descent. In the preface to the poem, he describes himself as “a descendant of the hapless [African] race”, v.

² Steinmetz, *A Voice in Ramah*, Notes to Canto II, 224–225.

Larger treatments of the slave trade with a focus on quantitative assessments tend not to list Sweden as a slaving nation in their statistics. There are of course more or less valid reasons behind this omission. Compared to other states involved in the slave trade, Sweden occupied an inconspicuous share. It only possessed a fort on the West African coast for a few decades during the seventeenth century, and it did not possess any colony founded upon a slave economy until St. Barthélemy in 1784. The merchant communities of Swedish port towns did not figure prominently in the branch of the slave trade. The conclusion - or assumption, rather - that seems to follow, is that while there may be a few odd Swedish slave ships left to find for the diligent researcher in the extant records, the bulk of the Swedish slave trade was not large enough to represent a meaningful category in the larger picture of the history of the transatlantic slave trade.³

Still, a few attempts have been made to survey the extant records on the Swedish colonialism in the Caribbean, as well as the slave trade. The results vary from misrepresentation to misunderstanding, exemplified in the case of the slave trade in the erroneous claim of Ernst Ekman in 1975 that “while some Swedish subjects may on occasion have participated, this was never legally done under the Swedish flag.” On the other extreme, there are works like those of Göran Skytte’s *Kungliga svenska slaveriet*, published in 1986. While Skytte’s work in parts is more thoroughly researched than Ekman’s, for instance, it tends to skewer the picture of Swedish slave trade profiteering towards a sensational causerie more geared towards reader amusement than a serious attempt at historical accuracy.⁴

In this chapter an attempt will be made to address a few pertinent questions about the Swedish involvement in the slave trade, which will serve to broadly reconstruct how the slave trade manifested itself in the free port of Gustavia. I will also try to address questions surrounding the profitability and legality of the slave trade in the context of neutral Swedish free trade in the Caribbean. Towards that end, a quantitative assessment of the trade will

³ See for example Pieter Emmer, “Slavery and the Slave Trade of the Minor Atlantic Powers,” in *The Cambridge World History of Slavery*, ed. David Eltis and Stanley L. Engerman (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), III: 450–75, which despite its inclusive title, focuses primarily on the Dutch and Danish slave trade.

⁴ Ernst Ekman, “Sweden, The Slave Trade and Slavery,” *Revue française d’histoire d’outre-Mer* 62 (1975): 221–31; Göran Skytte, *Kungliga svenska slaveriet* (Stockholm: Askelin & Hägglund, 1986).

also be made, grounded in new archival research as well as the construction of a database from existing sources as well as compiled catalogues and datasets.

Swedish Ambitions Foreign Participation in the Gustavia Slave Trade

Throughout the organization of the Swedish colonization of St. Barthélemy, the institution of the slave trade was always regarded as a means to several ends. An expanded importation of slaves into the new colony was a precondition for island agriculture, and there were new, lucrative markets in the West Indies where slaves could be sold. Cuba opened up its importation of slaves to all nations in 1789 which initiated a renewed interest in the trade. Furthermore, there was a consistent belief among traders in St. Barthélemy that the loss of lives among the enslaved in the French colonies during revolutionary conflicts would lead to an insatiable demand for slaves from the West African Coast.⁵

The formal implementation of these various plans naturally befell the Swedish West India Company, but its shortage of capital and perennial troubles eventually spelled out its nonparticipation in the trade. There is one single planned voyage on record. In 1787 the company directors signed a contract with a Danish captain for an intended journey towards the Guinea coast, and a suitable cargo for the slave trade was procured. The intended voyage was however never put in motion, as the Russo-Swedish war of 1788 made the risk of a Russian seizure in the Baltic unacceptable to the directors. The cargo was instead later sent to St. Barthélemy in 1791 as the company saw no promise in the “less secure enterprise” of the slave trade.⁶

There were a handful of individual Swedish merchants that were no strangers to the slaving business. Richard Söderström, Swedish consul in Boston since 1784, had dabbled a few times in the slave trade and made small but, according to himself, handsome profits. He deplored the slave trade as a

⁵ Röhl & Hansen to the Board of Commerce, 21 June 1791, SBS 1A, SNA; Röhl & Hansen to SWIC, 14 December 1790, 18 February 1791, 14 March 1791, Handel och sjöfart, vol. 168, SNA.

⁶ SWIC to Röhl & Hansen, 15 October 1791, Handel och sjöfart, vol. 158, SNA; Röhl & Hansen to SWIC, 10 April 1793, Handel och sjöfart, vol. 168, SNA; Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, 187–88.

“wicked” business, but nevertheless congratulated himself on his successes in the branch in a letter to an unknown business associate. There were certainly more Gothenburg merchants such as Söderström who participated in or financed their own slaving voyages. A known instance is the expedition of the ship *Sweriges Wapen*, owned by the merchants Fåhraeus and Laurin. The ship left Amsterdam in February of 1796 under Swedish colors. The ship left the trading fort of Elmina for the West Indies the same year with 168 slaves, but was seized by a British privateer outside of Grenada before the slaves were disembarked, and would later be condemned as good prize along with its cargo.⁷

While the voyage of *Sweriges Wapen* might be only one of many overlooked instances of Swedish slave trade, the paucity of Swedish slave ships in the statistics and in the records is naturally due to the fact that direct Swedish participation in the transatlantic slave trade was marginal. The new Swedish colony would however give rise to a certain degree of raised activity in the traffic of African slaves perpetrated by Swedish actors. The Stockholm merchants Röhl and Hansen, who had been SWIC’s local agents during the early years of the colony, would become the most ambitious Swedish slave traders in the colony. Beginning in 1791, they regularly engaged the board of directors into partnering in prospective slave trade ventures. Röhl and Hansen specifically pointed towards the revolutionary unrest in Martinique and other French colonies as a rare opportunity to seize upon. In the wake of the disturbances, thousands of enslaved Africans had been slaughtered, and while the French authorities were seemingly reclaiming the prior stability in their colonies, Röhl and Hansen suggested that importing new slave replacements into the French colonies would be especially well timed. They also anticipated the consequences of a possible British abolition of the trade, which in their mind could only favor future Swedish projects.⁸

While awaiting a response from the board, they proceeded with plans of an expedition of their own. They purchased a ship of 200 tons in St. Eustatius,

⁷ Söderström to unknown, 8 August 1784, *Handel och sjöfart*, vol. 9, SNA; Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, 244–45; Anne Aghard, *Brink – Den svenske slavkaptenen* (Stockholm: Atlantis, 2012). The voyage of *Sweriges Wapen* is not recorded in TAST.

⁸ Röhl and Hansen to the board of directors, 18 February & 14 March 1791, *Handel och sjöfart*, vol. 168, SNA.

the *Zombie*, and brought it to St. Barthélemy where it was rebuilt and refitted for the requirements of the slave trade. A crew of 14 was also recruited, commanded by an experienced English captain. They planned for the vessel to sail for the coast of Guinea, the Gabon River as well as Cape Lopez before a return voyage. They calculated a minimum requirement of 150 slaves to turn a sound profit. Despite frequent lobbying in their regular correspondence with the company, the board of directors positively declined any participation in the project, which Röhl and Hansen acknowledged in an April letter in 1793.⁹

By that time, the *Zombie* had long since departed for the coast in the autumn of 1792. The expedition would turn out a disaster for everyone involved. The ship lingered on the African coast for well over two years, during which time ship and crew endured storms, weathered mutinies and African resistance, until it was finally driven ashore in the vicinity of Cape Coast Castle. The ship's remaining cargo of 100 "bad conditioned slaves" and some ivory was reportedly seized and sold by the British.¹⁰

Despite its outcome, the *Zombie* expedition became the starting point of a long career in slave trading for both partners in the firm. After the Swedish West India Company decided to sever its ties with Röhl and Hansen in 1795, Röhl travelled to Stockholm and never returned to the colony. Hansen stayed on the island as head of the firm, while Röhl operated as a factor in Stockholm, where he would occasionally provide the firm's ships with Algerian passports and additional documents needed for longer and more ambitious voyages. They were in all likelihood the only business house on St. Barthélemy capable of doing so. Their successor as agent for the Swedish West India Company, Gustaf Wernberg, became an associate of Röhl & Hansen in 1795 after having had his own disagreements with the company. Gustaf Wernberg had also caught wind of the lucrative prospects of the slave

⁹ The *Zombie* recorded in TAST, no. 98852, also regularly transcribed as *Zumbi*, *Zumbie* or *Lumbie*; Muster roll of the *Zombie*, 30 July 1792, access no. 1.05.13.01, inv. no. 141, fo. 468r, NAN. I am indebted to Han Jordaan for this information; Certificate of carpenter Thomas Grennles, 15 July 1794, 2L, vol. 197, ADG; Röhl and Hansen to the board of directors, 23 July & 11 August 1792, 10 April 1793, Handel och sjöfart, vol. 168, SNA; Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, 222–23; Weiss, *den atlantiska slavhandeln*, 59.

¹⁰ 19 May 1807, T70/1584; Dalziel to the Committee, 3 April 1807, T70/1586, TNA.

trade. According to a manifest issued in January 1797, he had dispatched the schooner *Anna Maria* to Cuba with 64 “Guinea Negroes”.¹¹

Hansen and Wernberg were joint owners of the brig *Stockholm*, which had made an earlier trip to Cuba in 1795 with a smaller cargo of 45 African captives. Its captain was a Gustavia resident named Ferdinand Deurer, the same person which would helm Wernberg’s *Anna Maria* as supercargo in 1797. The *Stockholm* also made an expedition to the coast of Guinea in 1798. It nearly met a similar fate as the *Zombie*, as an onboard epidemic deprived the crew of both captain and supercargo for its homeward journey. It however safely reached St. Barthélemy with 57 African captives in 1799. Wernberg himself perished in Dover during a journey from the West Indies in 1799, in all likelihood from some form of illness. Whether he accompanied the aforementioned voyage is unknown.¹²

The *Stockholm* was one of several ships mentioned in an administrative controversy surrounding the issuance of Swedish passports in St. Barthélemy. The issue concerned the right of the island council to convey ship documents to Swedish vessels above 20 lasts. The company and its agents accused the council of handing around passports with a liberal hand towards the close of the century. The exasperated judge faced the accusations with the rebuttal that the issuance of the passport to *Stockholm* a couple of years prior had been just as blatant a violation of this rule as the ones now brought to light. In that case however, not a single company agent or clerk had however raised any objections. The reason that the vessel had been registered in apparent violation of regulation was that the SWIC director Rejmers had been one of the consignors of the cargo. The slave trade proposals of Röhl and Hansen had ostensibly not been lost on Rejmers, as opposed to the other directors. The matter of the registration was passed, as judge simply concluded that the captives could hardly have been shipped to Havana in smaller boats.¹³

¹¹ Manifest 18 January 1797, ADG 2L, vol. 199, this voyage is neither recorded in TAST nor Klein’s Cuban dataset based on the AGI.

¹² The 2 extant voyages of *Stockholm* recorded in TAST, nos. 28208 and 28209; Approval for *Stockholm*’s passport in the minutes of the council, 14 August 1798, PJ 142 and a short account of its voyage in the minutes of the council, 27 September 1799, PJ 143, FSB, ANOM; ADG 2L, vol. 206; Notice about Wernberg’s death in *Inrikes tidningar*, 5 November 1799.

¹³ Norderling to SWIC board of directors, 13 July 1795, Handel och sjöfart, vol. 169; Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, 226–27.

While there is little direct evidence that Röhl & Hansen organized further slaving voyages of their own, it is evident that the firm stayed in the business for a long time, and possibly through different forms of participation other than independent organization. In February 1808, the Charleston-registered U.S. ship *Farnham* arrived at St. Barthélemy with 319 Africans, consigned to Röhl & Hansen. The firm also seem to have been consignees and agents for the Spanish-flagged ship *San Francisco de Asis*, lying at anchor in Gustavia in January 1810 loaded with 142 captives and 500 pounds of ivory. The ship *Rebecca* without any stated nationality was also tied to the firm, likewise anchored in Gustavia in December 1810, with 193 slaves. Possibly the *Rebecca* is the same Swedish-flagged ship which is recorded as having made two landings in Havana, one in October 1809 with a cargo of 84, and one in March 1810 with 80. The owner of the *Rebecca* was a Havana merchant named Clemente di Ichazo. If it indeed was the same ship, it would strongly suggest that Ichazo would have consigned several cargoes to Röhl & Hansen during a prolonged period of time.¹⁴

Röhl & Hansen were at any rate capable of handling a limited traffic of slaves to St. Barthélemy either on their own account or for foreign correspondents. Hansen himself lived until his death in 1844 in St. Barthélemy, and owned a sizeable waterfront property in Gustavia, on which he had built a gaol or “slave-shop” for storing captives until the time of sale or re-shipment (see Figure 3.1). A building which could have been identical to this one was known, according to popular tradition, as *la maison d’esclaves* until its destruction in the early 20th century. It is evident that captive Africans languished in storage either onboard ships or in shoreside detainment, as sundry lists show that “newly arrived African negroes” perished while in

¹⁴ The *Farnham* recorded in TAST, no. 25513; Minutes of the council, 24 February 1808, PJ 154, FSB, ANOM; *Lloyd's Lists*, 26 April 1808; Elizabeth Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the Slave Trade to America* (Washington: Carnegie Institution of Washington, 1930), IV: 525; *San Francisco de Asis* is not recorded in TAST; Minutes of the council, 17 January 1810, PJ 160, FSB, ANOM; *Rebecca* is not recorded in TAST, but 2 entries are included in Klein's Cuban dataset based on the AGI, with Clemente de Ichazo as the stated owner.

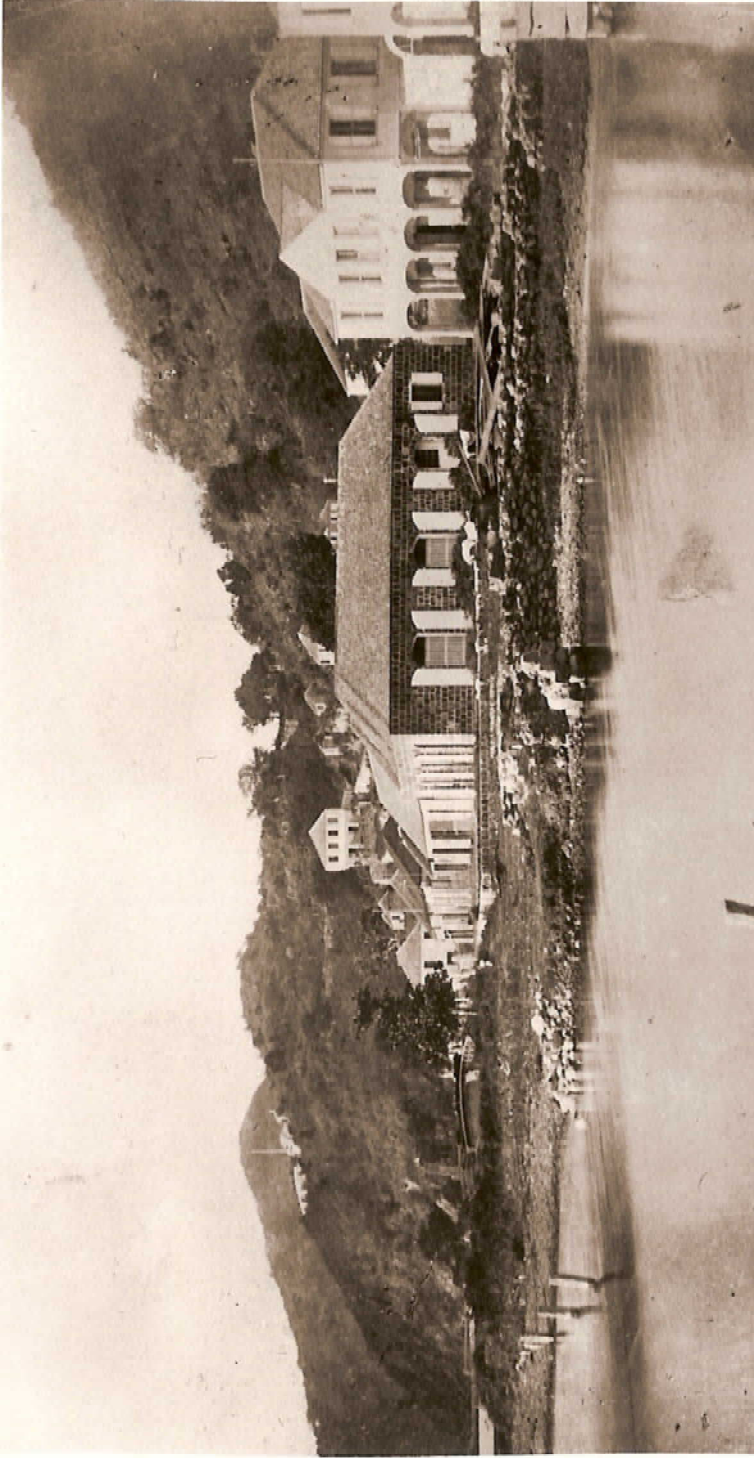


Figure 3.1 *La Maison d'Esclaves*

The brick-and-mortar building in the center of the picture, complete with grated doorways, might have been Röhl & Hansen's slave house, where they held Africans captive awaiting sale and transshipment. The building, which still stood in the early 1900s, was called *La Maison d'Esclaves* by locals. Picture courtesy of Arlette Magras, St. Barthélemy. I am indebted to her as well as Fredrik Thomasson for the use of it.

Gustavia. In 1808 26 African captives died, while 28 died in 1811. These may well have been slaves belonging to Röhl & Hansen and other town merchants, and were in port awaiting further transshipment.¹⁵

The records further suggest that Röhl & Hansen made a niche for themselves by smuggling their human cargo into British colonies after the abolition in 1807. According to informants in Nevis, “A gentleman named Hanson of St. Bartholomews” was rumored to have supplied them to St. Kitts for reshipment to other British islands, having at one time “imported there two hundred and sixty Africans at once, and three hundred at another time,” according to British informants, as per their account before the justice of the peace in Nevis, written down in 1815.¹⁶

A Swedish traveler visiting the island in 1888 claimed to have then seen Hansen’s remaining books and letters, among which he found a general ledger. In it he could find occasional years with a turnover of over 500,000 Spanish dollars, a great deal of which would have been earned through the slaving business, he maintained. Through his marriage with a rich Statian heiress of the Benners family, Hansen inherited sugar plantations which also made him the largest known Swedish owner of slaves. Even if it can be said with definite certainty that Röhl and Hansen’s business was the most significant of Swedish ambitions in the slave trade and slavery, its extent and nature remains inexact.¹⁷

An Ambiguous Path to Abolition

While individual Gustavia burghers continued to engage in the slave trade well into the 19th century, the legal status of the trade on Swedish keels quickly assumed an ambiguous character. The case of Röhl & Hansen’s *Zombie* is illuminating again in this regard. Röhl & Hansen had applied for an Algerian

¹⁵ Real estate property of Röhl & Hansen in *Matrice Cadastrale Suédoise*, Hôtel de la Collectivité de Saint-Barthélemy; lots no. 84, 85, 87, fo. 11; Aggregate list of deaths in Gustavia 1808–13, SBS 28, SNA.

¹⁶ Deposition of Richard Brodbelt and James Stanley Waiter, 15 April 1815, Lamborn-samlingen, vol. 110, SNA, The original is found in CO 239/2, TNA.

¹⁷ Goës, “Minnen,” 156.

passport and toll exemptions for the ship from the Swedish Board of Commerce. The Board turned down the request, and the *Zombie* was left to sail to the coast without privileges and protection afforded to other Swedish ships.

This was not altogether unusual, as the Board infrequently issued passports and exemptions for foreign-built hulls such as the *Zombie*. But the most striking feature of the Board's response was its explicit statement against the voyage's stated destination for "the slave-trade, so detested by all enlightened nations". This rejection has been interpreted as a significant turning point in Swedish perceptions of the slave trade. According to this reasoning, Swedish government officials had started paying attention to the British debate and the movement against the slave trade. Additionally, officials reasoned towards an abolitionist stance with a view to protect the young king, the largest shareholder in the West India Company, from foreign scrutiny. There are however other facts to consider in the *Zombie* rejection, most importantly the vested interests present in the Board of Commerce. Apart from the SWIC directors' prior grievances with Röhl and Hansen as company agents, they had never taken any favor with the firm's slaving project, likely in part because they saw such an independent effort as unwanted competition. Both the company directors – some of which had seats on the Board of Commerce – as well as the Stockholm trade society were consulted in the matter of the *Zombie* passport with negative answers as a result. Non-shareholders were engaging in a branch of trade that was viewed as company territory, after all.

Still, the international climate in the question of the slave trade should not be discounted. Gustav III had indeed been approached by the British Committee for the Abolition of the Slave Trade on the matters of slavery and the slave trade as early as 1790. In a letter to the Swedish king, the committee entreated Sweden to take the lead in abolishing the slave trade, to which Gustav responded with his belief that no Swedish subject had embarked in this branch of trade, and that he would "do all he could" to keep it so. A peculiar argument developed in the Swedish diplomacy on abolition, namely that the slave trade had never been permitted to Swedish subjects. Swedish attitudes towards slavery and the slave trade is however a separate subject that warrants further research. What is important here is that the slave trade through St. Barthélemy continued with varied forms of domestic support – or

non-intervention, at the very least – until the end of the Napoleonic Wars. It would take a decade and a half more until Sweden explicitly forbid its practice with effective laws.¹⁸

Swedish slave-ships instead steadily ran into limitations set by other national legislatures. This was the case with the merchant house of Vaucrosson & Son of St. Barthélemy, which financed at least two slaving expeditions, in 1797 and 1798. Their career in the slave trade was possibly cut short by legal exigencies in the United States. They sailed their Swedish-flagged brigantine *La Neutralité* under the command of Daniel Campbell to New York in 1796. While in port, the brigantine was refitted for the particular needs of the slave trade. The ship's reconstruction attracted the attention of a few local Quaker abolitionists, who in March of 1797 decided to notify the New York customs collectors about the matter. The ship's captain was promptly apprehended by port authorities. The brigantine fell under a section of the late Slave Trade Act of 22 April 1794, which prohibited foreign ships from equipping or loading a cargo intended for the slave trade on U.S. soil. The ship was cleared from port, but only after the captain signed a 10,000\$ bond declaring that the ship would not take part in the slave trade.¹⁹

After the rebuilt *Neutrality* had returned to St. Barthélemy in late April, the Vaucrossons and the Governor of St. Barthélemy both tried their hand at getting the bond revoked. The Vaucrossons attempted to deny the suspicions altogether, and claimed that while the ship was indeed headed for Africa, it was intended for a purchase of ivory, not the slave trade. The Vaucrossons even sent one of their agents to New York to make inquiries and demand redress, but without any success.²⁰

¹⁸ Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, 224–25; The undated letter of the Committee to Gustav III, signed by Granville Sharp, in F420, XI, UUB, also printed in *Appendix to the New Jerusalem Magazine*, 1791, 294–96; Gustav III's reply summarized in Thomas Clarkson, *The History of the Rise, Progress, and Accomplishment of the Abolition of the Slave-Trade by the British Parliament* (London: Taylor, 1808), I: 565–66.

¹⁹ Affidavit of Isaac Hicks, 8 March 1797, Hicks to Rogers, 5 May 1797, RG 59, M664, NARA, fos. 113, 128–29.

²⁰ Minutes of the St. Barthélemy council, 14 September 1797, PJ 142, FSB, ANOM; Sands to Wolcott, 11 May 1797, M664, RG 59, NARA.

The Swedish Governor adopted a different approach and wrote directly to president Adams. He appealed to the mutual rights guaranteed by the U.S.-Swedish Trade Treaty of 1783. He never tried to contest the fact that the ship was fitting out for the slave trade. Instead, he claimed to admire “the motives, and the principles of benevolence and humanity” behind the U.S. Slave Trade Act, but that he was also “astonished and frightened” of the “monstrous consequences” it laid bare on foreign nations trading with the U.S. He stressed the mutual benefits inherent in the relationship between neutral powers generally, and between American merchants and St. Barthélemy specifically, guaranteed by the late Treaty. He entreated the president to get the case reviewed by a duly qualified court. The matter transpired quietly after the U.S. Treasury Department compiled all the pertinent documentation on the case for review before the U.S. Attorney General. His opinion was that the Slave Trade Act of 1794 in no way conflicted with the Treaty of 1783. The bond had been issued according to prevailing practice and was by no means unlawful. No further complaints were put forward from St. Barthélemy.²¹

More serious legal challenges against the Swedish slave trade would eventually come from the British government, as a consequence of its ambitions to negotiate the abolition of the slave trade with other nations after 1807. The first result of British ambitions were addressed in a separate article of the 1813 treaty which formally ceded Guadeloupe to Sweden. The 4th point of the separate article stated that Sweden was to “forbid and prohibit” the slave trade into Guadeloupe and “the other possessions in the West Indies of His Swedish Majesty.” The cession was nevertheless annulled, and Guadeloupe was returned to France in 1814. Great Britain instead paid an indemnification to the Swedish crown in lieu of a colony. The existence of the treaty has erroneously made 1813 the common year of reference for when Sweden abolished the slave trade. The real consequences of the treaty were

²¹ af Trolle to John Adams, 18 April 1797, af Trolle’s official protest, 18 April 1797, Lee to Wolcott, 29 April 1797, Wolcott to Söderström, 1 May 1797, M664, RG 59, NARA, fos. 102–12, 121–23; Instead, the owners simply renamed the ship after which it departed for the West African coast as intended. In October 1797 a Swedish brigantine by the name of *Neptune* under the command of Daniel Campbell arrived in Havana with 98 slaves. Campbell and the *Neptune* made at least one more expedition, disembarking a larger cargo of 185 slaves in Havana in February 1798. Whether the Vaucrossons organized even more voyages to the African coast is unclear.

however unclear for a long time afterwards. The Swedish council of St. Barthélemy encountered many cases of slave trade after 1813 which it had serious difficulties in treating consistently.²²

The impetus behind British diplomacy in the matter did not merely spring out of mere conjecture. Considering the limited extent of the Swedish slave trade, The British government was quite well informed. Governor Elliot of St. Christopher wrote to Whitehall in 1811 that he was concerned over the fact that “several Individuals in the Island of St. Bartholomew take a considerable share in the Portuguese and Spanish Slave Trade”. The British High Court of Admiralty reviewed the case for the Swedish schooner *Diana* following a seizure and condemnation by the Vice-Admiralty Court of Sierra Leone a few years prior to the 1813 treaty. The Sierra Leone court had suspected Portuguese or American slavers hiding behind Swedish colors, but it also addressed the question if Sweden sanctioned the slave trade at all. One of the most important arguments for its condemnation was that the slave trade had been abolished “by most civilized nations,” and was not “at the present time legally authorized by any.” The High Court of Admiralty saw fit to reverse the initial judgment, as it could not sustain the Vice Admiralty court’s blanket claims. No evidence could simply be found that the Swedish crown had abolished the slave trade. The court made a passing reference to the late treaty, which had been signed as late as the 3rd of March 1813, two months prior to the aforementioned reversal in the High Court of Admiralty.²³

The Swedish Governor of St. Barthélemy was also at a loss for answers when a French slaver put into Gustavia with around 100 African captives in 1814. The ship had first touched at British-occupied Guadeloupe, where the British governor had turned it away but advised the captain to go to St. Barthélemy instead. The Swedish Governor, while unsure of how to respond to the unexpected arrival, still granted the captain the right to either sell his

²² Minutes of the Committee graciously appointed for matters relating to the island of Guadeloupe, 27 September 1813, Pommerska expeditionen och kolonialdepartementet , AI:3, SNA.

²³ Elliot to Lord Liverpool, 3 September 1811, CO 152/98, TNA; Lamborn-samlingen, vol. 107, SNA; The *Diana*, TAST i.d. 7548; John Dodson, *Reports of cases argued in the High Court of Admiralty, commencing with the judgments of the Right Hon. Sir William Scott, Trinity Term, 1811*, ed. George Minot (Boston, 1853), 1: 95–103; The ship was indeed the property of Swedish burghers in Gustavia, see minutes of the council, 6 & 26 October 1812 PJ 165, FSB, ANOM, 450–55, 530–32.

cargo or prepare the slaves for transshipment. Since no explicit declaration of abolition had come to his notice, he decided not to turn the ship away. The Governor turned to the Court chancellor for instructions in the event of future instances, and the chancellor's response marks an important while inconclusive turn in the question. The chancellor notified the governor about the late treaty with Britain and its concerns with the slave trade. While he confessed that the treaty did not explicitly cover the specifics of the case in question, he nevertheless strongly urged the governor to take a more cautious course in the future. He made specific mention of the ongoing debates on the slave trade during the Congress of Vienna, and the determination behind British ambitions in the question. Even if the 1813 treaty and its separate articles could be considered null and void, it was anticipated that this document had only been a preliminary to future negotiations on the matter.²⁴

In 1819, the Governor of St. Barthélemy was furnished with more precise instructions regarding the slave trade, where it was importantly stressed that no admission of foreign slave ships would be tolerated:

Si dans d'autres isles voisines le trafic des Negres se fait encore, malgre les engagemens contraires, qui ont ete generalement adoptes, le Roi vous enjoint d'autant plus severe a empecher ce commerce honteux a St. Barthélemy.²⁵

However, there were at least three principal problems facing Swedish administrators attempting to prohibit the foreign slave trade through St. Barthélemy. One was the sale of captured slave cargoes by South American insurgent privateers and the other was the illegal slave trade practiced by neighboring colonists, primarily the Frenchmen of Guadeloupe. Both found their way into St. Barthélemy by exploiting its neutral character and commercial demands. Illegal sale of slaves were conducted on the islet of

²⁴ Stackelberg to Wetterstedt, 26 December 1814, SBS 3A, SNA; Wetterstedt to Stackelberg, 2 April 1815, C 258, FSB, ANOM, 53–55; Stackelberg to Wetterstedt, 3 July 1815, SBS 3B, SNA; This was also the case with treaties made with Portugal and Denmark during the same period, see Jerome Reich, "The Slave Trade at the Congress of Vienna – A Study in English Public Opinion," *The Journal of Negro History* 53, no. 2 (1968): 129–143.

²⁵ Wetterstedt to Berghult, 6 February 1819, C 258, FSB, ANOM. A copy is found in Pommerska expeditionen och kolonialdepartementet, AI:6, SNA.

Fourchue to the northwest of St. Barthélemy, with or without the aid of Gustavia burghers.²⁶

In 1821 one such incident at Fourchue brought to light the problems facing the Swedish government of St. Barthélemy. An American brig carrying 380 captives was captured by insurgents and brought to the small islet where the cargo was sold to the naturalized Swedes Bigwood & Debouille, who transhipped them on their own accord, likely to Puerto Rico or Guadeloupe. There were numerous similar cases where Swedish St. Barthélemy subjects were implicated.

The second problem was the resurgence of the slave trade within the French colonies after the war, particularly Guadeloupe. French slave traders maintained a steady traffic to their colonies as well as foreign markets such as Cuba and Puerto Rico. For their purposes, St. Barthélemy assumed the character of a subterfuge for illegal activities. Swedish documents were procured for illegal vessels, crews were recruited from St. Barthélemy, and equipment, iron and gunpowder for the coastal trade was purchased in Gustavia, as was frequently also the case at Charlotte Amalie on St. Thomas.²⁷

The third problem and the crux of the Swedish position was the slave trade's profitability in a time of post-war economic slump. Administrators were reluctant to turn away at least the most indirect and discreet instances in view of its commercial importance for the colony. Governors and senior members of the administration were accused of having a hand in or at the very least turning a blind eye to the most blatant infractions of international treaties. Governor Norderling had initially held a firm line with slave smugglers who exploited the islet of Fourchue and indeed captured or chased away a few ships during the early years of his period. He however soon caved in to the realities of the illicit slave trade. He soon noticed that the ailing economy of Gustavia in the post-war years quickly showed signs of rejuvenation if only slave ships and privateers were given leeway. He admitted as much himself in his official reports to Stockholm. Many French slavers that regrouped in Gustavia during or after a sale often came to his notice. He

²⁶ Per Tingbrand, "Femöarne," 136–62.

²⁷ Josette Fallope, "Négriers de la Guadeloupe sur la côte africaine au début du XIXe siècle," in *L'Afrique entre L'Europe et l'Amérique. Le rôle de l'Afrique dans la rencontre de deux mondes*, ed. Elikia M'Bokolo (Mayenne: UNESCO, 1995), 103–18.

however justified their presence with the fact that the burghers of Gustavia were “such smugglers of sugar and coffee of Guadeloupe and Martinique”, that it would be the “height of ingratitude” to denounce or subvert their affairs. Good relations needed to be retained with the French colonies in order for St. Barthélemy to retain some of its lost commercial vivacity. It is however uncertain whether he himself or other Swedish officials profited from this state of affairs, as per Harrison’s reports and others.²⁸

The Swedish government’s ambiguous relation to the insurgents was also a cause of recurring difficulties. Norderling had been firmly instructed not to pursue or prosecute individual slavers or privateers to firmly so as to injure prospective commercial relations with them. The Swedish government’s view – especially that of Charles XIV – was that commercial ties with South America’s rebels was to be carefully encouraged and cultivated, so long as it did not put any unnecessary stress on diplomatic relations with Spain or its allies.²⁹

While the Swedish administration of St. Barthélemy continued its pragmatic policy towards foreign slave traders, it clamped down on the slave trade under Swedish flags to a higher degree. An 1824 treaty with Britain marked a new commitment from the Swedish side in the question of the international slave trade. The treaty was the first to unequivocally proclaim the complete abolition of the Swedish slave trade and established the right of search for Swedish and Norwegian vessels suspected of trading in slaves, as the two kingdoms were joined since 1814. When the treaty was made public in St. Barthélemy, the Governor was however faced with an obstinate council. Two members of the council were concerned with the consequences of individual slave sales between households. A third council member, Gerhard Röhl, a relative of Jacob Röhl and associate of the Röhl & Hansen firm, footed

²⁸ Norderling’s report, 15 October 1819, SBS 6A, SNA. “ [...] Sire nous sommes ici de si grands contrebandiers en Sucre, Café e& de la Guadeloupe et Martinique, et nous avons un si grand besoin de l’indulgence des Gouverneurs de ces Isles, qu’à peine osons nous penser à leurs péchés, encore moins les dénoncer, ce serait de notre part le comble d’ingratitude.”

²⁹ Norderling’s instruction, 29 April 1819, C 256, FSB, ANOM. A copy is found in Pommerska expeditionen och kolonialdepartementet, BII:3, SNA. An excerpt read as follows : “Quant aux batimens Negrieres ou aux prises faites sur les Nations Espagnoles et Portugaises, elles ne pourront ni être recues, ni vendues à St. Barthélemy; mais pour des effets, parvenus légalement dans la possession d’un tiers, encore que provenant d’une capture, aucune poursuite, de la part du Gouvernement, ne pourra avoir lieu.”

more categorical objections against the treaty. As an interesting precondition to the discussion in the council, Sweden and Norway were united under the same crown, and as a result the Danish-Norwegian text of the 1792 abolition was fully included in the 1824 treaty between Sweden and Britain. Röhl pithily objected that it was widely known that the 1792 decision had never been executed in St. Thomas, and ascertained that no changes should be made in prevailing practice. The treaty's stipulations were nevertheless upheld with only a few concessions in the final proclamation to allow for the sale and purchase of slaves for household needs.³⁰

The increasingly firm stance shows in the sudden break of the fairly constant trickle of Swedish-flagged slaving voyages until 1814. That year the last legally registered Swedish slave ship, *Pilot*, owned by the merchant house of Elbers & Krafft, departed from St. Barthélemy for the West African Coast. In 1820 the last known Swedish-flagged slave ship entry in Havana was recorded. Even as the official slave trade withered out, the record is marred with reports of illicit departures and violations of port regulations. Governor Norderling estimated in 1825 that “dozens” of Swedish ships had illicitly left for the slave trade on the Coast of Africa, all the while with false destinations and forged documents. There were similar observations being made by British naval officers, ones who disdained the “false notion of encouraging trade” among the Dutch, Danish, and Swedish Governments by instructing “their Authorities in the West Indies not to be too strict.” Facilities to acquire documents of different national origins and thus ostensibly acquire several national characters were readily available for the illegal slave traders. Frequent

³⁰ The right of search was included but Sweden opted out of seating a representative at the mixed court in Sierra Leone. Instead the council of St. Barthélemy was vested with the powers of the projected ‘mixed court’, see Bloomfield to Canning, 11 March, 8 April, 29 April, 27 August, 11 November 1824, in *Memoirs of Benjamin Lord Bloomfield*, ed. Georgiana Bloomfield (London: Chapman & Hall, 1884), I: 102–03, 116–18, 137–38, 234, 258–60; Minutes of the council, 22 February & 14 March 1828, SBS 10A, SNA. Drafts of the minutes are also found in PJ 160, FSB, ANOM. Röhl’s claim was well grounded in some aspects, insofar as the Danish slave trade via St. Thomas was perpetuated well beyond 1802 contrary to the stipulations of the 1792 decision. See Green-Pedersen, “Colonial Trade,” 110–11.

reports and rumors in fact led to the long-held British belief that the slave trade was secretly being protected at St. Barthélemy.³¹

In 1830 Sweden however reinforced its earlier commitment to abolition by instituting a penal law against the slave trade. The death sentence was reserved for the gravest offenders, whereas the pertained ship and cargo were to be forfeited to the crown. The same year a trial on St. Barthélemy delivered a guilty verdict for the ship *Gotland*, due to have been commissioned to the African coast by the Gustavia burgher Samuel Vaughan. The ship and cargo was seized and sold to the benefit of the crown, whereas the owner and crew were spared any corporeal punishment. It was the last Swedish-flagged slave ship on record to have attempted a transatlantic slave trade expedition from St Barthélemy.³²

Even so, spurious accounts continued of foreign slave ships that exploited Gustavia as a port of convenience continued well into the 1830s, and would only cease when the abolitionist efforts of other nations, particularly France, became effective enough to suppress the illegal smugglers of human captives. The Swedish abolition of the slave trade was thus not enforced – as it is often claimed – from the beginning of 1813, but rather was instituted piecemeal over the course of several decades, whereas the relation to the foreign illegal slave trade was never properly negotiated or formulated. Gustavia was thus a comparatively safe asylum for the illegal slave trade that slowly waned during the course of the 19th century, and its burghers took active part in many parts of its organization, recruitment, as well as in its supporting and associated trades and commodity chains.³³

³¹ *Pilot* is recorded in Klein's Havana dataset as an arrival with 61 slaves at the Havana in February 1815. The ship is however not recorded in TAST. The *Pilot's* Muster roll dated 17 December 1814, in AM 265, FSB, ANOM; The Swedish vessel that landed in Havana in 1820 was a vessel named *Maria*, TAST i.d. 112.; Norderling's report, 11 May 1825, SBS 9A, SNA; Bloomfield to Canning, 22 February 1833, *Memoirs of Lord Bloomfield*, II: 296–97.

³² Kongl. Maj:ts Nådiga Förordning, angående ansvar för Negerhandel och delaktighet deruti, 7 January 1830, in *Swensk Författnings-Samling*, no. 33 (Stockholm, 1830): 325–28; Regarding the *Gotland*, see Haasum's report, 4 September 1830, SBS 10B, SNA.

³³ There is one other reported Swedish slave ship, the *Victorina* or *Victoria*, said to have cleared out from Havana for the coast in November 1837, but there is little else known about this ship and her ownership. See HM:s Commissioners to Viscount Palmerston, 30 November & 20 December, 1837, in *Correspondence with the British Commissioners at Sierra Leone, the Havana, Rio de Janeiro and Surinam, relating to Slave Trade, 1837* (London, 1838); For the case of the *Gotland*, see Minutes of the council, 4 September 1830, SBS 10B, SNA.

3.2 An Assessment of the Gustavia Slave Trade

Any quantitative investigation of the Swedish involvement in the slave trade during the 18–19th century must start with the CLASH catalogue, or as it is titled, the “*Répertoire*” de la traite négrière: *Saint-Barthélemy (Suède)*. With a special focus the colony of St. Barthélemy, it is the most detailed single collection of references to the Swedish slave trade available. It is hosted online among a vast range of miscellanea pertaining to the history of St. Barthélemy, collected and published by Richard Ledée, a St. Barthélemy resident and amateur historian.³⁴

While the CLASH catalogue has been described as a slave trade database in scholarly productions and used as such, it is not a database in the strictest sense of the word. More precisely, it is a catalogue of all manner of references to slave trade having been perpetrated with any kind of affiliation with St. Barthélemy or the Swedish flag. There are aspects about the *Répertoire* which make it problematic and which have further misconstrued the picture of the Swedish slave trade through St. Barthélemy. Whatever its relative demerits, the catalogue is the essential foundation of this section, without which such an investigation would be impossible. There are conceptual problems with operationalizing *Swedish* slave trade in the catalogue that are serious enough that I have chosen to omit 25 dubious entries in the CLASH catalogue. Additionally, 10 slaving voyages not included in the catalogue have been added, following empirical studies of unexploited archival records.³⁵

The quantitative assessment presented in this section also incorporates a wide range of data from different primary sources as well as databases and digital repositories, in order to build a dataset with the expressed goal of surveying the total extent of the slave trade through St. Barthélemy. The

³⁴ CLASH is short for *Le Comité de Liaison et d'Application des Sources Historiques*. <http://www.memoirestbarth.com/st-barts/traite-negriere/pdf/repertoire-traite-negriere-saint-barthelemy-suede.pdf>, date accessed 18 June 2015. It does not incorporate the 17th-century slave trade of Swedish Cabo Corso. While the material varies on the website varies, Ledée has taken a special interest in how the slave trade and slavery has affected the history of the island. The last update of the slave trade catalogue was on June 15, 2011. An earlier version of the catalogue is used in Weiss, “Danskar och svenskar,” 60–62.

³⁵ See appendices IX and X for details.

CLASH catalogue also builds upon these. The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database (TAST) and Herbert Klein's dataset on the importation of slaves into Cuba 1790–1820 are two other essential components. The TAST is however somewhat difficult in this particular context as it is belied with some problems regarding the study of Swedish ships, as Swedish-flagged voyages are covered under the umbrella category of 'Danish/Baltic' ships. Also, it is not always possible to ascertain a particular ship's connection to St. Barthélemy through the database. Coverage of all pertinent slaving voyages is also lacking. Some of its omissions are hard to understand, as one of the many components of TAST is the Klein dataset, which in turn includes these. Some of the relevant entries on Swedish slave ships in Klein's dataset are not included in TAST presumably because the TAST does not include smaller intra-Caribbean voyages. However, slaving voyages that made the Atlantic passage under Swedish flags or with Swedish participation are omitted from TAST while still being a part of Klein's older dataset.³⁶

In order to make a serious attempt to assess the Swedish slave trade through St. Barthélemy, there is need for an operationalization of what the Swedish slave trade was and what it was not. There is also a need to characterize the nature of foreign exploitation of Gustavia for the needs of the slave trade. To this end, 8 categories of slave trade organization and affiliation have been devised (Table 3.1), as well as 7 categories of different voyage outcomes (Table 3.2). The manifold varieties of slave trade through Gustavia across a large time-span - from the era of legal to illegal trading - as

³⁶ The Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade Database (TAST), www.slavevoyages.org; Herbert S. Klein, "North American Competition and the Characteristics of the African Slave Trade to Cuba, 1790–94," *The William & Mary Quarterly* 28, no. 1 (1971): 86–102; Herbert S. Klein, "The Cuban Slave Trade in a Period of Transition, 1790–1843," *Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer* (1975): 67–89; For Klein's raw data and documentation, see the University of Wisconsin's Data & Information Services Center's copy: Herbert S. Klein, *Slave Trade to Havana, Cuba, 1790–1820* (accessed October 10, 2014). http://www.disc.wisc.edu/archive/slave/slave09_index.html. Klein's dataset includes 16 relevant voyages not covered in TAST. Other notable data collections apart from TAST and Klein include James A. McMillin, *The Final Victims: The Foreign Slave Trade to North America, 1783–1810* (Columbia: Columbia University Press, 2004), Appendix B; Gregory E. O'Malley, *Final Passages: The Intercolonial Slave Trade of British America, 1619–1807* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014); Serge Daget, *Répertoire des Expéditions Négrières Françaises à la Traite Illégale 1814–1850* (Nantes: Centre de recherche sur l'histoire du monde atlantique, 1988); a few entries extracted from Michael Reidy, "Admission of Slaves and Prize Slaves into the Cape Colony, 1797–1818" (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Cape Town, 1997); and Jean Pierre Leglaunec, "A Directory of Slave Ships with Slave Cargoes, Louisiana, 1772–1808," *Louisiana History* 46 (2005): 211–30.

well as the exigencies of national affiliation has necessitated this level of complexity and detail.

Categories 1–4 can be termed as the framework within which Swedish slave trade proper can be identified, starting with Swedish St. Barthélemy-ships (Category 1) which were by all appearances organized, financed, registered, and deployed from St. Barthélemy by bona fide Swedish subjects. Cases that can be confirmed as Swedish-flagged slave ventures financed and realized by Swedes or naturalized Swedish Gustavia burghers fall under this category. While a case could be made for the inclusion of the runaway slaves and slave convicts sold by the island government on public auctions in Gustavia, these are however not included. Although it may also be termed as a form of Swedish slave trade, is it distinct from the organized commerce in human captives by sea that is the focus of this investigation. Category 2 simply includes Swedish-flagged voyages which suggest a departure and base in a Swedish port town in the Baltic, with little or unknown connections to the Swedish colony.

Category 3 is more difficult to categorize, as it pertains to the legally ambiguous activity of coloring ships with ship documents of one or more national origins. An example of such an instance was the brig *Regulator*, for which the Gustavia inhabitant Samuel Parsons registered a Swedish sea pass on the 22nd September 1794, for a journey “to Surinam and the African coast and back here again.” The extant records tell us nothing about the subsequent fate of this supposedly Swedish-flagged slaving voyage, but a British brig named *Regulator* sailed from London in May 1795 towards Cape Coast Castle and Accra, and arrived in Barbados with a cargo of African captives in November the same year. There are some inconsistencies between the short record in the Swedish pass-registers and the information amassed about the *Regulator* in British sources, but it is however not unlikely that the two were the one and the same ship. If they were the same ship, the London owners could have procured Swedish ship documents through Parsons, a British colonist who had become a naturalized Swedish burgher. The documents could have fit any number of purposes, although a precaution against maritime predation was the most likely. It did not necessarily entail that the

ship primarily flew Swedish colors, if at all. This is also a fact worth noting when reviewing the total numbers of exported slaves under each category.³⁷

Category 4 includes foreign slave ships with one or more bona fide Swedish subjects attached in some manner to the necessary commercial operations of the voyage. Gustavia merchants did not always freight slave ships of their own, but instead acted as agents and consignees of foreign-based slave traders. Such was the case with John Joseph Cremony, who was the agent for the large firm of Henry Clarke and George and Robert Tod & Co. of Liverpool. The firm had bought and fitted a ship of 270 tons, the *Kitty's Amelia*, which made four African journeys between 1804 and 1808. For an 1805 expedition, the captain was instructed to dispose of the "Women & Male Negroes at St. Kitts for short Bills or Produce" after which he was to proceed with the remainder to St. Barthélemy, where Cremony was a possible contact. Cremony would then see to it that the remaining slaves could be dispatched to Havana, as he had assured the captain upon his return to the West Indies:³⁸

The Negroes continue in great demand to windward, and I think in Six weeks, or two months, I will be able to turn your Cargoe into Government Bills, or Cash, provided your Cargoe is good, & I have very little doubt of its being so – from the choice I have seen you make before. I will likewise engage to give you, either here or at St. Kitts, a full freight for your Ship. [...]³⁹

³⁷ The British brig *Regulator* recorded in TAST, no. 83301; Additional references to it in Adam Afzelius, *Adam Afzelius Sierra Leone Journal 1795–1796*, ed. Alexander Kup (Uppsala: Studia Ethnographica Upsaliensia, 1967), 32; *Lloyd's List* 8 May, 4 August, 8 December 1795, 11 March 1796; The pass-register notation for the Swedish brig *Regulator* in AM 265, ANOM, 75; Samuel Parsons listed as a Gustavia burgher in the St. Barthélemy census of 1796, SBS 28, SNA; see also Wernberg to SWIC, 10 August 1795, Handel och sjöfart, vol. 169, SNA.

³⁸ The voyages of *Kitty's Amelia* are recorded in TAST, nos. 82200–03; Correspondence and other records relating to Cremony's connections with Liverpool slave traders in DX/170/1–9, Maritime Archives & Library, Merseyside Maritime Museum, Liverpool; see also Charles R. Hand, "The Kitty's Amelia, the last Liverpool slaver", *Transactions of the Historical Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, vol. 28 (1930), 70–73.

³⁹ Cremony to Nuttall, 13 August 1806, in Hand, "The Kitty's Amelia," 76.

Table 3.1 Categories of Slave Trade Organization and Affiliation

1	(Swedish St. Barthélemy-ships) Swedish-flagged voyage registered and organized by bona fide Swedish subjects stationed in St. Barthélemy.
2	(Swedish ships proper) Swedish-flagged voyage registered and organized by bona fide Swedish subjects, but with unclear or non-existent connection to St. Barthélemy.
3	(Colored foreign ships) Swedish-flagged voyage registered and organized by foreign actors with the assistance of bona fide Swedish subjects in St. Barthélemy as agents and/or consignees. The ship may have possessed documents of registration etc. of foreign origin, i.e. a so-called colored voyage.
4	(Foreign ships with Swedish agents) Foreign-flagged voyage operating with the assistance of bona fide Swedish subjects in St. Barthélemy as agents and/or consignees. The ship may or may not have touched at or even disembarked slaves in St. Barthélemy during a leg of its voyage.
5	(Foreign ships) Foreign-flagged voyage with unclear or nonexistent connection to St. Barthélemy. The ship nevertheless touched at or even disembarked slaves at St. Barthélemy during its voyage.
6	(Foreign prize ships) Foreign-flagged voyage brought to St. Barthélemy by way of privateering activities. St. Barthélemy may have been either an accidental or pre-planned rendezvous point and/or slave market. Varying degrees of involvement and connivance by colony merchants and officials.
7	(Foreign proxy ships) Foreign-flagged voyage which merely used St. Barthélemy as a convenient port for armament, refitting, sale of ship, or crew recruitment.
8	(Illegally colored foreign ships) Foreign-flagged voyage with forged Swedish documents but no confirmed Swedish connections.

Table 3.2 Categories of Slaving Voyage Outcomes

A	Delivered slaves as per the original intent.
B	Captured and condemned, slaves sold before capture.
C	Captured and condemned, slaves sold or freed after capture.
D	Captured by South American insurgent privateers.
E	Original goal thwarted due to shipwreck, mutiny, or natural hazard.
F	Outcome unknown
G	Other

Cremony and other Gustavia merchants like him took it upon themselves to liquidate the shipments of foreign-owned slaves into the final payoffs and profits. Some of the slaves were even likely sold on location in St. Barthélemy even if the confirming evidence for this is very much lacking in the records. While voyages such as these cannot be termed *Swedish* slave trade *per se*, it is nonetheless a very tangible form of Swedish participation in the slave trade.

Categories 5–8 on the other hand encompass different forms of slave trade, from planned to purely transactions incidentally finding their way through St. Barthélemy by necessity, brought on by either adverse weather, maritime predation, or damages to the vessel. In this category voyages such as that of the U.S. frigate *La Feliz* can be found. *La Feliz* made an Atlantic passage during 1788 and returned with 228 captives in Louisiana in October, but only after touching at St. Barthélemy, ostensibly for the convenience of a last stop before the final leg to the continent. Other ships in this category seem to have carried larger shipments of captives from the African coast and indeed sold them at St. Barthélemy, but this is inferred only by the fact that these ships do not turn up as having different destinations in other sources. To present knowledge, there are no detailed preserved records of slave sales out of the cargoes of transatlantic slavers, only a few instances where there exists witness

accounts of a slave cargo sales having been made. In those accounts, there are seldom any explicit or reliable numbers of slaves mentioned.⁴⁰

Category 6 comprises all known accounts of privateer-seized slaves either sold to Swedish subjects in St. Barthélemy or simply transshipped through Swedish territory, specifically within the conveniently uncontrolled waters of Ile Fourchue. Category 7 includes all foreign slave ships known to have employed St. Barthélemy in a number of indirect ways. It could concern partial purchases of the cargo intended for barter on the African coast, recruitment of mariners, as well as refurbishment and repairs of ships outside of their own national jurisdictions. Category 8 includes all ships known to have forged Swedish documents and were in no other way connected or affiliated with the legal or commercial frameworks of St. Barthélemy.

Before a breakdown of the extent of different categories (Tables 3.3 and 3.4), it should be noted that the known numbers and ships involved in the dataset are empirical findings, not calculations or extrapolations. The maximum recorded amount of slaves for a particular ship is thus included in the dataset. If the amount of slaves is not known, there is no figure added to the dataset. So, for ships that entered Gustavia with an un-enumerated cargo of “New Negroes from the Islands” as so often happened, only the ship itself is recorded. The same goes for information on destinations and ports of departure, if these are not known then they are marked as “unknown”.

The complete amount slave ships included is 87 ships with a total of 7,370 slaves. It should be noted that out of these 87 ships, there are only information on slaves for 61 of them. The hidden figure of slaves should however not be very large, as most of the ships without details on slave cargoes were smaller crafts involved in inter-island commerce in the West Indies. Out of the total figure of ships there are a few observations to be made. 37 ships (Categories 1–2) made their expeditions under Swedish flags, the great majority of which were based in St. Barthélemy. Comparatively few foreign ships made use of the Swedish colony (3–4) as a slave market or port of transshipment. The

⁴⁰ The voyage of *La Feliz* is recorded in TAST, no. 41844; see also Gilbert C. Din, *Spaniards, Planters, and Slaves: The Spanish Regulation in Louisiana, 1763–1803* (College Station: Texas A & M University Press, 1999), 124, 286; Leglaunec, “A Directory of Ships,” 220; McMillin, *The Final Victims*, Appendix B.

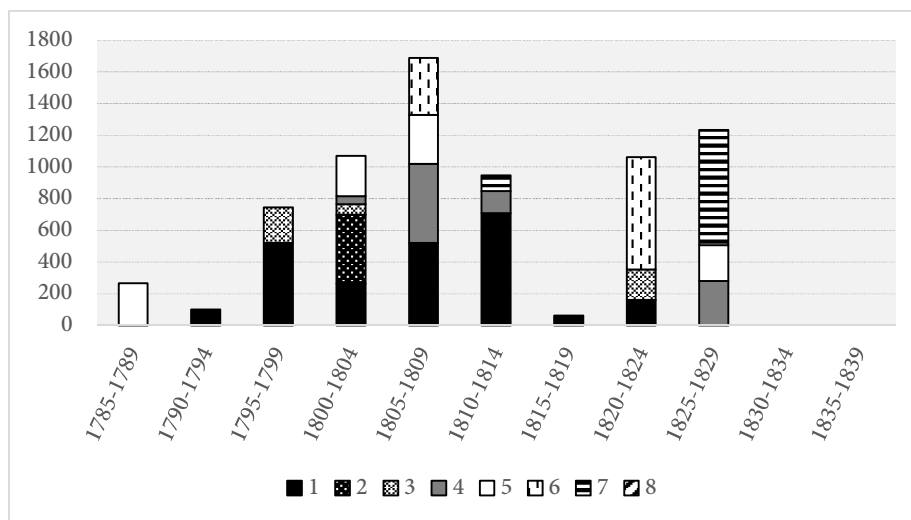
Table 3.3 Slave Ships by Category

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Total
1	28	-	1	-	1	2	1	33
2	4	-	-	-	-	-	-	4
3	2	2	1	-	-	-	-	5
4	5	-	-	-	-	1	2	8
5	11	1	-	-	-	2	-	14
6	-	-	1	4	1	2	1	9
7	1	1	3	-	-	5	3	13
8	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	1
Total	47	4	7	4	2	12	7	87

Table 3.4 Slaves by Category

	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	Total
1	2,087	-	84	-	100	64	n/a	2,335
2	434	-	-	-	-	-	-	434
3	66	312	107	-	-	-	-	485
4	971	-	-	-	-	51	140	1,162
5	1,023	35	-	-	-	n/a	-	1,058
6	-	-	207	380	n/a	330	152	1,069
7	114	n/a	202	-	-	511	-	827
8	-	-	n/a	-	-	-	-	n/a
Total	4,695	347	600	380	100	956	292	7,370

Figure 3.2 Slaves by Category, Chronology 1785–1839



Source: Wilson dataset on the Swedish slave trade (2015).

relative weight in slave numbers that these ships had should however be noted. The eight ships in category 4 carried nearly half the amount of slaves as the 33 Swedish St. Barthélemy ships. This would indicate that the ships employed by Swedish slave traders were comparatively small and were employed mostly in a more limited inter-island trade, transshipping portions of captives from the coast that had arrived in larger ships. Indeed, there is reliable information of African landings for only a handful of Swedish ships.

A comparative number of ships made use of St. Barthélemy as an intermediate stop between the African coast and their ultimate destinations (5), whereas a sizeable portion of slaves were illegally sold through St. Barthélemy and its outlying territories (6) by insurgent privateers in various modes of conduct. Illegal slavers (7), primarily French vessels from Guadeloupe, also made an appreciable impact on the total figures. These last categories constitute a collection of uncertainties as to their exact extent. Due to their clandestine and illegal nature, their extent will never be fully known, but it is however very possible that their numbers could be quite larger. There is only one known vessel with forged Swedish papers (8), the *Joseph*, naturally because it was condemned in the mixed courts of Sierra Leone in 1820 after having been captured and its papers confiscated. Judging by the number of suspicions and sundry reports to this effect, there were certainly several others which carried forged papers of Swedish and other nationalities, but none of these can be confirmed.⁴¹

The majority of voyages in this database were completed successfully for the organizers, 47 ships carrying 4,695 captives reached their destinations without succumbing to the hazards of the weather, illness, maritime aggressions or the vigilance of anti-slaving cruisers. An even greater extent of the Swedish slave ships, 87 percent of the category 1 vessels, were completed successfully. There are however a large amount of slave ships and slaves whose ultimate fate are unknown (F), whereas the ships and slaves in the 'other' category (G), most often refer to ships which have been detained by various authorities but subsequently released. Their ultimate outcome after that are often obscure.

⁴¹ The *Joseph* recorded in TAST, no. 2329.

Table 3.5 Slave Ships by Destination

	St. Barthélemy	Spanish Caribbean	French Caribbean	British Caribbean	North American Coast	Other/Unknown	Total
1	8	20	-	1	-	4	33
2	-	4	-	-	-	-	4
3	-	3	-	1	-	-	5
4	5	-	1	1	-	-	8
5	4	2	2	-	2	6	14
6	2	-	-	-	1	3	9
7	-	1	3	-	-	8	13
8	-	-	4	-	-	1	1
Total	19	30	10	3	3	22	87

Source: Wilson dataset on the Swedish slave trade (2015).

Table 3.6 Slaves by Destination

	St. Barthélemy	Spanish Caribbean	French Caribbean	British Caribbean	North American Coast	Other/Unknown	Total
1	598	1,539	-	14	-	184	2,335
2	-	434	-	-	-	-	434
3	-	152	107	226	-	-	485
4	563	-	280	319	-	-	1,162
5	506	88	-	-	426	38	1,058
6	152	-	537	-	n/a	380	1,069
7	-	n/a	226	-	-	601	827
8	-	-	-	-	-	n/a	n/a
Total	1,819	2,213	1,150	559	426	1,203	7,370

Source: Wilson dataset on the Swedish slave trade (2015).

A chronological analysis (Figure 3.2) of the different categories illustrates a few further points. The growth and development of the slave trade in St. Barthélemy started in the 1790s and culminated in the final years of the war. The foreign share of the slave trade indeed seems to have been very marginal until the post-war era, and only increased again after the 1815 recession with the South American independence movements and the regular slaving activities of their privateers, as well as the French illegal slave traders. This is however an over-simplification, as foreign actors often had consignments or shares in Swedish vessels, as well as the fact that many Gustavia burghers were involved in and earned their livelihoods by participating in the illegal slave trade of neighboring colonies. The peak years for the trade however fell within the first ten years of the 19th century, before the following decades of the post-war illegal trade. The reason why this latter period (1830–39) contains no reliable data on the numbers of captives transported is precisely due to its illegal character. There are eight separate vessels which can be linked to St. Barthélemy but none of their associated documents contain reliable - if any - information on their cargoes.

These data can be complemented with an overview of the overall trajectory of the trade (Tables 3.5 and 3.6). The overwhelming majority of the slave trade went to the Spanish Caribbean, primarily to Cuba, but a portion also went to Puerto Rico, as well as a few shipments to destinations on the Spanish Main. This fits rather well with the chronological development of the trade, which picked up in the early 1790 at precisely the time when Spanish colonies opened up their ports for the foreign importation of slaves. St. Barthélemy itself was the second largest recipient of slaves, but this figure likely does not reflect the true number of slaves that were finally sold and put to work in the Swedish colony. Most of these were most probably transshipped to neighboring colonies, Cuba, or other larger markets. That is not to say that a significant influx of slaves occurred in St. Barthélemy during the peak years of the trade. This can be best attested by the large growth of the urban slave population of population which grew more than sevenfold from the early years of the colony (242 slaves in 1787) until the later years of the war (1,818 slaves in 1812). Some portion of this development must however also be attributed to the settlement of newly settled colonists who brought their

households and slaves with them in tow. It is however hard to make this distinction in concrete numbers due to the lack of precise sources.

French colonies were unsurprisingly the third most frequented destination, attributable to the Swedish colony's close ties to Guadeloupe, Martinique, and St. Martin, during the era of the legal as well as the illegal trade. British colonies and the North American seaports were on the other hand a relatively small piece of the overall trade, but these numbers could well may be adjusted upwards to the existence of an illegal trade after the respective abolitions of United States and Great Britain.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the Swedish-flagged slave trade, either organized by Gustavia merchants, or colored foreign vessels, was small in scope and intensity when put into the wider context of transatlantic slave voyages during the period covered. In comparison with, for instance, the Danish slave trade organized through the free port of Charlotte Amalie on St. Thomas, which in many respects was very similar in character, it was of a minor scale. Between 1790 and 1807, there were 191 recorded landings of Danish slave ships in Havana, with a total of 12,341 captives. The corresponding Swedish numbers reach 20 recorded landings and 1,676 captives, and this is in the period up until 1820. The slave trade was furthermore only a small piece of the much larger transit trade of Gustavia.

On the whole, however, one should note that there existed some impetus for foreign slave traders to make use of Swedish ships as a cover for their activities. This became especially prevalent towards the middle of the 19th century, when international treaties and laws were codified in an overarching ambition to end the transatlantic slave trade. Gustavia could and did offer the facilities for seekers of protection or extralegal opportunities. The important role of local agents as intermediaries in the trade makes it difficult to make a more precise estimate of the transportation of African captives which had any links to the Swedish colony. There may be yet a significant portion of the 19th century slave trade which can be traced to the activities of actors in St. Barthélemy. There are also some very concrete conceptual issues regarding what exactly constituted *Swedish* slave trade. These have been discussed at

some length in this chapter, but the result has been that a majority of the slave trade covered can be attributed to important Swedish actors in the colony.⁴²

⁴² Note that these are only the Swedish-flagged imports of slaves into Havana recorded in Klein's dataset. TAST does not record all of these arrivals. There were other shipments to Cuba from St. Barthélemy, but under other flags; For the Danish slave trade through St. Thomas, see Svend-Erik Green-Pedersen, "The History of the Danish Negro Slave Trade, 1733–1807, An Interim Survey Relating In Particular to its Volume, Structure, Profitability, and Abolition," *Revue française d'histoire d'Outre-Mer*, no. 65 (1975): 196–220; "Colonial Trade under the Danish Flag," 99.

4 Gustavia and the Caribbean Transit Trade, 1793–1809

4.1 A Growing Free Trade Outpost, 1793–1801

This chapter is devoted principally to the investigation of the scope, volume, and intensity of the transit trade to and from Gustavia during from the outbreak of war in the early 1790s until 1820. The previous chapters have shown that Gustavia was subject to shifting developments from the time of its foundation. The complex regional developments during the closing decade of the eighteenth century were the sources of its increasing population and activity. But besides lending itself as a neutral sanctuary for a host of different settlers and political refugees alike, what role did it come to play in the economy in the region? After the abrogation of the Swedish West India Company's charter in 1805, trans-Atlantic voyages to and from Sweden soon became virtually non-existent. Naturalized burghers were not allowed to fly the Swedish flag on European-bound voyages. Its future as a free port was ultimately dependent on its utility as a Caribbean marketplace in the following two decades of warfare, as well as on the independent shipping activities of its cohorts of naturalized merchants, traders and sailors.

Calculating the commercial movements through Gustavia during the wars presents a wide range of difficulties. Yet, a useful starting point of reference for the overall development of trade in St. Barthélemy can be found in the Gustavia customs revenue records (Table 4.1.), which are available in aggregate figures from 1791 onwards. Although far from an ideal measurement of trade frequency to allow for many definitive conclusions, some inferences can be made about the ebbs and flows of the commercial life of Gustavia. The collected revenues consisted of importation and exportation duties, as well as a number of minor fees for pilotage, anchorage, weighing and gauging. Importation and exportation duties were subject to differential tariffs. The

primary logic behind differential duties was to safeguard the importation of essentials, i.e. provisions and building materials, as well as to favor the carrying trade under Swedish colors. In essence this meant that the importation of all goods that could be passable as “American” and “West Indian” coming from within the Americas were free of duty. This included the whole spectrum of staples produced in the colonies, to all kinds of American-produced provisions and livestock. Importation of lumber in any form was subject to a half percent duty, unless carried in Swedish bottoms, when no duty was necessary. The highest duties were on European goods and manufactures, which were as high as three percent when imported in foreign bottoms, two percent in Swedish. When European goods were imported from North America or the West India islands, the duties were slightly lower, two percent for foreign ships, one and half for Swedish ships.¹

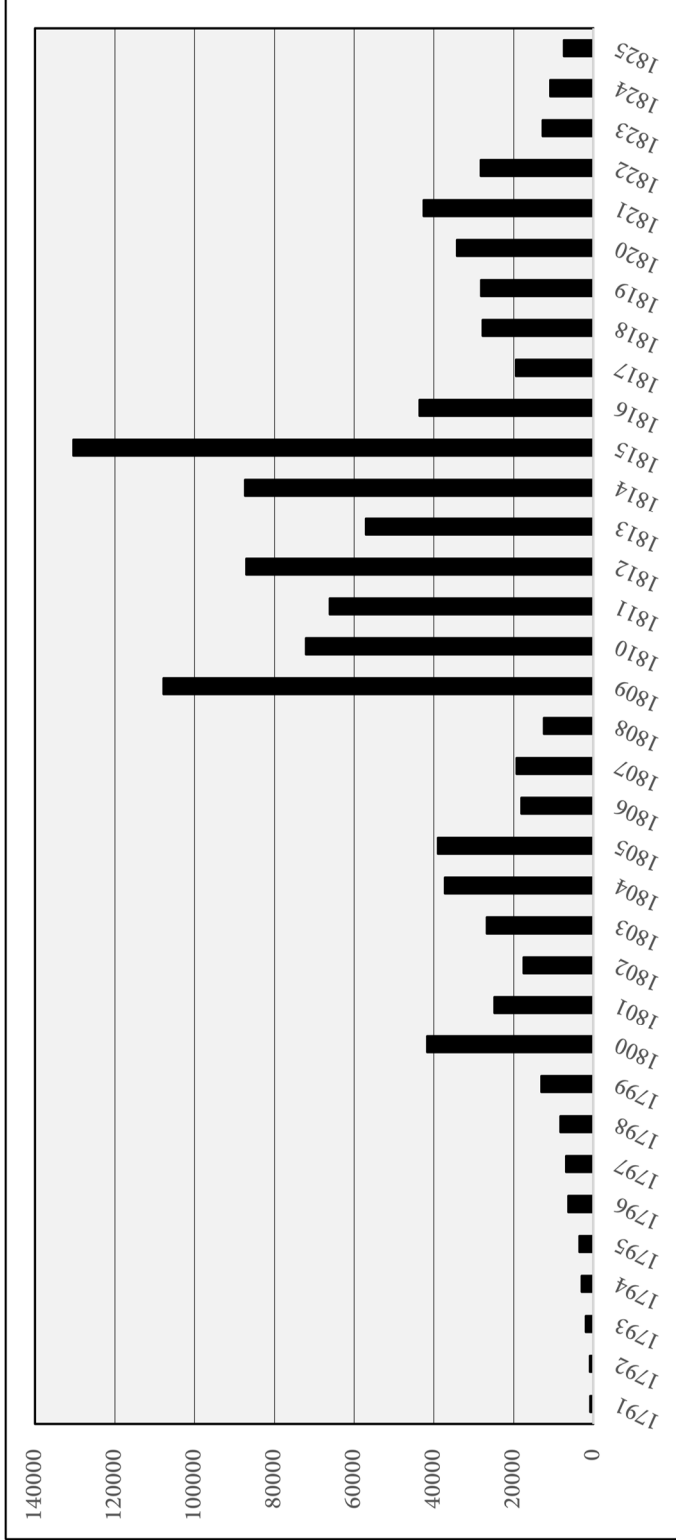
These were very low duties, but they were intentionally so. The low duties were put in place in order to attract surrounding commerce in the region from the other principal free ports. But it also diverted a lot of potential revenues from the island coffers. Calculations of the value of vessel cargoes passing in and out of the harbor were made by the customs collector in 1799 for the preceding three years. In 1796, the starting year, the valuation of export and import cargoes landed at 1,007,161 Spanish dollars, while the total share of that value collected into the colonial chest was 6,270 Spanish dollars. The rate of the “rent” for the transit traffic in Gustavia in 1796 was only 6 promille. 1797–99 displayed equal rates. Exploiting the transit traffic financially was one of the prime concerns for the council, and tariffs were subject to successive revisions in 1790, 1800, 1803, and 1804 to address annual fluctuations in prices and to improve gains, but these revisions have a very limited effect on how to review the overall development between these years. In conclusion, the high discrepancy in total value and collected duties raises a sound enough warning about using the revenues as a reflection of real commercial value entering and

¹ The 1786 regulation in SBS 23, SNA; and Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, 308–309; The 1790 regulations in Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, 310–311; His Royal Majesty’s letter to the Council of Gustavia, 12 March 1790, *Handel och sjöfart*, vol. 160, SNA; *The Report of St. Bartholomew*, July 4, 1807; The 1800 regulation in *The Report of St. Bartholomew*, July 4, 1807; The 1803 regulation in *The Report of St. Bartholomew*, March 4, 1804; The 1804 regulation in Government Minutes, March 26, 1804 SBS 1 C, SNA; C.A. Wachtmeister et al to the Board of Directors of the SWIC, March 26, 1804, *Handel och sjöfart*, vol. 190; SNA; *The Report of St. Bartholomew*, September 26, 1804.

leaving the free port of Gustavia, but they still offer some possibilities to discern some patterns if taken at face value.² Judging by these patterns, there can be at least three distinctive time-periods in the economic history of the free port. The first, beginning in 1790 and ending in 1808, conveys a process of stable growth and consolidation, albeit small. From very modest beginnings, the last decade of the 18th century saw incremental annual revenue growth with a sudden expansion in early 1800 and 1801 before the British occupation. Recovery after the Peace of Amiens was brisk, as well as the fact that the beginning of the 19th century reached similar levels as before the stop of 1801. Revenues in 1806–08 on the other hand suggests that trade contracted considerably. 1809–15, the second period, was exceptional in contrast with the preceding years. 1809 saw a sudden and significant increase of commerce. While revenues during the preceding period averaged an annual sum of 15,611 Spanish dollars, 1809–15 averaged 86,840 Spanish dollars, an increase of 82 percent over a few years. 1815 marked the peak of this high tide of commerce, before a third period of marked decline started in 1816, trailing off to pre-1800 levels by the start of the 1820s. One can of course sense some of the underlying causes for the developments in these figures in the course of the political history enveloping the region, but it is worth taking a closer look at the commerce that made up the fortunes (and misfortunes, as will be argued as well) of the free port, which will be the emphasis of the following chapters.

² “A Calculation of the Value Sums of Ships and Vessels Cargoes, which have been entered and Cleared at the Custom House of Gustavia Island of St. Bartholomew, since the beginning of the year 1796 until the Last Day of June this year 1799,” in PJ 143, FSB, ANOM. The document offers no basis for how the values were calculated, although it can be assumed with some certainty that they were based on the enumeration of cargoes in customs journals. The surviving excerpts of the 1787 customs journals shows a fairly detailed and systematic record, which would surely have produced some good estimates if combined with accurate price information. Usual caveats involve the importation of dry goods and bullion, which were notoriously difficult for customs authorities to record, and the ever present possibility of frauds and misreporting of cargoes. It is not stated whether these considerations affected the estimates in any way.

Figure 4.1 St. Barthélemy customs revenues 1791–1825



Source:; St. Barthélemy account books, 1793–1814, S:t Barthélemyssamlingen (SBS), vols. 25A–D, 30A–B, SNA; SWIC account ledgers and journals, 1787–1808, Handel och sjöfart, vol. 87–120, SNA; *The Report of Saint Bartholomew*, 11 April 1807; Fredrik Edvard Fähræus, “Statistiska upplysningar rörande svenska kolonin S:t Barthélemy” *Statistisk tidskrift* 2 (1865), 256–265.

The Outbreak of War in 1793

A “circumstance of great novelty” in the words of some observers after the outbreak of war in 1793, was that the Caribbean Sea was covered with vessels bearing the colors of the neutral powers. The principal neutral carriers in the region were now the Americans, the Danes, and the Swedes. Especially the trade of the United States trade experienced a rapid expansion with different West Indian colonies. New opportunities for trade opened on the southern continents as the war progressively undermined the Spanish and Portuguese monopolies on trade with their American colonies. The trade of belligerents found a greater need for the carrying capacity under neutral flags than ever. The great concessions that American diplomacy and liberal trade advocates could not even have imagined during the peace, was now essentially ushered in overnight. Staunch protectionism gave way for a pragmatic policy of subsistence in many colonies. The French opened their ports in 1793, and English officials in the Caribbean greatly expanded the practice of permitting trade otherwise forbidden by means of provisional proclamations.³

While colonial ports were opened to a greater extent, the war however also created the need for neutral carrying capacity. American shipping had by far the most to gain from this development. Still, statistics of issued sea-passes in St. Thomas and St Barthélemy (Figure 4.2) suggest that also Swedish and Danish carrying capacity was in demand. Pre-war issues of sea passes convey a lame level of activity, when St. Thomas vessels averaged only 30 to 40 vessels a year, while St. Barthélemy had even less. But the war seemed to have an instant effect on this, as Swedish vessels registered in higher numbers than ever, as much as 90 in the year 1793. But the phenomenon in St. Thomas, on the other hand, was unprecedented. From 1795 onwards it is as if a sizeable neutral merchant fleet simply materialized in the island. Of course, the buildup of shipping at St. Thomas started earlier, but there are not any official records of registered vessels for the two preceding years. Even so, the increase

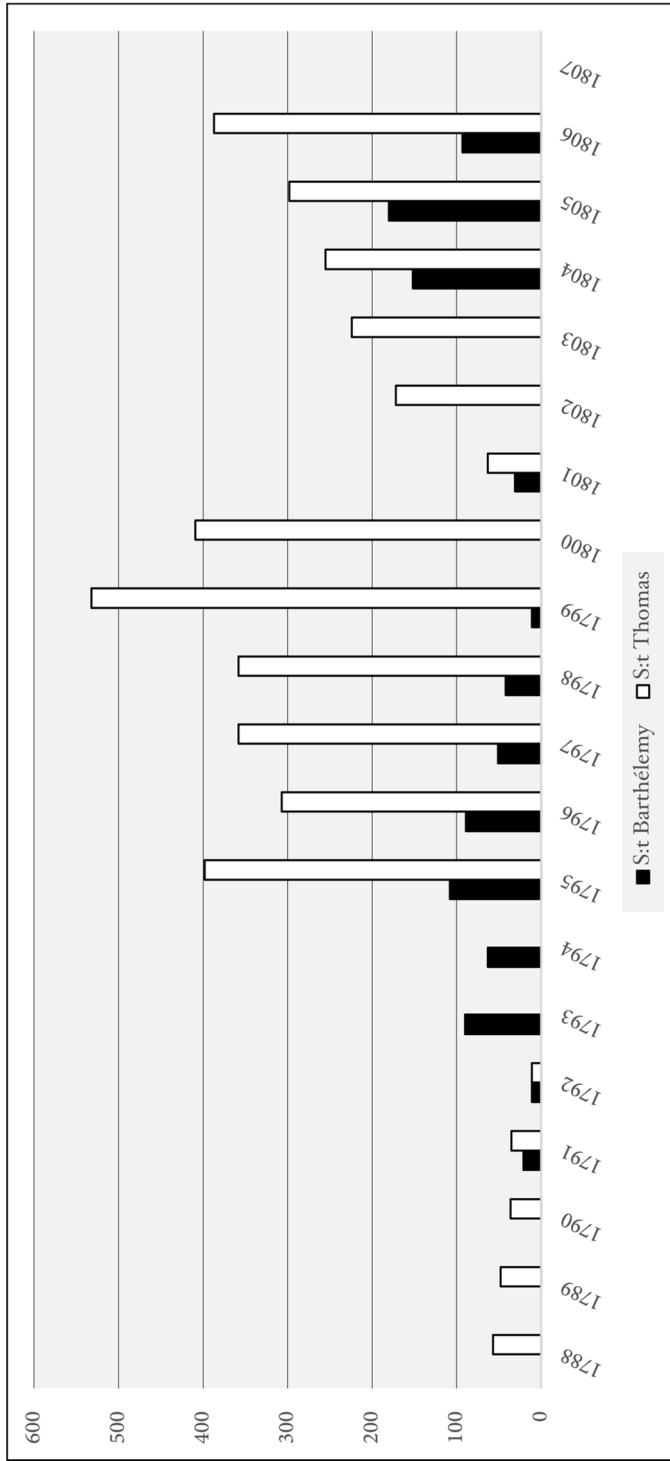
³ Quote from Observations of Archibald Gloster, 18 April 1795, FO 73/20, TNA; John H. Coatsworth, “American Trade with European Colonies in the Caribbean and South America, 1790–1812,” *The William & Mary Quarterly* 24, no. 2 (1967), 243–266; Alice B. Keith, “Relaxations in the British Restrictions on the American Trade with the British West Indies, 1783–1802,” *Journal of Modern History* 20, no. 1 (1948), 1–18.

in carrying capacity is remarkable. During the years leading up to the turn of the century and the subsequent British occupations, there was not nearly the same amount of neutral vessels registered in St. Barthélemy. The more restrictive sea pass regulations in force in St. Barthélemy as well as the larger merchant community in St. Thomas easily suggest themselves as likely causes for this discrepancy. A single telling circumstance was that island-registered ships were restricted to 20 lasts burden or less. Another measure that definitely stymied demand for Swedish ship documents was the prohibition of European-bound voyages (save for Swedish destinations). In any case, the war entailed that the governors of both St. Thomas and St. Barthélemy were granting Danish and Swedish navigation documents on a more frequent basis than ever.⁴

Other differences may also explain the fact that St. Thomas was better situated for an expansion of neutral trade. On top of institutional advantages, St. Thomas derived some benefits purely from its geographic position. The proximity of St. Thomas to the larger Caribbean colonies, especially the Spanish colonies of Puerto Rico, Santo Domingo and Cuba, but also French Saint-Domingue, conveyed some potentially lucrative opportunities for westbound traders stationed in St. Thomas. The British Vice Admiralty records of Jamaica point to the ascension of this sort of trade quite visibly. Out of the vessels libeled in the Vice Admiralty Court of Jamaica between 1793 and 1802, at least 232 of the vessels had been engaged in voyages that originated in St. Thomas. 134 were engaged in round-trips beginning and ending (at least officially) in St. Thomas. Another 27 were engaged in voyages that originated in St. Thomas, and the remaining 72 were engaged in voyages that included St. Thomas as a port of call, of which exactly half originated in the United States and the other half in other ports, mostly Caribbean. The peak year for seizures of Danish vessels was 1799, when the 82 prosecuted St. Thomas cases represented over 20 percent of the Jamaica total that year. If the passport registries of St. Thomas for the same period is compared to this data, it is evident that almost ten percent of the St. Thomas merchant fleet ended up in the clutches of the British Navy or British privateer vessels.

⁴ For the restrictions on Swedish passports and their perceived effects during this time, see Ankarheim to von Fersen, 15 July 1801, Hans Axel von Fersens samling, vol. 12, Stafsundsarkivet, SNA; and Söderström to von Ehrenheim, 14 May 1799, Diplomatica Americana, vol. 1, SNA.

Figure 4.2 Issued sea-passes for St. Thomas and St. Barthélemy vessels, 1788–1807



Sources: Udskrift af St. Jan og St. Thomas søpasprotokol 1788–1807 365/384 Vestindisk-guinesisk renteskriverkontor, Generaltoldekammeret, Ældre del, DNA; PJT, vol. 136; FSB, ANOM; AM, vol. 265, FSB, ANOM; *The Report of Saint Bartholomew 1804–1806*. Figures for St. Barthélemy are missing for the years 1788–90, 1800, and 1802–03. Figures for St. Thomas are missing for the years 1793–94. A majority of the passports (over 90 percent in St. Thomas) were issued for a duration of six months.

Navy patrolling areas around the Jamaica station were restricted to some key areas: the Yucatán Channel to the northwest, a southwest-northeasterly strip along the Rosalind Bank towards the Yucatán Peninsula, as well as the entirety of the coast of Hispaniola and the southeastern coast of Cuba. Patrolling rarely stretched as far north than the Turks and Caicos. Along these focus areas, the majority of Danish vessels were caught along the southern coastline of Hispaniola, often outside the major French and Spanish ports of Hispaniola. The corresponding seizures of Swedish vessels or vessels with some sort of affiliation to St. Barthélemy was only 25. There is nothing to suggest that British cruisers and privateers were any less likely to capture Swedish-flagged vessels, so these numbers offer some measure of understanding of the difference in activity between Swedish and Danish neutral shipping in the region. That is, of course, only the activity around the Greater Antilles. The high frequency of Danish naturalized trade in the region was due to the fact that St. Thomas was increasingly playing host to at least two great foreign channels of trade. One was the British trade with Spanish America, and the other was the American transit trade to Caribbean colonies, Saint Domingue being one of the chief ventures.⁵

It should, however, be stressed that American shipping was far from enjoying an empty field when it came to exploiting neutral carriers. An embittered Philadelphia merchant observed that Dutchmen employed the same method in the Saint Domingue coffee trade:

The Danes, or rather Dutch, under Danish colours, are powerful and jealous competitors for a share in this commerce: Their flags being also neutral, they swarm here [Saint Domingue] from St Thomas's &c. – and [...] endeavour to undersell us. The usual custom among the sellers of this article, when they arrive in town, is, at first to go into al the American stores

⁵ Udskrift af St. Jan og St. Thomas søpasprotokol 1788–1807 365/384 Vestindisk-guinesisk renteskriverkontor, Generaltoldkammeret, Ældre del, DNA. The percentage was 8.9 percent, to be exact, or 232 seizures out of a total of 2,597 registered vessels during the years 1795–1802. Many of these decisions were appealed, but still a very high proportion of the St. Thomas cases between 1793 and 1802 ended up with the complete condemnation of vessel and cargo. It is worth noting that Danish vessels libelled in Vice Admiralty Courts elsewhere in the British Caribbean are missing from these figures. See Craton, “Vice Admiralty Courts,” 287–289.

and learn the highest prices they will give, and then go and sell to a Dane for six deniers more.⁶

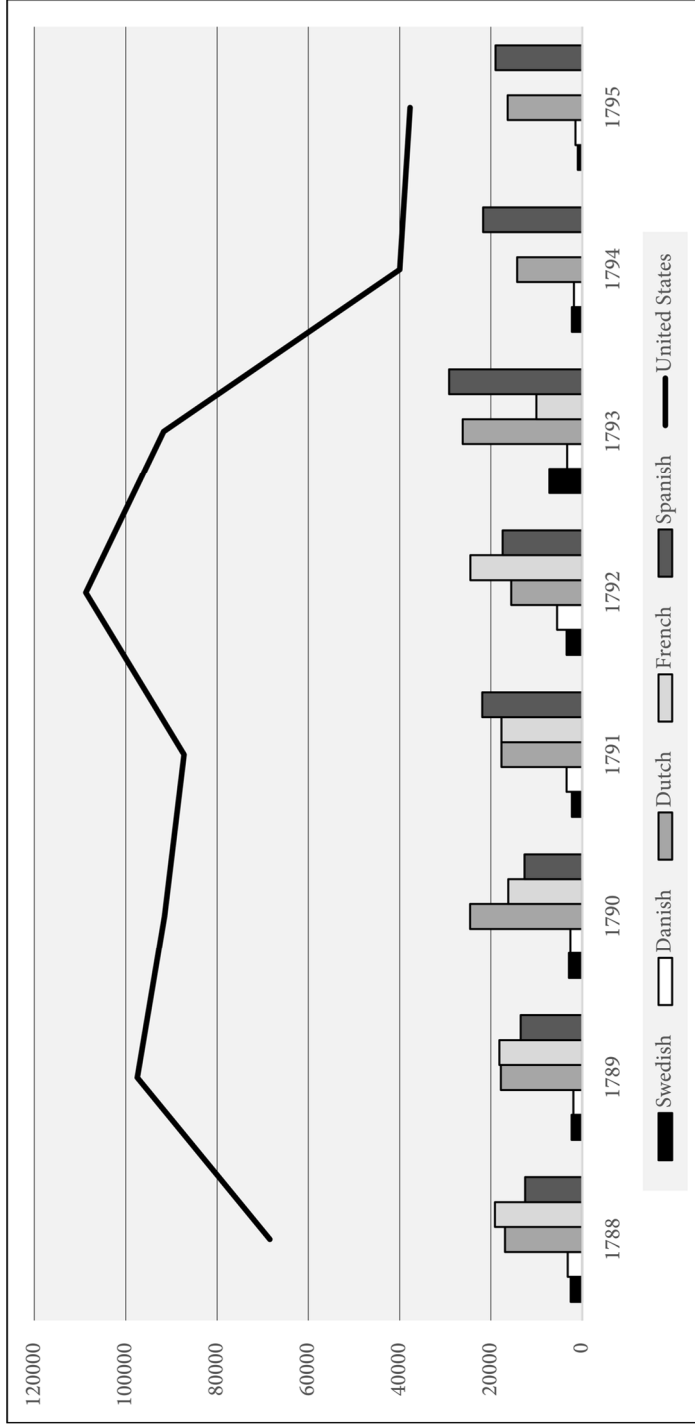
At the Danish free port itself, the greatest part of the shipping entering were “American vessels, small Spanish sloops and boats, and large English merchantmen”. It was further told that “the Americans brought in provisions, lumber and shingles, and they took out rum and sugar in return. The Spaniards exchanged German linens and English manufactured goods &c.&c., - bringing along much cash from the main land and Porto Rico.” Spaniards smuggled it into St. Thomas and exchanged it for German linens and British manufactures. The concentration of bullion and specie in St. Thomas was meaningful for British interests, as the land and sea forces in the British Caribbean demanded a steady flow of money, Jamaica often excepted, as it had its own established sources. It is nearly impossible to give an estimate of Anglo-Spanish exchanges performed in this way through St. Thomas, but some contemporary observers guessed that about two millions of dollars per was carried away from St. Thomas for British destinations on a yearly basis. British government bills of exchange were often the means of payment for these shipments of bullion, highly valuable for remittances and facilitation for international trade.⁷

It is clear that the Greater Antilles were not the most frequented markets by St. Barthélemy vessels. Another area where it did not register prominently were the British colonies (See Figures 4.3 and 4.4). In a rare compilation of statistics concerning the commerce of British free ports, the tonnages and values of shipping entering the British Caribbean are covered for the years 1788–95. Very little tonnage from Swedish, Danish or Dutch colonies entered during the years for which there is any data. Tonnage is of course a very crude measurement, but the valuations of cargoes do not suggest any differing

⁶ *Pennsylvania Gazette*, 1 April 1795; McDonald, “The Chance of the Moment”, 463–464; See also James Alexander Dun, “What avenues of commerce will you, Americans, not explore! Commercial Philadelphia’s vantage onto the early Haitian revolution,” *The William & Mary Quarterly* 62, no. 3 (2005), 473–504.

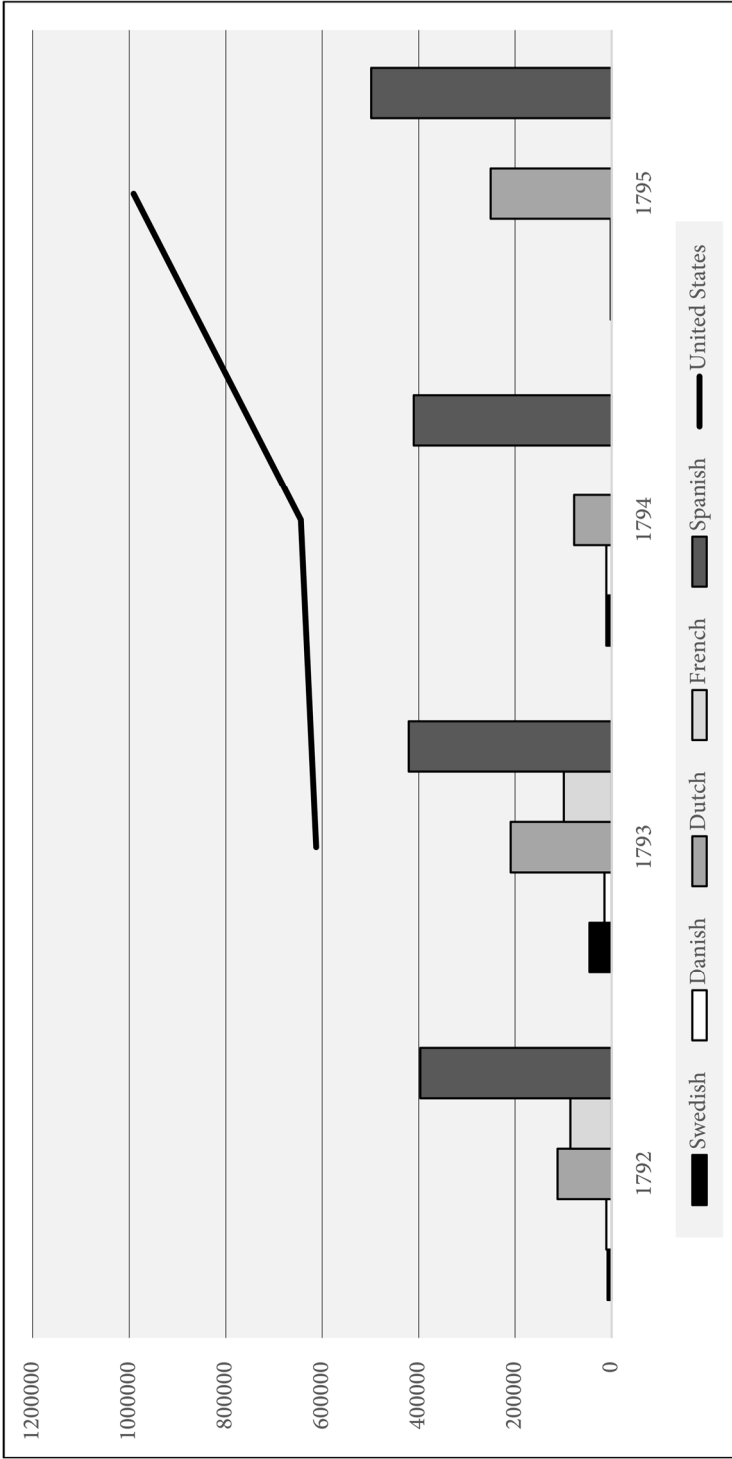
⁷ For the contemporary accounts, see Nissen, *Reminiscences*, 9, 40, 60–61; and John P. Knox, *A historical account of St. Thomas* (New York: Scribner, 1852.), 100–01; for the Anglo-Spanish trade through St. Thomas see Pearce, *British Trade with Spanish America*, 148, 201; cf. Craton, “Vice Admiralty Courts,” 212, 267.

Figure 4.3 Tonnage of shipping entering at the British Caribbean free ports, 1788–95



Sources: Customs 17/10–17 TNA; Adrian J. Pearce, *British Trade with Spanish America, 1763–1808* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press), 262.

Figure 4.4 Total registered value of imports from foreign colonies and the United States to the British Caribbean free ports, 1792–95



Sources: Customs 17/14–17, TNA; Sources: Customs 17/10–17 TNA; Adrian J. Pearce, *British Trade with Spanish America, 1763–1808* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press), 26.

conclusion. By 1794, the British free port system had been made perpetual for Jamaica, Dominica, Grenada and Nassau in the Bahamas. The free ports had been envisioned as conduits for the Anglo-Spanish trade as well as competitors to neighboring foreign free ports. Instead, the evidence from the last decade of the eighteenth century shows that the British free ports had become depots for North American goods, something which legislators in Whitehall certainly never had had in mind. American tonnage as well as cargo value far outweighed any other nations before and after the war. Danish and Swedish ships had a minuscule share in this trade. This fact is unsurprising, as the goods that were reshipped from St. Thomas or St. Barthélemy had their primary origin in the United States as Americans could carry their merchandise into British harbors directly themselves, there was no particular need for neutral middlemen in this particular branch of trade.⁸

Gustavia, the United States, and the revolutionary French Caribbean

As St. Barthélemy-affiliated commerce seemed to be conspicuously absent from most of the region during the first few years of the war, it is interesting that an anonymous author stated in *The Report of Saint Bartholomew* that the island “had become an outpost, or kind of depository and ware-house for the American West-India commerce”⁹ during the same time. In order to explain this, figures for the American trade with St. Barthélemy must be considered. Figures 4.5–7 contain official estimates of American exports to Caribbean colonies. These export statistics are compiled from reports of the US Secretary of Treasury, printed in *American State Papers*, VII, Class 4: *Commerce and Navigation* (Washington, D.C., 1832). Early US trade statistics such as these have garnered a mixed reputation, but they stand as the only foreign trade data for this period, and researchers have thus been obliged to use them. Furthermore, most of the recognized inaccuracies in the statistics occur on

⁸ For a discussion of the statistical series that these observations are based on, see Pearce, *British Trade with Spanish America*, 98–101.

⁹ “Extracts from M.S. Sketches of a political and commercial review of the island of Bartholomew...” in *The Report of St. Bartholomew*, 15 June, 1811. The text is a brief political and commercial history of the island, and spanned several numbers, was reportedly written “by a member of the court of justice”, which almost certainly was Abraham Runnels.

the *import* side. Export values, on the other hand, have been concluded to be reasonably accurate.¹⁰

Taken together, the American exports to the Swedish, Danish, and Dutch ports from 1793 to 1799 constituted about a quarter of the whole American export figure to the Caribbean. At best, St. Barthélemy stood for about 5 percent of this commerce, which in itself is not inconsiderable as the volume of American trade grew prodigiously during the war. From 1795 to 1801 the average annual value of the goods exported in American bottoms to St. Barthélemy was \$685,000, and the annual value of the imports to American harbors from St. Barthélemy during the same period, was \$500,000.¹¹ Danish and Dutch ports drew comparably more traffic from the North American mainland than Gustavia did during the 1790s, but the difference was fairly uniform up until the years 1798–1799, when exports to Danish and Dutch ports peaked, totaling 8.5 million dollars together in the year 1799. This trade never reached these levels again after the Peace of Amiens. Gustavia meanwhile did not experience the same surge before the turn of the century, or at least not according to the official statistics.

To explain this difference, the trajectory of the American trade to South America needs to be elaborated. A large part of the American exports were directed towards French colonies. US exports to the French Caribbean exceeded those to the British and Spanish islands during the early years of the war, from 1793 to 1798. The largest part of these exports could be carried directly in American bottoms, but there were at least two pressing reasons for Americans to employ an indirect route to French ports by way of neutral free ports or neutral flags. One was the increasingly hostile British stance towards neutral shipping after 1793. The British Orders-in-Council issued the same year, along with the arrival of admiral Jervis in the Caribbean, signaled the coming of a time of increasing maritime depredations of British cruisers and

¹⁰ It was not until 1820 that United States import values were collected. Official figures for the years before 1820 were estimated only as late as 1835. For a discussion of the source material, see for example Douglass C. North, “The United States Balances of Payments, 1790–1860,” *Trends in the American Economy in the Nineteenth Century* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1960), 198–199; Douglass C. North, *The Economic Growth of the United States, 1790 to 1860* (Prentice Hall, Englewood Cliffs, 1961), 24–25, 270–271; and Coatsworth, “American Trade,” 243–266.

¹¹ Timothy Pitkin, *A Statistical View of the Commerce of the United States of America: Its connections with Agriculture and Manufactures: and an Account of the Public Debt, Revenues, and Expenditures of the United States* (Hartford: Hosmer, 1816), 198–199.

privateers alike. Any vessel detained and suspected of carrying French property or carrying on trade with the French colonies were considered good prize, and American ships were especially targeted during the early years of the war.¹² The other reason were the deteriorating relations between the two young republics. Unresolved issues after the American War of Independence as well as the political course taken by the United States after the Jay Treaty with Britain led to a state of undeclared war between the United States and France, also known as the Quasi-War. In practice this meant that American merchant ships were no longer safe from the hostilities of French privateers. French privateers were arming in increasing numbers in Guadeloupe after its recapture from the British in 1794.¹³

It is important to note that the American trade to the French colonies contracted at the same time as trade to the neutral ports (Dutch included) increased in 1799. This was the likely result of an American ban on commercial intercourse with the French colonies following in the wake of the Quasi-War. Enterprising American merchants sought to circumvent domestic legislation by assuming neutral burgher rights, and Danish papers were very sought after. The Swedish consul Richard Söderström reported from Philadelphia in 1799 that the U.S. Admiralty Court had recently concluded a number of cases that had been initiated against “new-made Danes” engaged in the forbidden French trade. Problems of this kind were quite serious at this time, and any merchant adventurous enough to try his luck in this kind of operation was in risk of facing prosecution in US courts. Söderström had to his relief not received any information about Americans masquerading as Swedes for the same purpose, and it was thought to be less common for Americans to assume Swedish burgher rights in this way.¹⁴

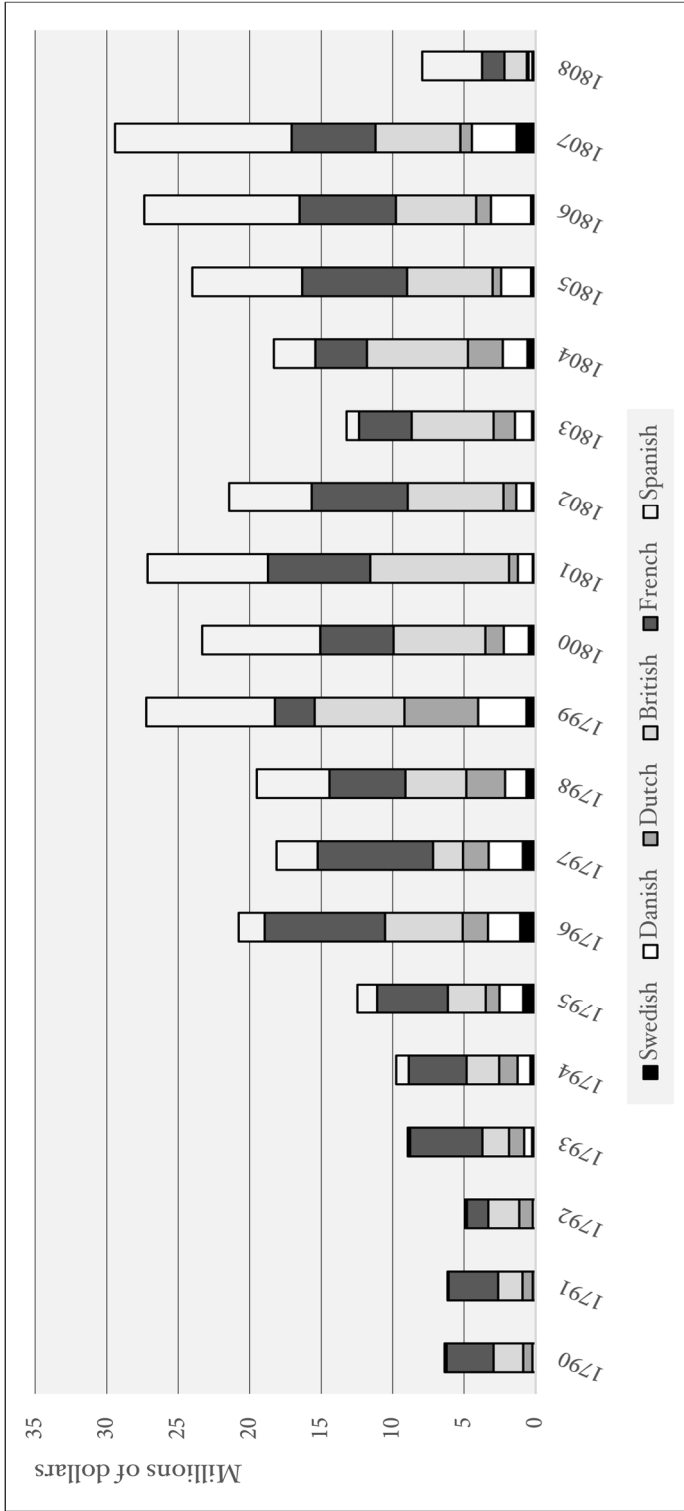
The case of American trade to the Dutch colonies on the other hand had less to do with the exploitation of foreign neutrality, but it was also at least

¹² Clauder, “American Commerce,” 30–34.

¹³ Michel Rodigneaux & H el ene Servant, “La guerre de course aux Antilles 1793–1810,” *Bulletin de la Soci et e d’histoire de la Guadeloupe* (2005), 13–39.

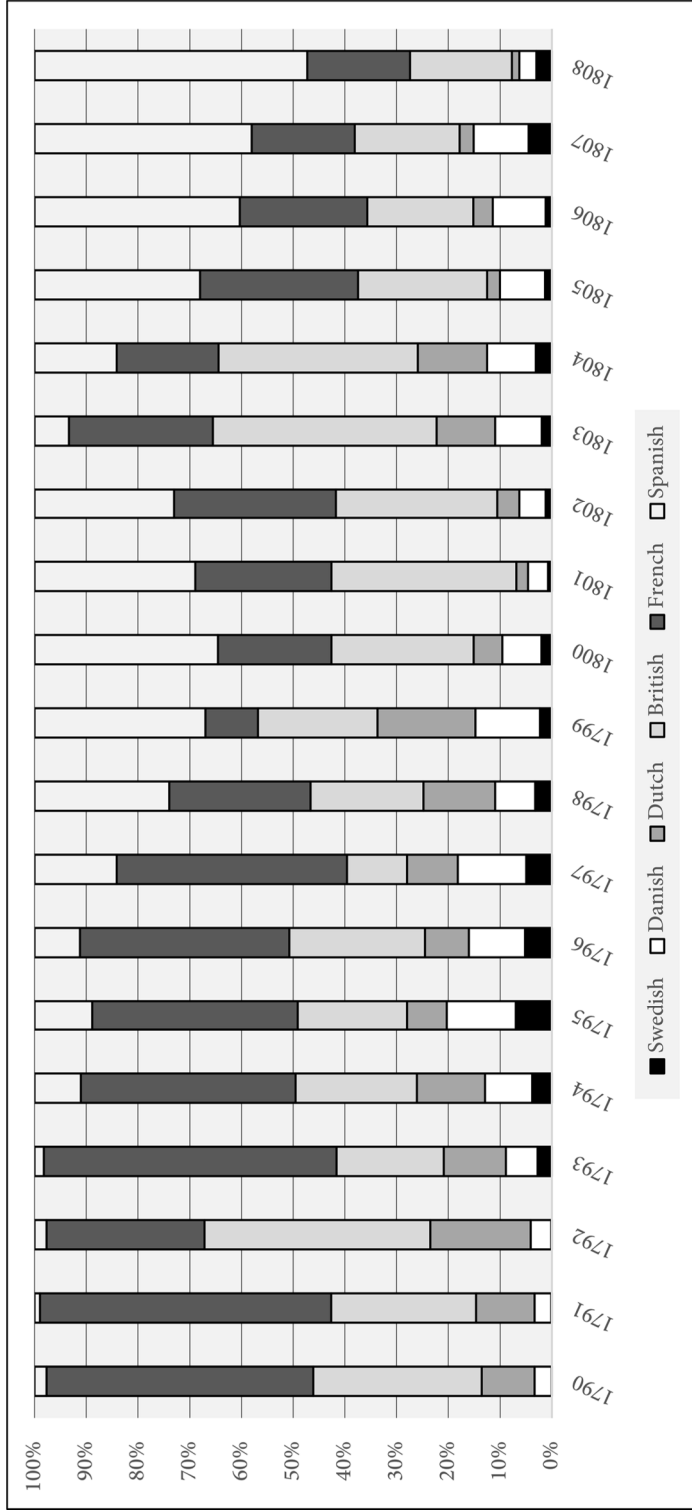
¹⁴ S oderstr om to von Ehrenheim, 14 May 1799, *Diplomatica Americana*, vol. 1, SNA.

Figure 4.5 Values of American exports to Caribbean and South American colonies, 1790–1808



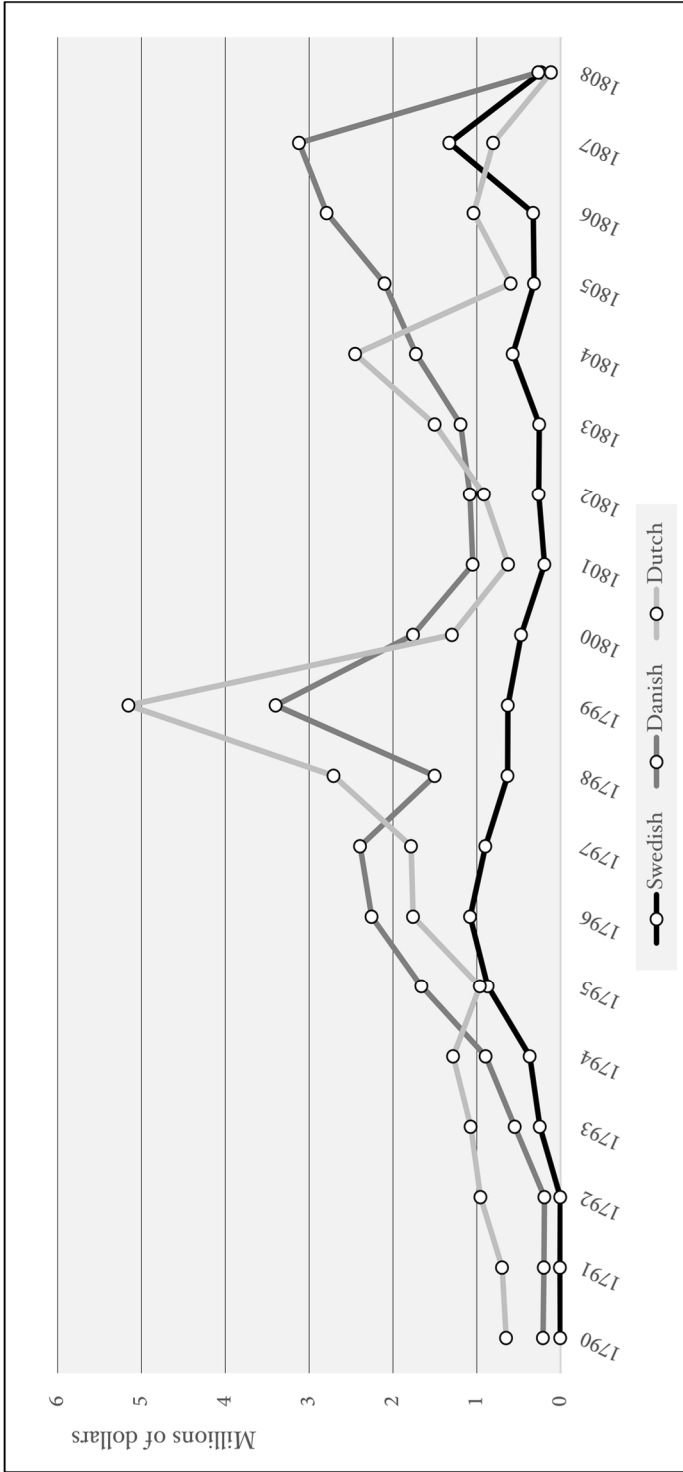
Sources: John H. Coatsworth, “American trade with European Colonies in the Caribbean and South America, 1790–1812.” *The William & Mary Quarterly* 24, no. 2, 248–266; American State Papers, Class IV: Commerce and Navigation, vol. 1, 34, 138, 248, 312, 342, 362, 384, 417, 431, 453, 489, 507, 543, 590, 671, 696, 721, 738, 815.

Figure 4.6 Proportions of US exports to Caribbean and South American colonies, 1790–1808



Sources: John H. Coatsworth, 'American trade with European Colonies in the Caribbean and South America, 1790–1812.' *The William & Mary Quarterly* 24, no. 2, 248–266; American State Papers, Class IV: Commerce and Navigation, vol. 1, 34, 138, 248, 312, 342, 362, 384, 417, 431, 453, 489, 507, 543, 590, 671, 696, 721, 738, 815.

Figure 4.7 Estimated values of US exports to Swedish, Danish and Dutch ports in the Caribbean, 1790–1808



Source: American State Papers, Class IV: Commerce and Navigation, vol. 1, 34, 138, 248, 312, 342, 362, 384, 417, 431, 453, 489, 507, 543, 590, 671, 696, 721, 738, 815.

partly a result of Franco-American trade being circumvented through other channels than before. Considering the commodity of coffee, statistics would have that Americans increasingly directed their purchases of coffee to the Dutch West and East Indies towards the close of the century. It is however highly probable that a considerable quantity of the coffee coming from the Dutch colonies in 1798 and onwards had originated somewhere else. American imports of coffee leaped from 3.9 million pounds in 1797 to more than 10 million pounds the following years. The Dutch produced coffee in their Caribbean colonies, but it is impossible that they produced quantities sufficient to explain this increase. It is more likely that Dutch merchants, as well as others, reshipped Saint-Domingue coffee and other commodities to the United States during the Quasi-War.¹⁵

Gustavia's place in the overall scheme of Franco-American trade was somewhat different. American merchants did indeed resort to Gustavia as a port of convenience. Expeditions like the ones made by the American brigs *Nancy* and *Sally* from Philadelphia in 1794 and 1795 were examples of such a scenario. The vessels were owned by the prominent Philadelphia merchant Stephen Girard. Placed under the command of Captain Paul Post, *Nancy* was insured for \$3500 and carried a cargo insured for \$10,000. The captain of the *Nancy* received instructions to make sail for "St. Bartholomew and a market." The cargo was not to be sold unless at an advance of 40 percent on the invoice valuation of \$12,639. If this condition was not met, the Captain was to go to any neutral or other ports not blockaded by belligerents, and sell the cargo there instead. Girard requested that the brig return with a cargo of green coffee. *Sally* also sailed for St. Barthélemy, "or a market in the West Indies" in December, with a cargo valued at \$23,414. Before the latter ship's departure for the Swedish colony, she had returned to Philadelphia in November from Aux Cayes of Saint-Domingue with a cargo of sugar, coffee, and cotton. Girard, born a Frenchman, had since long specialized in the trade to the French Caribbean, and at the time of these expeditions, he was heavily involved in the flour trade to Saint-Domingue as so many other Philadelphia merchants. Expeditions specifically headed towards St. Barthélemy and other neutral islands were comparatively rare occurrences in his overall business

¹⁵ McDonald, "The Chance of the Moment," 463-64.

operation. Neutral ports as primary destinations made some practical sense. American traders could make free ports such as Gustavia their first place of landing, and only then inquire about market conditions, trying to find the most prudent way of selling their cargo.¹⁶

The evidence suggests that reaching greater colonial markets such as Hispaniola and Cuba safely was more difficult from St. Barthélemy than St. Thomas, which would entail that merchants basing their ventures from the island had fewer options. But there was a steady link of cabotage in small and fast sailing boats to the French colonies of Martinique and Guadeloupe to the southeast. This kind of traffic was a time-honored institution, as it had been established and frequently pursued during the inter-war years.¹⁷

The relationship between Guadeloupe and St. Barthélemy however deteriorated very badly as a result of a string of controversies surrounding the activities of French privateers and citizens caught in legal quandaries in the Swedish colony. The colonies were economically linked as before, but the French authorities in Guadeloupe became more and more adamant that the representatives of the Republic would dictate the terms of the relationship. In November of 1796, Victor Hugues finally turned completely on the neutral islands. In an instruction to Bigard, he explained that “it is time for us to put an end to the violation of neutrality in St. Barthélemy since it is now populated by our enemies.” He called for the repatriation of all French citizens now living in St. Barthélemy. All the French-controlled ports, including the Dutch, he informed Bigard, were now off-limits to Swedish ships. But, on a conciliatory note, he added that “honest Swedes” could be offered “all possible assistance” as to the needs of their colony. Bigard was encouraged to tell the Swedes that their prior help in sheltering “true Frenchmen” should never be forgotten, and that the French authorities have

¹⁶ John Bach McMaster, *The Life and Times of Stephen Girard: Mariner and Merchant* (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1918), 280; Albert J. Gares, “Stephen Girard’s West Indian Trade, 1789–1812,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, LXXII (1948), 311–342. At least one of the expeditions turned awry, as the *Nancy* never reached Gustavia. She was captured by a French privateer and taken to Petit Canal, Guadeloupe, where the captain was brought in for a forced sale of the cargo; Cf. Williams, *The French Assault*, 257.

¹⁷ Öström to Reimers, 10 January 1795, *Handel och sjöfart*, vol. 169, SNA; Pérotin-Dumon, “Cabotage, Contraband, and Corsairs,” 64–67.

only been “forced to take these measures for the sake of the honor of the Government they represent.”¹⁸

French privateers were thus ordered to steer clear of St. Barthélemy, and French merchants being found near its waters would no longer enjoy the protection of the French government. French privateering now spared no ship, whether American, Dutch, British, Danish or Swedish. It is quite evident that although Hugues probably felt genuine regret over the measure, he was eager to root out elements in the free port traffic that did business with the British colonies. Individual merchants known to have British connections were often singled out. A case in point was the capture of the Swedish brig *Hedvig*, captain Magnus Andersson, in the vicinity of Antigua in 1796, by the sloop *Le Rienzy*, captain Bastien Navarre. The brig and its cargo was the sole property of the house of Röhl & Hansen. The cargo consisted of naval stores, tar, bar and sheet iron, canvas, lampblack, and red wine. The brig and cargo was deemed good prize since it had carried contrabands of war, it was stated.¹⁹

Especially problematic for Gustavia was that the vital American export traffic as well as the island’s own ships was preyed upon regularly. The American consul in Gustavia sent repeated pleas to the Swedish Governor whenever instances of seized American merchantmen arose. It was not unusual that American ships were pulled into Gustavia for auctioning by the French bounty court, even despite Hugues’ orders of 1796. The Governor was powerless to help with redress, as the French bounty court and Bigard could not be persuaded in such cases. Even the Swedish government was opposed to the Swedish court of the island meddling with the French revolutionary

¹⁸ The whole section pertaining to St. Barthélemy goes as follows: “Il est temps que nous fassions cesser la violation de la neutralité à Saint-Barthélemy puisqu’il se peuple de nos ennemis. [...] Vous intimerez le même ordre [de quitter l’île] à tous les corsairs particuliers et autres bâtiments français, sous peine de leur retirer leur commission et punir le capitaine de désobéissance et aux bâtiments marchands de perdre la protection du Gouvernement. Tous les ports français et ceux hollandais sous la protection de la France sont fermés au Suédois pour le commerce et n’y seront reçus que par relâche pour cause d’avarie. Vous ferez offer [...] aux honnêtes suédois, de toute assistance possible soit en vivres, eau et autres objets pour les besoins de leur colonie. Vous leur direz que nous ne pourrons jamais oublier que Saint-Barthélemy a été jadis l’asile des vrais Français, et que nous sommes forces de prendre ces mesures pour l’honneur du Gouvernement que nous représentons.” Hugues to Bigard, 3 November 1796 (13 brumaire an V), C7A 49, f. 54; Cf. Rodigneaux, *Guerre de course*, 101; See also Norderling to SWIC, 12 November 1795, *Handel och sjöfart*, vol. 169, SNA.

¹⁹ Dreyer to SWIC, 24 December 1796 & 4 July 1797, Fahlberg to SWIC, 25 May 1797, *Handel och sjöfart*, vol. 169, SNA; Rodigneaux, *La guerre de course*, 280–81.

authorities. This was illustrated in full force in the case of the American brig *Polly* of Portland, captain Joseph Clement. The 182-ton brig had left London in October of 1796, heading for Norfolk. It was however seized in late March of 1797 by the French privateer *L'Amour de la Patrie* and subsequently brought into Gustavia. Captain Clement's papers and some of the crew were sent to Guadeloupe. Af Trolle however then seized the brig, and asked for instructions from Stockholm regarding the proper course of action. The measure was disapproved by royal orders, and Gustav IV Adolf decreed that the vessel and cargo be turned over to the captors. The orders expressed that there was no provision in the Swedish-American commercial treaty that necessitated such actions from the Swedish government on the island. This situation suggests a likely cause why the American exports were at such a low level in Gustavia compared to the Danish and Dutch ports.²⁰

The French commerce brought in by the bounty court surely compensated in some part for missing U.S. shipping, which is supported by a comparison of the rising customs revenues of St. Barthélemy with the estimates of American exports to the Swedish colony, the former of which were at a low point at the turn of the century. It is however extremely difficult to arrive at any estimates of the significance of the French trade. Swedish Governors were officially quite silent on the matter, but it is clear that they acknowledged it as an important part of the island economy. Governors entertained a regular correspondence with French authorities on Guadeloupe regarding commercial as well as political affairs throughout the period in question.²¹

This was of course not a situation Swedish administrators were entirely content with. It was by no means a result of conscious, deliberate policy. The emigration waves from the French colonies along with the nature of the free port institution had made St. Barthélemy a kind of French proxy colony. Certainly the island was bound to be regarded more as a French than Swedish

²⁰ Af Trolle's report 27 May 1797, SBS 1B:2, SNA; Gustav IV Adolf to af Trolle, 14 September 1797, ES 286, FSB ANOM; William, *The French Assault*, 287.

²¹ Wernberg to SWIC, 24 April 1795, Handel och sjöfart, vol. 169, SNA; Norderling to SWIC, 13 July 1795, Handel och sjöfart, vol. 169, SNA; Pérotin-Dumon, "Témoignages," 17–21. See also the memoirs of the French privateer captain Jean Landolphe for numerous references to the French privateer traffic in St. Barthélemy in J.S. Quesne, *Mémoires du Capitaine Landolphe, conenant l'histoire de ses voyages pendant trente-six ans aux côtes d'Afrique et aux deux Amériques* (Paris : Betrand, 1832), II: 207, 212, 216, 233, 244.

by the British. The French recapture of Guadeloupe in December of 1794 had already raised eyebrows in the British camp. The island had been in British hands since the end of April, but had ultimately been overrun by the combined forces of the French *commissaire* Victor Hugues, in an action “as unforeseen as unexpected” for the British. Questions were being raised as to how the French, now without a single viable bridgehead in the Caribbean to support such a mission, could have pulled it off. The neutral islands and free ports in the Caribbean were being viewed with increasing skepticism after this event, and especially St. Barthélemy was seen as having a decided partiality to “the French cause”. Rumors and various intelligence reports about the contacts between neutrals and the French colonies were rampant, and created sensational reports such as the following excerpt shows:

The moment Pointe-a-Pitre was known to be Recaptured, St. Thomas and St Bartholomew vomited forth the numerous Partizans that had there apparently waited for such an Event. Danish and Swedish Bottoms were devoted to their service and carried up Men, Provisions and warlike Stores of all Denominations and in return they were busily employed in Transporting from Pointe-a-Pitre and the out Ports, the rich Booty which this daring and Succesful Enterprize of the Republicans had recaptured from Great Britain and from the unfortunate Royalists.²²

An event which dispelled any lingering doubts about the collusion between the French colonies and St. Barthélemy was the affair with the brigantine *Le Courrier*. She was captured by a British vessel off of Guadeloupe on the morning of December 16th, 1794. She was sailing under Swedish colors and under the command of Aaron Johan du Bordieu, the Swedish place major of St. Barthélemy. After an inspection, the British officers found enough incriminating evidence onboard as to send her immediately to the Vice Admiralty court in Antigua. Three French officers and two British deserters were found on board, as well as a cargo of gunpowder. The brigantine was reportedly headed for St. Barthélemy, and was said to have been purchased by du Bordieu in Pointe-à-Pitre from Victor Hugues. There were a lot of diverging testimonies regarding the affair. The ship had enough supplies

²² Archibald Gloster, “Observations upon the conduct of the Neutral Powers in the West Indies since the Commencement of the War,” 18 April 1795, F.O. 73/20.

loaded onboard for a voyage to Europe, and it was told by various witnesses that the ship either was bound for Gothenburg in order to purchase supplies for the French colonies, or to France with important despatches. The ship had originally been a British merchant ship, and had recently been captured by French privateers. Whatever the reality behind the different allegations, the case showed that Swedish authorities themselves colluded with the revolutionary leadership of Guadeloupe. The ship, along with its cargo, was condemned as good prize in Antigua.²³

The place major du Bordieu had in fact been engaged in many expeditions to the French colonies, parlaying about commercial affairs and running correspondence between the islands. Swedish shipping from Gustavia had been running into British vigilance at sea since before the start of the war, as attested by the bulging dossiers of complaints by merchants and ship-owners that were sent to Stockholm and London. But after the *Courrier* affair British skepticism towards Swedish neutrality turned into outright hostility. Admiral Jervis promised “execution” to the island of St. Barthélemy.²⁴ The free port of Gustavia then, after a promising start, was already facing external threats. That is, the commerce of the island was besieged both by French and British military action at sea, and its professed neutrality was nullified by the close ties to the revolutionary French Caribbean. Gustavia’s place in the Caribbean transit trade during the early years of the war was primarily as a conduit between Martinique and Guadeloupe and the other markets in the Americas, primarily the United States. American shipping was however far from protected in going into Gustavia, which is showed by regular attempts at redress of American traders in St. Barthélemy. The Swedish authorities were too heavily influenced by the *commissaires* of Guadeloupe to address the worst effects of revolutionary activities and privateering.²⁵

Still, despite the British reports about the collusion between the neutral islands and the French colonies, the British government did not act before

²³ CO 152/77, TNA; Norderling to SWIC, June 30, 1796, Handel och sjöfart vol. 169, SNA; Anne Pérotin-Dumon, “Témoignages,” 17–21; Hildebrand, *Den svenska kolonin*, 276–277; Lydia Wahlström, *Sverige och England under revolutionskrigens början: Bidrag till den Reuterholmska regeringens historia* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1917), 235–238.

²⁴ Jervis to Bagge, 18 June 1794, FO 73/18, TNA; Bagge to Jervis, 27 June 1794, SBS 1 B, vol. 2, SNA.

²⁵ Wall to Pickering, 5 August, 24 October & 31 December 1799, M72:1, RG 59, NARA.

the formation of the Second League of Armed Neutrality in 1800. Orders were swiftly sent out the naval stations in the Caribbean to seize the Danish and Swedish islands, and they were swept up during the summer of 1801 without much resistance. On the morning of the 19th of March 1801, a group of about 16 sail were spotted far to the south of St. Barthélemy. It was a British expedition from Antigua which was headed for the island with the goal of capturing it. The Swedish administration was well aware that British hostilities might lead to an occupation well before this day, and the French agents of Guadeloupe had even offered the assistance of two companies for the defense of the island. The condition was however to surrender the command of St. Barthélemy, which the Governor, H.H. Ankarheim, could not accept.²⁶ The British expeditionary force landed on the 20th of March, and after the exchanges of terms of capitulation, the St. Barthélemy convened for an emergency meeting where it was decided to accept the British terms and not to put up any resistance. St. Barthélemy was the first neutral island to be captured by the British in this year, whereas St. Thomas, St John, St. Croix and St. Martin were occupied a few weeks after.

4.2 The Transit Trade after the British occupation of 1801

The British lockdown of the neutral islands meant that the transit trade ground to a halt. Freedom of movement was circumscribed for the colony's inhabitants. Confiscations of both private and crown property was quite widespread despite the efforts of the Governor, and the conduct of British soldiers were described as that "of pirates and brigands".²⁷ When the orders of occupation had been sent from London, it had been stated very clearly that the seizure would be of a temporary nature. The British had no intention of keeping the Danish and Swedish islands, and the conflict in Europe was approaching a temporary truce. Furthermore, in the summer of 1801 after

²⁶ Dundas to Trigge, 14 January 1801, WO 1/90, TNA; Trigge to Dundas, 22 March 1801, WO 1/90, TNA; Duckworth to Nepean, 27 March 1801, ADM 1/323; Ankarheim's report, 21 March 1801, SBS 1 C, SNA

²⁷ Bergstedt's memorial, SWIC Minutes 2 September 1803, Handel och sjöfart, vol. 157, SNA.

Nelson's victory in Copenhagen, Denmark, Sweden and Russia started negotiating with Great Britain about surrendering the policy of armed neutrality, a process which was completed in the following year. Arrangements were made for the return of St. Barthélemy after this, and on the 10th of July 1802 the remaining British forces departed the island. If we lend full credence to the reports and letters of Swedish officials. The British left the island in a state of destitution. Many had lost their means of income and subsistence, especially the urban residents. Meanwhile, the recess from war did not bring about any immediate prospects for business at the free port. But this situation would not last longer than twenty months, and in 1803 the activity in the harbor had regained the same pace as before the occupation.²⁸

The best wide-ranging commercial records in Gustavia during this time is supplied by the island's newspaper, which carried a section named 'Port Intelligence' in which were recorded the arriving vessels, their names and their captains, as well as their previous port of departure and their cargo. Cargoes were however never enumerated except in the occasional arrivals of slaves, as shown in chapter 3. It is thus impossible to arrive at an estimation of quantities and values of cargoes, but the assortment of cargoes can create some basic understanding of the patterns of trade. Nationalities of ships were noted for over 80 percent of the arrivals, and the information on the ports of destination is another instance of uncertainty and vagueness. A majority of vessels were referred to as arriving from "the Islands", most certainly meaning nearby islands in the Lesser Antilles. Despite these considerable limitations, an analysis of the information contained in *The Report of St. Bartholomew* can supply a substantial understanding about the scope, intensity and pattern of commercial activity through Gustavia during 1804–06.²⁹

The data suggests a slow recovery of the free port in the wake of the British occupation (Tables 4.1 and 4.2). A total of 2,708 arrivals are included in a

²⁸ Dundas to Trigge, 16 June 1801, WO 1/90, TNA; Ankarheim's report, 22 July 1802, SBS 1 C, SNA.

²⁹ It is possible in some cases to complement this information with the surviving ship manifests in M 1, FSB, ANOM, which include detailed information on cargoes. These are however far from complete. The volume contains manifests for 1805, 1809 and 1819. The 1805 manifests are the most extensive, but still they contain only 95 instances of arrivals and departures, of a total of 1,402 arrivals as recorded for the same year in *The Report of St. Bartholomew*. For the creation of the newspaper and its intended use, see SWIC Minutes, 26 March 1804, Handel och sjöfart, vol. 157, SNA.

dataset based on the Port Intelligence section of 1804–06. 1805 offers the most complete figures, and provides a general picture of trade after the resumption of war. St. Barthélemy-registered ships dominated the traffic through Gustavia. In 1805, these ships stood for 1,051 arrivals and thus represented 75 percent of the total. The second largest presence was, as before, American ships, with 211 arrivals. The Danish and British were also visible, with 74 and 59 arrivals respectively. Spanish and French vessels landed infrequently, and others exceedingly were rare, such as Hamburger, Prussian, and Austrian ships, of which there were a few odd sightings during the years covered, arriving from various locations in the North Sea. Judging by the assortment of cargoes, the American ships laying anchor in Gustavia were invariably the most diverse and in all probability carried the largest cargoes. The American schooner *Diana*, captain Engelhardt, arrived from Norfolk in Gustavia in the fall of 1805 with a cargo consisting of 1,983 feet of lumber, 10,000 shingles, 200 bushels of corn, 10 hogsheads of tobacco, 18 tierces of nails, 6,000 hoops, 25 barrels of pilot bread, 75 barrels of navy bread and 30 barrels of ship bread, “all American produce”. The totality the cargo was unloaded and sold, and the *Diana* proceeded to St. Kitts with a smaller assortment of wares, 31,254 feet of boards, 50 shooks, 56 headings and 9,780 cypress shingles. The *Diana*, being one of the few American ships doing business in Gustavia of which there survives a more detailed record, is also important as it gives an impression of the size of ships and cargoes involved in this trade.³⁰

There were good reasons for this kind of variety in a single cargo. It was mainly aimed at the risk of glutting the small island markets with any one article of merchandise, but it was also a result of the often haphazard ways in which the export cargoes were collected on the continent. Goods were often bought at a number of locations on the North American coast before an expedition had assembled a viable cargo. Thus, American ships would traverse various suitable islands, gather intelligence about market and price conditions and sell parts of their cargoes as they went whenever suitable. In time, their

³⁰ Manifest of the schooner *Diana*, signed Gustavia, 5 November 1805, M 1, FSB, ANOM. The same vessel apparently made several intra-Caribbean round-trips during the following months, arriving again in Gustavia on the 14th of November and the 24th of December, in ballast on both occasions. See *The Report of St. Bartholomew*, 21 November, 1805 and 25 January, 1806. The initial arrival from Norfolk was not recorded in the *Report*.

outward cargo would be sold and their holds laden with a return cargo of colonial goods. Still, in some cases, a single stop was enough if conditions were favorable. This was the case for the Alexandrian schooner *Sampson*, captain Jesse Cox, which landed in Gustavia in early July of 1805, negotiated its cargo of 566 barrels of flour, 60 half-barrels of crackers, 42 bags of bread, 10,000 shingles and could return to Alexandria loaded with 58 casks and 140 barrels of muscovado sugar.³¹

Table 4.1 Gustavia arrivals, Flags of Vessels, 1804–1806

	1804*		1805		1806**	
	Total	Ballast	Total	Ballast	Total	Ballast
Sweden	199	83	1,051	576	401	211
USA	37	1	192	19	49	7
Denmark	25	12	74	35	9	9
Great Britain	8	3	59	21	32	10
France	5	-	7	3	9	2
Spain	10	2	8	4	-	-
Other/Unknown	513	-	11	-	-	-

Table 4.2 Gustavia arrivals, Ports of departure, 1804–1806

	1804*		1805		1806**	
	Total	Ballast	Total	Ballast	Total	Ballast
Caribbean	640	102	1,426	651	468	237
North America	91	-	102	-	31	-
South America	32	-	19	9	1	-
Europe	20	-	26	1	4	-
Africa	1	-	3	-	-	-
Other/Unknown	3	-	8	4	3	3

*Figures are limited to March 25 – December 30, 1804.

**Figures are limited to January 1 – June 16, 1806.

Source: Wilson dataset on the transit trade of St. Barthélemy and St. Thomas (2015); *The Report of Saint Bartholomew* 1804, 1805 & 1806.

The mainstay of American exports was flour, nearly half of the ships carried some quantity of it with them. Victuals unsurprisingly comprised the bulk of

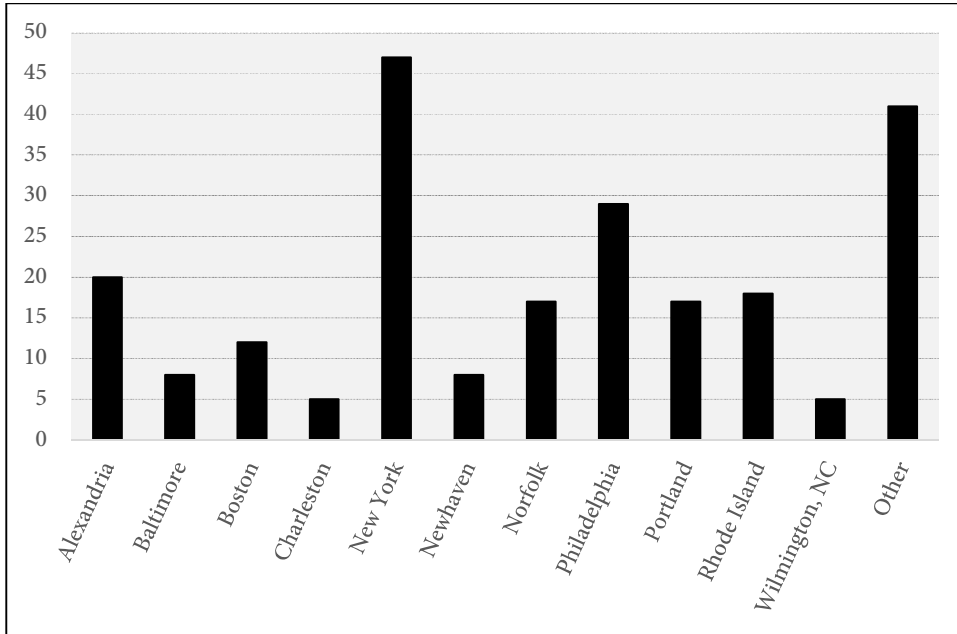
³¹ Manifest of the schooner *Sampson*, signed Gustavia 22 July 1805, M 1, FSB, ANOM.

the American produce carried to Gustavia. Corn, corn- and rye meal, rice, barley, peas, beans and onions were some of the most usual agricultural products carried. As for proteins, bovine, dairy and pork products far outweighed fish proportionally in terms of occurrence in cargoes. Derivatives of the fishing industry were far more common than fish itself, such as different oils, fats and tallows as well as spermaceti candles. Besides provisions, American holds were filled with essentials for construction, shipbuilding and the Caribbean export economy. Lumber, boards and especially shingles were well represented, as well as shooks, staves and hoops for making indispensable barrels for exportation. Masts, spars, pitch, tar and cordage were sparse imports, present only in a few odd ships. There was also a small proportion of tobacco as well as wine, Madeira and other spirits imported. Presumably the tobacco had its origins in Virginia as it was a common American staple, but liquors other than rum were likely to be re-exports.

In general it can be said that cargoes carried with American ships would seem to have been mostly American in origin. Official American estimates recorded the share of foreign to domestic produce exported on American ships from 1803 onwards, and these figures display that American produce outweighs re-exports in the trade to St. Barthélemy. In 1804, the proportion of American to foreign produce exported to St. Barthélemy was 70.3 percent, in 1805 66.5 percent and in 1806, 65.2 percent. The remaining shares of foreign re-exports consisted, in most part, by British and other European manufactures. The Gustavia records and manifests cannot reveal any details about this trade, as manufactures were nearly always concealed behind the ubiquitous, catch-all category of dry goods. The relatively high share of foreign re-exports might also be a consequence of the more mixed and itinerary American trade to neutral islands, as opposed to the trade to British colonies, for example. In every year from 1803 to 1812, domestic American exports accounted for more than 89 percent of all US exports to the British Caribbean. These figures reflect the degree of the British naval presence in the Caribbean and the fact that British merchants were well situated to

maintain commercial contact with their colonies without resorting to neutral carriers on a larger scale, at least when it came to manufactured goods.³²

Figure 4.8 Ports of departure of arriving American ships, 1804–06



Source: The Report of Saint Bartholomew 1804, 1805 & 1806. Wilson dataset on the transit trade of St. Barthélemy and St. Thomas (2015).

Looking at geographic provenience (Figure 4.8), the majority of American ships unsurprisingly came from two large commercial centers on the North American seaboard, New York and Philadelphia. Together they represented 33.7 percent of the American shipping that landed in Gustavia during 1804–06. The Chesapeake region was generally well represented, and ships also came from Saco, Salem, Georgetown, New Bern, Newburyport, Savannah and Swansborough. Thirteen of the American arrivals had not departed directly from US ports, but came from various Dutch and French ports.

The Swedish ships were a different matter altogether. They carried into Gustavia considerably smaller assortments of goods. Barthélemy ships consisted generally of small sloops and schooners, utilized mainly in the intra-

³² American State Papers, Class IV: Commerce and Navigation, vol 1, 590, 671, 696. For total values, see Figures 4.10 and 4.11; Coatsworth, “American Trade”, 256.

Caribbean trade with islands in the Lesser Antilles. They carried any range of goods, but the emphasis was clearly on colonial staple goods; sugar, coffee, rum and cocoa. Of all the Swedish ships, 49.5 percent arrived with some quantity of sugar. Judging by the available information, the return cargoes to Gustavia from the island trade could be exceedingly small. On the 26th of July 1805 Francisco de la Rosa, master of the small schooner *Sally*, signed a manifest declaring an outward cargo of building materials, lime, nails, hinges and padlocks bound for Guadeloupe. Before his departure he had come from the same island with a cargo of 20 barrels of muscovado sugar. Captain de la Rosa plied Caribbean waters quite regularly during the course of the year, as his ship arrived at least six times from other islands, carrying at all times carrying some cargo of either sugar, coffee, cotton or wine. In late December, the *Sally* arrived from as far away as Curaçao with campeche wood and coffee. The ship and its voyages is a good example of the small-scale cabotage traffic that had its base in neutral islands. She was a small schooner, measuring only 10 lasts, and was at least in the nominal ownership of Gustaf Norgren, one of the few Swedish-born merchants on the island.³³

The overall pattern of Swedish and American vessels would seem to support the basic assumption that American ships arrived from the North with victuals, timber products and other necessities which could be sold in St. Barthélemy for return cargoes of colonial staples. These staples would then in turn have to have been collected from mostly nearby islands in the Lesser Antilles by small Swedish ships that sailed unceasingly throughout the year. However, Swedish ships landed with no cargo with a very high frequency. Nearly half of all Swedish vessels arrived in Gustavia in 1805. It is therefore not that easy to suppose that Gustavia functioned only as a market where American exports and colonial products changed hands. St. Barthélemy-registered ships must have made a significant amount of intra-Caribbean trading expeditions without the intention or final outcome of bringing colonial staples to trade in Gustavia. Issued sea-passes for these vessels were comparatively high for the years 1804–06. In 1805, 180 passes were issued.

³³ Manifest of the schooner *Sally*, signed Gustavia, 26 July 1805, M 1, FSB, ANOM; Wilson dataset on the transit trade of St. Barthélemy and St. Thomas (2015); Passport of the *Sally* issued to Norgren in *The Report of St. Bartholomew*, 21 June 1806; Possibly the ex-Governor Bagge could have been her owner and Norgren only an agent, as a newspaper advertisement in the *Report of St. Bartholomew*, 15 March 1806, stated that Norgren had been employed by Bagge.

Combining this information with the data on arrivals, we can come to the conclusion that the minimum median amount of voyages St. Barthélemy-vessels made in this year lay between 5 and 6. It is therefore far from impossible to suppose that these ships maintained commercial connections between other Caribbean colonies. A retrospective published in *The Report of St. Bartholomew* described exactly this more than five years later:

It was reserved to the present times [after the peace of Amiens] to exhibit the novel, and not uninteresting sight of a close maintenance of all the relations of amity and commerce in the midst of war, between the colonies of France, and (some of those) of England, by means of the Swedish flag. In this intercourse *National obligations*, were not always regarded as strong enough to supersede the weightier considerations of personal Friendship, or private emolument, and it was not unfrequently extended to articles of contraband; for which unhappy Neutrals, would have been severely trounced.³⁴

In the short recess from war in 1802–03, British merchants had begun trading very actively with French colonies. The sudden resumption of hostilities left merchants of both belligerent nations with many unresolved affairs and dependencies on the wrong side of enemy lines. Additionally, the mutual benefits derived from this commerce left many unwilling to abstain from it in the future. Neutral flags such as the Swedish and Danish furnished the means of prolonging this trade, even if it was officially outlawed. It was therefore not surprising to see, as observers did during this time, “many of the British droghing vessels [...] metamorphosed into Swedish ones.” The practice of buying and registering vessels in the names of others therefore continued among Gustavia burghers with renewed and increased frequency. Many Swedish vessels returning to Gustavia, then, seldom visited their home port for the purpose of bringing goods to market, but to renew their sea-passes. Even during these years Swedish vessels were not as numerous as Danish St. Thomas-registered vessels, but the picture was far removed from the one-sided dominance of Danish vessels in the neutral Caribbean trade of the late 1790s. Swedish neutral shipping was a more prominent presence than before.

³⁴ “Extracts from M.S. Sketches of a political and commercial review of the island of Bartholomew...” in *The Report of St. Bartholomew*, 3 August, 1811.

This probably had a lot to do with the extension of navigation rights issued in 1803, which abolished the old prohibition on vessels larger than 20 lasts. Still, the St. Barthélemy-registered vessels could not make sail for European destinations other than Sweden, which explains the almost non-existent outward commerce to Europe. On an inward route, there arrived 20 ships from European ports in 1804, followed by 26 ships in 1805. There were some merchants in Gustavia who had connections to port cities in the North Sea and the Mediterranean. But they were obliged to freight their expeditions under a different flag, not uncommonly American. But this was a costly a circuitous way of doing business, and explains why merchants based in Gustavia did not do a lot of direct business with European markets.³⁵

While it is certain that the largest share of the Swedish-flagged transit trade consisted of different sorts of round-trips to Caribbean colonies, it is impossible to discern which colonies were frequented the most because of the ambiguities in the records. Only 290 out of 2,356 ships landing in Gustavia from Caribbean destinations were supplied with specific information on the port of departure. Yet, with the information in these, it seems to be clear that Swedish neutral shipping was directed mostly to smaller British and French islands in both the Windward and Leeward islands. The connections to Martinique and Guadeloupe continued, and there were a considerable share of shipping from Antigua, Anguilla and Barbados. Overall, there were not many locations in the wider Caribbean that were not represented in these arrivals, but colonies such as Cuba, Hispaniola, Jamaica and Puerto Rico were not regular, established destinations.³⁶

Colonial Blockades and a Brief End to Swedish Neutrality

A significant turn came when formal Swedish neutrality ended when Sweden entered the Third Coalition against Napoleon in 1805. This fact had its consequences for the trade between St. Barthélemy and the French colonies

³⁵ “Extracts from M.S. Sketches of a political and commercial review of the island of Bartholomew...” in *The Report of St. Bartholomew*, 3 August, 1811; SWIC Minutes, 2 September 1803, *Handel och sjöfart*, vol. 157.

³⁶ Wilson dataset on the transit trade of St. Barthélemy and St. Thomas (2015).

in the region. There was however no immediate backlash. Instead, the usual informal relations between the islands continued. On 11 July 1806 a formal letter was received in St. Barthélemy from General Ernouf, the Governor of Guadeloupe, informing the Swedish council of the recently declared Franco-Swedish War. The French generals and colonial officials continued to entertain a friendly disposition towards the Swedish island despite the war. General Villaret of Martinique had protected Swedish ships laying in the harbor of St. Pierre, in the face of demands by Jérôme Bonaparte to confiscate them during a visit to the island. French privateers that had ventured to capture Swedish vessels early on in the conflict were disappointed to see that they were promptly restituted to their owners and allowed free passage. Villaret, for instance, had even allowed the remaining Swedish vessels to hoist French colors and return safely to Gustavia. Ernouf likewise stalled any possible hostile measures, keeping the official declaration under wraps for several months after having received information about it.³⁷

The attitude maintained by French officials after the declaration of war was to a certain extent a result of some calm and sober considerations. The limited usefulness of molesting a colony from which there was not much to be feared was one aspect, and the increasingly precarious state of the French colonies in the Caribbean was another. The threat of a British landfall was beginning to be very real. But the non-hostile course taken by Ernouf and Villaret also speaks a great deal about the utility of a neutral free port to the French colonies in the Lesser Antilles. Ernouf revealed as much in a communication to the Minister of the Navy and the Colonies, in which he cited the need for an access to neutral entrepôts, and St. Barthélemy was in this respect a much safer and close alternative than St. Thomas. He also made a point of the fact that a large share of the population in the Swedish colony was French, and that the merchants of St. Barthélemy were both by their connections as well as their birth closely bound to France and were “real agents for our colonies”.³⁸

But this mutual understanding in the region was not any real guarantee for keeping up previous commercial engagements, as no one was convinced that

³⁷ Ernouf to Ankarheim, 7 July 1806, SBS vol. 1 C, SNA.

³⁸ Ernouf to Decrés, 1 October 1806, Col. C7^A 65, fols. 57–59, ANOM.

this sort of relationship would be tenable in the long run. British watchfulness was one factor that worked against it. After the declaration of war, a British frigate paid a visit to Gustavia, and its commanding officers offered to land a garrison of British soldiers and to post a maritime patrol around the island's waters to protect the island from an impending French invasion from Guadeloupe. This visit and its implications sent a wave of panic among the Gustavia merchants long since associated with the Guadeloupe trade. The merchants interpreted the British offer only as a pretext for widespread confiscations of French merchandise, bearing of course the late occupation in mind. Concerned inhabitants pleaded with Governor Ankarheim to dispatch a messenger to Guadeloupe to ascertain the truth behind the rumors of an alleged invasion. In Basse-Terre there were similar signs of public outrage, as many owned property in Gustavia either in their own names or through naturalized relatives living in the free port. Few, it was claimed, did not have any sort of connections or outstanding debts or payments due in the Swedish colony. The rumors about an invasion were ultimately proved to be entirely false, and General Ernouf believed them to be fabricated by British sources, created in order to ensure British control of St. Barthélemy. Such hearsay did its harm, however, and ensured that the formerly stable bonds between St. Barthélemy and the remaining colonies under French rule began to deteriorate. People started to leave Gustavia in droves, and there was a visible drain of vital capital as a result. The formal declaration of war finally came in early September from Guadeloupe, and from that time the shaky balance in Franco-Swedish relations was gone. French privateers were again a real threat, and their presence outside the road of Gustavia was duly noted in the Governors' increasingly somber reports. A few merchants, it was told, even had procured Danish flags at exorbitant rates in a desperate attempt to gain protection from French seizures.³⁹

Faced with this situation, Gustavia officials and merchants began to scramble for solutions. Urged by a petition of remaining burghers and merchants, Ankarheim decided to negotiate with the commanding generals on Guadeloupe and Martinique. The idea was to try to convince them of respecting St. Barthélemy as a neutral island. After all, this was not a

³⁹ Ernouf to Ankarheim, 18 January, 4 July, 9 July, 12 July & 1 October 1806, 2 January 1807, SBS 1C, SNA.

phenomenon new to a wartime Caribbean. St. Martin had served this function for both French and British vessels during the American War of Independence, it was argued. Ankarheim was sure the French side would agree, but was wary of waiting for royal acceptance of this arrangement from Stockholm. In the present situation, he claimed, the allied British were causing more harm to the island than the French, as the former continued seizing and condemning vessels engaged in the inter-island trade, while the latter allowed some measure of dispensation. Nevertheless, both Ernouf and Villaret could not stretch their authority to accept this sort of agreement, and declined in politely articulated letters. While neither party desired any hostilities, open economic contacts could not be maintained as before.⁴⁰

Matters would however suddenly come to a head because of some burgeoning commercial transactions between St. Barthélemy merchants and newly independent Haiti. In the United States, pronounced Southern fears concerning the possible spread of black emancipation to the United States meant that an American recognition of the new island nation was out of the question. There were also concerns about the issue of French privateers seizing American merchant vessels on the trade routes to Haiti since the declaration of Haitian independence in 1804. France actively pursued an aggressive policy towards Haitian commerce after the failure to restore French rule and impose slavery anew on the island in 1802. These considerations and others led to the final isolation of Haiti by the U.S. in 1807 by means of a trade embargo. Despite the destructive impact of decades of internecine warfare, Haiti was still considered as an important market by American merchants. Since Denmark also had issued severe restrictions on any type of communication with Haiti, St. Barthélemy remained as one of the few channels through which any commercial adventures to Haiti could be attempted. One American who ventured to go this way was William Israel. Israel was one of the wealthiest independent merchants in Gustavia at this time, and he had set up a correspondence with traders in Haiti for future expeditions. He had attained burgher documents in Gustavia sometime around the beginning of the century, he set up a business operation there. In

⁴⁰ Memorandum signed Anders Bergstedt and Samuel Fahlberg, 24 December 1806, SBS 1 C, SNA; Petition of 47 Gustavia merchants, 6 December 1806, SBS 1 C, SNA; Ankarheim to Ernouf, 27 December 1806, SBS 22, SNA.

1806 he issued sea-passes for at least two vessels, the schooner *Leonidas* and the brig *Ann and Contempt*, of 39 and 36 lasts, respectively.⁴¹

It did nevertheless not take long until the French in Guadeloupe caught wind of these plans, and Ernouf reacted promptly. Lacking regular maritime forces, he commissioned a few privateers and loaded them with troops for a hostile expedition to St. Barthélemy, which resulted in the short French occupation of 1807 mentioned in an earlier chapter. Ernouf's intention was to arrest Israel and to seize his property on the island. During the night between the 11th and 12th of November a detachment of French soldiers landed clandestinely in a southern cove of the island. The plan was to subdue the Swedish garrison quickly and then to seize Israel for a quick return with the spoils. When guards spotted the French forces encroaching the town at night, a small skirmish soon took place, in which a Swedish soldier was killed before Gustavia was surrendered. The expedition was a failure insofar as Israel was never apprehended, but a few of his smaller vessels as well as the contents of his warehouse, was confiscated. It was reported that it was stocked wall-to-wall with Haitian coffee. The French occupation was over in less than 24 hours, but the French left the island with the promise of renewed hostilities if any Swedish burgher was found doing business with Haiti.⁴²

⁴¹ Tim Matthewson, "Jefferson and Haiti," *The Journal of Southern History* 61, on. 2 (1995), 234–238; Congress passed a law already on March 3, 1805, which put restrictions on the trade. As it turned out, it proved to be only marginally effective, and was subject to revisions until repassed on February 24, 1807. It expired the next year, but because of the general embargo of December 22, 1807, U.S. trade with Haiti remained illegal until the spring of 1810; Israel's registrations in *The Report of Saint Bartholomew*, 31 January 1807.

⁴² Ankarheim's report, 27 November 1807, SBS 1 C, SNA; Forsström to Lindblad, 19 March 1808, Linköpings stiftsbibliotek, Lindblomska brevsamlingen, vol. 16, 1808:134.

5 An Anglo-American Port of Convenience, 1809–1815

After the British occupation of St. Thomas in 1807, St. Barthélemy remained as the only neutral free port in the Lesser Antilles. This position did however not lead to any immediate advantage, as the colony was shook hard by American Embargo Act of 1807. It had the effect of slowing vital American imports to a trickle. Strict controls on the exportation of flour and other foodstuffs were instituted by the island council, and prices on bread were fixed as an attempt to alleviate starvation among the town's poor. The second period of the Napoleonic Wars in the Caribbean was characterized by an initial spurt of neutral seizures, the provocation of Denmark into war, and the systematic British conquest of enemy colonies. St. Croix, St. Thomas, and St. John were seized by the British in December 1807. The occupation of the Danish islands completely eradicated the trade with the French and Spanish colonies which had previously existed. Deprived of supplies and outlets for their produce, the French colonies were now highly vulnerable, and all were occupied almost at will by British forces between 1807 and 1810. Saint-Domingue's export sector had all but been destroyed by civil warfare during the preceding decades. Dutch Curaçao was also occupied in 1808. Other conflicts ended, such as when the Anglo-Spanish War was concluded in July 1808, and an eventual Anglo-American war was only staved off momentarily by the assimilation of belligerent colonies with which the Americans could trade. Anglo-American relations steadily deteriorated as Americans were increasingly dissatisfied with the British blockade of the European continent, as well as with the virtual monopoly which the British now exercised on trade in the Caribbean. Violations of U.S. neutrality also continued, and the U.S. Congress finally responded to the mounting conflicts with commercial warfare. The Embargo Act was signed into law on December 22, 1807 and lasted until 1809. The idea behind the embargo was to chasten Great Britain and France and impose economic hardships on them as belligerents. The

embargo however turned out to be counterproductive, and was in the end an economic and diplomatic failure.¹

A few crafty American merchants still found ways to evade the embargo and reached St. Barthélemy from time to time. Unscrupulous shippers found a loophole in the original embargo act by the requirement that goods loaded and cleared for a coasting voyage had to be landed in an American port, “dangers of the sea excepted.” An example of an exploitation of this kind was the case of the American brig *James Wells*, which had left New York with a cargo of more than 1200 barrels of flour on the 26th of February 1808. The ship was cleared for St. Mary’s in Georgia, but on account of foul weather and the leaky condition of the ship, the supercargo, who was also the owner, declared that he was obliged to put into Gustavia. Once there, he declared that he had to land his cargo because it was damaged, and afterward, since the island council had forbidden the export of provisions, he was forced to sell his flour. It must be added that the affair ended most opportunely for him due to the prevailing shortage of imports, as he could sell his flour at a very high price. Once back on American soil, the owner of the *James Wells* was prosecuted and the case finally came before the Supreme Court. The evidence showed that the supercargo’s explanations were either bogus or unfounded, as the ship apparently had made no effort to reach an American port, and the vessel was therefore condemned.²

Aside from the American embargo, British men-of-war were now patrolling outside the road of Gustavia against the French, effectively blockading the little commercial traffic that was left. British cruisers seized in- and outgoing ships during this time, even Swedish-flagged vessels despite the protection agreement between the Swedish council and Admiral Cochrane. This quickly prompted an outcry among town merchants. Faced with this situation, Governor Ankarheim wrote Cochrane in August 1808 and called for the removal of British protection, as Gustavia now stood, as he put it, “near the brinck of ruin”. The British cruisers eventually complied with

¹ Craton, “Vice Admiralty Courts,” 260; Clauder, “American Commerce,” 132–47.

² *Brig James Wells vs. U.S.*, 11 U.S. 22 (1812); Clauder, “American Commerce,” 136.

Ankarheim's request and departed.³ In short, 1808 passed as a dismal year for St. Barthélemy, but things were soon to change.

5.1 The Non-Intercourse Act of 1809

The immediate source of reversed fortunes was that the American Embargo ended in 1809 and was supplanted by the Non-Intercourse Act. Thus the previous, partial non-importation policies were supplanted by a complete ban on *all* British goods, on all British *colonial* produce, and on all import from the French Empire or occupied territories. British and French ships were completely shut out of American harbors as well. American ships were not permitted to go to British and French ports. This was the last step in the efforts of the US government against the maritime depredations against its merchant fleet. The plan was appended with a promise of forgiveness in return for the abandonment of the French decrees or the British Orders-in-Council insofar as they violated the neutral commerce of the United States.⁴

American Non-Intercourse entailed some immediate and interesting consequences for St. Barthélemy. It has been pointed out that the limited freedom granted to American ships in the Act “bedeviled the whole plan”. When the Embargo was lifted in mid-March, American merchantmen cleared for permitted foreign ports, usually ones that previously had been more unusual destinations. Gothenburg, Tönningen, and other Scandinavian ports burst into popularity. In the West Indies, St. Barthélemy was “inundated with spring cruisers”.⁵ Albert Gallatin had correctly foreseen this effect, as explained in a letter to Jefferson. His belief was that the “true effect” of the lifting of the total embargo “would be to open an indirect trade with Great Britain, which, through St. Bartholomew and Havana, Lisbon, Cadiz, or

³ Ankarheim to Cochrane, 10 August 1808, SBS 1C, SNA; Ankarheim's report of 2 September 1808, SBS 1C, SNA.

⁴ Herbert Heaton, “Non-Importation 1806–1812,” *The Journal of Economic History* 1, no. 2 (1941): 191–92.

⁵ Heaton, “Non-Importation,” 192.

Gottenburg, would receive [...] all the provisions, naval stores and raw materials” that Britain possibly could want.⁶

The effects of the Act had also been anticipated in a petition of Gustavia merchants written to the Swedish council in January 1809. The merchants very correctly expressed their belief that it was very probable that the Swedish flag and Swedish territories would “be in the number to be exempted from the resolutions of that act”. Information and rumors about the Act’s contents had clearly been disseminated and discussed among the well-informed local merchants. The prospects of the Act raised both hopes and concerns. On the one hand, the merchants expected some benefits to arise from the new order of things, but on the other hand they were worried that the “unthinking” among the naturalized burghers would be tempted to take out sea registers in their own names and sell or lend them to Americans, as they had “seen of late that hardly a single vessel is come to this port with the American Flag, which has not gone out from it without our own”. They also suggested some measures be enacted against the expected influx of American flag-changers, which the council duly accepted. Sea-passes were now restricted to four months instead of six, African-bound ships excepted. Furthermore it was decided that sea register applicants be forced to deposit a security bond, at the same value as the register. The bond was to be forfeited if the register was not returned within the prescribed time limit.⁷ By all appearances, the new restrictions never had the desired effect. It is telling alone that 1809 saw the record amount of St. Barthélemy sea registers taken out in a single year, 204. A year later, the Swedish consul in Philadelphia, Richard Söderström, confirmed the anticipated effects as he reported that the Swedish-flagged vessels arriving into American ports frequently changed their flags:

[...] the vessels that arrived today under the Swedish trading flag show the American flag tomorrow [...] [they] go from here under the American flag,

⁶ Gallatin to Jefferson, 9 September 1808, in *The Writings of Albert Gallatin*, ed. Henry Adams (Philadelphia: J.B. Lippincott, 1879), 434–45.

⁷ Merchants’ petition, 23 January 1809, Council Minutes, 1 February 1809, PJ 156, FSB, ANOM.

and in 5 or 6 weeks arrive once again from some port under the Swedish flag.⁸

It should be noted that the previously French-controlled islands around the Swedish colony had all come under British control. St. Barthélemy and the American goods in transit through the port of Gustavia thus posed no kind of nuisance to the blockading strategy of Britain. Quite the opposite, the commerce of St. Barthélemy was serving a vital function within a British economic sphere in the Caribbean. The Swedish colony could transmit much needed American goods to the British colonies which they were no longer able to receive directly from U.S. ports. From his vantage point in New York, the Swedish consul Henrik Gahn noted the worsening of relations between the United States and Britain. He also noted that the Non-Intercourse Act made Swedish carrying capacity and commodities desirable in American ports. In particular, he thought, St. Barthélemy would benefit, as the American vessels would be able to unload their cargoes there.⁹ The American traffic had appeared in Gustavia in full force beginning in April 1809. In fact, there were so many ships arriving each day that the customs inspector Furuträd became overwhelmed with the growing size of his daily tasks. He stated that on the first eleven days of the month, 86 American ships had arrived, not counting other ships from the surrounding islands. He did not think it within his means to accurately register each and every ship in the customs journals, and requested additional assistance in his chores to avoid any losses to the crown.¹⁰

Americans engaged in the transit trade through Gustavia during this time employed all manners of methods to defraud customs and to avoid additional costs. It was observed by local merchants and officials alike that Americans tended to arrive with their cargoes and arrange sales onboard while anchored, rather than perform the required unloading, selling, and loading of goods. William Israel, who had received a commission as American consul on St.

⁸ Söderström to the Board of Trade, 28 April 1810, E VI aa 374, Huvudarkivet, Kommerskollegium, SNA; Müller, *Consuls, Corsairs, and Commerce*, 210–211.

⁹ Gahn to the Board of Trade, 25 November 1809, E VI aa 352, Huvudarkivet, Kommerskollegium, SNA; Müller, 211–212.

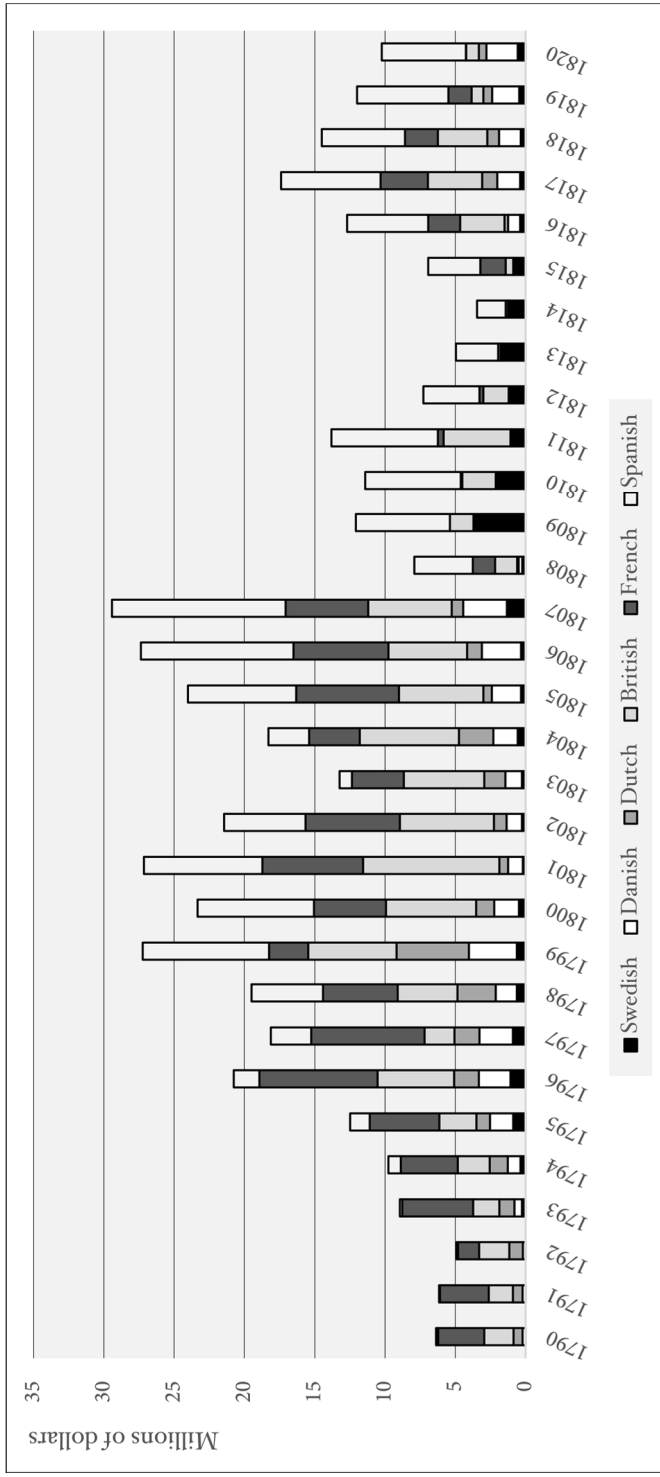
¹⁰ Furuträd's memorial 12 April 1809, PJ 157, FSB, ANOM.

Barthélemy, reported to the Secretary of State that some had instead sold their cargoes at interdicted ports, and only arrived at Gustavia to obtain certificates of landing as to mask their real commercial destination. Many Americans, he wrote, even sported fictitious names in official dealings. Though they often confessed regret of their conduct before the American consul, they claimed that the current times required a certain attitude and that especially the northern merchants who dealt in fish would be the “most firm supporters of the Laws” in the future when other circumstances would allow them to.¹¹

Even if the heavy traffic and obvious frauds led to some inevitable profits evading the council coffers, the year of 1809 was unlike any other preceding year in terms of commercial gain for the Swedish crown. The windfall from customs revenues that year yielded 107,778 Spanish dollars, as opposed the previous annual average of 15,600 Spanish dollars. The corresponding official estimates of American exports to St. Barthélemy for the same year was over \$ 3,600,000 (See Figures 5.1 and 5.2). Compared to the earlier decades, the Swedish crown was now raking in prodigious profits from the transit trade through the port of Gustavia. The simple explanation for this is because the American shipping had few other entry points to Caribbean markets except for Spanish ports. Curaçao and St. Thomas, who had previously enjoyed a far larger share of the American exports throughout the years 1790–1807, were now under British lockdown. How and why did St. Barthélemy escape British occupation during the remainder of the European conflicts? Surely, an occupation would not have been any less simple than before, and it would have snuffed out another subterfuge for American shipping. Diplomatic relations between Sweden and Britain in 1809 were indeed strained and complicated. The fragile alliance was held upon the fact that Sweden was very much dependent upon the British crown, its only ally at the time. The British also had much to gain from keeping trade links to the Baltic open during the war. France was a common enemy as well. This changed after the 1809 coup against Gustav IV Adolf and the subsequent Treaty of Paris, as the Swedish diplomatic trajectory shifted towards a friendly stance against France, which in effect forced a formal declaration of war against Britain in November 1810.

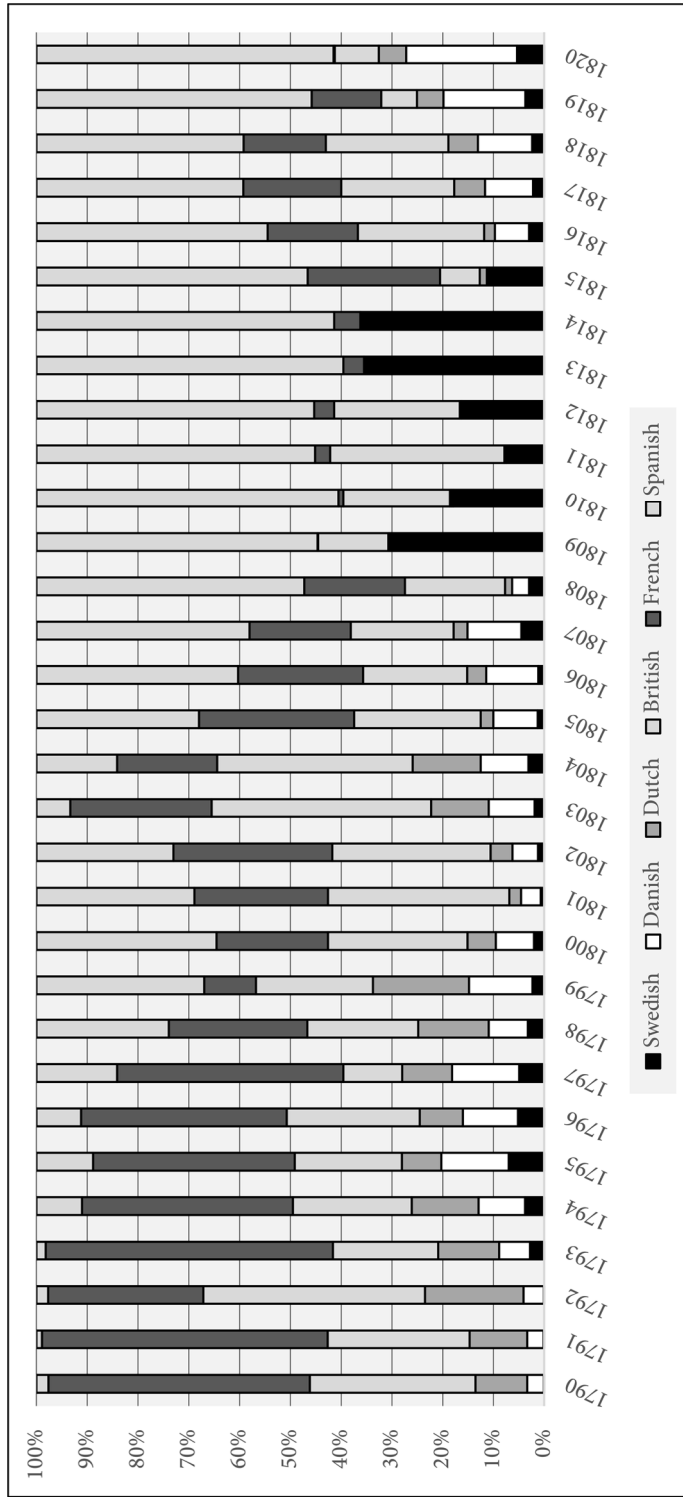
¹¹ Israel to Smith, 26 April 1809 and 23 July 1809, M72, RG 59, NARA.

Figure 5.1 Values of American exports to Caribbean and South American colonies, 1790–1820



Sources: John H. Coatsworth, 'American trade with European Colonies in the Caribbean and South America, 1790–1812.' *The William & Mary Quarterly* 24, no. 2, 248–266; American State Papers, Class IV: Commerce and Navigation, vol. 1, 34, 138, 248, 312, 342, 362, 384, 417, 431, 453, 489, 507, 543, 590, 671, 738, 815, 869, 965, 994, 1023; vol. 2, 22, 55, 95, 158, 388, 469.

Figure 5.2 Proportions of American exports to Caribbean colonies, 1790–1820



Sources: John H. Coatsworth, "American trade with European Colonies in the Caribbean and South America, 1790–1812." *The William & Mary Quarterly* 24, no. 2, 248–266; American State Papers, Class IV: Commerce and Navigation, vol. 1, 34, 138, 248, 312, 342, 362, 384, 417, 431, 453, 489, 507, 543, 590, 671, 696, 721, 738, 815, 869, 965, 994, 1023; vol. 2, 22, 55, 95, 158, 388, 469.

Still, this amounted only a fictitious conflict, and diplomatic and commercial channels between Britain and Sweden remained as open as before.¹²

This might do well to explain why St. Barthélemy was spared any further British hostilities, but regional circumstances should also be considered. When St. Thomas was occupied by the British Navy in December of 1807, vociferous complaints were voiced by interested assemblies of British merchants. Complaints were made by a sizable group of British merchants trading to St. Thomas, and showed that it was British and not Danish commerce which was made to suffer by the recent takeover. The island had acted as a leading entrepôt for trade between the Britain and Spanish colonies. During the war years 1796–1802, St. Thomas was a focal point of the British slave trade with the Spanish colonies. But the main concern on the event of its capture was the British textile trade to the Spanish Main, which had employed St. Thomas extensively as a base of operations. The merchants protested the ruinous consequences of stifling British annual exports amounting “to a sum almost incredible”. They also observed that a great deal of the seized property on the Danish island in fact belonged to British subjects. St. Thomas was not, however, granted the status of British free port, as had been the case with other conquered foreign islands previously involved in the trade with the Spanish colonies, such as Curaçao. Instead, St. Thomas was allowed only to partake in the much more restricted licensed trade.¹³

The Americans, meanwhile, were finding themselves increasingly shut out. The diplomatic situation between the UK and the US had since the Non-Intercourse Act become critical, and relations were also still being worsened by continuing seizures of American vessels. The tension was only eased by the abrogation of many of the objectionable clauses of the British Orders-in-

¹² The growing North American share in the Spanish regional economy of the Americas, see for instance Jacques A. Barbier, “Silver, North American penetration and the Spanish imperial economy, 1760–1800,” in *The North American role in the Spanish Imperial Economy*, ed. Jacques A. Barbier and Allan J. Kuethe (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984), 6–12.; Cf. Fischer, *Economic Aspects of Spanish Imperialism*, 197–216; Regarding the war between Great Britain and Sweden, see Ulf Sundberg, *Svenska krig 1521–1814* (Stockholm: Hjalmarsson & Högberg, 1998), 391–93.

¹³ The merchants calculated a value of £210,000 in British exports to St. Thomas in 1807 alone, see B.T. 1/37 No. 31. Memorial of merchants trading to St. Thomas, 5 October 1807; B.T. 1/37 No. 32. Memorial of merchants of Lancaster trading to St. Thomas, 3 October 1807; Armytage, 87; Pearce, *British Trade*, 201–202; Armytage, *The Free Port System*, 103.04.

Council by the General Orders of 13 March, 1809. Another means of British détente was that the virtual British monopoly on trade in the Caribbean had the useful effect of decreasing the number of American seizures necessary to maintain the British blockade of Napoleon's Europe. After 1808, the business of the Caribbean Prize Courts grinded down to a pause, especially after orders were received to restore American vessels that were already seized.¹⁴

Given that the Caribbean was now effectively under British imperial control, a small American trade was deemed tolerable, indeed it was seen as beneficial, as British colonies still were far from solving their chronic problem of undersupply. St. Barthélemy, in this situation, assumed the role of a convenient conduit for Anglo-American trade, a subterfuge which allowed some exchange between the belligerents. An editorial notice in a January number of *The Report of Saint Bartholomew* was quite open about the prevailing order:

That the British navigation act is strictly followed in some of the British Islands, is very true; but it is as true, that English vessels carry American produce from hence to British islands every day, and that even Swedish vessels with American produce are admitted in some.¹⁵

The British were not unaware of the fact that the goods flowing out from St. Barthélemy were nothing but re-exports from the United States and the surrounding islands. Governor Elliot of the Leeward Islands, writing in 1811 to the Earl of Liverpool, admitted that if the Non-Intercourse Act between the United States and Britain been strictly observed and enforced, the British Leewards would be in dire need of the necessary supply of provisions, lumber and livestock from North America. St. Barthélemy was the crucial link to these supplies, but Elliot still was unsure, as many other British officials in the region, in what view British colonial relations with St. Barthélemy was legally to be considered, as Sweden was a nation formally at war with Britain, as well as the "singular" nature of the free port institution of Gustavia, which had created opportunities for Britain's enemies in the past.¹⁶ Even before Elliot's

¹⁴ Craton, "Vice Admiralty Courts," 327–328.

¹⁵ The Report of St. Bartholomew, 10 January 1810.

¹⁶ Elliot to Lord Liverpool, 3 September 1811, C.O. 152/98.

inquiries were known at the Foreign Department in London, a dispatch was planned to be forwarded to him, instructing the Governor that “the same lenient policy maintained towards Sweden should be pursued towards her Dependencies in the West Indies”.¹⁷

This situation was essential for the economic livelihoods of nearly all parties concerned. Whereas the British colonists could secure a steady supply despite the state of war with the United States, merchants of St. Barthélemy subsisted on the “intercourse with the People of the United States,” and were “Active or Languid, in proportion to the demands of the British Possessions.” The Americans, as before, carried provisions and articles of necessity for the British colonies to St. Barthélemy, where local merchants purchased and stored them until they could be runned into the British colonies, “in such small parcels, as either do not attract the Notice of their Revenue Officers.” American traders, too, were obliged to resort to this scheme even though it entailed trading with the enemy. The American exports to the West Indies had quickly plummeted to levels that were prevalent in the immediate post-Independence period. The only markets in left for the Americans to access were St. Barthélemy as well as the Spanish colonies. The coming conflict with Great Britain would perpetuate this condition for the remainder of the Napoleonic Wars.¹⁸

¹⁷ Smith to Peele, 7 September, C.O. 152/98; Earl of Liverpool to Elliot, 21 September 1811, C.O. 53/34.

¹⁸ Quotes from Runnels to Skogman, 31 March 1812, SBS, vol. 2, SNA; Coatsworth, “American Trade,” 247, 251–54; Clauder, “American Commerce,” 229–32.

5.2 The War of 1812

The conflict between the United States and Britain formally began on the 18th of June 1812, when president James Madison signed the measure into law. The U.S. declaration of war came as the end-result of American grievances against Britain for a long period. Ironically, the British government had started to embark on a more reconciliatory policy towards the United States, and had issued a repeal on the 11th of May 1812 of past Orders-in-Council aimed towards neutral trade. The news of the British repeal did however cross the Atlantic before the declaration of war had been put into effect. Neither side was particularly well prepared to prosecute the war, and especially Britain took a very pragmatic course in order not to cramp existing trade relationships between the North American mainland and British colonies. The trade on the Canadian-American border in fact flourished during the war, even when the U.S. government was determined to stamp out trade with the enemy through commercial sanctions. Even as U.S. leaders still put their faith in commercial prohibitions, British officials left New England unblockaded precisely in order to facilitate this trade. At the beginning of the war, British officials in Canada authorized the export of all goods outright to the United States, and ordered British subjects in the colonies not to molest the goods or vessels of American citizens, so long as they did not show any hostility when encountered.¹⁹

The sea-lanes between the North American coast and the West Indies were exceptions to this general condition. The trade with the enemy was generally condoned by U.S. authorities as long as it was conducted in neutral ships: Neutral ships flying Swedish and Spanish colors were known to operate from the British dominions to U.S. ports. Since the beginning of the U.S. Embargo policy, the Swedish government was beginning to take notice of the recent surge in traffic at St. Barthélemy. Official letters from the Colonial Department reveal both the possible benefits and risks that were expected. Wary of possible actions from the part of British Admiralty, instructions were issued to the Swedish Governor, to act, as always, carefully and discretely.

¹⁹ Donald R. Hickey, *The War of 1812: A Forgotten Conflict* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2012), 28–47, 169–170

Special attention was given to the policy of issuing sea-passes, officials at the Department were especially firm on the point of observing the proper formalities of applications, and to always ascertain that only Swedish burghers were the true owners of trading ventures under Swedish colors. While these considerations were stressed, the instructions also carried the argument that British colonies and their responsive officials would act pragmatically during the war. In other words, it was expected that a certain measure of clandestine trade from North America was to be permitted in order to meet immediate needs.²⁰

In a telling move, the Board of Commerce clearly exploited the situation by allowing Swedish consuls unprecedented rights to issue certain registers and ship's documents in the fall of 1812. The most crucial point was that American ships were now allowed to be naturalized while anchored in American ports. In other words, American ships could be sold to Swedish burghers or their agents in North American ports and apply for Swedish documents. After this naturalization process, ships were allowed to sail for Gustavia and obtain the proper sea-pass for further expeditions. In this way American ships could slip past the British blockade and cruising ships outside the Continental seaboard.²¹

While this measure was made to make the most out of the war situation, the Swedish government was still uncertain as to the British opinion on the matter. The matter was simply put forward in Britain by the resident Swedish minister Johann Gotthard von Rehausen, still on location in London despite the formal state of war between Sweden and Britain. The solicitous response came in the form of the so-called American Prizes Act of 1 February 1813, which modified a certain passage of the earlier Orders of 11 November 1807, which held that belligerents (i.e. Britain's enemies) could not sell their ships to neutrals, as they would then be held as good prize. Now, it was decided, that the Orders would be confined to the ships of France and her overseas possessions, as this was thought to be "expedient". The Orders were personally communicated by Castlereagh to Rehausen. They were forwarded

²⁰ Hickey, *The War of 1812*, 234; af Wetterstedt to Stackelberg, 12 November 1812, Image 18–19, vol. 258, Correspondance (C), FSB, ANOM.

²¹ Af Wetterstedt to Stackelberg, 3 February 1813, Image 29–31, vol. 258, Correspondance (C), FSB, ANOM.

to the Governor in St. Barthélemy, already translated into French from the English original. He was urged to make these “most fortunate proceedings” as widely known and public as possible.²²

In essence, then, these Orders amounted to nothing less than the tacit approval from Whitehall of American trade under the Swedish flag. Moreover, Admiralty had informed its officers stationed in the Caribbean that the Swedish flag was to be respected at sea. In fact, this had for a longer time been the prevailing order. Already in early 1812, the U.S. consul Speyer in Gothenburg informed the Secretary of State of his suspicions:

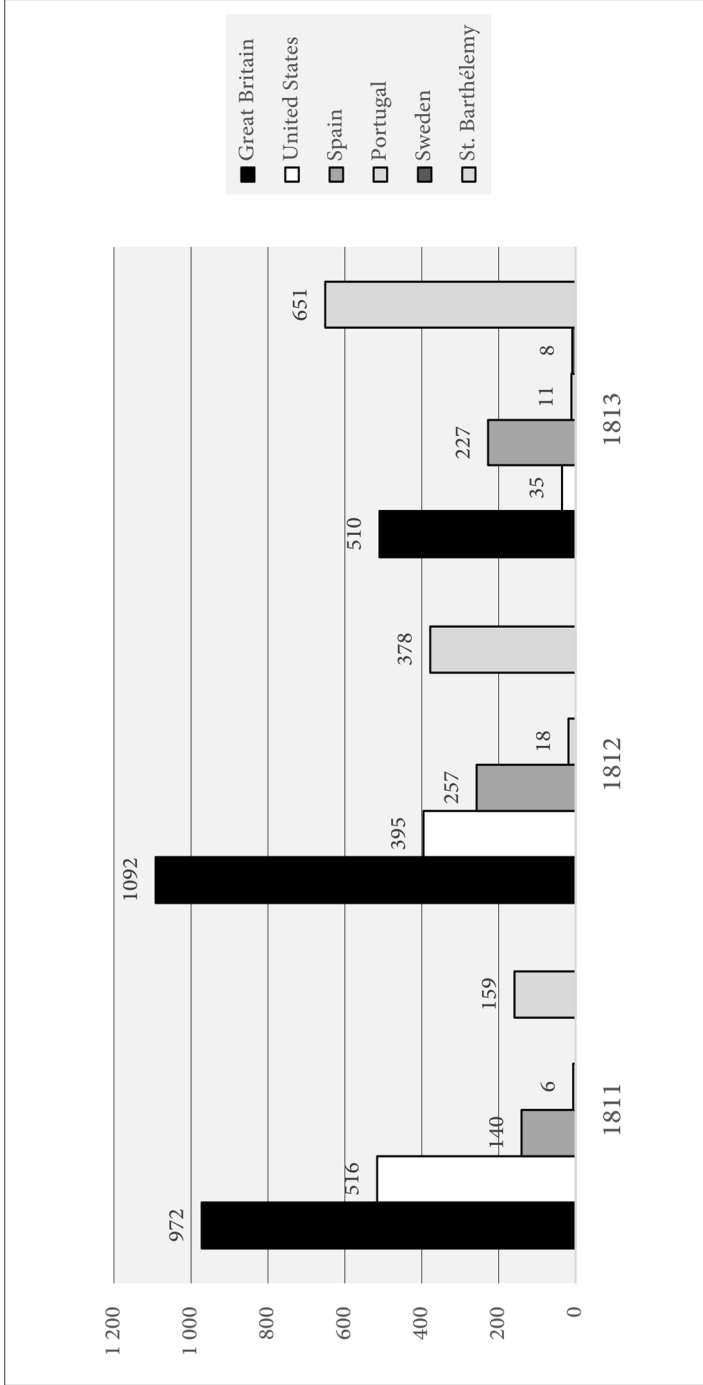
This government is desirous to draw from that possession [St. Barthélemy] all the revenues it is capable of yielding and I am induced to believe that England will not oppose it. – There must doubtless exist a friendly understanding with that govt., as a number of Swedish merchant vessels, which had been detained, were given up.²³

This dispensation was readily exploited, as shown by the statistics of the Gustavia customs journals in 1811–1813 (Figures 5.3 and 5.4). Whereas the high frequency of British and American vessels in Gustavia in 1811–12 reveals an ongoing breach of the American Non-Intercourse Act, the American vessels all but disappeared in 1813, as there were only 35 recorded arrivals as opposed to 395 during the previous year. In contrast, there was a conspicuous increase in Swedish arrivals during these years. The corresponding figures for tonnages reveal, however, that it was probably not only a matter of American ships merely changing flags, as median tonnages for the Swedish ships in 1813, for instance, was considerably smaller than their American counterparts, as an American ship generally measured well above 100 tons, while a Swedish ship registered in Gustavia was slightly above 30 tons. A total of 39 ships arrived with “consular papers”, which is nothing other than American ships that had been naturalized with Swedish documents on the North American Coast. While the amount of these vessels amounted to only 6 percent of the

²² For the American Prizes Act, see 53 Geo. 3 c. 63; cf. Wetterstedt to Stackelberg, 20 February 1813, Rehausen’s report, 12 January 1812, C 258, FSB, ANOM.

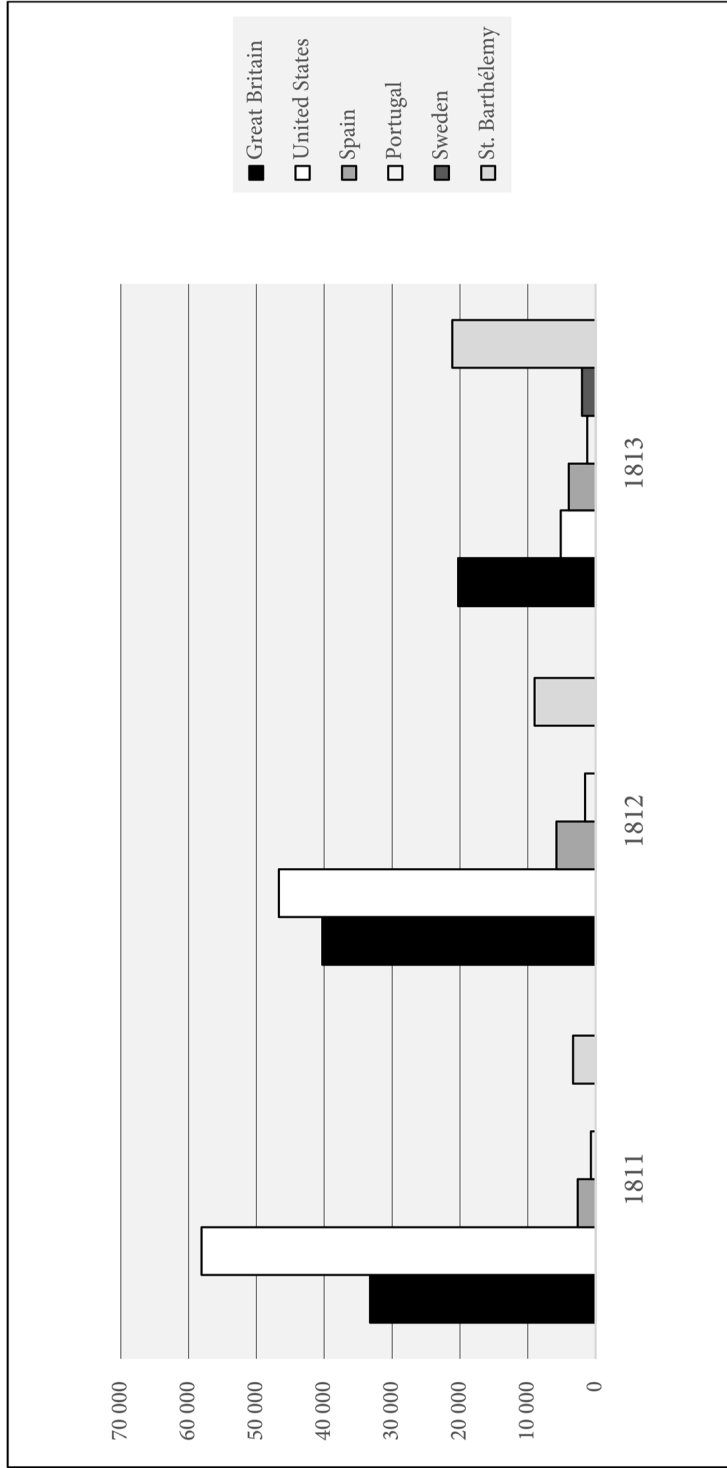
²³ Speyer to Monroe, 8 January 1812, T230, RG 59, NARA.

Figure 5.3 Arrivals, St. Barthélemy 1811–1813, by nationality



Source: Extracts from Gustavia customs journal 1811–1813, S:t Barthélemysamlingen (SBS), vol. 26 A, SNA.

Figure 5.4 Tonnage of arrivals, St. Barthélemy 1811–1813, by nationality



Source: Extracts from Gustavia customs journal 1811–1813, S:t Barthélemyssamlingen (SBS), vol. 26 A, SNA.

total arrivals, they nevertheless represented nearly $\frac{1}{4}$ of the total recorded tonnage. The business of vessel naturalization was witnessed by Swedish vessels arriving in the United States from Gothenburg in 1813, who duly complained about “such a stagnation in shipping in trade” that they were compelled to return eastwards to Cadiz or Lissabon with small or unprofitable cargoes. The Swedish vessels proper were prospecting for precisely those kind of neutral tramp shipping ventures to the Caribbean which American vessels could obtain Swedish papers for, either through legal channels via Swedish consuls on the North American Coast or simply through forgery.²⁴

Governor Elliott, who had been cautious in the British intercourse with regard to the American trade over St. Barthélemy during the years leading up to the war, now had reason to be less circumspect. Since the trade was informally condoned, he could take to issuing licenses to British subjects to consign a ship under any flag, except for France, in order to import necessities from any U.S. port. In a license to the Darrell firm of Antigua, he explicitly included the permission for Darrell’s vessel “to touch at Saint Bartholomews,” which had the convenient function to allow the ship to clear for a neutral port while in the United States. Still, while this trade was readily promoted by British authorities, it should be noted that the value of American exports from U.S. ports was at an all-time low since independence. The total arriving tonnage in Gustavia in 1813 had also dropped to about half of the recorded tonnage of 1812. Turning to official American estimates, 1813 was the most prominent wartime year for American exports to St. Barthélemy, amounting to a value of \$1,758 862 (Figures 5.1 and 5.2). It can then be deduced that a small-scale traffic of exports from the North American coast persisted during war years, or rather was allowed by the British to continue. In the years 1813–14, as had been the case in 1809, St. Barthélemy was the destination for over 30 per cent of the total, albeit very diminished, American exports to the region. The Treaty of Ghent on the 24th of December 1814 restored relations between the United States and Britain, and signaled a slow recovery of the U.S. trade with the West Indies. The coming peace after the Treaty of Vienna also began the normalization of affairs in the region, but whereas the

²⁴ von Brinkman to Stackelberg, 30 October 1813, C 258, FSB, ANOM; A copy of the letter is also found in PJ 172, FSB, ANOM.

commerce of St. Barthélemy was concerned, it was the start of a long downhill development.²⁵

²⁵ License for J. & S. Darrell of Antigua, 2 February 1813, PJ 170, FSB, ANOM; Ernst Ekman has noted before that St. Barthélemy stood at the receiving end of over 20 percent of U.S. exports in 1814, but explains nothing of the overall trade figures of U.S. shipping, which were gravely diminished at the time. See Ernst Ekman, "A Swedish Career in the Tropics: Johan Norderling (1760–1828)," *Swedish Pioneer Historical Society* 15, no.1 (1964): 3–32.

5.3 Epilogue: The Peace of 1815 and Ambiguous Decline

It is intriguing to gauge the response of the news of the impending peace in Gustavia. It was rarely met with expressions of joy or relief. Instead, the prevailing feeling among the council and merchants of the colony was concern. It was no secret that the colony's commerce had occasionally thrived as a cause of the conflict. The unavoidable return of normal peacetime relations was anticipated with dour concern in commercial circles. A particular cause for concern was that the rival free ports of St. Thomas and St. Eustatius would soon return to their former owners.²⁶

Despite numerous efforts to accommodate foreign commerce by lowering taxes and granting new liberties, St. Barthélemy officials were hard pressed to relieve the situation. Governor Stackelberg had an informant in St. Thomas who relayed the official Danish tariffs at six percent for imports and seven and half percent on exports, "but in reality not more than 2% are actually paid." The governor's reports of Samuel Rosenswärd in 1817–18 convey a continuous state of despair and alarm. The hopelessness was compounded by the fact that the colony's enterprising merchants had begun to leave the island for commercial opportunities in other islands. There were very few left who had stable capital enough to pay for transiting cargoes in cash. Especially American traders had grown uncertain whether they could dispose of their holdings in St. Barthélemy, and had begun preferring St. Eustatius and St. Thomas as primary stops on their West Indian journeys. The mass departure of local merchants were a sign of the times. Many traders and merchants who had enjoyed a lively business during the war now were faced with an imminent depression of available trading possibilities. Creditors closed in their debtors and demanded payment of outstanding debts. Many were left insolvent in this process, and settlers on St. Barthélemy was no exception.²⁷

²⁶ Af Wetterstedt to Stackelberg, 14 January 1815, C 258, FSB, ANOM; af Wetterstedt's memorial, 16 August 1816, SBS 1C, SNA.

²⁷ Petition of St. Barthélemy merchants to Skogman, 17 April 1815 & Stackelberg to Skogman, 22 April 1816, Skogmanska samlingen, SNA; Rosenswärd's report, 18 November 1817, SBS 4B, SNA; Berghult's report, 22 March 1819; 21 June 1819, SBS 5B, SNA.

In the light of the peacetime problems, it is therefore not surprising that a lingering hope for the commercial prospects of St. Barthélemy found a source in the political turbulence generated in the wake of the Spanish American Wars of Independence. The disintegration of Spanish authority in the New World created conditions which were at once advantageous and harmful to maritime commercial activity. Alternative markets were found among the coastal waters of the Spanish Main for enterprising neutral traders, as well as the possibility for private maritime predation to flourish once again as it had during the late French wars, as Spanish American revolutionaries relied heavily upon privateering. St. Barthélemy felt both the positive and negative effects of these regional developments during this continuing period of war and violence. They will be the subject of the final chapter.

Reorientations in the Post-War Period

The election of Jean Bernadotte, subsequently Charles XIV, as heir-presumptive to the Swedish throne, brought with it significant reorientations in Swedish foreign policy. One often neglected side of Charles' foreign policy thinking was his apparent conviction of the future potential of the South American countries not only as export markets, but as new political entities and prospective allies. After the conclusion of the war, Sweden was highly oriented towards Britain in its foreign policy, and was also quite simply following cautiously along in the foreign ambitions of Canning's ministry towards the insurgents in South America. In some respects influenced by the Enlightenment, Charles XIV was familiar with the work of Raynal but also particularly the more recent polemics in 1817 by abbé de Pradt about the South American revolutions. Charles XIV granted the Swedish translation of de Pradt's work as a propagandistic measure, in part at least in order to further the Swedish commercial interest in South American markets. In 1819 the former St. Barthélemy judge Bergius furthermore published his *Om*

Westindien, his reflections on the colonies in the West Indies and South America which very strongly endorsed the ideas and sentiments of de Pradt.²⁸

In this context, of St. Barthélemy had begun to assume a special role in the foreign policy of Charles XIV. Since the Diet of Örebro in 1812, St. Barthélemy had become a crown colony, and was separated from the state finances. All the funds accruing from the tax and tariff collection in Gustavia was at the personal disposal of the Swedish king. During the conflict between the United States and Britain in 1812–14, these funds had become quite significant. The windfall from the Anglo-U.S. war had been generously disposed of for public as well as private costs. For a number of years, the St. Barthélemy funds, as they were termed under the renewed auspices of the monarchy, were used to pay wages and pensions for officials in the foreign ministry and the colonial department, finance diplomatic travels and exigencies, but also a costly range of widely differing cultural investments, such as the debts of the Stockholm Theatre. The funds were however most importantly a means of maintaining independent financial backing for the Swedish government's foreign policy and diplomacy. Furthermore, the king was involved in costly operations involving the purchase of foreign bills of exchange in an effort to stabilize the Swedish economy. It is also through these facts that the royal interest in South American speculations should be seen.²⁹

Count af Wetterstedt, the court chancellor, also had personal economic interests which were connected with the West Indian colony. He owned extensive shares of the ironworks in Finspång in southern Sweden since his marriage into the wealthy family of De Geer. Finspång had since several centuries been one of the largest manufacturers of artillery pieces in the Swedish kingdom, but since the early 1790s the cannon foundry of Finspång had been subject to a heavy slump as a result of the loss of the lucrative Dutch markets. Alternative foreign markets for munitions were therefore of utmost

²⁸ Per G. Andreen, *Politik och finansväsen. Från 1815 års riksdag till 1830 års realisationsbeslut* (Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1958), II: 154–57; Torsten Gihl, "Kabinettskassan," *Historisk tidskrift* 56 (1936): 341–92; Swärd, *Latinamerika i svensk politik*, 293–94; Elovsson, *Amerika i svensk litteratur*, 249, 286; Torvald Höjer, *Den svenska utrikespolitikens historia* (Stockholm: Norstedts, 1954), III:2: 241–54.

²⁹ Andreen, *Politik och finansväsen*, II:137–53; Gihl, "Kabinettskassan," 347–49, 353–54; Swärd, *Latinamerika i svensk politik*, 151–52.

importance, and af Wetterstedt had displayed a particular willingness to explore different opportunities. As court chancellor, his personal responsibility for colonial affairs could also further his private ambitions in the foreign arms trade.³⁰

When governor Rosenwård died in 1818 he was succeeded by Johan Norderling, who had been judge in the colony in the 1790s. He left Sweden for St. Barthélemy in 1819 with thorough instructions by the crown prince Charles XIV to make amicable contacts with the leaders of insurgency on the South American continent as well as the government of Haiti, although taking care to never to officially acknowledge their independence. The king-in-waiting wanted to exploit the opportunity of his departure to envoy a large cargo of cannons, rifles, gunpowder and other munitions. Norderling was advised to sell these goods in a way that he saw best fit, although he should take care to arrange sales discreetly. Contracts and deals were struck through local merchants who were knowledgeable and well connected with agents on the Spanish Main. Through these operations, some merchants and officials of St. Barthélemy became closely associated with economic and military developments in the Spanish Americas. Johan Bernard Elbers became an established agent in Colombia, where he traded in arms and munitions. The Swedish government also made clandestine use of agents, such as the officer Severin Lorich. In October of 1816 he arrived in Les Cayes and went by land to Port-au-Prince. During his sojourn in the republican capital, he discussed matters of trade and politics with the Haitian president Alexander Petion as well as with Simon Bolívar, then present under sanctuary. His personal overtures and offers of Swedish armaments to both were however met with reservation at this particular moment. In the wake of the revolutionary movements, many long-time settlers in St. Barthélemy gravitated towards the economic possibilities near the South American mainland. Artisans and

³⁰ Hans Forssell, "Minne av statsministern greve af Wetterstedt," in *Svenska akademiens handlingar ifrån år 1886* (Stockholm, 1889), 468–70, 476–89. Af Wetterstedt married into the de Geer family in 1811.

workers from St. Barthélemy settled in Angostura and Margarita as well as other settlements along the Venezuelan coastline.³¹

Individual efforts of persons connected to the government in St. Barthélemy did much to further contacts with the Spanish Main. The clerk Carl Ulrich von Hauswolff had been envoyed to St. Barthélemy in 1810 as a replacement to the current notary public, and advanced amid a stormy career in the colony to the office of government secretary. His personal conflicts with other magistrates were seemingly the cause of his resignation and subsequent travels to South America. He conducted extensive personal research efforts on mining prospects in Colombia, and became an agent of the Colombian government, specializing in securing shipments of munitions and armaments. After a long sojourn in South as well as North America, he conducted two trips to Sweden in 1824, where he successfully promoted commercial expeditions among Swedish merchants and officials. One of the latter included Count af Wetterstedt, who consigned part of the cargo of the brig *Cristoval Colon*, bought and loaded with Swedish iron products during von Hauswolff's stay in Sweden. Hauswolff's general visit to Europe also went hand in hand with his functions as an agent for the Colombian government. He tried to exact Swedish recognition for the state as of Colombia well as the title of Swedish consul to Colombia for himself. Even though he was unsuccessful in this particular regard, he collaborated, through his financial contacts in London, in the notorious 'ship contract' (*skeppshandel*) in 1825 between Sweden and the Mexican and Colombian governments, respectively. The contract in question involved a plan to clandestinely sell a number of Swedish men-of-war to the newly independent states. Despite fairly complicated measure to keep the deal secret, Spanish authorities nevertheless unearthed the plans, which became the subject of international as well as domestic scandal in Sweden. The contract fell through, and did much to temper the Swedish commercial interests in South America, especially in

³¹ Norderling's instruction, 29 April 1818, C 256, BII:3 Koncept i kolonialärenden 1818–20, Pommerska expeditionen och kolonialdepartementet, SNA; Carlos Vidales, "Bernadotte, San Bartolomé y los insurgentes de Tierra Firme (La ayuda de Suecia a la causa bolivariana)," *Instituto de Estudios Latinoamericanos, Universidad de Estocolmo*, no. 53 (1988), 6–21; Simon Bolívar's trade in armaments with Elbers is quite well known, see for instance Bolívar to Elbers, 27 August 1820, in *Memorias del General O'Leary, publicadas por su hijo Simón B. O'Leary*, (Ministerio de la Defensa: Caracas, 1981), 17: 398; Lorich, "Rapport sur ses voyages."

government circles. Von Hauswolff returned to settle in Colombia in 1825 in the town of Medellin, where his household became a rendezvous point of sorts for the shipping interests still present in St. Barthélemy. His position in Colombia however soon unraveled as his various mining projects undertaken with personal means became marred by disasters and bankruptcies. He was compelled to return to Sweden in 1831 in straitened circumstances.³²

Whereas the utility of St. Barthélemy experienced a brief revival through Swedish interest in South American markets, regional traffic as well as the local merchant activity was steadily decreasing in the postwar period. A Swedish officer visiting Gustavia in 1817 expressed his surprise when he only “saw very few American vessels” in the harbor, in stark contrast to the wartime traffic he had seen two years prior during a Swedish naval expedition to the colony. The local merchants were also moving elsewhere, or were simply running into financial difficulties after the war. In Gustavia of early 1817, claimed governor Rosenswärd, there were no other “speculative tradesmen” left on in the colony except Johann Bernhard Elbers of the firm of Elbers & Krafft. In the period of post-war depression on the island, he was the only one among the cadres of naturalized merchants keeping regular contacts aloft with American vessels and neighboring colonies. His partner Krafft had long since then moved to the United States and become a resident of Baltimore. In the summer of the same year, Elbers was forced to cease his immediate commercial activities in the colony and declare bankruptcy. The totality of outstanding claims that was affixed to the firm’s business inventory exceeded half a million Spanish dollars. Nearly half that amount was due to a hefty loan in the merchant bank of Baring Brothers & Co. in London. The rest of the 78 other creditors dispersed in the West Indies, Britain, the

³² Swärd, *Latinamerika i svensk politik*, 146–54; Berndt von Schinckel, *Minnen ur Sveriges nyare historia* (Stockholm: Samson & Wallin, 1872), 11:127–30; Tingbrand, *Who was who*, 289–90; Magnus J. Crusenstolpe, “Hauswolffiana” in *Portefeuille. Skildringar ur det inre af dagens historia* (Stockholm: Hjerta, 1842), IV:185; Sven Ola Swärd, “Carl Ulrich von Hauswolff,” in *Svenskt biografiskt lexikon* (Stockholm: Bonniers, 1969), XVIII: 352–54.

Netherlands, and the United States convey a wide commercial network that was unravelling helplessly in the state of peacetime affairs.³³

The bankruptcy case and the subsequent activities of Elbers is significant in the general crisis and reorientation in colonial commerce towards the South American markets. In itself, the bankruptcy was a serious individual setback to the colony's commercial activity and occasioned a prolonged and difficult proceeding in the colonial courtroom. Somewhat miraculously Elbers however could continue as the most active merchant in the colony even during the height of the claims process against his firm. He did so with the aid of persisting commercial contacts and sources of credit, despite being unable to trade directly under his own name. The firm would however never operate within the transit trade as it had done during the late war, but rather adapted to new possibilities offered by another conflict, the Latin American wars of independence.

There are also fair reasons to believe that Elbers escaped his creditors by less than scrupulous methods. During the whole of the period of political unrest on the South American continent, Elbers stood in close connection to Admiral Luis Brion, acting as a middleman who handled shipments of supplies, money, munitions as well as troops to the Spanish Main. He even offered the use of his private armed frigate, *El General Clemente*, to Brion's discretion, as well as other ships during various campaigns in Portobello and Cartagena. He married into a Bogotá family in 1823, and in October of that year he became a Colombian citizen. His apparent insolvency a few years prior comes into an interesting light when it is clear that he spent considerable sums of money on the patriot cause, administering personal loans to the Colombian government of 69,457 Spanish dollars in 1821 and 61,502 Spanish dollars in 1823. In his newly adopted home country, there was ill-natured gossip surrounding his purported lack of reputation and low business ethics, concerning specific reports of failed business ventures in Curaçao and the United States, as well as St. Barthélemy. High-ranking government officials

³³ The Swedish officer's account from Severin Lorich, "Rapport sur ses voyages en 1816 et 1817 à Saint-Barthélemy, à Haiti, aux Etats Unis de l'Amerique du Nord et en Egypte," 30 May 1818, M298, Engeströmska samlingen, SRL; The whole volume of PJ 184, FSB, ANOM, in excess of 1,000 pages, is composed solely of the documentation of the Elbers & Krafft bankruptcy case; Rosenswärd's report, 5 June 1817, SBS 4B, SNA; Rosenswärd's report, 12 January 1818, SBS 5A, SNA.

reported that he had arrived in 1821 with a hefty personal fortune in excess of 500,000 Spanish dollars, in cash. Possibly this was money he had kept out of the reach of debtors, or money he had made in the arms business with the insurgent leaders, or quite possibly a combination of both. The claims about his wealth is reinforced by the fact that he received a personal monopoly on steam navigation on the Magdalena river, and financed the construction of steamboats and the accompanying infrastructure for many decades through his personal assets.³⁴

As a whole, the rebellions on the Spanish Main ushered in a brief but intensive last period of commercial activity for the ailing Swedish colony.³⁵

The *Corsario Insurgente* and the Resurgence of Illicit Trade in Gustavia

In a similar way to the Guadeloupean privateering during the French wars, the Spanish American *ordenanzas de corso* allowed prizes to be carried into neutral ports, as opposed to ports exclusively controlled by the insurgents. This condition was made absolutely necessary by the transitory nature of territorial dominion during in Spanish America during the early years of the insurgencies. Spanish expeditionary forces pacified parts of the Spanish Main from time to time, effectively separating privateers from home ports such as Cartagena and forcing them to seek refuge in alternative bases in the West Indies. A wide variety of insurgent privateers frequented St. Barthélemy regularly, from Cartagena, Venezuela, Buenos Aires, Chile and Gran Colombia. Especially Artigas privateers made St. Barthélemy a regular base of operations. According to a news story in *The Times* in the early 1820s, Artigan

³⁴ Robert L. Gilmore & John P. Harrison, "Juan Bernardo Elbers and the Introduction of Steam Navigation on the Magdalena River," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 28, no. 3 (1948): 335–59; Ricardo Garcia Bernal, *Juan Bernardo Elbers: del Rhin al Magdalena* (Bogotá: R. Garcia Bernal, 2007), 31–36; The declaration of Elbers' Colombian citizenship in *Gaceta de Colombia*, 18 January 1824.

³⁵ Berghult's report, 22 March 1819, SBS 6A, SNA.

privateers had made the small dependency of Fourchue an “emporium for their booty.”³⁶

Under the auspices of the revolutionary government in Puruarán, privateering was authorized under the newly designed Mexican flag. Mexican privateering was in many ways synonymous with the activities of a Frenchman named Luis Aury, who amassed a sizeable maritime force of ships and established a base at Galveston, before embarking his privateers to Amelia Island, where the Scotsman Gregor MacGregor was struggling to defend his settlement against Spanish forces. In September 1817, Aury assumed command of Amelia Island and declared it part of the Mexican Republic. Towards the end of the year, however, the United States government sent troops to the island and removed Aury and his privateers. St. Barthélemy with remote out ports like Fourchue became somewhat of a surrogate for the lost bases of operation, although not congenial to the same kind of organization of offensive maritime forces. Fourchue nevertheless became a means for privateers to regroup and sell of their prizes, and conversely a means for financially ailing Gustavia burghers to remain in business. Many found a new lucrative branch as privateer agents. William Israel, for instance, was one of several merchants who acted as agent for Buenos Ayrean privateers.³⁷

A special trait of the privateering business during the South American Wars of Independence was the relative ease with which maritime depredations were conducted. A great factor in this condition was the British interest in the independence movements. The British government attempted to re-establish British trade with Spanish America on the same unofficial footing as it had enjoyed since 1810. Clandestine commercial and military efforts were frequently a part of these plans. As such, they too found use in neutral subterfuges to disguise their expedition. A corps of British mercenaries headed to aid and arm the insurgents in the South American

³⁶ Matthew McCarthy, *Privateering, Piracy and British Policy in Spanish America 1810–1830* (Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013), 30–31; Carlos Vidales, “St Barthélemy,” 25–33; Feliciano Gámez Duarte, “El desafío insurgente. Análisis del curso hispanoamericano desde una perspectiva peninsular: 1812–1828” (Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Universidad de Cádiz, 2006), 83–84, 131–34; *The Times*, 10 March 1821; *The Report of Saint Bartholomew*, 20 April 1818.

³⁷ McCarthy, *Privateering, Piracy, and British Policy*, 31, Sarah Batterson, “A Horde of Foreign Freebooters. The U.S. and the Suppression of the Slave Trade,” *Diacronie* 1, no. 13 (2013): 1–16; Duarte, “El desafío insurgente,” 133.

colonies departed with five different ships in London in 1817 with the aim to arrive conjointly in South America. First, however, they would touch at St. Thomas and St. Barthélemy before continuing with their mission. The British soldier James Hackett, a part of the military detachment described the general impression of shoreside commerce in Gustavia in 1818 as he arrived with one of the British ships:

This island may be considered a place of general rendezvous for smugglers of every description. The flags of all nations (but more especially of America) are to be seen flying in the harbour of Gustavia, and the resident merchants, I understand, derive a large part of their emoluments from the intercourse with those engaged in contraband traffic.³⁸

Before they could mount their expedition on the main, they landed with their different vessels both in St. Thomas and St. Barthélemy, also convenient for mercenaries like Hackett to ascertain the state of affairs on the Spanish Main and plan their intended approach. While awaiting intelligence, the senior officers of the British expeditionary force was invited to a fête by the Swedish governor Rosenswård, in honor of the birthday of Charles XIV. During his short tenure (1816–18), governor Rosenswård had close contacts with at least one admiral of the patriotic fleet, Luis Brión. British-Spanish contacts had been facilitated through St. Barthélemy before. At a prior occasion to Hackett's expedition, three British vessels had anchored at Fourchue laden with equipment, munitions, as well as hundreds of soldiers waiting to join ranks with the army of Simon Bolívar. Brión was there with his fleet to arrange the reshipment, all with the clandestine approval and supervision of the Swedish governor. A new item about the landing was however inserted into the local newspaper, but it only disclosed that Brión had arrived with two brigs and a schooner, and that he had been “immediately informed that he could not be received here, nor his vessels even be permitted within gun reach” and that he then retreated towards Fourchue, where his squadron lay anchor, from which station it was “impossible to force.”³⁹

³⁸ Hackett, *Narrative of the expedition*, 23.

³⁹ Hackett, *Narrative of the expedition*, xv, 32; Rosenswård's report, 6 July 1818, SBS 5 A; *The Report of Saint Bartholomew*, 20 April 1818.

Gustavia's record of illicit trade and smuggling during the post-war period conveys different, conflicting pictures. The actions of Swedish colonial magistrates sometimes displayed what can only be seen as an extremely risk-filled policy towards privateers and smuggling after the conclusion of the French wars. The American consul Robert Harrison was convinced that the Swedish Governor was in league with the most notorious of South American privateers and "pirates", as he called them. Harrison had initially been dispatched as U.S. consul in St. Thomas, but after some quarrels with local officials he became *persona non grata* in 1819, and relocated with a new consular letter to St. Barthélemy. He made a long-winding but ultimately unsuccessful attempt at achieving recognition as consul from Governor Norderling. He quickly grew embittered at his current state of affairs, but also found a source of grievance in the affairs of the colony. As an American citizen, he was appalled by the presence of South American privateers carrying American prizes into the port. He interestingly traced this tacit acceptance of privateering all the way to the Swedish government, stating that Governor Norderling was:

[...] supported by Baron Wedderstadt [af Wetterstedt] one of the Ministers, who having an Iron-Foundry (or rather Cannon), sends a great many Guns and balls to the Governor, to dispose of to the Cruisers that fit out here. [- -] Neither King, or Ministers, are over nice how the Governor gets money, so he sends it to them, and it is so with all petty depraved Governments and there is none more so than that of Sweden.⁴⁰

Harrison continued to make various impasses about the corruption of Swedish colonial officials, and is most certainly a source of libels against the governor and council found in various newspapers. He accused Governor Norderling of taking bribes from pirates and the chancellor Wetterstedt of supplying them with guns and armaments from his private iron foundries. Harrison's numerous testimonies are however difficult to assess, as he was an embittered official, disenchanted with the activities of the free ports after having been expelled from St. Thomas in 1819 after making similar accusations there. He was also never granted recognition by the Swedish

⁴⁰ Harrison's report, 31 July 1821, M72:1, RG 59, NARA.

authorities as consul at his current post, and could thus not earn a living from his title. In his reports to the Secretary of State, he could spin unbelievable yarns about deposits of illicit riches piling up in Gustavia under the approving gaze of Swedish officials. All tendencies aside, he still hinted at a rough-and-ready pragmatism that was very much a reality of free port governance.⁴¹

American consuls were not the only ones that found irregularities in the commercial activity of Gustavia. Swedish Governors were in steady correspondence with French admirals and colonial officials about the course of clandestine commerce in Fourchue. Of particular interest to the French administration were reports of French subjects that were involved in smuggling, especially slaves, through the small islet. But they were also, as most other officials tasked with the protection of their own colonial commerce, highly concerned with the fact that privateers were offloading and selling seized vessels at Fourchue belonging to the French. The British Vice Admiral Charles Fleeming who had been stationed in the West Indies since 1828, reported that even after the conclusion of conflicts in the South American continent, illicit trade continued to thrive in the free ports of the region. He mentioned that the “Dutch, Danish, and Swedish Governments have instructed their Authorities in the West Indies not to be too strict” in their adherence to international law. This condition, he observed, was motivated by “a false notion of encouraging trade.”⁴²

In their communications with foreign officials, St. Barthélemy Governors consistently insisted that persons guilty of irregularities and illegal trade at Fourchue were immediately ordered to depart. There were also many instances when this held true. Privateers were sometimes even seized when their activities were found to be too harmful for the colony’s foreign relations. This condition most often occurred when privateers tried to arm their vessels while in Swedish waters. This was the crucial distinction which had been established already during the French wars, when Swedish subjects had tried to arm their ships while lying at anchor in Gustavia, either to be sailed under

⁴¹ Harrison’s report, 31 July 1821, M72:1, RG 59, NARA; Ekman, “A Swedish Career,” 24–27.

⁴² Haasum to Jacob, 29 December 1823, Jacob to Norderling, 19 January 1824, Haasum to Jacob, 17 March 1824, SBS 9A, SNA; Fleeming to Barrow, 7 September 1829, *British Parliamentary Papers. Correspondence with British Commissioners and Foreign Powers relating to the Slave Trade* (Dublin: Irish University Press, 1840).

the Swedish or any foreign flag whatsoever. In the course of time, however, magistrates increasingly started to look the other way. In a report to af Wetterstedt, Governor Norderling confessed that “Since I began to close my eyes about Fourchue, dubloons and sound piastres are everywhere [...] hundreds of sailors have amused themselves and drunk up all their wages.⁴³

The complaints from French and British colonial officials did not however lead to serious diplomatic confrontations or crises. The presence of the unacknowledged U.S. consul in Gustavia however did give rise to wealth of accusations against the Swedish council. A constant reiteration in Harrison’s dispatches are reports of depredations against U.S. shipping as well as U.S. citizens connected to it. Among these former was the “pirate” Joseph Almeida, who Harrison claimed lived in “wealth and splendour” on the island with his wife and nine children. Almeida originated from the Azores, but had become a U.S. citizen in 1805 and settled in Baltimore. As many other sailors and traders on the North American coast, he got a privateer’s license from the U.S. government in 1812. After the Anglo-U.S. war he had strove to continue with the lucrative privateering business, and served intermittently as a privateer under the flags of Buenos Ayres as well as the United Provinces of Rio de la Plata. He soon gained notoriety for his maritime exploits against Spanish and Portuguese shipping in the region, which earned him several lawsuits, including in his adoptive United States where he was charged of piracy, but acquitted in 1819. In 1822 he settled in Gustavia and acquired different properties both in St. Barthélemy as well as in neighboring islands. His activities in St. Barthélemy during the period 1822–28 seems to have been relatively legitimate, as he traded and worked as a local merchant with at most the capacities of agent for different privateers. He however returned to piracy in 1828, but on his final cruise, his crew mutinied and transported him to Puerto Rico where he was subsequently executed. Almeida is quite typical of the kind of actor who was involved in the privateering of the *corso insurgente* during the South American wars. Large cohorts of former U.S. privateers changed berths after the conflict with Great Britain and continued to cruise

⁴³ Norderling’s report, 3 July 1820, SBS 7A, SNA.

under various insurgent colors, often taking up occasional residence in the imperial peripheries.⁴⁴

The majority of U.S. protests were however only written complaints which received little if any satisfactory responses from the Swedish government. This however changed dramatically when an individual U.S. naval ship decided to take decisive action against a privateer lying at anchor in Gustavia in December of 1828. The privateer in question was the Buenos Ayrean *Federal*. During a recent cruise, the *Federal* had plundered the U.S. brig *Nymph* of Boston of some manufactures. The privateer then proceeded to make sail for Martinique but was driven off course and a new destination was plotted for St. Eustatius and St. Barthélemy, where the privateer's most recent spoils. Surprisingly, the ship was denied entry at St. Eustatius where it only received cannon fire from Oranjestad's forts. While just outside port waters of Gustavia, the local privateer agent Abraham Haddocks of A. & Henry Haddocks received the ship and offered to buy the loot while the ship was lying offshore. The privateer's command however knew that they would need a recent clearance of goods from the port of departure, and as they stolen goods on board, they would have to feign a need for repairing the ship in order to get the ship shoreside and present the goods to prospective buyers. This simulation was indeed arranged and the goods were duly sold, but before the privateer could lift anchor the next day, the U.S. sloop of war *Erie* cut out the *Federal* from the harbor during the night. Captain Turner of the U.S. naval ship had received intelligence about the *Federal*'s encounter with the *Nymph*, and decided to seize it before it could proceed elsewhere. Before the seizure, Harrison in Gustavia had demanded that the Swedish council seize the ship and deliver the property onboard belonging to U.S. citizens.⁴⁵

The affair resulted in a lengthy fallout in the communications between U.S. and Swedish governments. One obvious issue was the violation of neutral waters by a warship. The captain of *Erie* was under orders to protect American shipping but overstepped his authority when he entered Gustavia, and was

⁴⁴ Jeffrey Orenstein, "Joseph Almeida: Portrait of a privateer, pirate & plaintiff, part I" *The Green Bag* 10, no. 3 (2007): 306–28; Jeffrey Orenstein: Portrait of a privateer, pirate & plaintiff, part II," *The Green Bag* 12, no. 1 (2008): 35–52; Duarte, "El desafío insurgente," 203, 212–28.

⁴⁵ Stackelberg to Clay, 31 December 1828, Affidavit of John Williams, 25 January 1829, M60:2, RG 59, NARA.

duly put on trial. The U.S. government also saw fit to replace Harrison with another consul. The most serious and practical issue was however the claims of several Gustavia burghers, who had bought or consigned parts of the cargo that was carried off the island in the night. The incident also put into an embarrassing light the kind of commerce that the island's merchants now resorted to since many years. Reports from the island's governing council after the incident showed a higher alertness in the handling of privateering business that had been turned away, and agents such as Haddocks and others were ostensibly being more and more scrutinized in their actions.⁴⁶

A Colonial Backwater

During the 1820s and 1830s, the former maritime economy of Gustavia almost completely weaned off. The twilight of the former bustling free port is especially present in its dwindling population. In the decades after the war, thousands moved away to settle in other colonies. Still, the commercial and social community did not die overnight. In September 1819, a serious hurricane struck the island, whereupon hundreds of Gustavian houses, magazines, and stores were demolished. An equal number of buildings were seriously damaged whereas all berths and moorings were washed away. Most of the thirty-odd vessels lying in port were pulled ashore, leaving many beyond any means of reparation. Even in the face of this destruction, the usual commercial activity resumed after that hardly a month had passed, and dwelling-houses and means for the newly homeless were mustered in due course. Indeed, the town had like many urban societies in the region, recovered fairly well and quickly after past hurricanes. In 1819 the census tallied 2,910 inhabitants in Gustavia, and in 1828 there was only a decrease in a few hundred, at 2,311.⁴⁷

⁴⁶ Clay to Stackelberg, 2 January 1829, M38, RG 59, NARA; van Buren to Wright, 22 May 1829; van Buren to Culloch, 24 September 1829, M40, RG 59, NARA; Appleton to van Buren, 30 May & 15 July 1830, M45:T-6, RG 59, NARA; Haasum & Morsing's report, 6 December 1828 & 24 January 1829, SBS 10A, SNA.

⁴⁷ Norderling's reports of 15 October & 20 November 1819, SBS 7A, SNA.

After this time, however, the population of Gustavia quickly faded away. In 1838 the countryside population eclipsed the town population, and in the 1850s and 1860s the population of Gustavia dropped below a thousand, whereas the countryside population slowly increased from 1,683 in 1854 to 1,990 in 1866. The decline of the town followed from further disasters. Severe hurricanes occurred again at least once every decade, and all brought with them material and human destruction. A malignant intermittent fever epidemic in 1839–40 harvested some 300 lives, while the most serious destruction came when a fire provoked by strong winds in 1852 turned the western part of Gustavia ablaze. 135 houses were completely destroyed and up over 500 people were left homeless. Governor Haasum at that point feared that the colony was near the brink of the abyss. After the fire of 1852 most of the former constructions of Gustavia whittled away into a nearly desolate place, which was observed by Goës in his tour of the island in 1882. He saw vacated buildings and ruins overrun by cacti and bushwork where there once had been “gambling dens and hotels, meeting places for the stock brokers of Gustavia, politicians and demagogues, of which the town had apparently been well supplied.” The ephemeral nature of commercial enrichment was not lost on Goës, who also toured the colony’s countryside, and discovered the ruins of rural retreats which once belonged to the richest merchants in the island. There was the remains of a villa in Anse de Flamands, built by the unfortunate Carl Dreyer which had been blasted to smithereens after the hurricane of 1837 and never rebuilt. Goës also witnessed the still visible foundation of the abandoned stone and marble mansion of Elbers & Krafft in Anse d’Ecailles, which had been largely picked to pieces over decades in order to supply building repairs in Gustavia. According to Goës, the remains of the white marble floor of its former antechamber still breathed an air of “West Indian arrogance and vanity.”⁴⁸

Notwithstanding the effects of the climate and individual disasters, the decay of the urban environment of Gustavia was still mainly a consequence of disappearing capital and economic activity. Landed property had depreciated

⁴⁸ For the population development of St. Barthélemy, see Table 2.1; For information of serious disasters and epidemics, see Tingbrand, “A Swedish Interlude,” 75–78; The most destructive hurricanes occurred in 1821, 1837, 1850, 1867, and 1867. The quotes are from Goës, “Minnen,” 120, 162–64.

in value “beyond conception,” wrote an exasperated member of the local Haddocks family in the 1830s, and other settlers feared that if they chose to stay they would soon fall “into a state of beggary.” Most merchants and artisans were steadily leaving the island for employments and better prospects in other islands. Still during the early 1820s the public incomes indicate a viable economy, as incomes exceeded the cost of funding for the administration and public works. The colonial council of St. Barthélemy remitted a sizeable sum of 32,345 Spanish dollars to Stockholm in 1821 and 25,058 Spanish dollars in 1822. The sources of this income would all but vanish, however, with the opening of British colonial ports. A brief intercession in this new liberty seemed almost to revive the old free port’s commercial fortunes, but it was only temporary. In the period 1829–31, the colony could still remit sums in excess of 20,000 Spanish dollars annually, but after this brief stint the activity faded away quickly.⁴⁹

The sudden halt in public proceeds occasioned the need for the Swedish crown to supply the colony with annual payments to cover expenses for official wages and public expenditures. The colony had finally become a financial burden for its owner. It is important however to note that notwithstanding the declining fortunes of the free port, Charles XIV was for a long time reluctant to part with the West Indian possession. The king was well aware that the extra income would soon dwindle as peace settlements were signed, but he underestimated how much the funds would be diminished after the war. When there was no longer any significant means flowing from the colony, the St. Barthélemy funds instead became a gravely abused loans account, mired in debts accrued from running costs in the work of the foreign ministry. Towards the end of 1829, when pressing economic matters were about to be settled in government, court chancellor af Wetterstedt was urgently proposing the sale of St. Barthélemy to a foreign European power, in order to relieve some of the debt that had grown heavy on the king’s different accounts during the preceding decades.⁵⁰

⁴⁹ Summary of St. Barthélemy’s revenue and expenditures, 1812–54, SBS 27 A, SNA; Haddocks to Lönner, 22 August 1826; Haddocks to the Lönner family, 8 January 1836, Abrahamssonska familjearkivet, Stockholms stadsarkiv.

⁵⁰ Fåhraeus, “Statistiska upplysningar,” 263; Andreen, *Politik och finansväsen*, II:2: 254–58; Gihl, “Kabinettskassan,” 341–42; Charles XIV’s report to the Swedish Diet, 27 June 1815, 1815:10:11, Charles XIV to the Privy Council, December 1817, 1817:10, Bernadotteska familjearkivet, SNA.

Despite af Wetterstedt's prior activism in this question, the offers that the Swedish government presented to foreign ministers did not meet with much appeal. In a series of deliberations between Sweden and the United States in 1818–19, Sweden had proposed the sale of St. Barthélemy for 200,000 pounds sterling to a number of different foreign governments, primarily the United States and Britain. This offer, however, was promptly refused as “wild and extravagant.” by the U.S. government. Af Wetterstedt continued to court foreign governments in this matter, and tried several times during the 1820s to sell it as a strategic naval station, given that the “late piratical acts and events in the adjacent Seas, might give importance to the Island.”⁵¹

Towards the middle of the century Italy was also approached with an offer, but upon learning that the Italians had plans of converting the island into a penal colony the offer was withdrawn. By then however the situation had turned critical for the few remaining persons who made up the Swedish administration of the island. In a very candid and succinct letter in 1860, Governor Carl Ulrich made very clear that the parent country could not expect to retain a colony with any functioning domestic presence if it could not spare more finances than it had during the preceding decades after the conclusion of the French wars. Ulrich made it abundantly clear also that the time was ripe for a cession back to France:

[...] since there are here no more than half a dozen or maybe eight people (the civil servants and my eldest daughters included) who speak or even understand one single word of Swedish inasmuch as the island never has been a Swedish colony in the strictest sense of the word and any effort never has been made to make it such a colony by establishing Swedish schools and such like I cannot perceive that a return of the island to its first owner in such circumstances would in any way be contrary to the dignity of the country⁵²

⁵¹ Russell to Adams, 21 October 1818 M45:3; Hughes to Clay, 7 February 1825, M45:5, RG 59, NARA; Sweden also tried to motivate the sale of Barthélemy at a discounted price to the U.S. with the argument that it would settle the Stralsund claims issue from 1810. See Carlson, *Relations of the United States*, 68–71.

⁵² Ulrich to Bredberg, 24 March 1860, SBS 17, SNA; Quote also used in Tingbrand, “A Swedish Interlude,” 77.

In 1876 France was approached in exactly this question, whereby a treaty of 10 August 1877 was produced, by which content France consented to reclaim the island if it was in express will of the local settlers for it do so. A referendum was subsequently arranged, where 352 votes were cast out of a remaining population of over 2,000 persons. All but one vote was for the retrocession of St. Barthélemy into French dominion. The treaty was ratified in Stockholm and Paris the following year. In return for the island the French government paid a small sum for the remaining Swedish property on the island as well as for the costs of retirement for Swedish colonial officials. Thus, in March of 1878, Swedish rule over St. Barthélemy ended. It ended inconspicuously, long after the island had had any significant role to play in the economic exchanges in the region. Life on the island had returned to a similar state as before the arrival of the Swedes in 1785. The local population lived and worked locally, claiming a living from the soil or from the adjacent waters of the Caribbean Sea, rather than from participation in intercolonial and transoceanic speculation that had become the norm under early Swedish dominion. Only the diminished city of Gustavia as well as scattered remains across the island remained as a memento of its fleeting days as an entrepôt and neutral subterfuge.⁵³

⁵³ Hélène Servant, "La rétrocession de Saint-Barthélemy à la France (1878–1884)," *Bulletin de la Société d'histoire de la Guadeloupe* 142 (2008): 13–39 ; Tingbrand, "A Swedish Interlude," 78–79.

6 Commerce in Disguise – Conclusions

How does one reconcile the two different views of the history of St. Barthélemy presented in the beginning of this study? The view offered by most historiographic tradition has glossed over the role of the Swedish colony in the maritime economy of the Caribbean due to its apparent lack of importance, whereas contemporary eye-witnesses living in St. Barthélemy during the height of the French wars reported of the rich windfalls of intensive transnational commerce. To this author it is clear that the first view needs some serious modification, according to a range of examinations and indications offered within the framework of this thesis.

Firstly, one should note the continuity of the transit trade that the creation of the free port of Gustavia facilitated in the wake of regional upheavals towards the end of the 18th century. After the decline of the region's arguably most important free trade colony, St. Eustatius, significant numbers of former merchants and traders of that colony quickly settled their businesses elsewhere, prominently featured in the waves of new settlers in St. Barthélemy but also rival free port colonies such as St. Thomas. The arrival of significant foreign capital constituted a success for Swedish colonial policy, and made possible the remarkably rapid development of Gustavia, which became a middling urban settlement in the region. This development should also be seen against the backdrop of further regional processes and events. Whereas both St. Barthélemy and St. Thomas gained in relative importance when St. Eustatius became a French dominion, St. Barthélemy remained as the only regional entrepôt after the Danish West Indian colonies became occupied by British troops in 1807.

Following a general rule, the free port of Gustavia profited most during times of war, and conversely, suffered depressions in trade during times of peace. This study has shown that the period 1793–1815 was the most profitable period of the colony's existence, with an uncontested apex during the late period of the war, 1809–14. There were at least two other notable periods of heightened activity, the first occurring at the tail end of the 18th century, and

the other actually occurring after the Treaty of Vienna in the 1820s. All of these peaks in trade activity have very specific and individual causes, tied to the different manifestations of the international conflict in the region.

The first period of note, the 1790s, is tied to at least two phenomena, the redirection of trade from St. Eustatius and the activities of the revolutionary French island of Guadeloupe. Economic opportunities were available in both of these developments, but especially the latter. The economy of St. Barthélemy became increasingly tied to the French colonies under revolutionary rule, which garnered a more intensive economic relationship with them than before the outbreak of the war. This, however, was very much a mixed blessing. A large part of this commerce consisted of prize goods seized by French privateers, or in the very least some affiliation with this commerce. Neutral Swedish vessels were however not untouchable by the same French privateers which frequented Gustavia with their booty, especially not if they were found trading in British harbors. Conversely, the colony of St. Barthélemy gained an ungainly reputation by British Admiralty, who rightly saw that it was deeply infiltrated with their enemies. As a result, Swedish-registered shipping suffered under the renewed vigilance of British cruisers and privateers, and the British decision to invade St. Barthélemy and St. Thomas surely had independent reasons beyond the European-centered politics of armed neutrality. Internal politics and the Swedish dominion of St. Barthélemy also became decisively effected by the local power exerted by Guadeloupe and its network of privateering agents. A substantial number of St. Barthélemy court cases became influenced by the ambitions and machinations of Victor Hugues, and the magistrates of the Swedish colony were on a constant tight-rope walk between the economic relationship with Guadeloupe and the official neutral status of St. Barthélemy.

As the aggressive maritime ambitions of Guadeloupe finally were tempered, and the first round of the international conflict was subdued by an uneasy peace at the start of the new century, so was the economic activity of St. Barthélemy's merchants. The colony emerged in an unfavorable condition after British troops left it in 1802, but as the war started anew there was renewed vigor in shipping and trading. Most importantly, its ties to the French colonies remained strong, even persisting for some time in the face of Franco-Swedish hostilities a few years later. The lifeblood of the free port was

however not entirely dependent on the access to French colonial markets. Rather, it was the traffic from the continental United States which mattered most for the fortunes of local merchants as well as the Swedish colonial chest. From the early days of Swedish colonization, neutral American vessels were the most frequent visitors. American goods were vital as the key to the markets of neighboring colonies. Since the access to European-made manufactures and goods were limited at best, only the supply of American goods made any exchange with West Indian colonies possible. The integral role of the United States in the transit trade of Gustavia was immediately felt following the start of Jefferson's embargo policies in 1807. During the war years, the economy of Gustavia was never in such dire straits as during this period, when there was no steady supply of the barest necessities from the North American seaboard. Even bare subsistence on the island became tenuous when victuals were scarce.

Somewhat ironically, the continuous reorientation in U.S. embargo policy also became the signal to the most prosperous period of the colony's history. In 1809, when the U.S. embargo became replaced with a policy of non-intercourse, St. Barthélemy suddenly emerged as the ideal subterfuge through which U.S. exports could be funneled to British and French West Indian colonies. Swathes of American vessels seeking to subvert the ambitions of domestic prohibitions now appeared on the road of Gustavia, and there followed a resurgence in new settlers and naturalized mariners from the continent. The period also marks the highest point of demand for Swedish naturalizations of vessel in the Western hemisphere, especially during the War of 1812, when the St. Barthélemy-registered fleet reached record highs.

After the war, economic activity seemed to disappear as quickly as it had surged a few years prior. The peace and the prospect of St. Thomas and St. Eustatius returning to their initial owners were causes for alarm in the commercial and administrative circles of St. Barthélemy. Despite a serious reorientation and refurbishment of colonial taxes, the Swedish colony failed to face the renewed competition from its former rivals. There was only one lingering source of commercial scope, which came now from the South American continent. The independence movements on the Spanish Main brought in its wake a fleet of new privateers in need of neutral entrepôts, as well as foreign, primarily British, capital with a trajectory towards the

insurgentes. St. Barthélemy filled some key supporting functions in this development, in likeness with other neutral or weakly controlled territories. The Swedish government's active but discreet interests in the possibilities offered by the independence movement also served to give the colony a renewed lease on life, albeit for a brief period.

After the hostilities of the South American independence movements died down, so did too any lingering economic prospects for the free port of Gustavia. The effect was compounded and made final by the opening of British ports to vessels of all nations during the 1820s. Nearly overnight the free port modeled after Dutch and Danish counterparts, a successful institution for centuries, became obsolete. No measure of administrative liberality could longer alleviate this fact. Gustavia remained as an occasional holdout and haunt for smugglers for decades, but nothing on the scale of the intensive wartime traffic which had built a foundation for a colonial society. In lockstep with disappearing capital, devastating hurricanes and disasters, the population of St. Barthélemy dwindled, especially among its urban dwellers. The colony reverted slowly but surely to its agricultural origins, as the once bustling harbor was slowly vacated. Since long realizing the inevitable decline of its possession on the other side of the Atlantic, the Swedish government started a campaign to sell it to a foreign power, although without success for most of the 19th century.

Whereas the development sketched above are readily observable through the corpus of documentation, reports, and statistical indicators, it is an entirely other matter to gauge accurately the value of the transit trade through Gustavia. The most important quantitative information on this question are the records of issued sea-passes, Gustavia customs revenues, as well as the estimated values of American exports to the circum-Caribbean during the period 1790–1820. Keeping in mind the limitations that these sources have, they do however convey a comparatively clear image of the transit trade through Gustavia, especially as the U.S. records permit a comparative perspective with the foremost rival free port colonies of St. Thomas and St. Eustatius for the whole duration of the French wars. As a free port among others in the West Indies, Gustavia was not among the most frequented during the early stage of the war. Even if American shipping was the single most important source of its commerce, Americans tended to favor St.

Eustatius and St. Thomas. Still, this relationship is hard to establish decisively since the estimated total values only record the principal stated destinations of American vessels leaving home port, while it is known that these vessels tended to oscillate between different West Indian ports, ascertaining the best available markets before making any concrete transactions. The records of Gustavia customs revenues however tend to reflect the general image conveyed by the figures of U.S. exports, save for a few odd years. This continued as the general trend up until 1807, when both St. Thomas and St. Eustatius were seized by the British. Only then did Gustavia receive a mass of U.S. exports on par with its rival free ports during the preceding years. This massive expansion however quickly faded within the late stages of the war, and even though St. Barthélemy received over 30 percent of the total U.S. exports to the West Indies in select years, it was only 30 percent of a grossly diminished export sector

It is more difficult still to make approximations of the commercial activities of the Swedish colony's own merchants and actors. Considering the comparative numbers of their merchant fleets, St. Thomas had a substantially more developed indigenous commercial movement. St. Thomas annually dispatched sea registers for hundreds of vessels plying different routes in the Western hemisphere. The frequency and reach of St. Barthélemy maritime activity was much more circumscribed. Thus the character of Gustavia was that more of a commercial node in the wider Caribbean through which foreign vessels could exchange their goods as opposed to an independent center of Swedish-registered shipping. This diminutive fleet however kept a vigorous small-scale traffic open between its home port and the French colonies of Guadeloupe, Martinique, St. Martin and the smaller outliers of the Lesser Antilles. The documentary evidence surrounding a few of St. Barthélemy's most prominent merchants also reveal that the commercial actors in Gustavia were far from limited to a solely regional operation, but instead had trusted correspondents and agents on all the far sides of the Atlantic. Their wealth and influence also indicate their apparent successes during the high tide of commerce during the wars.

The institutional limitations to commerce in Gustavia were manifold, despite the liberal dispensations of its commercial and legal framework. In the earlier years of the colony the essence of the free port was hampered by

the presence of a small but influential chartered company, which kept a strict observance of trade limitations during its existence. Gustavia merchants also lacked many of the rudimentaries of commercial infrastructure due to the weak links with the metropole. The demands for financing and markets were facilitated instead mostly through other colonies and European ports outside of the Baltic. In connection with this last fact, naturalized merchants in Gustavia faced a serious obstacle: they were not permitted to sail their Swedish-registered ships to other European destinations than those in Sweden. Even if most restrictions could and were circumvented, the restrictions nevertheless produced their own set of disadvantages and costs. Gustavia merchants as well as traders of other neutral nations were playing a constant game of risk during the war, as neutral shipping rarely was respected by the belligerent maritime forces of Britain and France. Protections in form of convoys and territorial control of colonial waters were never fully attained by naturalized Swedish merchants in West Indian waters. The problem of protection culminated in 1810 after a prolonged effort of the Swedish administration to organize an internal defense erupted in a mutiny. The mutiny is also characteristic of colonial rule in St. Barthélemy, as it had its sources in other matters of popular discontent.

Despite that a systematic account of the available statistics and other indicators show that St. Barthélemy played a secondary or tertiary role among West Indian free ports during the French wars, this study nevertheless shows that a great deal of the Caribbean transit trade flowed through this diminutive island in the Lesser Antilles. It was never considered ideal by most traders involved in the transit trade, but nevertheless found convenient and useful by traders looking to subvert and evade commercial restrictions in high-risk ventures. The creation of the free port of Gustavia constituted no less than a possibility for the continuity of the kind of trade conducted for centuries in Dutch, Danish, and other subterfuges in the region. Its brief yet significant value for state finances in the later stages of the war has also largely been overlooked by prior studies.

This thesis also offers one of the first systematic assessments of the Swedish participation of the slave trade through St. Barthélemy, as well as the foreign involvement in this trade. The survey reveals a number of over 7,000 transported African captives during the whole period of Swedish ownership

of the colony. Whereas this is a diminutive figure in the context of the whole European participation in the trade, it nevertheless reveals that the Swedish slave trade was larger than many earlier estimates. There are also important conceptual problems of what exactly constituted *Swedish* slave trade that have been considered, but the most important individual slave traders in the colony were in fact Swedes, whose activities have come into a new light. The historical development of the slave trade in the colony is also interesting because the neutral free port allowed foreign actors to circumvent international treaties and laws that were becoming prevalent in the overall efforts to abolish the transatlantic slave trade. The role of local agents as intermediaries in the trade also makes it difficult to arrive at any precise estimates, but it suggests that the final number presented in this thesis could still be revised upwards.

One could also speculate that the greater importance of the free port's existence did not lie within the quantities and values of goods shipped through it, but rather within the free port's quality as neutral ground. The free ports were a colonial crossroads for goods and capital but also for people and information. In a colonial world officially closed off by mercantile restrictions and policed by maritime predators in times of war, the free port offered unique possibilities for the itinerant trading vessels plying the Caribbean and Atlantic Seas. As such, Gustavia at times seemed to exert a near magnetic force of attraction to privateers, smugglers, and freebooters of nearly every description.

More significant queries surrounding Gustavia's role include the question whose interests the free port ultimately served? Although Gustavia served a purpose for a range of actors in need of a neutral subterfuge, it is clear that the utility of it mirrored the prevailing power relationships in the region. In likeness to Holden Furber's claim that smaller European nations contributed willingly or unwillingly to the establishment of British domination of India, so one could argue that St. Barthélemy was a service node on the periphery on the British Empire. True, during its early formative years the Swedish colony became juxtaposed in a network of almost subaltern colonies of the French empire, enough to warrant continuous British maritime harrassments as well as a final occupation in 1801. But this relationship did not last, and when the Caribbean Sea became more firmly in the grip of British maritime supremacy,

so did the nature and character of Gustavia commerce change. It became, more than ever, a neutral meeting place where American and British merchants could exchange goods despite the barriers erected by the war of 1812, in order to alleviate the immediate aggravations of war. One could also pose the question if St. Barthélemy could have been the service node and entrepôt for insurgents and privateers from the Spanish Main had it not been for the stance of the British government in the Latin American independence movement.

Especially the period of 1809–14 in the history of St. Barthélemy could offer some outlooks within the wider context of Atlantic and Early American history. The supply of British colonies during embargo and war years could give a significant additional evidence to the debate surrounding the so-called decline thesis of the British West Indian colonies. The decline thesis has held for a long period of time that the British plantation societies were set, by the end of the 18th century, in a state of irreversible decline. Newer investigations of quantitative data seem however to contradict this position. The availability of neutral markets such as St. Barthélemy for British colonists seem to support the latter position.

Another aspect of the period is the significance of the free port for American merchants during the war. Barring the increased connections with Spanish ports, St. Barthélemy remained as one of the few West Indian market available to American shipping, which suffered its most significant setback since independence. This development should be allocated its space in the economic history of the United States, something which it has not been given before this study.

Swedish Summary – Sammanfattning

Den här boken undersöker den svenska kolonin S:t Barthélemy's ekonomiska historia i den karibiska regionen under de franska revolutions- och Napoleonkrigen mellan 1793–1815. Den centrala frågeställningen är vilken roll kolonins frihamn Gustavia innehade i den regionala transithandeln under denna tidsperiod. Ett grundläggande antagande för studien är antagandet att smuggling historiskt sett utgjorde ett naturligt och väsentligt inslag i denna handel. Begreppet smuggling har varit föremål för en rad undersökningar och debatter inom tidigare historieskrivning, speciellt äldre kolonialhistoria under första delen av 1900-talet såväl som inom den moderna avgreningen atlantisk historia. Inom dessa har den holländska skeppsfarten samt frihamnshandeln på det västra halvklotet stått i exceptionellt fokus. Både Sverige och Danmark innehade däremot frihamnskolonier och verkade som neutrala aktörer inom samma världsdel. Jag hävdar i denna bok att den svenska frihamnen Gustavia innehade en större och mer betydelsefull roll i den karibiska transithandeln än forskningen hittills antingen hävdade eller kunnat påvisa.

Den tidigare forskningen kring S:t Barthélemy har bedrivits genomgående från ett nationellt svenskt perspektiv och hur kolonin påverkat svensk ekonomi och utrikeshandel. Eftersom denna forskning inte kunnat skönja någon stor betydelse av kolonin i dessa sammanhang, har också kolonins historia tillskrivits ringa betydelse i en rad andra sammanhang. Inom den internationella historieskrivningen har S:t Barthélemy inte uppmärksamats nämnvärt och endast rönt svepande omnämnanden från ett litet antal forskare. Däremot ger nedslag i källmaterialet och samtida litteratur under 1800-talet en annan bild av kolonin. I brittiska polemiker om neutral handel framhålls den svenska kolonin som en av flera potentiella nedslagsplatser som kan användas av det brittiska imperiets fiender, och samtida observationer från Gustavia under Napoleonkrigen ger ibland ett intryck av frenetisk ekonomisk verksamhet genom frihamnen.

Orsakerna till tystnaden inom tidigare forskning är många. Dels härrör den sig från att en stor och betydelsefull del av det primära källmaterialet inte varit tillgängligt under många årtionden, eftersom det återgått till Frankrike efter att kolonin återlämnades från Sverige 1878. Detta material har sedermera

blivit i mycket dåligt materiellt skick och varit stängt för forskningen. Dels beror situationen också på ett lågt intresse i Sverige kring dess koloniala förflutna. Perioden som kolonialmakt har inte resonerat väl med den moderna bilden av Sverige som ett progressivt välfärdssamhälle med engagemang i utvecklings- och biståndspolitik. Intresset för kolonin inom internationell historieskrivning har också varit marginellt, och de få bidrag som gjorts inom den har mötts av samma begräsningar gällande källmaterial. Det viktigaste inom det senare sammanhanget torde dock vara en förhärskande tendens att hålla sig inom nationella perspektiv och inte fästa stor vikt till gränsöverskridande fenomen såsom transithandeln via frihamnar just var. Ett vanligt narrativ inom atlantisk historia är den holländska dominansen inom frihandel, som till stor del överskuggat behandlingen av andra historiskt betydelsefulla neutrala aktörer i Västindien såsom Sverige och Danmark.

Avhandlingen påvisar en del väntade och en del överraskande resultat. Som en generell regel upplevde Gustavias ekonomi sina bästa konjunkturer under krigstid och sina sämsta under fredstid. Detta var en normal utveckling för regionens frihamnar. Den närmast dramatiska tillökningen i S:t Barthélemys befolkning var en direkt följd av den franska revolutionen och kriget mellan stormakterna. Inflyttningen till S:t Barthélemy var störst ifrån de närliggande holländska och franska besittningarna i Karibien, vilka upplevde stora politiska och social omvälvningar i följd av kriget. Av stor betydelse var inflyttningen från St. Eustatius, den ditintills största neutrala handelsplatsen i de mindre Antillerna. Denna mindre flyttningsrörelse sattes igång efter det franska övertagandet av ön 1795. Inflyttningen förde med sig inflytelserika handelsfamiljer och deras medföljande kapital och kontaktnät. En del i denna flyttningsrörelse rörde sig även till andra frihamnar såsom danska Charlotte Amalie. Tidigare framställningar av den regionala transithandeln har ofta utfäst 1795 som slutpunkt just på grund av St. Eustatius nedgång, men som ett nytt resultat kan denna avhandling påvisa att de svenska och danska frihamnarna möjliggjorde en kontinuitet i regionens transithandel. Avhandlingen ger också en av de första utförliga redogörelserna och uppskattningarna av den svenska inblandningen av slavhandeln genom S:t Barthélemy. Källmaterialet påvisar en summa på drygt 7 000 exporterade slavar, antingen på svenska fartyg eller med andra anknytningar till den svenska kolonin. Karaktären av handeln genom frihamnen påförde däremot

en historiskt intressant utveckling där slavhandeln pågick länge under olika former trots den ökade kampanjen mot handeln i Europa. Trots sin begränsade omfattning fanns det betydande svenska aktörer inom St. Barthélemys slavhandel, och det utländska deltagandet i kolonins slavhandel blev allt större efter hand som den transatlantiska slavhandeln förbjöds i andra europeiska länder. Som neutral frihamn erbjöd St. Barthélemy möjligheter för slavhandelsaktörer att förbigå internationella restriktioner och lagar. Den svenska slavhandelsfrågan samt den svenska förhållningen till slavhandelsmotståndet under 1800-talet skulle förtjäna ytterligare undersökningar.

Inom transithandeln skulle det däremot ta lång tid innan Gustavia steg till en liknande roll som sina danska och holländska föregångare. Det svenska västindiska kompaniet grundades som ett led i de svenska försöken att upprätta direkta handelskontakter från hemlandet till olika karibiska marknader. Avhandlingen visar dock i tydligare mån än tidigare undersökningar vilka problem och hinder som stod i vägen för kompaniets ansträngningar. Kompaniet var illa förberett finansiellt såväl som kompetensmässigt att möta de utmaningar som en transatlantisk handel ställde. Kapitalbristen i kompaniets hemstad Stockholm var stor, och direktörerna själva, ett par individer ur Stockholms handelsmannaelit, var tvungna att finansiera en stor del av insatsen själva för att upprätthålla en småskalig men regelbunden handelsrörelse med kolonin. Under sin knappt tjugoåriga oktrojtid mötte kompaniet och dess tjänstemän en mängd andra problem. Motståndet mot kompaniets privilegier i kolonin var stort, och dess tjänstemän lyckades aldrig etablera sig helt i regionens svårforcerade handelsnätverk. Kompaniets betjäning gjorde stora förluster i sin handel och i hemlandet saknade kompaniet ibland regeringens stöd för sina koloniala importvaror. Det tydligaste exemplet för detta var det svenska förbudet mot kaffekonsumtion som rådde 1794–96. I korthet berodde kompaniets problem i allmänhet på att frihamnsinstitutionen inte fungerade väl ihop med ett privilegierat handelskompani med stort inflytande i den koloniala styrelsen. Kompaniets oktroj upphävdes 1805 efter en förhållandevis kort diskussion i hemlandet och förnyades aldrig.

Den internationella handeln genom Gustavia var också till en början obetydlig. Konkurrens från etablerade aktörer samt den ökande osäkerheten

under den tidiga krigsperioden var avgörande faktorer i denna tröga utveckling. Ett informellt handelsförhållande upprättades dock efter hand främst med de franska kolonierna Guadeloupe, Martinique, och S:t Martin. Under revolutionstiden skulle förhållandet intensifieras, med såväl positiva som negativa effekter. En stor inflyttning av franska bosättare inleddes under det tidiga revolutionsåren, och de franska revolutionskommisarierna i Guadeloupe upprättade ett franskt konsulat i S:t Barthélemy. Konsulatet agerade också som bas för franska kapare i regionen, på samma sätt som i många kringliggande, icke-brittiska kolonier. Konsulatet medförde en förhöjd ekonomisk aktivitet som gagnade öns handlande, men det bidrog också till den svenska öns ökande utsatthet inför den brittiska sjömakten.

Som koloni och som ekonomisk institution var frihamnen mycket prekär att administrera och styra. Den lokala svenska administrationen, konseljen, ställdes kontinuerligt inför allvarliga utmaningar under krigstid. Som en perifer europeisk makt med en liten kolonial besittning hade Sverige inga realistiska möjligheter att upprätthålla ett effektivt herravälde över ön. Kolonin sattes under utländsk ockupation 1801–02 (Storbritannien) och 1807 (Frankrike). Ockupationerna hade olika handelspolitiska motivationer, men var relativt kortvarade och begränsade i förhållande till kolonins natur och utsatta läge. Ett utbrett missnöje hos den lokala befolkningen mot kolonins ledning ledde också till ett myteri bland kolonins milis 1810, med påföljden att öns justitiarie och platsmajor deporterades. Den svenska koloniala ledningen hade stora problem med att kontrollera befolkningens och individers agerande i politiskt och ekonomiskt viktiga frågor. Således antog Gustavia karaktären av ett samhälle som närmast fungerade som en marknadsplats som endast utnyttades åt utländska intressenter. Det svenska inslaget i öns befolkning och samhällsliv var mycket begränsat.

Efter en dålig ekonomisk period under början av 1800-talet, inledd av en instabil fred mellan stormakterna, ökade den ekonomiska rörelsen i Gustavia stadigt ända mot krigets slut. Danska Västindiens tillbakagång i kölvattnet av det brittiska besittningstagandet 1807 förstärkte den svenska kolonins roll i regionen. Förutom de traditionella kontakterna till de närliggande franska kolonierna förstärktes banden till amerikanska handelsnätverk. Gustavia intog mer och mer rollen som mellanhand i den amerikanska handeln till brittiska och franska kolonier. Detta förhållande ändrades dramatiskt på

grund av senare utvecklingar i amerikansk handelspolitik. Ett amerikanskt embargo inrättades emot handel på Frankrike och Storbritannien, vilket ledde till att St Barthélemy:s ställning som mellanhand blev ovärderlig. Under perioden 1809–12 upplevde kolonin sin mest intensiva handelsperiod, och avlöstes av en nästan lika lönsam period under 1812 års krig mellan Storbritannien och USA.

Handelspolitik hade varit ett stridsämne i relationerna mellan dessa länder ända sedan den amerikanska självständigheten. I allmänhet var båda länder ekonomiskt intimt förbundna, men medan USA drev en frihandelspolitik hävdade Storbritannien sin exklusiva rätt på handeln i dess egna kolonier. Detta förhållande, samt de folkrättsliga diskussioner som uppstod i samband med amerikansk neutral handel på franska kolonier och fastlandet, ledde till att den amerikanska sjöfarten utmanades av brittiska krigsskepp och kapare under i stort sett hela krigsperioden 1793–1815. Efter en rad brittiska övergrepp mot amerikanska handelsskepp förklarade USA krig. Däremot var amerikanska handelsmän ännu i behov av brittiska marknader för sina varor, och St. Barthélemy blev den föredragna nedslagsplatsen där brittiska och amerikanska varor kunde byta händer, kriget till trots. Detta var en utökning av den amerikanska smuggelhandeln som tilltagit efter 1809, då den svenska kolonin började utgöra en bekvämlighetshamn för amerikanska handelsmän som var i behov av att kringgå förbud i den inhemska handelspolitiken. Det stora amerikansk-brittiska handelsutbytet genom ön under denna period utgör avhandlingens kanske största resultat, och har inte tidigare behandlats ingående.

Fredsslutet 1815 medförde så småningom en dramatisk nedgång för kolonins handel och ekonomi. St. Eustatius och St. Thomas återlämnades efter kriget och var åter igen konkurrenter om den regionala transithandeln. En rad brittiska beslut under 1820-talet medförde även en utökad frihandel i de brittiska territorierna vilket skadade regionens gamla frihamnar. De sydamerikanska självständighetssträvandena blev däremot den möjlighet som höll Gustavias kommersiella funktioner i liv. St. Barthélemy blev en nedslags- och mötesplats för kapare under en rad nya sydamerikanska flaggor, och ön blev en slags mellanhand i vapenexporten till de sydamerikanska rebellerna. I denna utveckling deltog även den närmaste kretsen kring den svenska regeringen, som personligen gjorde affärer på ett antal expeditioner. I det

långa loppet var dock frihamnens roll utspelad, och kolonin upplevde stadiga förluster i sin befolkning under årtiondena efter kriget. Mot slutet av 1820-talet kunde öns administration inte längre bestrida sina utgifter själv, och kolonin var tvungen att få ekonomiskt tillskott från svenska kronan. Kolonin hade blivit en ekonomisk börda för hemlandet, och under 1800-talets lopp försökte den svenska regeringen sälja kolonin till en rad länder. Detta lyckades ändå inte förrän 1878, då kolonin återförsåldes till Frankrike.

Själva transithandelns karaktär, speciellt under krigstid, är sådan att den svårigen låter sig kvantifieras i precisa tal. Denna avhandling har dock gjort en systematisk genomgång av de tillgängliga indikatorerna i källor och statistik som finns tillgängliga. Resultatet är att S:t Barthélemy som sådan spelade en sekundär eller tertiär roll i förhållande till andra frihamnskolonier under kriget. Resultaten är dock tydliga i att en stor del av den karibiska transithandeln korsade den lilla svenskägda ön i Karibien. En rad begränsningar på det politiska såväl som ekonomiska planet begränsade möjligheterna för kolonin att vara en idealisk handelsplats för regionala handelsmän. Inrättandet av en frihamn på ön utgjorde dock inget mindre än en avgörande möjlighet för kontinuiteten av en slags gränsöverskridande handel som var en hundraårig tradition inom regionen. Gustavias korta men betydelsefulla högkonjunktur under Napoleon krigens slutskede är av speciell vikt även ur ett internationellt perspektiv. Det är också föremål för diskussion om frihamnsinstitutionens betydelse endast kan mätas i de sammanlagda varuvärden som kan uppmätas i kolonins handel. Frihamnar var en slags mötesplats mellan territoriella gränser, inte bara för utbytet av varor och gods utan även för mänskliga aktörer och information. I den merkantilistiska världen som det sena 1700-talets Karibien ännu var, så erbjöd frihamnen unika förutsättningar för kringresande handelsskepp på Karibiska och Atlantiska havet.

En viktig utblickande fråga i sammanhanget är vilkas intressen som egentligen gynnades mest av den svenska frihamnen? Även om Gustavia var öppen för alla och drog till sig en mängd aktörer i behov av en neutral undanflyktsort, är det ändå rätt klart att betydelsen av hamnen stod i en relation till rådande maktförhållanden i regionen. Jag hävdar att det går att göra ett analogt uttalande om S:t Barthélemy som Holden Furber gjort om mindre europeiska nationer i koloniseringen av Indien. Furber har framhållit

att mindre europeiska nationer såsom Danmark och Holland genom deras närvaro och sina handlingar på den indiska subkontinenten har bidragit mer eller mindre medvetet till etablerandet av brittisk dominans över samma territorium. I likhet med detta resonemang kan man framhålla S:t Barthélemys funktion som en läglig undantagszon i periferin på det brittiska imperiet i Karibien. Under den svenska kolonins första årtionden var visserligen den mera att betrakta som intagen i en fransk intressesfär, tillräckligt för att bli ockuperad av brittiska sjöstridskrafter i början av 1800-talet. Men detta förhållande förändrades stadigt i takt med att Storbritannien erhöll en fastare kontroll över regionen mot slutet av Napoleonkrigen. I synnerhet var nödlidande brittiska kolonier väl betjänade av frihamnen under stridigheterna med Förenta Staterna. En kontinuerlig debatt inom brittisk kolonialhistoria är om de västindiska koloniernas nedgång under 1800-talet faktiskt var så allvarlig som den tolkats vara, och här kunde S:t Barthélemys roll som mellanhand vara förtjänt att inlemmas som ett ytterligare perspektiv i denna debatt. En viktig anmärkning i sammanhanget är också om S:t Barthélemy kunde ha haft en så utvecklad kontakt med sydamerikanska rebeller och kapare om den brittiska utrikes- och handelspolitiken inte skulle ha haft så stora ambitioner på Sydamerika.

En sista betraktning är den om den svenska kolonins roll för den amerikanska neutrala handeln under hela krigsperioden. Före såväl som efter självständigheten levde amerikansk handel i ett nära förhållande till Västindien, som erbjöd koloniala stapelvaror i utbyte mot livsmedel och andra nödvändighetsartiklar som producerade i Nordamerika. Under de franska revolutions- och Napoleonkrigen blev den amerikanska neutrala handeln dock föremål för oerhörda risker och påtryckningar från alla krigförande länders flottor och kapare. I denna situation påtog frihamnarna i de mindre Antillerna en större roll än tidigare för förmedlandet av amerikanska handelsvaror till de olika kolonierna i Västindien. Under krigets gång utvecklades ett speciellt förhållande mellan amerikansk handel och den svenska kolonin, som utgjorde ömsesidiga fördelar, och ibland nackdelar, för svenska och amerikanska regeringar. I takt med Storbritanniens ökade herravälde över havet minskade de amerikanska handelsintäkterna dramatiskt, men S:t Barthélemy erbjöd en av de få möjligheter för handels fortgång. Detta förhållande har inte utvecklats så djupgående så som den

gjorts i denna avhandling tidigare, och kan väl tjäna att uppmärksammas i Förenta Staternas ekonomiska historia.

Appendices

Appendix I

A Note on Money, Rates of Exchange and Values

This thesis presents values for the Caribbean transit trade via different entrepôts and port cities. The Spanish dollar, a silver coin, is used throughout this thesis as the common denominator for sums of money and for valuations of commodities and cargoes and overall trade statistics. This is because the Spanish dollar was the primary money of account in St. Barthélemy as well as many other Caribbean colonies. This meant that in an everyday transaction and bookkeeping entry of, say, 100 Spanish dollars, the onus was always on the debtor to produce enough coin of sufficient metal weight to equal the required sum in Spanish dollars, whatever real money was involved. I emphasize that all such values are understood to be current at the time they were given. Called variously the peso of eight reales, the piastra or piastre gourde, cob, dollar, and the piece of eight, the Spanish dollar was the universal money of the Atlantic world, as well as the primary mode of payment in Euro-Asiatic trade in the Far East. This had been the case since the early sixteenth century, and had spread outwards from the Spanish empire by force of the vast silver output of the Spanish colonies in Latin America, and of the perennial need for bullion and specie of traders everywhere. It was the relatively most stable and least debased coin in the Western world. The Spanish government debased the value of the Spanish dollar as a coin a few times during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries with the result that it took greater numbers of reales to equal the nominal "piece of eight". As of 1772, the Spanish dollar was divided into 11 reales (also called bits or escalins), and every reale into 6 stivers (also called dogs or noirs). Other prominent coins which featured in the monetary circulation of St. Barthélemy were the Spanish doubloon (gold, worth 16 Spanish dollars) and the Portuguese moeda (gold, worth 8 Spanish dollars). Large remittances of money were of course transacted by way of cashless payments, primarily by bills of exchange, but also by bartering commodities. Swedish officials and agents of the Swedish West India Company usually resorted to the merchant house of Wilson & Son in London for their credit and remittances, but occasionally also to firms and bankers in Hamburg, Amsterdam, and Paris. Buying bills of exchange

from British, Danish and Dutch colonies in the vicinity was also not unusual to meet immediate liquidity needs.

The propensity for cheating and fraud, and the overall scarcity of bullion and specie, led to some serious problems in the colonial economies. "Clipping" coins by shaving, filing, or cutting metal from its edges was commonplace. It was very usual to cut a coin in not quite two halves by shaving and keeping a thin strip from the center. The list goes of techniques could go on, but the inevitable result of a these practices was a kind of profit for cheaters and a debased coinage for everyone. This explains the reliance of merchants on the weight of coins rather than accepting them by tale. A practical example is given by Euphrasén in 1788, who observed that the Spanish dollar in St. Barthélemy was usually in physical circulation as two or four cut pieces of a whole coin. Half a Spanish dollar was good for $5\frac{1}{2}$ reales. A coin cut into four pieces, on the other hand, led to the problem that 2 pieces (two fourths of a coin) were always bigger than the other two pieces, which in practice led to the larger pieces being worth 3 reales a piece, while the smaller ones never went for more than $2\frac{1}{2}$ reales each. Official measures by the St. Barthélemy council were enacted from time to time to combat abuse and to create a degree of monetary order, prohibiting underweight, cut, or otherwise debased types of coin and instituting the practice of countermarking coins for authenticity or value. There were even plans for an indigenous, copper colonial currency for the island in 1797, but these were never put into action as it was unrealistic. In an attempt to secure the supply of specie, the island council in 1797 fixed the value of Spanish dollars at a rate of 12 reales per dollar, instead of the usual 11. Still, the supply of specie and liquid assets remained an everyday problem. Administrative measures as a whole were never successful in regulating the monetary system of the island, which remained free and open to the whims and fluctuations of economic life at large.

Concerning the rate of exchange between the Spanish dollars and other currencies, it has to be conceded that there are no longer exchange rate series due to lack of sources. Exhaustive series are only available from 1820 onwards. However imprecise, I have adopted the practical exchange rate which was often referred to during the period covered in this thesis. The rate of exchange applied by the British to the Spanish dollar was calculated a relatively stable and precise £1 sterling = 4.44 Spanish dollars throughout the

Revolutionary period. For general and practical purposes, at least during the Napoleonic wars, the rate was sometimes rounded in contemporary sources to £1 = 5 pesos. The Spanish dollar and the U.S. dollar were held to be at par throughout these years. In comparison with these currencies, the monetary system of the Swedish kingdom was much more complex. During the 18th century, Sweden had both silver and copper currencies as well as a paper currency. After the insolvency of the *Sveriges Riksbank* in November 1776, the rixdollar specie of 25.70 was declared the monetary unit. Thus the silver standard was reintroduced. Despite of this, new paper money was issued, i.e. the rixdollar banco (or *bancosedlar*) and additionally the rixdollar riksgälds since 1789. Through these developments, the silver currency was more or less put out of operation at the end of the 18th century. Exchange rate quotations were done for the most part in or for rixdollar banco of 6 rixdollars specie or 48 shillings (*skillingar*) payable in bancosedlar. In the context of international trade, however, transactions were seldom made in Swedish currencies. Commercial centers such as Stockholm and Gothenburg were affiliated with international networks of cashless payment systems, but bills of exchange were rarely drawn from abroad on Sweden, and Swedish economic actors largely settled their commercial debts by drawing and remitting foreign bills.

Sources: John J. McCusker, *Money and Exchange in Europe and America, 1600–1775. A Handbook* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press for the Institute of Early American History and Culture, 1978), 3–23, 81–86, 98–107; Markus A. Denzel, *Handbook of World Exchange Rates, 1590–1914* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2010), 32–33, 307–11, 339–58; Frank Olrog, *Med svensk krona: Den svenska kolonien S:t Barthélemys mynthistoria 1784–1878* (Stockholm: Kungl. Myntkabinettet statens museum för mynt-, medalj- och penninghistoria, 1978).

Appendix II

Notes on units of measurement

Throughout the text use has been made of essentially two units for the measurement of shipping capacity or tonnage, the first of which is the Swedish last (*svåra läster* in plural) and the imperial ton (alt. weight ton or long ton). The common denominator for both units of tonnage is that they are a calculation of the total permanently enclosed capacity of the vessel, essentially the cargo hold of the vessel. This is not to be confused with either deadweight tonnage (the measure of how much weight a ship is carrying or is capable of carrying) or displacement (the weight of the water that a ship displaces when floating).

Calculation of the tonnage units could be a complicated process, but after 1726, standard procedures were employed in Sweden for the measurement of shipping capacity. A Swedish last was equal to a ship's carrying capacity of 18 ship pounds ironweight, or, 1 last = 18 ship pounds ironweight = 2.448 metric tons. That means that registered capacity of Swedish vessels were roughly equal to modern deadweight tonnage (but should still not be considered as such). The imperial ton, then, employed in the measurement of early modern British shipping, was equal to 2,200 English pounds, which is almost exactly 1 metric ton (1,016 kg). Partly because of this accessibility and ease of understanding for a modern audience, the unit is used in comparative research and I have therefore decided to convert Swedish registered tonnage throughout text from lasts to imperial tons. For practical purposes, I have assumed a general rate of conversion of 1 ton = 2.5 lasts.

An example how a measurement and conversion between these units functioned in practice is furnished in the ship documents of the Swedish brig *Neptunus*, captain Daniel Jäderbom. Measured in 1793 in Gamla Karleby (present day Karleby/Kokkola), the small brig had a measured length of 89 feet and a width of 26 feet. Moreover, it measured an immersion of 5 feet and 5 inches in the water (computed from a difference in immersion between a loaded and unloaded cargo hold, but these original measures were not specified). The Swedish royal *reglemente* of 11 March 1778 regulating the procedure of measurement was followed, and its specified formula can be

described as immersion (length * width)/112 = lasts. The calculation began thus:

$$89 * 26 = 2314.$$

$$2314 * 5.5 = 12727.$$

$$12727/112 = 113 \frac{71}{112}$$

The final tally was rounded down to 110 lasts, an acknowledgment of the fact that the total capacity included the crew's living quarters as well, which could be deducted from the commercial capacity of the vessel. Now, when the *Neptunus* sailed over the Atlantic and engaged in tramp shipping in the continental United States, she would be described as a registered 270 tons burden, as she was in a Baltimore custom house document in February 1798. Then the following proportion can be deduced: 270 tons / 110 lasts = 2.45. This goes to show that it is hard arriving at any perfect understanding of any vessel size when confronted with a number in either lasts or imperial tons.

Sources: Measurement of Swedish brig *Neptune* 10 September 1793, 2L, vol. 197, ADG; Measurement of Swedish schooner *Four Sisters*, 16 October 1815, PJ 183, FSB, ANOM.

Appendix III

Governors and commanders of St. Barthélemy

<u>Name</u>	<u>Term of Service</u>
Salomon Mauritz von Rayalin (1757–1825)	6 March 1785 – 23 April 1787
Pehr Herman Aurivillius Rosen von Rosenstein (1763–1799)	23 April 1785 – 6 June 1790
Carl Fredrik Bagge af Söderby (1750–1828)	6 June 1790 – 17 November 1795
Georg Henrik af Trolle (1764–1824)	17 November 1795 – 26 January 1801
Hans Hindric Ankarheim (1743–1814)	26 January 1801 – 14 February 1812
Berndt Robert Gustaf Stackelberg (1784–1845)	14 February 1812 – 10 August 1816
Johan Samuel Rosenswärd (1782–1818)	10 August 1816 – 19 September 1818
Carl Fredrik Berghult (1794–1834)	19 September 1818 – 20 August 1819
Johan Norderling (1760–1828) 27 April 1826	20 August 1818 –
James Harlef Haasum (1791–1871) (co-governed for most of the time) Lars Gustaf Morsing (1794–1860)	27 April 1826 – 28 June 1841
James Harlef Haasum	28 June 1841 – August 1858
Georg Wilhelm Netherwood (1829–1903)	August 1858 – 4 December 1868
Bror Ludvig Ulrich	4 December 1868 – 10 September 1878

Appendix IV

American consuls stationed on St. Barthélemy, 1797–1827

<u>Name</u>	<u>Term of Service</u>
Job Wall	1797–1803
Isaac Prince	1803–1809
William Israel	1809–1813
Nathaniel W. Strong	1813
Joseph Ficklin	1816–1820
Joshua Norvel	1820–1821
Robert Monroe Harrison	1821–1823
Hugh Steele	1823–1827

Sources: Despatches from U.S. Consuls in St. Bartholomew, French West Indies, 1799–1899, M72, RG 59, NARA; Walter Burges Smith, *America's diplomats and consuls of 1776–1865: a geographic and biographic directory of the Foreign Service from the Declaration of Independence to the end of the Civil War* (Washington D.C.: Center for the Study of Foreign Affairs, Foreign Service Institute, U.S. Dept. of State, 1987).

Appendix V

Swedish consuls stationed in the United States, 1783–1834

<u>Station</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Term of Service</u>
New York	Henrik Gahn	21 November 1799– 2 August 1834
Baltimore	Henry Aquiton	17 May 1810– 4 November 1818
Boston	Richard Söderström	22 September 1783– 27 February 1795
Charleston	Adolf Schough	10 January 1784– 17 October 1785
Philadelphia	Carl Hellstedt	22 September 1783– 28 February 1793
	Richard Söderström	27 February 1795– 7 April 1815
	Severin Lorich	25 July 1818– August 1834

Sources: J.A. Almqvist, *Kommerskollegiums och rikens ständers manufakturkontor samt konsulsstaten. Administrativa och biografiska anteckningar* (Stockholm: Norstedt, 1912), 345–49.

Appendix VI

Description of the datasets

Three separate datasets have been constructed for use in this thesis. These are (1) the Wilson dataset on the transit trade of St. Barthélemy and St. Thomas (2015), (2) the Wilson dataset on the Swedish slave trade (2015), and (3) the Wilson dataset on St. Barthélemy mariners (2015), referred to in this appendix as datasets (1),(2), and (3). The systematic collection of a large body of data from the archives have been organized through Filemaker software, and has been ongoing for the period of 2011–15. A large number of iterations have been made for each and every one of the separate datasets before arriving at the current structure. The data in the thesis are from the most current versions of the datasets (from 2015).

The composition and structure of dataset (1) is the most complicated. The purpose of this dataset was to collect all the available information on free port shipping in the Caribbean during the relevant years, with an obvious focus on St. Barthélemy. In the end, a large amount of data on the shipping of St. Thomas was also included. The dataset combines two principal layouts, as they are termed in Filemaker. The first layout is the passport registration layout, where every single database entry is a ship registration with basic ship and crew data, information on passport duration, place of registry, and so on. The second layout is the so-called itinerary layout, where the entries consist of voyage data. In individual cases in the latter layout, it has been possible to collect many references for the same voyage, and thus trace a quite detailed record of the ship route, as well as the goods carried. In the majority of cases, information for individual ships is quite scarce, and there are only a few points of information regarding the ship's passage. Taken together, dataset (1) includes 7,344 entries, out of which 4,507 are ship registrations whereas 2,790 are voyages. In a few hundred cases there are overlaps between registered ships and their voyages, thus rendering a more complete picture of the individual vessel in question.

Furthermore, the creation of databases also presents the constructor with the problem of standardization. Dataset (1) is constructed of various sources with widely differing proveniences. A large part is derived from the records of

St. Barthélemy shipping in the *Report of Saint Bartholomew*, registration lists and manifests found in the FSB, as well as material from the Sound Toll Registers and the Danish National Archives. I have not striven for wide-ranging standardization of values and measurements in individual entries. Instead, the ambition has been to recreate the original record. I have only performed conversions when referring to specific ships in the text, according to the method explained in Appendix II. Conflicting pieces of information regarding individual ships is not uncommon, and is a result of several factors, the most important of which is the incompleteness of the general records. It is simply not possible to recreate most individual voyages in complete detail. Conflicts of information and inconsistencies are especially prevalent regarding flag colors and national affiliations. This is a common problem that is due to the nature of the trade surveyed, and has been covered to an appreciable extent in the thesis.

Dataset (2) and (3) have been covered in chapter 2.2 and 3, and deserves only a few additional comments. The goal of dataset (2) was to collect all references to the Swedish slave trade with some connection to St. Barthélemy, and as such has been the dataset with the most serious conceptual problems regarding national affiliation. It has however been structured as far as possible in order to correspond to the information included in the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade (TAST) database, which includes two levels of national affiliation, distinguishing between ship registration and ownership of the vessel. The choice has also been made in order to harness the wealth of data in this database, and hopefully to integrate the findings on the Swedish slave trade into the online TAST resource in the near future. Finally, dataset (3) is a database recreation of the information in one single source, and is the least problematic of the three. It is the ambition of the author to make the datasets available online in a convenient form for other researchers.

Appendix VII

List of voyages made by the Swedish West India Company, 1787–1806

No.	Year	Name	Ship type	Tons	Captain	Øresund Date of outwards passage	St B Date of arrival	St B Date of departure	Øresund Date of homewards passage	Comments
1	1787	<i>Enigheten</i>	Ship	–	Johan N. Damp	1784-11-26	1785-01-30	–	1785-09-10	Captured and condemned; Russia
2	1789	<i>L'Amitié</i>	Brig	–	Etienne Morin	–	–	–	1790-09-27	–
3	1791	<i>Wälkomsten</i>	Brigantine	–	Petter Melin	–	1791-04-20	–	–	Shipwrecked in St. Croix
4	1791	<i>L'Apparence</i>	Snow	270	Anders Flodberg	1791-08-12	–	–	1792-06-23	–
5	1791	<i>L'Amerique</i>	Ship	238	A.F. Edling	1791-11-02	–	–	1792-10-02	–
6	1792	<i>L'Apparence</i>	Snow	270	Anders Flodberg	1792-10-01	–	–	1793-07-03	–
7	1793	<i>L'Apparence</i>	Snow	270	Anders Flodberg	–	–	–	1795-06-30	–
8	1793	<i>L'Amerique</i>	Ship	238	A.F. Edling	1793-11-03	1794-04-25	–	1794-08-25	–
9	1794	<i>L'Amerique</i>	Ship	238	A.F. Edling	1794-11-19	1795-02-26	1795-07-14	1795-09-12	–
10	1795	<i>L'Apparence</i>	Snow	270	Anders Flodberg	1795-09-23	1796-01-06	1796-04-17	1796-07-01	–
11	1795	<i>L'Amerique</i>	Ship	238	A.F. Edling	1795-12-13	1796-04-03	1796-07-03	1796-09-09	–
12	1796	<i>L'Apparence</i>	Snow	270	Anders Flodberg	1796-10-31	1797-01-24	1797-05-31	1797-07-22	–
13	1797	<i>L'Amerique</i>	Ship	238	A.F. Edling	1797-10-26	–	–	–	Shipwrecked in the English Channel
14	1798	<i>L'Apparence</i>	Snow	270	Anders Flodberg	1798-09-04	–	–	1799-07-17	–
15	1799	<i>Triton</i>	Barque	328	Anders Flodberg	1799-10-23	–	–	1800-07-03	–
16	1799	<i>L'Apparence</i>	Snow	270	Lars Ekenberg	1799-11-29	–	–	1800-09-09	–
17	1800	<i>Triton</i>	Barque	328	Anders Flodberg	1800-11-11	–	–	1803-06-15	Captured and cargo condemned: UK
18	1800	<i>L'Apparence</i>	Snow	270	Lars Ekenberg	1800-12-18	–	–	–	Stranded on the south coast of Norway

19	1803	<i>Triton</i>	Barque	328	Anders Flodberg	1803-10-15	1804-04-24		
20	1804	<i>Triton</i>	Barque	328	Anders Flodberg	1804-10-26	1804-12-23		
21	1806	<i>Triton</i>	Barque	328	Anders Flodberg	1805-23-10	1806-01-17	1806-06-18	Captured and condemned; France

Sources: SWIC Minutes, vols. 156–57, SWIC correspondence, vols. 168–70, Handel och sjöfart, SNA; Sound Toll Registers Online, 1787–1806, “St Barts” destination and place of departure, http://dietrich.soundtoll.nl/public/places_standard.php?fromname=St%20Barts, and http://dietrich.soundtoll.nl/public/places_standard.php?toname=St%20Barts, date accessed 17 February 2015.

Appendix VIII

List of known registered Swedish ships with a stated destination to St. Barthélemy from the Baltic, 1785–1815

No.	Year	Name	Ship type	Tons	Captain	Øresund Date of outwards passage	St B Date of arrival	St B Date of departure	Øresund Date of homewards passage	Comments
1	1785	<i>Sprengporten</i>	Frigate	–	Puke	–	1785-03-06	1785-06-30	–	Royal navy expedition
2	1785	<i>Antonetta</i>	Brig	–	G.A. Gyllenbååth	–	1785-05-11	1785-06-12	–	Owner: L.Kåhre; reg. in Gothenburg
3	1785	<i>Fred och Ymmoghet</i>	Ship	–	Teuchler, Andersson	–	1785-12-24	–	–	Owner: N. Arfwidsson; reg. in Gothenburg
4	1785	<i>Lovisa Fredrica</i>	Ship	–	A.A. Knape	1785-11-29	1786-02-03	1786-07-12	1786-08-24	Owners: L. Rejmers Persson, J.P. Müller, A. Westerberg, Carl Arfwedsson, David Schinckel; reg. in Stockholm
5	1785	<i>St. Olof</i>	–	–	D.F. Hacker	–	–	–	–	Owners: S.P. Rothstein; Hacker; reg. in Gothenburg
6	1785	<i>Sophia</i>	Brig	165	G.A. Gyllenbååth	–	1786-03-11	1786-06-01	–	Owners: Cullin, G.B. Santesson, J.P. & N. Holterman, reg. in Gothenburg
7	1786	<i>Expréen/</i>	Brig	78	S. Granberg	1786-10-28	1787-05-10	1787-07-08	1787-10-22	Owner: Escholin, reg. in Åbo

27	1798	<i>Gustavia</i>	-	275	J.G. Hilleström	1798-10-18	-	-	1799-07-21	Owners: Schön & Co., Röhl & Hansen; reg.in Stockholm
28	1798	<i>Minerva</i>	-	88	A. Hjortberg	-	-	-	-	Owner: J. Hall & Co.; reg. in Gothenburg
29	1799	<i>María</i>	-	108	H.P. Österberg	-	-	-	-	Owner: Zygeström; reg. in Gothenburg
30	1799	<i>Minerva</i>	-	88	A. Hjortberg	-	-	-	-	Owner: J. Hall & Co.; reg. in Gothenburg
31	1799	<i>Gustavia</i>	-	275	J.G. Hilleström	1799-12-04	1801-10-06	-	-	Owners: Seton & Co., Röhl & Hansen; reg. in Stockholm
32	1799	<i>Gustaf Adolph</i>	-	110	F. Olsson	-	-	-	-	Owner: J.G. Westerberg; reg. in Stockholm
33	1799	N/A	-	-	J. Durees	-	-	-	-	Owner unknown; possibly reg. in Stockholm
34	1800	<i>Amphion</i>	Brigantine	-	A. Graffman	-	1800-09-27	-	-	Owner unknown; reg. in Stockholm
35	1802	<i>Redligheten</i>	-	-	B. Ellström	-	-	-	-	Owner: Seton & Co.; reg. in Stockholm
36	1804	<i>Michael</i>	-	145	C.F. Hagelberg	-	-	-	1804-08-04	Owner: M.P. Hambré; reg. in Stockholm
37	1805	<i>Michael</i>	Brig	-	T. Childs	-	1805-03-27	-	-	Owner unknown; possibly same as in no. 36 above.
38	1812	N/A	-	-	N.P. Krook	1812-10-19	-	-	-	Owner unknown: reg. in Gävle
39	1814	N/A	-	-	B. Wallin	1814-06-16	-	-	-	Owner unknown: reg. in Gothenburg
40	1814	N/A	-	-	Z. Kolinius	1814-07-04	-	-	-	Owner unknown: reg. in Gothenburg
41	1814	N/A	-	-	M. Rump	1814-07-16	-	-	-	Owner unknown: reg. in Gothenburg
42	1815	N/A	-	-	J.F. Böst	1815-11-03	-	-	-	Owner unknown: reg. in Stockholm

Sources: SWIC correspondence, vols. 168–70, Handel och sjöfart, SNA; Extract of Algerian passports, Board of Commerce to Gustav IV Adolph, 12 June 1804, SNA; Sound Toll Registers Online, 1787–1815, “St Barts” destination and place of departure, http://dietrich.soundtoll.ni/public/places_standard.php?fromname=St%20Barts, and http://dietrich.soundtoll.ni/public/places_standard.php?toname=St%20Barts, date accessed 17 February 2015.

Appendix IX

List of slave ships with known Swedish or St. Barthélemy affiliation, 1787–1867

No.	Year	TAST No.	Name	Ship type	Tons	Flag	Captain(s)	Known owners and/or agents	Slaves carried	Affiliation and outcome	Known stops
1	1787		<i>William</i>	Schooner	61	Britain	John Story	N/A	N/A	5A	
2	1787		<i>Anne*</i>	Sloop/jachtship	92	N/A	N/A	N/A	32	5A	St. Barthélemy
3	1787		<i>Swift*</i>	Shooner	86	N/A	N/A	N/A	6	5A	St. Barthélemy
4	1788	41844	<i>Feliz</i>	Frigate	30	USA	Alexandro Bauden	N/A	228	5A*	St. Barthélemy, Louisiana*
5	1788		<i>Hope*</i>	Brig	50	N/A	N/A	N/A	34	5A	St. Barthélemy
6	1791		<i>Amity</i>	Schooner	30	France	J.P. Benoit	N/A	12	5F*	St. Barthélemy*
7	1792	98852	<i>Zombie/Zumbic</i>	Ship		Sweden	Richard Rogers	Röhl & Hansen	100	1E	Accra
8	1795	28209	<i>Stockholm</i>	Sloop	58	Sweden	Ferdinand Deurer, Peter Hassel, John Hassel, Adam Bird	Röhl & Hansen, G. Wernberg, Lars Rejmers Petterson	45	1A	Havana
9	1795	83301	<i>Regulator*</i>	Brig	133	Sweden/ Britain	Th. Dennett	S. Parsons	226	3B	Barbados
10	1796		<i>La Resource</i>	Schooner	N/A	Sweden	Desiderio Biagino	Sebastiano Biagino	N/A	3A	New Barcelona
11	1797		<i>Neptune</i> (formerly <i>La Neutralité</i>)	Brigantine	N/A	Sweden	Daniel Campbell	Vaucrosson & fils aîné	98	1A	Havana
12	1797		<i>Anna Maria*</i>	Schooner	N/A	Sweden	Thomas Simmons	Gustaf Wernberg	64	1F	Havana

13	1798	13738	<i>Neptune</i> (formerly <i>La Neutralité</i>)	Brigantine	N/A	Sweden	Daniel Campbell	Vaucrosson & fils ainé	185	1A	Havana
14	1799	28208	<i>Stockholm</i>	Brig	58	Sweden	Ferdinand Deurer	Röhl & Hansen, G. Wernberg	198	1A	St. Barthélemy
15	1800	36729	<i>William & Margaret</i>	Schooner	95	USA	John Read Jr., Meinhard Soubiron	Thom Dennis	35*	5B	St. Barthélemy
16	1801	24803	<i>Carolina</i>	Frigate	N/A	Sweden	Andre Hagberg	N/A	86	2A	Havana
17	1801	41545	<i>Svea</i>	Schooner	N/A	Sweden	Peter Wallender	N/A	98	2A	Puerto Rico
18	1801		<i>Antelope</i>	Schooner	N/A	Sweden	Blyder (Blyden)	N/A	37	1A	Havana
19	1802	13966	<i>Carol</i> (probably <i>Carolina</i>)	Frigate	N/A	Sweden	Xagleerg (probably Hagberg)	N/A	193	2A	Havana
20	1803		<i>La Petite Victoire</i>	Schooner	N/A	France	W. Robin	Valée de Coudre	51	4F	St. Barthélemy
21	1803		<i>Antelope</i>	Schooner	N/A	Sweden	Abel Blyden Jr.	Martins de Clarencieux, Juan Macias, Samuel Bonnet	41	1A	New Barcelona
22	1803		<i>Trosuherf</i>	Schooner	N/A	Sweden	Gardiner	N/A	57	2A	Havana
23	1804		<i>Eagle</i>	Schooner	55	Sweden	Marsan	J.J. Cremony	N/A	1A	St. Barthélemy
24	1804		<i>Gagne ton Pain</i>	Sloop	10	Sweden	François Romieu	Castagnet & Daumas	N/A	1A	St. Barthélemy
25	1804		<i>Distress</i>	Schooner	10	Sweden	Warner (possibly Cicero Warner or relative)	Cicero Warner	N/A	1A	St. Barthélemy
26	1804		<i>Polly</i>	Schooner	10	Sweden	Wells (possibly John Wells or relative)	John Wells	N/A	1A	St. Barthélemy
27	1804	36987	<i>Sally</i>	Schooner	40	Denmark	Lundell, J.	James Murphy	42	5A	St. Barthélemy, Havana
28	1804	37281	<i>Hoff</i>	Brig	156	Denmark	Benjamin Hilton	James Murphy	177	5A	St. Barthélemy

29	1804		<i>Dart</i>	Schooner	N/A	Sweden	Lorkik (possibly William Lordick)	N/A	66	3A	Havana
30	1804		<i>Active</i>	Schooner	30	Sweden	Portelly (possibly Jean Portelly or relative)	Jean Portelly	51	1A	Havana
31	1804		<i>Active</i>	Schooner	58	Sweden	Wilkinson	Joseph Wilkinson	136	1A	Havana
32	1805	40738	<i>Elmira/Almira</i>	Schooner	N/A	USA	Samuel Sherbourne	N/A	46	5A	Havana
33	1805	37279	<i>Experiment</i>	Schooner	N/A	USA	Mackintosh	N/A	67	5A	St. Barthélemy
34	1805	82201	<i>Kitty's Amelia</i>	Ship	272	Britain	Newkable, Nuttall, Thomas, Forrest	Henry Clarke	210	4A	St. Barthélemy
35	1805	83252	<i>Prudence</i>	Brig	126	Britain	Griffith, Christian, Charles	Henry Clarke	162	4A	St. Barthélemy
36	1805	37282	<i>Only Son</i>	Schooner	53	Sweden	Lamitt	J.J. Cremony, J.L. Kidder	101	1A	St. Barthélemy
37	1805	37280	<i>Elisabeth</i>	Brig	93	Sweden	Pyke	John Franklin Gibney	176	1A	St. Barthélemy
38	1805		<i>Aurora</i>	Schooner	83	Sweden	Arnaud (possibly Pierre Arnaud or relative)	Gregorio Cevada, Pierre Arnaud	146	1A	Havana
39	1805	81421	<i>Fanny</i>	Ship	171	Britain	Archibald Kennan	Samuel Newton	207	6C	St. Barthélemy, Guadeloupe
40	1806	25470	<i>Samuel</i>	Ship	84	Denmark	Ward, Griffiths	Samuel Goodman	198	5A	Charleston
41	1807		<i>Dorade</i>	Schooner	12	Sweden	Francis Roberts	N/A	14	1A	Dominica
42	1808	25513	<i>Farnham*</i>	-	N/A	USA	Burgess	Röhl & Hansen	126	4A	St. Barthélemy, British Caribbean - colony unspecified
43	1808		<i>Le Fernand*</i>	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5F	N/A
44	1808		<i>Betsy</i>	Schooner	N/A	Sweden	Jacob Andres	N/A	N/A	1A	Puerto Rico

45	1809		<i>Rebecca</i>	Brig	N/A	Sweden	James Cohen	Clemente de Ichazo	84	1A	Havana
46	1809		<i>Nuestra Señora del Carmen*</i>	Schooner	N/A	Spain	Manuel Moreira	Ramon Navarro	152	6G	St. Barthélemy
47	1810	7548	<i>Diana</i>	Schooner	N/A	Sweden	Berthé	Jean Turenne	84	IC*	Sierra Leone
48	1810		<i>Rebecca</i>	Brig	N/A	Sweden	James Cohen	Clemente de Ichazo	80	1A	Havana
49	1810		<i>Lookout</i>	Schooner	N/A	Sweden	Juan Ventre	Clemente de Ichazo	40	1A	Havana
50	1810		<i>Hope</i>	Schooner	N/A	Sweden	Richard Beale	Clemente de Ichazo	24	1A	Havana
51	1810		<i>Eliza</i>	Schooner	N/A	Sweden	Hiram Beaker	Clemente de Ichazo	33	1A	Havana
52	1810		<i>Minerva</i>	Schooner	N/A	Sweden	Francisco Coffee	Pedro Carricaburu, Santiago Martiartu	44	1A	Havana
53	1810		<i>San Francisco de Asis*</i>	Ship	N/A	Spain	N/A	Röhl & Hansen	140	4G	St. Barthélemy
54	1810		<i>Rebecca*</i>	Brig	N/A	N/A	N/A	Röhl & Hansen	193	1A	St. Barthélemy
55	1811		<i>Matilde</i>	Schooner	N/A	Sweden	Carl Lindgren	Clemente de Ichazo	150	1A	Havana
56	1811		<i>Eliza</i>	Schooner	N/A	Sweden	Francisco Coffee	Clemente de Ichazo	60	1A	Havana
57	1814		N/A	Brig	N/A	France	N/A	N/A	100	7F	N/A
58	1815		<i>Pilot</i>	Schooner	125	Sweden	Devreer (Deurer)	Elbers & Krafft	61	1A	Havana
59	1818		N/A	N/A	N/A	France	N/A	N/A	N/A	7F	N/A
60	1818	41899	<i>S Jago de Cuba</i>	Brig	N/A	Spain/ Uruguay	N/A	Martin Maher	N/A	6E*	St. Barthélemy, Savannah
61	1820	112	<i>Maria</i>	Schooner	N/A	Sweden	Benoat	N/A	160	1A	Havana
62	1820	34190	<i>La Protée/Le Procès</i>	N/A	N/A	France	Coquart de Pouliguen	Coquebert	330	6D	French Caribbean, various ports
63	1820		N/A	N/A	N/A	Spain/ Portugal	N/A	N/A	N/A	6D	French Caribbean, various ports
64	1820	2329	<i>Joseph</i>	N/A	N/A	Spain/ Uruguay	de la Cruz	Zachariah Atkins	N/A	8C	Sierra Leone
65	1821		<i>Prometheus/Jolly</i>	Brig	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	380	6D	N/A
66	1822		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	6D	N/A

67	1822		N/A		Hermaphrodite Brig	N/A	USA/ Colombia	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	6D	St. Barthélemy
68	1823	2754, 34391	<i>Le Prince d'Orange/ Chasseur</i>	N/A	N/A	France	France	Francis Thébaud, Ruinet	Giraud, Renaud	N/A	N/A	7F	Puerto Rico
69	1823	34443	<i>Jaloux</i>	N/A	N/A	Sweden	Sweden	Clark	Titus (Philippe) Bigard, William Panilio	107		3C	Guadeloupe
70	1824		<i>La Clarisse</i>	N/A	Schooner	Sweden	Sweden	Simmons, Sanguinetti, Gaspard	Titus (Philippe) Bigard, Alexis Bernier	86		3B	Puerto Rico, St. Thomas
71	1826	2842	<i>Justin</i>	N/A	N/A	France	France	Tardy	Tardin de Roche	N/A		7F	N/A
72	1826	2878	<i>L'Hermione</i>	Schooner		France	France	Chirpoin, Gouy	A. Boucannier, A. Ferrand, Delisle, Perillier	123		7C	Cayenne
73	1827		<i>Presidenta (Bella Escholha/Bella Brazileira)</i>	N/A		Buenos Ayres	Buenos Ayres	Beasley	Haddocks, Dinzey	6		6F	N/A
74	1827	2889	<i>Flora</i>	N/A		France	France	J. Dauris	Guard	N/A		7F	N/A
75	1828		<i>Gaviota</i>	Ship		Buenos Ayres	Buenos Ayres	Dautant	G. Röhl	N/A		4G	Guadeloupe
76	1828		<i>Le Charles</i>	N/A		France	France	Moras	Bigard, Armuzier, Montreuil	8		4A*	St. Barthélemy (Fourchue)
77	1828	34619	<i>La Corine</i>	Schooner		France	France	Jean Deglanne		N/A		7C	Gorée
78	1829	931	<i>Nirzee/Niersée/ Estafeta</i>	Brig		France	France	N/A	Bigard, Dejoye	280		4A	Guadeloupe
79	1829	938	<i>La Folie</i>	Schooner		France	France	Ptoilé	N/A	127		7A	Martinique
80	1829	2416	<i>Félicité</i>	Brig		France	France	Thomas Dauthon	Chable	227		5A	St. Barthélemy
81	1830	34659	<i>La Vigilante</i>	Schooner		France	France	N/A	N/A	N/A		7C	Gorée

82	1831		<i>Gotland/L'Etoile du Nord</i>	N/A	N/A	Sweden	Samuel Vaughan	Samuel Vaughan	N/A	IG	N/A
83	1831	34719	<i>Mani/Mars</i>	Schooner	56	France	Raphael	Liard, Francheschy	N/A	7B	Guadeloupe
84	1831	34721	<i>Eglantine</i>	Schooner	N/A	France	N/A	N/A	N/A	7G	Guadeloupe
85	1831		<i>Polina</i>	Schooner	N/A	Spain	Ferrera	Natta	N/A	7G	Cuba
86	1837		<i>Victorina/Victoria</i>	Brig	N/A	Sweden	N/A	N/A	N/A	1F	N/A
87	1862	4984	<i>Laura</i>	Brig	303	USA	Dionissis	Dionissis	N/A	7G	Antigua

Sources: Wilson dataset on the Swedish slave trade (2015); Richard Ledée, “*Répertoire de la traite négrière: Saint-Barthélemy (Suède)*”, otherwise known as the CLASH catalogue, available at <http://www.memoiresbarth.com/st-barts/traite-negriere/pdf/repertoire-traite-negriere-saint-barthelemy-suede.pdf>, date accessed 18 June 2015.

Appendix X

List of ships in the CLASH catalogue which have been excluded from Appendix VI

No.	Year	TAST No.	Name	Ship type	Tons	Flag	Captain(s)	Owner(s)	Slaves carried	Affiliation/ Outcome	Known stops
1	N/A		Orbit			USA				Mentioned in governor's report in connections w. accusations against St B. Orbit probably not a slave vessel	
2	1795	80856	<i>Cleveland</i>	Brig	127	Britain	William Rogers	N/A	120	Only loose St B affiliation	
3	1799		<i>Peggy</i>			USA				Vessel sold in St B after completion of voyage	
4	1800	36734	<i>Success</i>	Schooner	111	USA	Paul Brownell	W. Greene	101	Only loose St B affiliation	
5	1803	82448	<i>Margaret & Eliza</i>	Brig	163		Thomas Barry, Postlethwaite	William Thompson, Samuel Clough	250	Purchased and naturalized after slaves disembarked at another location	
6	1806	25457	<i>Gustavia</i>	Ship	300	USA/ Sweden?	M. Hill	Spencer John Man	250	No apparent affiliation with St. Barthélemy except for the name	Charleston

7	1807	36948	Nancy	Schooner	106	USA	Joshua Viall	John Phillip	70	St B a possible destination, but captured before completion of voyage	
8	1815		<i>Hannibal</i>	Schooner	N/A	Sweden	N/A	N/A	N/A	no slaves onboard ("staves" misread in source)	Savannah
9	1818		N/A						N/A	Vague St B affiliation	
10	1818		N/A						N/A	Vague St B affiliation	
11	1819		N/A						N/A	Vague St B affiliation	
12	1819		N/A						N/A	Vague St B affiliation	
13	1819		N/A						N/A	Vague St B affiliation	
14	1820		N/A						N/A	Vague St B affiliation	
15	1820	34197	<i>La Theresza</i>	N/A	N/A	France	Suarez da Costa	N/A	192	Reloaded slaves to a Danish vessel in Guadeloupe, with St B as the intended next destination. Unclear if it ever reached St B.	Guadeloupe
16	1824		N/A						N/A	Vessel's owners tried to procure Swedish documents for a voyage to Africa	
17	1825	34472	<i>La Venus</i>	Schooner	88	France	Yves Allain, André Debarbès	Dubuc	N/A	Based at St. Thomas, only recommended to buy ballast iron at St. Barthélemy before departing for the coast.	Guadeloupe
18	1826		N/A	N/A	N/A	France	N/A	N/A	N/A	Arrived in St B fier disembarking slaves in Guadeloupe, arrived	Guadeloupe

23	1829							France				N/A	Swedish governors denied this.	
24	1830	34636						France			Renault	444	Disembarked 1 mariner at St B after slaving voyage otherwise unconnected with St B.	
25	1833											N/A	A shipment of gunpowder from St B to St Thomas, supposedly going into a Spanish slave ship's cargo. G. Röhl implicated in the deal.	

Sources: Wilson dataset on the Swedish slave trade (2015); Richard Ledée, “Répertoire” de la traite négrière: *Saint-Barthélemy (Suède)*, otherwise known as the CLASH catalogue, available at <http://www.memoirestbarth.com/st-barts/traites-negriere/pdf/repertoire-traites-negriere-saint-barthelemy-suede.pdf>, date accessed 18 June 2015.

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FO 73/432 From Erskine and Watson, 1877.
FO 73/131 Domestic, various, 1826.

FO 73/134 Domestic, Stierneld and Rålamb, 1827.
 FO 73/138 Correspondence, Lord Bloomfield, 1829.
 FO 73/142 Lord Bloomfield and Rålamb, 1830.
 FO 73/149 Lord Bloomfield, 1833.
 FO 73/150 Correspondence, Lord H. de Waldes, 1823–33.
 FO 73/152 Domestic, Björnstjerna, 1833.
 CO 152/65 Leeward Islands, Antigua, 1786–88
 CO 152/88 Leeward Islands, Correspondence, Governor
 Lavington and Minister for Foreign Affairs Viscount
 Castlereagh, 1806.
 CO 152/89 Leeward Islands, correspondence, 1807.
 CO 152/90 Leeward Islands, correspondence, 1807.
 CO 152/91 Leeward Islands, correspondence, 1808.
 CO 152/101 Leeward Islands, Antigua, 1813.
 CO 152/102 Leeward Islands, correspondence Elliot and Lord
 Bathurst, May–August, 1813.
 CO 152/103 Leeward Islands, correspondence Elliot and Lord
 Bathurst, September–December, 1813.
 CO 152/26 Leeward Islands, 1747–50.
 CO 153/28 Reports from Stanley, 1794–98.
 CO 318/38 Military reports of the Public Office, October–
 December, 1809.
 CO 318/47 Windward and Leeward Islands, military reports,
 October–December, 1812.
 CO 319/7 Windward and Leeward Islands, 1801–02.

Ruuthska samlingen

C.F. Bagge till Erik Ruuth, 16 juni, 12 juli & 5 juli 1790

Saint Barthélemy-samlingen

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 1 A | Dokument rörande övertagandet av S:t Barthélemy 1784–1804. |
| 1 B:1 | Guvernörsrapporter etc. 1784–1800. |
| 1 B:2 | Guvernörsrapporter etc. 1784–1800. |
| 1 C | Guvernör Ankarheims rapporter etc. 1800–11. |
| 2 | Guvernör Ankarheims och Stackeborgs rapporter etc. 1812–13. |
| 3 A | Guvernör Stackelbergs rapporter etc. 1814. |
| 3 B | Guvernör Stackelbergs rapporter etc. 1815. |
| 4 A | Guvernör Stackelbergs och Rosenswärds rapporter etc. 1815. |
| 4 B | Guvernör Rosenswärds rapporter etc. 1816–17. |
| 5 A | Guvernör Rosenswärds och Berghults rapporter etc. 1818. |
| 5 B | Diverse rättsdokument och protokoll från S:t Barthélemy 1818. |
| 6 A | Guvernör Berghults och Norderlings rapporter etc. 1819. |
| 6 B | Diverse rättsdokument och protokoll från S:t Barthélemy 1819. |
| 7 A | Guvernör Norderlings rapporter etc. 1820. |
| 7 B | Guvernör Norderlings rapporter etc. 1821. |
| 8 A | Guvernör Norderlings rapporter etc. 1822. |
| 8 B | Guvernör Norderlings rapporter etc. 1823. |
| 9 A | Guvernör Norderlings, Haasums och Morsings rapporter etc.
1824–26. |
| 9 B | Guvernör Haasums och Morsings rapporter etc. 1827. |

- 10 A Guvernör Haasums och Morsings rapporter etc. 1828–29.
 10 B Guvernör Haasums rapporter etc. 1830.
 11 Guvernör Haasums och Morsings rapporter etc. 1831–32.
 12 A Guvernör Haasums och Morsings rapporter etc. 1833.
 12 B Guvernör Haasums rapporter etc. 1834–35.
 13 Guvernör Haasums rapporter etc. 1836–39.
 14 Guvernör Haasums och C. Ulrichs rapporter etc. 1840–44.
 15 Guvernör Haasums och C. Ulrichs rapporter etc. 1845–49.
 16 Guvernör Haasums och C. Ulrichs rapporter etc. 1850–54.
 17 Guvernör Haasums och C. Ulrichs rapporter etc. 1855–60.
 18 Guvernör C. Ulrichs rapporter etc. 1861–64.
 19 Guvernör C. Ulrichs och Netherwoods rapporter etc. 1865–68.
 20 Guvernör B. Ulrichs rapporter etc. 1869–73.
 21 A Guvernör B. Ulrichs rapporter etc. 1874–75.
 21 B Guvernör B. Ulrichs rapporter etc. 1876–78.
 22 A Diverse dokument och korrespondens 1799–1816.
 22 B Diverse dokument och korrespondens 1820–73.
 23 Diverse dokument och korrespondens, utkast, memorialer etc.
 1785–1744.
 24 Diverse trycksaker, officiella utfästelser, tidningar etc. 1807–1863.
 25 A Räkenskaper 1793–96.
 25 B Räkenskaper 1796–1801.
 25 C Räkenskaper 1801–05.
 25 D Räkenskaper 1806–08.
 25 E Räkenskaper 1809–12.
 26 A Diverse räkenskaper.
 27 A Handlingar och räkenskaper för S:t Barthélemyfonden 1812–70.
 28 Inventarieförteckningar m.m. 1788.
 Folkräkningar 1787, 1788, 1796.
 Anmärkningar om staden Gustavias och landsbygdens kvarter.
 Fartygslistor 1787 (mars–december).
 30 A Räkenskaper 1812–13.
 30 B Räkenskaper 1814.
 31 A Räkenskaper 1815.
 31 B Räkenskaper 1816.
 51 Diverse handlingar.
 Kungörelser och författningstryck m.m.

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- vol. 7 Vaucrosson, ed. *Handlingar Uti Det hos Kong:1 Maj:t anhängiga Mål, angående den af handelsbuset på Öen St. Barthélemy, Vaucrosson & Son, i underdånighet förda klagan öfwer wäldsamt medfart af Gouverneuren och Conseillen på nämnde Ö, m.m.* Stockholm, Nordström, 1799.

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M 298 Lorich, Severin, "Rapport sur ses voyages en 1816 et 1817 à S:t Barthélemy à Haiti, aux Etats Unis de l'Amerique du Nord et en Egypte." 30 May 1818.

Newspapers

The Report of Saint Bartholomew
Inrikes tidningar

Stockholms stadsarkiv

Abrahamssonska familjearkivet

Correspondence between the Haddocks and Lönner families, 1820–40

Antikvarisk-topografiska arkivet hos Riksarkivarieämbetet

Vitterhetsakademiens handskriftssamling

F 16:20 Röhl, Hjalmar Jacob Eliasson, "Wördsamt Memorial." 14 januari 1786.

Uppsala University Library (Uppsala universitetsbibliotek)

Fredrik Gyllenborgs brevsamling

Hans Hindric Ankarheim till Fredrik Gyllenborg, 20 oktober 1801.

Gustavianska samlingen

F 420 Granville Sharp till Gustav III, odaterat, 1790.
F 479 Gustav III till G. Ph. Creutz, 10 september 1779.

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The Report of Saint Bartholomew

Pehr Olof von Asps håndskrifter

- F 812g:7 Pehr Olof von Asp, "Om Ultramarinska Besittningar, i anseende till den nytta eller skada som, för en Europeisk Magt af 2ra eller 3je ordningen, kan af dem härröra," utkast till pro memoria, 12 februari 1802.

Danish National Archives (Rigsarkivet København)

Generaltoldkammeret, ældre del, vestindisk-guineisk renteskriverkontor

- 365: 384 Udskrift af St. Jan og St. Thomas søpasprotokol 1788–1807
365: 488 Breve till direktionen for Det vestindiske handelselskab 1801–07.
365: 496 Dokumenter betræffende toldvæsendet 1779–1789.
365: 490 Ekstrakter, beregninger etc. vedr. den vestindiske handel, told og skibsfart 1764–1856.

Reviderede vestindiske regnskaber

- S-12573 Matrikel for St. Thomas og St. Jan 1755–1915.
57I: 127.5 Toldregnskaber St. Thomas 1784–90.
57I: 127.6 Toldregnskaber St. Thomas 1791–1800.
57I: 127.7 Toldregnskaber St. Thomas 1801–07.

Vestindiske lokalarkiver

- 693: 11.53.169 St. Thomas og St. Jan guvernement mm; Gruppeordnede sager – Sociale og kulturelle forhold; Fortegnelse over indbyggerne på St. Thomas 1806.
693: 11.53.171 St. Thomas og St. Jan guvernement mm; Gruppeordnede sager – Sociale og kulturelle forhold; Borgerbrevsprotokol 1755–88.
693: 11.53.230 St. Thomas og St. Jan guvernement mm; Gruppeordnede sager – Næringsvæsen; Beskyldning om indbyggeres slavehandel på St. Thomas 1825.
705: 17.1.12 St. Thomas borgerråd; Forhandlingsprotokoller 1783–1855.

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Record Group 59: General Records of the the Department of State

M28	Diplomatic and consular Instructions of the Department of State, 1791–1801.
M38	Notes to Foreign Ministers and consuls in the United States from the Department of State, 1793–1834.
M60	Notes from the Swedish legation in the United States to the Department of State, 1813–1906.
M664	Notes from foreign consuls in the Unites States to the Department of State, 1789–1906.
M72	Despatches from U.S. consuls in St. Bartholomew, 1799–1899.
M77	Diplomatic Instructions of the Department of State, 1801–1906.
M78	Consular Instructions of the Department of State, 1801–1834.
T208	Despatches from U.S. consuls in Guadeloupe, 1802–1906.
T230	Despatches from U.S. consuls in Stockholm, Sweden, 1810–1906.
T350	Despatches from U.S. consuls in St. Thomas, 1804–1906.
T431	Despatches from U.S. consuls in St. Pierre, Martinique, 1790–1906.

Archives departementales de la Guadeloupe

2L Tribunal de prises de Basse-Terre

vol. 28	Documents des bateaux saisis, <i>Louisa</i> (brick americain).
vol. 35	Documents des bateaux saisis, <i>Sterling</i> (brick americain).
vol. 38	Documents des bateaux saisis, <i>Vulture</i> (brick americain).
vol. 41	Documents des bateaux saisis, <i>Industry</i> (brick americain).
vol. 127	Documents des bateaux saisis, <i>Neptune</i> (brick suédois).
vol. 170	Documents des bateaux saisis, <i>Triton</i> (navire suédois).
vol. 178	Documents des bateaux saisis, <i>Success</i> (navire suédois).
vol. 191	Documents des bateaux saisis, <i>Aurora</i> (goélette suédois).
vol. 196	Actes notariels, Saint Barthélemy 1793.
vol. 197	Actes notariels, Saint Barthélemy 1794.
vol. 198	Actes notariels, Saint Barthélemy 1795.
vol. 199	Actes notariels, Saint Barthélemy 1796.
vol. 200	Actes notariels, Saint Barthélemy 1797 jan–sept.
vol. 201	Actes notariels, Saint Barthélemy 1797 sept–1798 juin.
vol. 202	Actes notariels, Saint Barthélemy 1798 jul–sept.
vol. 203	Actes notariels, Saint Barthélemy 1799 juin–dec.
vol. 204	Actes notariels, Saint Barthélemy 1800.
vol. 205	Actes notariels, Saint Barthélemy 1801.
vol. 206	Actes notariels, Saint Barthélemy 1797–1802.

Archives nationales d'outre mer

Fonds suédois de Saint-Barthélemy

Serie M	1	Manifestes 1805-19.
Serie PF	59-72	Proces-verbaux de finance 1812-30.
Serie C	73-78	Comptes 1790-1877.
Serie RG	125-27	Rapportes des Gouverneurs 1816-44.
Serie PG	128-29	Proces-verbaux du Conseil de Gouvernement 1812-40.
Serie L	134-35	Decrets et proclamations 1787-1878.
Serie PJT	136-39	Journaux et listes 1801-36.
Serie PJ	140-249	Proces-verbaux du Conseil de Justice 1784-1836.
Serie NP	250-55	Documents appartenant au Notaire Public 1783, 1785, 1792, 1801, 1810, 1815.
Serie C	256-64	Correspondance 1784-1878.
Serie AM	265-275bis	Affaires Maritimes 1778-1878.
Serie N	276-280	Documents concernant des naturalisations 1796- 1875.
Serie DT	281-84	Documents concernant la defence 1814-78.
Serie ES	285-86	Documents sur l'esclavage 1802-48.
Serie E	287-91	Documents sur l'etat civil du population 1756, 1785, 1786, 1791, 1800.
Serie PO	292-93	Roles de recensement 1787-1872.
Serie R	294-95	Documents sur l'exercice des cultes 1795-1876.
Serie D	296-300bis	Documents divers
Serie S	301-17	Inventaires des Successions 1787-1839.
N/A	325	Documents non-inventoires 1785-1877.

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Victor Wilson

Commerce in Disguise

War and Trade in the Caribbean Free Port of Gustavia, 1793–1815

The thesis studies the economic role of the free port of Gustavia on the island of St. Barthélemy, the Swedish colony in the Caribbean, during the French Revolutionary Wars of 1793–1815.

Departing from an unexplored source material, the study shows that Gustavia attained a temporary yet exceptional position during the period of international conflict, which showed in the sizeable flows of cargo in transit through the Swedish colony as well as the increasing shipping under the Swedish flag in the region.

