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The prize of neutrality

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6 Dutch trade with North America 1771 - 1817

In this chapter I will present the results of the analysis of the *Paalgeld* portbooks concerning the ships coming from North America to Amsterdam in the period 1771-1817. To put this trade in the right perspective the data concerning the whole trans-Atlantic traffic to Amsterdam will be presented. First of all this will present a framework for understanding the importance of the North American trade. Secondly, I will show that the developments in the whole trans-Atlantic trade are closely related. Political changes have had a great impact on all aspects of this trade. There are a number of older studies about the early Dutch-American relations, but these concentrate on the period of the American War of Independence, or on the role the Dutch played in providing the young United States the loans it so much needed. Most of these studies deal with this history from an American point of view.¹ In this chapter I will treat this almost half century of commercial relations strictly from a Dutch point of view.

The last quarter of the eighteenth century and the first quarter of the nineteenth century do not take a prominent place in the historiography of Dutch trade. The interest of most historians has focused on earlier periods; the rise of the Dutch Republic to prominence in the sixteenth century, and the period of hegemony in the seventeenth century have been covered much more extensively than this period. The final days of the old Republic, the short period of the Batavian Republic, the Kingdom of Holland under Louis Napoleon, the annexation by France, and the restoration of William of Orange as the new king of the Netherlands have not provided the same inspiration to historians that earlier periods did. Of course there are exceptions, like Schama's *Patriots and Liberators*, but these studies have an emphasis on political history and not on economic history.² Even recent economic-historical studies have little attention for what in general is seen as an era of decay. Jonathan Israel, who is normally generous with pages, needs just over thirty pages to describe the downfall of the Republic and its trade in his *opus magnum* *The Dutch Republic*. De Vries and Van der Woude developed a very interesting vision on the changing characteristics of Dutch trade, but even they have very little attention for this half century. Still, this is the period in which we can recognize the first

¹ A. L. Kohlmeier (1925), R.A. Bayley (1881), C.P. Nettels (1962)

² S. Schama (1977)

traits of the modern patterns of trade of the Netherlands. Amsterdam continued to be the center of trade for the time being, but things were changing rapidly. In the new constellation, in which the Atlantic trade became increasingly import and outshone the Baltic trade, it was only a matter of time before Rotterdam would overtake Amsterdam.³

Some aspects of the trade have received more attention. The fact that fewer and fewer Dutch ships were involved in the trade has been noticed by many authors and has been interpreted as a sign of declining energy of the Dutch economy and of a complacent state of mind of most merchants. But even if that was the case, the argument does not hold. In modern Rotterdam, too, only a small fraction of the ships in the port sail under the Dutch flag. Still, no one would claim this is a sign of a deteriorating attitude of Dutch businessmen or a premonition of economic stagnation. The actual transport of goods from one port to another is not such a profitable business. On the other hand it is and was the most risky side of the trade. To charter ships maybe a bit more expensive, but if these resources are available, who would not prefer to leave the hazardous task of plowing the seas to others, while still getting the profits out of the trade. It is the rational decision of a more developed phase of entrepreneurship.

When Heeres published the time series of the revenues of levy of the *Paalgeld*, he indicated that the greatest importance of these new data was that they offered the possibility to compare the trans-Atlantic trade with the rest of Amsterdam's trade.⁴ He showed that the revenues of the levy of the *Paalgeld* shed a different light on the economic conditions than the revenues of the *Convoyen en Licenten*, which have been the main source for so many analyses of the developments of Dutch trade. Since the conversion to a machine readable version of the total *Paalgeld* portbooks was out of the question within the time limits I set myself, I restricted myself to the processing of the data concerning the *West-Indian* trade. This part of the *Paalgeld* portbooks has a much simpler structure and could be converted to a machine readable form within a reasonable period of time.

The recent attention for the trans-Atlantic trade has focused mainly on the trade with the West-Indies and Suriname and most of these studies do not cover the period after 1795. In

³ J. Israel (1995), J. de Vries and A. van der Woude (1995)

⁴ W.G. Heeres (1982)

this chapter I will present the data I have gathered from the *Paalgeld* portbooks concerning the *West Indian* trade. As I have described in Chapter 3, the *Paalgeld* portbooks consist of two parts, of which the latter is dedicated to the *West-Indian* trade. The meaning of *West-Indian* in this case must be “concerning all territories that once fell under the trade monopoly of the Dutch West India Company (WIC)”.

Heeres indicated that the trans-Atlantic trade became ever more important in the first part of the nineteenth century, probably even more important than most sectors of the European trade of Amsterdam. He based his analysis on aggregated data, which did not allow to make a distinction between the various sectors of the trans-Atlantic trade. The *Paalgeld* portbooks do offer the possibility for this distinction. These data are available for a long period. A continuing series starts in 1771 and ends in 1836: only data for the years 1810-1813 are missing. It is not surprising that official documents about this trade do not exist, since officially all trade was forbidden in these years. However, non-systematic research in a small number of American port-archives in Virginia suggests that not all traffic between the USA and the Netherlands halted in this period.⁵ There are recorded ship arrivals in Alexandria from the Netherlands in these years.

For this study the *Paalgeld* portbooks have been processed for the whole trans-Atlantic trade for the period 1742, 1771-1817. On both sides of the Atlantic this was a era of dramatic changes, of which I will trace the repercussions in the development of the trade between the Netherlands and the United States of America.

6.1 Political developments 1771-1817

The events of the period 1771-1817 have had great influence on the development of both the Netherlands and the United States of America. The loosely organized Dutch Republic lost a devastating war with Great Britain, mainly because of internal weakness. The stalemate between the various factions in this federative state could not be overcome. The Dutch Republic was a loose confederation of provinces which jealously held on to their privileges. As long as the interests of all provinces were the same there was unanimity, but more often

⁵ See: B. Harrington MacDonald, Alexandria Ship Records 1732-1861. (4 boxes) Lloyd House, North Washington and Queen Streets, Alexandria VA. Historical branch of the city library. Data gathered from the Alexandria Newspaper.

than not there were great divisions of interest. Then it was very difficult to come to some sort of central policy, which resulted in paralyzing the central government, which had very little executive power of its own. The seaboard provinces siding with Amsterdam, usually demanded a stronger navy to protect their commercial interests. The land provinces normally wanted a stronger army, to protect the country against the French and Prussian threats.

Especially during the American Revolution the merchants demanded better protection on the high seas. They used the Dutch Caribbean island of St. Eustatius to supply the rebels with all the supplies they could pay for, stretching the concept of *neutrality* to the limit. It was an awkward situation because, until war was declared in 1780, the Dutch Republic and Great Britain were officially allies. The almost open support for the American rebels was a continuous source of friction between the two allies. The Prince Stadtholder, William V of Orange, who also was commander in chief of the army of the Dutch Republic, had dynastic ties with the British court. He and the land provinces were in favor of strengthening the army to deal with the threat from France, which had invaded the Low Countries a number of times before. The Dutch merchants claimed that their trade with the rebels in North America was no breach of the alliance with Great Britain. But the support for the rebels, who also had the sympathy of Dutch public opinion, inevitably led to a confrontation with Great Britain.

When the Fourth Anglo-Dutch war broke out in 1780, the Dutch were ill prepared. The navy was in very poor shape and the army's supreme commander would rather have fought another enemy: the French instead of the English. The result was a disaster from which the Republic never fully recovered. Internal factional strife paralyzed the country for a number of years after the lost war and brought it to the brink of a revolution. However, when the revolutionaries--calling themselves *patriots*--tried to arrest the family of the Stadtholder they overplayed their cards. The Stadtholder was married to a Prussian princess, and a Prussian intervention followed. The party of loyal followers of the Stadtholder, the Orangists, restored their grip on the state. The repression that followed incited many of the patriots to go into exile. Most of them fled to France and some of them played minor parts in the French Revolution, but some of them went to the now independent United States.

The patriots regarded the American Revolution as a splendid example of a democratic revolution. Some of them had good contacts with the leading figures in the United States and had been involved in securing the loans that the American government so desperately needed

during the war and later to overcome the financial and economic crisis after the war of Independence. Most of these loans were placed in Amsterdam, some of them in Antwerp. The success of these loans helped to establish the credibility of the United States and gave it time to reorganize its financial affairs. The frequent mentioning of the connections with the Netherlands in the annual messages of the first presidents of the United States are an indication of the importance of these relations.

During the American war of Independence the Dutch West-Indian island of St. Eustatius had served as *the arsenal for the revolution*. It had been declared an open port, where all nations were allowed to trade freely, including the Americans. Officially the rebels had not been recognized as a nation, although the American flag received its first official salute on orders of governor De Graaff of St. Eustatius. Tobacco was the most important product that the Americans traded for all the supplies needed to carry on the war. The Dutch merchants wanted to profit both ways: trading with their allies Great Britain, but also trading with the rebels against that ally. But the British were not going to tolerate the undermining of their empire by their own ally. One of the first major incidents of the fourth Anglo-Dutch War was the capture of St. Eustatius by a British fleet under Sir George Romney on February 3, 1781.

The Dutch connection had been of great importance to the United States. Until the beginning of the fourth Anglo-Dutch war English goods, which were no longer available via direct trade with Great Britain for the American rebels, were shipped via Amsterdam to America. During the war the connections between the Republic and the United States were hindered by British blockades and seizures of ships. Still, during the war and afterwards the American trade with the Dutch West Indies and the Dutch settlements in the Guyanas-- Surinam, Essequibo and Demerara-- were of vital importance for the Dutch, who were not able to provide their colonies with the usual supplies. The Americans were quick to step in.

It is estimated that about 10% of the total exports of the United States went to the Netherlands, consisting mainly of rice and tobacco, equaling the value of the exports to Great Britain.⁶ Most of the imports from the United States were re-exported by the Dutch to other European countries. The importance of American shipping in the West-Indies grew even more when France opened its West Indian possessions for neutral shipping after naval defeats against the British in 1793. France, Spain, Portugal, Denmark and the Netherlands gave

⁶ C.P. Nettels (1962), 223

favorable treatment to American vessels. Still, in 1792 three quarters of the total imports of the United States came from Great Britain, where American ships had to deal with a number of discriminatory measures.

During the period of French dominance of the European continent and the British hegemony on the oceans, the Americans as neutrals were the only ones who could provide safe shipping to and from the colonies of the French and their allies. Not only West-Indian goods, but also East-Indian goods were shipped to the United States and hence to Europe, for a large part to Amsterdam. Coffee, spices, silks, indigo, cotton, China ware, and great quantities of sugar were re-exported from the American ports to Europe.⁷ Even in the European coastal trade the American ships became more and more prominent.⁸ The Napoleonic commercial measures stopped all trade in and out of Amsterdam. Between 1810 and 1813 no arrivals of ships are registered in the *Paalgeld* portbooks.⁹ The war of 1812 between the United States and Great Britain ended the period of neutrality of the United States and the benefits it had brought. After Napoleon's defeat and the restoration of the freedom of the seas, Dutch merchants quickly tried to reestablish the ties with the colonies that had been broken for so long. Still, the Americans never completely lost the position as intermediaries in the West-Indian trade that they had gained in this period of almost twenty years.

6.2 The trans-Atlantic trade

Figures about the trans-Atlantic trade for this period are scarce. Only Van Nierop and Oldewelt published figures that cover a part of this period. Van Nierop's data are the most interesting, since they cover the period 1797-1811. However comparing these data with the

⁷ C.P. Nettels (1962), 237

⁸ L. van Nierop (1922)

⁹Trade was officially forbidden, so it could not officially be registered. Furthermore, if there has been any registration the registers may not have survived. There is still a possibility that there are registers for this period, when the Netherlands were a part of France: they could be in some French archive. However, I do not know of their existence.

Year	West Indies		North America		South America		Central America		Total
	Ships	%	Ships	%	Ships	%	Ships	%	Ships
1742	18	22	20	24	40	49	4	5	82
1771	55	38	22	15	65	45	4	3	146
1772	51	38	25	18	59	43	1	1	136
1773	50	39	16	13	61	48	0	0	127
1774	37	32	26	23	49	43	2	2	114
1775	39	29	8	6	85	64	1	1	133
1776	62	54	2	2	51	44	0	0	115
1777	50	38	1	1	78	60	1	1	130
1778	48	39	3	2	72	59	0	0	123
1779	107	62	8	5	57	33	1	1	173
1780	194	77	14	6	43	17	0	0	251
1781	18	82	3	14	1	5	0	0	22
1782	27	57	7	15	13	28	0	0	47
1783	129	53	42	17	73	30	0	0	244
1784	44	26	57	34	68	40	0	0	169
1785	41	27	47	31	66	43	0	0	154
1786	40	25	47	29	74	46	0	0	161
1787	26	19	41	30	71	51	0	0	138
1788	31	24	43	34	54	42	0	0	128
1789	28	18	56	36	72	46	0	0	156
1790	38	22	56	33	78	45	0	0	172
1791	42	25	46	28	78	47	0	0	166
1792	42	27	46	30	65	42	0	0	153
1793	24	19	75	60	26	21	0	0	125
1794	37	17	98	46	80	37	0	0	215
1795	9	15	38	64	12	20	0	0	59
1796	6	5	93	76	23	19	0	0	122
1797	8	8	87	89	2	2	1	1	98
1798	0	0	40	98	1	2	0	0	41
1799	0	0	7	100	0	0	0	0	7
1800	2	3	71	93	3	4	0	0	76
1801	1	1	140	99	0	0	0	0	141
1802	11	9	117	91	1	1	0	0	129
1803	10	7	103	73	28	20	0	0	141
1804	2	1	159	98	1	1	0	0	162
1805	5	3	158	97	0	0	0	0	163
1806	3	1	231	98	2	1	0	0	236
1807	3	2	192	98	0	0	0	0	195
1808	0	0	44	100	0	0	0	0	44
1809	0	0	21	100	0	0	0	0	21
1810	0	0	5	100	0	0	0	0	5
1811									
1812									
1813									
1814	4	57	3	43	0	0	0	0	7
1815	24	21	77	66	16	14	0	0	117
1816	36	20	84	46	61	34	0	0	181
1817	30	15	82	40	92	45	0	0	204
Total	1,432	25	2,561	45	1,721	30	15	0	5,729

Table 1 Number of ships arriving in Amsterdam from the Western Hemisphere according to the data in the *Paalgeld* portbooks concerning the West-Indian trade 1742, 1771-1817.

data gathered from the *Paalgeld* portbooks, I must conclude that they only show the same trend for the period 1800-1805. For the other years the results are so different that the new data offer a completely new view on the developments in this trade. Van Nierop's data show a halt in traffic after 1806, while the data from the *Paalgeld* portbooks show that 1806 was one of the peak years, when more than 200 ships arrived in Amsterdam from the United States. Even if the other results of this research may not be so interesting, this is a serious correction of the image of the trans-Atlantic trade. I have a high esteem of the work of Van Nierop and cannot explain why here figures are so different.

To put the trade with North America in the right perspective I will present data on two aspects of the trade: the number of ships involved, and the estimated value of the trade. The number of ships involved can be calculated very simply from the *Paalgeld* portbooks. To order the data from the *Paalgeld* portbooks concerning the *West-Indian* trade, I made four categories to organize the data. The first category was for ships coming from the West-Indies, the second for ships coming from North America, actually being the USA since no ships from Canada arrived in Amsterdam in this period, the third for ships coming from South America and the fourth for ships coming from Central America. However, only in a very few years did any ships from Central America arrive in Amsterdam. Still, it would disturb the picture if this category was joined with another. In the *Paalgeld* portbooks concerning the *West-Indian* trade there were also a small number of ships mentioned coming from the West coast of Africa. These data have been shown in the previous chapter and will not be presented here.

The data in the table 1 are a clear reflection of the political developments in this period. The total trans-Atlantic trade shows a more or less stable picture in spite of strong fluctuations caused by the various wars of the period. Over the whole period on average 127 ships crossed the Atlantic annually to Amsterdam, of which 32 came from the West Indies, 57 came from North America and 38 came from South America. The number of ships coming from Central America is so small that it disappears in the averages. However these averages give an oversimplified image of the real developments. It is quite obvious that especially the trade with the West Indies and the trade with South America suffered. After 1795, the beginning of the Batavian Republic and French dominance in the Netherlands, the trade with South America and the West-Indies almost stopped. Only in 1803, that single year of peace in a long period of war, shows a short-lived revival of the trade. It is quite striking that in that

Period	West Indies	North America	South America	Central America	Total
1771-1779	55	12	64	1	133
1780-1784	103	31	50	0	183
1785-1795	33	54	61	0	148
1795-1815	5	91	5	0	100
1816-1817	33	83	77	0	193

Table 2 Average number of ships arriving in Amsterdam from the Western Hemisphere in 5 periods according to the *Paalgeld* portbooks , 1771-1817

same period the trade with North America becomes more and more important. However, after the wars with Napoleon this situation changes again, back to patterns that were normal in the seventies of the eighteenth century. To clarify this picture I will present the data in another periodisation, which takes the war-periods into account.

The total figures for the trans-Atlantic trade as presented in table 2 show a rather stable development. But if we consider the various regions, there are great differences. In the first period 1771-1779 the trade with the West Indies and with South America are on an almost equal level, and both far more important than the trade with North America.

The Fourth Anglo-Dutch war, which was a completely naval war, shows a very interesting peak, which is caused by a great number of ships coming from the West-Indian islands in the years 1780, just before the hostilities began, and 1783, when the hostilities stopped. The cause of this war was the Dutch support for the American rebels: the numbers indicate that indeed a much larger number of ships than usual frequented the West-Indian islands. And a closer look at the number of ships coming from St.Eustatius (see table 3) shows that this indeed was the

year	St. Eustatius	Others	Total
1742	5	13	18
1771	36	19	55
1772	34	17	51
1773	32	18	50
1774	20	17	37
1775	25	14	39
1776	32	30	62
1777	29	21	50
1778	36	12	48
1779	82	25	107
1780	134	60	194
1781	1	17	18
1782	0	27	27
1783	1	128	129
1784	10	34	44

Table 3 Ship arrivals in Amsterdam from St. Eustatius and the other ports in the West Indies, 1742, 1771-1784. Source: *Paalgeld* portbooks

most important island during this period. In the next period an average of about 20 ships arrived from St. Eustatius, and after 1795 not one ship put in from the *Arsenal of the Revolution* anymore.

The third period 1785-1795 (see table 2), shows a small increase in numbers in the overall picture, which however obscures the fact that during this period the trade with the West Indies seriously declined, while the trade with North America almost doubled and the South American trade showed almost stability. In this period there was an increase in traffic between Surinam and the United States, which Postma has documented.¹⁰ These years seem to have been the beginning of a new pattern of trade, in which the neutral Americans became the most active freighters in the Caribbean. The opening of the French West-Indies to American ships in 1793 seems to have provided an extra stimulus to the American trade, a premonition of what was to happen a couple of years later.

In the fourth period from 1795 until 1815 trade with the West-Indies and South America came to an almost absolute standstill, while the trade with North America once again almost doubled. In these years almost all ships registered in the *Paalgeld* portbooks came from North America. One gets the impression that the Americans completely took over the trade with the West Indies and South America. Until 1812, when war broke out between the United States and Great Britain, the Americans provided the neutral flag under which cargoes could be carried to Amsterdam, which could not have reached it otherwise. It is quite striking that the single year of peace 1803 immediately showed a reversion of this trend. All of a sudden there are arrivals coming directly from Suriname or the Dutch West Indies in this year, while the number of American ships putting in declines for that single year.

In the fifth period, which is a bit short to draw very strong conclusions, the trade with the West Indies recovered on a level equal to that in the period 1785-1795. The trade with South America recovered very quickly on a higher level than ever. This is caused by the fact that next to the normal number of ships putting in from Suriname a number of ships from Brazil arrived. The trade with North America did not fall back to pre-war levels: 43% of the total number of ships that were registered in the *Paalgeld* portbooks of 1816-1817 came from North America. The special position that the Americans had had as neutrals was a thing of the

¹⁰ J. Postma, Surinam-America Databank and Surinam-Holland Databank: I thank professor Postma for letting me use these yet unpublished data.

past, but it seems that the commercial ties between Amsterdam and North America had become so strong in the meantime that it became one of the most important commercial partnerships for Amsterdam.

As I have shown in the last chapter, only looking at the number of arrivals may obscure the real developments. An increasing number of arrivals can be caused by a greater number of smaller ships carrying the same or even smaller amount of goods than before. Since the *Paalgeld* portbooks give no cargo descriptions for the ships coming from the West Indies, it is not possible to identify the flow of goods. Still, the levy of the *Paalgeld* can be used as an indicator of the value of the imports to Amsterdam. Using the same formula used in the previous chapter, I have calculated the total value of the imports to Amsterdam from these regions. Comparing these estimates with Klooster's estimates of the value of the West-Indian trade, I have the impression that my estimates are rather conservative.¹¹ He estimates that the total value of the trade with Surinam and the Dutch West Indies totaled 18.5 million guilders annually for the period 1771-1780. Based on the figures from the *Paalgeld* portbooks this figure should be 4.3 million guilders, which would mean that the performance of the Dutch in the trans-Atlantic trade was not as good as Klooster concluded.

My estimates of the value of the trans-Atlantic trade may be influenced by the fact that for some goods the levy was a fixed amount for a given volume, while for other goods it was a levy *ad valorem*. But the same possible distortion would be in my analysis of the other trades of Amsterdam, for which I used the same method of estimating. Comparing the arrivals from Curacao according to Klooster's data for 1742 with the data from the *Paalgeld* portbooks, we see that 7 out of 9 ships can be found there: the ships *de Vreede* and *de Zeepost* who are supposed to go to Amsterdam cannot be traced. On the other hand *de Catharina Galeij* can be found in Klooster's data for 1741, but in the *Paalgeld* portbooks in 1742. Since I only have one year for which the data can be compared, I suspect that there maybe some variation caused by ships who were headed for Amsterdam but did not arrive there but in another port. Of Klooster's data set 86% of all ships headed for Amsterdam. However, he estimates the value of the imports to the Netherlands, while the *Paalgeld* data only refer to Amsterdam. Klooster's estimates are even higher than the estimated 12 million guilders of De Vries and Van der Woude. However, their estimates are partly based on a misinterpretation of

¹¹ W.W. Klooster (1995), 172

the data provided by Heeres: they treat the West-Indian trade from the *Paalgeld* revenues as being real West-Indian trade, while I have shown that a major part of this revenue is based on trade with North America.¹² Comparing the exports from St. Eustatius given by Klooster for the period 1760-1790 with estimates based on the revenues of the *Paalgeld* from the trade with St. Eustatius, it is clear that the former are about four to five times higher.¹³ Once again a part of the explanation can be found in the fact that the data I used only refer to Amsterdam, while the other authors refer to the Netherlands. However since Amsterdam attracted about 80% of this traffic, this explanation is not satisfactory. It is more likely that the value of the cargoes was underestimated by the ship masters in order to pay less *Paalgeld*. Another explanation may be found in the fact that all these estimates of the value of the imports are based upon the prices given by Posthumus, whose work I have discussed before. It may be necessary to go to the original price currents to come to accurate estimates of the real value of the imports.

If my estimates are too low and should be raised four to five times, this would also imply that the value of the other trades should be four to five times higher. This would mean that the value of trade with North America would be even higher than my estimates. Since my estimates are based on the same source for all sectors of the trade, I do not want to change the method of estimation. Because even if the absolute value of the trade may be understated, it will still allow comparisons with the other sectors of the trade of Amsterdam. This puts the trade with the West Indies at the level of the trade with Spain in average years, the trade with Surinam on a level above the trade with France, and the North American trade starting rather humble, but ending in this period above the level of the normal trade with Great Britain and maybe just under that with France. This underlines the importance of the trans-Atlantic trade. For the years for which I have estimated the value of the trade with the Far East, the value of the trans-Atlantic trade is 2.2 times higher than that of the Asiatic trade. This is mainly caused by the value of the Surinam trade, which in this period (1771-1787) still had the highest value of all the sectors of the trans-Atlantic trade.

¹² J. de Vries and A. Van der Woude (1995), 554

¹³ W.W. Klooster (1995), 244

year	West Indies	North America	South America	Central America	Total
1742	f 516,325	f 167,975	f 831,675	f 26,500	f 1,542,475
1771	f 1,664,775	f 323,000	f 2,064,150	f 34,125	f 4,086,050
1772	f 1,078,350	f 364,600	f 2,357,700	f 5,250	f 3,805,900
1773	f 1,513,100	f 234,925	f 2,647,525	f 0	f 4,395,550
1774	f 1,178,200	f 292,025	f 2,035,925	f 37,575	f 3,543,725
1775	f 961,150	f 126,200	f 3,337,300	f 9,450	f 4,434,100
1776	f 1,130,625	f 9,000	f 2,044,450	f 0	f 3,184,075
1777	f 1,089,225	f 11,150	f 3,341,775	f 5,000	f 4,447,150
1778	f 977,750	f 30,875	f 3,221,375	f 0	f 4,230,000
1779	f 2,621,250	f 34,175	f 2,534,225	f 3,300	f 5,192,950
1780	f 5,042,050	f 145,025	f 2,177,475	f 0	f 7,364,550
1781	f 361,675	f 18,525	f 15,150	f 0	f 395,350
1782	f 755,700	f 53,275	f 658,550	f 0	f 1,467,525
1783	f 4,148,250	f 643,875	f 4,105,325	f 0	f 8,897,450
1784	f 1,255,750	f 1,191,025	f 4,177,125	f 0	f 6,623,900
1785	f 1,114,550	f 972,950	f 2,888,400	f 0	f 4,975,900
1786	f 1,042,050	f 993,650	f 3,338,300	f 0	f 5,374,000
1787	f 836,125	f 571,650	f 3,241,850	f 0	f 4,649,625
1788	f 802,900	f 700,475	f 2,294,450	f 0	f 3,797,825
1789	f 943,425	f 1,008,575	f 3,777,825	f 0	f 5,729,825
1790	f 1,159,275	f 1,103,475	f 4,459,800	f 0	f 6,722,550
1791	f 1,291,200	f 767,525	f 3,983,725	f 0	f 6,042,450
1792	f 1,433,400	f 895,400	f 2,936,700	f 0	f 5,265,500
1793	f 598,700	f 1,742,025	f 984,025	f 0	f 3,324,750
1794	f 1,330,550	f 2,536,650	f 4,001,875	f 0	f 7,869,075
1795	f 197,200	f 1,065,950	f 372,900	f 0	f 1,636,050
1796	f 276,175	f 3,116,625	f 971,150	f 0	f 4,363,950
1797	f 160,275	f 2,661,150	f 40,675	f 26,500	f 2,888,600
1798	f 0	f 1,249,400	f 91,825	f 0	f 1,341,225
1799	f 0	f 203,125	f 0	f 0	f 203,125
1800	f 85,875	f 3,548,575	f 38,950	f 0	f 3,673,400
1801	f 21,225	f 7,852,475	f 0	f 0	f 7,873,700
1802	f 510,650	f 6,811,825	f 78,925	f 0	f 7,401,400
1803	f 358,425	f 3,420,250	f 1,427,050	f 0	f 5,205,725
1804	f 39,100	f 7,728,475	f 30,425	f 0	f 7,798,000
1805	f 185,525	f 9,977,650	f 0	f 0	f 10,163,175
1806	f 77,000	f 11,957,200	f 27,775	f 0	f 12,061,975
1807	f 93,600	f 11,016,550	f 0	f 0	f 11,110,150
1808	f 0	f 2,622,175	f 0	f 0	f 2,622,175
1809	f 0	f 883,925	f 0	f 0	f 883,925
1810	f 0	f 160,650	f 0	f 0	f 160,650
1811					
1812					
1813					
1814	f 235,250	f 270,150	f 0	f 0	f 505,400
1815	f 1,419,200	f 3,784,550	f 770,775	f 0	f 5,974,525
1816	f 1,775,100	f 3,422,625	f 2,652,725	f 0	f 7,850,450
1817	f 1,254,375	f 3,892,825	f 3,568,750	f 0	f 8,715,950

Table 4 Estimated value in contemporary guilders of the trans-Atlantic trade based on the revenue of the levy of the Paalgeld in Amsterdam, 1742, 1771-1817.

years	West-Indies	North America	South America	Central America	Total
1771-1779	f 31.246	f 11.243	f 41.071	f 6.058	f 33.916
1780-1784	f 18.534	f 23.412	f 59.821		f 30.505
1785-1795	f 27.684	f 24.455	f 44.915		f 33.667
1795-1815	f 62.800	f 50.110	f 67.002	f 26.500	f 51.447
1816-1817	f 45.901	f 44.069	f 40.663		f 43.030

Table 5 Estimated average shipcargo value based on data from the *Paalgeld* portbooks (West-Indies) for 5 periods in Guilders , 1771-1817

Another way to look at these data is to see if the average estimated value of cargo of a ship from these regions changed in this period. The averages for the whole period are 29,005 guilders for ships coming from the West Indies, 39,275 guilders for ships coming from North America, 45,049 guilders for ships coming from South America and 9,847 guilders for the few ships that came from Central America. However, this representation does not do justice to the enormous changes that happened in this period. If we look at the data using the same periodisation used before in table 2 of this chapter, we see a clear development.(see table 5)

It is obvious that the greatest fluctuations in the average cargo-value appear in the data concerning ships coming from the West-Indies. Especially in the years that only very few arrived from these regions the value of the cargoes was high, as in the period 1795-1815, when the average value of cargoes was the highest for all regions of the whole era. If we exclude the war years, the average value of the cargo of ships from the West-Indies declines a little in the period after the fourth Anglo-Dutch war, but after the Napoleonic era there is a good recovery. But the data that suggest this recovery only cover two years. Considering the ships coming from South America the influence of the war years is evident. In non-war years the average cargo value is around 40,000 guilders, but in the war periods the averages were much higher. The data seem to suggest a small decline in the value of the cargoes coming from South America over the whole era. The data concerning Central America are so sparse, that I will not consider them here. Most striking is the development of the data concerning North America. What was a minor trading partner in the beginning of the period, became a major trading partner at the end of this period. The long period of wars on the European continent from 1789 to 1815 gave the Americans a good opportunity to establish themselves securely in the trade with Amsterdam. In a period when the whole intercontinental trade of Amsterdam came to an almost complete halt, only the Americans were able as neutrals to

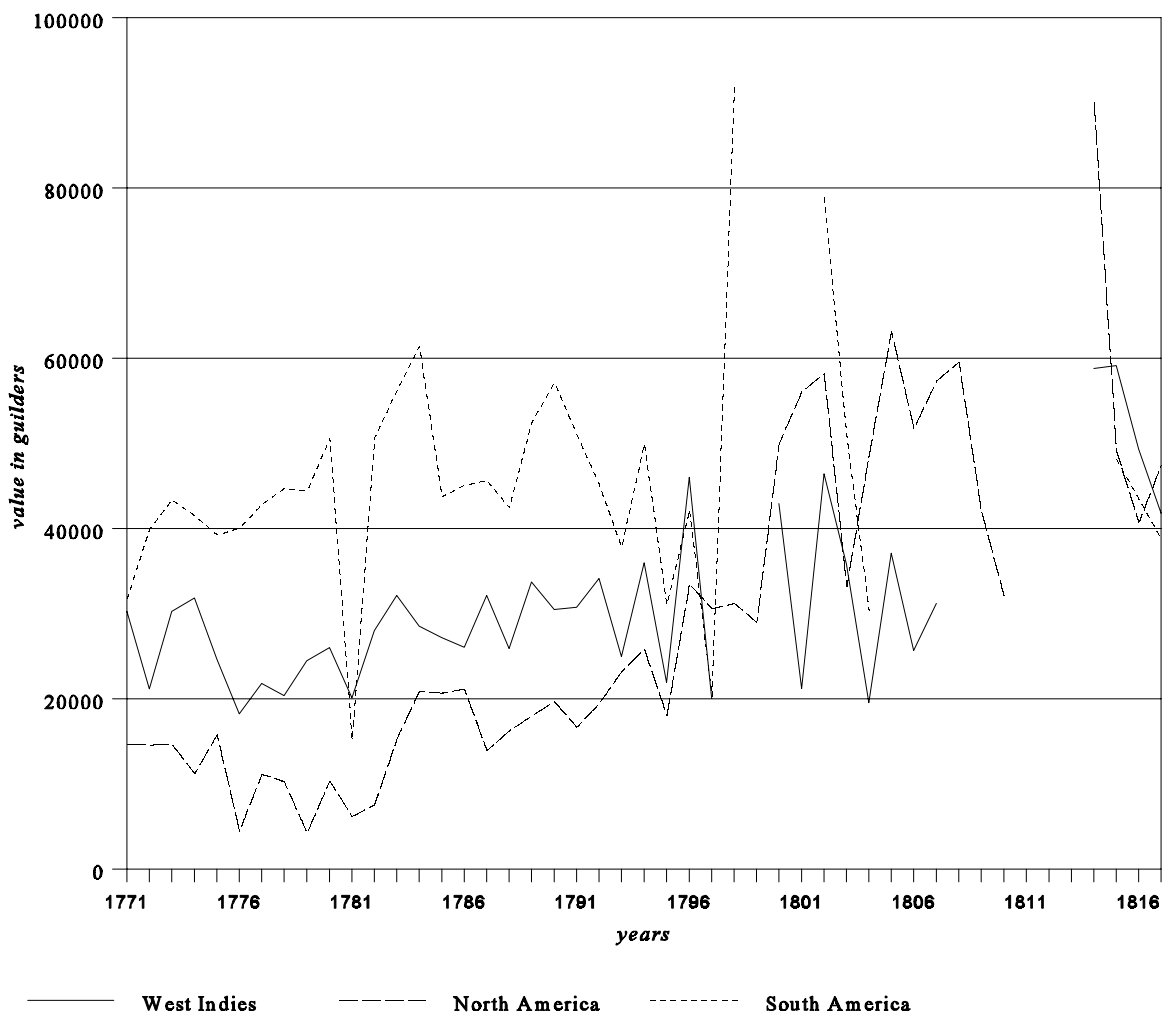


Figure 1 Estimated average cargo value of ships arriving in Amsterdam from the Western Hemisphere, 1771-1817, based on the *Paalgeld* portbooks (ships from Central America not included)

keep the lines to the colonies open. Although the *Paalgeld* portbooks have no information on the composition of these cargoes for this period, other sources indicate that it was mainly re-exports of West-Indian goods that the Americans brought to Amsterdam, but also goods from China and other parts of Asia.¹⁴ Especially during the first decade of the nineteenth century the value of re-exports exceeded the value of domestic products that were exported from the United States. Later I shall show that especially the American ports that were involved in the West-Indian trade profited most from these developments.

¹⁴C.P. Nettles (1962), 235-236.

year	Estimated Value of the trade		% of the total trade		Number of ships arriving from		Percentage of the total number of ship-arrivals	
	Asia	America	Asia	America	Asia	America	Asia	America
1742	f 1.000.000	f 1.542.475	10,2	15,8	5	82	0,2	3,0
1771	f 2.600.000	f 4.128.590	13,6	21,6	13	148	0,4	5,0
1772	f 2.600.000	f 3.805.900	13,8	20,2	13	136	0,4	4,3
1773	f 2.200.000	f 4.395.550	12,0	23,9	11	127	0,4	4,4
1774	f 2.400.000	f 3.544.500	13,1	19,3	12	115	0,4	3,7
1775	f 2.410.825	f 4.462.750	12,1	22,4	13	134	0,4	4,4
1776	f 2.400.000	f 3.184.075	13,3	17,6	12	115	0,4	3,7
1777	f 2.000.000	f 4.532.275	10,7	24,4	10	133	0,3	4,1
1778	f 2.000.000	f 4.207.875	10,3	21,8	10	121	0,3	3,4
1779	f 2.000.000	f 5.279.575	10,0	26,5	10	180	0,3	5,6
1780	f 1.800.000	f 7.403.675	8,2	33,8	9	254	0,3	7,6
1781	f 400.000	f 378.525	4,7	4,4	2	22	0,1	0,7
1782	f 401.125	f 1.469.075	2,5	9,1	3	48	0,1	1,4
1783	f 0	f 8.897.450	0,0	37,7	0	244	0,0	8,0
1784	f 2.000.000	f 6.623.900	9,4	31,2	10	169	0,4	6,2
1785	f 1.400.000	f 4.988.725	6,9	24,7	7	156	0,3	5,6
1786	f 2.000.000	f 5.374.000	11,0	29,4	10	161	0,4	6,8
1787	f 2.200.000	f 4.649.625	11,7	24,6	11	138	0,4	5,4

Table 6 The Asian and American trade of Amsterdam compared, 1742, 1771-1787. Sources: NHDA data set on Asian Trade and the *Paalgeld* portbooks

Looking over the whole period the conclusion must be that the importance of the trans-Atlantic trade has been underestimated. Even the corrections made by Klooster must be considered as too low. As table 6 clearly shows, the trade with the Americas involved many more ships than the Asian trade of Amsterdam. In some years ten times as many ships crossed the Atlantic than sailed from Cape Good Hope back to Amsterdam. The total value of this trade was even higher than that of the of the Asian trade, in some years of this period three times higher! It must be stressed that the data for the Asian trade have not been gathered in the same way as the other data, however. The value of the trade with the Guyanas, which were the only important South American trading partners in this period, was higher than that of the Asian trade, involving five to six times the number of ships of the Asian trade. The most spectacular changes were in the trade with North America. Combining these three regions, the vital importance of the trans-Atlantic trade for Amsterdam becomes undeniable. In a period of stagnation and decline in most other sectors of Amsterdam's trade, the trans-Atlantic trade became grew steadily.

6.2.1 Active or passive trade

Before focusing on the details of the trade with North America, I will compare three regions of the trans-Atlantic trade with regard to the participation of Dutch ship masters. It is stated frequently in all studies concerning the trade of the Dutch in the eighteenth century, that the Dutch lost the active part in the trade. An ever increasing number of ships that put into Amsterdam did not sail under Dutch flag. They may have been chartered by Dutch merchants, but I have found no proof for that. It may be possible that this proof can be found in bills of lading or freight contracts, but I have not studied these.

How can we discern if ships were actually Dutch ships or not without having access to the data of their registration of their ship papers. For this I have used a method that has been used before by Faber, when he tried to discern the role of ship masters from the Frisian town of Harlingen in Dutch trade on the Baltic. He decided whether a ship master was Frisian according to the family names and Christian names of the ship masters. Frisian family names and Christian names have some characteristics which differ clearly from names from other regions in the Netherlands. However, it could be argued that because of migration from Friesland quite a number of people with Frisian names lived in other parts of the Netherlands. Deciding on the basis of names is not a very strong foundation for an argument, but in some

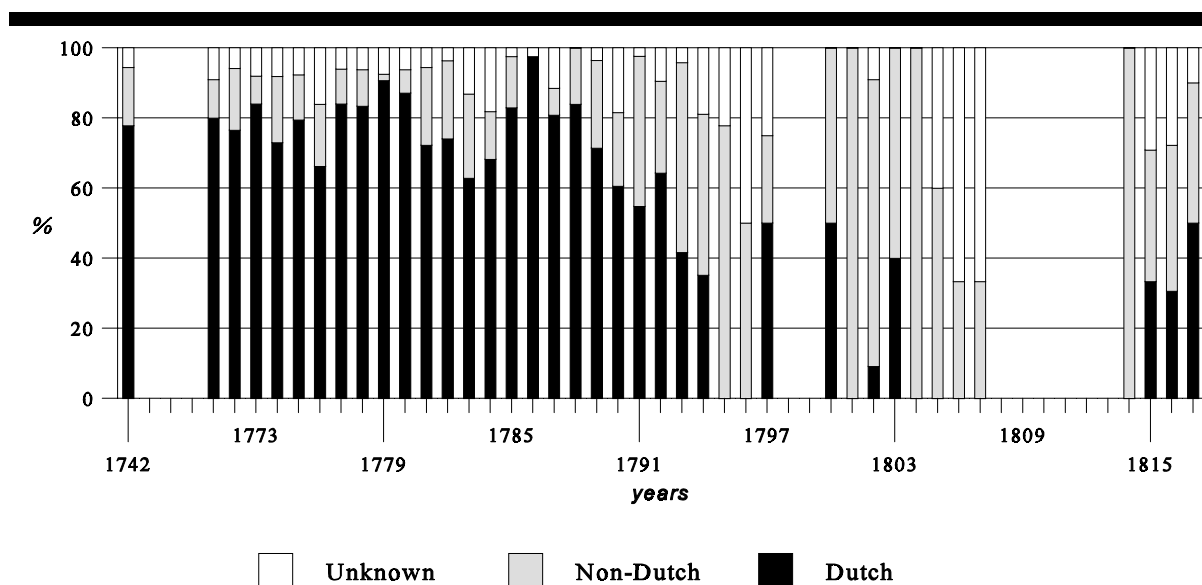


Figure 2 Nationalities of shipmasters arriving from the West Indies, 1742, 1771-1817. Source: *Paalgeld* portbooks (100% chart)

cases one does not have a choice.¹⁵ In the *Paalgeld* portbooks the names of the ship masters are also given, though the first names are usually abbreviated to initials. But they also give the name of the ship that arrived in Amsterdam. Based on this information I have set up three categories. In case that both the name of the ship master and of the ship were clearly Dutch, I have labeled these ships as Dutch. In the opposite case, when both ship name and the name of the ship master were clearly not Dutch, I have labeled this arrival as non-Dutch. I have not tried to make any further distinctions within this category, since that would be based on very subjective arguments. However, it is clear that most of the non-Dutch names were English, and hence could indicate that the ship masters may have been British or came from the United States. There is a smaller number of Spanish, Portuguese, German, and Scandinavian names. It should be admitted that quite a number of real Dutch captains may have had foreign names, but in cases in which both the captain's and the ship's name were clearly foreign, I decided to label them as non-Dutch. This leaves a third category of cases in which I could not decide one way or the other. What to do in cases where the captain had a Dutch name and the ship's name was English? I have decided to label this category as "unknown". Of course this whole line of reasoning is built on the assumption that the clerks who wrote the entries in the *Paalgeld* portbooks did not try to translate the names of ships, like they sometimes used Dutch translations for the names of ports, like *Nieuw Kasteel* for *New Castle*. However, I do hope that the sheer amount of data will iron out possible fluctuations that are caused by these traps.

First I will discuss the data for the trade on the West Indies. During the beginning of the period around three quarter of the captains involved in this trade were clearly Dutch, with some minor changes during the Fourth Anglo Dutch war. In the early nineties a decline sets in which hits rock bottom in 1794-1795 when no Dutch ships arrived from the West Indies. The whole period of French dominance and the restrictions on commerce that it brought had a disastrous effect on Dutch trade with the West Indies. The total number of arrivals from these parts declined to almost zero, except for the peace year 1803 when there was a sudden revival of the trade and of the Dutch share in that trade. But the next years saw very few ships coming from the Caribbean where those few that did arrive were not Dutch ships, but mainly American. Their neutral flag allowed them to keep the connections between Amsterdam and the Dutch West Indian colonies open on a minimum level. It should be noted, that in this

¹⁵J.A. Faber (1988), 68

period quite a number of arrivals could not be classified as *Dutch* or *non-Dutch*. These are cases in which the names are probably of Scandinavian origin, like *Petersen* or *Johansen*, but could also be Dutch. In most of these cases the ship names provided no clue to the origin of the ship. Many ships were named after mythological figures, like *Mercurius*, *Neptunus* or *Pluto*, in their Latin forms, or had other Latin names like *Mercator* or *Gratia*, which give no indication of the nationality of the ship. Frequently ships were named after females and in many cases those names are the same for many languages, like *Helena*, or *Maria*. In these cases I could not decide and have chosen to label them *Unknown*. After 1807 the contact with the West Indian settlements is completely lost until 1814. After the defeat of Napoleon and the retreat of the French the recovery of the West Indian trade is quick, and from 1815 on the share of Dutch captains in this trade increases again and this increase may well have continued after 1817, when it was already 50%. It is quite obvious that the West Indian trade was highly sensitive for periods of international tension and war.

In Figure 3 the same type of chart is made based on the data of arrivals from North America, which includes what became the United States of America during this period, and Canada. However arrivals of a ships from Canadian ports were very infrequent. Almost all of these arrivals concern ships coming from the USA. The whole picture is very different from that of the trade with the West Indies: during the whole period Dutch ships are a tiny minority

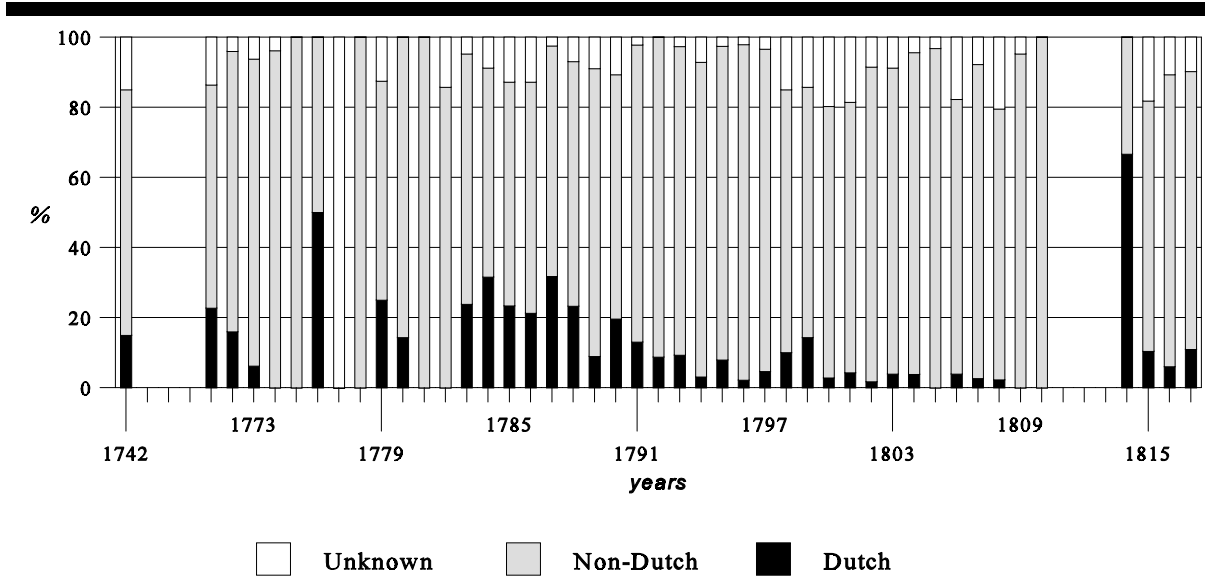


Figure 3 Nationalities of ship masters arriving from North America, 1742, 1771-1817. Source: *Paalgeld* portbooks (100% chart)

in this trade. The only exceptional years are 1776 and 1814. In 1776 the American rebels started their war of independence against the British, and had to rely for a large part on neutral shipping for their supplies. A part of the American merchant fleet was also involved in activities that contributed more directly to the war effort. Some were used as the core of the navy, and others were involved in the highly profitable business of privateering.¹⁶ In 1814 the Americans were still having problems after their second clash with the British in 1812, which would only be ended in 1815 by the peace of Ghendt. During the rest of the whole period the Americans dominated Amsterdam's trade with North America. In this case there is very little doubt about the nationality of the captains: most of them had names which could be easily recognized as English, and the same goes for the ship names. The neutral Americans were the only ones trading during the period of Napoleon's Continental System.¹⁷ In spite of Jefferson's self imposed restrictions on the trade with the belligerent parties in Europe the number of American arrivals in Amsterdam only increased. After 1808 when both the French and the British took harsher measures against the Americans, a sharp decline set in which would end in a total halt of trade in 1811. But during the whole period the picture did not really change: the share of the Dutch captains in the trade on North America was never again to match its peak of the early eighties, when it was about 20%. Although the Dutch merchants had had great hopes for the trade with the young United States, but the political circumstances were not in their favor. At least it seems that the Americans had the active part in this trade and may have profited much more from the new opportunities.

The arrivals from South America (Figure 4) show a completely different pattern. Most of the ships arriving from Surinam, Essequibo and Demerara were Dutch ships. But the pattern changes a little over the whole period. Until the fourth Anglo-Dutch war over 90% of the ships coming from the Guyanas were Dutch. After the war there is a slight decline to around 80%. From 1797 to 1815 the number of arrivals from South America is so small, that it makes no sense to attach much value to the data. Only the peace year 1803, when 28 ships made the trip to Amsterdam, is a clear exception. The French period hit the trade with the Guyanas even harder than it hit the trade with the West Indies, which every once in a while succeeded in getting a ship through to Amsterdam. The trade with the Guyanas came to a complete stand-

¹⁶ C.P. Nettles (1962),12

¹⁷ R.R. Palmer (1950), 440

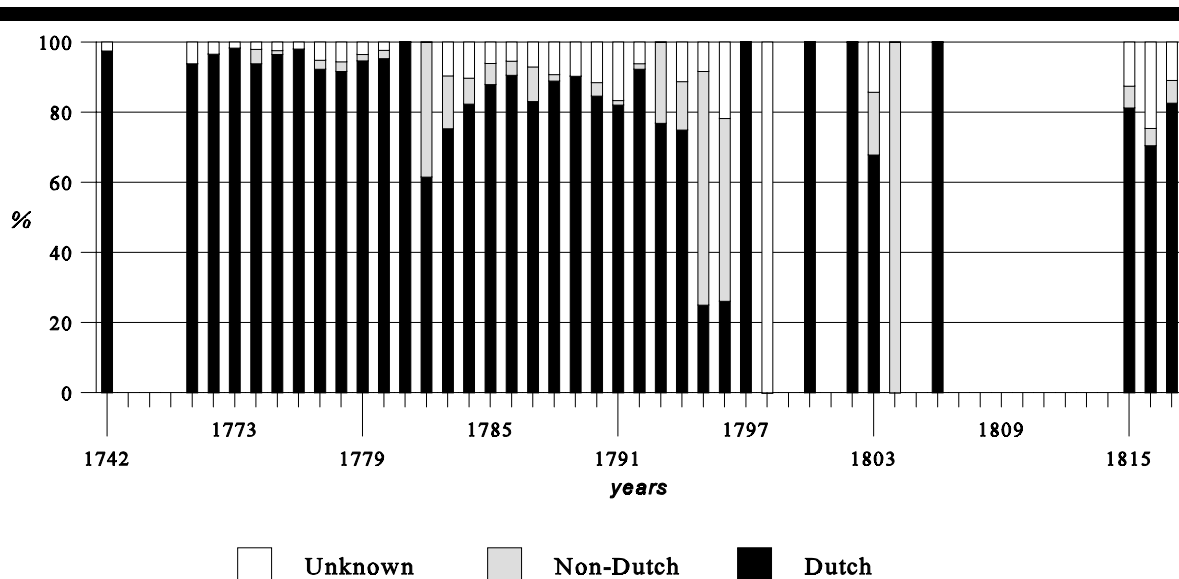


Figure 4 Nationalities of ship masters arriving from South America, 1742, 1771-1817. Source: *Paalgeld* portbooks (100% chart)

still from 1807 tot 1814. After the Napoleonic era there is a quick revival of the trade and even an expansion, because for the first time a number of ships coming from Brazil are seen in the port of Amsterdam. The share of Dutch captains in this trade recovers remarkably fast: in 1817 again more than 80% of this trade was in Dutch hands.

The three categories of the trans-Atlantic trade showed very distinct patterns: the trade with the Guyanas was in Dutch hands and except for the war years remained in Dutch hands. The trade from the West Indies, which had been mainly in Dutch hands at the beginning of the period, was taken over by foreign vessels, mainly American. After the Napoleonic era there are indications of a recovery of the Dutch share in this trade, but the data of only two years can only be seen as an indication: further research is needed. The trade with North America, for which the merchants of Amsterdam had such high hopes in the early 1780's, has been in American hands from the very beginning. The small share that the Dutch ships had in this trade only declined further. For all categories the influence of the international political developments is reflected in the data. The years of peace show an almost immediate response in the share of the Dutch captains in the international trade. Quite contrary to the supposed lack of initiative of the Dutch merchants, it seems that they took every opportunity that the international circumstances offered them. However, these circumstances were highly unfavorable for a maritime nation. The forced alliance with France from 1795 to 1814 prohibited the Dutch from taking the role of neutral freighters. The Americans were eager to

take over this role. This period of almost twenty years was enough to establish the Americans as one of the major seafaring countries. The period was long enough to let the trust grow between trading partners, which was so essential. Though the Dutch tried to regain their old share of the trade, they did not succeed in reviving all the connections that had existed before the French period.

In the next section I will take a closer look at developments of the trade of Amsterdam with North America as far as they can be reconstructed from the *Paalgeld* portbooks..

6.3 The trade with North America

After having provided the background information which should be used to put the data on the trade between Amsterdam and the United States in perspective, now the focus must be put on the analysis of the *Paalgeld* Portbooks concerning the North American trade. In this case I will go into much more detail, extracting from the available data as much information as possible. However, first of all it is necessary to have a look at some of the problems of the data set.

One of the problems is that a port is not always specified as place of departure. Sometimes there are regional indications like Maryland, the Carolinas, Virginia and even sometimes North America. The first three offer no real problems of interpretation, but North America could also refer to Canada. However, because no other ship from Canada arrived in Amsterdam in this period I have interpreted it as coming from the United States. Another

Ports		Regions	
<i>North</i>	<i>South</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>South</i>
Baltimore	Augusta	Maryland	The Carolinas
Bedford	Charleston	New England	Georgia
Beverly	Georgetown	New Jersey	Virginia
Boston	Mobile	North America	
Dumfries	New Orleans	Rhode Island	
Midletown	Norfolk		
Nantucket	Petersburg		
New Haven	Richmond		
New London	Savanah		
New York	Wilmington		
Newburyport			
Newport			
Nottingham			
Perth Amboy			
Philadelphia			
Portland			
Portsmouth			
Providence			
Salem			
Williamsburgh			

Table 7 Classification of origins of ship arrivals in Amsterdam from the United States

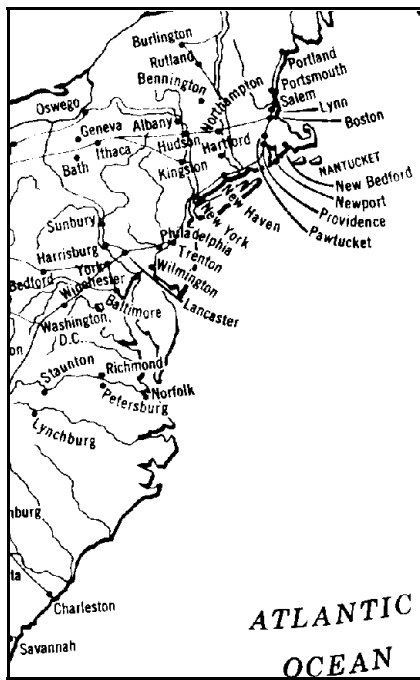


Figure 5 North American coast

problem is formed by the fact that there are a number of harbor names in the data set which could be located in several states of the United States. In some cases the solution is simple: places that have no connection with the sea are excluded. But this leaves a number of problems: there is a Newport in Rhode Island, but also in Kentucky; a Williamsburg in New York, but also in Virginia; a Portsmouth in New Hampshire but also in Virginia. In some cases like the case of Newport the solution is simple: Newport Kentucky is a highly unlikely choice, since it is not a seaport. In other cases I have decided to interpret the data as if all ships coming from such an origin came from the larger of the two places. Since some of these ports are located in the North and some in the South, there

may be a slight distortion in the analysis. But since these cases occurred only rarely, I do not think that it can have influenced the results significantly. Since the data on the arrivals from ships from North America are in the part of the portbooks that cover the trade with the *West Indies*, there is no possibility of mixing up English and American port names.

In the whole analysis of the imports from the United States to Amsterdam I have used the classification shown in Table 7. After standardization there were 30 names of ports and 8 different regions. Standardization was necessary because the Dutch clerks who wrote the

New York (N)	605	Norfolk (S)	27	Petersburg (S)	6	New Jersey (N)	1
Baltimore (N)	481	Rhode Island (N)	26	Beverly (N)	4	North America (N)	1
Philadelphia (N)	314	Salem (N)	24	Nantucket (N)	4	Nottingham (N)	1
Boston (N)	308	Maryland (N)	23	Bedford (N)	3	Perth Amboy (N)	1
Charleston (S)	304	Georgetown (S)	21	Georgia (S)	3	Portland (N)	1
The Carolinas (S)	94	Wilmington (S)	16	New England (N)	2	Richmond (S)	1
Virginia (S)	85	Portsmouth (N)	13	Dumfries (N)	1	Williamsburgh (N)	1
Newburyport (N)	74	New Orleans (S)	12	Midletown (N)	1	Augusta (S)	1
Providence (N)	29	New London (N)	10	Mobile (S)	1		
Savannah (S)	29	Newport (N)	9	New Haven (N)	1		

Table 8 Total arrivals in Amsterdam from American ports in the period 1742, 1771-1817. Source: *Paalgeld* portbooks

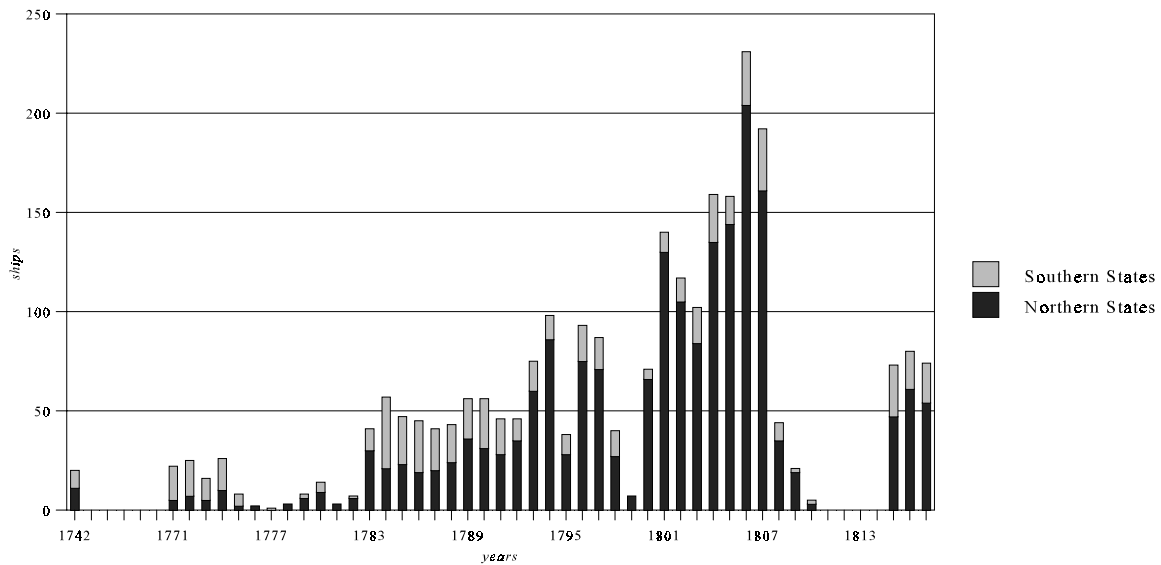


Figure 6 Number of ships arriving in Amsterdam from Northern and Southern USA states, 1742, 1771-1817. Source: *Paalgeld* portbooks.

entries in the *Paalgeld* portbooks used a very inconsistent code of spelling. New York, the port name which occurs most, is written in the Dutch form of *Nieuw Jork*, but also in abbreviated forms like *Nyork* or *Njork*. Interpretation of these forms did not offer the enormous problems that some of the European or Caribbean port names created. With some help of a number of the members of the C-18 List server I was able to trace all variations to their correct forms.¹⁸ Of course mistakes may have been made, but since the greatest number of ships came from a few large ports, whose names were easy to recognize, errors will only concern small numbers of ships and will not effect the overall validity of the analysis.

The categories North and South are not identical with the parties of the Civil War, Union and Confederacy. The distinction was made because the Southern part of the United States produced the great agricultural crops that were largely exported via the ports of these states. The Northern ports did not have a hinterland that produced such crops for the international market. Their main exports were re-exports of West Indian goods and a number of local manufactures, but these seem to have been of minor importance in this period. The *Paalgeld* portbooks offer no cargo-descriptions for this period, but in the 1820's these were given and my assumptions about the nature of the American exports are based on a non systematic

¹⁸ It would be very difficult to reconstruct who came up with what solution during the discussion on the listserver: I would like to thank all who participated in the discussion.

analysis of these entries.

Figure 6 shows the development of the traffic from the United States to Amsterdam. In the colonial period only a very small number of ships came directly from America. Officially all trade from the American colonies had to go via England, but even in 1742 twenty ships put in from America. In the earlier part of the period of research there is still a balance between ships coming from Northern ports and Southern ports, which is completely lost after 1790, when the share of the Northern ports in this trade begins to grow in a spectacular way. The opening of the French ports in the West Indies to all neutral traders in 1793 seems to have given a great boost to the trade of those Northern ports that were deeply involved in the West-Indian trade. The number of ships coming from Southern ports is more or less stable for the whole period with an average of 13 ships. The average number of ships coming from Northern

New York	25,4%		
Baltimore	24.0%		
Philadelphia	16.5%		
Boston	9.8%		
Charleston	8.6%		
The Carolinas	3.1%		
Newburryport	2.0%		
Providence	1.7%		
Virginia	1.6%	North	84.0%
Rhode Island	1.6%	South	15.5%
	94.3%		99.5%

Table 9 Percentage of the estimated value of the total imports from the United States for the 10 most frequently mentioned ports of departure, and of all Southern and Northern ports. 1742, 1771-1817 Source: *Paalgeld* portbooks

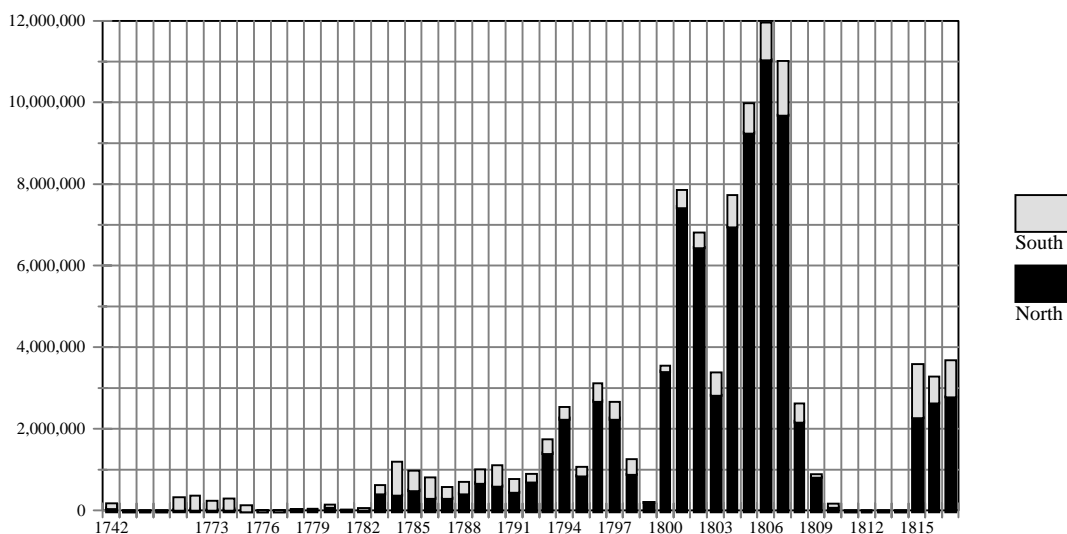


Figure 7 Estimated value in guilders of the trade of Amsterdam with Northern and Southern USA states, 1742, 1771-1817. Source: *Paalgeld* portbooks.

ports each year was 44 for the whole period, but the fluctuations are much greater in this category. There was a short period just after the War of Independence from 1784 to 1791 that more than twenty ships (average 24) arrived in Amsterdam from Southern ports. The peak year was 1784, when 36 ships brought their cargo of mainly tobacco to Amsterdam.

During the whole period five ports dominated the trade with Amsterdam, of which four were located in the North-Eastern part of the United States. As can be seen in tables 8 and 9 New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Boston and Charleston were by far the most important trading partners of Amsterdam as far as the number of ships is concerned. Further, 84.7% of the total value of the imports from the United States in this period were shipped from these ports. If the next ports are added that exported more than a million in value to Amsterdam, we must add another five ports. The first ten together covered 94.7% of the overall exports to Amsterdam. As table 9 and figure 6 show, the southern ports only had a small share in this trade. But figure 7 shows that this was not always the case. In the early part of the period imports from the southern states must have had a much higher value than those from the northern states. In these years the Americans did not yet play such an important role in the West Indian trade and the exports of the northern ports must have been mainly domestic products, like flaxseed, white-oak pipes, headings, and spars. The war with Great Britain had a devastating influence on the northern fisheries. This deprived the northern states of one of

their most valued export articles. Before the war American fish was sold to Spain and the West Indies, whale oil and whale bone had been exported to Great Britain. Another popular export product had been the furs that had been obtained in the trade with the Indians. Since many Indian tribes preferred to deal with the English and not with the Americans, the export fur-trade was reduced to almost nil. The southern states did have some products that were sought after on the world market. First of all and towering above all others tobacco. Smoking, sniffing and chewing tobacco had conquered the world, and the quality of the American tobacco was highly esteemed and hence made a good price. A part of the tobacco exports must have gone via northern ports, but the bulk went via ports in Virginia and the Carolinas. Until the occupation of Savannah (1778) and Charleston (1780) by the British, the southern states had also exported rice to Europe and the West Indies.¹⁹ However it is quite evident from figure 6 that the value of American exports to Amsterdam amounted to very little and may have undermined the trust in the creditworthiness of the rebels, who were desperately trying to get loans in the Netherlands. Though the Netherlands were important suppliers of goods to the rebels, very little direct traffic between Amsterdam and the United States was seen during the conflict. Most of the trade went via the Dutch West Indian island St. Eustatius. John de Neufville and Sons was one of the first Dutch merchant firms to open direct trade with Alexandria in Virginia, a port which does not appear in the *Paalgeld* Portbooks as such, but may have been included in the category Virginia.²⁰ The rebels did not have much to offer and needed credit, which they got. In 1780 John Adams succeeded in getting a two million dollar loan from a group of Amsterdam bankers: Willem and Jan Willink, Nicolaas and Jacob van Staphorst, De la Lande and Fijnje. This was the first of a series of loans that would follow and were essential for the reorganization of the finances of the young United States.

After the American War of Independence the situation changed slowly. Before the early nineties the total value of American exports to Amsterdam only seldom passed the one million dollar mark. In the nineties things began to change quickly. After the French revolution of 1789 the greater part of Europe became involved in a series of wars, in which the Americans wanted no part. On April 22, 1793 president George Washington proclaimed the neutrality of

¹⁹ C.P. Nettles (1962),18-21

²⁰ C.P. Nettles (1962), 16-18

the United States in the war that was going on at that time between Austria, Prussia, Sardinia, Great Britain, the Netherlands, and France. In that same year the French decided to give the American ships the same treatment in the West Indies as their own ships. This was not accepted by the British, who seized quite a number of ships. In 1794 Jay was sent to London to settle the problems and to remind the British of the conditions of the peace of 1783. The treaty that Jay concluded was not very favorable to the United States. It gave the British the right to search American ships in the West Indies. The French regarded it as an unfriendly act of the United States and an undeclared naval war began afterward which lasted until 1800. All American vessels that submitted to search by British men-of-war were taken by the French as fair prizes. The Americans retaliated and about 80 French ships were seized.²¹

The following years were very advantageous for the Americans. Baron d'Alphonse mentions that ever since the Independence of the United States the commerce with that country had been very important, but in these years the Americans have become *les marchands de presque tous les peuples et la nation la plus commerçante*.²² He indicates that the Americans are the only ones who kept the trade of the Netherlands alive, in spite of constant harassment by the British.

Maintaining neutrality became an item which returned again and again in the State of the Union speeches that the following presidents, Adams, Jefferson, and Madison, held. Jefferson, who knew that the United States were not yet able to face Great Britain in a conflict on the high seas, took measures to restrict trade in order to avoid a conflict with the British. Figures 6 and 7 provide an indication how that restriction hit the trade with Amsterdam. Jefferson's State of the Nation of 1802 gives a better insight in what the United States really wanted.²³ The temporary peace in Europe brought back the competition in the carrying trade, which had been an almost American monopoly during the previous years. Jefferson called it "to be expected" and "just", but the following sentences show that he did not intend to give up that share in the European trade easily. Figure 6 and 7 indeed do show that 1802 and 1803 were years of a temporary decline of the American trade with Amsterdam, but soon after business

²¹ Workers of the writers program of the Work Project Administration in the state of Massachusetts. (1941), 72-73.

²² F.J. d'Alphonse (1900) , 373.

²³ Jefferson's second State of the Nation, 1802, <http://www.let.rug.nl/~usa/P/tj3/tjson2.htm>

would be better than ever before. In 1806 the absolute peak in the trade with Amsterdam was reached: about 231 American vessels brought cargoes for about 12 million guilders worth to Amsterdam. The next year 192 ships brought goods for about 11 million guilders worth. But then restrictive measures began to hit hard: the next three years saw a sharp decline in the number of vessels that managed to get to Amsterdam: 44 in 1808, 21 in 1809, 5 in 1810, and then the whole trade came to a stand still in 1811, at least officially no ships entered the port of Amsterdam anymore. There are some indications that have been mentioned before that there still was some trade. However, until now no sources have been found in the Netherlands to support this claim. In 1814 commerce started again slowly, just 3 American ships were welcomed in port. The next years that number would rise back into the eighties. Traffic revived, but it was not the same situation for the Americans anymore.

The end of the European wars brought back the competition. As I have shown before, the share of Dutch captains in the trans-Atlantic trade immediately recovered. The restrictions of the Napoleonic era on Dutch foreign trade had given a great stimulus to the neutral Americans and the trade with Amsterdam would not sink to the level of before 1793. But the Americans would no longer get the favorable treatment they had had earlier. The new Dutch government decided in 1816 that a 3% levy would be put on incoming and outgoing American vessels from Curacao.²⁴ And in 1822, just outside the period of this research, minister Falck wrote a letter to the king in which he explained the problems of the harbor of Amsterdam, and where he explicitly mentioned that the Americans did not like the staple-market system, and preferred to sell their cargoes for the price of the day. Quite often the Americans would prefer to sail to Antwerp for these reasons.²⁵

Falck was very concerned about making the Dutch ports once again the center of the Baltic trade and hoped to attract more American ships to Amsterdam, Rotterdam and Antwerp. He thought that a revival of the staple-market system would be the solution.²⁶ In his letters to the king he also mentioned the goods that the Americans brought to Amsterdam: coffee, tea, sugar and other colonial goods. In 1823 minister Roell wrote a letter to the king in

²⁴Notulen v.d. Raad v. Politie v. Curaçao beginnende Maandag 4 Maart 1816. Posthumus archief: (407) inv.nr 11.

²⁵Falck aan de Koning 1823, juni 22

²⁶1823, September 19. Falck aan den Koning

which the same problems were discussed. He explains to the king, that the Americans have a direct trade with the Baltic and that they carried “*coffee that they had fetched from Java, tea from China, and sugar from South America*”²⁷ Although these remarks do not refer to the period of research, they indicate how important the role of the Americans had become. The boom of 1805-1807 was not to be reached again, but an average of about 80 ships carrying a value of about 3,5 million guilders, meant that the Americans had become one of the more important trading partners of Amsterdam.

6.3.1 Amsterdam’s trading partners in the USA

Amsterdam’s American trading partners were mainly located in the Northeast of the United States. New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, and Boston, the four most important ports that were involved in the trade on Amsterdam, are all in this region. The only port of major importance in the South was Charleston in South Carolina. Quite a lot of ship masters who came from the United States gave a region and not a specified port as their place of departure and this may have influenced the picture painted above. The Carolinas and Virginia are frequently mentioned as port of departure. The value of the imports from the Carolinas was 4.7 million guilders over the whole period.²⁸ It is quite reasonable to assume that most of the ships coming from the Carolinas actually departed from Charleston, being the only big harbor in the region, which would mean that the total imports from Charleston should be estimated at 11.7 million guilders, which would make it the fourth important partner of Amsterdam.

Figure 7 shows that the average value of cargoes increased during this period, with a peak around 1805-1807, which was the same period that the greatest number of ships from the United States put into Amsterdam. Another feature of this graph is, that it shows that in the colonial years the average cargo value was higher in ships coming from the South. After the War of Independence the value of cargoes from North and South had about the same value until the early nineties, when cargoes from Northern ports became more valuable. Though the Northern States took a longer period to recover from the post-Revolutionary decline of

²⁷ Roell to the King, 1823 , Augustus 19

²⁸ All amounts of money mentioned are in contemporary guilders

American commerce and the post-war depression, quite soon ships from Boston and other northern ports were seen in the Mediterranean, the Baltic and in the Pacific.²⁹ Re-exports were the most important goods the American ships carried: Chinese tea, chinaware, sugar, rum, molasses, and coffee. Furthermore, American ships in the trans-Atlantic trade usually put into a number of harbors and became involved in the inter-European trade. The goods they bought in the eastern parts of the Mediterranean might be sold again in Amsterdam, in the Baltic, or in Russia. American ships were all over the place. Only the Jeffersonian restrictions on trade and “Mr. Madison’s War”, as some Bostonian merchants named the war of 1812 with Great Britain, put an end to this boom period. The importance of neutrality is reflected by the fact that during this war with Great Britain some Bostonian merchants copied the behavior that the merchants of Amsterdam had tried so many times: flag flight. A number of Bostonian merchant took Portuguese papers during the war.³⁰

There are two important moments that can be clearly identified in figure 7. In 1783 the French West Indian ports were opened to American ships and this after this year the average value of American cargoes begins to go up. After the conclusion of Jay’s treaty in 1794 the problems with the British were solved for the time being. In 1793 the French had decided to give American ships the same rights in their West Indian colonies as French ships. Although the French were angered by Jay’s treaty and relations with the Americans cooled off until Napoleon gave up all hope of a French-American Empire and sold Louisiana to the Americans, it is evident that around 1793-1794 there is another sudden increase in the average value of American cargoes.

It is possible to trace the developments of the trade with all American ports from the *Paalgeld* portbooks, but here I will only show the developments of the five major trading partners: New York, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Charleston, and Boston. The data for all other ports can be found in the electronic appendices to this study.

²⁹ Workers of the writers program of the Work Project Administration in the state of Massachusetts (1941), 88-89

³⁰ Workers of the writers program of the Work Project Administration in the state of Massachusetts (1941), 89

6.3.1.1 New York

In the beginning years of the period New York did not play any significant part in the trade with Amsterdam. In the years before the hostilities of the American War of Independence began, just a hand full of ships sailed from the former Dutch colony of New Amsterdam to old Amsterdam. In spite of the fact that still many people of Dutch descent played important roles in New York life, the commercial ties between the two cities were not very tight.

The beginning of the American Revolution did not go well for the rebels and especially New York was in the area where the British were winning. After General Washington's defeat in the Battle of Long Island in 1776 he had to retreat and leave New York open to the British General Howe. In the next year the British even succeeded in capturing Philadelphia. Two years later they had to evacuate Philadelphia again, because of the threat posed by a French fleet, who had come to assist their American allies.

Only after the War of Independence did the ships from New York arrive in Amsterdam in greater numbers. Slowly the trade became more and more intense. After the opening of the French West Indies to

year	Ships	Value	Av.
1742	3	f 21.250	f 7.083
1771	1	f 12.650	f 12.650
1772	2	f 18.125	f 9.063
1773	4	f 27.300	f 6.825
1774	5	f 20.225	f 4.045
1775	1	f 3.600	f 3.600
1784	2	f 36.075	f 18.038
1785	3	f 106.900	f 35.633
1786	7	f 96.500	f 13.786
1787	3	f 53.200	f 17.733
1788	5	f 76.825	f 15.365
1789	10	f 148.425	f 14.843
1790	14	f 260.350	f 18.596
1791	13	f 187.075	f 14.390
1792	13	f 240.600	f 18.508
1793	13	f 253.700	f 19.515
1794	25	f 550.925	f 22.037
1795	13	f 431.600	f 33.200
1796	35	f 1.200.425	f 34.298
1797	26	f 876.950	f 33.729
1798	7	f 253.050	f 36.150
1799	2	f 81.850	f 40.925
1800	17	f 621.800	f 36.576
1801	40	f 1.932.100	f 48.303
1802	26	f 1.187.025	f 45.655
1803	27	f 893.550	f 33.094
1804	37	f 2.132.600	f 57.638
1805	44	f 2.713.850	f 61.678
1806	74	f 3.533.125	f 47.745
1807	60	f 3.368.575	f 56.143
1808	17	f 1.193.575	f 70.210
1809	8	f 574.925	f 71.866
1810	3	f 95.200	f 31.733
1815	14	f 819.125	f 58.509
1816	14	f 576.225	f 41.159
1817	17	f 765.875	f 45.051
Total	605	f 25.365.150	f 41.926

Table 10 Ship arrivals from New York in Amsterdam and the estimated total and average value of the cargoes. Source: *Paalgeld* portbooks 1742, 1771-1817.

American ships in 1783, the average value of the cargoes from New York increases rapidly. After 1793 there was a sudden change.

The French Declaration of War on Britain provided new possibilities for the neutral Americans. New York already had good contacts in the West Indies, and the new opportunities to act as neutral freighters were exploited quickly. Table 10 shows that the average estimated value of cargoes of ships coming from New York became much higher after 1793. In fact it tripled within a short period while the average number of ships only doubled. New York had established itself as the most important trading partner of Amsterdam in the United States. Jefferson's Embargo Act, Napoleon's Continental System, and the War of 1812 with Great Britain did much harm to the trade, which was virtually annihilated for a couple of years. In 1815 once again fourteen ships were welcomed in old Amsterdam: the ties with New York had been re-established. There were only fourteen ships, but the average estimated value of the cargoes was 58,000 guilders and that was quite a change from 1790, when the same number of ships carried cargoes that averaged 18,000 guilders worth.

year	Ships	Value	Av.
1780	1	f 4.900	f 4.900
1781			
1782	1	f 7.800	f 7.800
1783	12	f 184.100	f 15.342
1784	2	f 40.800	f 20.400
1785	8	f 204.150	f 25.519
1786	5	f 94.350	f 18.870
1787	8	f 140.125	f 17.516
1788	8	f 203.100	f 25.388
1789	14	f 338.950	f 24.211
1790	8	f 211.325	f 26.416
1791	6	f 129.300	f 21.550
1792	5	f 139.550	f 27.910
1793	10	f 276.125	f 27.613
1794	23	f 694.225	f 30.184
1795	7	f 199.150	f 28.450
1796	6	f 224.400	f 37.400
1797	10	f 345.125	f 34.513
1798	3	f 96.975	f 32.325
1799	2	f 76.450	f 38.225
1800	21	f 1.221.675	f 58.175
1801	37	f 2.422.525	f 65.474
1802	23	f 1.307.000	f 56.826
1803	25	f 750.575	f 30.023
1804	33	f 1.921.900	f 58.239
1805	41	f 3.280.175	f 80.004
1806	55	f 3.699.425	f 67.262
1807	42	f 2.759.100	f 65.693
1808	8	f 389.950	f 48.744
1809	2	f 57.775	f 28.888
1815	20	f 952.050	f 47.603
1816	21	f 940.275	f 44.775
1817	14	f 722.900	f 51.636
Total	481	f 24.036.225	f 49.971

Table 11 Ship arrivals from Baltimore in Amsterdam and the estimated total and average value of the cargoes. Source: *Paalgeld* portbooks 1780-1817.

6.3.1.2 Baltimore

The first ships from Baltimore arrived in Amsterdam in 1780. The pattern is more or less the same as in the trade between Amsterdam and New York. 1783 is a year of sudden higher values of cargoes from Baltimore, most likely caused by the opening of the French West Indies in that year (See table 11). It is striking also that the ships coming from Baltimore must have carried more expensive cargoes at the end of the 1780's than those from New York. In 1789 fourteen ships arrived from Baltimore, carrying cargoes that were worth about 24,000 guilders, while one year later a same number of ships coming from New York carried cargoes valued at about three quarters of that price. The changes of 1793 and 1794 are not so easily traced in the figures for Baltimore. But Baltimore profited in the same way as New York and the other American ports of the benefits of the neutral American flag and the peak years of 1805-1807 were very good for Baltimore too. After 1809 trade halted, but was restored in 1815. The extremely high cargo values of the peak years were not to be seen again, but trade was resumed on a level that was higher than the average in the earlier years.

year	Ships	Value	Av.
1772	1	f 7.525	f 7.525
1773			
1774	2	f 13.100	f 6.550
1775	1	f 4.200	f 4.200
1779	1	f 7.100	f 7.100
1780	1	f 7.250	f 7.250
1781	1	f 7.550	f 7.550
1782			
1783	12	f 201.150	f 16.763
1784	12	f 255.675	f 21.306
1785	6	f 102.950	f 17.158
1786	4	f 83.125	f 20.781
1787	5	f 72.875	f 14.575
1788	6	f 79.550	f 13.258
1789	6	f 75.900	f 12.650
1790	3	f 41.300	f 13.767
1791	4	f 77.375	f 19.344
1792	13	f 281.475	f 21.652
1793	21	f 616.575	f 29.361
1794	16	f 556.100	f 34.756
1795	4	f 154.400	f 38.600
1796	20	f 842.475	f 42.124
1797	20	f 713.975	f 35.699
1798	7	f 217.025	f 31.004
1800	14	f 1.010.850	f 72.204
1801	27	f 2.134.900	f 79.070
1802	22	f 1.888.675	f 85.849
1803	2	f 124.700	f 62.350
1804	12	f 946.700	f 78.892
1805	13	f 1.283.175	f 98.706
1806	20	f 1.820.575	f 91.029
1807	17	f 1.696.050	f 99.768
1808	5	f 441.450	f 88.290
1815	5	f 166.100	f 33.220
1816	5	f 236.125	f 47.225
1817	6	f 333.750	f 55.625
Total	314	f 16.501.700	f 52.553

Table 12 Ship arrivals from Philadelphia in Amsterdam and the estimated total and average value of the cargoes. Source: *Paalgeld* portbooks 1772-1817 .

6.3.1.3 Philadelphia

Considering the whole period Philadelphia was the third important trading partner of Amsterdam in the United States (see table 12). Even before the beginning of the American Revolution some ships made the trip across the Ocean to Amsterdam just as from New York. The British occupied the city for two years during the war (1777-1778) and in these years not a ship from Philadelphia was seen in Amsterdam. What is most striking about the ships from Philadelphia is the estimated value of the cargoes they carried. Before 1783 their estimated value was never much higher than 7,000 guilders. After 1783 suddenly these values double. And after 1794 the values are more than five times higher than in the beginning years. In the next couple of years the values only increase to reach an all time peak of almost 100,000 guilders in 1807. In 35 years the average cargo value had increased about thirteen times the starting value. The Philadelphians had to deal with the same problems after 1808. The peak years could not be repeated after connections were resumed in 1815 after seven years in which not one Philadelphian ship had reached Amsterdam. After the wars on the European continent were over the connections with Amsterdam were revived, but never again on the same level as during the peak-years 1805-1807. Philadelphia became one of the minor trading partners of Amsterdam.

Baltimore and New York sent far greater numbers of ships across the Atlantic than the city in which the First Continental Congress had assembled in 1774.

6.3.1.4 Charleston

Charleston is the only southern port, which ranks among the top five American trading partners of Amsterdam in this period. Actually, all the ships that were registered as coming from The Carolinas have been regarded as coming from Charleston for this analysis. If this would not have been done, Charleston would have ranked after Boston, as the fifth important trading partner.

Table 13 shows that regular contacts with Charleston started earlier than with New York, Baltimore and Philadelphia. Before the War of Independence more than 10 ships yearly sailed to Amsterdam, probably carrying mainly plantation products like tobacco, rice, and indigo.

The average value of the cargoes coming from Charleston remained much more stable than the average cargoes from Northern ports. Charleston was captured by the British in 1778 and during the next years of the War of Independence no ship from Charleston arrived in Amsterdam. After the peace was signed a steady number of ships would arrive.

The spectacular increases in number and in value that we have seen for the other three major trading partners after 1783 and 1793-1794 did not happen here though the peak years of 1805-1807 were a good period. Much more striking is the recovery of 1815, when connections were re-opened after the wars. The average value of the cargoes was much higher than before and even higher than that of ships coming from New York. This may be an indication of a change in the demand for the southern staple crops or a sudden change of character of Charleston as a trading port. However, the *Paalgeld* port-books offer no information here.

year	Ships	Value	Av.
1742	9	f 95.500	f 10.611
1771	15	f 261.725	f 17.448
1772	18	f 323.425	17.968
1773	11	f 203.425	f 18.493
1774	16	f 248.275	f 15.517
1775	6	f 118.400	f 19.733
1776			
1777	1	f 11.150	f 11.150
1778			
1779	1	f 3.500	f 3.500
1783	4	f 73.700	f 18.425
1784	23	f 548.050	f 23.828
1785	12	f 197.925	f 16.494
1786	19	f 331.425	f 17.443
1787	16	f 219.300	f 13.706
1788	17	f 242.525	f 14.266
1789	18	f 286.000	f 15.889
1790	16	f 324.700	f 20.294
1791	14	f 244.325	f 17.452
1792	8	f 150.150	f 18.769
1793	11	f 270.575	f 24.598
1794	9	f 234.650	f 26.072
1795	8	f 185.400	f 23.175
1796	13	f 370.625	f 28.510
1797	11	f 322.950	f 29.359
1798	9	f 307.225	f 34.136
1799			
1800	2	f 60.825	f 30.413
1801	7	f 338.400	f 48.343
1802	8	f 276.475	f 34.559
1803	7	f 331.975	f 47.425
1804	11	f 402.175	f 36.561
1805	8	f 632.875	f 79.109
1806	16	f 827.450	f 51.716
1807	18	f 974.650	f 54.147
1808	1	f 162.650	f 162.650
1809			
1810	1	f 42.250	f 42.250
1815	13	f 993.700	f 76.438
1816	11	f 469.875	f 42.716
1817	10	f 718.500	f 71.850
Total	398	f 11.806.725	f 29.665

Table 13 Ship arrivals from Charleston in Amsterdam and the estimated total and average value of the cargoes. Source: *Paalgeld* portbooks 1742, 1771-1817 .

6.3.1.5 Boston

Boston, ranking fifth in the row of American trading partners of Amsterdam shows a different pattern of development (See table 14). There were early contacts, but these were rather irregular and the average value of the cargoes indicate that this was a trade of minor importance for Amsterdam. More than the other three northern ports, Boston relied on the export of domestic produce of Massachusetts. Boston exported fish to the West Indies, whale-oil to Great Britain, and lumber and wood products, and furs to all markets. The post-Revolutionary depression hit the city very hard and lasted longer than elsewhere. After 1788 the situation began to improve. Bostonian merchants which had played such an important role in the revolution, were seen again on the European coasts and were quite successful in the trade on Lisbon, carrying fish, rum, whale and cod-oil, pot and pearl ashes, flour, flax-seed, furs, boards and staves.³¹ They also carried some colonial goods, like coffee, tea and molasses. More than a hundred ships coming from the West Indian islands put into Boston in 1791, to

year	Ships	Value	Av.
1742	8	f 51.225	f 6.403
1771	1	f 5.250	f 5.250
1772			
1773			
1774	1	f 1.000	f 1.000
1778	2	f 21.275	f 10.638
1779	4	f 16.825	f 4.206
1780	5	f 70.125	f 14.025
1781	1	f 5.375	f 5.375
1782	3	f 24.775	f 8.258
1783	3	f 19.250	f 6.417
1784	3	f 33.125	f 11.042
1785	3	f 46.150	f 15.383
1786	3	f 41.450	f 13.817
1788	3	f 50.925	f 16.975
1789	2	f 34.950	f 17.475
1790	4	f 60.800	f 15.200
1791	4	f 49.775	f 12.444
1792	3	f 40.550	f 13.517
1793	10	f 156.550	f 15.655
1794	20	f 433.725	f 21.686
1795			
1796	7	f 201.425	f 28.775
1797	5	f 109.475	f 21.895
1798	6	f 212.700	f 35.450
1799	3	f 44.825	f 14.942
1800	7	f 295.850	f 42.264
1801	13	f 471.875	f 36.298
1802	14	f 641.325	f 45.809
1803	15	f 477.025	f 31.802
1804	33	f 1.305.200	f 39.552
1805	23	f 982.425	f 42.714
1806	28	f 999.900	f 35.711
1807	27	f 1.196.675	f 44.321
1808	2	f 53.675	f 26.838
1809	3	f 39.725	f 13.242
1815	5	f 131.825	f 26.365
1816	19	f 600.150	f 31.587
1817	15	f 884.625	f 58.975
Total	308	f 9.811.800	f 31.856

Table 14 Ship arrivals from Boston in Amsterdam and the estimated total and average value of the cargoes. Source: *Paalgeld* portbooks 1742, 1771-1817.

³¹Workers of the writers program of the Work Project Administration in the state of Massachusetts (1941), 68

bring the goods, which would be re-exported, mainly to Europe. Since the West Indian trade was not only very profitable, but also very dangerous, because of seizures by the French and by the English, and the constant danger of pirates, Bostonian merchants opened safer markets in Europe. Bostonian ships sailed to the Russia and the Baltic, after visits to Lisbon, Cadiz, Amsterdam and Bremen. They took an active part in the European coastal trade. After the first trips of Bostonian merchants to China (1793), they also began to re-export china-ware and Chinese tea, which they had trade mainly for furs. The whole pattern of the Bostonian trade with Amsterdam shows fewer fluctuations. After a short interruption caused by the wars that have already been mentioned, the trade was reopened more or less on the same basis.

6.4 Conclusion

Amsterdam's trans-Atlantic trade, which during this period became of vital importance, was more and more a trade with North America. The years of constant warfare gave the Americans, who held on to a strict neutrality policy concerning the conflicts in Europe, the opportunity to become one of the most important trading partners of Amsterdam in spite of ship seizures by both French and British privateers.

Still a minor naval power before the American Revolution, dependent on the French, Dutch and Spanish to bring the supplies the rebels needed, after 1790 the Americans were the second naval power in the world after Great Britain. The Dutch naval power was reduced to near insignificance, but Amsterdam still was a major trading center and many American ships put into port. Just a small number of ships in this trade were Dutch: the majority was from the very beginning American. New York, that once was the in Dutch hands, was the port that profited most from the opportunities of this era and really became more New Amsterdam than New York.

For a short period the Americans took care of Amsterdam's trade with the West Indies and Surinam, but after the Napoleonic era the Dutch regained a great part of the trade on these regions. But in the meantime the North American trade had become just as important as the trade on South America and had passed the trade with the West Indies.

There is probably much more information to be found about the development of the connections with the various North American trading partners in archives in North America.

For this study I have only relied on the data from the *Paalgeld* portbooks. I have tried to show how these reflect the political changes. The United States became the second naval power of the world around 1795 and this position was built on a policy of strict neutrality in the European continental problems, but also on a policy of strength in the Western Hemisphere, which would lead to the second clash with the British in 1812. In 1817 president Monroe gave his name to a theory which had been American practice since independence.