

ABSTRACT

The thesis argues finally that by 1700 conditions in Surinam

This thesis attempts to describe and analyse the land settlement and agricultural development of the Liguanea plain between 1655 and 1700.

Section one of the thesis deals with land settlement. Land settlement is dealt with in terms of population and distribution of land relative to the total area of the plain among that population. The introduction and the first two chapters provide a background in which it is briefly outlined what the plain was like before the English settlers arrived, the arrival of the English expedition under General Venables, and the official methods of land allotment to 1700. Against this background the thesis argues that by 1673 practically all the arable land in the plain had been dispensed among the inhabitants, and that, even though most of the population was composed of small farmers, most of the land was owned by a few favoured individuals. The thesis argues further that after 1673 the number of small, free landholders tended to decrease as their properties were amalgamated by the already existing large estates.

Section two of the thesis deals with the agricultural development of the plain by the English to 1700. The second section is basically descriptive, but, in addition, it does argue that agriculture in the plain was dominated to 1673 by the provision-growing small landholders; only after 1673 did conditions created by both local and metropolitan situations tend to favour the development of large estate agriculture which was directed towards the production of crops for export markets.

The thesis argues finally that by 1700 conditions favouring the pre-1673 growth of provisions in Liguanea had so altered that the small landholders, no longer able to maintain themselves, were forced to sell their properties which were then amalgamated into the larger estates, forming an integral part of the rapidly developing 18th century plantation system.

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Any errors or faults in the subject, method, or conclusion of the final draft are all mine.

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