

STRUCTURAL PLURALISM AND THE PORTUGUESE  
IN NINETEENTH CENTURY BRITISH GUIANA:  
A STUDY IN HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY

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A STUDY IN HISTORICAL GEOGRAPHY

by

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A Thesis  
Submitted To  
The Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research  
in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for the  
Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

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Montreal, Québec

February 1975

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ABSTRACT

Structural Pluralism and the Portuguese in  
Nineteenth British Guiana: A Study in Historical Geography

The central questions of this research on the historical geography of 19th century British Guiana are "how" and "why" an immigrant group from Madeira (the Portuguese) came to dominate the post-emancipation retail trade of the colony. The "how" could and has been answered by examining the evolution and development of retailing both before and after the emancipation act of 1834. The "why" has been difficult to determine, but a recourse to plural society theory suggested where one should inquire. By asking for "whom" the creation of a plural society was so necessary; and "who" else, besides the Portuguese benefited from Portuguese control of the retail trade, one received sufficient clues and direction to know where to look.

Evidence was uncovered which established that the Portuguese initially received help from the European elite. In contrast, the Negroes were repressed because the planter interest wished to restrict them to estate labour. Planter support of the Portuguese and substantial indentured immigration from India enabled the elite to maintain its control of the colony by establishing and perpetuating ethnic divisions in the colony's economy, society, and geography. The result was the creation of a structurally plural society.

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RESUME

LE STRUCTURALISME PLURALISTE ET LES PORTUGAIS  
AU 19<sup>e</sup> SIECLE EN GUYANE BRITANNIQUE:  
UNE ETUDE EN GEOGRAPHIE HISTORIQUE

Cette recherche en géographie historique, en Guyane Britannique au 19<sup>e</sup> siècle, étudie les raisons qui ont amené un groupe d'immigrants portugais de Madère à dominer le commerce au détail à la fin de l'esclavage. Elle se divise en deux parties: "comment et pourquoi" cette domination fut possible. En examinant l'évolution et le développement de ce commerce avant et après l'acte de 1834 abolissant l'esclavage, nous sommes arrivés à démontrer "comment" cette situation historique a pu exister. Un recours à la théorie d'une société pluraliste nous indiqua la marche à suivre pour expliquer le "pourquoi" de cette domination. Certains indices orientèrent notre recherche. Nous nous sommes demandés "pour qui" cette société pluraliste était-elle si nécessaire et qui d'autres, en plus des Portugais, bénéficiaient de ce contrôle du commerce au détail.

Nous avons la preuve évidente que les Portugais avaient reçu l'appui de l'élite européenne, d'autre part les planteurs avaient tout intérêt à garder les Noirs comme ouvriers sur leurs plantations, les privant ainsi de leurs droits.

Une importante immigration de main-d'oeuvre indienne engagée sous contrat et l'appui des planteurs permit à l'élite de maintenir son contrôle de la colonie en établissant et en perpétuant les divisions ethniques sur les plans économique, social et géographique. Il en résultat la création d'une société structurellement pluraliste.

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PREFACE

Geographers are concerned with the interaction of man and the world about him; that is, how and why does man modify, accomodate himself, and use a particular portion of the earth's surface.. Historical geographers differ from other geographers in that they direct their questions to the past in an effort to better understand the present. An understanding of man's use of the earth, whether it be the terrestrial totality or merely a small area, provides an insight into man's future---surely the goal of all the humanities and social sciences.

The elite of the society which occupied Guyana in the 19th century used the land in a fashion designed to produce wealth for itself and the metropole. In order to accomplish this, every aspect of life, society, economy, law, and geography was bent to the fulfilment of this goal. The original contribution to knowledge of this thesis is how this goal was achieved and why the creation of a plural society was so necessary to the attainment of this goal.

Financial support from the Department of Geography of McGill University and the Canada Council made the undertaking and completion of this research possible. I especially wish to thank the Canada Council for its award of two doctoral fellowships and its subsidy of travel expenses to Guyana and London where the necessary archival work was undertaken.

Numerous individuals provided assistance in a variety of ways. First and above all, I wish to thank my three supervisors: Professors T.L. Hills, H.C. Brookfield, and J.M. Gilmour. Their patience, encouragement, and trenchant criticism kept me going and made the completion of this thesis possible. Others at McGill include C. Granberg, B. Grey,

T. Kulka, and R.G. Mayes. In addition, I wish to thank my cartographer, Louise Mayes; my typist, Helen Rousseau; and my French translator, Louis Saint-Amand. In Guyana, Tommy Paine and the staff of the National Archives must be thanked for both their assistance and forbearance.

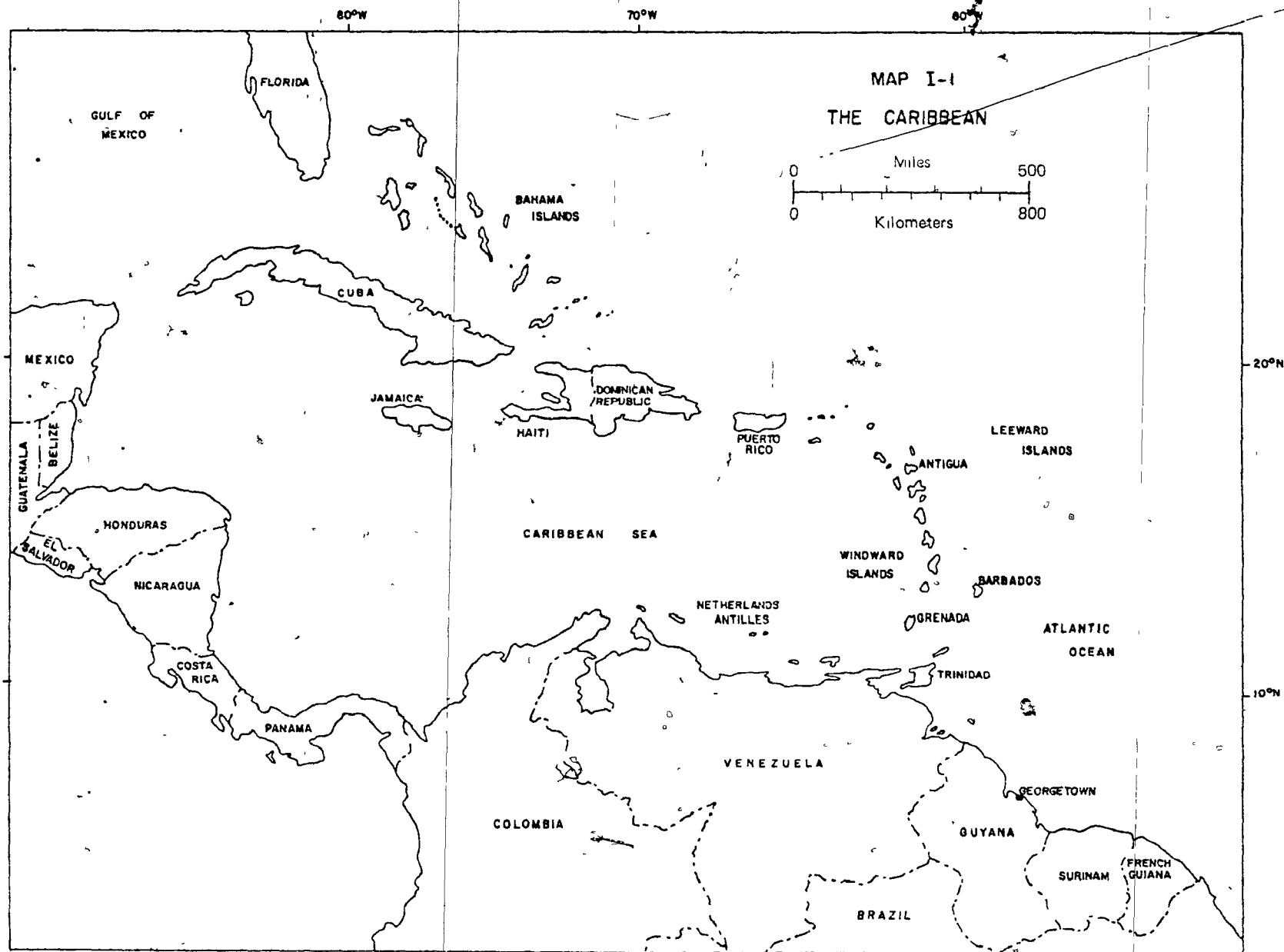
Others, whom I wish to thank, are Professor L.P. Cummings, Ms. L. Potter, Dr. R. Moore, and Sister (Dr.) Noel Menezes, all of the University of Guyana. In addition, thanks must be given to my research assistant, Janet Edgehill. And last, but not least, I thank my parents for all the small and not-so-small favours given me by them during the last five years.

## INTRODUCTION

This thesis is a study in historical geography, seeking to trace the manner in which human ideas and actions have manifested themselves in the spatial distribution of a given "geographical fact."

"To understand a place where man has lived is...to understand the thought lying behind it."<sup>1</sup> The "geographical fact" is the widespread dominance, quickly achieved and long maintained, of the shopkeeping trade of post-emancipation British Guiana by a minority immigrant group. It is argued that this dominance was not expressed only in social and economic space, but also and of necessity in geographical space: it was the establishment of "spatial monopolies" in the retail trade of rural British Guiana which made possible the control established by Portuguese nationals, migrants from Madeira, in a sector of the British Guianese economy as a whole throughout much of the 19th century.

The problem was thus: to understand, explain, and seek the significance of the appearance and distribution of Portuguese-managed shops within the context of 19th century British Guiana. In order to achieve these aims it was necessary to first appreciate the social, economic, and geographic milieu that constituted the colony in the 19th century. British Guiana was part of a commercial empire. In common with the sugar colonies of the West Indies, a region of which British Guiana was considered a part because of political, social, and economic but not locational criteria (Map I-1), British Guiana's *raison d'être* was the production of tropical staples; that is, the production of wealth for Britain, the merchant houses of the metropole, and for



the merchants and planters of the colony. At the beginning of the 19th century the sugar estates were small but numerous and in private hands. By century's end, the estates had passed into the hands of a few important British merchant houses. Throughout the course of the century the interests of sugar had been predominant. The social, economic, and geographic development of the colony was bent and distorted to the will of the sugar interest. These processes and tensions are discussed in Chapter One, and an intellectual perspective is given to them in Chapter Two with the introduction of pluralist theory.

Structural pluralism is implicit in the writings of J.S. Furnivall<sup>2</sup> and explicit in the work of M.G. Smith<sup>3</sup>. It affords the best means of understanding the forces at work in 19th century British Guiana. The unstated assumption behind pluralist thought is the issue of dominance. Ethologists and sociologists alike are concerned with social dominance--- human geographers, among other things, are concerned with the spatial expressions of dominance. Expressions of dominant and subordinate relationships take many forms; among chickens there is a pecking order just as there is a hierarchy of dominance among baboons. Among human beings, dominance within a homogeneous group (that is, homogeneous with respect to race, language, religion, etc.) is expressed by interpersonal deference, differences in accent, clothes, recreation interests, occupation, place of residence, and differential access to and control of the social domain.

However, when a plural society is established; that is, when a society comes into being containing two or more distinct groups of people one of which is dominant; the form and expression of dominance

changes. There is still a pecking order within the elite or super-ordinate segment of the plural society; but, what is different is that whole ethnic groups are placed in subordinate positions vis à vis the dominant group. This means that all the devices and more used to assign status within a homogeneous society are applied to the subordinate groups. This means that not only will deference be exacted from the subordinate group by the superior but, in addition, the regulation of the subordinate group's occupations and places of residence. It is the spatial expression, the geographic manifestation, of dominance which is at the heart of this thesis.

This dominance was most clearly expressed in British Guiana by the introduction and use of indentured labourers to offset the erstwhile slaves; and by the aid and encouragement given the Portuguese and their commercial ventures by the European elite in contrast to the hostility displayed toward similar ventures undertaken by Negroes. The result was the proliferation of Portuguese shops throughout the colony and the closing off of a possible avenue---indeed, for most the only avenue---of advancement to the more ambitious of the Negro population. The establishment of Portuguese commercial dominance was manifested in spatial monopolies; that is, the monopoly of a local commercial field; and was thus a social, economic, and geographic phenomenon. The establishment of this commercial dominance and concomitant spatial monopolies are the themes of Chapters Four through Seven; Chapter Three is an analysis of the pre-emancipation system of internal trade, an understanding of which is necessary in order to appreciate the magnitude of the changes wrought after 1838; and Chapter Eight is the conclusion.

This thesis arose out of curiosity. My early inquiries around a somewhat different theme brought me face to face with the surprising fact of Portuguese dominance in British Guianese retailing, a dominance that has now perished but has left its traces in modern Guyana. Seeking to understand this phenomenon, at first only one aspect of a thesis intended to be on the wider question of the evolution of trade in post-emancipation times, I found myself drawn into widening circles of explanation. To understand the dominance of the Portuguese, it was necessary to understand the plantation system itself, the hopes and intentions of the ex-slaves and ex-apprentices, the *raison d'être* of the "saccharine oligarchy" and the sort of society they wished to preserve. It became apparent that the answer to this small question embraced the whole transformation of British Guianese society, economy, and geography in the 19th century---and so, it became the core of the thesis. Nor is the question only of academic or antiquarian interest, for the events that led to the prolonged Portuguese ascendancy have left their mark upon the structure of Guyanese society to this day.



FOOTNOTES TO INTRODUCTION

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## 1. THE SACCHARINE DESPOTISM

### The Dutch Years

Until the final third of the 18th century the Guyanese plantation ecumene was exclusively riverine. The colonies of Essequibo and Berbice, founded in 1621 and 1627 and named after their respective rivers, were located upstream for several reasons.<sup>1</sup> The necessity for defence against marauding English, French, and Spanish privateers was a requirement for both colonies. Situated 40 and 100 miles (65 and 160 km.) upstream the administrative centres of Essequibo and Berbice were safe from all but the most intrepid privateers. A second reason for riverine settlement was the comparative hospitality of the lands adjacent the rivers. The Guyana coast consisted of mangrove and other vegetation groups associated with poor drainage. In contrast, the riverine lands were well drained, possessed more friable soils, and supported a less intractable vegetation. In the case of Essequibo, trade with the Amerindians was an additional site factor. The colony's location at the confluence of the Essequibo, Mazaruni, and Cuyuni Rivers facilitated access to the interior. In contrast, the colony of Berbice was a venture in commercial agriculture from its inception.

Both colonies developed at a slow rate. In contrast to Surinam, the thriving English colony seized by the Dutch in 1666, Essequibo and Berbice were poor sisters. Surinam in 1712 possessed an estimated 200 estates, 600 Europeans, and 12,000 slaves. Essequibo in 1735 possessed 30 to 35 estates, 150 Europeans, and 2,700 slaves. Berbice did not appreciably differ from Essequibo in population.<sup>2</sup> The effectively occupied

area of the colonies increased because of soil exhaustion on the old plantations, their partial abandonment, and the subsequent clearing of new plantations. The upstream growth of the Essequibo colony was hindered by rapids and poorer soils. Absence of European strife in the late 17th and early 18th centuries encouraged a downstream shift of plantation settlement. By 1718, the centre of population had shifted sufficiently to justify moving the capital from Cartabo at the Mazaruni-Essequibo junction to Fort (Flag) Island near the Essequibo-mouth.

Settlement on the three largest of the Essequibo Islands commenced about 1740. In 1741 two Englishmen established two sugar estates on Wakenaam Island. By 1743, seven English estates existed on Wakenaam and Leguan Islands and on the banks of the Pomeroon River.<sup>3</sup> Pressure to make available lands in the Demerara River, hitherto closed to settlers, resulted in the granting of permits in 1746 to planters of all nationalities. In the first six months 18 sugar plantations were granted in addition to a large number of smaller plots. Laurens Storm van s'Gravesande, Commander of Essequibo, wrote of Demerara to the directors of the West Indian Company in 1746, "I doubt not but that this River Demerary will in a few years be as populous, if not more so than Essequibo."<sup>4</sup> He was not in error. By 1770 Essequibo contained 74 sugar and cotton estates; in the same year Demerara possessed 130 sugar and coffee estates of which one-third were British owned.<sup>5</sup>

Meanwhile, the Berbice slave revolt of 1763 had precipitated a major shift of population and agricultural settlement in that colony. Unlike Essequibo, the Berbice colony had not been restricted by rapids or poor soils. Most of the plantations were upstream of the capital,

Fort Nassau. However, a dependent cluster of plantations had been established on the upper reaches of the Canje River. These were accessible by an easterly trail from Fort Nassau or by boat, for the Canje is tributary to the Berbice near the Berbice-mouth. The revolt of nearly 4,000 slaves forced the less than 350 Europeans to retreat by ship to the mouth of the river. It was 11 months before the revolt was crushed. An attempt was made to restore the old centre of the colony, but in 1784 this was abandoned and the capital was moved to Fort St. Andries on Crab Island at the mouth of the Berbice.

In 1775 the lands adjacent to the Demerara River had been completely occupied. In an attempt to make more land available van Schuylenburg, the first Commander of Demerara, planned and initiated the construction of Canals One, Two, and Three in 1775. The canals were dug at right angles to the Demerara River. Estates were then surveyed at right angles to the canals. Canals One and Two were dug on the west bank of the river, while Canal Three was sited opposite Canal One on the east bank. The west bank pair were five miles (8 km.) in depth while Canal Three was about four miles (6.4 km.) long. The soils were especially favourable for coffee. In 1792 the operative estates numbered 17, 13, and 12 respectively on the three canals, nearly all were coffee estates.<sup>6</sup>

In Berbice the shift of the capital downstream encouraged the occupation of the surrounding territory. The pressure on the adjacent lands, especially land suitable for cotton, began to mount in the 1780's. The long-staple salt tolerant sea island cotton of the West Indies was admirably suited for the mills of Manchester. Forced upwards by the French wars, the demand for cotton and its relative ease of cultivation

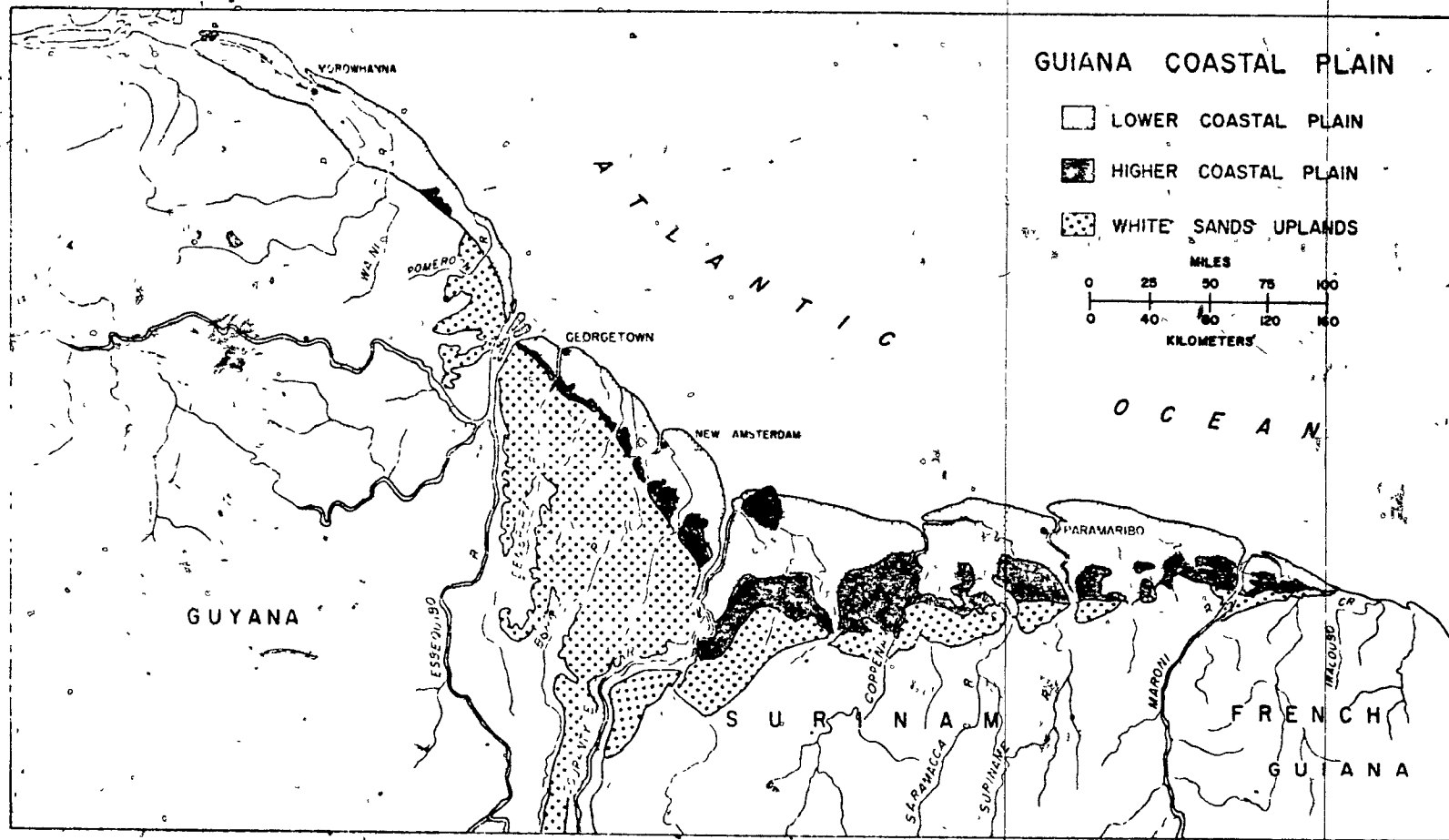
meant that once again fabulous fortunes could be made.

### The Transformation of the Land

It was only in an atmosphere filled with the speculative spirit and the lure of instant fortune that the reclamation of coastal Guyana could have been undertaken. It did not happen in adjacent Surinam. This was because there was no shortage of excellent estate sites within the Surinam River system and because the local planter population pressure was less than in Guyana. The lower coastal plain of Guyana is an exasperating landscape. Recent in origin and possessing an extremely low local relief and elevation, the plain confronts the prospective entrepreneur with major problems of drainage and irrigation. As a geomorphic region the coastal plain extends from western French Guiana, through Surinam and Guyana, to the eastern marches of Venezuela (Map 1-1). In width the plain varies from 1 to 50 miles (1.61 to 81 km.). It averages 15 miles (24 km.) in width. Roughly half of the total plain area is in Guyana; and it is in Guyana that it has been most exploited.

Two principal landform types are found on the plain. The higher and drier are sand ridges (called reefs in Guyana) not exceeding 7 feet (about 2 m.) above mean sea level. These are indicative of former shore lines and elevated sand bars. The reefs run roughly parallel to the coast and are most common immediately to the west of the major rivers. Their constituent brown sand has its origin in the Guiana Highlands. Fluvially transported, the sand was deposited west of the river mouths as a result of the westward flow of the South Equatorial Current.

MAP 1-1



Between the sand reefs are low and thus poorly drained areas or flats of clay soil which account for approximately 80 per cent of the total plain area. Prior to reclamation these flats were generally waterlogged the year round or, at a minimum, standing pools of water during the rainy season. The origin of these clays is a mystery. Their source is not the Guiana Highlands. It has been suggested that their ultimate origin is Amazonian. This, however, has not been factually established. What is certain is that the sediments have their origin east of the Guianas and that they are transported westwards by the South Equatorial Current.<sup>7</sup> The sediment load is sufficiently heavy to create one of Guyana's more interesting if less attractive features, a turgid purple-brown sea.

Though generally perceived as a coast of emergence, portions of the Guyana foreshore are subjected to periodic erosion and deposition. S.S. Naraine has observed that there exists a 30-year cycle of erosion and deposition. Nodes, or points of attack, average a separation of 20 miles (32 km.) and a westerly velocity of approximately .67 miles (1.07 km.) per year. At the nodes erosion takes place, whereas, between the nodes deposition occurs. The significance of this will become apparent below.<sup>8</sup>

Poldering was necessary in order to reclaim the coast. Each plantation needed a front dam, a back dam, and two side dams. The front dam was to keep the sea out. The back dam was to keep the savanna floodwaters out. Both were substantial and expensive undertakings. The side dams were shared with adjacent estates and allowed each estate to regulate its interior drainage and irrigation. These elaborate defences were

necessary because much of the coastal plain is either at mean sea level or, at most 3 to 6 feet (1 to 1.8 m.) in elevation. The average elevation of the coastal plain is a mere .46 feet (.14 m.) above mean sea level. Mean sea level counts for little when one encounters bi-diurnal tides with a range at Spring of 7 to 10 feet (2.1 to 3 m.). It is the half-tide level which is important and the percentages of land above and below mean sea level. Protection from innundation was essential, but the threat of innundation was not only from the sea for the low elevation of the coast inhibits natural drainage. In some areas the slope is only 1 foot in 10 miles (2 cm. in 1 km.). Thus, with an average annual precipitation of 90 inches (229 cm.), it follows that the natural state of the lower coastal plain is one of near-perpetual submersion.

Guyanese planters had not been confronted with the need to polder until the area of cultivation entered the lower coastal plain in the mid-18th century. Even then, the ecumene remained riverine. It was not until the 1780's that settlement on the coast was initiated. The older riverine estates had been above the level of the tides. All that a planter had need to do was clear the land and dig a shallow system of drainage ditches. These were crude but served their purpose of removing excess water. Although the average annual precipitation at Georgetown is 90 inches (229 cm.) since records were initiated in 1847 the range of precipitation has been 60 to 150 inches (152 to 381 cm.).

The Georgetown station is on the coast and thus somewhat wetter than an interior post, but the extreme range in the amount of precipitation received is typical of both coast and interior. Even on the coast the average annual precipitation varies from place to place. Skeldon on



the eastern border receives an average of 82 inches (208 cm.); New Amsterdam, 40 miles (65 km.) to the west, 90 inches (229 cm.); Mahaica, 50 miles (80 km.) further, 72 inches (183 cm.); and Georgetown only 25 miles (40 km.) from Mahaica, 90 inches (229 cm.) per year.<sup>9</sup> The climate of the Guyana coast has been described as between that of the true tropical rainforest and that of the savanna.

There are four nominal seasons---nominal, because they are not constant in appearance or duration. The short dry season usually coincides with February and March; the long rainy season with April through July; the long dry season runs from August through November; and the short rainy season coincides with December and January. In any year, one or the other of the short seasons may be absent. Drought and severe floods are frequent, often, a drought is broken by a year of excessive rains.

In contrast to the irregular precipitation regime of the coast are the almost invariant temperature and wind patterns. Coastal Guyana is made comfortable by the tradewinds blowing from a general northeasterly direction. Their velocity is not very great, in March, the trades blow at velocities of 10 to 15 miles per hour (16 to 24 km./hr); in July, their velocity drops to an average of 6 to 12 miles per hour (9.7 to 19.3 km./hr.). The nearer one is to the sea the greater the windspeed. Temperatures range from a mean minimum of 75.7 degrees F. (24.3 deg. C.) to a mean maximum of 85.4 degrees F. (29.1 deg. C.). The hottest months are September and October which are also the months of the least cloud cover. The coolest months are December and January, the months of the greatest cloud cover.

#### Establishment of the Estates

Given the vagaries of weather, terrain, and the international markets, an estate grant in Guyana was not necessarily an easy route to

great wealth. The plantations granted in coastal Demerara and Essequibo were contiguous and rectangular possessing a seafrontage of 100 Rhymland roods (1236 feet or 377 meters) and a depth of 750 roods (9267 feet or 2828 meters). The average estate was thus rather small, about 264 acres (107 hectares) in size. When two-thirds of the original grant had been brought under cultivation a second, interior, grant of equal size could be obtained. These second grants were referred to as the "second depth." In Berbice, the frontage granted ranged from 100 to 165 roods (1236 to 2039 feet or 377 to 622 meters).

Coastal estates and some lower river estates were surveyed, numbered, and then made available to planters. The numbering of estates commenced at the river mouths and proceeded along the coast or upstream, whichever was appropriate. The exception is the numbering of the Corentyne estates. Estate Number 1, Corentyne Coast, is immediately to the east of Devil's Creek, the former boundary between Surinam and Berbice. Planters customarily devised new names for their numbered lots; for example, Estate Number 5, Corentyne Coast, was renamed Albion. But in order to become productive the lots first had to be poldered.

In an 1875 report, William Russell, a leading estate attorney and innovator, related the steps taken by a planter in poldering an estate. The methods had changed little since the end of the 18th century. The planter's first effort was to secure his sea defences. The front dam and drainage koker (sluice) were quickly erected. The sea dam was usually constructed as illustrated in Figure 1-1. Leakage was guarded against by a firmly rammed trench beneath the bulk of the dam. The cost in 1875 was \$7.00 (£1.46) per rood. The material for the dam was got from the

Cross section of the Front or Sea Dam and the  
Back Dam of a typical Guianese Coastal Estate.

FIGURE 1-1: FRONT DAM

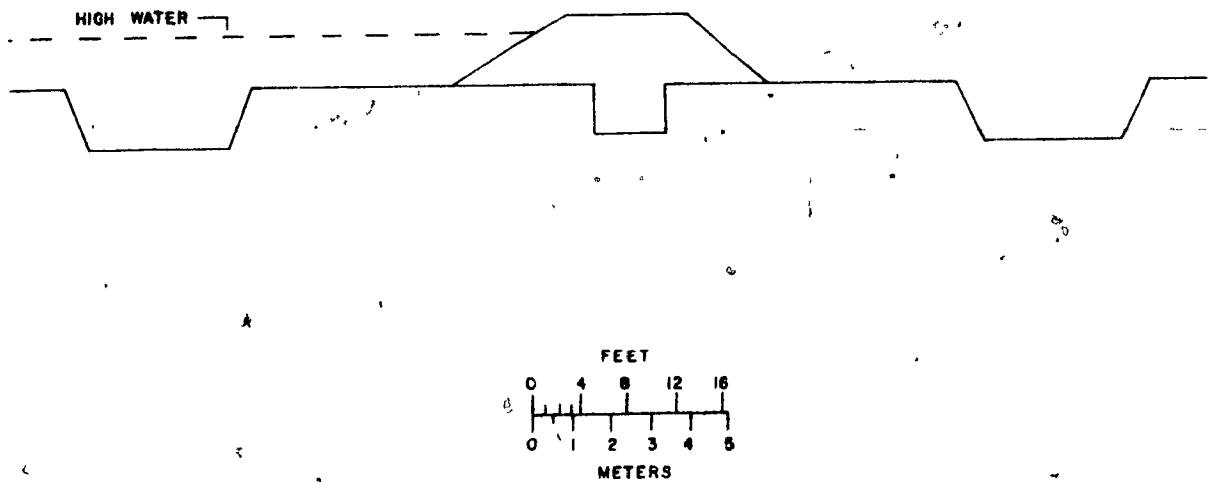
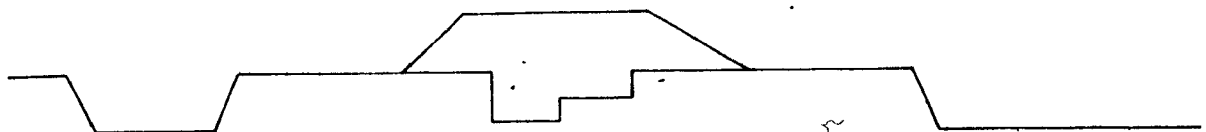


FIGURE 1-2: BACK DAM

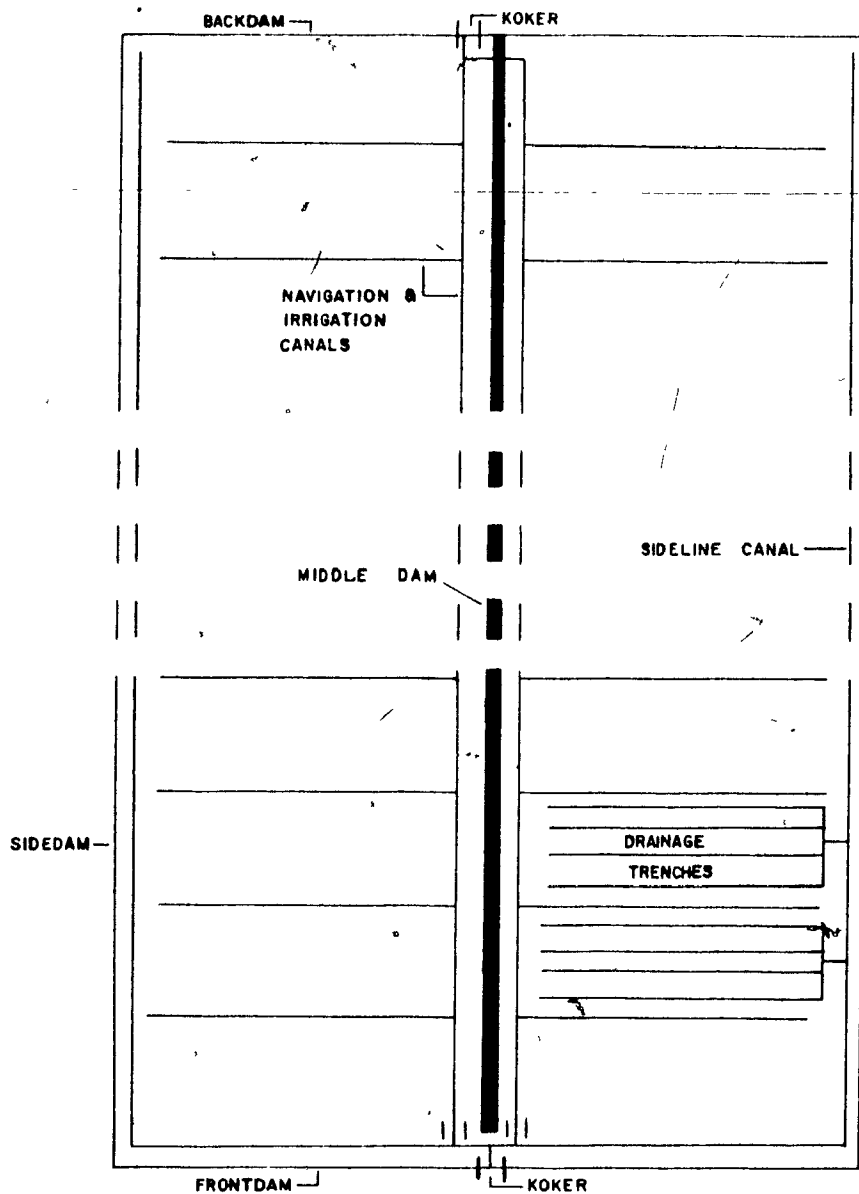


trenches dug parallel and adjacent on either side. The cost of the koker ranged from \$1,000 to \$2,000 (£208 to £417).

Once the sea dam was built the side dams were run inland. These were necessary if an estate was acting independently, because its flank was then exposed to the pressure of the savanna floodwaters. Two adjacent estates could reduce expenses and share a side dam which doubled as a path to the rear of the estates. The side dams were constructed from the earth removed in the digging of the major navigation-irrigation canals immediately adjacent. The cost of canal and dam was estimated by Russell to be \$5 to \$6 (£1.04 to £1.25) per rood. The back dam (Figure 1-2) was a more elaborate and expensive construction than the sea dam. The cost given by Russell was \$10 (£2.08) per rood. It too was penetrated by a koker which was used to admit a supply of irrigation water from the flooded savannas.<sup>10</sup>

A central dam, called the middle walk, was built parallel to the side dams. The material for this dam was got from the digging of two large navigation-irrigation canals which paralleled the middle walk. At regular distances, decided upon by the particular planter, smaller canals at right angles to the major canal were extended to within a few roods of the sideline drainage canals.<sup>11</sup> The fields so divided were 5 to 10 acres (2 - 4 hectares) in size. Within the fields a net of drainage ditches 2 feet wide and 3 feet (.6 - 1 m.) deep were dug delimiting beds 3 roods (12 m.) in width with an approximate length of 40 to 45 roods (160 - 180 m.).<sup>12</sup> Three cross drains connected the ditches at regular intervals. The cross drain nearest the sideline canal drained into the canal by means of a small trench. Figure 1-3 illustrates this and Figure

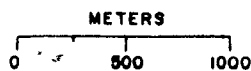
FIGURE 1-3  
Plan of a Typical  
Guianese Coastal  
Plantation



100 ROADS

FIGURE 1-4

A typical coastal estate drawn to scale



1-4 sketches a typical coastal estate.

Drainage of the estates was by gravity until the widespread introduction of ~~steam driven pumps~~ after emancipation. No attempt appears to have been made to employ windmills as in the Netherlands, even though until 1803 Guyana was a Dutch colony. The disadvantage of gravity drainage is that it can only be effectively done at low tide. Because of the bi-diurnal tides, effective drainage is possible only ten hours per day in two shifts. This necessitates a storage capacity in the drainage canals. Gravity drainage becomes inefficient if not ineffectual when, 1) the low stages of the river during the wet season are above or not much lower than the land to be drained (obviously, this applies only to river estates); 2) when the drainage channels become blocked by siltation and must be re-dug; 3) when channels feeding into the sea become obstructed by mud, sand, or a combination of both (the 30-year cycle of erosion and deposition); and 4) if the land is simply too low.<sup>13</sup>

The amount of labour needed to construct and maintain these elaborate systems of irrigation, drainage, and sea defence was enormous. Wittfogel's thesis of the centralized hydraulic authority is a paradigm of the Guyanese plantation.<sup>14</sup> Once the controlling hand was removed the system began to disintegrate. The land, formerly productive, became waste. The lack of a centralized control of drainage and sea defence became acute in the years after emancipation. The rate of estate abandonment increased. The free villages, established in the 1840's on estates purchased en masse and divided among the purchasers, were not equipped to maintain the necessary canals and dams. They possessed no authority other than friendly persuasion. With the lack of maintenance the canals

became clogged and the dams were breached. Consequently, the village lands were flooded and thus rendered useless for agriculture. The planter-dominated colonial legislature declined to intervene until the administration of Governor Sir Henry Irving. Irving pressed the passage of the Public Health Ordinance of 1878 and what amounted to an addition, the Polder Ordinance of 1880. With these ordinances drainage and sea defence became a government responsibility.

### Conquests and the Origin of the Constitution

The issue of centralized hydraulic control and its tardy resolution focuses attention on the essential conundrum of 19th century Guyana; that is, the structure of the constitution. Under the Articles of Capitulation negotiated in 1803 between the Dutch colonial authorities and the Royal Navy, the laws and usages of the colony (the United Colony of Demerara and Essequibo) were guaranteed. Furthermore, "no new establishments" were to be introduced into the colony without the consent of the Court of Policy, the legislature of the colony.<sup>15</sup> This guarantee was to bedevil successive governors and the Colonial Office until the reform of the constitution in 1893. (In 1831, the colonies of Berbice and Demerara-Essequibo were united to create British Guiana.)

Until the reform, according to Sir Cecil Clementi, "there existed in British Guiana neither Crown Colony Government nor Representative Government, but a travesty of both." It was not Crown Colony Government because the control of revenue was vested in the large unofficial majority in the Combined Court (the Combined Court was comprised of the Court of Policy plus six financial representatives). Nor was it Representative

Government, for less than 5 per cent of the adult male population after emancipation possessed the franchise. Clementi queried: "whether the system of administration then in vogue could properly be called a government at all; for an executive which could not command a majority in the chief body politic, and had neither the power of the purse nor the power to tax might reign but could not rule."<sup>16</sup> It was this constitutional arrangement which allowed the planter elite to manage the colony to please its own interests.

The constitution had its origin in the colonials' response to various conquests by the British and French in the late 18th century. In February 1781, the British seized the two colonies. A year later, in January 1782, the erstwhile conquerors were themselves displaced by the French. In March 1784, the colonies were returned to the Dutch. The affairs of the West India Company had been much disrupted by the three-year interregnum. In an effort to restore the Company's prospects, loans were got from several of the Dutch provinces and constitutional changes were implemented in Guyana. These changes established Company dominance in the governing council of Demerara. New taxes were imposed by the new council to the outrage of the colonists. They refused to pay. Thus, from 1784 to 1786, no taxes were paid in Demerara. Numerous complaints were made by the colonists to the States-General and the Stadholder until, finally, in 1786, a committee of investigation was appointed by the Dutch government.<sup>17</sup>

The constitution of Demerara and Essequibo was devised by the States General of the Netherlands in 1788 and promulgated in Demerara in 1789. The Plan of Redress, as it was known, effectively terminated the



West India Company's rule. The Plan united the hitherto separate colonies of Essequibo and Demerara and established a legislature, known as the Court of Policy, comprised of four official members and four colonial members.<sup>18</sup> The governor, who held one of the official seats, possessed a casting vote in the event of a tie. The colonial seats were divided equally between Essequibo and Demerara. These members were elected by a College of Kiezers (electors) whose seven members were elected for life by colonists owning 25 or more slaves. When a colonial seat was vacated in the Court of Policy the College met and submitted two names to the Court. One of the nominees was then selected by the members of the Court of Policy.

Because of the friction that had existed between the Company and the colonists over finances, the custom developed of dividing the revenue into two funds or chests. The Company or Government Chest (the King's Chest under the British) received its revenue from a head tax on slaves and other fixed imposts. The Colony Chest was comprised of extraordinary revenue imposed by the colonists upon themselves in a protean Court of Policy. Over time, as expenditures increased, the colonial government was forced more and more to request new levies from the colonists. The colonists came to feel that they should exercise a degree of control over expenditure.

The Combined Court satisfied the desire of the colonists to control expenditure. In 1795, when the Batavian governor left because of the colony's second capture by the British, the Court of Policy met with the College of Kiezers to discuss revenue. This was the origin of the Combined Court. With the return of the colony to the Batavian Republic in 1802

the Combined Court was legitimized. The Articles of Capitulation of the following year guaranteed its survival under the British.

The Combined Court had gained the right to discuss and reduce items of expenditure on the estimates. It could not increase or initiate money votes of its own. But the Combined Court was not without resources. It could coerce the governor to see things its way by threatening to stop supplies. Prior to the end of apprenticeship in 1838 the governor received the revenues of the King's Chest and thus possessed a measure of financial independence. With the end of slavery and apprenticeship the principal revenue of the King's Chest, the head tax, disappeared. What revenues that remained could not guarantee an independent executive.

The control of the Colony Chest was vested in the Combined Court. The colonial members in the Court of Policy and the financial members did not hesitate to threaten a stoppage of supplies in order to achieve their objectives. The Civil List was stopped in the last six months of 1840 and again from July 1848 to February 1850. After these protracted contests the Colonial Office found it expedient, if distasteful, to mollify the "saccharine oligarchs."

The Staples: Cotton, Coffee and Sugar

The political dominance of the plantocracy was paralleled by a domination of the economy. The local oligarchs and the West India interest in London re-iterated again and again that Guyana was sugar and that without sugar Guyana would be nothing. This assertion was not seriously questioned until Joseph Chamberlain became Colonial Secretary in 1895. Planter power vis à vis the Colonial Office rested upon the

prosperity of sugar and the suppression of other sectors of the economy. It was only when this grip began to fail in the 1890's that the Colonial Office was able to introduce long over-due reforms. Planter distaste for greater Colonial Office control was put aside out of fear of the rising Coloured class. Rather than share or risk losing power to those considered inferior, the planters preferred to surrender to the Colonial Office. The irony is that the Colonial Office then maintained the planter hegemony.

This hegemony dates from the second British conquest of Guyana in 1796. Under the stimulus of entry to the large British market and the impact of the French wars upon prices for tropical staples, an invasion of planters, capital, and slaves followed hard on the heels of the Royal Navy. In Demerara the population increased from 29,473 in 1795 to 39,232 in 1798. Slaves accounted for ninety per cent of this increase.<sup>19</sup> In Demerara and Essequibo (between 1798 and 1802 the production and export of coffee and cotton nearly doubled, while that of sugar nearly tripled (Table 1-1)). For a short period at the end of the 18th century, Guyana was the leading cotton exporter in the world and the greatest coffee producer in the British Empire.<sup>21</sup>

By 1810, Guyana's position as an exporter of cotton and coffee had begun to decline. Graph 1-1 illustrates the course of coffee, cotton, and sugar production in Demerara and Essequibo from 1798 to 1849. The slave population for the period 1796 to 1834 in Demerara and Essequibo is also indicated. From the graph it is apparent that the rates of increase

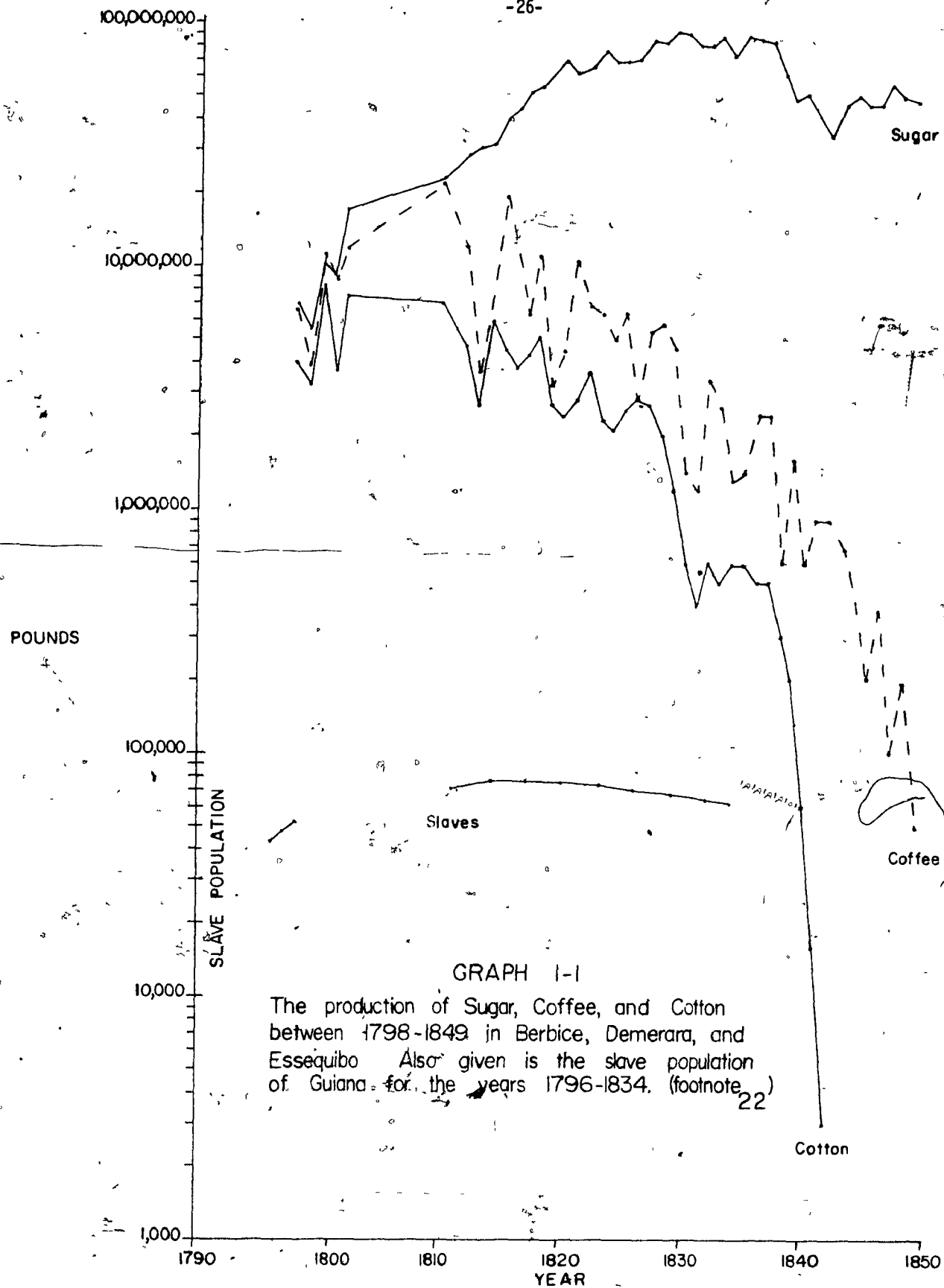
TABLE 1-1

Exports of Coffee, Cotton, and Sugar  
from Demerara and Essequibo in 1798 and 1802.  
(footnote 20)

	coffee	cotton	sugar
1798	6,506,435 lbs.	14,738 bales*	6,472 hhd.**
1802	11,539,497 lbs.	25,413 bales	17,520 hhd.

\* a bale varied from 240 to 300 pounds

\*\* a hogshead varied from 800 to 1000 pounds



GRAPH 1-1

The production of Sugar, Coffee, and Cotton between 1798-1849 in Berbice, Demerara, and Essequibo. Also given is the slave population of Guiana for the years 1796-1834. (footnote 22)

in staple production from 1798 to 1802 were approximately the same. After 1802, cotton commenced a precipitous descent. In 1820, production was about a third that of 1810. In 1830, production was less than a tenth of what it had been in 1810, and by 1842, cotton was no longer a significant export. Coffee production reached a peak in 1810. Thereafter, it paralleled the decline of cotton and virtually ceased to be an export of Demerara and Essequibo after 1850.

Several factors account for the decline of cotton and coffee and the ascent of sugar. By 1802, the demise of cotton was being hastened by the invention of the cotton gin, the slightly greater production per acre, and the slightly lower transport costs of American medium-staple cotton. Guyanese cotton began to be supplanted in the British market. Guyanese coffee initially suffered a loss of market by Napoleon's introduction of the continental system. With the restoration of peace in 1815, cheaper coffee from the Dutch East Indies displaced the Guyanese product in Europe. Within the British Empire, Guyanese coffee became increasingly unable to compete with Ceylonese production. By 1830, Ceylon had become the leading producer within the Empire. The decisive factor in Ceylon's success was the availability of large quantities of cheap labour.

With the abolition of the African slave trade on January 1, 1808, the value of labour within the British West Indies soared.<sup>23</sup> Accustomed to replenishing supplies with fresh imports, the West Indian planters had allowed a sexual imbalance among the slaves to appear. Not more than three-eighths of the African imports were female. Increase of a plantation's slave supply by reproduction had not been widely practiced. The get-rich-quick syndrome of the age had no place for children. Thus, with the sudden

abolition of the trade and the consequent inability of many planters to maintain their estates with a declining labour force, many small estates were forced to cease operations and sell their slaves to larger planters.

Henry Dalton in his History of British Guiana (1851) relates that in 1800, given the commodity prices of the day and the Negro's ability to cultivate "n" acres of staple, one Negro cultivating 2 acres of cotton produced a crop valued at £45. On a coffee estate, one Negro could manage 1½ acres and produce a crop valued at £34. The rate on the sugar plantation was one Negro per acre. The value of the sugar so produced equaled £33. But if one included the value of the molasses and rum produced per acre value increased by 40 per cent to £55. This was partly offset by the higher production costs of the sugar factory.<sup>24</sup>

The decline of cotton and coffee prices coupled with an increasing shortage of labour drove many small and over-encumbered planters to the wall. Two courses of action were open to the small planter: he could sell his slaves and abandon his estate; or, he could sell most of his slaves and convert his estate to a cattle farm. The larger cotton and coffee planters possessed a third option. Providing they were able to raise the necessary finances their estates could be converted to sugar. Thus, many estates came to possess a transitional mixed economy of sugar-cotton or sugar-coffee.

On an 1804 map of Guyana published by W. Faden, "Geographer to his Majesty and his Royal Highness the Prince of Wales," the staples of the more than 500 plantations are indicated. With only one exception, all the coastal estates from Stabroek (Georgetown) eastwards to the end of cultivation on the Corentyne River were indicated as under cotton. The banks of the Berbice and lower Canje Rivers supported coffee estates and

not more than six sugar plantations. The banks of the Demerara, the west coast, the banks of the Essequibo, and the Essequibo Islands were under extensive coffee and sugar cultivation. West Coast Essequibo supported all three staples.<sup>25</sup>

Table 1-2 contrasts the number of estates, their production, the number of field slaves employed, and the average number of slaves per estate in Demerara and Essequibo for the years 1820 and 1832. From the table it is apparent that about 1/3 of all field slaves were employed on estates producing only sugar in 1820. If one includes those estates producing sugar and other crops the proportion of field slaves then exceeds 67 per cent. In 1832, just under 70 per cent of all field slaves in Demerara and Essequibo were attached to sugar plantations. If one includes those estates producing sugar and another crop the proportion of field slaves so engaged is just under 90 per cent. There is every reason to believe that those estates producing sugar and cotton or sugar and coffee or all three were perhaps engaged chiefly in sugar production. These are the large estates as is evidenced by the average number of slaves held by the mixed crop estates in comparison to those estates producing only one staple.

The decline in the number of field labourers from 58,558 in 1820 to 53,477 in 1832 emphasizes the pressures under which the plantation economy was forced to re-structure itself. The decline in the number of field slaves was not averted by imports from Berbice. To the dismay of the Berbicians, wealthy planters from Demerara habitually purchased failing cotton estates in Berbice and then promptly abandoned them having sent the estate's slaves to their Demerara properties. This practice continued until 1823. The planter pre-occupation with supplies of labour which was to continue and grow in magnitude after emancipation dates from this period.



TABLE 1-2

A Comparison of Estate Characteristics in Demerara and Essequibo in 1820 and 1832 (see footnote 1)

	1820			1832		
estate production	no. of estates	no. of slaves	average no. of slaves/estate	no. of estates	no. of slaves	average no. of slaves/estate
sugar	94	19,779	210	132	36,351	275
cotton	68	9,496	138	11	1,821	166
coffee	42	4,462	106	28	2,408	86
sugar and cotton	8	2,030	254	1	436	436
sugar and coffee	67	18,199	272	35	10,577	302
sugar, cotton, coffee	2	387	194			
sugar and plantains				1	78	78
cotton and coffee	21	3,880	185	3	995	332
woodcutting	5	209	42	8	119	15
plantains	1	26	26	1	36	36
plantains and cotton				1	11	11
plantains and coffee				2	82	41
cattle				14	363	26
unknown	9	90	10			
TOTAL	317	58,558 field slaves		237	53,477 field slaves	

After the termination of the African slave trade in 1808 abolitionists in Parliament began to press more vigorously for complete emancipation. The West India interest was strong enough to effect a series of delaying tactics and compromises until the final act of emancipation in 1833. The programme of amelioration resulted in an Order-in-Council in 1823 which limited field labour to nine hours per day; prohibited the flogging of females, and forbade the presence of the whip in the fields as an emblem of authority. The then independent Council of Government in Berbice promulgated the Order-in-Council upon its receipt. But the Court of Policy in Demerara and Essequibo unwisely temporized and thus sparked the East Coast Demerara rising of 1823.

The rising was brutally suppressed even though the Negroes had deliberately refrained from untoward acts of violence against the person and property. Seeking to crush all opposition, a wrathful and vindictive Court of Policy accused the Reverend John Smith of the London Missionary Society of treason. The charge asserted that Smith had known of the uprising and had deliberately suppressed the knowledge. Smith was convicted and sentenced to hang, but before a reprieve could arrive from England "the Demerara Martyr" had died of consumption in prison. The resultant public indignation in England led to a motion of censure against the Government and Court of Policy of the colony in Parliament. The motion was lost 193 votes to 146; but it is a measure of the outrage felt in the metropole.

Under intense pressure from London the Court of Policy passed "an Ordinance for the religious instruction of slaves and for meliorating their condition" in September 1825. Taking effect on January 1, 1826, the ordinance provided for the appointment of a Protector of Slaves; secured

the slaves freedom from labour from Saturday sunset to Monday sunrise; limited fieldwork from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. with a two-hour break; prohibited the carrying of the whip in the field; forbade the flogging of women; limited the number of lashes to 25; required a record book of punishments to be kept; secured the slaves the privileges of marriage, of acquiring and holding property, and of purchasing their freedom. A second Order-in-Council expanded the colonial legislation in April 1830. Assistant Protectors of slaves were appointed; the separation of close relatives was prohibited; slaves were allowed to be good witnesses in the law courts; and a specified allowance of food and clothing was to be given the slaves.<sup>27</sup>

#### The End of the Old Slavery and the Introduction of the New

The colonists bitterly resented these impositions and interference in what were considered colonial affairs. The British government had caused them trouble enough by its abolition of the slave trade. The regulations imposed by London threatened the planter at his most vulnerable point, that is, the control of his labour force. The limits placed upon daily work and the prohibition on Sunday labour were deemed doubly damning because it encouraged the labourers to be, according to the planters, disrespectful. Dalton remarked that a slave's labour might profit his master £25 per year in 1800.<sup>28</sup> There is no reason to assume that the profit of 1830 was much less than the profit of 1800.

The abolition of slavery on August 1, 1834, was very much tempered by that "reasonable" concession to the West Indian planter, that is, apprenticeship. In theory, apprenticeship was to prepare the former slaves for the blessings of freedom. The original legislation provided for a four-year apprenticeship for non-praedial labourers and a six-year apprentice-

ship for praedial labourers. The planters, after their initial shock, took the initiative and terminated the apprenticeships of all on August 1, 1838. This was both a political and self-interested gesture. It was political because it improved the planter image in the eyes of the British public. It was self-interested because the planters controlled the colonial government and could legislate very much as they pleased.

The immediate consequences of emancipation were first, the receipt of £4,924,989 in compensation by the planters for their erstwhile slaves (no one thought of compensating the slaves for their bondage); and second, a diminution of the plantation work force by a third because of the withdrawal of most women and children from the fields. The consequence of this reduced labour force was a reduction of output at a time of high prices. As indicated on Graph 1-1, sugar production in 1839 was 30-million pounds less than in 1837.

The decline of nearly 40 per cent in sugar production convinced the planters of the necessity to acquire alternate supplies of labour. Actually, interest in other sources had first appeared during the period of apprenticeship. Unlike the cotton and coffee estates, the sugar plantation with its complex factory was more industrial than agricultural. The cutting, transport, and processing of cane necessitated tight scheduling and centralized control. This need, in tandem with the plural social structure both before and after emancipation, led to an authoritarian or para-military system of social organization on the plantations. That this was necessity in the plantation slave society was fortuitous insofar as the manufacture of sugar was concerned.

Great emphasis was placed upon supervision of the slave population. Status groups within the slave population were fostered and materially

acknowledged by the plantocracy. These status groups corresponded to the particular labour performed by the slave. At the bottom were the field slaves. House slaves and factory slaves were higher in status. Within the status groups further stratification existed. A sugar boiler possessed a very high status as did the concubine of the master. At the top of the plantation pyramid were the European elite. Organized in a militia, the free population of the colony provided the necessary underpinning of force.

Material and monetary rewards plus a variety of privileges were weapons devised for control in the planter armoury. In 1830 the Court of Policy of Demerara and Essequibo passed an ordinance establishing the yearly allowance of clothing and the weekly allowance of food to be given each slave. Prior to this date, with the exception of the provision of plantains, each planter was able to set his own standards. Under the ordinance, the yearly clothing allowance per male slave was 1 hat, 1 cloth jacket, 1 check shirt, 1 pair Osnaburg trousers, 2 Salempore laps, 1 razor or knife, and every second year a blanket. These minimal requirements allowed the planter considerable discretion in the granting of an additional allowance.

The food allowance per week allowed a similar vehicle by which the planter might reward or punish. Each male slave was entitled to 2 lbs. (.9 kg.) of salt fish or 4 lbs. (1.8 kg.) of fresh fish plus  $\frac{1}{2}$  pint (.25 l.) of salt and 45 lbs. (20 kg.) of plantains or the equivalent in corn, beans, peas, yams, cassava, potatoes, rice, flour or biscuits.<sup>29</sup> The concession of a garden plot to a deserving slave was one means by which the slave might vary his diet and earn an independent income. The produce so grown was the slave's to do with as he pleased. An additional privilege would be the right to raise chickens or pigs. Again the profits from these labours were those of the slave. A further privilege arising from the foregoing

was the granting of a pass to attend Sunday market in order to vend one's produce and socialize. These privileges along with the judicious employment of the lash assured the smooth running of the plantation.

The Order-in-Council of 1823 had been opposed so strenuously by the Demerara planters because it threatened their control of the slaves. It and other reform measures up to and including the Act of Emancipation were accepted with an ill-concealed distaste. Planter resistance began to materialize during apprenticeship when various schemes to import contract labour were touted and implemented. The plantocracy foresaw their loss of absolute control over the labour of the Negro. This not only threatened their livelihood but also the very structure of the social system. The planter response took two forms: the first was to import contract labour; the second was to make life as difficult for their erstwhile slaves as was feasible.

The implementation of the second response was unwittingly aided by the negligence of the Imperial Parliament. Parliament's failure to provide for post-emancipation social reform left the free Negro to the mercies of the plantocracy. In the islands where all land was owned by the planter the Negro either circumscribed his freedom by coming to an arrangement with the planter or emigrated. In Guyana, Crown land was available in large quantities as were abandoned or about to be abandoned estates. But on the functioning plantations the situation was initially similar to that of the islands.

The houses and garden plots of the slave/apprentice were the property of the planter. Sensible planters such as Barton Premium sold the houses and garden plots in question to their occupants in an attempt

V

to create an atmosphere of goodwill and to create a local labour pool for the plantation.<sup>30</sup> The approach of some planters was at the opposite extreme. The estate's plantain walks were cut down and troublesome workers found their gardens ravaged and their houses pulled down upon their heads. Other planters, less extreme or more moderate, rented the houses and gardens on condition that the renters work on the estate. These frank and open efforts to control the Negro's free labour led to an exodus from the estates and the establishment of free villages on lands purchased in common.

There was no movement to the vast Crown lands of the colony. Contrary to the expectations of the planters the Negroes were content to remain on the coast. Unlike the Crown lands, property could be had on the coast which was already cleared and drained. Nevertheless, in a precautionary move, the Court of Policy established the price of Crown land at £1 per acre to be purchased in 100 acre lots. In November 1839, the first organized purchase of a coastal estate took place. Plantation Northbrook, E.C.D., was purchased for \$10,000 (£2,083) by 84 shareholders. A village was established and named Victoria in honour of the Queen. By October 1844, 56 villages had been established on the coast. In addition, part or all of 154 plantations were acquired. The total population settled on these lands amounted to 17,449 or roughly 20 per cent of the total Negro population.<sup>31</sup>

The village shareholders encountered difficulties in the managing of their properties. Prior to 1838, excepting the two towns, there had been no need for local government legislation. Each plantation was in effect a local authority. The plantations were responsible for their own dams, canals, and the public road. As long as a central authority existed this could be done. Even before emancipation the abandonment of many coastal

cotton estates meant an end to the maintenance of the dams, canals, and the public roads. The informally organized villages in order to survive had to maintain the physical structure of the estate. But money could not be raised nor could labour be had by corvée for these purposes because of the lack of a local authority.

Until the 1860's the colonial government was not willing to create and impose upon the villages a system of local government. What local improvement ordinances were passed were done so in response to a specific petition requesting action. An example is Ordinance 18, 1845, the so-called Queenstown Ordinance. The ordinance established a property tax upon the village lands for the purpose of maintaining the public road. The government did not attempt to establish a uniform system of village government until during the administration of Francis Hincks in 1864. Hincks, however, by his heavy-handed approach succeeded in alienating the very people he was supposed to be assisting.

One hesitates to subscribe to what might appear to be a conspiracy theory of history. But, one interpretation of the Court of Policy's reluctance to establish a local government system after 1838 is that it was not deemed wise to introduce the Negro too quickly to the processes of self-government, even if only on a local level. A second interpretation is that the plantocracy knew very well what the fate of the villages would be once the dams were breached. If the village lands became unsuited for agriculture where else but to the sugar plantation could the Negro turn for a living?

Planter animus against the Negro increased after the brief strike of 1842. Because of a fall in sugar prices the planters arbitrarily attempted to reduce wages. The Negro estate labourers refused to accept a reduction.



A quiet but very effective six-week strike forced the planters to surrender. In their humiliation the planters had not failed to notice that the indentured labourers had not struck. When the planters attempted to reduce wages a second time in 1847 because of a financial crisis, the Negro labourers again struck. The strike lasted for several months spilling over into early 1848. It was a failure. The planters had learned their lesson in 1842. By 1847-48 the number of indentured labourers was sufficiently large to allow the plantations to continue operations, albeit at a reduced rate.

Henry Dalton observed in 1851 that "the main objects...of immigration...were twofold: first, to supply the declining ranks of the working peasantry; and second, to lower gradually the rate of wages consistent with the altered circumstances of the times."<sup>32</sup> The reasons given by Dalton were those used by the planters in their attempts to cajole the Colonial Office into supporting their desire for indentured immigration. Three additional and crucial reasons can be deduced from the actions of the planters and the policies implemented once indenture was underway. The first is that the terms of indenture were virtual replications of conditions, if not those under slavery, under apprenticeship. W.G. Barrett in 1859 could title a book Immigration into the British West Indies: Is It the Slave Trade Revived or Not? and Joseph Beaumont, former chief justice of British Guiana, in 1871 published a book titled The New Slavery.

A second reason for indentured immigration was the minimization of the Negro's position in the plantation economy and, as a result of this, his role in the colony. The Negro's reduced social and economic power became evident by the failure of the 1847-48 strike. A third reason for indentured immigration follows from the second. By introducing a number

of ethnic groups the planter succeeded in further pluralizing the society. Having done this, it was then practical to exploit already existing divisions among the population. In perpetuating these it was feasible to practice the politics of "divide and rule." John Gladstone wrote in 1838: "It is of great importance to us to endeavour to provide a portion of other labourers whom we might use as a set-off, and when the time for it comes, make us independent of our negro population."<sup>33</sup> Thus, the planter and his allies secured their position and control of all aspects of life in 19th century Guyana.

Indentured labour was first introduced from Madeira and the West Indies in 1835. The numbers were not large, respectively 429 and 157. Immigration from Madeira then ceased until 1841 when, happily for the Guyanese planters, famine gave the Portuguese authorities reason to encourage emigration. Immigration from the West Indies continued until 1846. It then ceased and was not renewed until 1863. The Guyanese planters had aroused the animosity of the island planters. The islanders had no intention of allowing their labour pool to be siphoned off to Guyana.

Gladstone imported 396 Indians in 1838, but because of well-founded reports of maltreatment the Indian government forbade further immigration to Guyana. Indian immigration was not renewed until 1845. Substantial and sustained immigration from India then continued until the abolition of the indenture system in 1917. A third important source of immigrants were Africans either recruited directly in West Africa or indirectly by Royal Navy capture of slave ships. The fourth important immigrant stream was from south China. Initiated in 1853, immigration was almost immediately forbidden by the Chinese government. It was not

renewed until 1859 and continued then uninterrupted until 1866. In addition to the foregoing small numbers of Americans, English, and Maltese were imported on three occasions between 1839 and 1852. The Maltese fared so badly that a public subscription was launched for their repatriation.

The flow of immigrants from 1835 to 1891 is displayed in tabular form in Table 1-3. Graph 1-2 charts the rise of the total population of Guyana from 1799 to 1891 and Graph 1-3 displays total population as well as ethnic components for the period 1799 to 1891 on semi-log scale. The striking feature of Graph 1-3 is the rapid increase in the number of Indians between 1841 and 1891. A second observation is the decline in the Negro population between 1818 and 1834. The sexual imbalance of the period of the slave trade is responsible for this decline.

The initial immigration schemes were financed by the planters. Ultimately, the burden became too much and an attempt was made in 1840 to shift the expense to the colonial treasury. In April 1840, an ordinance established the civil list for the next seven years on the condition that the Home government allow the colonial government the right to raise loans for the purpose of subsidizing immigration. The proposed loan was to total £400,000. Governor Light opposed the measure and the Colonial Office disallowed it. Consequently, supplies were cut off for the last six months of 1840. Because of emancipation and the consequent loss of revenue to the King's Chest from the head tax on slaves the government of the colony was in a very weak position.

The Colonial Office sent the governor of Trinidad, Sir Henry MacLeod, to assume temporarily the governorship of British Guiana. Sir Henry compromised with the Combined Court and secured the passage of a civil list whose

TABLE 1-3

Arrival of Immigrants

The following figures relate to persons introduced under contracts of service through the Immigration Department. They do not include persons arriving by ordinary passenger ships. From an original table prepared by Dwarka Nath. (footnote 34)

Year	India	Madeira	Azores	West Indies	Africa	England	China	Cape de Verde	Malta	U.S. of America	Total
1835	--	429	--	157	--	--	--	--	--	--	586
1836	--	--	--	1427	--	--	--	--	--	--	1427
1837	--	--	--	2150	--	--	--	--	--	--	2150
1838	396	--	--	1266	91	--	--	--	--	--	1763
1839	--	--	--	192	--	--	--	--	208	--	400
1840	--	--	--	2900	--	--	--	--	--	70	2970
1841	--	4297	--	2745	1102	--	--	--	--	--	8144
1842	--	432	--	506	1829	--	--	--	--	--	2767
1843	--	45	--	180	325	--	--	--	--	--	550
1844	--	140	--	225	523	--	--	--	--	--	918
1845	816	668	--	722	1425	--	--	--	--	--	3631
1846	4019	5975	--	428	1097	--	--	--	--	--	1519
1847	3461	3761	--	--	565	--	--	--	--	--	7787
1848	3545	300	--	--	1697	--	--	--	--	--	5542
1849	--	86	--	--	111	--	--	--	--	--	197
1850	--	1040	164	--	1219	--	--	--	--	--	2259
1851	517	1101	--	--	453	21	--	--	--	--	2256
1852	2805	1009	--	--	268	--	--	--	--	--	4082
1853	2021	2539	--	--	276	--	647	--	--	--	5483
1854	1562	1058	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	2620
1855	2342	1055	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	3397
1856	1258	180	--	--	65	--	--	766	--	--	2269
1857	2596	342	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	2938
1858	1404	1484	--	--	281	--	--	53	--	--	3222
1859	3426	684	--	--	--	--	699	--	--	--	4809
1860	5450	135	--	--	625	--	1942	--	--	--	8152
1861	3737	35	--	--	40	--	3368	--	--	--	7180
1862	5625	29	--	--	558	--	2590	--	--	--	8802
1863	2354	--	--	69	373	--	396	--	--	--	3192
1864	2709	--	--	4297	390	--	509	--	--	--	7905
1865	3216	118	--	2482	42	--	1691	--	--	--	7549
1866	2526	134	--	757	--	--	789	--	--	--	4206

.....cont'd

**Abstract**

5

POPULATION

300,000

200,000

100,000

0

1790

1800

1810

1820

1830

1840

1850

1860

1870

1880

1890

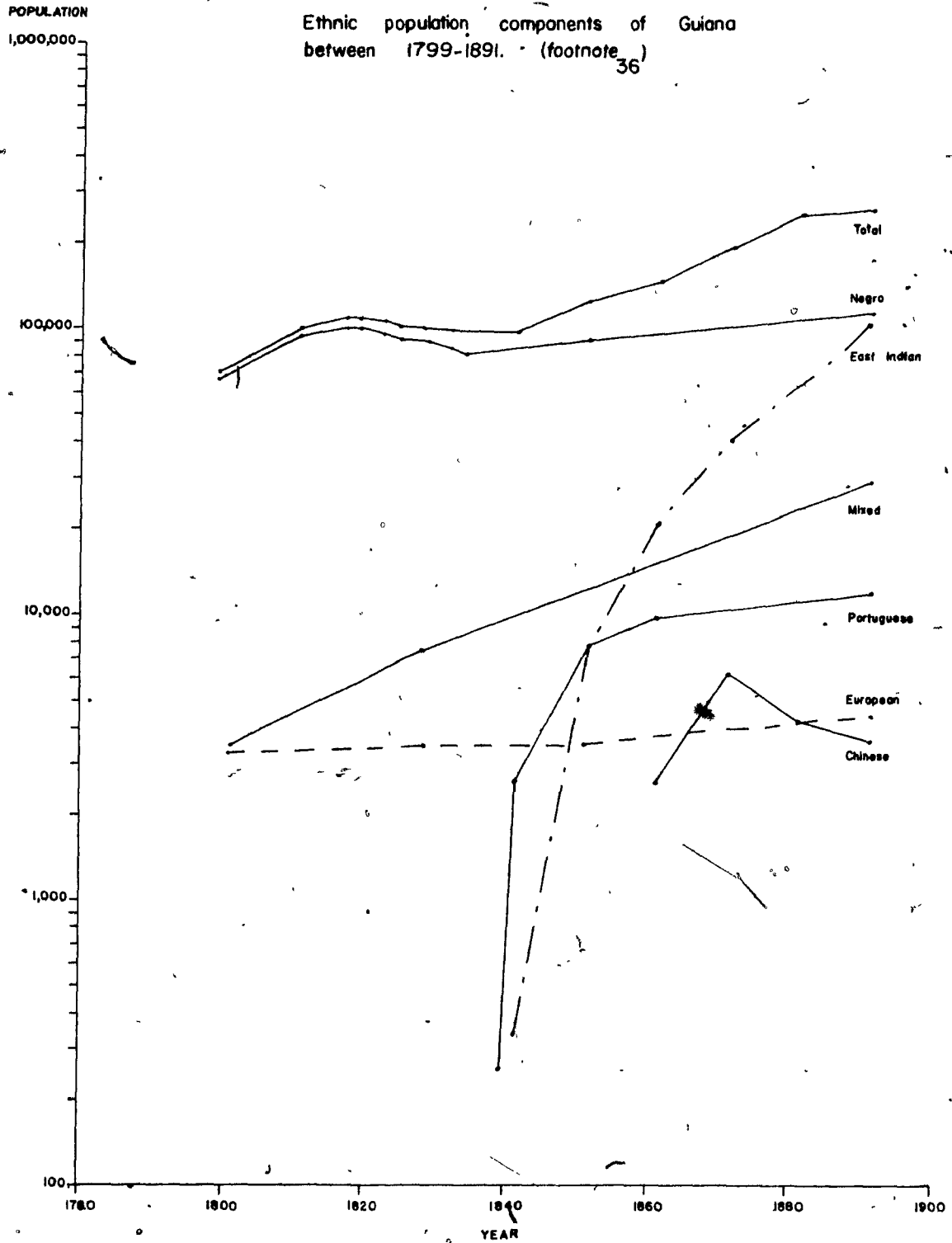
YEAR

GRAPH 1-2

The Population of Guiana between 1799-1891. (footnote 35)

GRAPH 1-3

Ethnic population components of Guiana  
between 1799-1891. (footnote 36)



duration was to be seven years. In concession, the Court of Policy was allowed to propose an ordinance authorizing the use of surplus revenue for the purposes of immigration. The issue had not, however, been laid to rest.

The sugar crisis of 1842 led to a change of heart by the Colonial Office. Encouraged by the West India Committee, the foundations of a new immigration policy were laid in 1843. Late in the year, the Colonial Office dropped its objection to the raising of a loan for immigration purposes. At the same time, the Indian government was persuaded to drop its ban on emigration to Guyana. The colonial government received the go-ahead to raise loans up to £500,000 early in 1844. Although the government was only able to raise £100,000 from the sale of bonds the immigration of labour rapidly moved ahead. The commercial crisis of 1847-48 prompted Parliament to guarantee a loan to be raised by the colonial authorities up to £500,000. But the intervention of another civil list crisis delayed the implementation of this offer until 1851.

Closely tied to the issue of immigration was the question of indenture. Under what conditions should the indentured labourer serve? The Court of Policy in 1836 sought to make a seven-year contract the norm. The Colonial Office settled initially on three years in March 1837. Four months later five years was acceptable. In 1838 the Colonial Office once again shifted position. Under the Order-in-Council of September 7, 1838, verbal contracts were to be monthly and written contracts for one year. Furthermore, contracts could only be entered into within the colony. The interpretation and enforcement of disputes were to be handled by stipendiary magistrates appointed and paid by the British government.<sup>37</sup>

The planters felt it in their interest that indenture be as long as possible. It was believed that the "system of husbandry pursued during



slavery was alone suitable to tropical cultivation."<sup>38</sup> By a tortuous twist of logic it was even asserted that it was in the best interests of the indentured labourer to serve a long indenture.

The economic argument for indentured immigration was most insistent. Governor Henry Barkly, himself a planter, explained the planters' position to Earl Grey, then Colonial Secretary, in 1849.

The disadvantages under which most of the British colonies labour in this competition [with slave labour] do not arise...from the dearness of Free Labour...they are attributable almost entirely to the great difficulty of commanding continuous labour, which always constituted a crying evil in countries where there exists a great deal of waste land and a very small population....

Immigration is the readiest palliative for this evil, but immigration without contracts would require to be almost infinite in extent to produce any permanent<sup>39</sup> effect upon the supply of labour in British Guiana.

The planters confirmed Barkly's statement by pointing to the failure of free immigrants to employ themselves in plantation labour. Given the commitment of the Colonial Office to save the Guyana sugar industry no other course of action than indentured immigration was feasible.

The planter counter-offensive or counter-revolution reached its apogee in 1850 when the Court of Policy passed five ordinances regulating the status of indentured immigrants.

Taken together, these ordinances represented a revolution or, more accurately, a counter-revolution in Guyanese society, a movement back toward slavery. Despite exaggerations and inaccuracies, John Scoble was substantially correct in asserting that they had the effect of handing over the immigrant to the dubious mercies of his planter-employer. No matter what construction was placed upon them, it was clear that they reduced to zero what little social and economic freedom the immigrant previously possessed.<sup>40</sup>

Earl Grey and the directors of the East India Company objected not to the principle of the ordinances but to the stringency of the details. The

conditions imposed upon the indentured labourers in Guyana were far more exacting than those imposed in Mauritius.

Duties supposed to be paid by the planter fell upon the labourer. Breaches of contract were criminal rather than civil offences. Furthermore, the penalties upon conviction were severe. For every day away from work the immigrant labourer not only forfeited his wages but had to pay his employer a penalty of 24 cents (£0.05). The penalty was equivalent to a day's wages. Also, a pass from the planter was of legal necessity if the immigrant wished to leave the estate. This smacked too much of slavery, but in the end the Colonial Office accepted the planter point of view. The clinching argument was that strict control was necessary in order to "promote the social improvement" of the immigrants. The passage of Ordinance 7, 1854, established the fate and position of the indentured labourer with only minor changes until indenture's end in 1917. Exacting indentures of five years became the essential feature of the Guyanese plantation economy and society.<sup>41</sup>

#### Technological Change and the Agglomeration of Estates .

Concomitant to the changes wrought by emancipation and apprenticeship was a re-structuring of the plantation itself. Before 1838, nearly all Guyanese plantations were in private hands. Proprietors managed their own properties or delegated their authority to an attorney who supervised the estate through a resident manager. Although frequently over-encumbered, the profits from sugar or cotton and coffee in their heyday were sufficient to repay the loans and allow a healthy margin for the maintenance of the estate. When estates were sold it was generally by private bargain. In

the adventurous atmosphere of the time productive properties commanded large sums. Emancipation brought about the ruin of many small planters and instilled an element of desperation in those who survived.

The first fruits of emancipation tasted by the planter were bitter. About 300 estates were in production in 1838. By 1849, 131 estates had been sold at execution and an additional 51 had come under sequestration by the end of 1849.<sup>42</sup> The small planters were unable to withstand the rising costs of production and the demands of their creditors. M.J. Higgins, a Demerara planter, reckoned that the cost of production per hundredweight increased from \$1.57 (£0.33) between 1832-34, to \$2.68 (£0.56) between 1834-38, and to \$6.73 (£1.40) during the first three years of freedom.<sup>43</sup> The profit margin of the small planter disappeared. As a consequence, many went bankrupt or sold their estates at a loss. In 1846, estates were selling at 20 per cent of their 1840 prices.<sup>44</sup>

The demise of the small planter was hastened by the shortage of labour. After the planter defeat in the strike of 1842, the planter front collapsed and competitive bidding for scarce labour ensued. The small planter, unable to compete, dropped out. Improvements in production technology were necessary if the sugar industry was to survive. The techniques of production had changed little during the course of sugar's two-century career in the West Indies. After emancipation, increasing competition from eastern producers and the somewhat later competition of bounty-fed (beet sugar whose export was subsidized by European governments) beet sugar necessitated radical changes in sugar plantation technology. The needed capital inputs were large and these could only be raised by the larger local planters or the metropolitan houses with plantation holdings.

Technological improvements took place in both the field and the factory. In the field, drainage was improved by the introduction of steam-driven scoop wheels and centrifugal pumps. These were not cheap, \$29,100 (£6062.50) was spent for pumps by one plantation in 1848.<sup>45</sup> As a consequence, introduction of such equipment was not rapid. J.G. Austin revealed in his June 1852 report that of 173 sugar estates only 17 had steam driven drainage equipment.<sup>46</sup> A second field improvement was the introduction of fertilizers. Beginning in the 1860's, their use became widespread. A third field improvement was the improvement of the cane itself, but this did not become important until century's end.

Sugar production is not measured by the tons of cane harvested but by the amount of sugar extracted in the manufacturing process. Because the production of sugar is essentially a manufacturing process improvements in factory technology can and are of paramount importance. Presses or mills are utilized to squeeze the juice from the cane. Traditionally, wind or animal power had provided the motive force although steam driven mills had been introduced about 1800. By 1852, on 173 sugar estates, 208 steam engines generating 2543 horse-power were in use.<sup>47</sup>

Other factory improvements were implemented after emancipation. The vacuum-pan had been invented in 1813 by Edward Howard, but it was not until 1833 that the first vacuum-pan was installed on a Demerara plantation, plantation Vreed-en-Hoop. The vacuum-pan gave a greater return of sugar from a given volume of juice, in addition, the sugar was also of a higher quality. Yet, in 1852, nearly 20 years after its introduction into Guyana only 25 estates were using the vacuum-pan technique. Its slow diffusion was due to three factors. The first was its high cost. The second was

its need for specially trained and expensive personnel. The manager of a muscovado estate (sugar estate using traditional methods) could command from £200 to £300 per year. An engineer and a sugar boiler on a vacuum-pan estate could respectively command £390 and £400 per year.<sup>48</sup> The third factor which retarded the diffusion of the vacuum-pan was the presence of high British duties against superior grades of sugar. Governor Barkly wrote that if one rate of duty was applied to all grades of sugar then the vacuum-pan technique would quickly spread to all estates producing more than 500 hogsheads per year.<sup>49</sup>

For nearly two centuries the customary means of raising capital in the West Indies had been to mortgage one's plantation. In the planter's heyday, first, second, and even third mortgages were sought and freely given. The mortgagees were generally metropolitan houses having an interest in West Indian commodities. By the terms of the mortgage the planter became the captive of the metropolitan house and its local representative. The planter was required to purchase all his supplies from the mortgagee and in turn consign all his production to the mortgagee.

The advantage of not being encumbered was the ability to sell one's sugar, coffee, or cotton in the best market. Barton Premium, a Demerara River planter, stopped shipping sugar to his London agents in June 1840. He had discovered that he could profit more by selling it in Georgetown. Local merchants, often pressed to complete a ship's cargo, were ready to pay the highest prices. Premium estimated that the additional profit was 30 to 50 shillings (\$6.40 to \$10.70 or £1.50 to £2.50) per cask. But the majority of planters were "unable to avail themselves of the local market, they being bound by mortgage, to consign their produce to British Houses, and in their ships."<sup>50</sup>

Many planters were forced to enmesh themselves in this system in order to raise the money necessary for essential capital improvements. The slave compensation had allowed many planters to free themselves of their encumbrances. But the rise in wages and of plantation costs in general plus the need for capital improvements forced them back into the traditional pattern. Mortgages were accepted freely by British houses until the financial crisis of 1847. During the period 1838-47, 102 estates in Guyana were mortgaged for \$4,882,897 (£1,017,270). Of the 114 proprietors only 16 were absentee. The large planter could be independent of mortgages. Thus, one suspects that it was the small resident planter who was encumbering himself.<sup>51</sup>

The creation of a vertically integrated system was the consequence of the liberal mortgage policies of the metropolitan houses. At the bottom were those plantations in thrall to the houses. These were accompanied by those plantations managed by the local representative of the house in his capacity as attorney for absentee proprietors. Above the plantations was the local import-export branch of the house. The firm supplied the needs of the plantations and forwarded the consigned plantation produce. The ships so utilized were either chartered or owned outright by the metropolitan house. The house then disposed of the sugar, molasses, and rum as it saw fit. The system was in existence almost from the very beginning of the plantation economy in the West Indies. But after emancipation, the firms so engaged became fewer either because of failure or merger.

The dominance of the large metropolitan houses became more pronounced during the latter half of the 19th century. The 1870 Commission of Enquiry reported that the large houses held a near monopoly on the

freight of sugar. In addition, the large houses had possession of the market for supplies and through their Georgetown branches did three-quarters of the attorney's business. The large houses also maximized the charges for their services at every opportunity. Through the mortgages they held on many estates, private proprietors were at their bidding.<sup>52</sup>

The resident planter was in decline. The colony's once dominant group had been reduced to a few tens of encumbered men. But, widespread abandonment did not occur in the 1860's, the land of insolvents was purchased at execution or public sales and was kept in cultivation by the evolving sugar companies. The number of sugar plantations declined from 173 in 1853 to 105 in 1884. Cane acreage, however, increased from 44,288 (17923 ha.) acres in 1852 to 79,485 acres (32168 ha.) in 1884. The average per estate increased from 256 acres (103.6 ha.) in 1852 to 757 acres (306.4 ha.) in 1884. By the 1880's, the large absentee owners of the 1850's had acquired an almost absolute control of the sugar economy.<sup>53</sup>

The most important firms operating in Guyana in the 1860's were Cavan, Lubbock & Co.; Thomas Daniel & Sons; Charles McGarel; Booker Brothers; Sandbach, Parker, & Co.; and Bosanquet, Curtis, & Co. (which after 1865 included Quintin Hogg as a partner). In 1866 Cavan, Lubbock, & Co. merged with Burnley, Home, & Co., whose principal interests were in Trinidad, to form the Colonial Company. The amount of sugar initially handled by the company was estimated at 46,000 hhds. inclusive of consignments. This nearly equaled the entire Guyanese production of 1851. In addition, the merger consolidated the mercantile interests of both houses. The commission yield was \$38,000 (£7917) per year. In Guyana, the Colonial Company owned nine working plantations in 1866. By 1878, the company had acquired three more sugar plantations.

Quintin Hogg soon became a senior partner in Bosanquet, Curtis, & Co. The firm was then renamed Curtis, Campbell, & Hogg. At the same time Hogg was in partnership with Charles McGarel in Demerara. After 1872, Hogg began to enlarge his holdings by large purchases of insolvent estates. Upon McGarel's death, Hogg fell heir to the whole firm and could state in 1879 "I believe I am the largest private West Indian sugar producer in Great Britain."<sup>54</sup>

The 1870 Commission of Enquiry reported that 14 or 15 estates were wholly or partly owned by resident proprietors; 85 were the property of absentees, and 35 or 36 were owned by colonists who were either merchants, estate attorneys, or managers of other estates. Alan Adamson has compiled a table indicating the degree of control by either direct ownership or mortgage exercised by the various companies and others of Guyanese sugar estates for the years 1872 and 1884 (Table 1-4). In addition to the degree of control exercised by the major firms, it is worth noting that the portion of the sugar industry operating under mortgage declined from 25 to 18 per cent.

The plantations which flourished in the 1880's were organized on modern lines. The essential features of the modern plantation had already been established when the Commission of Enquiry sat in 1870. The Commission noted that "the tenure of land... is not territorial, aristocratic, or patriarchal, or feudal, but simply and exclusively commercial." The Commission further noted that "the latest appliances of scientific farming and manufacture now constitute" a sugar estate.<sup>56</sup> In the 1870's further factory improvements had taken place. By soaking the megass (residue of sugar cane after juice has been extracted) with hot water and milling it



TABLE 1-4

Concentration of Ownership and Control  
of Sugar Estates, 1872-1884.  
From an original table prepared by Alan Adamson,  
(footnote 55)

	1872			1884		
	Ownership	Control through Mortgage	Total	Ownership	Control through Mortgage	Total
Absentees: Major firms and individuals						
Colonial Co.	12.30	1.80	14.10	11.40		11.40
Thos. Daniel & Sons	7.50	2.20	9.70	3.90		3.90
Charles McGarel, Q. Hogg & Bosanquet, Curtis & Co.	5.60	1.30	6.90			
Quintin Hogg (1884) only				8.10	4.90	13.00
James Eging & Co.	4.10	1.10	5.20	3.50	0.70	4.20
Booker Bros. & J. McConnell	3.50	0.60	4.10	3.25	0.80	4.05
Sandbach, Parker & Co.	3.40	0.10	3.50	6.00	0.60	6.60
George Little & Co.				2.60	1.50	4.10
Total major absentees	36.40	7.10	43.50	38.75	8.50	47.25
Other absentees	28.60	5.60	34.20	33.65	2.60	36.25
Total absentees	65.00	12.70	77.70	72.40	11.10	83.50
Residents mortgaged to other residents		12.30	12.30		7.10	7.10
Residents unmortgaged	10.00		10.00	9.40		9.40
Total	75.00	25.00	100.00	81.80	18.20	100.00

a second time the saccharine extraction rate increased from 62 to 77 per cent.<sup>57</sup> Double milling increased the production of sugar without increasing the area of cultivation. By the early 1880's, professional chemists had come to be regarded as indispensable on a well-run estate.

The financial crisis of 1884 put this modernity to the test. Only the strongest estates survived. The number of operating sugar plantations declined from 105 in 1885 to 85 in 1890 to 46 by 1904. Abandonment eliminated 42 estates while 17 were amalgamated. With the failure of so many plantations fell several important metropolitan houses. The only firms to survive the debacle were the limited liability companies.

#### Changes in the Role of Government

Concomitant with the changes wrought on the plantation were changes in the structure and role of the government. Under slavery, every plantation performed the role of a local government. After emancipation, costs once borne by the plantation became the responsibility of the State. These entailed an expansion of the judiciary, the establishment of a police force and rural constabulary, and provision for public health. Ultimately, the government assumed responsibility for sea defence, drainage and irrigation, and the upkeep of the public roads.

The system of taxation and expenditure remained in the hands of the planters through their control of the Combined Court. Prior to emancipation, taxation had been direct. The income tax, head tax, and the duty on plantation produce were the source of nearly all government revenue. Small additional sums were got from retail spirit dealers, huckster licences, and duties on imported wines and spirits.

After emancipation the nature of the taxes shifted from the direct to the indirect. Thus, the Negro and indentured labourer came to bear a large share of the cost of maintaining the government. Little effort was made to disguise this bias by the Combined Court. This is apparent when one enumerates the luxury items which entered at no duty or only a very small ad valorem charge. In 1853, clocks, silverware, and saddlery were allowed to enter duty free. But duties remained on those necessities of life: saltfish, flour, and ganja.<sup>58</sup>

As the indirect taxes increased the taxes on plantation produce decreased. Produce export duties were eliminated by 1856, and the income tax was reduced from two per cent to one per cent in 1842 and abolished in 1853. After this date the tax structure remained relatively stable. In 1838, customs duties accounted for 17 per cent of total revenue. This figure rose to 27 per cent in 1842, to 33 per cent in 1845, 36 per cent in 1851, and thereafter fluctuated between 42 per cent and 52 per cent of total revenue.

The pattern of public expenditure reflects the control of the planters upon the colonial government. The expenses of law enforcement had accounted for three per cent of total government expenditure in 1833. Between 1838 and 1855, law enforcement accounted for 17 per cent of total expenditure. The most important items of expenditure added after 1838 were for immigration and the public debt charges. The 1841 compromise effected by Sir Henry MacLeod with the Combined Court allowed the Court to appropriate surplus revenue for the subsidizing of immigration. In 1844, the Colonial Office sanctioned the raising of an immigration loan by the colonial authorities. Public debt charges as an item of expenditure date from 1847.

Immigration accounted for 17 per cent of total expenditure in 1842, 21 per cent in 1847, 14 per cent in 1852, and then gradually increasing to a maximum of 25 per cent of total expenditure in 1875. Public debt charges in 1851 amounted to 9½ per cent of total expenditure, 16 per cent for the remainder of the century.<sup>59</sup> The high indirect taxes which supported these expenditures were nothing less than a subsidy exacted from the Negro population to import competition for their own labour.

Opposition by the Negro and Coloured population to these high taxes made no impression upon the Court of Policy. Governor Barkly had argued the need for cheap food in 1853<sup>60</sup>, but his urgings for low duties were ignored. The planters wished not to tax themselves and at the same time to keep the subordinate sections of the population in their places. Hence, the high duties.

Nineteenth century Guyana was a despotism organized to serve the interests of the saccharine oligarchs; society and economy were bent to the will of this ruling elite. Subordinate groups were manipulated for the better maintenance of the planter's rule. The rise of the Portuguese in the commercial sector of the economy was essentially because of this influence. Under slavery the structure of the society had been sharply defined. Under freedom, the society remained rigidly structured, a situation fostered by the introduction of other ethnic groups. The composition of the ruling group changed from a collection of private plantation proprietors to the representatives of metropolitan corporations. But the ruling group remained devoted to the interests of sugar. Guyana and its people remained the same, producers of wealth for consumption elsewhere.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER 1

1. There is some evidence which suggests that the first Dutch settlement in Essequibo may have occurred between 1613 and 1616.
2. Netscher, P.M., History of the Colonies Essequibo, Demerary & Berbice from the Dutch Establishment to the Present Day. ('s Gravenhage, 1888); translated from the Dutch by Roth, W.E. (Georgetown, British Guiana, 1929), p.49.
3. Ibid., p.52-53.
4. Ibid., p.55.
5. Ibid., p.60.
6. Ibid., p.68.
7. Vann, John H., The Physical Geography of the Lower Coastal Plain of the Guiana Coast. (Technical Report No.1 obtained under project NR 388-028, Contract Nonr-1575(02); sponsored by the Geography Branch, Office of Naval Research, Washington, D.C., 1959), p.75.
8. Naraine, S.S., "Some Aspects of Coastal Development in Guyana", paper presented at the International Geographical Union field meeting held in Guyana, July, 1972, p.15-16.
9. Vann, John H., p.22.
10. Russell, William, "Report of the Agricultural Wants of British Guiana", submitted to the Court of Policy of British Guiana, 1875. Minutes Court of Policy, February, 1876.
11. Dalton, Henry G., The History of British Guiana, two volumes, (London, 1855), vol.I, p.228.
12. Russell, William: op.cit. (footnote 10).
13. Naraine, S.S.: op.cit. (footnote 8), p.18.
14. Wittfogel, Karl A., "The Hydraulic Civilizations", Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth, (University of Chicago Press, 1956).
15. Clementi, Sir Cecil, A Constitutional History of British Guiana, (London, 1937), p.411.
16. Ibid., p.377.
17. Ibid., p.44.

18. After the 1831 union of Berbice with Demerara and Essequibo to form the Colony of British Guiana, the Court of Policy increased in size from 8 to 10 members. It remained divided equally between official and non-official members.
19. Adamson, Alan H., Sugar Without Slaves, (Yale University Press, 1972), p.24.
20. CO-111-4, Dispatches from Demerara and Essequibo, 1802, Customs House Returns.
21. Adamson, Alan H., op.cit. (footnote 19), p.25.
22. Various official records the principal being the Minutes of the Court of Policy, the censuses of British Guiana, and the report of the commissioners appointed to inquire into the "State and Prospects of the Colony" in 1851; CO-111-280.
23. Clementi, Sir Cecil, op.cit., p.103; Clementi states that an Order-in-Council of August 15, 1805 abolished the slave trade in Demerara.
24. Dalton, Henry G., op.cit. (footnote 11) Vol.I, p.251.
25. Map of British Guiana, CO-700-11.
26. Local Guide to Demerara and Essequibo, 1821, Georgetown, Demerara.
27. Clementi, Sir Cecil, op.cit. (footnote 15), p.101.
28. Dalton, Henry G., op.cit. (footnote 11), Vol.I, p.254.
29. Minutes of the Court of Policy of Demerara & Essequibo, April 17, 1830.
30. Premium, Barton, Eight Years in British Guiana, 1840-1848, (London, 1850), p.70.
31. CO-111-214, Light to Stanley, October 16, 1844.
32. Dalton, Henry G., op.cit. (footnote 11), Vol.I, p.480.
33. Adamson, Alan H., op.cit. (footnote 19), p.41.
34. Nath, Dwarka, A History of Indians in Guyana, (published by the author, London 1970), p.219.
35. Censuses of British Guiana.
36. Ibid.
37. Adamson, Alan H., op.cit. (footnote 19), p.46-47.
38. Ibid., p.47.
39. Ibid., p.50.

40. Ibid., p.54.
41. Ibid., p.56.
42. CO-111-280, Report of the Commissioners appointed by His Excellency the Governor of British Guiana to inquire into the State and Prospects of the Colony, 1851.
43. Adamson, Alan H., op.cit. (footnote 19), p.163.
44. Ibid., p.164.
45. Ibid., p.169.
46. CO-111-291, Minute of Instructions to the Circuit Stipendiary Magistrate J.G. Austin's Report on the State of Sugar Cultivation in British Guiana, Barkly to Pakington, 178, November 10, 1852.
47. Ibid.
48. Adamson, Alan H., op.cit. (footnote 19), p.173.
49. Ibid., p.173.
50. Premium, Barton, op.cit. (footnote 30), p.78.
51. Adamson, Alan H., op.cit. (footnote 19), p.174.
52. Ibid., p.200-201.
53. Ibid., p.202.
54. Ibid., p.203.
55. Ibid., p.204-205.
56. Ibid., p.209.
57. Ibid., p.185.
58. Ordinance 9, Colonial Taxes, 1855.
59. Adamson, Alan H., op.cit. (footnote 19), p.243.
60. CO-111-293, Barkly to Pakington, No.10, January 25, 1853.

## 2. THE STRUCTURALLY PLURAL SOCIETY

### The Portuguese Shopkeeper

The post-emancipation capture by immigrant Portuguese of the retail trade in British Guiana has neither been adequately understood nor explained. There is no question that with the advent of emancipation a new niche appeared in the commercial ecology of the colony. There is also no question that competition was keen among the groups seeking to fill this niche. The puzzle is not so much how the Portuguese came to displace their rivals but why they were so allowed.

It is true that the Portuguese worked hard and knew the value of money. It is also true that because of a tightly organized family system the Portuguese were able to organize cooperative endeavours. Furthermore, not all Portuguese immigrants to British Guiana arrived as indentured labourers. A significant few arrived as free immigrants with modest sums of capital. Yet, the number of wealthy Portuguese immigrants was never very large. The vast majority of the eventually successful Portuguese businessmen had very humble origins.

The native Negro and Coloured population did not lack their share of entrepreneurs. Certainly it is true that the commanding heights of the commercial economy were and continued to be dominated by patriate and expatriate Europeans both before and after emancipation. During the time of slavery much of the petty retail trade, both itinerant and sedentary, had been managed by free or slave Negroes and Coloureds. After emancipation, these retailers were increased in number by substantial additions from the former slave population.



The Portuguese rapidly passed through the stages of itinerant and sedentary huckstering, the management of small shops, to the management of large retail and wholesale establishments. A few deviated and became the proprietors of rumshops. One must inquire what deterred the Negro and Coloured from a similar course of development. There is no reason to believe that the Negro and Coloured were less commercially acute. The extended family of the Portuguese may have been an advantage, but one cannot state how much. What is certain is that the Portuguese entrepreneurs received the assistance of a powerful patron. That is, the aid of the colony's ruling class. The Portuguese retailer or huckster was granted easy terms of credit. His rivals, the Negro and Coloured hucksters, were either denied credit outright or granted credit only with the most stringent of terms. In its October 3, 1843, "Review for Home Readers", the Royal Gazette gave this account of the rise of the Portuguese:

[It]...is attributable, in a great measure, to the assistance they received from many mercantile firms of between four and five years back...To explain this, it is necessary to state a certain object which our commercial houses of that day, and many other influential parties in the Colony had in view. A great part of the small retail or huckster trade, as it is called, was at that time in the hands of a large number of our native population, the members of which kept little shops in the towns, or travelled about the country with packages of goods for sale...It was thought that could these traffickers...be thrown out of their old employment by successful competition, the necessary consequence would be that they must all be driven into the field to earn their livelihood. To a certain extent...this expectation was answered...[The Portuguese] were entrusted...with goods, on the easiest terms of credit...while their native rivals were favoured with no credit at all, or a very stringent one. On these advantageous terms, the Portuguese pedlars soon drove the natives engaged in the same line, though entirely off the field, not exactly into the field as was anticipated.<sup>1</sup> [emphasis added]

If the relation of the Royal Gazette is true the problem is not so much how but why it was desirous that the Portuguese achieve their commercial dominance.

In attempting to ascertain "why" one must determine who gained and who lost by the rise of the Portuguese. The immediate post-emancipation years were a time of great potential change. The consequences of emancipation could have been revolutionary. Instead, because of the foresight and determination of the British Guianese elite the feared social upheaval did not occur. As Lord Harris remarked, a race had been freed but a society had not yet been formed. This lack of a "society" was directly due to the policies of the ruling group. The policies of the elite were designed to approximate, as best as possible, the pre-emancipation conditions of society and labour. After the abolition of the slave trade in 1806, slavery in the West Indies became more and more unprofitable. One wonders why the institution was not abandoned if it was so unprofitable? The West Indian planters were not stupid. Slavery allowed the planter an advantage he would never have under a system of free labour. This advantage was the absolute control of the labour force.

The necessity<sup>o</sup> for absolute control of the labour force is an expression of the modernity of the plantation system. The sugar plantation with its mill and its need for organized and co-ordinated effort is nothing less than one of the first modern factories. As the various West Indian sugar colonies existed only because they produced sugar, it is possible to speak of the plantation system as being a 'total institution' for whose well-being all else was subsumed. The necessity for complete and total control of the labour supply goes without question in such a system. This, more than any other reason, is why the West Indian planter resisted emancipation so vehemently.

Once emancipation was imposed by the Imperial Parliament the planters, nothing if not realistic, sought means and ways of circumventing

the freedom to come. Indentured labour was one means and eventually the most successful way of assuring a complete and total control of the labour supply. As early as 1835 indentured immigrants were imported into British Guiana. These early experiments were not too successful, but faced with prospective ruin (or so it was believed) the planters persisted and eventually perfected the system of indenture.

Indenture was even more advantageous than slavery. The differences were very slight, for the indentee was a slave in all but name. He was subject to comprehensive controls and excessive retribution if he broke his indenture. For example, if an indentee deserted his indenture he was guilty not of a civil offence but of a criminal offence. Attempts were made to entangle the newly freed Negroes but they would have none of it. Indeed on two occasions Negro estate workers struck for better wages and working conditions. The planters found the Negro's freedom repugnant and in a variety of ways (to be discussed below) did their best to circumscribe the Negro's freedom. The support of the Portuguese is one example of their efforts.

Colonial West Indian society cannot be understood without taking cognizance of a constellation of power relationships. In totalitarian societies it is difficult if not impossible to ignore the actions of the ruling elite. Decisions, designed to maintain the elite's position, impinge upon and distort every aspect of life, culture, economy, and geography of the society. Particularistic policies designed by the British Guianese elite to maintain the well-being of their plantation base had a deadening effect upon the whole economy with concomitant social and geographic side effects. Everything originated with and from the ruling elite. Thus, one can describe the activities of the Portuguese but one cannot explain these

activities without reference to the total society and the rulers of that society.

### The Plural Society

A plural society is one in which two or more distinct groups of appreciable size dwell within the same political unit. The basis for distinction may be race, religion, language, or any other aspect of culture deemed significant by the plural society's constituent groups. Usually, one of the constituent groups dominates the political unit by a monopoly of the governing apparatus, often, such a group is a minority. Its position having been acquired by force, it maintains itself principally through coercion and regulation of the other segments and by its manipulation of the economy.

The plural society is characterized by dissensus and the lack of a unitary social will. Each segment of the plural society perceives the others as opponents. Each is conscious only of the divisions within the society to the exclusion of the commonalities. Indeed, differences are often deliberately sought. "Few recognize that, in fact, all the members of all sections have material interests in common, but most see that on many points their material interests are opposed."<sup>2</sup> Following upon this, it is only in the market place that the constituent groups interact. All are able to appreciate buying and selling and the pursuit of profit. But because the economic interests of the several segments are not necessarily identical, conflict may also appear in the market.

As with the conflict theory of stratification, it is power not functional necessity that is the key to understanding the plural society.

Stratification theory presumes a common will, something which is explicitly denied to the plural society. Segments of the plural society possess a common will, but not their sum; while within the segments stratification exists. Among segments there is a ranking or hierarchy of status, often ascriptive. Thus, the plural society is comprised of several constituent homogeneous societies which are internally stratified and compete as units with one another for prestige and power within the total society.

The concept of the plural society was first stated by J.S. Furnivall in 1939.<sup>3</sup> Furnivall's insights into the "plural economies" of southeast Asia have their origin in the work of J.H. Boeke and other Dutch scholars of Indonesia.<sup>4</sup> Furnivall's proposition received very little attention for nearly twenty years. Then M.G. Smith, Leo and Hilda Kuper, Pierre Van den Berghe, Leo Despres and others took up the concept.<sup>5</sup> M.G. Smith has become the leading proponent of the plural society in the West Indies. Opposition to pluralism has come from other scholars of the West Indies such as R.T. Smith, H. Hoetinck, Lloyd Braithwaite, Sidney Mintz, H.I. McKenzie and Gordon Lewis.<sup>6</sup> Opponents have either stressed social stratification and the emergence of a consensus in contemporary West Indian societies or, as in the case of Gordon Lewis, a Marxist approach. M.G. Smith in his enthusiasm may have cast the plural society net too far. His application of the concept to all of the contemporary West Indies is perhaps farfetched. But there is no doubt as to the applicability of the plural society model to the West Indian societies of the 19th century.

The basic definition of the plural society remains that given by Furnivall in 1939. According to Furnivall the plural society is

characterized by two or more distinct groups living within the same political unit. Furnivall observed that

In Burma, as in Java, probably the first thing that strikes the visitor is the medley of peoples--- European, Chinese, Indian and native. It is in the strictest sense a medley, for they mix but do not combine. Each group holds by its own religion, its own culture and language, its own ideas and ways. As individuals they meet but only in the marketplace, in buying and selling. There is a plural society, with different sections of the community living side by side, but separately, within the same political unit. Even in the economic sphere there is a division of labour along racial lines.<sup>7</sup> [emphasis added]

In making his case, Furnivall overstressed the lack of combination among the segments. Combination does occur, but it is on an interpersonal level rather than an intergroup level. The kernel of Furnivall's definition is that group identities are maintained and only gradually, but perhaps never, disappear.

In a plural society all social wants are sectional. This "disorganization of social demand" is the basis or cause of all those features which differentiate the plural society from a homogeneous society.<sup>8</sup> In such a society "the economic test is the only test which the several elements can apply in common."<sup>9</sup> Keeping in mind Furnivall's bias as a student of colonial economy and a critic of imperial policies, one can understand his description of a plural society as "a business partnership rather than a family concern."<sup>10</sup> He goes on to assert: "The fundamental character of the organization of a plural society as a whole is indeed the structure of a factory, organized for production, rather than of a State, organized for the good life of its members."<sup>11</sup> The plural society arises where economic forces are exempt from control by social will. This can only happen when western law is imposed upon another society. Then, according to Furnivall, it is nearly impossible to restrain anti-social

economic forces. Once out of control, these forces bring about the destruction of native society.<sup>12</sup>

The problem confronting the plural society is to avoid the sectionalization of demand. The more one group controls the economy the more difficult it is to persuade the remaining groups that they possess common interests. With several radically different cultural groups the problem is compounded. Public money may be spent on a project which is a "public good" for only one section of the society. To the other sections, this expenditure is a "public bad." An example is the public construction of Christian churches in a plural society containing, in addition to Christians, substantial numbers of Hindus and Moslems. Such was the society of 19th century British Guiana.

The integration of social demand is hindered by the monopoly of political power by one of the constituent segments of the plural society. Concomitant with a monopoly of political power is a monopoly or near monopoly of the society's economic power. Furnivall, as a colonial administrator and economist, states that "the political constitution of a plural society is reflected in its political economy."<sup>13</sup> Monopoly of both political and economic spheres by the dominant segment provides only the dominant segment with reason to preserve the status quo.

Furnivall observed that included in the division of labour was a monopoly of the government. Government to the subordinate minorities may mean more than the usual political institutions. Other institutions of the ruling minority may be perceived as possessing a quasi-governmental status. Examples are the Anglican church in British colonies, banks, schools, organized charities, clubs, and expatriate business concerns.

These institutions, because of their connection with the ruling minority, have a concomitant high status. The institutions of the subordinate groups suffer an inverse status. Furnivall recognized the incompleteness of social life which appears in the plural society. He remarked upon the cultural paucity and general thinness of European society in southeast Asia. George Orwell's novel, Burmese Days, E.M. Forster's A Passage to India, and the short stories of Somerset Maugham are excellent studies of these empty societies. The societies of the subordinate groups gradually become acephalized. Their members, denied positions at the top because of exclusive policies practiced by the ruling minority, gradually become demoralized. Their respective societies and cultures begin to atrophy and disintegrate.

The more intelligent or ambitious individuals of the subordinate sections may attempt to acquire the culture of the superordinate minority. But unless the dominant minority is willing to accept new members the "westernized" natives... (become) more or less cut off from the people, and form a separate group or caste."<sup>14</sup> Such is the origin of the "wog" and the Coloured elite of the West Indies. Yet, in contrast to the intellectual and cultural poverty of the European elite, travellers in the 19th century West Indies observed that the most educated and stimulating people were Coloured men and women. But because of ascription, the subordinate sections could seldom aspire to more than "cultural" equality with the ruling elite. Such individuals belonged neither to one group nor the other and, in rejecting their past, cut themselves off from any potential base of opposition to the ruling group (in the West Indies this tendency was known as "whitening").



The ruling minority maintains itself by regulating and marginalizing the subordinate groups. This is managed in a variety of ways. The elite must first of all maintain its cohesion and identity. It thus becomes taboo to "go native." Furthermore, doctrines of racial or cultural superiority may be encouraged. These have the double function of encouraging elite group cohesion and of providing a mechanism by which elite rule can be asserted and justified over the subordinate segments. Ideally, the subordinate groups should be convinced of their inferiority and the superiority of their rulers. Symbols such as reverence for the Queen, the flag, and the governor all discreetly backed up by armed might (the Royal Navy) can be used to inculcate and impress the necessity for loyalty. Religion can also be an effective means of assuring the maintenance of the status quo.

The obstacles the ruling group must overcome are formidable. Subordinate classes of one's own ethnic group are much more likely to endure ill rule than conquered peoples in colonial territories. In the case of the former the common culture with its attendant symbols serves to hold the society together. Lacking these symbols in the plural society it is imperative that they be created so as to bind ruler and ruled. Aside from brute force (which can only be effective and efficient in the short run) a body of collective symbols is the most efficient means of perpetuating minority rule. The respect given Queen Victoria by West Indians in the 19th century was cleverly played upon by the Colonial Office and the colonial governors. Nevertheless, the position of a dominant minority can at the crunch only be maintained through superior force of arms.

Furnivall recognized the inherent instability of the plural society. He felt that this could be resolved by four means; first, the introduction of caste; second, equality before the law for all; third, by sectional nationalism (an unfortunate choice of word, "communalism" would have been better); and fourth, by the establishment of a federal as opposed to unitary system of government. Furnivall's resolutions do not necessarily imply the establishment of a stable and peaceful society. Caste cannot be imposed effectively unless it receives religious sanction. Equality before the law means the end of the dominant minority's position and possibly the rise of a dominant majority. Sectional nationalism is a disruptive force for a State. If the segments of the plural society tend towards geographic separateness, provinces such as the Swiss cantons can be devised. But, if communities are intermingled the prospect of a heightened "nationalism" is communal strife. (In Java, the nationalist movement first assumed a popular character against the Chinese.<sup>15</sup> In British Guiana, the anti-Portuguese riots of 1856 and 1889 were perceived by the European elite as direct challenges to their authority.) Federalism can work if the Swiss model is followed. But this can only be applicable in but a few instances.

Thus, according to Furnivall, the plural society is organized for production rather than for social life. Social demand becomes section-  
alized and then disorganized and ineffective. The members of each are unable to lead the full life of a citizen in a homogeneous community. The result is sectional nationalism which emphasizes the pluralism of the society and enhances its instability. Hence, the need for it to be held together by force.

M.G. Smith has elaborated the Furnivallian plural society model and given it a less economically biased definition. Smith states that "a plural society exists only when there is a small dominant group that is preoccupied with maintaining power over culturally discrete sections of a society."<sup>16</sup> If several culturally distinct groups share power, then a simple plurality exists. Furnivall recognized the coercive nature of the plural society but considered this to be a response to the nature of the economy. M.G. Smith, while not disregarding the economy, stresses the coercive or power element of the plural society.

By recognizing the quest for power as the basis of the plural society M.G. Smith releases the concept from the almost exclusive concern with the tropics so expressed in Furnivall's definition. M.G. Smith attempts to universalize the concept by observing that "the plural society itself develops in rather special, although, by no means unusual, conditions."<sup>17</sup>

Most often these societies result through conquest. History is littered with potential examples. Under 'conquest' conditions it is understandable why a dominant minority can be so preoccupied with economic and political control. Indeed, rather than encouraging acculturation among its subjects, a dominant minority may actively work to prevent such a process in order to justify the continuing status quo and to preserve their own group solidarity.<sup>18</sup> It is imperative to the ruling group that their organization be maintained. Devices such as corporate exclusivity and substantial social distance vis à vis subordinate groups assure a continuing group outlook. Ultimately, however, their control rests upon their coercive prowess and their ability to regulate the activities of subordinate groups. Often, what is known as a 'total institution' may be the result.

Dominance in the plural society is expressed institutionally as well as in personal relations. Dominance holds "primarily between social categories, rather than individuals."<sup>19</sup> Control is exercised and displayed through the government. The dominant minority establishes the models for justice, administration, welfare, and development. In addition, the economic interests of the dominant minority are buttressed and encouraged while those interests of the subordinate majority are carefully controlled.<sup>20</sup> It follows that individual qualities do not determine social rank. Social rank or identity is ascriptive and corporate in its determination.

M.G. Smith follows Furnivall in recognizing the unstable character of plural societies. As long as the institutions of the subordinate groups are not threatened a modicum of peace can endure. But if, for some reason, a subordinate section feels its identity threatened, what Furnivall termed "nationalism" awakens. M.G. Smith implies that once an equilibrium is established there is a tendency to maintain the status quo. Communal reaction is inevitable if for some reason a section feels its institutions to be threatened.

The structural stability of a plural society has several important requisites. M.G. Smith gives seven which he deems important: first, there must be a substantial continuity of economic and ecological conditions in which the structure was first stabilized; second, there must be a degree of isolation from other societies; third, the demographic ratios of ruled and ruler must be maintained or improved to the rulers' advantage; fourth, sectional identities and boundaries must be maintained by generalizing inequalities and differences to all spheres of activity; fifth, symbiotic relations which provide compensations for subordinates and

religions of deferral should be encouraged; sixth, the cohesion of the rulers must be maintained or enhanced through collective action, differences can be institutionalized by mobilizing subordinates to form two party systems; and seventh, the regime should be legitimized by an inclusive cult that sacralizes the structure and leadership, compensation after death or withdrawal from the world should be encouraged.<sup>21</sup>

Thus, by these means can the structure of the plural society be maintained. But because this stability has such a shaky foundation a high value is placed upon the rigid and durable ordering of intersectional relations on both group and individual levels, with the result that the structure of intersectional relations becomes and remains the distinctive political feature and practical problem of the plural society. The total structure of the plural society normally consists of a hierarchic pattern of intersectional relations. The preservation of this hierarchic pattern is unlikely to receive equal priority or legitimacy by the various subordinate sections. Hence, the stress upon the position and role of authority and power in the plural society, a factor which serves to differentiate them from more homogeneous societies.<sup>22</sup>

M.G. Smith in a theoretical discussion of pluralism advances the notion of three levels or modes of pluralism: cultural, social, and structural.<sup>23</sup> Smith defines cultural pluralism as consisting solely of institutional differences without a corresponding collective or segmental segregation. The example Smith gives is the white sector of American society in which many cultures co-exist in a state of equality or near-equality. Smith defines social pluralism as the mode in which institutional differentiations coincide with corporate segments of the society.

The position of the Negro in American society is cited by Smith as an example. Until recent times, the culture of the Negro American differed little (or no more so than other ethnic groups which were white) from that of his white neighbours. Negroes, in direct contravention of the U.S. constitution were legally and ascriptively relegated to a subordinate position. Neither cultural nor social pluralism taken alone or together as defined by Smith is of direct heuristic value in understanding 19th century British Guiana.

M.G. Smith's definition of structural pluralism, though contested by some, is of value in comprehending 19th century Guianese society. Structural pluralism links cultural and social pluralism as defined above and adds the factor of differential access to the common public domain. This results in economic structuralism. The key to structural pluralism is the ranking of the plural segments. Proscribed are intersegmental equivalence and intersegmental mobility. The differential ranking of the segments is justified by law, religion, conquest, and other primary social traditions. If the unequal ranking of segments leads to the dominance by a minority, then the classic Furnivallian model is described.<sup>24</sup>

Leo Kuper is a close collaborator of M.G. Smith but this does not mean that he agrees with all that Smith asserts. Kuper follows Smith in regarding the differential incorporation of groups in hierarchical relationships as characteristic of plural societies. These forms vary but include slavery, serfdom, caste, estates, etc., pluralism is thus a generic concept which describes a distinctive structure of group relations.<sup>25</sup>

Kuper is not happy with Smith's tripartite division of pluralism. He stresses the role of culture as the major determinant of the structure of the plural society. To Kuper, it plays much the same role of primacy as do economic forces in Furnivall's model of the plural society. In comparing Smith and Furnivall, Kuper discerns certain areas of agreement and areas of deviation. Both Furnivall and Smith agree on minority domination as an aspect of the plural society; but for Furnivall this is fact, whereas for Smith it is a theoretical necessity. Both emphasize social cleavage and cultural diversity; again, this is fact for Furnivall and a theoretical necessity for Smith. Furnivall's concern is with colonial tropical colonies, whereas Smith is cognizant of a wider application of the model. Furnivall's perceptions have been extended by Smith to form a general theoretical framework. And, the mainsprings for Smith are not the devices of economy but the mechanisms of integration and the regulation of groups.<sup>26</sup>

These mechanisms of integration have not been thoroughly expanded upon by M.G. Smith. The concept of the "broker institution" has been put forward by Leo Despres.<sup>27</sup> Despres, an adherent of Smith's model, suggests that the broker institution provides segmental linkages among the various plural society groups. These institutions are compatible with Smith's structural pluralism. Despres perceives plural societies as fields of social, economic, and political power whose structured networks of relationships must be the dominant research focus for students of ethnic and race politics.<sup>28</sup> Despres also perceives the plural society as a particular type of ecosystem. The plural society possesses a selective advantage in the reduction of competition between culturally distinct groups.<sup>29</sup>

An affirmation of the Furnivallian model has come from two political scientists, Rabushka and Shepsle.<sup>30</sup> They employ the plural society model as a predictive device to indicate relative degrees of political stability. Their interest has been in politically independent States. Many critics of the plural society model have conducted research in colonial territories and in passing have neglected to note the unifying presence of the imperial power. Continued colonial rule precluded the crystallization of interethnic hostility among the subordinate groups.<sup>31</sup> With independence and the displacement of the dominant minority, the prizes of the society became the objects of intergroup competition. Rabushka and Shepsle classified the plural society into four configurations: the first is one of balanced competition; the second is one having a dominant majority; the third is one having a dominant minority; and the fourth is a society in a state of fragmentation.<sup>32</sup> Their analysis is essentially a structural analysis and thus follows the trend of reasoning laid down by M.G. Smith.

Not all plural society theorists concur with Smith's tripartite division of the plural society. Some question the value of "structural" pluralism preferring to remain with the accepted "social" and "cultural" pluralism. Pierre Van den Berghe, a sociologist and an adherent to the concept of the plural society, conceives ethnic and race relations as special types of relations of power and production that can only be understood in the larger framework of political and economic institutions. To Van den Berghe, the plural society has the following characteristics: first, there is a relative absence of value consensus; second, there is cultural heterogeneity; third, there is group conflict; fourth, there is



a high degree of autonomy between parts of the social system; fifth, there is achievement of social integration by coercion and economic interdependence; and sixth, there is political domination by one of the corporate groups. "Furthermore, relations between groups are utilitarian, non-affective and functionally specific", while conversely, ties within groups are non-utilitarian, affective, and diffuse.<sup>33</sup>

Van den Berghe<sup>3</sup> does not fuss about the misleading criticism that the plural society by definition cannot be a "society." He states that

The primary criterion of whether a society exists or not is political. If several groups share a common polity; however differentially and unequally, they constitute a plural society. However, plural societies are seldom if ever held together by political power alone; the various groups also typically share a common system of economic exchanges. In both the political and the economic spheres, very frequently the sharing of institutions is highly unequal.<sup>34</sup>

In other words, societies are pluralistic insofar as they are divided into semi-independent subsystems, each of which has a set of homologous institutions and only specific points of contact with the others.<sup>35</sup>

As Van den Berghe suggests, plural societies are not held together by political power alone. Expanding upon M.G. Smith he suggests that a "network of segmental ties between members" of different groups exists. Some of these individuals may "shuttle" or "commute" between cultural subsystems.<sup>36</sup>

A distinction is made between cultural and social pluralism. The two usually go together, but not always. Cultural pluralism is usually accompanied by social barriers to interaction, strict rules of endogamy, etiquette, physical distance, or other avoidance patterns. As acculturation proceeds these barriers tend to break down.<sup>37</sup> Social pluralism can

at one level be regarded as the other side of cultural pluralism. At another level, cultural and social pluralism are partially independent variables. The continuing separation of Black and White Americans is an example of social pluralism. Little cultural difference exists between the groups, yet little interaction takes place.

### Criticism of the Pluralist Model

Opposition to the concept of the plural society has come from stratificationists. Stratification theory is normative or consensual in its approach. Social stratification is a fundamental feature in the organization and maintenance of all complex societies. They are held to display a distinctive structural anatomy. These characteristics of the social groups are that first, all are ranked hierarchically; second, all maintain relatively permanent positions in the hierarchy; third, there is differential control of the sources of power relative to their rankings; fourth, they are separated by cultural and invidious distinctions that also serve to maintain the social distances between the groups; and fifth, all are articulated by an overarching ideology which provides a rationale for the established hierarchical arrangements.<sup>38</sup>

As with pluralism, no one definition of stratification exists. That given by Plotnicov is rather comprehensive but not untypical. The essential point insofar as plural society thinkers are concerned is the need for "an overarching ideology" providing a rationale for the society. Plural society thinkers specifically deny the existence of such a consensus. Stratificationists hold that a consensus is necessary in order that a society may exist. But Van den Berghe, a sociologist, denies the

validity of this criticism of pluralism by asserting that a society is politically defined. Furthermore, there is no suggestion as to how extensive a consensus is necessary.

In class stratified societies deference is demonstrated or exacted interpersonally. In plural units deference is generalized by the dominant group and enforced upon the subordinate sections. The requirement of obligatory deference is an important mode of social control. Social stratification and cultural pluralism approaches have developed separately. Stratification theory can trace its origins to Weber, the father of modern sociology. While pluralism does not possess such a lengthy pedigree it is no less valid as a tool of analysis. Lloyd Braithwaite charges pluralism as possessing a "deceptive analytic flavour."<sup>39</sup> It is "logically unacceptable" and its widespread acceptance is due to other than logical grounds.<sup>40</sup> Braithwaite sneers at the "so-called plural society" by citing the racially homogeneous groups within the Nation States of West Africa as forming a type similar to the social structure in the plural society. But this is precisely the point! Pluralism depends upon more factors than race alone. The "Nation" States of West Africa are comprised of many "nations" possessing differing cultural traditions. They are plural societies!

Braithwaite asserts that "we must be careful not to stress the culturally pluralistic elements of the society without appreciating the fact that there must be a certain minimum of common, shared values if the unity of the society is to be maintained."<sup>41</sup> Furnivall is then slated for having neglected the ties of sentiment with the imperial power, to an overstressing of economic elements, and to an over-emphasis of the political structure as being essentially coercive.

No one has yet established just what is the minimum number of common shared values necessary to make a society work. The problem presented by the plural society is a problem of social structure posed by the existence of marked differences of culture. A society cannot be defined in cultural terms by merely observing the presence or absence of cultural traits. It must be defined in terms of social action, that is, the interaction of social roles.<sup>42</sup> Very good, but these criticisms do not invalidate pluralism.

M.G. Smith rebuts that if stratification is assumed to be an integrative order, it is therefore misleading to represent the inter-sectional relations of a plural society in these terms.<sup>43</sup> It is often assumed that all societies must be integrated by normative consensus, when empirically such is not the case for the plural society. This is because the plural union is not voluntary (at least initially) but imposed. Furthermore, if two groups are competing for the same goal (power in a plural society) there is no reason to believe that they possess a consensus or unitary value system.

R.T. Smith believes that M.G. Smith's "adaptation of Furnivall's 'plural society' conception must be accounted the most successful failure."<sup>44</sup> Raymond Smith has done a substantial amount of work in pre-independence Guyana. He is also an acknowledged stratificationist. Guyanese history is perceived by him as having three stages: first, the plantation; second, Creole society; and third, the evolution of the open democratic society.<sup>45</sup> With his student, Chandra Jayawardena, who examined the Indian segment of Guyanese society (R.T. Smith's work has been among the Negroes), support has been perceived for an increasing convergence and the development

of a consensual society.<sup>46</sup> Alas, the events of 1964 have demonstrated that this "consensus" is lacking. Although it has been argued that conflict such as occurred in the then British Guiana is indicative of a developing consensus one can only submit that the contrary can be argued with equal vehemence. There are very real differences in personality and in world view among the segments of the Guyanese plural society.

R.T. Smith's perception of a consensual society in the 1950's may reflect the unity of the independence movement and the effect that the presence of an imperial power may elicit. R.T. Smith does, however, introduce an interesting concept borrowed from Erving Goffman, the notion of the "total institution."<sup>47</sup> Students of the plantation West Indies have been puzzled by the ability of a small number of Europeans to control a large number of slaves and indentured labourers. Coercion, while part of this system of control, does not explain the situation adequately. Force alone is not sufficient to hold a society together. On the surface this appears to be a criticism of the plural society concept. It is not. R.T. Smith has unwittingly focused attention upon a device of regulation. The regulatory abilities of the dominant minority in a plural society have been posited by both Furnivall and M.G. Smith.

The concept of the "total institution" was initially broached by Goffman in 1957 and then presented in an expanded form in his book, Asylums, in 1961.<sup>48</sup> The "total institution" is one in which all aspects of one's life are controlled:

A total institution may be defined as a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals, cut off from the wider society for an appreciable period of time, together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life. Prisons serve as a clear example, providing we appreciate that what is prison-like about prisons is found in institutions whose members have broken no laws.<sup>49</sup>

"Inmates" of a total institution are not treated as individuals but as units and moved in blocks for reasons of bureaucratic efficiency. When persons are moved in blocks, they can be supervised by personnel whose chief activity is not guidance but surveillance---"seeing to it that everyone does what he has been clearly told."<sup>50</sup>

Entry into the total institution by normally socialized human beings requires a process of initiation in which one leaves one's past behind and takes up a new life. Prisons of all sorts so "socialize" their recruits. Candidates to the monastic life undergo a period of "mortification" during which they shed their past, acquire new garb, a regimen of prayers, and even a new name. In the slave West Indies new "recruits" were "seasoned" before being sent into the fields. Under the care of an old slave the newcomer learned what was proper and what was not. So sponsored, the new slave quickly adjusted to his new way of life. "Seasoning" was also the method of induction for indentured labourers after emancipation. The new labourer was, upon his arrival, lodged in the estate hospital and given time to acclimatize. The estate manager would generally appear after several days and dispense several favours, sweets, new clothes in excess of the amount required by law, and possibly a small flask of rum. Thus, the inductee learned to regard the manager as the giver of good things even while suffering under the rough rule of the manager's subordinates.

The West Indian plantation was one of the first industrial organizations to separate workers from the means of production and subject them to factory discipline. A famous description was given of the British Guiana plantation in 1871 by J.E. Jenkins, the author of The Coolie: His Rights and Wrongs.

...this great community...lives by itself, is shut in with itself, must find its news and amusements, as well as its tasks, out of itself. Take a large factory in Manchester, or Birmingham, or Belfast, build a wall around it, shut in its work-people from all intercourse save at rare intervals with the outside world, keep them in absolute heathen ignorance, and get all the work you can out of them, treat them not unkindly, leave their social habits and relationships to themselves as matters not concerning you who make money from their labour, and you would have constituted a little community resembling in no small degree a sugar estate village in British Guiana.<sup>51</sup>

The regulation of a plural segment does not differ very much from the above.

R.T. Smith asserts of the plural society model that "although it posits conflict between the plural segments it can provide no clue to the shape and direction of that conflict, nor to the cultural terms in which conflict is likely to be expressed."<sup>52</sup> Neither Furnivall nor M.G. Smith have attempted to predict precisely where violence will occur. Indeed, M.G. Smith at one point denies a predictive attribute to the plural society model. Aside from a generalized statement of general instability, M.G. Smith declines to be more specific.

Rabushka and Shepsle in Politics in Plural Societies assert that their plural society model is capable of predicting or indicating the degree of stability or instability that a society may possess. Precisely where conflict is likely to erupt is an issue skirted. They do appear to have achieved some success in spotting general and even specific areas of contention among plural segments. This success is based upon empirical evidence and forecasting from past trends. M.G. Smith and others have stressed the necessity for historical research in the acquisition of an understanding of the plural society. For example, internecine strife in Switzerland has tended to focus about language and religion.

A civil war was fought in the 1840's on the religious issue. If religion or language became a divisive issue in a Canton, the solution has traditionally been to split, if feasible, the Canton into discrete parts. The failure to split the predominantly German Canton of Berne has led to a separatist movement and discontent by the Cantonal French minority but local majority in the Jura. This may not indicate quite the predictive abilities that R.T. Smith had in mind. But, it is a beginning.

Furnivall hinted at potential sources of conflict when he discussed possible resolutions of the plural society. Nationalism was one of his resolutions and the only one of which he mentioned the possible bad effects. With the withdrawal of the imperial power and the dissolution of the multi-ethnic nationalist front, the various plural segments immediately (or nearly so) begin to contest for the control of the society. Surely this is an answer to R.T. Smith's criticisms. One can expect, depending upon the size of the out-group and the degree of entrenchment of the in-group either an intensification of segmental nationalism or an attempt to acculturate to the in-group.

H. Hoetinck criticizes M.G. Smith for too free an application of the plural society model. Some societies are less plural than others. Hoetinck believes that M.G. Smith has made a methodological error in applying an "ideal-typical" concept, "the validity of which is based on the structure of a certain category of societies during their first moment of existence, to a number of present-day societies, which vary markedly in their evolution from pluralism to homogeneity."<sup>53</sup> Though too sweeping in its tone, Hoetinck does have a point. One wonders at the determination of M.G. Smith to apply the plural society model to all of the contemporary



West Indies. One agrees with Wagley, that there is no doubt at all about Trinidad, Guyana, and Surinam being plural societies; but one questions the application of the model to contemporary Jamaica or Grenada.

Leo Despres acknowledges that there is a debate as to the theoretical value of the plural model when compared to the structural-functional model of the unitary society. Does the plural model offer any research advantage? Despres summarizes the criticism of the plural society model in three points: first, that cultural homogeneity is a condition of social homogeneity; second, that institutions are defined in terms of culture; and third, that M.G. Smith states that there is no necessary functional integration of institutional sections or cultural sections. The critics of the plural society derive their theoretical posture from Durkheim, Weber, Radcliffe-Brown, and Talcott Parsons. They hold that all societies are consensual systems; also, that culture, as a variable is relevant only to the extent that it represents a system of "shared symbolic meanings which makes communication possible in an ordered social life"; and finally, that social classes distribute members of cultural groups socially, politically, and economically.<sup>54</sup>

Bryce-Laporte, in citing M.G. Smith, relates that "the consensual theory contends that a central value system is a prerequisite for the persistence of any society." The logical conclusion is that most states are deviant.<sup>55</sup> If one accepts that the superordinate section of a plural society controls most economic, occupational, and educational opportunities one can comprehend the subordinates vision that "government" includes almost all public and private institutions because these are controlled by the governing group. C.Wright Mills' conception of the power elite describes this situation--as does the Marxist view.

Bryce-Laporte inquires: "does not speaking about cases of plural societies really mean speaking about how totalitarian, how asymmetrical, how suppressive, how ethnically exclusive and fixed is the relationship between 'government' and the 'governed' in various multi-cultured or multi-racial states?"<sup>56</sup> Should we reconsider Furnivall's view (which M.G. Smith rejects) that pluralism is a usual concomitant of a colonial system? It is, but pluralism is characteristic of almost all exploitative situations among ethnic groups whether they are capitalist or not.

Bryce-Laporte asks some very sensible questions concerning the how and why of pluralism. He suggests the importance of "why" and the need for an historical approach. His crucial questions concerning the plural society are:

- 1) for whom is the plural society so necessary, sufficient, convenient, and why?
- 2) have these "whoms" and "whys" changed significantly over time? How? Why?
- 3) would there be any significant cultural difference if the political-economic-social structure were changed? How? Why?
- 4) would there be any significant difference in hierarchy and power distribution if cultural pluralism is erased? How? Why?<sup>57</sup>

These are intelligent questions not only for plural analysis but for any social analysis. For too long, the social sciences have declined to ask "why." It is time that the heritage of logical positivism was reconsidered.

These "hows" and "whys" are essentially political questions. The political or power aspect of the plural society is one of its distinguishing features. Burton Benedict remarks that "in examining the power structure of a plural society, we will want to see how far the ethnic sections within the society are groups and for what purposes they act corporately. This is apt to be a concomitant variation of the political structure itself and will vary from society to society and over a period of time."<sup>58</sup> From the inequitable distribution of power other inequalities in the society can be established and/or maintained. This is especially true in the West Indies of the 19th century.

R.T. Smith concludes his attack on the plural society in the West Indies by defining it superbly (thinking at the time to put the concept down):

A plural society is a special type of society which is composed of cultural sections, each of which is really a little society in itself with its own basic institutional patterns. Each has its own kinship, family, and mating system, its own religious beliefs and practices, socialization systems, recreational activities, values, and language variant. The whole thing is held together by the political domination of one section.<sup>59</sup>

The position of the Portuguese can best be understood as a segment of a plural society controlled and manipulated by a European elite. The creation of the Portuguese "instrument" and its use by the elite is discussed in Chapters Four through Seven. The field upon which this "instrument" was turned, the commercial efforts of the Negro, is examined in Chapter Three.

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### 3. THE PRE-EMANCIPATION SYSTEM OF INTERNAL TRADE

#### Prologue

Commercial exchanges in the agro-industrial milieu of pre-emancipation British Guiana were predominantly wholesale. Wholesale exchanges are those in which "the purchaser uses the goods in pursuit of his trade, rather than simply to satisfy personal or family needs."<sup>1</sup> Guiana's staple producing estates were business enterprises. "Plantation supplies," purchased wholesale from town merchants or metropolitan houses, included agricultural implements, ironmongery, paint, rope, bagging, and shooks for hogsheads, puncheons, and other barrels.<sup>2</sup> In addition, because slaves were part of an estate's fixed capital investment their care and maintenance were charges on the estate's revenues. Thus, although some food could be produced on the estate, large wholesale purchases of imported food were necessary.

These purchases were substantial. Standards for the care and maintenance of slaves had been established in Barbice in 1806; perhaps even earlier in Demerara and Essequibo.<sup>3</sup> These standards were gradually raised in succeeding years. In 1830 the legislated weekly allowance of food per adult working slave in Demerara and Essequibo had been set at 2 pounds (.9 kg.) of salt fish and 45 pounds (20.5 kg.) of plantains. The plantains were grown locally, but the salt fish had to be imported.

Each working adult (16 years of age and above) was entitled to 104 pounds (47.3 kg.) of salt fish per year. In 1832 there were 47,171 adult slaves in Demerara and Essequibo. Utilizing the standard established in 1830, more than 4.9 million pounds (2.3 million kg.) of



salt fish would have to be supplied that year. The annual allowance of the 18,346 children was from one-third to two-thirds of the adult ration. Assuming the ration to be one-half the adult allotment, an additional 954,000 pounds (434,000 kg.) of salt fish would be needed that year. The total requirement of salt fish, or its equivalent, was thus 5.85 million pounds (2.7 million kg.) in 1832.

The average sugar estate in 1832 possessed 275 slaves. Of these, 28 per cent or 77 were children. The remaining 198 adults alone were legally entitled to 20,592 pounds (9360 kg.) of salt fish that year. Equivalent substitutions were permitted. Salt beef, salt pork, or fresh fish with a portion of salt could replace all or part of the salt fish ration. Plantains could be replaced by local ground provisions (cassava, eddo, tania, sweet potatoes) or by imported equivalents such as potatoes, corn meal, beans, peas, oatmeal, flour, or bread.

Similar allowances had been established for the clothing of slaves by the Court of Policy in 1830. Each adult working male was entitled to receive annually one hat, one cloth jacket, one check shirt, one pair of Osnaburg trousers, two laps, and one razor or knife. Each adult working female was entitled to receive one hat, one gown, one check shift, one Osnaburg petticoat, and one pair of scissors. Each sex was entitled to receive one blanket every two years.<sup>4</sup> As there were 24,730 adult males and 22,441 adult females in Demerara and Essequibo in 1832 the amount of clothing needed annually can easily be calculated.

These needs for imported food and clothing were best satisfied through wholesale transactions. Planters placed orders once or twice a year with their usual merchant. The merchant, who generally kept the planter in credit, was an importer not only of plantation supplies but

also of spirits, wines, fine clothing, china, and all the other items of luxury produced by the metropolis. These were sold at inflated prices to his planter and town clientele in what can only be described as a retailing operation. The merchant also imported quantities of inexpensive goods which would appeal to and were within reach of the slave and poor free population. Hucksters were generally given credit by the merchant and the colonial vendue (auction) office to retail these goods about the town and country districts.<sup>5</sup> It was at this juncture that the commercial universe of the merchant and the planter intersected the economy of the slaves.

Ideally, the slaves attached to a plantation had all their needs met by the plantation. In the pure plantation economy each plantation is a self-contained, self-sufficient, 'total' institution producing a staple for export and dependent upon the metropole for supplies, venture capital, and military might. As a total institution, the plantation is "a place of residence and work where a large number of like-situated individuals...together lead an enclosed, formally administered round of life."<sup>6</sup> This paradigm may have described the plantation economy at its inception; or, at least until it became firmly established. But in the late decades of the 18th century metropolitan interference in the affairs of the Guianese plantation began to erode its hitherto "total" and closed character.

The Dutch West India Company ceased to exist in 1791. With the Company's demise the two colonies became the responsibility of the Dutch government. Demerara and Essequibo which had been directly under Company rule became a Dutch colony in 1791. Berbice remained in the

hands of the Berbice Association until 1795 when it too became a Dutch colony.<sup>7</sup> The end of Company rule also meant the end of the restrictive and monopolistic practices of the Company, for the Dutch government encouraged the entry of immigrants and pursued a less stringent commercial policy. The populations of both colonies began to grow at this time as did the populations of the towns.

Once Guiana came under British rule it became an object of attention by the anti-slavery party in the British Parliament. Under their pressure, a series of acts and orders-in-council designed to ameliorate the slaves' condition were promulgated. So pressured, the colonial governments legislated standards for the care, employment, and religious instruction of the slaves. The termination of the slave trade increased the value of the slave and his labour in planter eyes. At the same time, the introduction of Christian missionaries in 1808 broke the information monopoly of the planters which had been so necessary to the functioning of the total institution.<sup>8</sup> Though enjoined from preaching abolition and stressing peaceful change, the missionaries by their mere presence demonstrated that not all Europeans were alike and indicated that some were opposed to slavery.

Under these metropolitan pressures and the stresses imposed by the British conquests and the rapid growth of population after 1796, the closed plantation society began to open. The pure plantation economy model predicates a controlled system of exchange. But as slaves were not machines incentives as well as punishments were necessary in order to keep the system working. Thus, there developed a substantial involvement of the slave population in the petty retailing of the two colonies.

This involvement was initiated by the practice of allotting most slaves private garden plots. Though not done in the land-short small islands, this practice had been widespread in Jamaica since the late 17th century.<sup>9</sup> When the custom was introduced to Guiana is not known. But because there was no shortage of arable land the practice may have originated in the 17th century. Favoured slaves were granted the privilege of raising feathered stock or animals. At least three consequences were the result of these practices. First, the slave was able to vary and supplement his diet thus relieving the estate of some expense. Second, an interest in one's garden and livestock encouraged an attachment to the estate and a satisfaction with one's lot. And third, one was able to exchange one's produce for barter and/or money. Money, as everyone soon learned, could be used to purchase a variety of precious things. One's freedom, colourful cloth, and jewelry are but three examples.

These productions were the subject of exchanges among slave, huckster, and free in the following contexts: 1) on the plantation; 2) in the rural Sunday market; 3) in the rare rural shop; 4) with a forestaller on the road to market; 5) in the town market; 6) about the town streets; and 7) in the town shops.

#### Intra-plantation Exchanges

Each plantation was in fact a small village containing artisans as well as agriculturalists. This was especially true of the older riverine estates. In contrast to the more recently occupied coastal estates, the riverine estates in 1806 more nearly resembled self-sustaining

and "complete" societies. Plantation Reynestein, a long established West Bank Demerara sugar estate, had fostered several generations of Negroes. Henry Bolingbroke commented upon the "unusual number of creole children" and the care given them by the estate.<sup>10</sup> On Reynestein "the tradesmen employ their spare time in making those articles of their several trades which they can sell to advantage."<sup>11</sup> The most prominent of these skills were basketry and strawplaiting. Bed-mats, ropes, and wicker chairs were often produced, while in Jamaica masks for festive occasions were commonly made.<sup>12</sup>

Bolingbroke observed that old plantation slaves "at the close of life...often keep a retail shop." These "shops" may not have stocked more than half a dozen items, but if they did exist (although pro-slavery, Bolingbroke was an unusually reliable observer) they are indicative of a hitherto unsuspected link in the chain of distribution.<sup>13</sup>

Money was not unknown among plantation slaves. Though probably apocryphal, Bolingbroke cites the case of an old woman on an Essequibo sugar estate who died leaving nearly £300 sterling to be divided among her children. The money consisted principally of joes, dollars, and small change. The old woman had acquired this sum from the sale of feathered stock, presumably both on and off the plantation.<sup>14</sup> One's produce, animals, and handicrafts were all potential sources of a cash income. In Antigua, planters often purchased supplies of vegetables or small stock from their own slaves or the slaves of other proprietors.<sup>15</sup> In addition, a slave could work extra hours and be paid and receive cash gifts from visitors or the managerial staff.<sup>16</sup> It was widely believed among the Georgetown merchants "that the Negroes throughout the colony

[had]...accumulated considerable sums of money by their industry..."<sup>17</sup>

This belief was expressed in 1825. Thus, there is perhaps sufficient evidence to attest that as early as the late 18th century money was already familiar to the slaves and that by the early 19th century it was in widespread use.

### The Markets

Throughout the West Indies and in Guiana Sunday was the slave's weekly holiday. On that day he could recover from Saturday night, tend his garden, look after his other affairs, or travel to market. Markets have been defined as a "meeting of a number of persons desirous of acquiring, and getting rid of, goods through acts of exchange."<sup>18</sup> Presumably, a place need have only one seller and one buyer to be called a market. The habitual or periodic use of a place to conduct exchanges, however small and few in number, gives that place the name of "market."

Markets in slave societies were more than commercial places and occasions. They were also social gatherings where people met, gossiped, and conspired. Cognizance of the trouble-making potential in the "Sunday market" led the Barbados Assembly to try to close the markets in 1685.<sup>19</sup> Pass laws were legislated and rigorously enforced in the islands as well as in Guiana. A slave found off his plantation without a pass was subject to a whipping. The markets persisted however, and remained the only legitimate excuse for crowds of slaves to gather off the plantations.

In Guiana and in the islands the town populations came to depend upon rural Negroes for their supplies of fresh vegetables, feathered stock, and small animals. In Guiana this was especially true as the non-

estate free population was effectively confined to the towns and thus in no position to do market gardening. With respect to beef, some was imported from Venezuela. But substantial herds of cattle were grazed in East Coast Berbice and in East Coast Demerara. These were driven along the public roads to the slaughterhouses of New Amsterdam and Georgetown.

In the small islands Sunday markets were customarily held in the towns. In Jamaica "Negro markets were established not only in the towns but any part of the rural areas where there was a potential demand, such as ports, villages, cross-roads and the residences of large and wealthy families."<sup>20</sup> Guiana had a dearth of crossroads but a plenty of ferry crossings. The only rural market definitely known to have existed was near the Mahaica Ferry. But others certainly functioned at other breaks in transportation or in the more isolated population clusters of the country.

### The Town Markets

Until late in the 18th century neither Berbice nor Demerara and Essequibo possessed an urban centre of note. Quite probably the control of the colonies by the Dutch West India Company and its monopoly of imports and exports mitigated against all but administrative centres. In a monopoly situation a colonial town becomes a "one market" town. There is no competition for the company does all the purchasing of staples and all the selling of supplies. With the end of the monopoly, the town becomes a marketplace supporting many buyers and many sellers. In addition, with an increase of population certain specialized activities and

occupations become feasible. Such is the example provided by the growth and development of Georgetown.

In 1781 the British seized the two colonies. They were displaced by the French in 1782. The colonies were not returned to the West India Company until February 1784. It was during the French occupation that the first town in Demerara and Essequibo was planned. The Comte de Kersaint, the commander of the French forces, in a proclamation issued on February 22, 1782 observed that Demerara and Essequibo was "perhaps the only instance of a European colony among thousands throughout the world, which has arrived at some magnificence without the establishment of either town or village."<sup>21</sup> Longchamps, renamed Stabroek by the Dutch, was the result. It became the capital of a colony which at that time had less than 20,000 inhabitants.

Meanwhile in Berbice, Fort Nassau and its attendant village became increasingly untenable in the years after the slave revolt of 1763. Governor Koppelaar in 1779-1780 realized that the maintenance and establishment of plantations far up the Berbice River was becoming increasingly impractical. The soils adjacent to the river were declining in fertility; this in itself was an inducement to move. But the awkwardness and hazards of the hundred mile river journey for merchant vessels coupled with the sense of insecurity prevalent after the revolt decided the issue.<sup>22</sup> Fort St. Andries was built on Crab Island at the mouth of the Berbice River and the town of New Amsterdam came into being between 1785-1790.<sup>23</sup> At that time the colony possessed about 6000 inhabitants.

Neither colonial capital was much more than a village until after the second British conquest in 1796. Stabroek's population in 1789 did not exceed 780. Of this number 238 were European.<sup>24</sup> Even then



New Amsterdam was the lesser of the two capitals. Bolingbroke states that the population of Stabroek in the earliest years of the 19th century was about 8500. This consisted of 1500 Europeans, 2000 free Coloureds, and 5000 Negroes.<sup>25</sup> This was obviously an official estimate. The earliest town census extant dates from 1812. The population of Stabroek was then 5911. This consisted of 971 Europeans, 1351 free Coloureds, and 3589 slaves.<sup>26</sup> A decline in Stabroek's population may have occurred during the Peace of Amiens when the colony briefly reverted to Dutch rule, but this is doubtful. Quite probably, the population of Stabroek at the turn of the century was about 4000.

Sunday markets were being held in Stabroek in 1797.<sup>27</sup> The marketplace was situated near the public stelling (wharf) but not immediately adjacent to the waterfront. It would be safe to assume that its location had been determined by the original French plan; as the market had apparently been in existence for several years.<sup>28</sup> Bolingbroke described the market as it appeared about 1800:

There is a market-place where the negroes assemble to sell their truck, such as fruit, vegetables, fowls, eggs, and where the hucksters expose for sale articles of European manufacture (much in the same manner as the pedlars do in England) in addition to salt beef, pork, and fish, bread, cheese, pipes, tobacco, and other articles, in small quantities, to enable the negroes to supply themselves agreeably to the length of their purses.<sup>29</sup>

Lt. Thomas St. Clair writing a few years later also commented on the market:

Fresh meat and vegetables are scarce as the market is only held on Sunday, that being generally a holiday for the plantation Negroes, who bring in poultry, vegetables, and fruit but in very small quantities. I have known a negro walk eight or ten miles to sell a starved fowl, together with a small basket of ocros, yams, or peas, which are the only vegetables they cultivate: and these they raise merely to obtain the means of procuring tobacco, to which they are passionately addicted, or some cheap kind of ornament for their favourite fair.<sup>30</sup>

Bolingbroke also observed that the butchers' shambles (sheds or stalls) were adjacent to the market.<sup>31</sup> But whether this location was the result of an official decision or the private initiative of the butchers is not known. What is clear is that the market resembled the Sunday markets held in the islands; insofar as the commodities sold and the method of selling them.

The public market of Stabroek was under the direct control of the Court of Policy. The state of the market gave the Court cause for concern in 1808. A committee was established to investigate the market and to construct a proper building.<sup>32</sup> But as no report or action was delivered or taken, two members of the Court again investigated the market. In December 1810 they devised a set of regulations for the market in order to eliminate "the present great inconvenience of hucksters crowding the public bridges and streets, and to erect in the market place proper buildings to shelter the persons reporting thereto to vend their commodities...."<sup>33</sup> In a town possessing many canals and ditches and only one bricked street the public bridges, high and dry as they were, were the logical place for hucksters to congregate. The desire to erect proper shelters in the marketplace was a lure to entice the hucksters off the bridges, thus reducing a traffic nuisance, and to better supervise their activities. A lure was necessary because in the rainy seasons the old marketplace was a sea of mud. As the town increased in size the need to introduce some order on the streets also increased. The committee's draft regulations were accepted by the Court and gazetted in May 1811. With their publication what had been an unsupervised market became an official market with all the attendant organization.

The market regulations published on May 25, 1811 defined the objectives of the market as well as the administrative and regulatory powers of the market authority. The first and second regulations made explicit the purpose of the market. First, the market was intended to encourage a better supply of provisions to the town. Second, the hucksters frequenting the streets and bridges would be forced to resort to the marketplace where they could be more closely supervised. The third through fifth regulations established a five-man commission to oversee the market; the construction of market buildings adjacent to the then existing marketplace; and the creation of the post of Market Clerk having the responsibility for the weights, measures, quality of the meat, and the quality of the provisions, vegetables, and fruits sold in the market. The sixth regulation reveals the double standard of the time. Stocks for misbehaving slaves were to be erected in front of the market; while, Europeans and free Coloureds causing a disturbance in the market were to be fined two joes (44 guilders or £1.80) within 24 hours. The seventh regulation authorized the commissioners to rent the sheds and stalls monthly at a convenient rate. The eight and ninth regulations empowered the commissioners to establish additional regulations when necessary and established a two-year term of office for the commissioners.<sup>34</sup>

From 1811 to 1815 the public market remained under the direct control of the Court of Policy. In 1815, the supervision of the public markets of Georgetown (Stabroek was renamed Georgetown in 1812) was transferred to the town's governing body, the Board of Police.<sup>35</sup> A second market had been planned for Stabroek in 1804; the Court in that year had purchased a lot in Plantation La Bourgade, then being subdivided into the

suburb of Cumingsburg, to be used as the second market of the town.<sup>36</sup> The lot purchased was sited half a mile north of the Stabroek Market at the northwest corner of Main and Newmarket Streets. Its site was further from the waterfront than that of the Stabroek Market. The second market was intended to serve the new suburb and Kingston village which had developed about Fort William Frederick at the junction of the river and the sea. Nothing was done with this property until 1816. In that year the Board of Police cleaned and leveled the site. The Board complained to the Court of Policy in February 1817 that although the new market site had been prepared for three months no use was being made of it. As the site was colonial property, the Board suggested that it be sold if a market did not develop. The Court in reply suggested that stalls be erected and let toll free for one year in an effort to attract sellers.<sup>37</sup> Apparently this ruse was not successful, for the market did not become operative until 1852.

With the creation of a market authority the Stabroek Market had become a daily market, but it continued to function as a Sunday market for the rural slaves. In 1824 up to 3000 Negroes were estimated to regularly attend the Sunday market. Those coming from the riverine estates were transported with their wares by the estate boats.<sup>38</sup> Animals brought to the market were killed in the slaughterhouse nearby and then sold from covered stalls by the butchers. Most butchers were Europeans. They had come to perceive the sale of meat as their special preserve. Thus, when slaves began to sell meat in the market the European butchers complained.

The two firms of Grant & Hedges and H. Fenden (the only European butchers in the market?) petitioned the Court of Policy in February 1822 complaining of a drop in sales because of the competition afforded by

"black slaves" vending meat in the market. They alleged that the cooks of the White customers generally gave preference to their own colour. The Court was requested to put a stop to this practice.<sup>39</sup> The Court delayed and eventually referred the matter to the Board of Police in November 1822. The Board replied in April 1823 remarking that as the slave stall holders were "most punctual" in paying their rents, it saw no reason to prohibit their selling meat.<sup>40</sup> The reply was accepted by the Court.

The issues raised by the European butchers in the Stabroek Market were to bedevil succeeding retailers during the course of the century. The first issue was the matter of ethnic favouritism. But this was only important insofar as there were no significant price differentials among competing shops. What Grant & Hedges and H. Fenden did not complain about was that they were probably being underpriced. The honourable members of the Court of Policy would not have been sympathetic to this argument. By its reply the Board of Police was probably aware of what was happening. But the Board did not object as long as the stall rents continued to be paid.

The ethnic issue raised by the European butchers was spurious. Ethnicity as a market factor, except among those displaying marked antipathies or sympathies, could only be of importance if all other factors were equal or nearly equal; that is, the quality of the goods, their price, and the distance of the retailer from the buyer's residence. What was happening in the Stabroek Market was a manifestation of Gresham's Law. Instead of bad money driving out the good, it was a case of the retailer willing to accept a smaller profit margin displacing the retailer who required a larger profit margin. This is not as simple as it appears.

The standard of living and thereby the cost of living was higher for the European butcher than the Negro or Coloured butcher. The conflict in the marketplace was thus a conflict between different modes of living. The European butchers may have been profiteering, but visitors to Guiana had remarked upon the high cost of all commodities. During the 19th century Guiana had the reputation of being the most expensive colony in the British West Indies.

More is known about the operation and revenues of the New Amsterdam Market in its initial years of operation than of its counterpart in Georgetown. The New Amsterdam Market was established as a supervised market in 1818.<sup>41</sup> As in Georgetown, there had probably been an unsupervised Sunday market supplied by slaves from the surrounding estates. In 1818 New Amsterdam's population probably did not exceed 1500. The town was a pale reflection of Georgetown just as Berbice had long been a pale reflection of Demerara and Essequibo.

In 1792 the Berbician slave population was 6709. This had increased to 8232 in 1795 and to 17,885 in 1802.<sup>42</sup> By 1813 the slave population had peaked at about 24,000. A decline then set in and in 1817 the number of slaves was 21,553. In addition 373 Europeans and 98 free Coloureds were resident on the estates.<sup>43</sup> New Amsterdam was not very large. In proportion to its hinterland it was smaller than Georgetown. As with Georgetown, a Board of Police managed the town's affairs. The supervised market established in 1818 was modeled upon the Stabroek Market (the principal public market in Georgetown is called, to this day, the Stabroek Market), even to its general location with respect to the waterfront.

Because both markets were organized in essentially the same fashion a detailed examination of the New Amsterdam Market in its formative years is of comparative value. The two principal sources of revenue were the rents received from the letting of stalls to full-time butchers and the fees imposed upon animals slaughtered in the market by occasional butchers. The fee per head of adult cattle was six guilders (£ 0.50). For the lesser animals such as calves, sheep, goats, and hogs the fee was three guilders (£0.25) per head. A market stall was let to a butcher at 22 guilders (1 joe or £1.83) per month. This was not cheap. The advantage, however, was with the stall holder. The rental of a stall relieved one of the necessity to pay a duty on each animal slaughtered. One could thus slaughter and sell as many animals as one wished for £ 1.83 per month. This fee policy was pursued by the market from 1818-1824. In 1825 stall rents were abolished and slaughter fees imposed upon all animals introduced to the market.

There were seldom more than four stall-holding butchers in the market, however, the turnover was high. A departing butcher was quickly succeeded by a newcomer. The graph below (Graph 3-1) for the period October 15, 1819 to December 31, 1821 illustrates this. Of the 12 butchers renting stalls during this period only 4 rented stalls for more than 12 months. Five butchers held stalls for half a year or less. All but two rented only one stall per month. The exceptions were William Kewley and Harris, a man who was probably Kewley's employee. Kewley did not rent his usual two stalls in the initial five months of 1821. Perhaps he was absent from the colony. Harris' rental of two stalls coincides with Kewley's absence. It would thus be reasonable to assume that Harris was Kewley's deputy.

Their Names and the Period of Time During which they Rented Stalls are Indicated.

With the Exception of Wm. Kewley & Harris who Rented Two Stalls,  
All the Remaining Butchers Rented a Single Stall. (footnote 44)

[illegible]



TABLE 3-1

The Number and Type of Animals Slaughtered in the New Amsterdam Market in the Five Quarters between October 15, 1819 and January 15, 1821 (footnote 46)

Animal	1st Q.	2nd Q.	3rd Q.	4th Q.	5th Q.	Total	Average
oxen	66	63	57	59	60	305	61
calves	5	14(1)*	14	24	14	71(1)	14
sheep	86	29(1)	78	90(1)	70	352(2)	70
goats	9	24	18(2)	14	16	81(2)	16
hogs: total	110	125	108	112	113	568	114
stall B.**	88	95	55	82	98	414	81
occ. B.	22	34	53	30	15	154	31

\*( ) indicates an animal slaughtered by an occasional butcher but included in the quarterly total

\*\* Butcher

This high turnover of butchers indicates, at the very least, that many were attempting the job but did not find it congenial. It may also indicate that profits were low or that competition against the more entrenched butchers was not feasible. By the second quarter of 1821 the number of butchers had stabilized. Three butchers managing four stalls came to control the market's meat trade. This was probably the optimum number, because in January 1826, there were only three stall holding butchers in the market. One of the three was William Kewley.<sup>45</sup>

The number of animals slaughtered in the market in the five quarters between October 15, 1819 and January 15, 1821 did not vary appreciably. With the exception of hogs, of which 27 per cent were slaughtered by occasional butchers, almost all of the animals introduced

were handled by stall holding butchers. Table 3-1 above displays the number and type of animals slaughtered in the market as well as the quarterly averages. These animals were introduced to the market when the butchers renting stalls were most frequently changing. The number of oxen and hogs introduced each quarter did not deviate excessively from their respective averages. The quarterly average for sheep was skewed by the low number of the second quarter. The numbers of calves and goats combined did not exceed one-half the number of oxen slaughtered. The near monopoly of the stall holding butchers is evident. As in Georgetown the stall holding butchers were European. This was certainly the case in 1826 when three firms, William Kewley, Charles & Andrew Ross, and H. Grimes & Company held the market stalls.<sup>47</sup>

The racial and social identities of the occasional butchers are not known. The only clue is a list of names of occasional butchers submitted in the first market report of Thomas C. Henry, Market Clerk, in June 1821. During the five month period January 17, 1821 to June 17, 1821 Henry reported not only the stall holders as was customary but also the names and stock of the occasional butchers. The stall holding butchers accounted for 104 oxen, 144 sheep, 2 goats, and 193 hogs. A finer breakdown is not possible. The 18 occasional butchers accounted for 3 oxen, 2 sheep, and 36 hogs. A breakdown on a daily basis can be given.

The New Amsterdam Market was a daily market. Livestock were slaughtered every day of the week. But because Sunday was the weekly holiday of the slaves, Sunday market remained a somewhat special occasion. With only one exception, all the fees paid for livestock slaughtered in the market by occasional butchers were paid on Sunday. There were 22

Sunday markets between January 17th and June 17, 1821. Occasional butchers slaughtered animals in 13 Sunday markets and on 1 week day. The dates of the Sunday markets, the number of occasional butchers in attendance, and the number and type of stock are given below in Table 3-2. From this table it is apparent that not every Sunday market was attended. Thirteen or 59 per cent of the Sunday markets were attended by occasional butchers. It is not easy to explain the two three-week gaps in April and May. Perhaps one may blame the weather.

What appears from Table 3-3 is that three individuals, Charles, Davy, and Fanny, handled 22 of the 36 hogs brought to the market. Charles and Fanny account by themselves for half the hogs introduced, and Fanny for the two sheep so marketed. These three individuals pose some problems in explanation. Two, Davy and Fanny, possess names commonly given to slaves. But whether they were slave or free is not known. Did these three raise the animals they brought to market, act as agents for others, or acquire them in the pursuit of another business such as huckstering? The butchers possessing a surname and an initial were almost certainly free Coloureds or Europeans. There are four such names in the second table. Those names marked with an asterisk in the second table were names commonly given to slaves. Including Davy and Fanny, about whom there is only a little doubt, there are five obvious slave names. The 9 remaining were most probably free, but whether Coloured or European cannot be ascertained.

In 1825 the Berbice Council of Government amended the New Amsterdam Market regulations. Stall rents were done away with and fees were assessed on all animals slaughtered in the market. This had first been proposed to the Council by William Sutherland, then Clerk of the Market, in January

TABLE 3-2

Attendance at the New Amsterdam Sunday Markets  
by Occasional Butchers and the Number and Type  
of Stock Slaughtered by them between  
January 17 and June 17, 1821  
(footnote 48)

Market Date	Number of Occasional Butchers	Animal	Number
January 21	1	hogs	2
January 28	1	hogs	1
February 4	-	----	-
February 11	3	hogs	6
February 18	2	hogs	6
February 25	4	hogs	5
March 4	3	hogs	3 & cattle 1
March 11	-	----	-
March 18	3	hogs	4
March 25	1	hogs	2
April 1	1	hogs	1
April 8	-	----	-
April 15	-	----	-
April 22	-	----	-
April 29	2	hogs	2
May 6	-	----	-
May 13	1	hogs	2
May 20	-	----	-
May 27	-	----	-
June 3	-	----	-
June 10	4	hogs	3 & cattle 2
June 17	1	hogs	1
February 15 (Thursday)	1	sheep	2

TABLE 3-3

The Occasional Butchers who Slaughtered Stock in the New Amsterdam Market between January 17 and June 17, 1821. Given are their Names, the Date of Attendance, and the Type and Number of Stock Slaughtered (footnote 49)

Aaron*	1 hog	25 February	Fanny*	2 hogs	21 January
Boatswain*	1 hog	25 February	Fanny	3 hogs	11 February
Cameron, C.	2 hogs	10 June	Fanny	2 sheep	15 February
Charles	2 hogs	11 February	Fanny	1 hog	18 February
Charles	2 hogs	18 February	Fanny	2 hogs	29 April
Charles	2 hogs	25 February	Jobel	1 ox	10 June
Charles	2 hogs	18 March	Kemp	1 hog	29 April
Charles	2 hogs	25 March	Kendall	2 hogs	4 March
Collins	1 hog	4 March	Klein, C.	1 hog	18 March
Cox, C.	1 hog	17 June	Layfield, P.	1 hog	1 April
Davy*	1 hog	28 January	Romeo*	1 hog	18 March
Davy	2 hogs	13 May	Scott	1 cow	4 March
Davy	1 hog	10 June	Vogt	1 cow	10 June
Demba*	1 hog	11 February	Warner	1 hog	25 February

\*Those so marked possess names commonly given to slaves

1821. The market revenues for the period October 15, 1819 to October 15, 1820 had been £140.51. Sutherland demonstrated that if stall rents had been abolished and fees charged on all animals slaughtered the revenues would have been £337.25. The Council declined to act.<sup>50</sup>

In 1824 John Watkins, then market clerk, proposed the same reform requested by Sutherland. Watkins' argument, however, was slightly different:

...it would be far more beneficial to the market, not to hire out the stalls, but let them be occupied by those who wish to kill, and in place of paying rents to pay for every head of cattle and other stock that is killed, the custom fees already fixed, which would prevent a great deal of fraud that is in the power of those hire stalls, by killing for persons, slaves, etc., to avoid the payment of the market fee.<sup>51</sup>

The Council of Government, perhaps moved by the potential for fraud, implemented the suggested reform in 1825.

In January 1826 the stall holding butchers protested to the Council. Their protests bemoaned the dilapidated state of the market and the heavy fees exacted from them. Under the old regulations a butcher renting one stall paid £21 per year. Under the new regulations the three stall holding butchers paid between £100 and £146.67 per year. They were not pleased with the drastic increase in their costs and the concomitant decline in their income. At the very least, they expected a proper market building. The Council referred the matter to the Board of Police.<sup>52</sup>

#### The Issue of the Sunday Markets

By 1825 the two colonial governments were under considerable pressure to ameliorate the condition of the slaves. This meant implementing reforms in the field, in the number of hours of labour, and the

religious instruction of the slaves. Christianity and the proper observance of the Sabbath were equated in the eyes of the Colonial Office. Hence, there was considerable pressure to do away with Sunday markets. The colonial governments, aware of the economic and social needs met by the Sunday markets, resisted. In the end, the Colonial Office was forced to accept a compromise.

A committee of the Berbice Council of Government examined the question and made its report in March 1825.

...the abolition of Sunday Markets altogether in this colony would in its effects be of little import generally to the slaves on plantations, as only a few who come from the rivers by water and those resident in the immediate vicinity of the town, bring the produce of their grounds to market on that day, indeed those who reside at a distance cultivate but little beyond what they apply to their own consumption, and then their feathered stock meets with a ready sale to the itinerant Hucksters who are constantly traversing the colony with articles of Negro consumption. The lower classes of the community in town would be the principal sufferers by such an arrangement as their dependence for the supply of casave [sic], yams, or other ground provisions is entirely on the product of the slaves private ground provision fields. And as in this colony the plantain walks or other grounds which the planter is obliged by law to maintain for the support of the slaves form part of the general cultivation of an estate, and are not kept up by devoting any part of their extra time or purpose, it can hardly be expected that any other day of the week should be set apart by the planter for an object in which he is in no wise interested and from which no general benefit is to be derived.<sup>53</sup>

It was the committee's contention that the town's inhabitants needed the market, not the slaves, and that any interference with this relationship would bring suffering to the "lower classes of the community." The role of itinerant hucksters as mediums of distribution and collection is touched upon. The provisions and stock collected by the hucksters was generally sold in the market.

The 1825 amelioration ordinance passed in Demerara and Essequibo established a savings bank for slaves, ordered that they be paid for Sunday

work, and ordered all Sunday markets to be closed at 11 a.m.<sup>54</sup> Berbice followed its neighbour's lead in 1826 and passed a virtually identical ordinance.<sup>55</sup> After the creation of British Guiana in 1831 by the union of the two colonies and the establishment of the apprenticeship system a second Sabbath Day ordinance was passed. The Sunday markets were to be closed at 9:30 a.m. after September 1, 1836, but this was not enough to satisfy the Colonial Secretary, Lord Glenelg.<sup>56</sup> Glenelg wished to put a complete stop to the Sunday markets. Governor Smyth in a dispatch dated December 22, 1836 attempted to mollify his superior.

The subject of the Sunday morning markets is one which I have frequently revolved in my mind. I am perfectly aware that I can issue a proclamation doing away the Sunday markets forthwith; but as Sunday morning is the only morning the labourers have to themselves, the issuing of such a proclamation would be tantamount to prohibiting them from disposing of the produce of their gardens, and would be a sad blow to their happiness, and a great drawback to their industry. If the labourers had one working day in the week to themselves, that day might be selected as the market day...As soon as the apprenticed labourer system ceases, all marketings upon a Sunday can be strictly prohibited; in the meanwhile...it appeared to me to be advisable to...regulate all Sunday morning marketing as to prevent any interference with the hours of Divine Service.<sup>57</sup>

Sunday markets were duly abolished in October 1839. But it remained legal "to buy and sell on Sundays all perishable articles of food at any places where such articles are usually bought and sold on other days of the week."<sup>58</sup>

#### The Rural Market

There were many possible locations in rural pre-emanicipation Guiana where Sunday markets could have been held. Only one, however, is mentioned in the sources consulted. The Mahaica Sunday market was sited near the Mahaica River Ferry, the Mahaica Military Post, and at

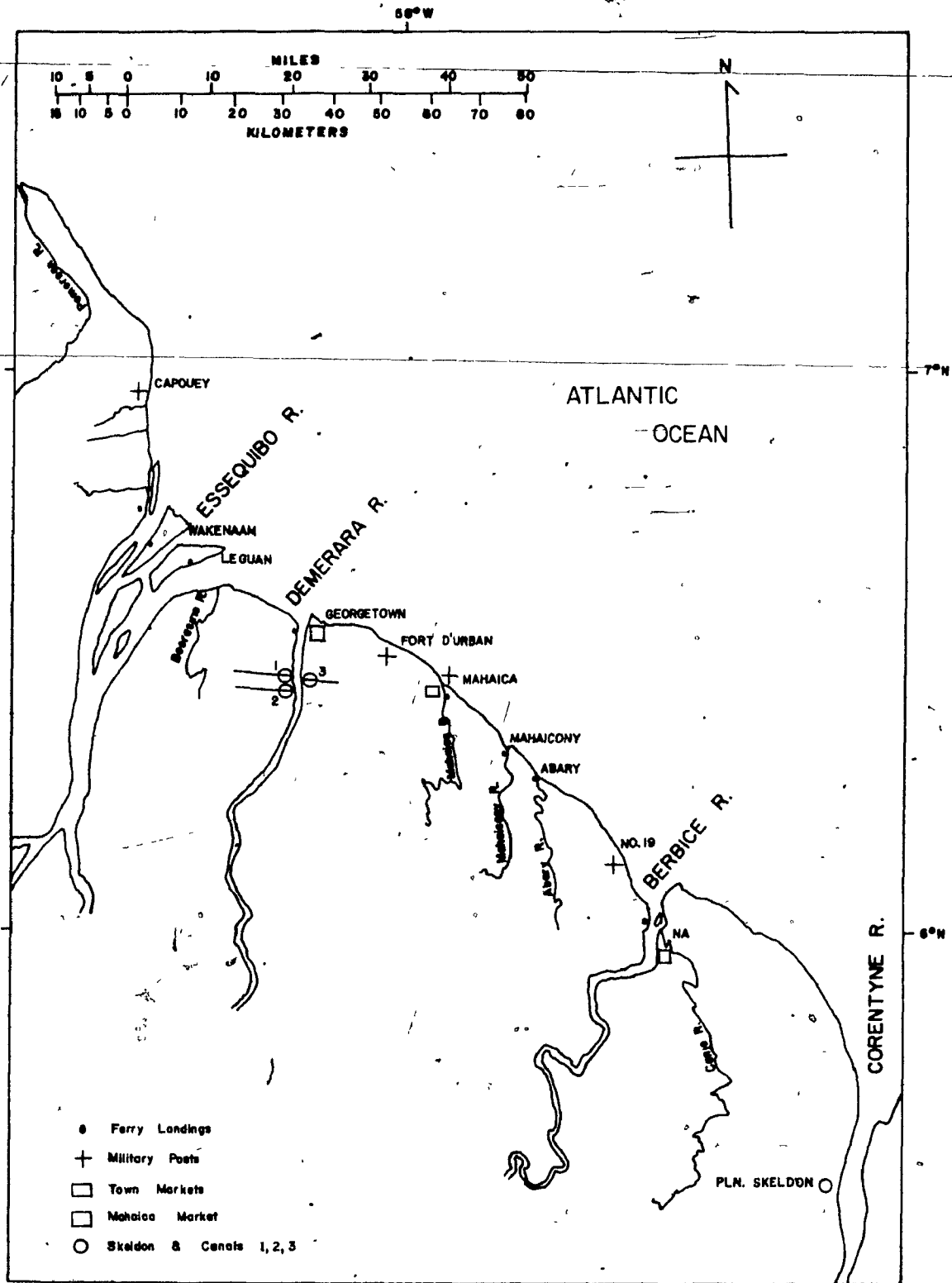


the intersection of the coast roads with the two riverine roads. The other possible locations for rural Sunday markets did not possess quite the same combination of centralizing elements. The combination of "crossroads," military post, and break in transportation occurred only at Mahaica. Only one or two of these elements characterize the locations of other possible market locations.

At least seven other ferry landings could have provided the necessary impetus for a Sunday market. These are indicated on Map 3-1. They are the landing at Adventure in West Coast Essequibo; Fredericksburg and Enterprise on Wakenaam and Leguan Islands; the west bank landing of the Demerara Ferry; the Mahaicony River and Abary River Ferries; and the west bank landing of the Berbice Ferry. The three remaining rural military posts were located at Plantation Columbia, W.C.E. (Capoey Barracks); Fort D'Urban at Plantation Annandale, E.C.D.; and the post at Number 19, W.C.B. (Catharina's Lust); each held a small company of soldiers and were possible market sites.<sup>59</sup> The four remaining possible market locations were at the mouths of Canals 1, 2, and 3, and at Skeldon in the Corentyne. The military posts and the Canals locations are also indicated on Map 3-1.

The coastal ecumene is narrow but more than 150 miles (240 km) in length. Its division into "islands" by the many rivers and the wild interior was very real. Transportation by land was not easy. When properly maintained in the dry seasons the public roads were easy to traverse; but with the coming of the rains the roads quickly degenerated. These difficulties, together with the hazards of coastal shipping as well as the advantages afforded by river transport must be considered in any discussion of the town and rural markets.

Actual and Potential Market Locations in Pre-emancipation British Guiana



The only description of a rural Sunday market was given by Michael McTurk, Deputy Fiscal (government attorney and tax commissioner) of the eastern district of Demerara, in a letter to Governor D'Urban in 1826. The Mahaica Market had been functioning since, if not before, 1817;<sup>60</sup> but this was the first official notice of the market.

Felicity, 28th October 1826

Sir,

I have frequently been given to understand that the negroes in the District of Mahaica assemble every Sunday at the Ferry for the purpose of holding market and that many things are there exposed for sale which are prohibited by law.

I made it my business a few Sundays ago to go there and ascertain the fact, and found nearly two hundred Negroes collected together on the main Public Road near to the Ferry where it is joined by the Road from the Estates in the Mahaica Creek. I made particular inspection of the articles exposed to sale and found, among many other things, very considerable quantities of Sugar, Coffee, and Molasses---three things struck me here as being either unaccountable or improper.

- 1st. That the market place should be upon the Public Road which so obstructs the thoroughfare that it renders it not only difficult to get through on horseback but even dangerous to passengers in a carriage--besides the din and clamour is excessive.
- 2cd. That it should require such a large number (of) negroes to supply the inhabitants of that village; so comparatively small, with ground provisions, Poultry, etc.
- 3rd. That negroes to any extent should be allowed to meet there without any person having contr[ol] over them.

It is a well known fact that many of the inhabitants of Mahaica Village are notorious for selling Rum to the negroes as well as to the military, and it is not unlikely that the crowds of negroes who frequent the Mahaica Ferry of a Sunday under pretext of going to market are more influenced by a desire of purchasing Rum than with a view of selling their little wares.

Mahaica Village is becoming populous and it is but right that the inhabitants should have an opportunity of purchasing from the Negroes as well as the negroes of selling to the inhabitants; such things as are permitted them by law; under a proper Superintendent; and this would secure in some degree three grand objects

- 1st. a protection to the negroes selling lawful articles,
- 2cd. a guarantee against their selling unlawful articles,
- 3rd. a prevention to the promiscuous and unlimited sale of Rum to the Slaves of that District....61

McTurk's "Mahaica Village" did not exceed a hundred in population not tied to the adjacent estates. This number includes the small military company as well as the European and free Coloured population and their slaves. That an assemblage of 200 Negroes should think to service the needs of the village was, as McTurk observed, incongruous. But more than the needs of the village were being met. McTurk alluded to the practice of selling rum to the Negroes and soldiers by some villagers. This was perhaps an attraction for some. But the market like the markets in the islands was a social as well as a commercial occasion. The desire to occasionally escape the plantation could perhaps only be appreciated by inhabitants of other total institutions.

The population within a six mile (10 km.) radius of the Mahaica market, about the distance an individual could walk in two hours, did not exceed 6400 in 1826. The free population numbered about 500 and was, with the exception of the group in the village, distributed about the estates in proportion to the number of slaves per plantation. The slave population of 5809 was not evenly distributed within the radius. The windward and riverine estates were already being abandoned. While to the west, estates were amalgamating and the slave population was increasing.

From Plantation Cottage westwards along the coast to and including Woodlands there were nine occupied estates with a slave population of 1152.. The 15 estates on both banks of the Mahaica River possessed 2458 slaves. While on the coast west of Mahaica inclusive of Belfield the slave population on the nine occupied estates was 2199.<sup>62</sup>

The service area of the Mahaica Sunday market may have been larger or smaller. The crowd of 200 Negroes observed by McTurk was not very large. He did not state at what time he visited the market or his point of origin on that day. His own estate, Felicity, was 15 miles west of Mahaica. On horseback, this could have been traversed in a few hours; or, he may have spent Saturday night with a friend at or near Mahaica. The Sunday markets were usually most busy in the morning hours, therefore, McTurk probably observed the market in the morning. If one assumes that the number of people attending the market remained constant throughout the market-day, perhaps as many as 1000 people or 17 per cent of the area's population may have attended.

McTurk was aroused by the illegal sale of plantation produce. In the eyes of the law this was theft by the slave from his master. It was common everywhere in the West Indies. In Jamaica stolen sugar sold in the market was referred to as "calabash estate" an allusion to the fact that it was sold in calabashes.<sup>63</sup> The crime was impossible to prevent for the free non-planter population encouraged the thefts by purchasing the stolen sugar, molasses, and coffee.

McTurk was also aroused by the use of the public road as the marketplace. As the road was probably the only high and dry piece of land around it was the only place where a market could be held; especially

during the wet seasons when extensive flooding was common in low areas. McTurk's concern about the lack of supervision was not alarmist. East Coast Demerara experienced serious riots in 1823. The suppression of the slaves had been severe and the lesson remained fresh in the planter's memory.

McTurk suggested that the colony purchase a lot of land in Mahaica village for the use of the Sunday market. His suggested lot had the additional advantage in that it could be used as a parade ground by the three companies of troops stationed at Mahaica. That the empty lot already happened to be the rendezvous of the troops was no accident. Deputy Fiscal McTurk was well aware of the potential need for riot control. The Court of Policy "maturely" considered McTurk's proposal. They decided to authorize the creation of a temporary Clerk of the Market whose duties would be identical to those of the Clerk of the Stabroek Market. The post was to exist until January 31, 1827.<sup>64</sup> As there is no mention of a supervised Mahaica market after this date one must assume that the market reverted to its former unsupervised status.

#### The Hucksters

In pre-emancipation Guiana the epithet "huckster" was applied to both the itinerant venders of manufactured goods and those vending from stalls or small sheds in the town. Although the term was applicable almost exclusively to those of African or mixed descent it was not in any sense opprobrious. The appearance of hucksters in Guiana was almost certainly delayed until the latter part of the 18th century. The slow development of the country, the West India Company's monopoly, and the

lack of any towns until after 1782 mitigated against petty retailing. Accompanying the influx of British planters and merchants after 1796 was the knowledge of local commercial practices in other parts of the British West Indies. The initial appearance of hucksters in Guiana dates at least, if not earlier, from 1796.

On January 31, 1797 the Court of Policy of Demerara and Essequibo passed an ordinance which restricted hucksters from selling dry goods in any other place in Stabroek than the public market.<sup>65</sup> The fact that such an ordinance was deemed necessary by the Court indicates that the number of hucksters was sufficiently large to create a nuisance. The streets of Stabroek were unpaved and the bridges over the many canals narrow. Hucksters "setting up shop" on the bridges would be a traffic hazard at the very least. In 1803 another huckster ordinance was passed by the Court of Policy. This was re-published in a slightly revised form in 1823. The huckster ordinance passed by the Berbice Court of Policy in February 1806, which replaced an earlier ordinance of April 1804, was identical for most of its text to the 1803 Demerara and Essequibo ordinance.

Both ordinances were passed in order to regulate the huckstering of goods on the plantations; an indication that such huckstering was perhaps comparatively recent. The Berbice ordinance stated:

That henceforth no person whatsoever, is permitted to employ any Negroes, Mulattoes, or people of colour of either sex, whether free or not to go about the country for the purpose of huckstering or exchanging any articles of whatsoever descriptions (milk, vegetables and other provisions excepted) without they have a written permit from the Governor....<sup>66</sup>  
[This is identical to the Demerara and Essequibo ordinance but for the inclusion of one word and the exclusion of another word. Neither word affects the import of the ordinance.]

The ordinance expresses the belief that the hucksters were acting as the agents or employees of someone else. The employer supplied the goods and sent out his personal slaves, hired slaves, or hired free individuals to huckster in the plantations.

The hucksters were licenced to raise revenue, three guilders (£0.25), but more importantly to supply the colonial authorities with the names of those frequenting the rural districts. The Government Secretary was ordered to "keep a proper register of all permits so granted with the necessary remarks, that it may at all times be ascertained to whom Permission as aforesaid is granted." The ordinance required a huckster to present his licence to the plantation proprietor or his subordinate. This permitted the plantation to control the entry of visitors, a characteristic of the total institution, and to supervise the huckstering and exchanges of goods, kind, and money. The illegal sale of plantation produce, which included plantains, could thus be thwarted. Hucksters were allowed only "to receive money, stock, and such provisions and vegetables as the Negroes may raise in their gardens..."<sup>67</sup>

Evasion of this and later ordinances was common. In 1808 the Demerara and Essequibo Court of Policy considered it necessary to republish the necessity for hucksters to have licences and the illegality of Negroes to sell plantains.<sup>68</sup> This was deemed necessary even though another ordinance pertaining to hucksters had been passed in 1807. The number of hucksters travelling about the country at that time was sufficiently large to enable the holder of the Mahaica Ferry to cite them in his annual plea for subsidy. Dirk Storm van s'Gravesande, the ferry franchise holder, complained about the many hucksters who kept his punts "continually occupied



with heavy trunks and pegalls" and refused to pay a ferriage of more than 2½ stivers (£0.01) the ferriage for slaves. The Court of Policy authorized a special rate for hucksters of 5 stivers (£0.02) on the Mahaica, Mahaicony, and Abary Ferries.<sup>69</sup>

Huckster licences which had been set at 3 guilders (£0.25) per year in 1803 were raised to 22 guilders (£1.83) per six months in 1807.<sup>70</sup> In 1812 an additional fee of 3 guilders (£0.25) per six months was collected for the support of the Stabroek Market. At the same time, the huckster regulations were loosened. Hucksters, previously confined to the precinct of the market, were allowed to vend their goods about the town. The only restrictions were that they were not to sit on the public roads or bridges nor vend their wares outside of the marketplace on Sundays.<sup>71</sup>

#### Itinerant Hucksters

Movement of hucksters about Guiana was substantial. Hucksters from Demerara were entering Berbice much to the chagrin of the Berbicians in 1814. Prompted by their complaints Governor Bentinck issued the following official notice in 1814.

29 October 1814

Whereas I have received the Complaints of Merchants and Inhabitants of this Colony, stating that there are a number of Negroes huckstering in and about this Colony, who are not belonging to Residents, which practice is unlawful and detrimental to the Complainants, I have therefore thought fit for the Remedy and Prevention of such Irregularity, to Declare, and to hereby NOTIFY: That every Huckster found without my Pass or Licence, shall be apprehended and lodged in the Colony Jail, and further dealt with according to Law.

AND that the said licences may be duly and regularly obtained, the Applicants for the same shall be obliged to Certify in writing that the Huckster is either a free Resident, or the slave belonging to an established Resident of this Colony.<sup>72</sup>

Bentinck affirmed that the huckster trade of Berbice was to be restricted to Berbician citizens. Whether these alien hucksters travelled overland or by sea from Demerara is not clear. West Coast Berbice was already in the process of depopulation. Thus, the offences probably occurred in either New Amsterdam or in the surrounding estates. However, some Berbicians had moved to Georgetown and were engaged in huckstering there.<sup>73</sup>

Bolingbroke wrote of hucksters exposing "for sale articles of European manufacture (much in the same manner as the pedlars do in England)" in the Stabroek market. He went on to observe that:

Hucksters are free women of colour, who purchase their commodities of merchants at two or three months' credit, and retail them out in the manner described. Many of them are, indeed, wealthy, and possess ten, fifteen, and twenty negroes, all of whom they employ in this traffic. It is by no means an uncommon thing for negroes in this line to be travelling about the country for several weeks together, sometimes with an attendant, having trunks of goods to a considerable amount, say 200 pounds, and when a good opportunity offers, they remit to their mistresses what money they have taken. It is really surprising what a large sum is thus returned by these people going from one estate to another. The permission of the manager on every plantation is always necessary, before the hucksters ventures [sic] to the negro houses, where the bargains are made. Those that have not money barter their fowls, pigs, segars, for what they stand in need of. The hucksters are provided with such an assortment as to be able to supply the negro with a coarse check, or the manager with a fine cambric, for his shirts. Coloured women of all descriptions are extravagantly fond of dress; but those resident in the country, not having such an opportunity as the Stabroek ladies of seeing every thing new as it arrives, feel a lively sensation of joy and pleasure at the sight of a huckster, and anticipate the pleasure of tumbling over the contents of her trunk; and if it contains any new articles of fashion, their hearts beat high with wishes to obtain them. If a joe or a dollar be still remaining, it is sure to go: should their purses be empty, they make no hesitation in asking for credit: such is the general character and conduct of coloured women.

There is a certain stage in the progress of civilization, in which a country is most conveniently supplied by pedlars. The inhabitants live too far asunder, and are not numerous enough to support stationary shops; yet the probable consumption of each estate is sufficient to reward the journey of a hawker of wares.<sup>74</sup>

The system that Bolingbroke described appears to have been well-developed; thus, either attesting a great age or the magnitude or pull of the opportunity for this type of retailing which existed in the final decade of the 18th century. Bolingbroke was an articled clerk in the employ of a firm in Stabroek from 1799 to 1805. When he left Demerara he became deputy vendue master in Surinam. This latter post he held from 1807 to 1813.<sup>75</sup> His experience with the law and business lend credence to his observations.

The business of huckstering was a sophisticated concern according to Bolingbroke. Free women of Colour, most probably current or past mistresses of resident Europeans, were extended two or three months' credit by various merchants. One can only speculate as to the carrying charges. (Whether the colonial vendue--auction--office was granting credit at this time is not known. But the vendue office was extending credit to hucksters in 1825.)<sup>76</sup> These women according to Bolingbroke possessed from 10 to 20 Negroes who were sent about the country to sell their quota of goods. Whether "possess" meant personally owned slaves, hired slaves, or hired free people of Colour cannot be determined.

Most of the itinerant hucksters were women. The possibility that this was a transfer of a West African culture trait cannot be ignored. Often accompanied by an attendant and perhaps a donkey these hucksters visited the estates. How long a visit to an estate might have been is not known. But at least one full day or possibly two were needed to

complete the necessary haggling. How frequently an estate was visited by a huckster is another mystery. Did the hucksters travel in groups or alone? It would not be unreasonable to expect that a schedule was followed by the hucksters. Nor that the hucksters in the employ of an entrepreneur would be assigned certain parts of the country. The rural Sunday markets, or the town markets, may have provided the tempo or refrain for these estate visits. Bolingbroke wrote that the hucksters spent several weeks in the country.

The hucksters accepted cash, produce, animals, and segars (cigars). Whether they accepted the handicrafts produced by artisan slaves is not known; but it would not be unreasonable to believe that it was done. The money, less the huckster's percentage which is not known, was paid over to the employer. The produce, stock, and handicrafts would be sold directly or indirectly by the huckster in the town or rural markets. Business was done in the Negro-yards of the estates. But the luxury needs of the European staff might also be attended. Bolingbroke mentions "fine cambric" carried by the hucksters which could be used to make fine shirts.

The sums remitted by the hucksters to their female employers were probably significant. Bolingbroke expressed surprise at the large sums collected by the hucksters. There is no question that significant amounts of money were in circulation among the slave population. Bolingbroke also remarked that the Coloured women on the estates did not hesitate to ask for credit. Whether it was granted cannot be stated, but it probably was extended to established and big-spending customers.

Bolingbroke's final remarks on the stage in the progress of civilization in "which a country is most conveniently supplied by pedlars"

is a comment on the economy and social organization of Guiana. Shops could not survive in the rural areas because potential patrons could not have free access. Because the plantations had to supply the essential needs of their labourers this market was removed from the expectations of any potential shopkeeper. What remained was the market for luxuries; which being less intensive but widely distributed could best be met by itinerant hucksters. An example of luxury huckstering on a regional scale is that of J.F. Meyer. Meyer advertised in the Essequibo and Demerary Gazette jewelry, silverware, and hats to be had at a house in Werk-en-Rust, a then unincorporated suburb of Stabroek. The advertisement was placed in 1804. Meyer is representative of a class of respectable hucksters who vended luxury items to the West Indian upper classes.<sup>77</sup>

A memorial of 29 "Free Coloured Female Inhabitants" of Georgetown was submitted to Governor D'Urban and the Court of Policy in 1824. The memorial casts light on the position of the huckster and the employer in 1824. Relevant extracts are given below:

...your memorialists have for many years past been struggling hard to support with becoming decency ourselves and offspring, by the same means by which we formerly lived if not in affluence at least in comfort, by purchasing from the Merchants, Transient Traders and others, Packages of Goods, which we afterwards retailed in Town and country...by sending either our own or hired Negroes with legal passes to vend the same.

The memorial goes on to complain about the large amount of competition given by "an innumerable number of Slave Pedlars as well as white and free coloured" who neglect to acquire the legal and necessary licences. The memorial continues and bemoans the high cost of licences and the additional fees associated with the obtaining of these licences. Although the huckster licence had been established at 25 guilders (£2.08) per six

months; the stamping fee and the Government Secretary's fee added an additional 15 guilders (£1.25) per six months. The 40 guilder (£3.33) exaction every six months was far too high the memorialists complained.

Even the hucksters employed created difficulties. The women "...usually employed as Hucksters, acquire a habit of life! which renders them after wholly unfit for the field, or domestic purposes, so that even their value is considerably diminished." In addition, "...law suits, thefts of these very women, short reckoning, and the general bad state of the times," made earning a living difficult. The 29 female memorialists requested the Court of Policy to reduce the huckster licence fee. But the masculine Court refused.<sup>78</sup> The memorial reveals that the organization of huckstering had not changed significantly since Bolingbroke's day. The competition alluded to by the memorialists from slaves, Whites, and free Coloureds appears to have been a phenomenon which appeared after 1806.

#### Forestallers

Another post-1806 phenomenon was the appearance of forestallers of the market. In early 18th century Jamaica engrossment of the market was common enough to warrant an act of the Jamaican Assembly for its suppression. By the latter half of the 18th century the practice was believed to have disappeared. The accepted reason was that the Sunday markets had come to acquire important social as well as economic connotations.<sup>79</sup> An alternative explanation is that the system had become refined and that higglers (hucksters), such as exist today in Jamaica, had become firmly entrenched.

In 1819 in a letter to the Guiana Chronicle and Demerara Gazette a complaint was made about the forestallers. The writer, "Observer",

represented the "great evil existing", from a certain description of negroes, under the denomination of 'forestallers' who infest the public roads leading to the metropolis, and purchase up poultry, eggs, vegetables, fish, etc., etc., and subsequently exact a most extravagant price for the same..."<sup>80</sup>

The presence of forestallers may indicate that the system of market supply was yet immature. If one may generalize from the marketing supply system of 18th century and 20th century Jamaica the above will become clear.

The presence of forestallers can be interpreted in at least two ways. First, that they were genuine profiteers interested in extorting what they could in the town market. Second, that they were necessary elements in the collection and distributive process. The issue is whether forestallers were profiteering or functioning as middlemen in an agricultural marketing system. Did they sell their forestalled goods in the marketplace to the general public or to other individuals who dealt with the general public? If the former, they were possibly profiteers or what can only be designated a type of wholesaler-retailer. If the latter, they were agricultural wholesalers. This cannot be determined either way for a lack of information, but it must be kept in mind.

Forestalling on the road indicates that first, the prices offered by the forestallers were attractive enough to persuade some rural producers not to attend market (the charge of profiteering becomes difficult to sustain, because if the forestallers were profiteering surely the producers would hear of the high prices and decide to take direct advantage); second, that not all rural producers perceived attending market as a social occasion; and third, that the rural producers were themselves vending their goods in the market. The second and third points are straightforward.

It is the first statement that raises several intriguing points.

Forestalling was a stage in the Guianese system of collection and distribution. For some reason, the collection process had not yet reached the producer's residence. Its failure to do so may have been because of transportation difficulties or because there were few forestallers and competition had not yet forced them to directly approach the producer at his residence. Itinerant hucksters in Guiana had been agents in the process of collection for many years. In making their sales they were often forced to accept produce or stock in lieu of cash. Their role as collectors may thus have been inadvertant. Furthermore, their disposition of produce and stock remains a mystery. Did they sell these items directly to the public or to others who did sell directly? The appearance of forestallers added to the complexity of the collection and distribution system which at the same time simplified the exchange links.

The forestallers of Guiana and Jamaica are the predecessors of the higglers which supply contemporary Jamaican markets. Margaret Fisher Katzin in writing of the Jamaican higglers comments that "the higglering system does, in fact, perform an essential function by making available to consumers goods that are produced in small quantities on scattered... outlying farms."<sup>81</sup> Katzin goes on to state that "higglering requires a minimum of capital investment by the community" and that in Jamaica "the higglering system is a relatively efficient means of effecting the internal distribution of locally-grown produce."<sup>82</sup> This statement may also apply to conditions found in Guiana before 1838.

#### Sedentary Hucksters

It would not be true to assert that pre-emancipation Georgetown had no retail shops. There were small shops which catered to the luxury



needs of the local elite. But in addition to these, there were in 1822 numerous small shops or retail stalls located in the central business district and on the adjacent stellings. The small shops or sheds displayed a marked bias for the waterfront; an indication perhaps that there was substantial amount of river traffic. There had been several small fires in the town centre. The crowded conditions near the stellings gave the Board of Police cause for concern. A committee was set up to report on

....the small houses used as Huckster shops on the stellings; particularly that of New or (more appropriately called) Blackguard Stelling; some on Robb's Stelling, and a number on a stelling belonging to Messers. Massiah. The most of these huts are about 12 feet square without any fire place, and the occupiers using fire any neglect on their part endangers the whole town.<sup>83</sup>

Many wholesale merchants advertized their premises as being on a particular stelling. A stelling or wharf consisted not only of the structure which projected out into the river but also the attendant platforms which paralleled the river bank. The merchants' premises and the small houses of the hucksters were generally located on these platforms. The stellings mentioned in the foregoing extract were located in New Town and Robb's Town (wards of Georgetown) downstream from the public stelling on the waterfront of Stabroek Ward and in Werk-en-Rust, immediately upstream of Stabroek.

These small sheds were rented out to various individuals who wished to keep shop. The rent obtained for these in one year was "more than the value or fee simple of the whole" property. The fact that such high rents would be paid by the occupants testifies to the lucrativeness of the locations. But the Board of Police's committee was prepared to believe that the renters "must pay their rents by illicit traffic; and may well be...a rendezvous for vagrants and a harbour for stolen goods."<sup>84</sup>

The local elite was always ready to assume that the profits of petty retailers were ill-gotten. The Court of Policy authorized the Board of Police to arrange for the removal of these shops. The matter then disappeared from public view.

### The Huckster Population

Any estimate of the number of hucksters plying their trade in Demerara and Essequibo before 1818 would be conjectural. The same observation can be applied to the period between 1818 and 1838. But because the revenue gained from the issuance of huckster licences was separately recorded a minimum estimate of the huckster population can be made. The table below displays what information has been judged to be reliable. As licences were granted for a period of six months Table 3-4 has been constructed accordingly.

TABLE 3-4

The number of hucksters plying their trade according to estimates derived from revenues received from the sale of six-month licences during the period 1818 to 1837. (Footnote 85)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Hucksters</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Hucksters</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Hucksters</u>
1818	60	1827	55	1836	-
1819	99	1828	46	1837	5
1820	74	1829	40		
1821	34	1830	25		
1822	28	1831	6		
1823	68	1832	6		
1824	57	1833	--		
1825	44	1834	2		
1826	50	1835	--		

The free women of Colour in their 1824 petition complained about frequent evasion of the licence fee. The table substantiates their contention and suggests that they themselves eventually became engaged in violating the law. The estimates were derived from the huckster licence receipts in the annual revenue reports submitted to the Combined Court. The few licences issued in 1831 and succeeding years suggests that the colonial government was considering the abandonment of the huckster licence system. Even before the end of apprenticeship the Combined Court resolved to maintain the issuance of huckster licences. The fee was raised from 25 guilders (£2.08) per six months to 44 guilders (£3.67) per six months.<sup>86</sup>

This was done on June 7, 1838. On June 20, 1838 Michael McTurk, a member of the Court of Policy, moved that apprenticeship be terminated on August 1, 1838.<sup>87</sup> As the members of the Court of Policy sat with specially elected financial members to constitute the Combined Court, the tantalizing possibility that the drastic increase in the huckster licences and McTurk's motion were connected cannot be ignored. If there was a connection, the increase in the licence fee can only be regarded as punitive. For it was the soon-to-be-freed population which would bear the cost. Yet the cost was borne, for in 1842 there were 1179 licenced hucksters in Guiana.<sup>88</sup>

### Conclusion

There can be no doubt that within the constraints imposed by the slave plantation economy there were many opportunities for retailing. It has been the purpose of this chapter to determine the range of these activities and to ascertain which individuals were so engaged. The range

and number of individuals involved was considerable. Sufficient evidence has been accumulated to demonstrate that a substantial body of retailing experience came into being and that this was available to many Creoles. Given these facts, how was it that the Creoles were supplanted by immigrant Portuguese in the immediate post-emancipation years? This question is the subject of Chapter 4.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER THREE

1. Vance, James E. Jr., The Merchant's World, (Prentice-Hall, 1970), p.23.
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#### 4. RURAL RETAIL TRADE AND THE PORTUGUESE: 1838-1856

##### Prologue

Few students of pluralism have given much thought to the geographic element in the constitution of plural societies. Furnivall wrote of "medleys" and recognized that different sections of the plural society live side by side, but separately.<sup>1</sup> But few, including Furnivall, have recognized or utilized geographic distribution as a means or vehicle for furthering the understanding of the plural society. Yet, if the fundamental issue within the plural society is dominance of the society, then the geographic distribution of the dominant group is of great significance. This is especially so of those plural societies under the domination of minority groups.

One must ask not only where but how the dominant minority and its allies are distributed within the area of the State. It does the elite minority no good to be clustered in a single small area. In such a situation, supervision of the surrounding and more remote subordinate population would be ineffective. Military garrisons can work, but frequent patrols are necessary to overawe the subject population. The European elite of 19th century British Guiana was not in a position to exercise or command frequent displays of military might. On occasion, the Royal Navy could be called upon; but, the Royal Navy was not always at hand.

The small European elite was thus forced to bring into being an allied group whose function would be to support the status quo and to overawe the subject majority. The ubiquitous Portuguese shop was the vehicle of domination. It not only established a loyal "occupation

force" throughout the country but also checked the economic advance of the Negro. It was an elegant tactic and it worked.

### The First Rural Shops

When apprenticeship was introduced on August 1, 1834 both the planter and the town merchant began to prepare for the day when the Negro would be free. The planter cast about for alternative sources of labour in order to create a "set-off" to the Negro population. The town merchant, foreseeing the day when the estates would no longer purchase "Negro Supplies," fostered the establishment of rural shops in order to develop and capture the custom of the rural Negro. This custom was considerable, for substantial amounts of currency had long been in the possession of the Negro. With the introduction of apprenticeship the Negro's opportunity to acquire more money increased. The planter's claim on the Negro's labour had been reduced from 54 hours to 45 hours per week.<sup>2</sup> Yet the amount of necessary estate work did not decrease. In order to acquire more labour the planter was forced to bargain with the Negro and to pay a good price for the Negro's labour. The Negro thus acquired a cash income and a standard by which he could determine the value of his labour; a fact which was to prove troublesome to the planter after 1838.

The Negro's earnings continued to be tapped by itinerant hucksters and the few pre-apprenticeship rural shops. The number of hucksters plying their trade is unknown; for evasion of the licence fee became widespread as the declining huckster licence revenues testify. The few rural shops in Demerara and Essequibo were at Mahaica, East Coast Demerara, and at Aberdeen and Columbia (Capoe Barracks), West Coast Essequibo.

These shops were managed by Europeans, for before 1834 commerce was the monopoly of the European rulers and their Coloured offspring. Country shops managed by individual entrepreneurs or agents of Georgetown firms became increasingly common after the introduction of apprenticeship.

An advertisement headed "Country Store Keepers" placed in the November 30, 1836 issue of the Guiana Chronicle lends support to this thesis.

G.F. Smyth & Co., dealers in clothing, dry goods, and provisions, invited buyers "to prove the advantages offered by the establishment" where only "a small commission" was charged on "goods sold in lots."<sup>3</sup> This directed advertisement suggests that numerous private country shopkeepers were in business in late 1836. Such an advertisement would hardly have been directed at the country branches of Georgetown stores. It also suggests that talk of establishing country shops was current in the Georgetown merchant community. One such shop had been established on Plantation La Belle Alliance, W.C.E., in 1835.<sup>4</sup> That others were planned or had been opened is certain. For example, an advertisement placed in the Guiana Chronicle of September 20, 1837 sought a partner for a retail store in Essequibo.<sup>5</sup>

Two types of partnerships functioned in pre-emancipation Guiana. One was a purely local arrangement and the other possessed a metropolitan connection. The former were a means through which two or more capital short individuals aspiring to merchant status might pool their resources and set up business. One or more cargos would be imported or sufficient goods purchased from a merchant-wholesaler in order to get the business underway. The partnership would often be dissolved when the enterprise was large enough to fission. The local-metropolitan partnerships were

more enduring. These were arrangements having one or more partners in local residence and one or more partners resident in the metropolis. Colonial and metropolitan goods were exchanged between the two branches. Often, the names of the local and metropolitan branches were near anagrams of the other. For example: Fraser, Campbell & Co. of Demerara became Campbell, Fraser & Co. in Glasgow.<sup>6</sup> The latter partnership arrangement provided a model for the urban-rural partnerships of post-1834 Guiana. The model extended even to the names of the various branches. For example, the Georgetown firm of H. and W. Howes & Co. titled its Zorg, W.C.E., branch George Howes & Co. The Zorg store was managed by a resident partner who was also a blood relative.<sup>7</sup>

#### The Post-Apprenticeship Proliferation of Rural Shops, 1838-1841

By an act of the Court of Policy dated July 12, 1838 praedial apprenticeship was to end in company with non-praedial apprenticeship two years ahead of schedule on August 1, 1838. Prompted by the Court's decision Edward Bishop, proprietor of Plantation Zorg on the Arabian or West Coast of Essequibo, placed an advertisement in the July 16, 1838 issue of the Royal Gazette addressed "To Store-Keepers or Others." Bishop offered to let for use as a retail shop a newly erected house near the public road. In addition, a safe storeroom in the lower part of a brick windmill cone was available. Furthermore, the estate's boat landing was only 50 yards away from the prospective store. Finally, the estate's railway to the landing passed near the store and the storeroom. Bishop observed that "the estate's labourers (as no doubt others) will have to provide their own food for cash wages" after August 1st.<sup>8</sup>

Zorg was a thriving sugar estate with a population in 1839 of 278. This number and the 554 inhabitants of the two adjacent estates comprised a population more than large enough to require the services of a store.<sup>9</sup> Bishop's offer drew the attention of H. and W. Howes & Co. of Georgetown. After negotiations the property was purchased and George Howes & Co. opened for business in October 1838.<sup>10</sup>

Bishop was eager to divest himself of the responsibility to supply food and other supplies to his estate labourers. Other planters such as Dr. Michael McTurk (who had been instrumental in the early termination of apprenticeship) attempted initially to operate their own stores. Perhaps these were merely meant to be temporary affairs which would allow the estates to dispose of their redundant "Negro Supplies." Nevertheless, McTurk placed an advertisement in the August 20, 1838 issue of the Guiana Chronicle for "several persons to be employed on estates as teachers and occasionally to superintend the sale of provisions or supplies, as the labourers may, from time to time, require."<sup>11</sup> The number of estates attempting to manage their own shops was large enough, apparently, to give the Guiana Chronicle cause for concern. The pro-planter newspaper editorialized on August 27, 1838 that "there are no employers in this colony who will be so foolish as to attempt to impose upon their labourers by charging them unreasonable prices for any things which they supply them."<sup>12</sup> Even then, the hazards of the "company store" were appreciated. Planter interest in provision shops quickly waned. The majority of the shops established in the immediate post-apprenticeship years were not estate owned.

Both individual entrepreneurs and Georgetown firms were establishing rural stores in the final months of 1838. Georgetown wholesalers continued

to place advertisements directed to those "about to establish retail stores on estates, or in the country."<sup>13</sup> The distinction between stores on "estates" or in the "country" was very real. Many estate stores were located at the nucleus of an estate, which in E.C.D. was generally situated one to three miles (1.5 to 5 km.) from the public road. The country stores were generally on the public roads of abandoned or working estates. One suspects that some Georgetown firms took advantage of their creditor position with respect to certain estates and pressed for the estate's retail shop monopoly. One cannot demonstrate this particular intuition; but it was common practice for estate managers and Portuguese shopkeepers to have "arrangements" after 1845.

Other Georgetown firms in addition to H. and W. Howes & Co. were advertising the establishment of rural stores in late 1838. A. Glen & Co. opened a branch on Plantation Greenfield, a sugar estate located two miles (3.2 km.) west of the Mahaica River mouth. It was a general store whose prices were to be as those in Georgetown.<sup>14</sup> Not to be outdone, Moses Benjamin & Co. two weeks later announced the opening of their branch store on Plantation Lowlands. Lowlands was a sugar estate located one and one-half miles (2.4 km.) west of Greenfield. The competitive "Lowlands Store" offered all manner of goods "particularly adapted to the wants of the Agricultural Labourers" at prices identical to those of the "cheap cash stores" then making their appearance in Georgetown. Managers of the neighbouring estates were "respectfully invited to call the attention of their people to the advantages to be derived by patronizing the Lowlands Store, instead of taking long journies [sic] to town."<sup>15</sup> Georgetown was more than 20 miles (32 km.) away via an ill-maintained public road.

Between October 1838 and the end of 1840 at least 11 rural stores were advertised in the Georgetown press. All were located in Demerara and Essequibo and with two exceptions all were located 15 or more miles (24 km.) from Georgetown by public road or sea. Table 4-1 below lists these shops by parish from west to east (refer to Map 4-1 for parish boundaries). One can state with confidence that J.J. Trood & Co. and Jones, Trood & Co. were connected to the same Georgetown firm. John Jones was yet managing the "Endeavour Store" at the enumeration of the 1841 census. In contrast, the Abram's Zuil store appears to have changed hands by that date.<sup>17</sup> Less certainty, other than relational, exists about a connection between Charles Benjamin and Moses Benjamin. Charles Benjamin had advertised in April 1839 for a "young man" to take charge of an Essequibo store.<sup>18</sup> This suggests that he may have been the owner of the store or its rental agent. The store was under the management of Joseph Kleyn, a colony born white, at the time of the June 1839 census.<sup>19</sup> Charles Benjamin's wish to let the Spring Garden store "at a very reasonable rent" in November 1840 suggests that having one's store managed by an employee was not satisfactory.<sup>20</sup> F. Milliroux & Co. had taken over the premises and the business of Messrs. McDougall & Co. in March 1839. According to the 1841 census, a John McDougall was managing the Enterprise store.<sup>21</sup> It was possible that Messrs. McDougall & Co. had been dissolved by intent or death and that a new partnership in association with F. Milliroux & Co. was formed.

The movement of retailers to the populated areas of Demerara and Essequibo least accessible to Georgetown was predictable. Travel to Georgetown was not easy for the inhabitants of Essequibo even after the introduction of a steamer service in January 1839. The roundtrip

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MAP 4-1

Parishes in Coastal British Guiana, 1840.

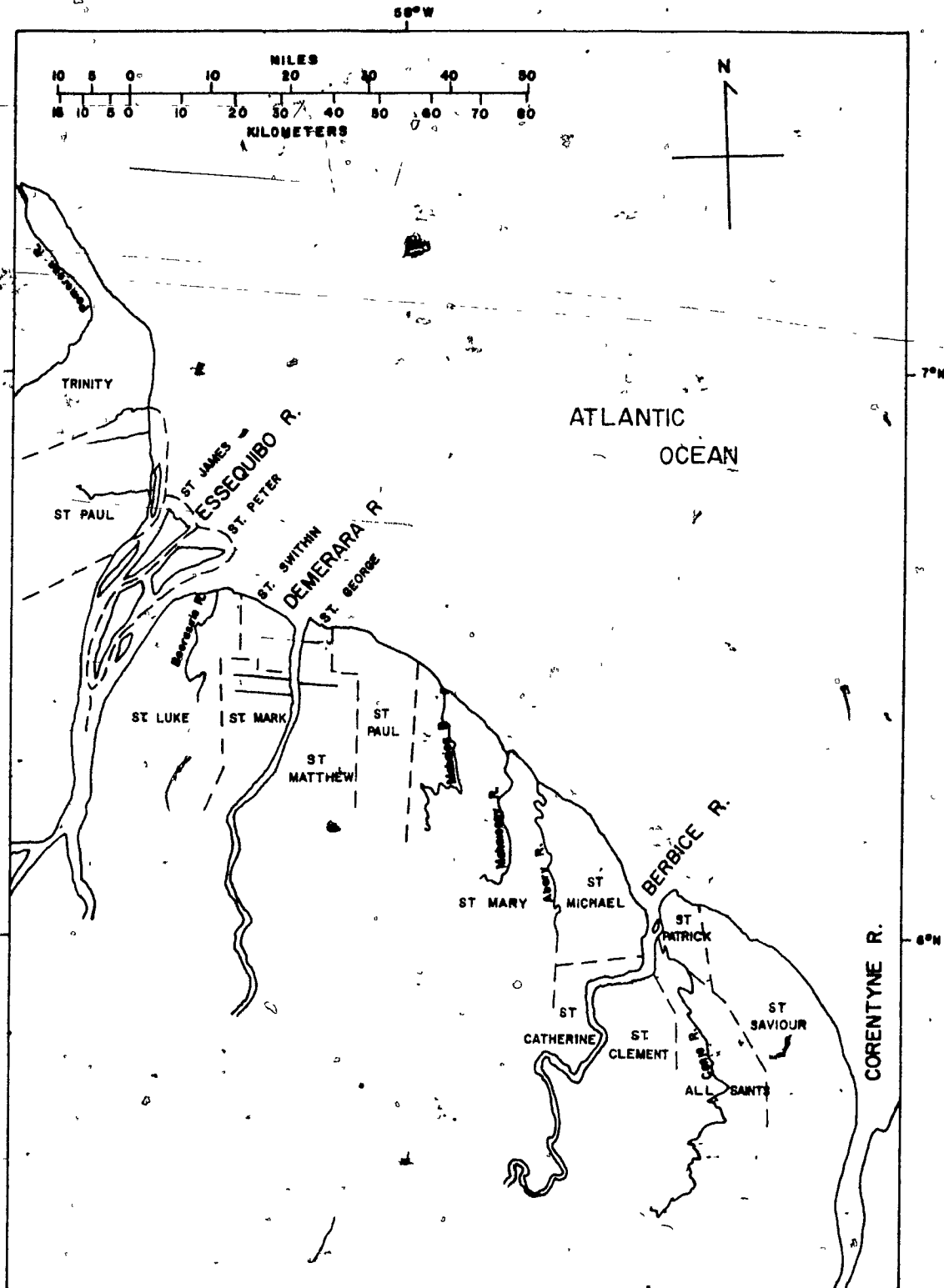




TABLE 4-1

Rural Shops Advertised in the Georgetown Press  
from October 1838 to the End of 1840  
(arranged from west to east). 16

<u>Parish</u>	<u>Estate</u>	<u>Advertisement Date</u>	<u>Proprietors</u>	<u>Status (new, rent)</u>
St. John	Abram's Zuil	July 30, 1840	J.J. Trood & Co.	new
St. John	Zorg	October 31, 1838	Geo. Howes & Co.	new
St. John	Spring Garden	November 12, 1840	Chas. Benjamin	for rent
St. Peter	Endeavour, Leguan	December 26, 1838	Jones, Trood & Co.	new
St. Peter	Enterprise, Leguan	March 27, 1839	F. Milliroux & Co.	old store, new proprietor
St. Peter	Amsterdam, Leguan	March 27, 1839	F. Milliroux & Co.	new
St. Swithin	Windsor Forest	March 25, 1839	Robt. Primrose & Co.	new
St. Paul	New Orange Nassau	December 16, 1839	J.A. Holmes	for rent
St. Mary	Greenfield	November 19, 1838	A. Glen & Co.	new
St. Mary	Lowlands	December 6, 1838	Moses Benjamin & Co.	new
St. Mary	Mahaica	December 14, 1838	G. Anderson & Co.	final auction of stock

fare from Airy Hall, W.C.E., to Georgetown was 12 guilders (£0.86); no mean sum for the bulk of the population. Furthermore, the journey took an entire day and could only be managed twice a week.<sup>22</sup> The residents of St. Mary's Parish, E.C.D., were in a similar position. The public road was not well maintained and in the rainy season became almost impassable because of the cattle drives from Mahaicony to Georgetown.

However, estate and other seaworthy craft plied between Mahaica and Georgetown thus affording an alternative mode of travel. The people living along the banks of the Canals 1 and 2 also encountered difficulties in gaining access to Georgetown; even though the Canals drained into that excellent highway, the Demerara River. The parishes most distant from Georgetown: Trinity, St. John, St. James, St. Peter, and St. Mary contained 26,736 people in 1841 or about 45 per cent of the rural population in Demerara and Essequibo. These isolated people most needed shops. From them, because they initially possessed but little choice, a greater margin of profit could be squeezed. The vehemence with which A. Glen & Co., Greenfield, and Moses Benjamin & Co., Lowlands, asserted that their prices were the same as those in Georgetown suggests that some profiteering was taking place.

The pull of Georgetown as a central-place accounts for the slower appearance of shops in the parishes adjacent to the town. This was especially evident in the Parish of St. Matthew, East Bank Demerara, even as late as 1852. The tendency of people in the parish to patronize Georgetown stores had been commented upon by Stipendiary Magistrate Thomas Coleman in December 1841.<sup>23</sup> The parish population in 1839 was 5,312. The census provides no evidence of any operating stores. In 1841, because of internal migration and indentured immigration the popu-

lation had risen to 7,318. The October 1841 census provides evidence for four general stores and one drugstore. One store was apparently owned and operated by the Great Diamond sugar estate. The remaining three general stores and the drugstore were located within a five-mile radius from the centre of Georgetown. One of the general stores was actually located in a suburb of the town. In contrast, Trinity Parish in Essequibo contained 6,655 people and five shops in 1839 and 7,888 people and eleven shops in 1841.<sup>24</sup> The central-place pull of Georgetown gains credence from this contrast.

#### The Revelations of the 1839 and 1841 Censuses

The 1839 and 1841 censuses of British Guiana were sufficiently thorough to enable one to state with some degree of confidence as to the number, distribution, and proprietorship of the rural shops then in operation. The June 30, 1839 census and the October 15, 1841 census gathered much the same data about each inhabitant of the colony. The data comprise for both censuses name, residence, age range, country of birth, sex, and occupation. In addition, the 1839 census recorded the colour of each respondent and his place of residence on August 1, 1838. The 1839 census was recorded in 19 folio volumes: one for each of the 16 rural parishes and New Amsterdam and 3 for Georgetown. The 1841 census was compiled in 21 folio volumes. Unfortunately, several volumes from each census have been lost. The volumes pertaining to the Parishes of St. Luke, St. Catherine, and St. Clement as well as the North and Central Georgetown volumes of the 1839 census are missing. In the case of the 1841 census, the volumes for St. Paul's Parish and Central Georgetown have disappeared. It was the opinion of the Commissary of Population for the

1841 census that the 1839 census was so "palpably deficient as to be useless as a reference for comparison" with the 1841 census.<sup>25</sup> In many respects this is true. The 1839 census was badly conducted in some parishes of the colony. The undercount was at least 15 per cent. It is with caution, therefore, that the 1839 census may be used.

Table 4-2 below contrasts the parish populations and their percentage of the total rural population for the census years 1839, 1841, and 1851. But for immigration the population of Guiana would have continued its long pre-emancipation decline. In 1817 the population of Guiana had been approximately 110,000. Eleven years later in 1828 it had declined to 101,000. According to the census of 1839 the population had declined further to 73,947. In contrast, the 1841 census determined a population of 98,947. However, 8959 of this total consisted of immigrants who had arrived during the 1839-1841 inter-censal period. This suggests that the 1839 population was approximately 90,000 and that an undercount of at least 15,000 if not more took place. One is forced to agree with the Commissary of Population.

By 1851 the population had increased to 125,858. Of this total, 22,778 had been born in Madeira, India, or were immigrants from Africa. The census did not categorize West Indian immigrants but it is known that slightly more than 2000 arrived between 1842 and 1851.<sup>27</sup> Therefore, perhaps as many as 25,000 or 20 per cent of the 1851 population were immigrants. The rate of natural increase of the long-established Negro population was then almost nil. For example, but for the presence of 1582 Madeirans and East Indians in Trinity Parish in 1851, the population of the parish would have declined to 6456 or 1432 less than in 1841.

TABLE 4-2

Rural Parish Population and the Parish Percentages  
of Total Rural Population in the Census Years  
1839, 1841, and 1851. (footnote 26)

Parish	Population			Per Cent Rural Population		
	1839	1841	1851	1839	1841	1851
Trinity	6655	7888	8038	11.22	10.36	8.52
St. John	4043	5173	6718	6.82	6.79	7.12
St. James	3106	4165	2414	5.23	5.47	4.46
St. Peter	3215	4268	3809	5.42	5.60	4.03
St. Luke	3912	5076	6588	6.59	6.67	6.98
St. Swithin	2487	3750	4243	4.19	4.92	4.48
St. Mark	3746	5019	7296	6.31	6.59	7.73
St. Matthew	5312	7316	8518	8.95	9.61	9.03
St. George**	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
St. Paul***	5848	9969	16,582	9.86	13.10	17.58
St. Mary	4754	5242	5917	8.01	6.88	6.27
St. Michael	3521	3592	4474	5.93	4.72	4.74
St. Catherine	2142	2212	3772	3.61	2.90	4.00
St. Clement	3423	3712	4206	5.77	4.87	4.46
All Saints	1606	2246	2383	2.70	2.95	2.52
St. Patrick	2121	2632	3304	3.57	3.45	3.50
St. Saviour	2498	2365	4231	4.21	3.10	4.48
Total	59,299	76,087	94,293			
Urban	14,648	22,046	31,565			
Guiana Total	73,947	98,133	125,858			

\*\* The small rural St. George population has been amalgamated with the Georgetown population.

\*\*\* The Parish of St. Paul may have been undercounted by 10 to 25 per cent in 1839.

Table 4-3 lists the rural parishes, the number of shops, and the shop to parish population ratios for the years 1839, 1841, and 1852. The sources for the number and distribution of shops are principally the 1839 and 1841 censuses and the Official Gazettes issued in July 1852. Although the many rural shops were of varying sizes, of necessity all have been assumed to be of equal size for the purposes of the ratios. This assumption is necessary because only the most sketchy of information has been found concerning the sizes of particular rural stores. Because the data for Berbice in 1852 were incomplete no shop numbers or ratios have been given. Sub-totals for Demerara and Essequibo for each year have been determined as well as the average shop to parish population ratios and the medians for each year. Because data were not available for St. Luke in 1839 and St. Paul in 1841 the medians and averages derived are not strictly comparable. Nevertheless, as enough uncertainty already surrounded the 1839 and 1841 censuses it was judged proper to include these parishes in the averages and medians where possible. However, Table 4-4 below orders all the rural parishes of Demerara and Essequibo but St. Luke and St. Paul.

The medians derived from the parishes listed in Table 4-4 for 1839 and 1841 differ little from those which included St. Luke and St. Paul in Table 4-3. In both instances the median value in Table 4-3 was one of the parish ratios contiguous to the derived medians in Table 4-4. In 1852, the derived medians of both Tables 4-3 and 4-4 were in close approximation. The means have also been determined for the eight parishes included in Table 4-4. The differences between the medians and the means in Table 4-4 are less than the differences of the medians and means in

TABLE 4-3

The Number of Provision Shops and the Ratio of these Shops to Rural Parish Population in the Census Years 1839, 1841, and in the year 1852.  
(footnote 28)

Parish	Provision Shops			Ratio Shop:Population		
	1839	1841	1852	1839	1841	1852
Trinity	5	12	27	1:1331	1:657	1:298
St. John	6	10	21	1:674	1:517	1:320
St. James	4	7	41	1:777	1:595	1:103
St. Peter	3	8	30	1:1072	1:534	1:127
St. Luke	n.d.	5	51	n.d.	1:1015	1:129
St. Swithin	2	4	30	1:1245	1:938	1:141
St. Mark	3	8	38	1:1249	1:627	1:192
St. Matthew	0	4	24	0:5312	1:1829	1:355
St. George*	---	---	---	---	---	---
St. Paul**	3	n.d.	117	1:1949	n.d.	1:142
St. Mary	8	10	23	1:594	1:524	1:257
Demerara & Essequibo				1:1245	1:627	1:167 median
Sub-Total	34	68	402	1:1004+	1:704++	1:179 average
St. Michael	1	3	n.d.	1:3521	1:1197	n.d.
St. Catherine	n.d.	4	n.d.	n.d.	1:553	n.d.
St. Clement	n.d.	9	n.d.	n.d.	1:412	n.d.
All Saints	1	2	n.d.	1:1606	1:1123	n.d.
St. Patrick	1	7	n.d.	1:2121	1:376	n.d.
St. Saviour	2	3	n.d.	1:1249	1:788	n.d.
Berbice						
Sub-Total	50	28	n.d.	1:1949=	1:599	n.d.
Guyana Total	39	96	n.d.	1:1270	1:689	

\* Rural St. George included with Georgetown

\*\* No data for 1841 and undercounted 10 to 25 per cent in 1839

+ Luke is not included

++ Paul is not included

= Catherine and Clement are not included

Table 4-3 for 1839 and 1841 but greater for 1852. These differences are given below in Table 4-5. The reduction in the median-mean differences was paralleled by a decline in the ranges. The decline in the ranges suggests that the distribution of rural shops to rural population was becoming increasingly regular. This is borne out by the reductions in the median-mean differences, suggesting also the development of a more regular and even distribution of shops.

The large median-mean difference from Table 4-3 in 1839 was due to the inclusion of St. Paul. The 1839 enumeration of St. Paul was very incomplete; perhaps as much as 25 per cent of the parish population had not been counted. St. Paul was excluded and St. Luke included in the 1841 calculations from Table 4-3. The slight variation between the differences derived from Table 4-3 and Table 4-4 suggests that both sets of ratios have equal validity. The slight differences between the median-mean differences derived for 1852 suggest an increasingly normal distribution of shops.

Of the eight parishes ranked in Table 4-4 only one, St. Matthew, did not deviate from its number eight position. Trinity moved from position seven in 1839 to position six in 1841, the position which it yet maintained in 1852. St. Mark moved from position six in 1839, to five in 1841, and to four in 1852. Of the four parishes possessing ratios higher than the median in 1852 only St. James and St. Peter, located in the Essequibo Islands, had had ratios consistently above the median. They were joined for the first time by St. Swithin and St. Mark in 1852. The most striking change was manifested by St. John. The parish declined from position one in 1841 to position seven in 1852.



TABLE 4-4

An Ordering of all the Rural Parishes of Demerara and Essequibo except St. Luke and St. Paul by their Respective Shop:Population Ratios for the Years 1839, 1841, and 1852. (footnote 29)

<u>1839</u>		<u>1841</u>		<u>1852</u>	
1:594	St. Mary	1:517	St. John	1:103	St. James
1:674	St. John	1:524	St. Mary	1:127	St. Peter
1:777	St. James	1:534	St. Peter	1:141	St. Swithin
1:1072	St. Peter	1:595	St. James	1:192	St. Mark
1:1245	St. Swithin	1:627	St. Mark	1:257	St. Mary
1:1249	St. Mark	1:657	Trinity	1:298	Trinity
1:1331	Trinity	1:938	St. Swithin	1:320	St. John
0:5312	St. Matthew	1:1829	St. Matthew	1:355	St. Matthew
1:1159	Median	1:611	Median	1:225	Median
1:1075	Mean	1:680	Mean	1:208	Mean
31	Shops	63	Shops	234	Shops
33,318	Population	42,821	Population	48,753	Population

TABLE 4-5

Differences between Mean and Median Ratios of Rural Parishes in Demerara and Essequibo as derived from Table 4-3 and 4-4; in addition, the Ratio Range for each Year is given. (footnote 30)

<u>Year</u>	<u>Median-Mean Difference</u>		<u>Range (the same for both tables)</u>
	<u>Table 4-3</u>	<u>Table 4-4</u>	
1839	241	84	4718
1841	77	69	1312
1852	12	17	252

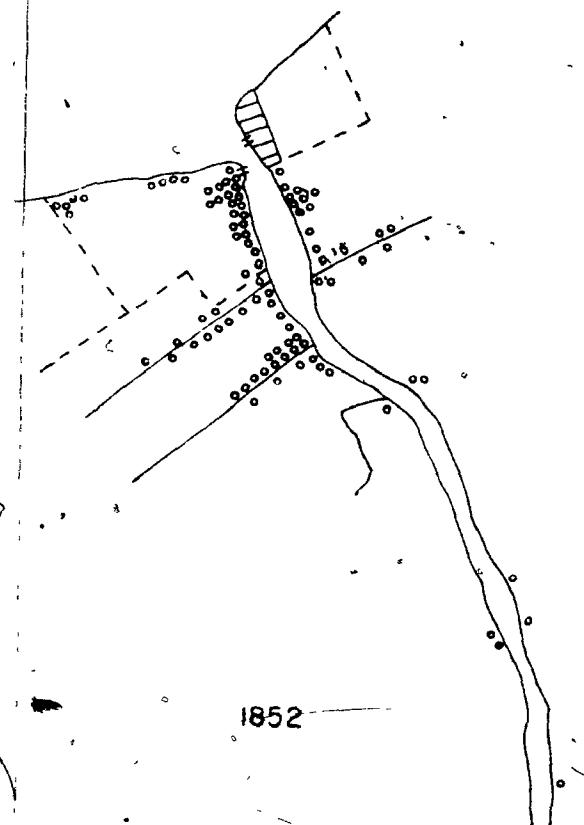
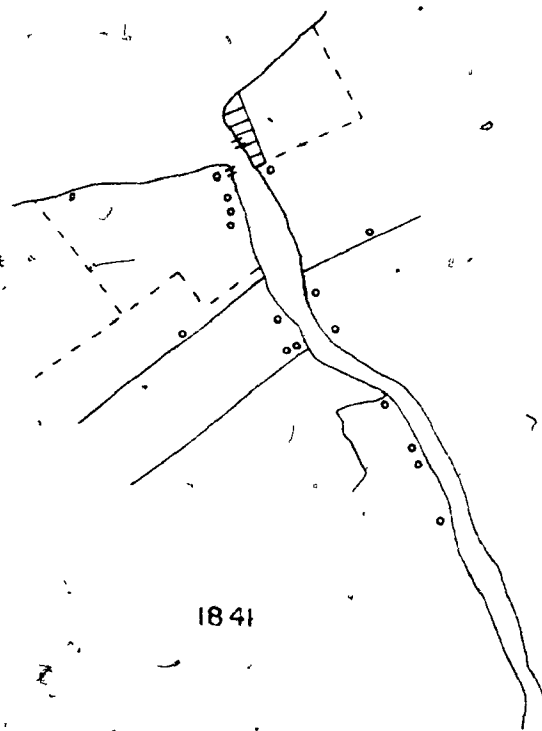
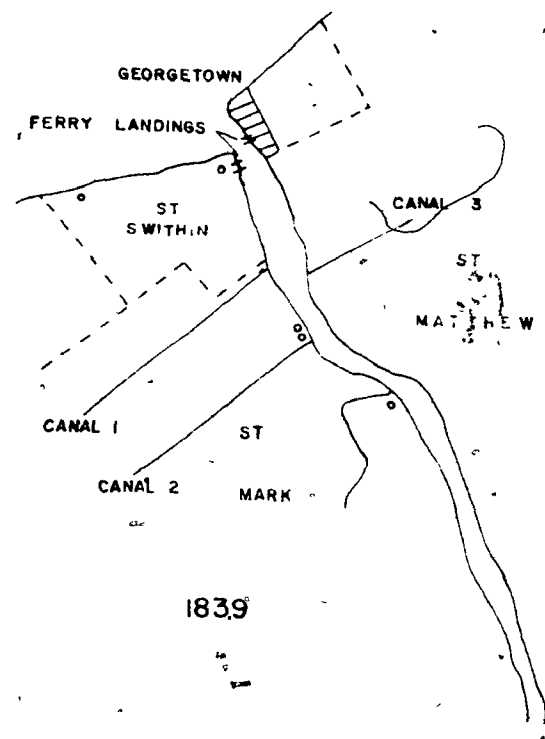
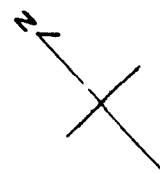
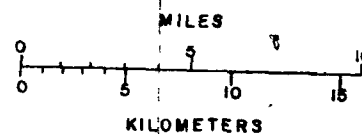
St. Matthew was the East Bank Demerara parish adjacent to Georgetown. Its consistent position eight is an indication of the central-place pull exerted by Georgetown. Trinity's low ratio was probably the result of the introduction of a large number of indentured labourers, and the existence of larger than average shops. Of the total Trinity population of 8038 in 1851, 2023 or 24 per cent were indentured or had been indentured labourers. The estates in many instances continued to purchase some supplies for their indentured labourers, another factor which may have brought about the low shop to population ratio. The Parish of St. Mark deviated least from the three medians presented in Table 4-4 and from the medians presented in Table 4-3. The "central tendency" manifested by St. Mark suggests that it can be regarded, in some respects, as the "typical" parish.

Located in ~~West Bank~~ Demerara and five miles (8 km.) upstream from Georgetown, St. Mark was the source of much of the capital's fresh vegetables, ground provisions, and fruits. In addition, the parish contained several moderately sized sugar estates. The parish included the entire west bank of the river upstream from Canal 1 as well as the estates bordering the Canals 1 and 2. Nearly all of the parish's population lived along the two canals and in a 12-mile (19 km.) stretch of river-bank extending upstream from Canal 1 to Maria's Lodge, Map 4-2 illustrates the parish's location with respect to Georgetown and the neighbouring river parishes of St. Swithin and St. Matthew. In three sections, Map 4-2 displays the locations of shops in the three parishes for the years 1839, 1841, and 1852.

In each year, the prominence of La Retraite at the mouth of Canal 2 is evident. In 1839, Louis Brotherson was operating a bakery

MAP 4-2

Distribution of shops in the Parishes of  
St. Swithin, St. Mark, and St. Matthew in  
1839, 1841, and 1852.



and provision store on La Retraite. He may have commenced operations at an earlier date, because, he was resident on La Retraite on August 1, 1838. In 1841, Louis and his brother Thomas jointly managed the shop and the bakery in competition with a second shop that had opened nearby.<sup>31</sup> The bakery's bread and cakes were vended by huckster women all about west Demerara. That the legal niceties were not always observed was demonstrated by the Commissary of Taxation for West Coast Demerara. The commissary seized the trays of bread and cakes of several of the Brotherson's employees because they did not possess a valid licence. This took place in 1844. In the same year, in addition to the store and bakery, Louis Brotherson was still the licence holder of a retail spirit shop on La Retraite. This licence was first acquired in 1842.<sup>32</sup> The Brothersons were thus engaged in three different businesses, a characteristic of many of the large rural shops.<sup>33</sup> In 1852, the Brothersons were still in business at La Retraite but were no longer operating a retail spirit shop. However, Thomas Brotherson had become the holder of a huckster licence which was used by his employees. Six other shops were functioning in La Retraite at that time; of these, five were run by Portuguese and the sixth shopkeeper was the possessor of a European name, Fox Campbell. One of the Portuguese also held a licence for a shop at Patientia in addition to a huckster licence. One of the remaining Portuguese and Fox Campbell also held huckster licences.<sup>34</sup> The Brothersons were Coloured men, an unusual characteristic for shopkeepers in 1839.<sup>35</sup>

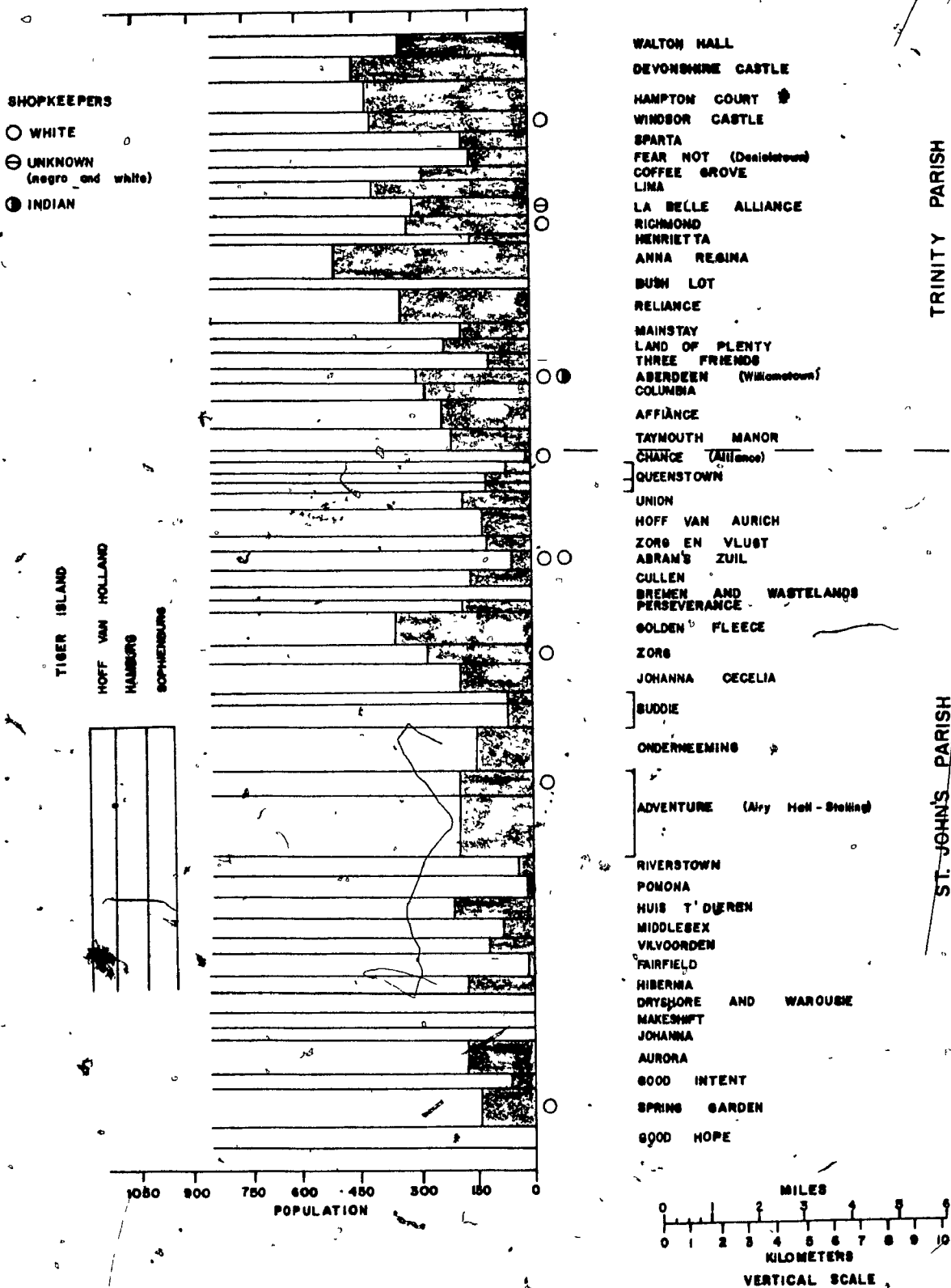
The distribution of shops in St. Swithin and St. Matthew was less extensive in 1841 than in St. Mark. Both St. Swithin and St. Matthew possessed very low shop to population ratios in that year. In St. Swithin, three of the four shops were situated in the vicinity of the west bank

public road. The fourth was near the ferry stelling. In St. Matthew, one of the four shops was situated in Canal 3 five miles (8 km.) from the southern boundary of Georgetown. Access to the Canal 3 estates was by water or by the public road which paralleled the canal. The two shops upstream of Canal 3 were five and six miles (8 and 9.6 km.) from the limits of Georgetown. The store nearest Georgetown was situated in the front lands of Plantation La Penitence, a developing suburb of the city. The influence of Georgetown upon the appearance and distribution of provision shops in St. Matthew is apparent in 1852. The density and number of shops in East Bank Demerara were far less than the density and number of shops on the west bank, although the populations did not differ by more than 15 per cent.

Additional light on the appearance of rural retail shops can be got from an examination of the two West Coast Essequibo parishes of Trinity and St. John. Their remoteness from Georgetown allowed for a more "natural" development of rural shopkeeping. The estate populations and shop locations are illustrated in Cartograms 4-1, 4-2, and 4-3. Because of the nature of settlement in coastal Guiana it is possible to utilize a device such as the cartogram. The various plantations of the two parishes have been arranged west to east or top to bottom on the cartogram. The frontages of the various estates on the public road are of differing widths. These varying widths have been preserved on the cartogram. On the small cartogram of Tiger Island, no attempt to preserve the major scale has been made. The vertical scale is in miles and kilometers and represents the public road. Most of the people lived along the public road or at most one quarter to one half mile (.4 to .8 km.)

-163-  
CARTOGRAM 4-1

Population and Shop Distribution in June 1839.



CARTOGRAM 4-2  
Population and Shop Distribution in October, 1841.

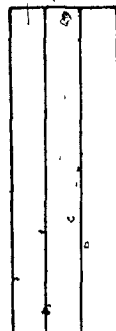
SHOPKEEPERS  
○ WHITE  
○ UNKNOWN  
(negro and white)  
● BLACK

TIGER ISLAND

HOFF VAN HOLLAND

HAMBURG

AMSTERDAM



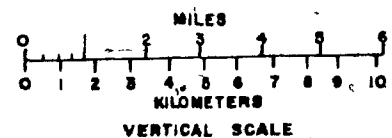
POPULATION  
1050 900 750 600 450 300 150 0

NB Three shops cannot be located

WALTON HALL  
DEVONSHIRE CASTLE  
HAMPTON COURT  
WINDSOR CASTLE  
SPARTA  
FEAR NOT (Densitope)  
COFFEE GROVE  
LIMA  
LA BELLE ALLIANCE  
RICHMOND  
HENRIETTA  
ANNA REGINA  
BURN LOT  
RELIANCE  
MAINSTAY  
LAND OF PLENTY  
THREE FRIENDS  
ABERDEEN (Wilmington)  
COLUMBIA  
AFFIANCE  
TAYMOUTH MANOR  
CHANGE (Alliance)  
QUEENSTOWN  
UNION  
HOFF VAN AURICH  
ZORG EN VLUGT  
ABRAM'S ZUIL  
CULLEN  
BREMEN AND WASTELANDS  
PERSEVERANCE  
GOLDEN FLEECE  
ZORG  
JOHANNA CECILIA  
SUDOE  
ONDERNEEMING  
ADVENTURE (Ary Hall - Stelling)  
RIVERSTOWN  
POMONA  
HUIS - T' DIJEN  
MIDDLESEX  
VLVOORDEN  
FAIRFIELD  
HIBERNIA  
DRYSHORE AND WAROUSIE  
MAKESHT  
JOHANNA  
AURORA  
GOOD INTENT  
SPRING GARDEN  
GOOD HOPE

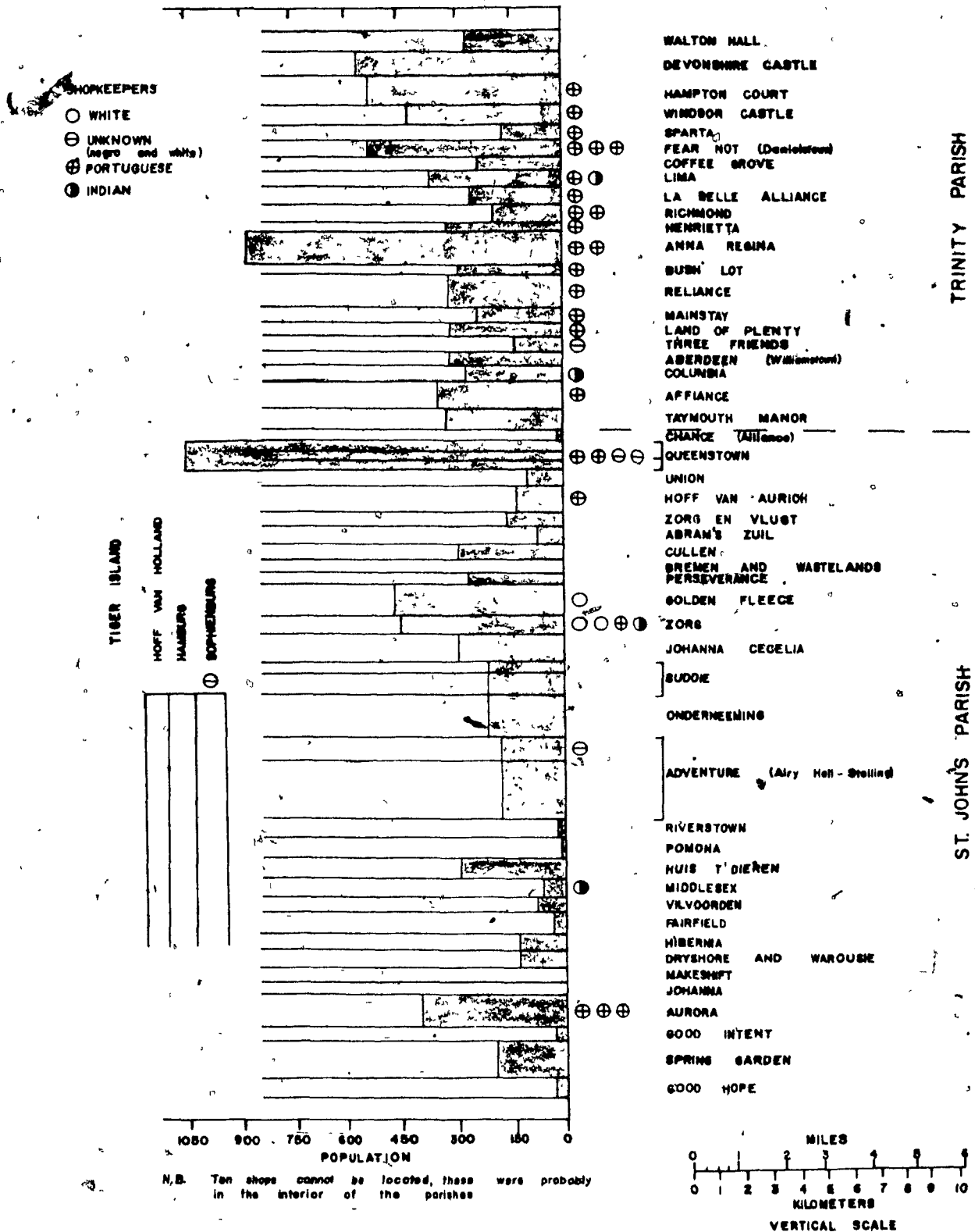
TRINITY PARISH

ST. JOHN'S PARISH



CARTOGRAM 4-3

Population and Shop Distribution in July 1852





towards the interior. The horizontal scale provides a measure for each estate's population. Hence, the histogram-like appearance of the cartograms. The various symbols located between the estates and their names indicate the presence of a shop and the colour or ethnicity of their proprietors. In the case of the 1852 data presented on Cartogram 4-3, ten shops could not be located because the licence holders gave only the parish as their place of residence. It is likely that these shop licences were utilized in the non-estate or interior portions of the parishes.

Estate activity was especially pronounced in Trinity Parish and on a few estates in St. John. The Trinity estates of Devonshire Castle, Hampton Court, and Anna Regina were among the most prosperous in the colony. At the same time, the village movement of the 1840's resulted in the establishment of several large rural communities. Queenstown, on the boundary between Trinity and St. John, was the largest and most successful. Others were Danielstown (Fear Not), Williamstown (Aberdeen), Suddie (Belfield), Riverstown, and Huis t' Dieren. Large numbers of indentured labourers had been introduced by 1852. Of the total population of Trinity and St. John of 14,756 in 1851, 16 per cent had been or were indentured labourers. This percentage included 1375 East Indians and 958 Madeirans. The population in 1851 contained 1695 or 13 per cent more people than in 1841. It is clear, that but for the introduction of indentured labourers the population would have declined.

The number of shops increased from 11 in 1839, to 21 in 1841, and to 48 in 1852 (the ten which cannot be placed and which were probably in the interior parts of the two parishes have been excluded). The proliferation of shops in Trinity Parish is the most striking feature that comes to one's attention when comparing the cartograms. As this was an

The number of people per shop cell in Trinity and St. John  
Parishes, West Coast Essequibo, in 1841 and 1852.

FIGURE 4-1

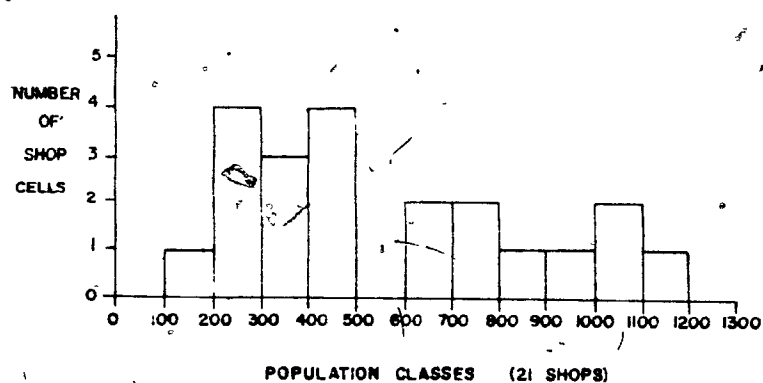
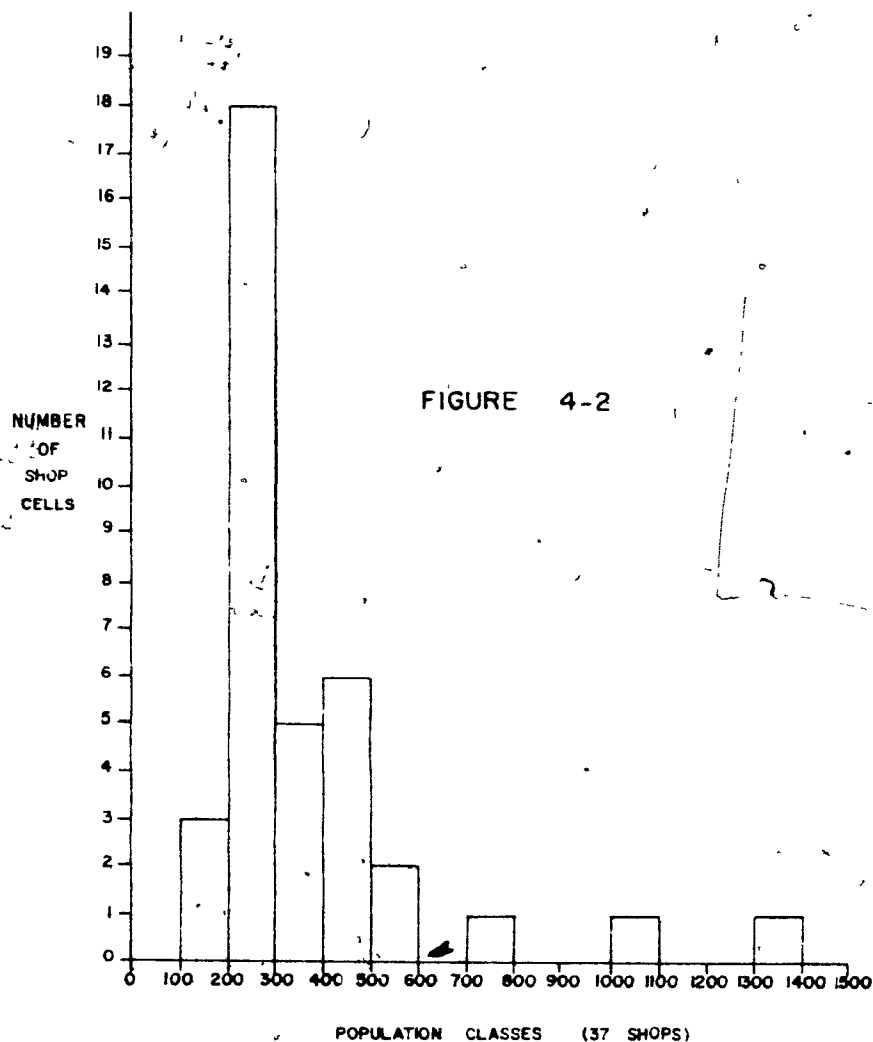


FIGURE 4-2



area of populous and prosperous estates this was to be expected. In contrast, with the exception of Queenstown, Zorg, and Aurora in St. John, very little change apparently took place in the neighbouring parish. However, the three shops located on Abram's Zuil in 1841 were gone in 1852. As Abram's Zuil was midway between Queenstown and Zorg, the former a large free village and the latter a large sugar estate, the demise of these shops may be understood. It may be coincidence, but in 1852 the shops on Zorg, Airy Hall, Middlesex, and the shops on Aurora were equidistant. The distance between each cluster of shops was two and one-half miles (4 km.). If one places the Golden Fleece shop with those on Zorg, then the next nearest shop was two and one-half miles (4 km.) distant on Hoff van Aurich. A maximum journey of one and a quarter miles (2 km.) was the lot of those people living furthest from the shops in the row of estates bounded by Hoff van Aurich and Aurora.

Given the assumption that the rural population would utilize the services of the nearest shop or cluster of shops, the potential customer population for each shop can be determined. Figures 4-1 and 4-2 are histograms displaying the distribution of the potential customer population cells for each shop in Trinity and St. John in 1841 and 1852. If two or more shops were located on the same estate the population in that particular cell was divided equally among the shops. Again, the shops are assumed to have been equal in every respect. The average cell in 1841 contained 622 people; whereas the median cell in the same year contained 486 people. The difference of 136 suggests, as the histogram indicates, a large spread of customer cells. In 1852 the average cell contained 370 people; whereas in the same year the median cell contained 278 people. The difference of 92 and the histogram suggests that the

establishment and the distribution of rural retail shops was fast approaching the end of the post-emancipation boom. Everyone in Trinity and St. John can be said to have had adequate shop facilities at hand in 1852. The supply vacuum created by the withdrawal of the estates from their former supply responsibilities had been filled. Thereafter, the appearance of new shops would be linked to the growth of the country's population.

For analytic convenience it has been assumed that the shops under examination have been equal in size. Such was not the case. Most of the White-managed stores were large. Indeed, the presence of a White proprietor could be taken as an indication of a large store. A typical example of a large rural general store with an attached retail spirit shop was Nicholas Hearne's Boerasjrie Store in West Coast Demerara. The store was situated on a plot of land 4 roods by 9 roods, about one-eighth of an acre (.05 hectare), at the sideline dam between Met-en-Meerzorg and De Kinderen and adjacent to the public road. The building housing the store and dwelling was a two-storied structure 50 feet long and 20 feet wide (15 by 6 m.) with the store below and the dwelling above. It possessed a slate roof. In addition, there was a shed covered with white pine shingles, a coach-house, an out-building used as a kitchen, a horse stable, an oven, and two water vats. The oven served as the nucleus of a bakery. Further, a sloop capable of carrying 50 barrels, one American wagon, a spring cart, two horses, a cow and calf, eight sheep, and a Spanish watch dog completed an inventory of the non-merchandise effects of the store. Several hundred varieties of goods in varying quantities constituted the goods of the store, not to mention the spirits needed to manage the rum shop. This substantial establishment was not cheap to

maintain. But it was, in every sense, a general store.<sup>36</sup>

Other rural shops were seldom so grand but were constructed on similar lines. The short-lived Eliza store, W.C.E., consisted of a two-story structure with the living quarters above and the shop below. Side buildings accommodated the kitchen, the servants, and the stables.<sup>37</sup> The Chateau Margot store, E.C.D., was built in a similar fashion, in addition, the store proprietor possessed a retail spirit licence and bakery facilities.<sup>38</sup> The Queenstown, Essequibo, store occupied by H. Tilbury possessed much the same features.<sup>39</sup> The arrangement of the large rural store structures and their outbuildings replicated a pattern established in Georgetown and elsewhere in the West Indies. It allowed the proprietor to guard his shop and to take advantage of the breezes afforded by the dwelling's height above the ground. Detached kitchens were required by law in Georgetown because of the fire hazard an attached kitchen engendered. It also enabled the householder to preserve the coolness of his dwelling. The large ovens provided the only source of bread in the rural areas. The shopkeepers could gain a supplementary income by baking bread and cakes and hiring hucksters, as did the Brothersons on La Retraite, to vend about the neighbouring estates. This style of shop and the attendant style of living were expensive to maintain. Because of this, the Portuguese by making sacrifices were able to undercut the larger establishments. Nevertheless, the standards set by the European retailing elite were the standards to which the Portuguese aspired.

### Colour and Ethnicity among the Shopkeepers

Before emancipation in 1834 all commerce above that of the most petty type was in the hands of the Europeans. Assisting them to some extent were their Coloured offspring. The position and status of the European merchant was almost invulnerable. The large slave and later apprenticed population and the few Free Coloureds not connected by blood could not hope to begin to displace the commercial elite; because the elite monopolized the external links of credit and supply. During the four years of apprenticeship this situation had not really changed. It only gradually began to do so after 1838. Commerce continued to be a White monopoly not only in the towns but in the rural districts. Evidence for this assertion comes from the 1839 and 1841 censuses.

Table 4-6 provides a colour and ethnic breakdown of the shopkeepers cited by the two censuses with minor additions from other sources for the rural parishes of British Guiana. Approximately 75 per cent of the rural shopkeepers in 1839 were White. Of these, all but five had been born in Europe. In 1841, 50 per cent of the shopkeepers had been born in Europe. Of the 40 who were born in the West Indies or Guiana perhaps as many as half were White. If so, then the percentage of White shopkeepers in 1839 and 1841 did not appreciably differ. The number of known Brown shopkeepers was the same in both years. But it is likely that a significant if not majority percentage of those born in the West Indies and Guiana were Brown. No Black shopkeepers were recorded in 1839, but again, there were probably more than two in 1841. The most interesting addition to the types of shopkeepers in 1841 was the lone Portuguese. Not surprisingly, Juan Fernandes' shop in Maria's Lodge was in that median parish, St. Mark. The shop was situated near the upper limit of dense settlement

in St. Mark and is the first example of a Portuguese shop outside of Georgetown.<sup>40</sup>

By July 1852, of the 423 rural shops in Demerara and Essequibo 312 or 73.75 per cent were in the hands of the Portuguese. An additional 13 or 3.07 per cent were managed by East Indians. The remaining 98 or 23.16 per cent were being managed by Coloureds, Blacks, and Whites. Many of the White-managed stores went out of business during the course of the 1840's. The "Lowlands Store" was for rent little more than a year after its grand opening by Moses Benjamin & Co. in December 1838. In 1845, the Zorg store premises owned by George Howes & Co. and operated by that company since 1838 were auctioned off. The price got was one-third of that paid for the premises in 1838.<sup>41</sup> Other White-owned and managed stores suffered similar fates. In March 1844, A. Glen & Co., operators of the Greenfield store, auctioned off their entire stock and went out of business.<sup>42</sup> Again in 1844, the Oena Store of Abram's Zuil, then operated by J.T. Glover, was up for sale.<sup>43</sup> Other stores affected in West Coast Essequibo were situated on La Belle Alliance, Eliza, Richmond, and Sandy's Cottage at Abram's Zuil. Elsewhere in the country at least a dozen other White-managed stores went out of business or exchanged hands.

In one instance the White proprietor died and the Administrator-General of Demerara and Essequibo disposed of his effects. This was Nicholas Hearne's Boerasirie Store. The Boerasirie Store and attendant spirit shop had been managed by Arch. Templeton in 1841. Sometime after, Nicholas Hearne took possession.<sup>44</sup> After the sale in September 1846, Little & Barber of Georgetown, possible the major creditors, came into possession of the store. In December 1846 they put the store and grounds up for sale.<sup>45</sup> In December 1847, J. & C. Harrison advertised the store as

TABLE 4-6

Number of Shops and Colour of the Rural Shopkeepers  
in 1839 and 1841  
(Sources; Censuses of British Guiana in 1839 and 1841)

Parish	1839				1841					
	White	Brown	?	Total	White	Brown	Black	Portuguese	?	Total
Trinity	3	1	1	5	5	-	1	-		6 12
St. John	6	-	-	6	8	-	-	-		2 10
St. James	4	-	-	4	3	-	-	-		4 7
St. Peter	-	-	3	3	4	-	-	-		4 8
St. Luke	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.		4	-	-	-		1 5
St. Swithin	2	-	-	2	1	-	-	-		3 4
St. Mark	2	1	-	3	3	1	-	1		3 8
St. Matthew	-	-	-	-	3	-	-	-		1 4
St. Paul	1	1	1	3	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.		
St. Mary	7	1	-	8	6	2	-	-		2 10
St. Michael	1	-	-	1	1	-	1	-		1 3
St. Catherine	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.		-	-	-	-		4 4
St. Clement	n.d.	n.d.	n.d.		5	-	-	-		4 9
All Saints (rural)	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-		2 2
St. Patrick	1	-	-	1	3	1	-	-		3 7
St. Saviour	2	-	-	2	3	-	-	-		- 3
Total	30	4	5	39	49	4	2	1		40 96



being for rent.<sup>46</sup> It was yet in their possession in March 1855.<sup>47</sup> Many of these stores were to come into the hands of the Portuguese.

#### The Introduction of the Portuguese: Their Bent for Commerce

In 1839, 253 Madeirans were resident in British Guiana. These were the survivors of the small immigration of 1835 with the addition, perhaps, of some unrecorded immigrants. In December 1840, Governor Henry Light reported in a dispatch to Lord Russell that

The greatest portion of European emigrants, who were not mechanics or artisans, have entirely left agriculture; they have become shopkeepers and hucksters: in the latter capacity they have almost beaten the black population out of the trade, at least of that in the precincts of Georgetown.

I have remarked six shops, owned apparently by many partners, set up within the last few months by the Portuguese; four of these shops are in one street, and all seem to thrive; one is almost on the footing of an inferior store. Large fortunes have been made here from small beginnings. The Portuguese, as well as the Maltese, whom I recall on their arrival here, as the most filthy looking beings in the colony, are beginning to dress better, look more cleanly, wear good Sunday clothes, and are fast recovering from the squalid and depressed state in which they seemed to be.<sup>48</sup>

The number of Madeirans and Maltese introduced between 1835 and 1840 was respectively 429 and 208. Neither group made good field labourers and both tended to desert the estates for a more congenial life in Georgetown or New Amsterdam. Governor Light's comment about the Portuguese having "almost beaten the black population out of the trade" seems a bit far-fetched. Six shops do not constitute a victory. Yet, these six shops must have been prosperous enough to capture the attention of the governor, who was a very astute man, and to impress him favourably.

The second stream of immigrants from Madeira began to arrive after February 1841. In that month the colonial government offered a subsidy to cover the cost of migration from Madeira to Guiana. Between

February and the census enumeration of October 15, 1841, 2711 Madeirans immigrated to Guiana. This immigration received an impetus from the famine which was then afflicting the island. Many Madeirans, already mal-nourished and weak from the Atlantic crossing, fell victim to the yellow fever (it may have been malaria) epidemic which struck the colony in late 1841 and continued into 1842.<sup>49</sup> The epidemic and the difficult field labour expected of the Madeirans proved too much for many. Desertions from the estates became common. The deserters drifted about the country and gradually converged upon Georgetown. Perhaps assisted by their fellow countrymen who had already taken up shopkeeping, many Madeirans became itinerant hucksters.

The free Negroes, meanwhile, had been pooling their resources in order to purchase land and establish communal villages. In November 1839, 84 labourers had accumulated \$10,000 (£2000) for the purchase of Plantation Northbrook. It was renamed Victoria and set the pattern for 29 other cooperative purchases effected by December 1844.<sup>50</sup> In addition, many planters such as Barton Premium sold small plots of land to their estate labourers thinking to assure a labour supply as well as to turn a profit.<sup>51</sup> Much, but not all, of the Negroes' capital which might have been channeled into commerce went into land. However, the number of Negroes engaging in huckstering increased. Many of these new hucksters neglected to acquire the legal licence and became the subject of a denunciatory editorial in the Royal Gazette. The Gazette in September 1839 stated that "it is a notorious fact, that there are many who daily carry grocer's trays themselves on their own account, or who employ others to do so for them, who have never yet taken out a pass, nor paid one stiver of licence." One huckster woman had only recently told her employer that

it was no longer necessary "to take out pass any more" for those who sold without passes were more in number than they who had them.<sup>52</sup>

What appeared to be an alarming drift of Negroes from the estates into huckstering and petty retailing prompted the planter-dominated Court of Policy to double the huckster licence in 1842 to \$30 (£6.25) per year and to raise the almost non-existent shop tax to \$25 (£5.21) per year. The Gazette and General Advertiser observed in May 1842 that "these taxes originated, we suspect, not so much in hopes of revenue as in a morbid dread that the whole labouring population would turn hucksters and petty traders." [my emphasis] The Gazette chided the planters and pointed out that

...a certain number of retail dealers are absolutely necessary to administer to the wants of the population; but the idea that all the labourers would turn hucksters and petty shopkeepers, is only one of those flights of fancy for which sugar planters are remarkable. So far from stripping the plantations of labourers, the hucksters and petty traders contribute greatly to keep the labourers on the plantations. If they did not bring the goods to the labourers, the labourers would be obliged to go to the goods. The journey of one huckster into the country saves the journey of 30 or 40 labourers in to town. This certainly must be obvious to every one capable of thinking. The convenience of the petty retail provision shops lately established in all parts of the town, is well known to every housekeeper. On the other hand, the hucksters and small shopkeepers are of the greatest use to the Water-street merchants in getting off their goods. They supply a gap, an intermediate step between the importer and the small consumer, absolutely essential, and to be found in every civilized country. They contribute also to increased sales. A shrewd dealer lately remarked that, but for the Portuguese hucksters the sales of dry goods would have fallen off far more than they have; for, notwithstanding the disposition of the labourers to save, the articles exhibited before their eyes by a huckster, tempt them to buy many things for which they never would have taken a journey to town.<sup>53</sup> [my emphasis]

Perhaps the planters had some cause for concern; but the suspicion is that the trauma of emancipation sensitized them to "progress" of any sort manifested by the Negro. Some resentment was initially directed to

the Portuguese. The Guiana Chronicle in September 1841 complained about the return of a few Madeirans to their native homeland with small fortunes made from huckstering. The Royal Gazette in reply indignantly asked "What if a small number of Portuguese Immigrants have made little fortunes by a huckstering trade and have returned home with them?"<sup>54</sup>

In his June 1841 report for W.B.D., Stipendiary Magistrate K. Heyland stated that "Portuguese immigrants, as hucksters, nearly monopolize the country traffic."<sup>55</sup> Stipendiary Magistrate J. Allen of W.C.E. commented in his December 1841 report that "Hucksters are numerous, which business is now almost exclusively carried on by the natives of Madeira, many of whom find this occupation either more profitable, or more congenial to their taste, than agricultural labour."<sup>56</sup> The planters did not wish to see the Negro rise above his appointed station. The Madeirans soon came to be regarded as allies. From August 1841 to March 1842 about 139 new shops were opened in Georgetown. Of this number, 42 were exclusively or partially managed by Portuguese.<sup>57</sup> Although there were 180 licenced hucksters in the 1841-42 fiscal year,<sup>58</sup> because of stringent enforcement of the licence law by the end of 1842 some 1179 hucksters were licenced. This suggests that the number of hucksters had always been large and that evasion of the licence had been the norm. At the same time, 420 shop licences had been granted in all British Guiana.<sup>59</sup>

Madeiran hucksters continued to appear throughout the country. The stipendiary magistrates continued to report that the Madeirans were monopolizing the huckster trade.<sup>60</sup> Yet, according to the figures issued by the Receiver-General's Office in 1845, the Madeirans held only 40.5 per cent of the 800 licences issued to the public between July 1844 and February 1845.<sup>61</sup> This hardly was a monopoly. Interestingly, all the 324

Madeirans holding huckster licences were male; whereas, of the remaining 476 licences 190 were held by males, 215 by females, 62 by individuals whose sex was not specified, and 9 by estates and business firms. The stipendiary magistrates may have been misled as to the prominence of the Madeirans contrasted with the darker skinned majority. Their darker rivals were more likely to pass unnoticed. A second possibility is that the Madeirans had briefly in 1842 and 1843 truly monopolized the huckster trade. Then, having amassed sufficient capital they proceeded into sedentary shopkeeping. Tangential evidence for this intuition comes from the decline of the rural White shopkeeper in the mid-1840's.

Table 4-7 displays the number of rural hucksters in Demerara and Essequibo in July 1852; for by 1852, two types of huckster licences were being issued. One was for use only in Georgetown and the other was for use only in the country districts. Many holders of the latter sort of licence lived in Georgetown and periodically ventured forth into the rural areas. In July 1852, 95 town licences had been issued to 60 Creoles and 35 Madeirans. Percentage-wise, this was 64.1 per cent and 35.9 per cent. The rural licences issued in the same month reveal a similar percentage distribution. Less than 39 per cent of the huckster licences were held by Madeirans. In only two parishes did the Madeirans possess half or more of the rural huckster licences issued. In St. Mark, precisely 50 per cent of the huckster licences were held by Madeirans. Georgetown and rural St. George also contained a majority of Madeiran licence holders. The rural huckster licences held by people living in Georgetown accounted for 34.4 per cent of all the rural huckster licences issued in Demerara and Essequibo. Of these, 57.07 per cent were held by Madeirans. The percentage of rural huckster licences held by Madeirans was, whether

TABLE 4-7

Holders of Rural Huckster Licences in Demerara and Essequibo  
in July 1852, their Place of Residence, Ethnicity, and the  
Percentage of Licences held by the Various Ethnic Groups. (footnote 62)

<u>Parish or Town</u>	<u>Rural Huckster Licences Held By</u>				<u>Per Cent Distribution</u>		
	<u>Portuguese</u>	<u>Creole</u>	<u>Indian</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Portuguese</u>	<u>Creole</u>	<u>Indian</u>
Trinity	13	24	1	38	34.21	63.15	2.63
St. John	8	21	-	29	27.58	72.41	----
St. James	3	22	-	25	12.00	88.00	----
St. Peter	5	34	-	39	12.82	87.17	----
Essequibo R.	3	17	-	20	15.00	85.00	----
St. Luke	16	31	1	48	33.33	64.58	2.08
St. Swithin	6	9	1	16	37.50	56.25	6.25
St. Mark	22	21	1	44	50.00	47.72	2.28
St. Matthew	5	25	-	30	16.66	83.34	----
Demerara R.	7	20	-	27	25.92	74.08	----
St. George Rural	6	2	-	8	75.00	25.00	----
St. Paul	20	26	-	46	43.47	56.53	----
St. Mary	3	30	3	36	8.33	83.34	8.33
Total Resident Rural	117	282	7	406	28.81	69.45	1.72
Resident in Georgetown	121	90	1	212	57.07	42.45	.47
Total	238	372	8	618	38.51	60.19	1.29

parish by parish or in toto, much less than the percentage of rural shop licences held by Madeirans in each parish or in all Demerara and Essequibo. Precisely when large numbers of Madeirans shifted from huckstering to shopkeeping cannot be accurately determined. But it probably took place in late 1844 and early 1845. Stipendiary Magistrate William Carbery of W.C.E. observed in June 1845:

The number of shops in the district affords evidence of considerable internal traffic; many new ones have been opened by the Portuguese during the last six months, who seem to be gradually supplanting every other description of petty trader.

It frequently happens that a shop which is found unprofitable, and has been relinquished by the former owner, a European or Creole, is rented or purchased by a Portuguese, whose activity and address seem at once to attract custom, and his superior industry and economy enable him to turn to advantage a position which the more expensive and indolent habits of his predecessor rendered profitless.<sup>63</sup>

Of the 48 shop licences issued for the parishes of Trinity and St. John in 1852, 28 or 58.3 per cent were held by Portuguese. William Carbery was perhaps the most thorough and excellent of all the stipendiary magistrates. His observations of an increase in the number of shops can be believed. He even touched upon the great competitive advantage of the Portuguese; that they were willing to make sacrifices which their European and Creole predecessors were not willing to make in order to stay in business. The lush days of a seller's market were ending and a country storekeeper could no longer afford to lead a life of luxury.

Henry Dalton in his 1851 History of British Guiana remarked of the immigrant Portuguese that it soon "became evident that agriculture" was not their forte. The Portuguese commenced business in town and

...behind their small and dirty counters, began to amass large sums of money by the sale, in small quantities, of salted provisions, rice, flour, potatoes, fish, beer; in fine, everything needed by the individual who 'kept house'....This was but a prelude to the display of their commercial spirit and enterprise. The success attending their town speculations led them to adopt the same system in the country....profits were small, but as they sold their goods rapidly, and their expenditure was not great, they, most of them, contrived to realise large sums. The gross income of such shops was from £20 to £30 per week....Not content with purchasing goods from the merchants' stores...many afterwards imported goods on their own account, and rented houses in Water Street, where they either retailed to their countrymen or competed with the British merchants.<sup>64</sup>

By their willingness to sell small amounts of several items the Portuguese were able to build up a custom among the people. They, by being able to purchase wholesale, were able to save on their own domestic consumption. This also enabled them to put substantial amounts of money aside.

The first import of goods by the Portuguese took place in October 1843. The Royal Gazette in its "Review for Home Readers" commented upon the sudden rise to commercial prominence by the once indentured labourers.

Within the last few days, a brigantine called the ZARGO has arrived in our river from Madeira, under circumstances which seem likely to lead to great future changes in the commercial history of this country.

The vessel, which was of small size, had been chartered, for the large sum of \$1900 (£380) by a couple of Portuguese, on their own account, and that of some of their fellow-countrymen, who had all within a very few years emigrated to this colony in a state of most complete poverty, and who, after trafficking for a short time as the keepers of petty shops, had returned to their own country for the purpose of laying in a large assortment of goods as importers to the Demerary market. The cargo...consists of wines, esculents of various sorts, and a quantity of fancy articles....

The rapid growth of the fortunes of these people now, as it would seem about to enter our markets as general merchants and importers, is attributable, in a great measure, to the assistance they received from many mercantile firms of between 4 and 5 years back, after the passing of the great measure of the emancipation. To explain this, it is necessary to state a certain object which our commercial houses of that day, and many other influential parties in the Colony had in view. A great part of the small retail or huckster trade, as it is called, was at that time in the hands of



a large number of our native population, the members of which either kept little shops in the towns, or travelled about the country with packages of goods for sale to the different estates, the villages on which, inhabited by the labourers, are, in most instances remote from each other. It was thought that could these traffickers, many of whom having been brought up to no other calling were fit for no other, be thrown out of their old employment by successful competition, the necessary consequence would be that they must all be driven into the field to earn their livelihood. To a certain extent, partially, though far from uniformly, this expectation was answered. By the coalition that had been entered into between the Portuguese and those whom we have mentioned, these foreigners, whose savings had not then amounted to enough to raise them from a condition of the most abject misery, and many of whom had shortly before arrived in the colony as indented laborers,---an occupation which they took the first opportunity of giving up in disgust,---were entrusted in the first instance, with goods, on the easiest terms of credit, to carry about the country and to dispose of to the estates' people; while their native rivals were favoured with no credit at all, or a very stringent one. On these advantageous terms, the Portuguese pedlars soon drove the natives engaged in the same line, though entirely off the field, not exactly into it, as was anticipated. Numbers of the ejected flocked into the towns, and have remained in them ever since, earning their subsistence in a precarious, and not always a very commendable way. The Portuguese, however, had not yet completely defeated their competitors. They had beaten them on the road, and in the rural districts; to these latter still remained the command of the small settled trade in the towns. But the strangers had already gained a great advantage; they had derived, moreover, some profit from their new enterprise. The same parties, who had formerly assisted them, still lent them a helping hand to further deeds: little imagining that the day would ever come when the poor and humble dependent would think of exalting himself to the same pitch as the opulent and haughty patron. Credit had already been made easy to the Portuguese and when they became purchasers in the warehouses of merchants, it was found that to start shops of their own, Portuguese money went further than any other. What was the consequence? It followed almost as rapidly as it may be told. The Portuguese became the monopolists of the whole retail trade of the country; for they immediately undersold, and the reason is not to be wondered at, everybody else in the same way of business as themselves. These two causes have been the peculiar secrets of their eminent and most remarkable success. A few short years have glided by, and lo! we behold them the possessors of thousands, and beginning to take their stand, side by side, on an equality, with the great importing merchants of the country. The small domestic trade they have already made their own; they are now about to enter upon the wider path of foreign commerce; with what success events will show. The attempt proves that they are not destitute either of sagacity, daring, or ambition.<sup>65</sup> [my emphasis]

The prediction of the Royal Gazette came to pass.

The whole purpose of indentured immigration was, as John Gladstone observed in 1838, to provide a "set-off" to the Negro population. The Negro was not going to be allowed to get "uppity." His labour was needed on the plantation and not wanted elsewhere. The report of the Royal Gazette, whether it be true or mere allegation, described this syndrome. The advantageous terms of credit given the Portuguese in contrast to the harsh terms of credit given the Negro had the effect, whether by design or accident, of displacing Negro entrepreneurs from the field of petty retailing. Negroes remained competitive in huckstering but lost out to the Portuguese in shop-keeping. Easy credit terms granted the Portuguese had the effect of fostering a particular ethnic dominance in a particular and vital sector of the domestic economy. Whether advertantly or not, the policy of "set-off" resulted in the structural pluralization of Guianese society.

The allegation that substantive assistance had been given the Portuguese appears only once in the newspapers of the time. One newspaper article may appear to be a small straw upon which to support a major argument. Yet, the support is stronger than it appears. Similar admissions of support given the Portuguese appear in letters of Sir Henry Barkly to one of his merchant associates in Liverpool and in letters of Josiah Booker to his associates in the same city.<sup>66</sup> Both men were not only in a position to know but were also in a position to influence events. Barkly was a Guiana planter, former member of Parliament, and eventually governor of British Guiana. Booker was a Liverpool merchant whose house came into the possession ultimately of nearly all the producing sugar estates in the country. Finally, there are the attitudes and the behavior of the Negroes towards the Portuguese, these became increasingly hostile during the course of the 1840's.

The Negroes had conducted a successful strike to prevent the reduction of estate wages in January and February of 1842. This display of collective muscle, albeit non-violent, gave considerable alarm to the White community, both planter and merchant. Assistance to Portuguese hucksters and shopkeepers may date from the strike. It is a fact that the planters began to press for increased indentured immigration. The merchant community may also have taken alarm and decided to restrict Negro retailing activities. Planter persuasion and the desire perhaps to preserve a White monopoly, even if it meant the incorporation of "inferior" Whites, may have given the urge a greater impetus. The Royal Gazette report was made in October 1843 and was perhaps sufficiently near to the "point of origin" for the facts not to have been seriously garbled. No indication is given as to the frequency of granting easy credit to the Portuguese. But if one merchant demonstrated that a profit could be made by so doing, others no doubt followed. Additional favouritism was given the Portuguese during the long contract controversy of 1846-1848. The Court of Policy and the planters wished to impose long term contracts upon East Indian and African indentured labourers. Neither the Court nor the planters "paid much attention to the fact that the Portuguese imported on bounty were...entirely free of...obligation." The desire of the Portuguese to "get on" in Guiana facilitated their adoption of the attitudes of the ruling elite and an acceptance of the status quo until they were in a position to challenge it. "It seems safe to say, at least, that the European community would have preferred to see Portuguese rather than Negroes enhancing their status through retail trade..."<sup>67</sup>

The commercial successes of the Portuguese over the Negro population also support the thesis that assistance and favouritism were given

the former and denied the latter. In Chapter 3 it was demonstrated that a body of commercial expertise had developed among the Negro population. In the immediate post-apprenticeship years numerous small shops were established by Negroes and Coloured people. Twenty-seven Creole shopkeepers in a petition to the Court of Policy dated January 6, 1842 complained of the imposition of the shop tax; demonstrating, if nothing else, that the Creole shopkeeper was willing to put up a struggle.<sup>68</sup> A local newspaper several months later accused the planter dominated Combined Court and the Court of Policy of deliberately imposing huckster and shop licences of \$30 (£6.25) and \$25 (£5.21) per-year in order to discourage Creoles from leaving the field.<sup>69</sup> A year later, the same newspaper charged that the Portuguese were being given assistance and favours whilst their Creole rivals were being hindered.

Attitudes toward the Negro changed from optimistic in 1838 to the pessimistic only a few years later. Governor Henry Light initially held very pro-Negro views. But by the beginning of his second five-year term as governor in 1843 his attitudes were beginning to converge with those of the planters. In the reports of the stipendiary magistrates one finds constant references to the Portuguese monopoly of the huckstering trade. It appeared that they could do no wrong. Yet, the Portuguese did not possess a majority of the huckster licences issued between July 1, 1844 and February 6, 1845. Nor did the Portuguese monopolize the huckster trade in 1852. However, the Portuguese had made great strides in capturing the rural shop trade. Table 4-8 below lists the parishes, the number of shops in each, and the ethnicity of their proprietors in July 1852. The succeeding table, Table 4-9, gives the parish population, the number of Portuguese

TABLE 4-8

Rural Shop Licences held in Demerara and Essequibo  
in July 1852. (footnote 70)

<u>Parish</u>	<u>Shop Licences Held By</u>				<u>Per Cent of Shop Licences Held By</u>		
	<u>Portuguese</u>	<u>Creole</u>	<u>East Indian</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Portuguese</u>	<u>Creole</u>	<u>East Indian</u>
Trinity	19	6	2	27	70.37	22.22	7.40
St. John	9	7	5	21	42.85	33.33	23.80
St. James	32	9	-	41	78.04	21.96	-----
St. Peter	22	2	6	30	73.33	6.67	20.00
St. Luke	44	7	-	51	86.27	13.73	-----
St. Swithin	23	7	-	30	76.67	23.33	-----
St. Mark	30	8	-	38	78.94	21.06	-----
St. Matthew	17	7	-	24	70.83	29.17	-----
St. George (Rural)	21	-	-	21	100.00	-----	-----
St. Paul	84	33	-	117	71.79	28.21	-----
St. Mary	11	12	-	23	47.82	52.18	-----
Total	312	98	13	423	73.76	23.17	3.07

TABLE 4-9

Number and Per Cent of Portuguese Population  
in the Parishes of Demerara and Essequibo in 1851.

<u>Parish</u>	<u>Parish Population</u>	<u>Portuguese Population</u>	<u>Per Cent Portuguese</u>
Trinity	8038	532	6.6
St. John	6718	426	6.3
St. James	4214	220	5.2
St. Peter	3809	97	2.5
St. Luke	6588	550	8.3
St. Swithin	4243	771	18.1
St. Mark	7296	799	2.7
St. Matthew	8518	818	9.6
St. George (Rural)	1424	218	15.3
St. Paul	16,582	1590	9.5
St. Mary	5917	305	5.1
Total	73,347	5726	7.8

resident in each, and the percentage of the population which is Portuguese. Table 4-8 reveals the extent to which the Portuguese had gained control of the retail trade in rural Demerara and Essequibo.

Whether one orders only the eight parishes listed in Table 4-4 or all the parishes listed in Table 4-8 one discovers that St. Mark, the "typical" parish, occupies the median position. Yet, the percentage of Portuguese resident in St. Mark in 1852 was very low. This very low number suggests that at least half of the Portuguese in St. Mark were engaged in shopkeeping or were dependents of shopkeepers. The remainder were engaged in truck farming. Table 4-9 reveals that with the exception of peri-urban rural St. George and St. Swithin, the Portuguese population did not exceed 10 per cent in any other parish; a fact which enhances their commercial significance. Meanwhile in Georgetown, of the 296 shop and store licences issued in July 1852, 171 were held by Portuguese and the remaining 125 were held by Whites and Creoles. In New Amsterdam, of the 52 shops licenced 28 were held by Portuguese and 24 by Whites and Creoles.<sup>71</sup>

Commenting upon the commercial prominence of the Portuguese, The Colonist observed on March 5, 1852 that:

The Madeirans, it is true, have taken the trade out of the hands of the Creoles, but that is less the misfortune than the fault of the natives. They cannot compete with their rivals, because they are generally deficient in that industry, economy and perseverance which characterise the exertions of the Portuguese. It is no common praise to a race who came here scarce 10 years ago destitute and penniless, that, in many instances, they are now wealthy merchants, forming the intermediate link between the great importing firms and the retail shops. They have turned their industry into every available channel and in every instance with marked success. They have broken down the old monopolies and materially cheapened the rate of living, and in that they have benefitted the colony to an incredible extent.<sup>72</sup>

The Colonist relegated the Negro to the status of an inferior being. His failure to get ahead was his own fault. Whereas the Portuguese, initially despised because of their "filthy habits" had become the new models of "industry, economy, and perseverance."

#### The Creole Response, Retreat and Riot

The village movement of the 1839-1850 period can be characterized by three succeeding emotions: confidence, caution, and despair. The initial movement to the villages took place between 1839 and the end of 1841. Enjoying the benefits of freedom and wishing to rise in the world, resources were pooled and estates purchased in order to enable the Negroes to become the proud owners of property. Men were able to live in their own houses on their own land and travel to the adjacent estates for work. After the successful strike of 1842, when because of declining prices the planters attempted to reduce wages, many more Negroes left the estate lodgings and acquired their own properties in either established villages or newly founded villages. The strike, although successful, had apprised them of the dangers of being too dependent upon the estates. This second pulse continued to 1844 and actually included more people than the first movement to the villages. The planters, stung by their defeat, prepared for the next encounter by supporting extensive immigration. When the planters once again attempted to reduce wages in 1848 the Negroes once again went on strike. They lost. The large numbers of indentured labourers had not joined the strike but continued to work. The Negro labourers were thwarted in their attempts to shut the estates down and were forced to accept a reduction in wages. Once again large numbers of Negroes left the estates.



thus swelling the populations of the old villages and creating a few new settlements. Several years later, in an attempt to halt this drift away from the estates, the colonial government prohibited the communal purchasing of estates.<sup>73</sup> Because of policies implemented by the colonial establishment the Negro came to believe, justly, that he had been robbed of the fruits of freedom. Instead of allowing him to get ahead the colonial establishment at every opportunity had struck him down. The immigrants introduced by the establishment came to personify the oppression under which the Negro laboured. This sense of oppression and hostility to the most visible and successful of the immigrants manifested itself in a series of riots in 1846, 1847, 1848, culminating in the most widespread and destructive of the riots in 1856.

The first instance of a mob attack upon a Portuguese shop took place in Albert-Town, a suburb of Georgetown, on April 1, 1846. The proprietor of the shop and his wife were assaulted "by an infuriated mob" who maintained that the Portuguese were "taking the bread out of their mouths." [my emphasis] The mob looted the shop of merchandise and loose cash to the value of \$500 (£104). The shopkeeper, Manuel Pereira, rather shaken by the experience petitioned the Court of Policy to compensate him for his losses and to repatriate him and his family to Madeira. The Court ordered the claim to be brought up with the estimates.<sup>74</sup>

Little more than a year later a serious attack by a mob of 2000 to 4000 was directed against the Portuguese shops in New Amsterdam. "Breathing fury against the foreign intruders" the mob pillaged the shops of the Portuguese on the evening of May 18, 1847. The Berbice Gazette reported that

Those very persons who crowd the churches on Sundays were amongst the foremost in the mob which was got up evidently for no other purpose in the world than that of robbing and stealing from the Portuguese that property the possession of which has excited against them the envy and hatred of such as from improvidence or lack of sufficient industry are unable to compete with them in anything to which they turn their attention.

In partial mitigation, the newspaper stated

That there are also faults on the side of the Portuguese, and that they have lately become very insolent to the Creoles we have reason to believe...<sup>75</sup>

In both riots, the Portuguese were the focus of the mobs' grievances against the establishment. The accusation that the Portuguese were "taking the bread" out of Negro mouths was true. The Portuguese at the instigation of the real villains in this epic, the colonial establishment, were causing hardship among the Negro population.

In March 1848 a third outbreak of violence against Portuguese shops took place. Between the 15th and 20th of March rioting took place at Sisters Village, Highbury, and L'Enterprise Village in East Bank Berbice.<sup>76</sup> Six Portuguese shops were looted. The rioters were ultimately quelled by a small force of police and 66 arrests were made.<sup>77</sup> No real reason for the rioting was ascertained by the governor. But there can be little doubt that envy of the prosperity of the Portuguese and resentment of their privileged position within the society contributed to the start of the riots.

The ostensible cause of the 1856 riots was a series of anti-Catholic and anti-Portuguese harangues delivered in the marketplace by the "Angel Gabriel," John Sayers Orr. Orr had acquired an unsavory reputation as a rabble-rouser in such distant places as Glasgow and Boston. When he returned to Guiana in December 1855 he immediately launched into

a crusade against "the abuses of popery and the profligacy of popes, bishops, priests and nuns." The government, alarmed by the tone of his speeches and the crowds assembling in the marketplace to hear Orr, moved to prevent Orr from addressing any more public meetings. Undaunted, Orr retreated to his mother's house in Albert-Town and continued to address large crowds from that vantage. He was arrested, brought before a magistrate, and charged with holding an unlawful assembly. On that same day, February 18th, rioting commenced.<sup>78</sup>

The course of the riots gave every indication of foreplanning and coordinated effort. Messengers were dispatched from Georgetown to all parts of the country artfully giving out that they were under the orders of the governor who had decreed that "all the Portuguese shops should be destroyed."<sup>79</sup> At Mahaica, a man from the Canals in Demerara read from a paper, purported to be from the Queen, which ordered the expulsion of the Portuguese.<sup>80</sup> Many, but not all, of Her Majesty's loyal subjects were deceived. By February 21st the authorities had re-established control and investigations into the nature of the riots commenced. The compensation claims for damages caused during the riots exceeded £60,000.

Governor Wodehouse in a dispatch to the Colonial Office on the riots observed that as the rioting spread in Georgetown

...the true character of the disturbance was revealed. The popes, the bishops, the nuns, were clean forgotten. Nothing remained in the minds of the actors but the long subsisting hatred and jealousy of the Portuguese immigrants from Madeira, and the love of plunder, aggravated by the gross and brutal character of the female population, who have throughout the colony taken a most active part in the riots, and who are of course the most difficult to punish.<sup>81</sup>

Many Creole women were hucksters and petty shopkeepers. They had obvious reasons for a hatred of the Portuguese. The violence in the rural districts

was such that with few exceptions, every Portuguese shop in the rural areas was gutted. This was the case in Leguan, in Wakenaam, in the Parish of St. John, St. Paul, and St. Mark. In St. Mark, violence was also directed at the Portuguese truck farmers operating in Canal 1. Approximately 150 Portuguese refugees had fled the mob and taken refuge at Vauxhall near the mouth of Canal 1. To the elite, the most ominous note had been sounded by rioters in East Coast Demerara. The stipendiary magistrate in the district reported that shouts of "when we have done with the Portuguese we will attack the whites" were heard.<sup>82</sup>

This perceptive cry pinpointed the source of the Negro's troubles, the ruling elite of the colony. But the ruling elite was too strong to attack directly; hence the victimization of their proteges, the Portuguese. The violent attacks on the Portuguese and the ease by which they were precipitated indicates that substantial reserves of resentment lay just below the surface of every-day life. After emancipation the Negro wished to better himself. The planter wished him to remain as he was, a field labourer. But the planter feared the bargaining power of a united Negro population. Thereafter, even before apprenticeship's end, various schemes to import labour in order to "set-off" the Negro population were under discussion. The 1842 strike convinced the planters that in order to survive they must have indentured labour. They got it, and their successful weathering of the 1848 strike proved the value of their policies.

The European attempt to maintain control of post-emancipation society required that the Negro remain at the bottom of the social pyramid. In order to effect this various schemes and policies were implemented. The discovery that the Portuguese possessed a commercial talent was quickly

seized upon by the establishment as a means of checking the ambitions of the Negro. The easy credit and other favours turned the trick for both the planter and the Portuguese. The Negro's frustrated response was to riot and desert the plantation as a source of employment. Hence, the ever greater and greater necessity to import indentured labour. In the process, the European establishment successfully pluralized the society. The various segments were relegated to certain occupations and denied access to others. The decision to deny the Negroes access to the commercial world and to favour the Portuguese in their stead was a logical, indeed necessary, consequence of these policies.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER FOUR

1. Furnivall, J.S., Colonial Policy and Practice. (Cambridge, 1948), p.304.
2. CO-111-128, Smyth to Stanley, October 2, 1833.
3. Guiana Chronicle, November 30, 1836.
4. Royal Gazette, April 6, 1843.
5. Guiana Chronicle, September 20, 1837.
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38. Ibid., January 20, 1846.
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42. Royal Gazette, March 26, 1844.
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## 5. RUM, POLICY, AND THE PORTUGUESE

### Prologue

That the structurally plural society of mid-19th century British Guiana was the creation of its dominant European segment cannot be disputed. Determined to maintain or at least approximate the pre-emancipation system of social, economic, and power relations; the dominant segment took steps to preserve the status quo if not to effect a virtual counter-revolution.

Under slavery and apprenticeship it had been no great task to maintain the system; albeit military coercion was sometimes necessary. Before the amelioration act of 1825 the "master" regulated nearly every aspect of the "servant's" life. Thus regulated were place of residence and freedom of movement, occupation and hours of labour, and property and mates. After 1825 slaves could legally marry, hold property, and were permitted the benefits of Christian religious instruction. In addition, limits on the hours of work which could be exacted from the slave were imposed. The introduction of the apprenticeship system reduced the planter's control yet more. However, the planter retained firm control over the apprentice's place of residence and freedom of movement. The indentured labour system as it was planned and as it developed differed little from its predecessors. The salient features of slavery, apprenticeship, and the indenture system (which was not termed "the new slavery" by its critics without reason<sup>1</sup>) were first, near absolute to absolute control over the individual's labour; and second, near absolute to absolute control over the individual's geographic freedom. The general thrust

of the policies of the dominant segment of the evolving post-emancipation society in 19th century British Guiana was to impose those controls on all members of the polity, whether indentured or not.

As was feared by the planter, the end of apprenticeship allowed many Negroes to leave the estates and to enter other occupations. Even worse, from the planters' point of view, were Negro attempts to bargain for better wages. Their successful strike in support of these claims in 1842 substantiated the planters' fears. Fortunately for the elite, the means were at hand by which the attempts of the Negroes to better themselves could be frustrated. Many Portuguese, unhappy and unsatisfactory as indentured labourers, had drifted into petty commerce or truck gardening at the earliest opportunity. Their commercial propensities were encouraged with the hope that the Negro entrepreneurs would be displaced and forced back into the fields. Some, but not all Negroes, returned. The resisters eked out a living on their own land or sought other legitimate or illegitimate means of making a living in Georgetown or New Amsterdam. The support given the Portuguese with respect to itinerant huckstering and provision shops has been discussed in Chapter Four. Support was also given the Portuguese when they sought to enter the retail spirit trade. But in this instance, the hand of the dominant segment was more discreet.

Until 1848, indenture contracts had a life of one year. This was not satisfactory from the planter's point of view. Short indentures provided the labourer with too much mobility. The labourer could too easily change employers or even leave estate work altogether. Thus, the Court of Policy having at last convinced the Colonial Office of the necessity for longer indentures, established a three-year indenture in 1848.<sup>2</sup>

Two years later the indenture period was extended to five years.<sup>3</sup> The Portuguese had frequently taken on several one-year indentures until they had amassed sufficient funds to become hucksters, shopkeepers, or hire-cart owners. The establishment of the three and later five year indentures for estate labour encouraged the Portuguese to seek employment elsewhere. They had no wish to become trapped in the new slavery. Thus, with some encouragement, they turned to the relatively open commercial sector of the economy.

In 1846 various petitions were submitted to the Court of Policy by Portuguese requesting retail spirit shop licences on estates or in villages already possessing a rumshop. In mid-1846, many large rural population clusters were legally defined as villages thus allowing more than one retail spirit licence to be granted per village. In July 1847, the Court of Policy removed the limit placed upon the number of rumshops allowed in villages. This was the first of several administrative steps which favoured the Portuguese licence applicants and dis-favoured the established Coloured, White, and Negro licenced retail spirit dealers and will be discussed later in this chapter.

The production and consumption of rum in 19th century British Guiana was widespread. In both pre- and post-emancipation times the colonial authorities strove to regulate the sale and the sellers of rum and other spirits. Before emancipation, the government aimed to restrict the slaves' access to spirits. After emancipation, the government sought to raise revenue from the rum consumed in the colony. In order to effect this, strict bonding and licencing procedures were introduced. Rum, hitherto inexpensive, became expensive; and, as the Negroes

were the principal consumers of rum the tax burden fell upon them, as it was intended. Until the mid-1840's, most of the rum retailers possessed European surnames. Most were European, but perhaps as many as a third to a half were Coloured. However, by 1848 in Demerara and 1850 in Berbice, 50 per cent of the rural rum retailers were Portuguese. By 1852, 79 per cent of the rural dealers in Demerara were Portuguese. Until well into the 20th century the Portuguese were able to preserve their monopoly of the trade. It was no accident that brought about the Portuguese monopoly. One factor was their willingness to cooperate among themselves in raising the capital to establish a shop. A second factor was their aggressiveness in the sale of rum and their willingness to endure a lesser level of profit than their European and Coloured predecessors and rivals. A third and salient factor was the method of granting retail spirit shop licences. An application could not be made until two certificates of good character from two justices of the peace had been obtained.<sup>4</sup> And who were these justices of the peace? In the crucial years under discussion nearly every respectable planter! Once again, the Portuguese found powerful patrons; or rather, once again, powerful patrons found the Portuguese.

#### The Regulations and the Ordinances\*

Ordinances regulating the disposition of spirits before 1841 had been passed in 1803, 1813, 1821, 1827, and 1829 in Demerara and Essequibo and in 1836 and 1841 for all of British Guiana. Berbice, when yet a separate colony, tended to lag behind its neighbour in passing

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\* see Table 5-1 for a summary of the most significant spirit ordinances

TABLE 5-1

Changes Wrought by the Significant Spirit Ordinances  
Promulgated in British Guiana between 1803 and 1893.

<u>Year</u>	<u>Ordinance Number</u>	<u>Changes Initiated</u>
1803	--	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Two classes of outlets: grog-shops and taverns</li> <li>-Sales to slaves, soldiers, and sailors forbidden</li> <li>-Outlets only in the towns and in Mahaica</li> <li>-Price controls on rum sold in grog-shops</li> </ul>
1813	--	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Liquor stores established; not permitted to sell less than 5 gallons of spirits</li> <li>-Estates not permitted to sell less than 20 gallons of rum to free residents of estates</li> </ul>
1821	--	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Slaves permitted to patronize grog-shops</li> <li>-Liquor stores permitted to sell amounts in excess of two gallons</li> <li>-Quota of 9 grog-shops in Georgetown and 2 in Mahaica</li> <li>-Bidding for grog-shop licences</li> </ul>
1827	--	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Permits required of the Fiscal for private purchase of 100 or more gallons of spirits</li> <li>-Estates allowed to sell any free person one gallon or more of rum upon presentation of a written order which must be preserved by the estate for one year</li> </ul>
1836	81	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Grog-shops in town not permitted to sell provisions</li> <li>-Two classes of grog-shops established in Georgetown</li> <li>-Price controls in grog-shops lifted</li> </ul>
1841	9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Rum or other spirit may not be given in lieu of or as part of wages</li> <li>-A single licenced spirit outlet could be established on each estate and in each village.</li> <li>-Estate officials were not to be concerned in liquor stores or grog-shops</li> <li>-Rum to be purchased at bonded warehouses</li> <li>-Seven classes of grog-shop (retail spirit shop) licences established</li> </ul>
1845		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Bidding for town licences ended in 1845</li> </ul>
1847		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-In July 1847, the limit on the number of rumshops allowed in each village was removed</li> </ul>
1850	15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Duties set on each gallon of rum consumed in the colony</li> <li>-Five class scale established for retail spirit shops</li> <li>-Annual licencing meetings to be held in each judicial district</li> </ul>
1868	25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Court of Policy could establish as many classes of retail spirit licences as it deemed necessary</li> </ul>

similar if not identical legislation. The Demerara and Essequibo ordinance of 1803 established the necessity for tavernkeepers and retail spirit dealers to take out a 300 guilder (£25) annual licence; to re-apply annually for renewal of the licence; and forbade the serving of slaves.<sup>5</sup> The succeeding ordinance of 1813 preserved the foregoing but also added additional regulations. Henceforth, estates were not to sell rum in quantities less than 20 gallons (95 liters) to free buyers on the estates. In addition, a new retail outlet, the liquor store, was established at a licence of 220 guilders (£18) per year. Liquor stores were forbidden to sell spirits in quantities less than five gallons (23.76 liters). In common with taverns and grog-shops, liquor stores were forbidden to sell to soldiers (who were expected to patronize the military canteens), sailors, or slaves on pain of banishment from the colony.<sup>6</sup>

The Licenced Liquor Store Act of 1821 which was promulgated in January 1822 broke with tradition in several respects. For the first time slaves were allowed to patronize the retail spirit or grog-shops. The act weakened the regulations affecting liquor stores but imposed more stringent regulations on those money-makers, the grog-shops. In future, liquor stores were allowed to sell a minimum of two gallons (9.5 liters) of spirits to their customers. The licence fee was raised to 300 guilders (£25) per year and, in addition, the licensee was expected to display in large letters over his street door a sign declaring his premises to be a "Licenced Liquor Store." The articles of the ordinance pertaining to grog-shops established the number which could be licenced in Demerara and Essequibo. Georgetown was allotted nine grog-shops; each district of the town being allotted one licence with the exception of Vlissengen (Lacytown) which was allotted two. Mahaica village was the only other place in the

colony allotted grog-shop licences. Two licences, each to be situated on opposite sides of the river, were the quota. Hours of business were established by the Court of Policy as well as the prices of rum and other spirits sold by the grog-shops. Furthermore, with respect to the locations of the shops in Georgetown, none were to be located nearer the waterfront than the west side of the second major street parallel to and east of the Demerara River. The last important provision of the ordinance established that grog-shop licences would be subject to open bidding. None of the bids were to be less than 1000 guilders (£83). The highest bid would receive the licence.<sup>7</sup>

The spirit ordinance of 1827 instituted further changes in the distribution of rum in Demerara and Essequibo. Ordinance 21 of 1829 superseded the 1827 ordinance but differed in only one article of the 26 articles of the act. Tighter controls on the purchase of large amounts of spirits from both the estates and liquor stores were instituted in 1827. Planters were allowed to sell on the estate to any free person one gallon (4.75 liters) or more of rum. However, a written order had to be presented by the purchaser and preserved by the estate for a period of one year. Inhabitants of Georgetown or Mahaica wishing to purchase 100 gallons (475.2 liters) or more of rum or other spirits for domestic use were required to obtain a permit from the Receiver of Wine and Spirits' Duties. The reason for the permits was stated explicitly in the ordinance. "The officer authorised to grant such Permits, having any ground of suspicion, that such Permit is intended to cloak the clandestine sale of Spirits, may refuse such Permits."<sup>8</sup> Firm that this resolve was, it did not put a complete halt to the illegal vending of rum.



It had long been customary for holders of liquor or grog-shop licences in Georgetown to sell spirits in conjunction with a general provision business. Ordinance 81 of 1836 specifically prohibited this practice among spirit licence holders in Georgetown and New Amsterdam whether on their immediate premises or elsewhere. Furthermore, the licence fees for both liquor stores and retail spirit shops (grog-shops) were raised from 300 guilders (£21) to 1200 guilders (£86) per year. The restrictions and the increase were held to be intolerable by the licence holders.<sup>9</sup> Ordinance 81 had continued the practice of requiring bids for the various retail spirit licences issued in Georgetown. In a petition, 11 retail spirit shopkeepers complained "that other parties as a mere matter of speculation (or even to satisfy a perhaps unwarrantable spirit of malevolence) tender [bids] so excessively high, even at their loss, as to ensure themselves the licences, and thereby bring ruin upon...[the 11] petitioners." The High Sheriff, to whom these tenders were submitted, in an accompanying brief recognized what was happening and so reported to the Court of Policy. The Court in its wisdom ordered that the old licencees be given preference but at the average of the bids submitted. In addition to the bids, fees of 2200 guilders (£157) per year were to be paid for licences west of High Street (the second street east of and parallel to the river) and fees of 1600 guilders (£114) were to be paid for licences issued east of High Street.<sup>10</sup>

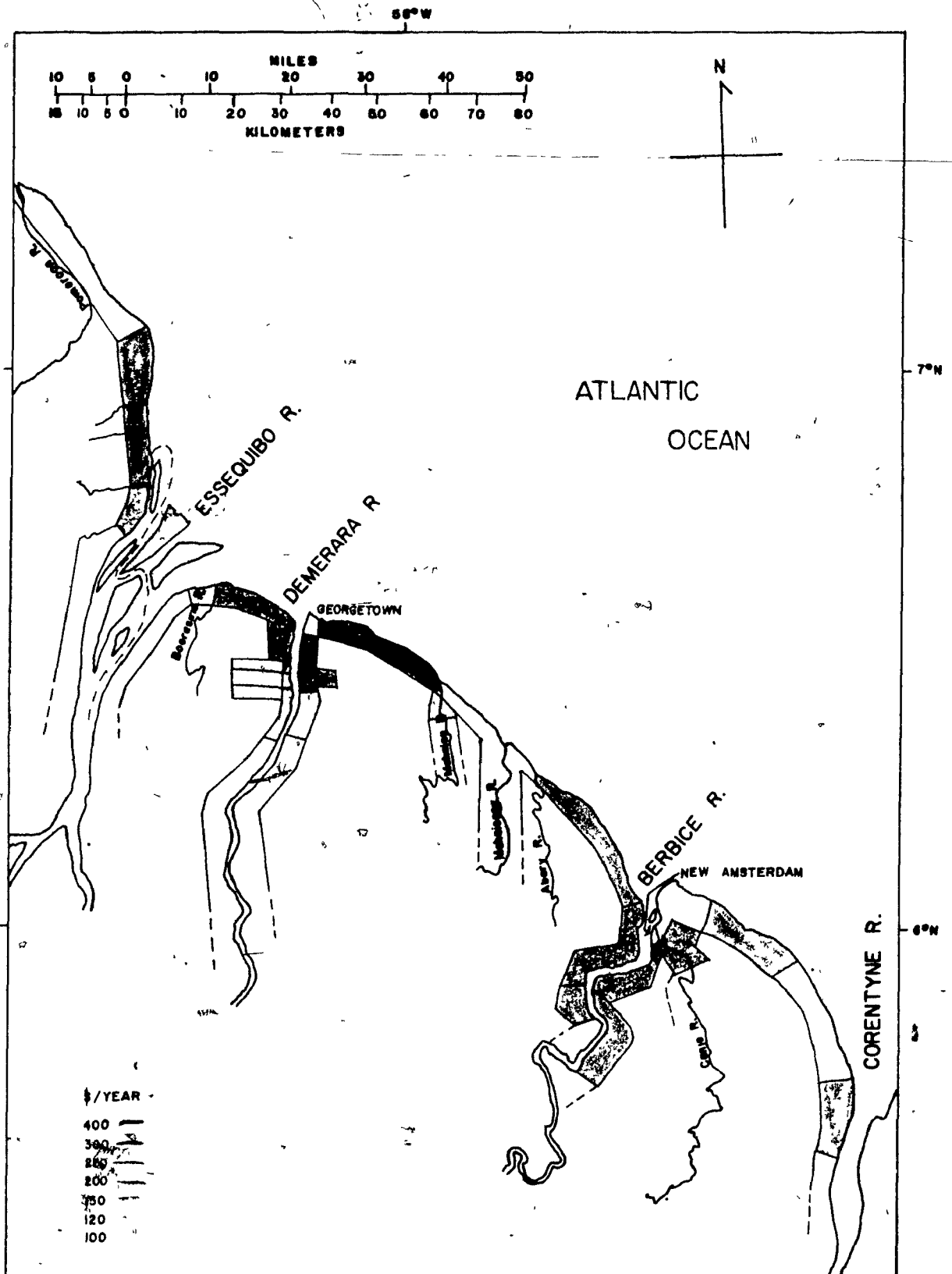
As a result of the new state of society brought about by the end of apprenticeship in 1838, new legislation was necessary for the regulation of the sale of rum. Duties on rum consumed in the colony were for the first time imposed. They amounted to 1 1/2 guilders (£0.11) per

gallon and were a frank attempt to shift part of the tax burden from the planter to the labourer.<sup>11</sup> Ordinance 9 of 1841 was titled "An Ordinance to Regulate and Carry into Effect the Licencing and Conducting of Retail Spirit Shops in the Rural Districts; to Prevent Evasions of the Tax on Rum, and to Prohibit the Issuing of Rum by Unlicenced Persons in British Guiana." The act ended the ancient tradition of supplying gratuitous rum to estate labourers. Specifically, it became unlawful for estate management to supply rum or any other spirit to labourers by way of gratuity or in part or full payment for wages earned. The act allowed in recompense that a licenced spirit shop could be established on each estate. However, estate management was specifically enjoined from participating in such ventures and from supplying rum to the spirit shops. Rum consumed by the shops was to be purchased only from the bonded warehouses in Georgetown, New Amsterdam, and wherever else they might be established. Article 9 of the ordinance regulated the amount of rum and other spirits which could be sold to patrons. Rum was to be sold in amounts less than one gallon (4.75 liters) and other spirits in amounts exceeding one gallon. This had the effect of a sumptuary law. Bidding for rural licences was not to be permitted. Applicants applied directly to the High Sheriff who, in company with two Justices of the Peace, passed on the various applications which were then scrutinized by the Court of Policy. If they saw fit, the High Sheriff and the Justices could require an applicant to produce security of up to \$1000 (£208). The final major innovation established a sliding scale of licence fees adapted for the various parts of the country.<sup>12</sup>

The rates for rural licences established in 1841 remained in force through 1849. They ranged from \$100 (£21) to \$400 (£83) per year. Map '5-1 displays the areas covered by the various licence rates. The licence rates assessed for the various districts of the country were in rough proportion to the population residing in the various districts. Agglomerations officially designated as villages were assessed at a uniform rate of \$300 (£62) per year. The E.C.D. from Georgetown to Mahaica was so thickly covered with villages that retail spirit shops in the entire 25 mile (40 km.) stretch of coast were uniformly assessed at \$300 (£62) per year. The small three mile (4.9 km.) portion of E.B.D. between Georgetown and Canal 3 was in many respects an unincorporated part of Georgetown. Because of this, retail spirit shopkeepers in the district were required to pay \$400 (£83) per year for their licences.<sup>13</sup> Under the terms of Ordinance 9, each estate and each village on an estate were entitled to have one licenced retail spirit shop. Because of this regulation, it was possible for a village spirit shop in W.C.E. to pay a licence of \$300 (£62) annually while a rival shop a few tens of meters away would pay a licence of \$200 (£42). This was a source of contention.

Bidding for licences in Georgetown and New Amsterdam remained customary until 1845. The minimum licence fees set for Georgetown establishments in 1839 had not been changed. The tax ordinance of 1845 effectively put an end to the farce. Bidding was done away with. In future town licences, as with rural licences, were to be granted by the Court of Policy to those approved by the High Sheriff's committee.<sup>14</sup>

Ordinance 15 of 1850 repealed all previous ordinances and effected changes in the licencing system. A five class system for the



entire country was implemented. Class one licences were restricted to Georgetown, while class two licences were issued in both Georgetown and New Amsterdam. These licences were assessed at \$1700 (£356) and \$1200 (£250) per year, respectively. Classes three, four, and five were reserved for rural spirit shops. Their licences were respectively assessed at \$400 (£83), \$300 (£62), and \$200 (£42) per year. In addition, duties averaging \$0.62 (£0.13) per gallon continued to be imposed on all rum consumed in the colony.<sup>15</sup> A remaining change wrought by Ordinance 15 was the convening of annual licencing meetings in each judicial district of the country under the direction of the Justices of the Peace.<sup>16</sup>

Other ordinances effecting minor changes were passed in 1851, 1852, 1858, 1863, and 1867.<sup>17</sup> Ordinance 25 of 1868 consolidated these earlier acts. The ordinance established three types of spirit licences: one for taverns, another for liquor stores, and a third for retail spirit shops. The differences between the three types of outlets had always been recognized. Taverns had never been allowed to sell rum, although other spirits, wines, and beers could be sold for consumption on the premises. There existed an element of status consciousness in this prohibition. Europeans drank little rum but consumed vast quantities of gin, brandy, and Madeira. Indeed, at least one tavern operating in Stabroek in 1811 catered only to Whites.<sup>18</sup> In addition, food could be served on the premises. Liquor stores sold for off-premises consumption amounts in excess of one gallon (the quantity permitted varied from time to time) of rum, other spirits, wines, and beers. These licences were very low in comparison to the retail spirit licences. For example, in 1850 a liquor store licence was \$100 (£21) per year. Retail spirit or

grog-shops consistently paid the highest licences after 1821. Rum could not be sold in quantities greater than one gallon (4.75 liters). Until 1850, quantities of other spirits could be sold only in amounts exceeding one gallon. Again, this took the character of a sumptuary prohibition. After 1850, any spirit could be sold in quantities less than one gallon.<sup>19</sup>

Ordinance 25 of 1868 introduced an innovation which allowed the Court of Policy through the annual tax ordinance to establish as many classes of retail spirit licences as were deemed necessary.<sup>20</sup> This was done in the tax ordinance of 1869 when the old five class system (plus the special woodcutters' spirit licence introduced in 1852<sup>21</sup>) was abolished and 14 new classes created. Table 5-2 lists the classes and the rates assessed; and the maximum amount of rum which could be sold under the licence. In addition, the duty on rum consumed continued to be imposed.

TABLE 5-2

Classes of Retail Spirit Licences Established by the Tax Ordinance of 1869. (footnote 22)

<u>Class</u>	<u>Rate/Year</u>	<u>Maximum Amount of Rum Allowed/Licence</u>
1	\$6000 (£1250)	4000-plus gallons
2	\$5400 (£1125)	3000
3	\$4800 (£1000)	2400
4	\$4200 (£ 875)	1800
5	\$3600 (£ 760)	1500
6	\$3000 (£ 625)	1200
7	\$2400 (£ 500)	1000
8	\$2040 (£ 425)	800
9	\$1800 (£ 375)	700
10	\$1560 (£ 325)	600
11	\$1320 (£ 275)	500
12	\$1080 (£ 225)	400
13	\$ 840 (£ 175)	300
14	\$ 600 (£ 125)	200

But it was lowered from \$0.62 (£0.13) to \$0.25 (£0.05) per gallon. } This was done to reduce losses to the revenue brought about by the widespread smuggling of rum. To balance this reduction in the rum duty the licence fees were raised. The maximum and the minimum rates increased by a factor of three. Each class of licence, except the first, was allowed to sell a quota of rum per year without an additional assessment. The upper limit of class one was surpassed by a number of Georgetown establishments. In order to maintain the revenues, the Court of Policy established two additional classes above class one in 1870. A first class "C" licence-holder continued to pay the established class one rate. But first class "A" and "B" licence-holders paid an annual licence fee of \$8400 (£1750) and \$7200 (£1500). The quota of rum allotted these licences was correspondingly high, that is, respectively 6000 and 5000 gallons (28,512 and 23,760 liters).<sup>23</sup>

The licence rates established in 1869 and 1870 remained in force until 1880, when because of pressure from the licencees all licences were reduced by approximately 20 per cent. At the same time, the duty on rum consumed in the colony was raised from \$0.25 (£0.05) to \$0.50 (£0.10) per gallon. If the spirit dealer sold more rum than his licence quota allowed he was assessed an additional duty per gallon of \$0.75 (£0.16). With one exception the rates and quotas established in 1880 remained in force until 1893. The exception occurred in 1891. In that year it was deemed necessary to establish a seventeenth retail spirit licence class for the "frontier" areas of the colony. An annual licence of \$252 (£32) was established and a quota of 300 gallons (1425.6 liters) of rum allowed the licencee. Seven shops were so classified in 1891 but only three in the following year.<sup>24</sup> Other minor changes in the regulations had been effected

by ordinances passed in 1868, 1869, 1871, 1877, and 1888.<sup>25</sup> However, the system established by Ordinance 25 of 1868 did not significantly change.

The evolution and development of the licencing system during the course of the 19th century paralleled processes underway in the society as a whole. The comparative simplicity of pre- versus post-emancipation society was reflected in the spirit licencing system as well as in all other institutions. The advent of apprenticeship and eventual freedom destabilized the society. Costs once borne by the estates were shifted to the government and the erstwhile apprentices. The introduction of indentured labourers and the entry of former indentees into the "free" economy fostered additional elaboration. After 1838, new niches in the commercial ecology appeared. The licencing act of 1841 which permitted the establishment of rural retail shops was a cognizance of the new state of society. Even before 1838, the salient issue confronting the society was that of control. Who were to rule? Was it to be the erstwhile apprentices or the old established European elite? By judicious use of credit extensions to certain petty traders and by the judicious use of the regulations of the retail spirit acts the issue was settled to the elite's satisfaction. But, having once established their proteges---the proteges in turn must need be controlled. The licencing acts passed in 1850 and thereafter regulated the Portuguese rum shopkeepers and gathered a plentiful harvest of taxes. For the Negro, the future had long been settled. He was not to benefit from the opportunities which appeared after 1838.



### Taverns and Grog-Shops, 1803-1841

Retail spirit outlets during this period were restricted to the two towns and the village of Mahaica. The proprietors of the taverns, grog-shops, and liquor stores were invariably White or the Coloured concubines or the mixed offspring of the former. The first taverns, with the exception of the establishment on Fort Island, apparently did not appear in Stabroek until after 1799. Henry Bolingbroke in 1799 commented that "there are no taverns, or lodging houses" in the town.<sup>26</sup> Ordinance 20 of May 1803 established the licencing of taverns and inns. It is after this date that licenced taverns appeared in Stabroek and Mahaica. However, a tavern had long been established near the government offices on Fort Island in the Essequibo River. Bolingbroke reported that "mynheer Blacke Blecker's tavern" on the island was the only tavern "in the colony."<sup>27</sup> This remark was definitely made before 1803. What Blacke Blecker's colour was is not known. But Sarah Hacker, who kept the tavern and billiard room on the island between 1809 and 1812, was Coloured.<sup>28</sup>

Other tavern and grog-shopkeepers were possibly Coloured but more probably White. The positions, actions, and origins of three individuals support the latter supposition. In 1811, W.A. Ellis opened a tavern in Stabroek exclusively for the use of Whites; presumably, he himself was White.<sup>29</sup> In 1827, Simeon Wolff took his discharge from the British army and because of his military record was granted tavern and billiard room licences by Governor D'Urban. Wolff was still managing his establishment in 1834.<sup>30</sup> In another instance, because of ill health, former plantation manager John Rock acquired a Georgetown grog-shop licence in 1836.<sup>31</sup> The origin of other tavern and grog-shopkeepers was

probably from similar classes of Europeans resident in the colony.

Sarah Hacker is, of course, an exception. But because of the general shortage of European women the status of Coloured women was ambiguous. Liquor store licences were held by the wholesale merchants who were, invariably, White. At least 26 of these were held by Georgetown merchants in 1827.<sup>32</sup>

The October 1841 Census of British Guiana, although incomplete, suggests that in common with the increase of Coloureds in the provision shop business a similar increase was taking place among spirit shop proprietors. Of the 14 rural spirit dealers who can be identified; 5 were born in Europe, 2 in Barbados, and 7 in British Guiana. One of the Barbadians and two of the British Guianese were women. They were almost certainly Coloured. Of the six West Indian males perhaps half were Coloured and half were White. Of the 16 retail spirit dealers in Georgetown, 3 were born in Europe, 5 were born in the West Indies, and of the remaining 8 there is no information. If the above five to three proportion held, perhaps 10 of the 16 were West Indian born. Of these, perhaps half were Coloured and half were White. If so, then the ratio in Georgetown would have been approximately 67 per cent White to 33 per cent Coloured. In the rural areas it would have been 57 per cent to 43 per cent; and in New Amsterdam about the same proportions as in Georgetown.<sup>33</sup>

However, not all vendors of rum and other spirits were licenced vendors. The 1821 Licenced Liquor Store Act of Demerara and Essequibo prompted the passage of a similar act in Berbice in January 1824. Two grog-shops were permitted to be established in New Amsterdam. The licences were established at 2000 guilders (£167) per year. In April 1824, grog-

shopkeepers Charles Faddy and James Bone complained in petitions to the Berbice Council of Government of illegal competition. In July, in a second petition, it was asserted that the illegal vendors of spirits sold full bottles for 5 stivers (£0.02), "whilst the licensed retail dealer, cannot sell the same quantity under a Guilder" (£0.08).<sup>34</sup> Obviously, the controlled price set by the government was too high.

Illegal sales of rum were not confined to New Amsterdam and Georgetown. It was also a problem in Mahaica and E.C.D. On the estates the distribution of rum had traditionally taken place on Saturdays. The weekly pint was charged against the operating expenses of the estate as were slave supplies of food and clothing. The practice was recognized by the Court of Policy as being both necessary and inevitable. Planters were also allowed to sell to the rural free population quantities of rum in excess of 20 gallons (95 liters) with few strictures until 1827.<sup>35</sup> Thereafter, any quantity of rum in excess of one gallon (4.75 liters) could be sold providing a written order was submitted and preserved for one year. In the halcyon days of the colony the colonial revenues did not suffer much. The amount of rum so disposed by the planters (and thus untaxed) was small. This was because the rural free population, with one exception, was small and regularly distributed on the estates. The exception to this regular distribution was Mahaica. In Mahaica, rum was frequently purchased from the estates and then illicitly sold to estate Negroes living nearby or in attendance to the Sunday market. Mahaica had possessed a licenced tavern since 1804. But tavernkeepers were specifically forbidden by law to serve slaves. As grog-shops were not permitted in Mahaica until 1822, a slave could not legally purchase a drink. But even then the price was controlled at an artificially high level. The

consequence was a considerable trade in illegal rum.

A planter complainant to the Court of Policy in 1814 charged that "the retailing of rum to Negroes by different people residing in this neighbourhood has got to such an alarming length that Negroes on different estates are frequently in a state of inebriation at night."<sup>36</sup> Drunkenness frequently led to brawls which could lead to full-fledged riots. The planters, understandably, feared riots. The attempt to rectify this situation by the passage of the 1821 Licenced Liquor Store Act was not completely successful. A planter correspondent to a Georgetown newspaper in November 1822 charged that country cottages were rented "under pretence of benefiting the declining health of your town folks-- but in fact to supply the neighbouring Estate Negroes with [rum]...at a moderate price." The Negroes had "access to these places at all hours of the night" and drunkenness was common.<sup>37</sup> Until the passage of the consolidated act in November 1827 there was little the colonial authorities could do. Even in Georgetown the illegal sale of rum and other spirits was alleged to have been widespread. One correspondent to the Guiana Chronicle in 1826 asserted that there were in excess of 45 illegal "spirits" dealers ostensibly and openly keeping shops in town." He went on to assert that there were twice as many clandestine shops.<sup>38</sup> This was certainly hyperbole, but 22 spirit dealers in a petition to the Court of Policy in February 1837 stated that illicit retailers were numerous. The illicit dealers concealed "their liquor in a jug or some other vessel not containing more than the law allows to be kept in possession" and served their patrons from this clandestine source.<sup>39</sup>

Shortly after apprenticeship's end rural provision shops began to appear throughout the countryside. Rural spirit shops, with the excep-

tion of those in Mahaica village, did not appear until after the promulgation of Ordinance 9 on August 1, 1841. The ordinance was necessary because with the end of apprenticeship the free population of the estates comprised all the residents of the estates. Under the terms of Ordinance 21 of 1829, planters on estates manufacturing rum were allowed to sell one gallon (4.75 liters) or more of rum to free residents of the estate. After August 1, 1838 this included everybody. Planters sold rum to the Negroes at rates which were lower than the licenced retail spirit shop in Mahaica could afford. Such was the substance of a complaint made to the Court of Policy in December 1839. With an unofficial liquor store on every sugar estate any retailer in Mahaica paying a 1000 guilder (£71) licence was at a disadvantage.<sup>40</sup> Ordinance 9 of 1841 eliminated this anomaly in the law brought about by freedom.

The preamble of the ordinance declared

That from and after the first day of August next ensuing, it shall not be lawful for any proprietor, or attorney, or agent of an Estate, nor for the manager, overseer, or any other servant of, or employed on, any estate, to sell, dispose of, issue, give by way of gratuity, or in payment, or part payment of wages or hire for any work or labor done and performed, or to be done or performed, or deliver under any pretence whatsoever any Rum, Gin, Brandy, Shrub, or any Spirituous Liquor, diluted or undiluted with water or other liquid, in any quantity whatever, to any Labourer whomever for his or her own use...<sup>41</sup>

The ordinance permitted the establishment on each estate a single retail spirit shop. It also forbade "any person acting as a servant on any estate, to be directly or indirectly concerned or interested in the spirits of any kind, or description, sold and vended in any" spirit shop.<sup>42</sup> Nor was it lawful for an estate to sell rum directly to any spirit shop-keeper. Instead, spirits were to be sold from the bonded warehouse

established in Georgetown, New Amsterdam, or where ever else ~~one~~ might be established.<sup>43</sup> Furthermore, applications for licences were to be made to the High Sheriff of Demerara or the Sheriffs of Essequibo and Berbice. Licences would "be granted to such parties as shall be approved of by a Sheriff and two Magistrates..."<sup>44</sup> "Unworthy" applicants could be given short shrift with a minimum of fuss and bother while "worthy" applicants could be treated appropriately. This one aspect of the ordinance, plus the one spirit shop per estate proviso, reduced the number of shop locations and potential shopkeepers to a minimum.

#### The Proliferation of Retail Spirit Shops in Berbice, 1841-1869

It has not been possible to establish with any great degree of certainty the colour of the retail spirit dealers possessing European surnames. However, the proportions of White and Coloured manifested by the proprietors of the rural provision shops in October 1841 may provide a guide. Of 96 rural shopkeepers identified, 49 or 51 per cent were White; and 40 or 42 per cent possessed European surnames but had been born in Guiana or in the West Indies. Perhaps as many as half of these were White. Because of the recent implementation of Ordinance 9 of 1841 and because many provision shopkeepers also held retail spirit licences, only 14 rural spirit dealers can be identified in the October 1841 census. Of these, as stated above, five were born in Europe and the remainder in Guiana, or the West Indies. It may perhaps be safely assumed that at least 50 per cent if not more of the rural retail spirit dealers holding licences in 1841 and 1842 were White. Others possessing European surnames were probably Coloured as opposed to Black. However, Louis Brotherson of La Retraite, W.B.D., is the only Coloured who can positively be identi-

fied. In some instances the given name and surname are sufficiently distinctive to identify an individual as Coloured or more probably Negro. A few examples are Sucky Cupido, Lafleur Caesar, Cain Cockfield, and Monday McKenzie; all were rural retail spirit shopkeepers.<sup>45</sup> In addition, females resident in the country and retail spirit dealers were almost always Coloured or Negro.

Individuals who had been slaves in almost every instance possessed only two names, the given and the surname. Europeans, on the other hand, generally possessed two or more given names. This was also true of a few Coloureds in the 1840's, but no estimate can be given as to their number. Also, some Europeans used only a single given name when signing documents. If one assumes that those rural retail spirit dealers possessing two or more given names were European, a partial and incomplete statement can be made about the colour of the spirit shopkeepers. Table 5-3 displays the result of a name analysis for the County of Berbice\* during the period 1842-1850. As can be seen from a perusal of the table, the number of unsorted European surnames almost equals or surpasses in every instance the combined total of Coloured and White names. The table may not appear to be of much use; nevertheless, it establishes a platform from which additional observations may be made.

Annual statements of the number of rural retail spirit shop licences issued exist for Berbice between 1842-1850; for Demerara between 1842-43 and 1847-52; and Essequibo between 1848-52. Utilizing the coverage afforded by the lists given for Berbice and Demerara an understanding of the diffusion of retail spirit shops and the takeover by the Portuguese

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\* (When the two colonies of Berbice and Demerara-Essequibo were joined to form British Guiana in 1831; three counties, Berbice, Demerara, and Essequibo were established within the "new" colony. The boundaries of the counties corresponded to those of their predecessor colonies.)

TABLE 5-3

Surname Analysis of Rural Retail Spirit Dealers in  
Berbice, 1842-1850. (footnote 46)

Year	Black & Coloured	White	Unknown	Portuguese	Indian	Total	Percentages				
							B&C	W	U	P	I
1842	4	6	11	1	-	22	19	27	50	4	-
1843	7	9	22	1	-	39	18	23	56	3	-
1844	4	7	10	-	-	21	19	33	48	-	-
1845	4	5	16	-	-	25	16	20	64	-	-
1846	4	9	15	-	-	28	14	32	54	-	-
1847	4	6	16	2	-	28	14	22	57	7	-
1848	6	8	12	3	-	29	21	28	41	10	-
1849	6	2	8	2	-	18	33	11	45	11	-
1850	-	1	4	6	1	12	--	8-1/3	33	50	8-1/3

TABLE 5-4

The Number of Individuals Holding Rural Retail Spirit Licences in  
Berbice for One, Two, etc., Years in Succession  
between 1842-1850. (footnote 47)

Number of Years Licences were Held	Number of Licences	Per Cent of Total
7	4	12.61%
6	2	5.40%
5	1	2.45%
4	2	3.60%
3	4	5.40%
2	27	24.32%
1	103	46.40%



can be achieved. The continuous nine year coverage of the Berbice records predicates their examination first. During the nine year period the total number of licences issued between January and April of each year sums at 222. These licences were issued for use on 68 of the 273 estates in the lower reaches of the Canje and Berbice Rivers and the coasts of Berbice including the Corentyne. The average number of licences issued each year was 25, but this is not too significant as the range was from 12-39. These licences were held by 130 individuals. Table 5-4 gives the duration of licences held in succession by these individuals. As only 12 licences had been issued in 1850 and only 3 of the 12 had held licences in 1849, the possibility that the 1850 data cut-off skewed the information given in Table 5-4 cannot be very great.

The fact that 103 licencees held only a single annual (or less, as some licences were taken out for portions of the year) licence suggests that there was a good deal of speculation in the rumshop business. That 27 individuals held licences for at least two years during the nine year period re-enforces the preceeding observation. A mere 13 individuals held 65 licences or 29 per cent of the total issued for rural Berbice for three or more years. It is perhaps not coincidental that in 1849 and 1850 the number of licences issued was respectively 18 and 12. There are not data for the years 1851-1868, but in 1869 the number of rural licences issued was 14. After 1871 the number of licences issued again began to rise. All of this suggests that the free-for-all initiated by Ordinance 9 of 1841 did not subside until 1850 in Berbice. That the number of licences held between January and April of each year between 1842-1846 did not drop below 23; or nearly twice as many licences as were held in 1850 and 1869 supports the foregoing contention.

Fifteen individuals held licences for more than three years, with one exception, upon the same estate. The exception was an individual who shifted his business from one estate to a contiguous estate. In some cases the licences were held discontinuously. For example, the official returns state that John White of Foulis, W.C.B., held a licence from 1845-1846 and again from 1848-1849. This looks suspicious. The official returns are probably at fault; nevertheless, there is no safe alternative to their acceptance. The 15 individuals, the location of their shops, and the years during which they held licences are listed in Table 5-5. Twelve of the rural licencees were simultaneous proprietors of two or more rumshops either in rural Berbice or in rural Berbice and New Amsterdam. Given the licence fee of \$100 (£21) to \$200 (£42) and the capital needed to purchase rum and build or renovate a building it is likely that most of the non-Portuguese multiple rumshopkeepers were European. Of the 12, 8 were possibly European, 3 Portuguese, and 1 probably Coloured. Table 5-6 lists these individuals, the locations of their shops, and the years in which they managed these shops. In six instances, established rumshopkeepers in New Amsterdam had acquired rural licences. Two of the three Portuguese then possessing shops in New Amsterdam were so involved. The acquisition of a rural licence in addition to a town licence suggests that profits from the town trade were sufficiently large to underwrite a rural speculation. The rumshops established on Balcraig, Standvastigheid, Best Coffee Land, and De Voedster by New Amsterdam dealers were the first to be opened on those estates. The other rural rumshops managed by New Amsterdam dealers on Lochaber, Hopetown, and Glasgow were successor shops to earlier ventures.

TABLE 5-5

Rural Retail Spirit Dealers in Berbice who held Licences for Three or More Years, either Continuously or Discontinuously, between 1842-1850. (footnote 48)

<u>Years</u>	<u>Estate</u>	<u>Individual</u>	<u>Years Held</u>	<u>Colour</u>
7	Paradise, W.C.B.	Monday McKenzie	1843-1849	Black
7	Ithaca, W.B.B.	Lafleur Caesar	1843-1849	Black
7	De Kinderen/ Deutichem, E.B.B.	Guillaume Patoir	1842-1844 1846-1850	?
7	Friends, E.B.B.	James Hayes	1843-1849	?
6	L'Esperance, E.B.B.	J. Timmers	1843-1848	?
6	Reliance, Canje	Henry Arnold	1845-1850	White
5	Canefield, Canje	Thos. R. Austine	1843-1847	White
4	Foulis, W.C.B.	John White	1845-1846, 1848-1849	?
4	Waterloo, W.C.B.	Mary McDonald	1845-1848	Coloured
4	Eliza & Mary, Cor.	Hugh Campbell	1847-1850	?
4	Skeldon, Corentyne	Daniel Dixon	1843, 1846, 1848	?
3	Hopetown, W.C.B.	Henry Arnold	1845-1846, 1848	White
3	Ma Retraite, E.B.B.	H.J. Blair	1844-1846	White
3	Rose Hall, Corentyne	C. Chalmers	1843-1845	White
3	Port Mourant, Cqr.	R.R. Richardson	1846-1848	White

TABLE 5-6

Multiple Proprietorships of Rumshops in Berbice, 1842-1850. (footnote 49)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Colour or Ethnicity</u>	<u>Estate</u>	<u>Years of Proprietorship</u>
Arnold, Henry	White	Reliance, Canje Hopetown, W.C.B. Prospect, E.C.B.	1845-1850 1845-1848 1847
Baldery, Charles	White	High St., New Amsterdam Lochaber, Canje	1841-1847 1846
Chalmers, C.	White	Rosehall, Corentyne Belvidere, Corentyne Fyrish, Corentyne Ma Retraite, E.B.B.	1843-1845 1844-1845 1844 1843
Corria, Joseph	Portuguese	Strand, New Amsterdam Standvastigheid, W.B.B.	1848-1850 1850
Fraser, James	White	High St., New Amsterdam Hopetown, W.C.B.	1841-1848 1844
Gomez, Joseph	Portuguese	Glasgow, E.B.B. Ma Retraite, E.B.B. Cumberland, Canje	1848-1849 1850 1850
Joachim, Manuel	Portuguese	High St., New Amsterdam Glasgow, E.B.B.	1848-1850 1850

... (cont'd)

TABLE 5-6 (cont'd)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Colour or Ethnicity</u>	<u>Estate</u>	<u>Years of Proprietorship</u>
Merritt, John P.	White	High St., New Amsterdam Best Coffee Land, Canje De Voedster, Canje	1841-1846 1844 1845-1846
Miller, John	White	Rose Hall, Corentyne Lancaster, Corentyne	1846-1847 1847
Payne, James Wm.	White	High St., New Amsterdam Balcraig, Upper Berbice River	1842-1844 1844-1846
Richardson, R.R.	White	Port Mourant, Corentyne Albion, Corentyne	1846-1848 1848
Walraven, Isabella & J.B.	Coloured	Mara, E.B.B. Ma Retraite, E.B.B.	1848-1850 1847-1849

C. Chalmers' three shops on Fyrish, Belvidere, and Rose Hall in the Corentyne were regularly distributed on a 2 1/2 mile (4 km.) stretch of the coast. A rival's shop was situated on Kilcoy, the estate adjacent to Fyrish, but its licence was not renewed in the succeeding year of 1845. Chalmers did not renew his Fyrish licence in 1845 either, but he had no need. The removal of his rival on Kilcoy meant that the nearest rival rumshop was five miles (8 km.) away. He thus had a captive market of 1400 people for his rumshops on Belvidere and Rose Hall. He did not renew either licence in 1846. The Rose Hall shop was probably sold to another dealer and the Belvidere establishment abandoned for use as a rumshop. In addition to Chalmers, John Miller, R.R. Richardson, and Isabella & J.B. Walraven also managed two rumshops in close proximity. As in the case of Chalmers, the intent appears to have been to monopolize the local custom or displace rivals by the ruthless cutting of prices. This technique was to be employed by the Portuguese against their Creole rivals and later against one another. One Stipendiary Magistrate remarked that grog-shopkeepers would "do almost any thing to oust an opponent."<sup>50</sup> Isabella and J.B. Walraven were either close relatives or a married couple. In 1848-1849 Isabella held the licence for Mara while in 1850 J.B. held the licence. In 1847-1848 J.B. held the licence for Ma Retraite while in 1849 Isabella held the licence. The use of one's relatives to manage additional rumshops or provision shops or to apply for the licence through a relative or an employee was a technique of competition and of evading the penalty if convicted of rum smuggling.

Retail spirit shops were functioning in New Amsterdam prior to 1841, but just how many in the years before 1841 is a mystery. In 1841, six retail spirit shops and five liquor stores were operating.<sup>51</sup> The

liquor store licences were held by merchants such as Wm. Lyle & Co. The retail spirit licences were held by Coloured or White men, but more probably the latter. Graph 5-1 lists the retail spirit shopkeepers operating in New Amsterdam between 1841-1850 and displays the duration of their businesses. As with the rural retail spirit shops, there appears to have been a period of speculation in town licences. In 1841, six licences had been issued while in the succeeding year seven had been issued. Thereafter, the number of licences held in the town dropped only to rise briefly in 1847 and 1848 and then to drop again to three in 1850. In 1869, when data are next available, there were four retail spirit shops in New Amsterdam. Each was managed by a Portuguese.

The first Portuguese retail spirit dealer in Berbice may have been John Marks (Marques) on Providence, E.B.B., in 1842. However, whether he was Portuguese or not, he very quickly faded from the business. In the second half of 1846, Manuel Gomez acquired a licence for a retail spirit shop on L'Enterprise-Zorg doch Met Vergenoegen, E.B.B., between Mara and Ma Retraite. Six months later John Martinus became the second Portuguese to manage a rumshop in Berbice. He was located on Adelphi, Canje. In 1848, a third rural spirit shop was opened on Glasgow, E.B.B. At the same time, three Portuguese opened retail spirit shops in New Amsterdam. By 1850, the three Portuguese in New Amsterdam possessed all the retail spirit licences issued for the town. Meanwhile, in rural Berbice, 6 of the 12 licences issued in July 1850 were held by Portuguese. When data are next available in 1869, the 4 New Amsterdam licences and all 14 of the rural licences issued were held by Portuguese. The Portuguese "takeover" in New Amsterdam was almost too neat. Within a year of their initial appearance their rivals had been vanquished. Although there is

GRAPH 5-1

New Amsterdam Retail Spirit Dealers and  
the Years during which They were in Business  
between 1841-1850. (footnote 52)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Years</u>									
	1841	1842	1843	1844	1845	1846	1847	1848	1849	1850
Fraser, James	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Baldery, Charles	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Merritt, J.P.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Lewis, J.C.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Yulpius, Ab.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Cumings, George	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Payne, James Wm.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Cameron, Wm.C.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Greenslade, J.T.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Jansen, F.M.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Salmon, J.F.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Corria, Joseph	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
D'Abreu, F.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Joachim, Manuel	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.	.
Number each year	6	7	4	4	3	3	5	5	3	3



no indication as to how this was accomplished, elsewhere in British Guiana it was by means of a ruthless price war.

The pattern of rumshop proprietorship and distribution which developed in Berbice between 1841-1850 can be divided into two parts. The first was the period of frenetic speculation and rapid proprietorship turnover which commenced in 1841 and continued to 1848. During this period from 23 to 39 rural retail spirit licences were granted each year. Commencing in 1849 and continuing into 1850 and probably into the years thereafter the number of rural licences declined initially to 18 and then to 12. The rural decline was paralleled by a similar decline in New Amsterdam. Part of the responsibility for this decline may have been due to the economic depression which took place in the latter years of the decade. For a slight decline did occur in the number of rural spirit licences issued in Demerara between 1847-1850. But this was a magnitude of 15 per cent, not 60 per cent as in Berbice between 1847-1850. It is thus doubtful as to how much weight may be placed upon the economic slowdown as a causative factor.

Smuggling of gin and other spirits from Surinam cannot be ruled out as a cause for some rural retail spirit dealers not being able to continue in business. Nor, was the decline in the number of rural spirit shops due to a decline in population. Although the rate of population increase was not overly large, the rural population of Berbice did increase from 16,759 in 1841 to 30,120 in 1871. The population of New Amsterdam similarly increased from 3460 in 1841 to 5437 in 1871. Yet, in 1869 there were only 14 rural spirit shops and only 4 spirit shops in New Amsterdam---all managed by Portuguese.

Given that the parish populations increased by 25 per cent between 1851-1871 and that the pattern of population distribution remained almost unchanged since 1841, how and why is it that there were 12 rural spirit shops in 1850 and 14 rural spirit shops in 1869? The ratio of rural spirit shops to rural population decreased from 1:729 in 1842 to 1:1864 in 1850 and to 1:2151 in 1871. An examination of events which took place in Demerara after 1847 may provide an answer.

#### Portuguese Managed Rumshops in Demerara

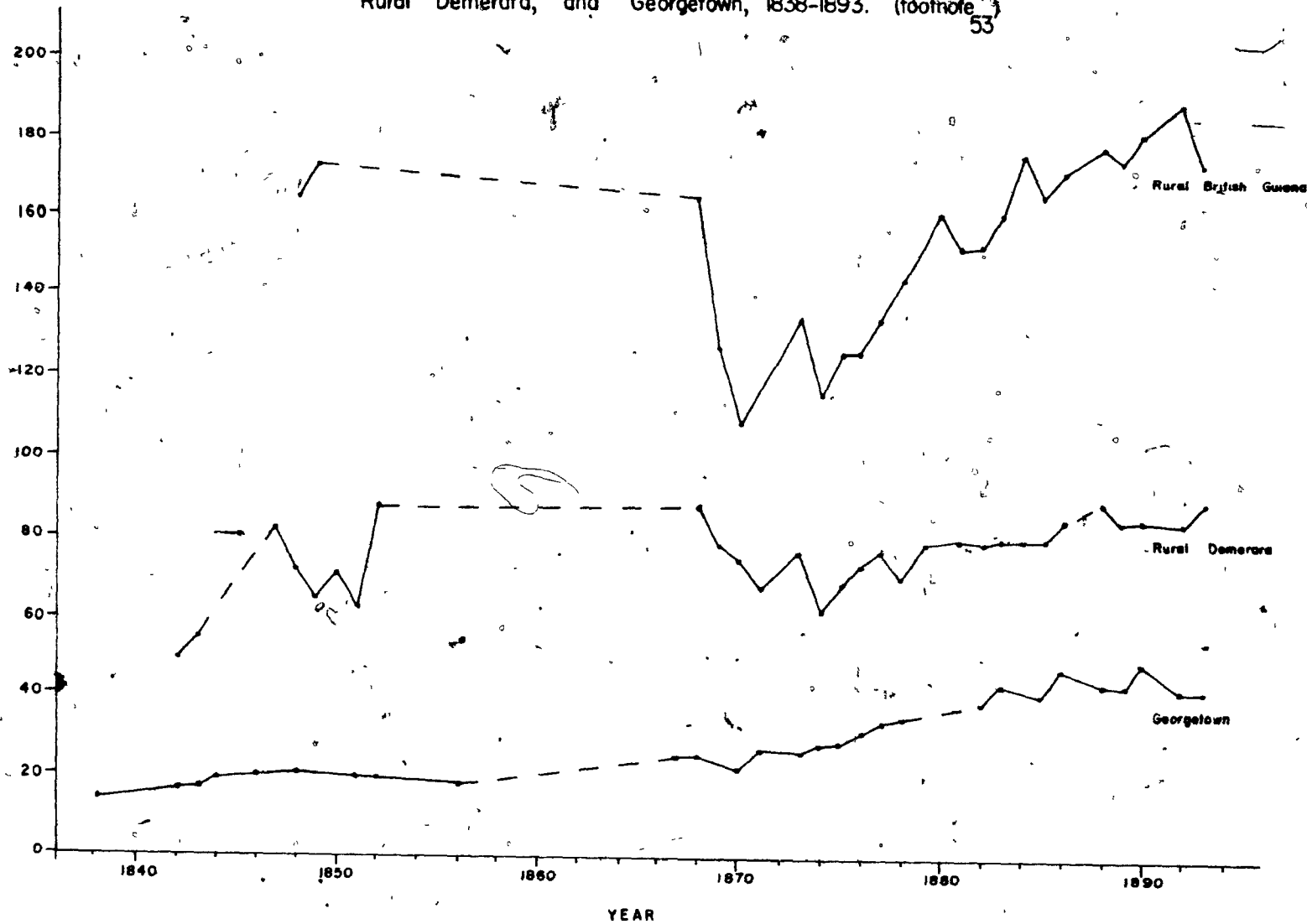
During the course of the 19 century the County of Demerara was consistently the most populous and prosperous of the three British Guianese counties. Not only did Demerara contain Georgetown--the capital, principal port, and the central place of the colony; but it also contained in excess of 50 per cent of British Guiana's total rural population. Given the size of Demerara, its impact upon the British Guianese social, economic, and geographic milieu was bound to be greater than peripheral Essequibo or Berbice. However, because of gaps in the data available for Demerara in the 1840's the preceding detailed examination of Berbice was deemed necessary. Spirit licence data for rural Demerara are available for the years 1842-1843, 1847-1852, 1868-1871, and thereafter with a few gaps from 1873-1893. Somewhat better coverage is available for Georgetown. Data are available for 1838, 1842-1843, 1846, 1848, 1851-1852, 1856, and thereafter with a few gaps from 1867-1893.

Graph 5-2 displays the number of retail spirit licences issued for all of rural British Guiana, for rural Demerara, and for Georgetown between 1838-1893. Approximately 38 per cent of the rural spirit licences issued in British Guiana in 1849 were held in Demerara. By 1868, this

GRAPH 5-2

Licensed Retail Spirit Shops in Rural British Guiana,  
Rural Demerara, and Georgetown, 1838-1893. (footnote 53)

NUMBER OF  
RETAIL SPIRIT  
SHOPS

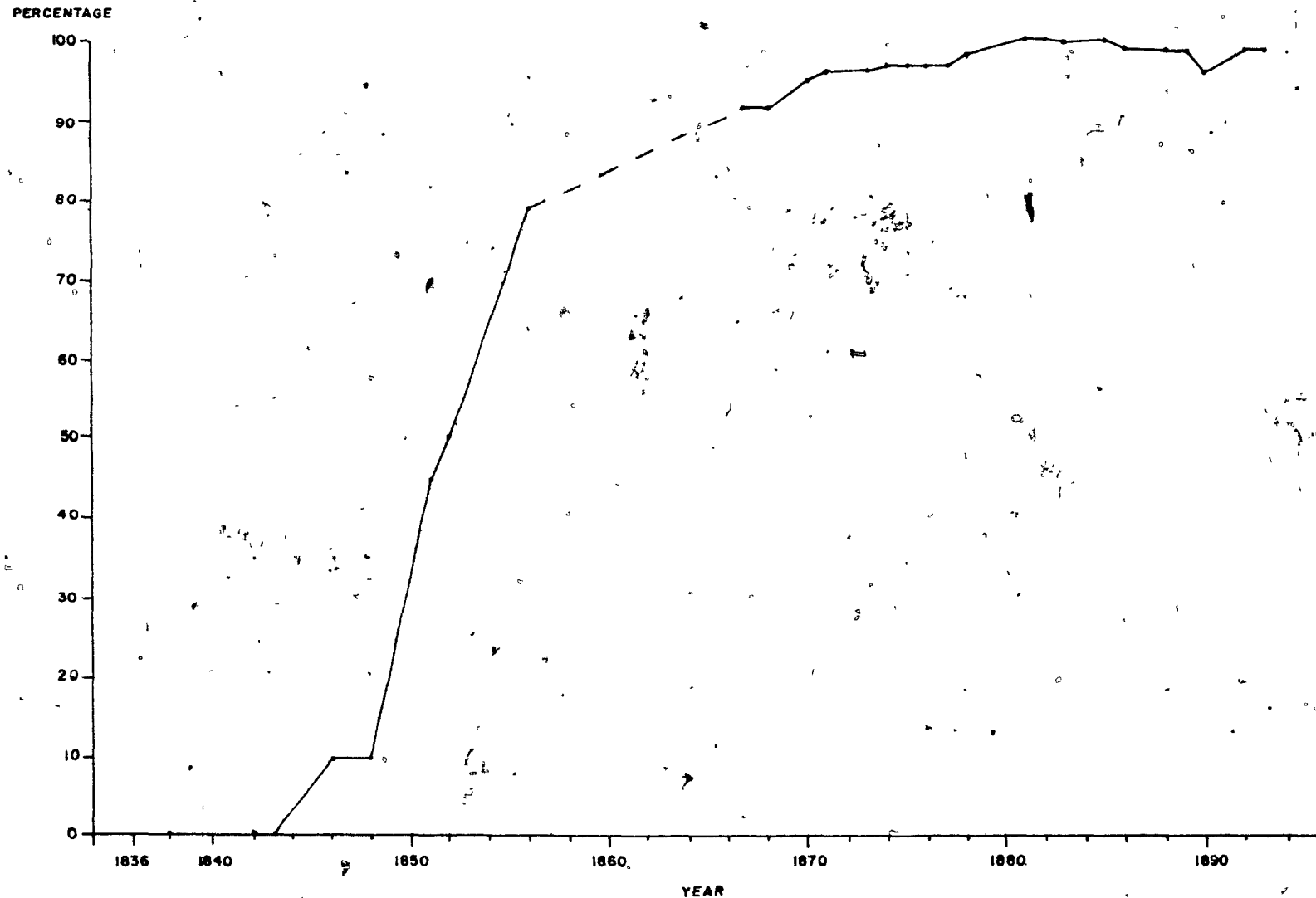


percentage had increased to 53 per cent. Thereafter, the proportion of licences held in Demerara remained above 50 per cent. The decline in the total number of licences issued in rural British Guiana after 1868 was a direct result of the implementation of the spirit ordinance passed in that year. The introduction of 14 classes of spirit licences and the three-fold increase in the minimum licence rate that prevailed under the old five class system forced many uneconomic or speculative shops out of business. "Under the old system it was well known that the same individual had often many shops, and that some of them were so near one another that it would hardly answer to pay for two licences" under the new system.<sup>54</sup> It is significant that the number of rural spirit licences held in all of British Guiana declined by 49 per cent between 1868 and 1870; whereas, in Demerara during the same period the decline was only 14 per cent. The greater density of population in Demerara enabled more rumshops to survive even at the new and higher licence rates. After the shock of the 1868 spirit ordinance dissipated, the number of rural spirit licences outside Demerara again began to rise. Whereas, in contrast, the number of licences issued in rural Demerara increased but slightly after 1874. The demand for retail spirit licences in Georgetown was always great. The licencing board carefully controlled and limited the number of licences issued for the town. The ratio of retail spirit licences to urban population was 1:1030 in 1841. The ratio decreased to 1:1220 in 1851 and thereafter remained between 1:1200 and 1:1300.

After 1848 in rural Demerara and 1852 in Georgetown, in excess of 50 per cent of the retail spirit licences issued were held by Portuguese. Graph 5-3 displays the infiltration of Portuguese proprietors into the Georgetown retail spirit trade. The curve described approximates the

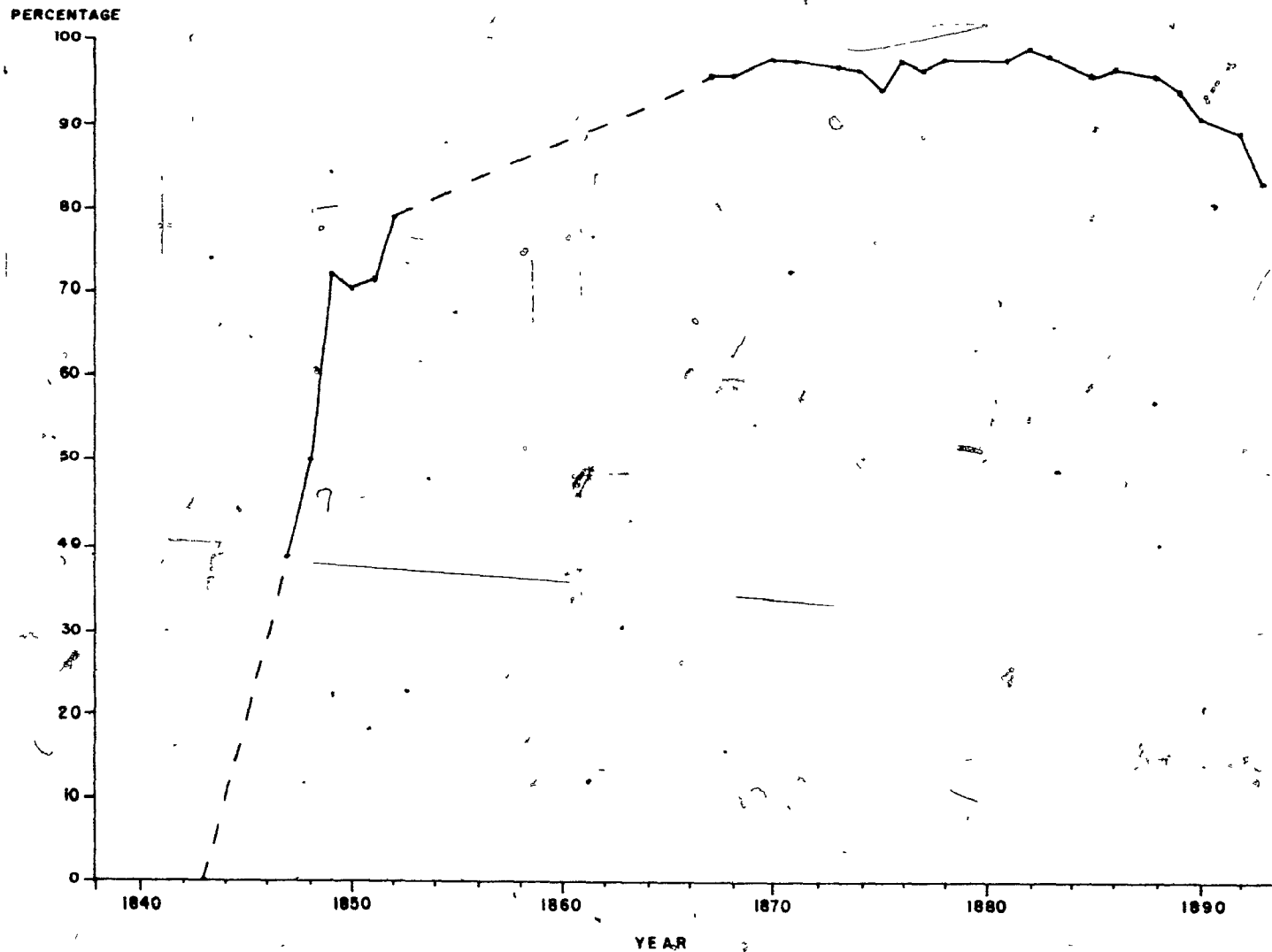
GRAPH 5-3

The Portuguese proportion of the total number of retail spirit shops operating in Georgetown between 1838-1893 (footnote 55)



GRAPH 5-4

The Portuguese proportion of the total number of retail spirit shops operating in Rural Demerara between 1840-1893. (footnote 56)



classic S-diffusion curve. The curve described for rural Demerara in Graph 5-4 is much steeper. As the curves described are different so are the interpretations which might be given to each. The essential reason for the difference was touched upon above. The 1841 spirit ordinance allowed one retail spirit shop to be established on each estate and in each village. There were approximately 250 estates in rural Demerara. In contrast, the number of retail spirit licences allowed in Georgetown was in a proportion of 1:1200; that is, one retail spirit shop to approximately 1200 inhabitants. Thus, while the issuance of retail spirit licences was controlled in all of Demerara, the opportunities for acquiring a licence and opening a shop were much greater in rural Demerara than in Georgetown. White and Coloured retail spirit dealers held on to their rumshops in Georgetown with some tenacity. This was managed through inheritance and inter-marriage among the few families concerned. It was not until 1881 that the Portuguese displaced the last of them. Table 5-7 presents an account of this struggle in numerical form.

The situation in rural Demerara was quite different from that in Georgetown. In Georgetown, because the number of licences was restricted, the Portuguese were forced to pay highly for the privilege of taking over the business of their White and Coloured rivals. This was accomplished by either outright purchase of an established rumshop and a transfer of the licence; or, by collusion among the established Portuguese spirit dealers to engage in price wars. Their rivals could then be driven to the wall and forced to sell. Once this was effected the Portuguese fought one another. In rural Demerara the price war weapon was also used; but the stage setting was quite different. A referral to Graph 5-2 and Table 5-8 reveals that the total number of retail spirit licences issued for

TABLE 5-7

Number and Percentage of Portuguese-Held  
Retail Spirit Licences in Georgetown  
(footnote 57)

Year	Number		Total	Per Cent	
	Portuguese	Other		Portuguese	Other
1838	--	16	16	--	100
1842	--	18	18	--	100
1843	--	18	18	--	100
1846	2	18	20	10	90
1848	2	19	21	9.5	90.5
1851	9	11	20	45	55
1852	10	10	20	50	50
1856	15	4	19	79	21
1867	25	2	27	92	8
1868	25	2	27	92	8
1870	22	1	23	95	5
1871	27	1	28	96	4
1873	27	1	28	96	4
1874	28	1	29	97	3
1875	29	1	30	97	3
1876	31	1	32	97	3
1877	33	1	34	97	3
1878	34	1	35	98	2
1881	39	--	39	100	---
1882	39	--	39	100	---
1883	44	--	44	100	---
1885	42	--	42	100	---
1886	47	1 (Chinese)	48	98	2
1888	43	1 (Chinese)	44	98	2
1889	43	1 (Chinese)	44	98	2
1890	48	2 (1 Chinese) (1 White)	50	96	4
1892	42	1 (White)	43	98	2
1893	42	1 (White)	43	98	2



TABLE 5-8

Numbers and Percentages of Portuguese and Others  
Holding Retail Spirit Licences in Rural Demerara. (footnote 58)

Year	Number				Per Cent		
	Portuguese	Coloureds, Negroes & Whites	Chinese	Total	Portuguese	Coloureds, Negroes & Whites	Chinese
1842	--	50	--	50	--	100	-----
1843	--	55	--	55	--	100	-----
1847	31	52	--	83	37	63	-----
1848	36	36	--	72	50	50	-----
1849	47	18	--	65	72	28	-----
1850	50	21	--	71	70	30	-----
1851	44	18	--	62	71	29	-----
1852	70	18	--	88	79	21	-----
1868	84	4	--	88	95	5	-----
1870	74	2	--	76	97	3	-----
1871	66	3	--	69	96	4	-----
1873	74	3	--	77	97	3	-----
1874	59	2	--	61	96	4	-----
1875	66	3	--	69	94	6	-----
1876	72	2	--	74	97	3	-----
1877	74	3	--	77	96	4	-----
1878	68	2	--	70	97	3	-----
1879	77	2	--	79	97	3	-----
1881	77	3	--	80	96	4	-----
1882	77	2	--	79	98	2	-----
1883	78	1	1	80	97	1.5	1.5
1884	77	1	2	80	96	1.33	2.67
1885	75	2	2	79	95	2.5	2.5
1886	80	1	3	84	95	1	4
1888	85	1	3	89	95	1	4
1889	78	1	5	84	94	1	5
1890	77	2	6	85	91	2	7
1892	75	3	6	84	89	4	7
1893	74	5	10	89	83	6	11

rural Demerara dropped from 83 in late 1847 to 62 in late 1851. A year later in 1852 the number issued had rebounded to 88. The question is not so much how the Portuguese held so many rural spirit licences but why the rural non-Portuguese failed to maintain their hold on the number of licences they possessed in 1847. In 1842, 50 licences were held by non-Portuguese in rural Demerara; in 1843, 55 licences; and in 1847, 52 licences. Yet, in 1848 the number of non-Portuguese holding rural spirit licences had declined to 36. By 1852, even this number had been halved.

The first mentioned Portuguese application for a retail spirit licence in rural Demerara was made by Manoel Dias in July 1845. Dias, citing the recent precedent of Buxton where a second retail spirit licence had been issued (over the protests of the Buxton people), petitioned the Court of Policy that a similar dispensation be granted for Stanley Town on La Retraite, W.B.D. Dias stated that Stanley Town contained from 300 to 400 houses and a population of 2000 and thus warranted a second spirit shop.<sup>59</sup> The Court of Policy was not about to be taken by this gross exaggeration. In 1844, Stanley Town contained 70 houses and 350 people.<sup>60</sup> The petitioner's request was refused. No other petitions by licence seeking Portuguese were presented to the Court of Policy for the remainder of 1845. However, in 1846, at least five applications for licences were made to the Court of Policy. No action was taken until the Court had declared certain large settlements to be official Villages. The settlements so declared were Plaisance, Beterverwagting, Buxton, Friendship, Victoria, Jones Town, Virginia, and Recess in E.C.D.; Craig, Supply, and Hyde Park in E.B.D.; Reynestein, Free and Easy, and Stanley Town in W.B.D.; and Den Amstel, Fellowship, Stewartville, and Good Hope in W.C.D.<sup>61</sup> These

18 "new" villages joined Mahaica to create 19 environments where two or more retail spirit licences could be granted.

In 1846, Manoel Dias again petitioned the Court of Policy to grant him the second retail licence for Stanley Town. Dias cleverly sweetened his request by offering to pay a licence of \$400 (£83) per year instead of the \$300 (£63) licence paid by Louis Brotherson the established retail spirit dealer. The Court of Policy granted his petition but at a licence of \$300 (£63) per year. The technique of offering to pay a higher licence than was required was, frankly, a bribe to the revenues and was practiced by at least two other Portuguese applicants. In one instance, Elutherio Varella offered to pay \$300 (£63) for a licence in Hyde Park where a \$100 (£21) annual licence had been customary. The Court of Policy had, in the meantime, classified Hyde Park as a village. Thus, Varella's offer was accepted and the High Sheriff was ordered to exact an additional \$200 (£42) from the non-Portuguese spirit retailer already established in Hyde Park. At least four Portuguese were granted rural retail spirit licences as a result of their petitions to the Court of Policy in 1846. In addition to the two mentioned above, licences were granted for Friendship, E.C.D., and Good Hope (Greenwich Park), W.C.D.<sup>62</sup> More licences were certainly granted to Portuguese in Demerara in 1846, but the best estimate one dares to give would be between 20 and 25 rural licences.

The expansion of Portuguese managed rumshops was assisted by an instruction given by the Court of Policy to the High Sheriff of Demerara in July 1847. Prompted perhaps by the decision taken in January 1847 to grant a third spirit shop licence for Buxton,<sup>63</sup> the Court of Policy instructed the High Sheriff to "grant for Villages whatever number of

Licences may be applied for."<sup>64</sup> Until this change of policy, villages had not been allowed to contain more than two licenced spirit shops. The instruction enabled the Portuguese to saturate the opportunities for rumshops in the various villages of Demerara. Within two years Buxton contained five retail spirit shops. Some Portuguese endeavoured to have the Court of Policy declare certain settlements villages in order that they might apply for a retail spirit licence. Five such requests were submitted to the Court of Policy before the end of 1847.<sup>65</sup> Similar requests continued to be made throughout 1848 and 1849. In counter-petitions the established non-Portuguese retail spirit dealers decried any attempt to declare certain settlements villages.

The Parish of St. Paul in E.C.D. was the most populous rural parish in all British Guiana during the course of the 19th century. In 1851, it contained 16,582 inhabitants or about 17 per cent of the national rural population total. This was approximately 33 per cent of the total Demerara rural population. Some 1590 Portuguese were resident in the parish in 1851. Of this number 762 or 48 per cent were adult males, 477 or 30 per cent females, and 351 or 22 per cent children. At a minimum, at least 200 of the adult males would have been indentured labourers. The remaining Portuguese were settled on Plaisance where they practiced truck gardening or were resident in the various estates and villages where they kept provision and/or retail spirit shops. In 1852, according to Tables 4-6 and 4-7, 20 Portuguese resident in the parish held huckster licences and 84 held provision shop licences. These were respective percentages of 43 and 72 per cent. In the same year 20 of the 23 retail spirit licences were held by Portuguese. Given that the Parish of St. Paul contained the largest Negro villages in British Guiana it was remarkable

that so much of the parish's commerce should have been in Portuguese hands.

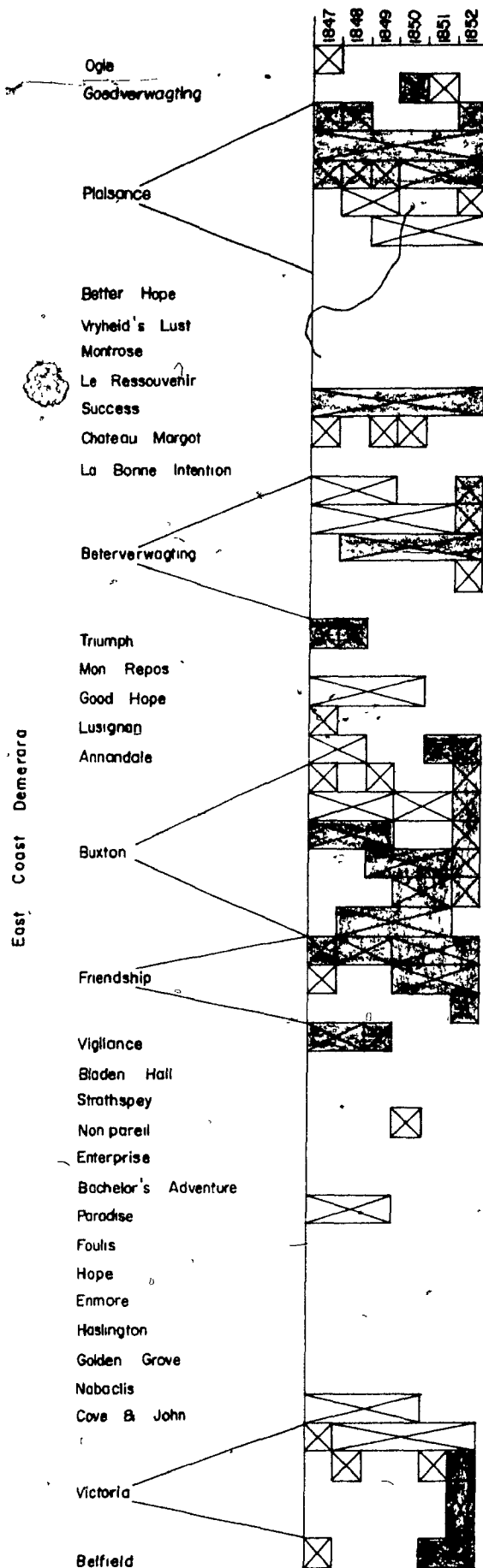
Table 5-9 provides a comparison of the total number of established retail spirit shops, those managed by Portuguese, and their respective percentages for the Parish of St. Paul and all of rural Demerara for the years 1847-1852. The most striking feature of Table 5-9 is the sudden change that took place between 1851 and 1852 in St. Paul. Within a single year, the number of retail spirit licences increased by almost 50 per cent while the number held by non-Portuguese was halved. It is more striking when the percentage change between 1851 and 1852 is considered. That the percentage of retail spirit licences held by the Portuguese in the most "Negro" area of Demerara should exceed the county average is surprising. It appears, however, that until 1850 the non-Portuguese retail spirit licence holders were able to combat or resist Portuguese encroachment. It is significant that it was in 1850 that the new five class system was introduced. Buxton spirit shops under the old system were assessed at \$300 (£63) per year; under the system established in 1850 the licence was set at \$400 (£83) per year. Could this increase have made "the" difference in determining the success or failure of non-Portuguese rural spirit shops in the Parish of St. Paul? The licence increase in conjunction with the customary price war so often utilized by the Portuguese may have driven the non-Portuguese dealers to the wall.

The changing pattern in the proprietorships of retail spirit shops in St. Paul's Parish is displayed in Cartogram 5-1. The estates and villages which constitute the parish are arranged as they appear along the public road as one proceeds eastwards from Georgetown. There were four important village clusters in the parish. The first encountered in one's easterly journey was Plaisance. In 1851 it contained approximately

TABLE 5-9

Number and Per Cent of Portuguese-Held Retail Spirit Licences in  
the Parish of St. Paul, E.C.D., and all Rural Demerara, 1847-1852. (footnote 66)

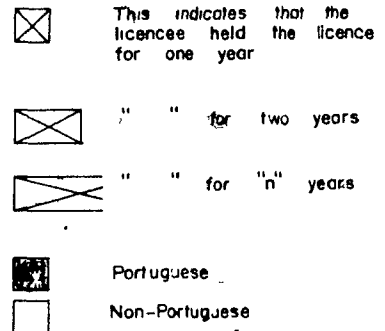
Year	Number						Per Cent			
	St. Paul			Rural Demerara			St. Paul		Rural Demerara	
	Portuguese	Other	Total	Portuguese	Other	Total	Portuguese	Other	Portuguese	Other
1847	8	14	22	31	52	83	36	64	37	63
1848	10	10	20	36	36	72	50	50	50	50
1849	9	11	20	47	18	65	45	55	72	28
1850	10	8	18	50	21	71	56	44	70	30
1851	11	6	17	44	18	62	65	35	71	29
1852	20	4	24	70	18	88	83	17	79	21



# CARTOGRAM 5-1

The number of retail spirit shops in the Parish of St. Paul, E.C.D., managed by Portuguese and others in the years 1847-1852.

The cartogram is arranged from West to East (top to bottom) as the various estates and villages appeared on the public road



2000 inhabitants. Further east was Beterverwagting which in 1851 contained about 1500 inhabitants. The adjacent villages of Buxton and Friendship together contained more than 4000 people or nearly 25 per cent of the total parish population in 1851. The last important village encountered before leaving the parish is Victoria. In 1851, this oldest of the Negro villages contained approximately 2000 inhabitants. The average population of each of the remaining estates and villages was 260. The maximum population of any of the remaining estates and villages did not exceed 700.<sup>67</sup> When Cartogram 5-1 and Table 5-9 are taken together the Portuguese achievement becomes even more impressive.

The Portuguese achievement was most telling in Buxton-Friendship. In these most "Negro" of the Demerara villages the Portuguese displacement of their Creole rivals had not only real but symbolic significance. The takeover was made possible by the July 1847 instruction of the Court of Policy to the High Sheriff. The instruction permitted the High Sheriff to grant "whatever number of licences" that were sought in any village in Demerara. Presumably, the instruction was also communicated to the Sheriffs of Essequibo and Berbice. By throwing open a previously controlled field of endeavor the immediate effect was not to increase dramatically the number of shops in the four village clusters in St. Paul but to reduce the number of retail spirit shops outside the villages. The number of village shops slowly increased from 11 in 1847 to 12 in 1851; then, in 1852, 21 licences for village retail spirit shops were granted. The number of non-village shops declined to three, but as two were adjacent to major villages the number of extra-village rumshops was effectively one. One may assert that the four villages were exerting a central-place pull upon the adjacent estates and that Buxton-Friendship, as the largest cluster,



was exerting the most powerful attraction. However, while this may explain the drift of rumshops into the villages it does not explain the changing character of the proprietors.

Under what had amounted to a local monopoly; that is the limit of one rumshop per estate or village, the Creole dealers were able to achieve a perhaps more than reasonable profit and a good standard of living. They were on their way to becoming men of substance and importance in the community. If the objective of the dominant segment of the society had been to foster the development of an influential Creole group this would have been the easiest means of doing so. By opening up the villages to unlimited competition in 1847 the living of the Creole rumshopkeepers was threatened. By being able to exist at a lower, at least initially, standard of living; the Portuguese by price wars were able to displace their predecessors. By 1852, the Creole dealers had been almost totally displaced in St. Paul's Parish. The commercial interests of the Portuguese were consistently favoured during the decade and a half after apprenticeship's end. The result was the destruction of the developing Creole commercial interest.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER FIVE

1. Beaumont, Joseph, The New Slavery, (London, 1821).
2. Minutes of the Court of Policy of British Guiana, Ordinance 3, 1848.
3. Ibid., Ordinance 21, 1850.
4. Ibid., April 6, 1847.
5. Minutes of the Court of Policy of Demerara and Essequibo, April 27, 1813, reprint of July 20, 1803 publication.
6. Ibid., July 20, 1813.
7. Ibid., December 4, 1821, published January 5, 1822.
8. Ibid., Ordinance 21, 1829.
9. CP of BG, February 6, 1837.
10. Ibid., January 8, 1839.
11. Ibid., Ordinance 15, 1838 (taxes).
12. Ibid., Ordinance 9, 1841.
13. Ibid., July 13, 1841. and July 21, 1841.
14. Ibid., Ordinance 9, 1845 (taxes).
15. Ibid., Ordinance 11, 1850 (taxes).
16. Ibid., Ordinance 15, 1850.
17. Ordinance 10, 1851; 7, 1852; 8, 1858; 15, 1863; and 6, 1867.
18. CP of DE, January 31, 1811.
19. CP of BG, Ordinance 11, 1850 (taxes).
20. Ibid., Ordinance 25, 1868.
21. Ibid., Ordinance 7, 1852.
22. Ibid., Ordinance 6, 1869, (taxes).
23. Minutes of the Combined Court of British Guiana, June 13, 1874.

24. Licence Receipt Books for 1880, 1891-92, and 1892-93.
25. CP of BG, Ordinances 29, 1868; 3, 1869; 9, 1871; 4, 1877; and 5, 1888.
26. Bolingbroke, Henry, A Voyage to Demerary, 1799-1806. (Daily Chronicle Reprint, Georgetown, British Guiana, 1947), p.25.
27. Ibid., p.88.
28. CP of DE, October 28, 1812.
29. Ibid., January 31, 1811.
30. CP of BG, January 28, 1834.
31. Ibid., November 15, 1838.
32. CP of DE, March 8, 1827.
33. Census of British Guiana, 1841.
34. Minutes of the Council of Government of Berbice, July 24, 1824.
35. CP of DE, July 20, 1813.
36. Ibid., February 19, 1814.
37. Guiana Chronicle and Demerara Gazette, November 1, 1852.
38. Guiana Chronicle, June 29, 1836.
39. CP of BG, February 6, 1837.
40. Ibid., December 17, 1839.
41. Ibid., Ordinance 9, 1841, preamble.
42. Ibid., article 3.
43. Ibid., articles 4 and 5.
44. Ibid., article 7.
45. Royal Gazette, August 22, 1843.  
Berbice Gazette, April 1, 1844.
46. Official lists of Berbice retail spirit licence holders 1842-1850:  
Gazette and General Advertiser, April 12, 1842.  
Berbice Gazette, April 1, 1844; February 10, 1845; February 12, 1846;  
January 21, 1847; July 6, 1848; January 31, 1849.  
CP of BG, Rum duties return, April 25, 1843.  
Official Gazette of British Guiana, July 15, 1850.

47. Ibid.
48. Ibid.
49. Ibid.
50. CO-116-166, Stipendiary Magistrate Reports, 1846.
51. Royal Gazette, January 26, 1841.
52. Footnotes 46 and 50.
53. Footnote 46.  
Royal Gazette, July 7, 1838; August 22, 1843; February 9, 1848;  
February 12, 1848; August 16, 1848; August 26, 1848; October 31, 1848;  
November 1, 1848; December 6, 1848; July 21, 1849; July 28, 1849;  
February 8, 1848; August 11, 1849.  
The Gazette and General Advertiser, April 5, 1842.  
Local Guide to British Guiana, 1843, p.cx.  
Official Gazette, 1850, 1851, 1852, 1869, 1871, 1872, 1874, 1876, 1877.  
Receipt Books of the Receiver General of British Guiana, 1862, 1863,  
1864, 1868, 1870, 1871, 1873, 1874, 1875, 1876, 1877, 1878, 1880, 1882,  
1883, 1885, 1886, 1888, 1889, 1889-90, 1890-91, 1891-92, 1892-93.
54. CO-111-371, Hincks to Granville, number 23, January 19, 1869.
55. Footnote 53.
56. Ibid.
57. Ibid.
58. Ibid.
59. CP of BG, July 25, 1845.
60. CO-111-199, Census of British Guiana, 1841, number 17, p.42.
61. CP of BG, June 27, 1846.
62. Ibid., July 7, 1846,
63. Ibid., January 28, 1847.
64. Ibid., July 8, 1847.
65. Ibid., August 5, 1847, and January 31, 1848.
66. Footnote 53.
67. Census of British Guiana, 1851; and Census of British Guiana, 1861.
68. Footnote 53.

6. THE SUBORDINATE ASCENDANCY: PORTUGUESE SHOPKEEPING, 1856-1891

Prologue

In 1856 the Portuguese held two-thirds of all the general goods and provision shop licences issued in British Guiana. They had arrived at this position through their own efforts and the patronage of the European elite. Their "own efforts" entailed an ability to exist at a low standard of living while saving their earnings acquired as indentured labourers, free labourers, and itinerant hucksters in order to amass sufficient capital to open a shop. Once the shop was opened, their "own efforts" meant being satisfied with small profits, a low standard of living, and an ability to establish spatial monopolies which facilitated the displacement of their "high living" and less competitive European, Negro, and Coloured rivals.

The patronage of the European elite was, however, the spark that ignited Portuguese initiative and secured ultimate success. Merchant-wholesalers granted favourable terms of credit to the Portuguese whilst denying or only reluctantly extending these terms to others. Government cooperation manifested itself in the imposition of shop licences a few years after apprenticeship's end. While this may appear paradoxical, the Portuguese shopkeepers recognized that the barrier of a \$20 (£4.16) annual licence in the 1840's was sufficient to discourage many Negroes and Coloureds from establishing small shops. During the stoppage of supplies crisis of 1849 when no taxes, duties, or licences were being collected; the Portuguese actually petitioned the government to re-establish the collection of shop licences.<sup>1</sup>

The Negro population was well aware of the privileged position of the Portuguese in early post-emancipation society. Initially contemptuous of these "Portuguese Buckmen" (Buckmen or Bucks are the common derogatory terms for the Amerindians) their contempt hardened to dislike as the Portuguese displaced them from petty commerce. The Negro response was to organize cooperative shops which often failed through mismanagement and the competition of the Portuguese, and to launch attacks upon the symbols of their oppression, the Portuguese and their shops. Violence was directed against Portuguese property in 1846, 1848, 1849, and 1856. In 1846 the cry in Albert-Town was that the Portuguese shopkeeper "was taking the bread out of their mouths."<sup>2</sup> In February 1856, during the most widespread and destructive of the riots, the cry in East Coast Demerara was "when we have done with the Portuguese we will attack the whites."<sup>3</sup>

The 1856 riots caused damage in excess of \$286,000 (£60,000). The riot compensation commission approved 630 claims for loss of property. The compensation funds were to be raised by a punitive head tax upon the able-bodied adult population, a large majority of which was Negro. Each male was assessed \$2 (£.43) and each female \$1 (£.21). In the first six months of operation the head tax produced more than \$100,000 (£20,833).<sup>4</sup> Although economically sound the tax was politically inexpedient. Opposition to the tax developed not only among the Negroes who constituted the majority of the population, but also among the more perspicacious of the planters, merchants, and professionals. It was one thing to impose heavy indirect taxes but quite another thing to impose relatively light direct taxes. A petition containing 18,000 names was submitted to the

colonial government in 1857 requesting the repeal of the head tax. This, plus some gentle pressure from the Colonial Office, persuaded the Governor and Combined Court to see their folly. The head tax was abolished in 1858. As Henry Taylor of the Colonial Office remarked, it had created too much discontent "among the lower orders of the population."<sup>5</sup> Direct taxes of this nature were never again imposed during the 19th century.

### The Changing Elite Perception of the Portuguese

From their introduction into the colony, the Portuguese were only grudgingly liked by the colonial establishment. They were not admired for many reasons, the principal however being their "filthy habits." But with the development of their commercial propensities the colonial elite proceeded to lavish a grudging praise upon the Portuguese successes. Invidious comparisons were inevitably made with the Negro population.

The Colonist in March 1852 stated:

The Madeirans, it is true, have taken the trade out of the hands of the Creoles, but that is less the misfortune than the fault of the natives. They cannot compete with their rivals, because they are generally deficient in that industry, economy and perseverance which characterise the exertions of the Portuguese. [my emphasis]<sup>6</sup>

Yet, for all this adulation and praise of the Portuguese, The Colonist, the pro-planter newspaper, was disgusted and outraged by their "grasping avarice."

This dismay was precipitated by a slight increase in the import duties and a dramatic increase in the prices of imported goods in the Portuguese shops. As these prices were "already "exorbitant," The Colonist was understandably incensed.<sup>7</sup> Nevertheless, the general establishment perception of the Portuguese prior to the 1856 riots was favourable.

The Colonist and the Royal Gazette, the pro-governor newspaper, both acknowledged the role played by the Portuguese in breaking down "the old monopolies" under which "it was useless to expect any store to sell less than a guilder's worth of any article." The Colonist also gloried in the fact that the Portuguese were the best customers of the merchants and a boon to the community.<sup>8</sup> The Royal Gazette made similar observations and spoke of "those thrifty people."<sup>9</sup> Thrift was one of the more admirable Victoria virtues.

Establishment attitudes vis à vis the Portuguese underwent a change after the anti-Portuguese riots of February 1856. The scale and intensity of Negro animosity to the Portuguese shocked the colonial elite. Things had got almost completely out of hand. The danger of favouring the Portuguese too much had been apparent to Governor Henry Barkly in 1850. Barkly had hoped to abolish the shop tax but was unable to persuade the Combined Court to his views.<sup>10</sup> Instead, the rural licence was merely reduced by 50 per cent to \$10 (£2.08) per year. In 1853, the rural shop licence was reduced further to \$6 (£1.25) per year. In the aftermath of the 1856 riots, the rural shop licence fee was increased to \$15 (£3.13) per year. This may have been an attempt to deter prospective Negro shopkeepers and to bolster the somewhat shaken position of the Portuguese. This rate remained in force until 1859 when it was reduced to \$10 (£2.08). Then, in an attempt to reduce the Portuguese hold on the trade, no licences were demanded of rural shops between 1862-1867.

The Creole, a pro-Coloured and Negro newspaper, transcribed a Court of Policy discussion on country shops held in June 1864. In answering



a complaint of a member that unlicensed country shops provided an avenue for the illicit sale of rum, a second member replied that the licences had been abolished to prevent monopolies. In retort, the first member charged that "it afforded a great inducement to the people to sit down in their houses on the estates over a few articles of merchandise, pretending that they were very industrious." A remark of a true planter conservative. In reply, the second member stated that the possession of a shop was no excuse for not working; and that the more shops on an estate the better.<sup>11</sup> Clearly, the danger of Portuguese dominance in the retail trade was recognized by the government.

Disgust at Portuguese avarice became widespread after the disastrous Cumingsburg and Robbstown (both districts of Georgetown) fire of 1864. In combination, the Portuguese shopkeepers throughout the city increased their prices by 100 per cent.<sup>12</sup> Anti-Portuguese comments in the Georgetown press became increasingly frequent. In 1866 the Guiana Times accused the Portuguese of engaging in get-rich-quick schemes which involved false orders and other unsavory commercial practices.<sup>13</sup> The Creole, champion of the Coloured and Negro, was constantly critical of the Portuguese shopkeeper. In 1873, The Creole charged that the reduction in imported food duties in 1872 benefitted no one but the Portuguese who kept their prices up. The colony's retail trade was

...almost entirely in the hands of a class of persons who are in no way akin to the British tradesman...they are intensely practical. By habits of frugality and self-denial---perhaps also by other means---habits in which they altogether surpass their competitors, they have got almost all the retail trade into their own hands, and they are wise enough to see that by combination they can quickly become wealthy, whilst by competition they may remain petty shopkeepers for life.

There is no chance of finding goods cheaper in one Portuguese shop than another, the prices are the same in all.

The Creole in transcribing a Combined Court debate reported that the Portuguese were "not at all flexible in accomodating their retail prices to the state of the wholesale market." Locally produced bread, it was charged, was double the price it should have been.<sup>14</sup>

Complaints and charges of similar nature continued to be made by the press and members of the Combined Court throughout the period under examination. In 1888, The Argosy accused the Portuguese of "deliberately deceiving their customers and trading cruelly upon their ignorance" in the matter, justifying drastic retail price increases in response to what were miniscule increases in the import duties.<sup>15</sup> The Argosy's dislike of the Portuguese was evident even in its account of the anti-Portuguese Georgetown riot of March 1889. The failure of the Portuguese, but for a single exception, to defend their property against the mob elicited the contempt of the press. "The utter and disgusting apathy or funk betrayed everywhere by the Portuguese" gained them no friends.<sup>16</sup>

The Portuguese response to the riot was to demand compensation and to increase the price of their goods, in some cases by 50 per cent, although no increase had taken place at the wholesale level. This blatant attempt to demonstrate their power aroused the anger of the elective members of the Court of Policy. They publicly condemned the Portuguese for their actions. It was felt by the Governor and some of the members that this injudicious action of the Portuguese was enough to prejudice their claims for compensation. However, elected member Barr stated that if the shops on the estates he represented had raised their prices and would not reduce them, he would take steps to open shops on those estates for the accomodation of the labourers. The Argosy seized upon this state-

ment in vociferous agreement.

Here we have the true remedy for the evil complained of. Competition is all that is required, and the estates' authorities are in the position to supply that competition at very little trouble and absolutely no risk, to themselves. Over and again we have urged the black people to open their own shops and share the retail trade with the Portuguese, and we know of one or two efforts now being made by them to carry on the trade; for it is no use shirking the fact that as long as the retail trade of the colony is in the hands of the Portuguese, these hard-working parsimonious and money-making people will make the most of it,--as they are justly entitled to do.

The Argosy did not love the Portuguese, and it appears that the Portuguese had succeeded in partially alienating their former patrons. But that was inevitable, for as the commercial power of the Portuguese grew after 1856 they began to occupy prominent places in Water Street, the mercantile heart of the colony. They had become independent of the European elite and hence not controllable. The Portuguese were thus a threat to the European elite's dominion.

#### The Licencing of the Shops: The Ordinances

The first shop licence was not established by the tax ordinance of January 1841 but was one of the series of licencing ordinances passed in June of that year. In addition to regularizing the licencing of retail spirit shops; huckster, cart, and porter licences were increased. In the same collection of ordinances an annual shop licence of \$25 (£5.21) was established. However, shopkeepers were permitted to credit their licence against their income tax assessment.<sup>18</sup> This was permitted through 1846 when the income tax was abolished. In 1843 the annual shop licence was reduced to \$20 (£4.16). This was imposed upon all shops until 1851.<sup>19</sup> In that year a distinction between rural and urban shops was recognized.

Urban licences remained at \$20 (£4.16) while rural licences were established at \$10 (£2.08) per year. These and succeeding shop licence rates are given in Table 6-1.

In December 1850 Governor Henry Barkly had expressed to the Colonial Office his wish to eliminate both the huckster and the shop licences. Deeming them "inexpedient in the present state of society" in Guiana, he hoped to have them "altogether repealed at the next meeting of the Combined Court."<sup>21</sup> Although himself a planter, very persuasive, and much respected by the colonial elite, Barkly was only able to effect a reduction in the rural shop licences in 1851. In 1853, Barkly was able to persuade the Combined Court to reduce the rural shop licence further and to institute a six class system for shops in Georgetown. These classes were based upon the valuation of the premises in the books of the receiver of town taxes. Table 6-2 lists the classes, the licence fee, and the valuation of the shops within each class. The classes remained static throughout the period under discussion. However, in 1868 and in 1892 the licence rates were in the first instance modified slightly and in the second instance dramatically increased. In 1859, New Amsterdam shops were licenced under the same system. Rural shops were not licenced between 1862-1867. The expressed intent was to bring about the end of the Portuguese monopoly and to encourage Coloured and Negro enterprise. It did not succeed. It is ironic that in licence year 1861 there were 964 rural shops. When licences were reimposed in 1868, but at \$4 (£.80) rather than \$10 (£2.08) per year, only 709 shops were licenced. Thereafter, throughout the period under discussion, both urban and rural shops were licenced.

TABLE 6-1

Licence Fees for Rural Shops, New Amsterdam Shops,  
and Georgetown Shops between 1841-1892. (footnote 20)

Years	Classes								
	Rural	New Amsterdam	Georgetown	1	2	3	4	5	6
1841-1842	\$25 (£5.21)	\$25	\$25						
1843-1850	\$20 (£4.17)	\$20	\$20						
1851-1852	\$10 (£2.08)	\$20	\$20						
1853-1855	\$ 6 (£1.25)	\$20		\$ 50	\$40	\$35	\$30	\$25	\$20
1856-1858	\$15 (£3.13)	\$20		\$ 50	\$40	\$35	\$30	\$25	\$20
1859-1861	\$10	classes		\$ 50	\$40	\$35	\$30	\$25	\$20
1862-1867	-----	classes		\$ 50	\$40	\$35	\$30	\$25	\$20
1868-1891	\$ 4 (£.83)	classes		\$ 48	\$40	\$36	\$32	\$28	\$20
1892	\$ 4 (£.83)	classes		\$150	\$80	\$70	\$60	\$50	\$12

TABLE 6-2

Georgetown Licence Classes (and New Amsterdam after 1859), Shop Tax, and Shop Valuation as Established by the Tax Ordinance of 1853 (footnote 22)

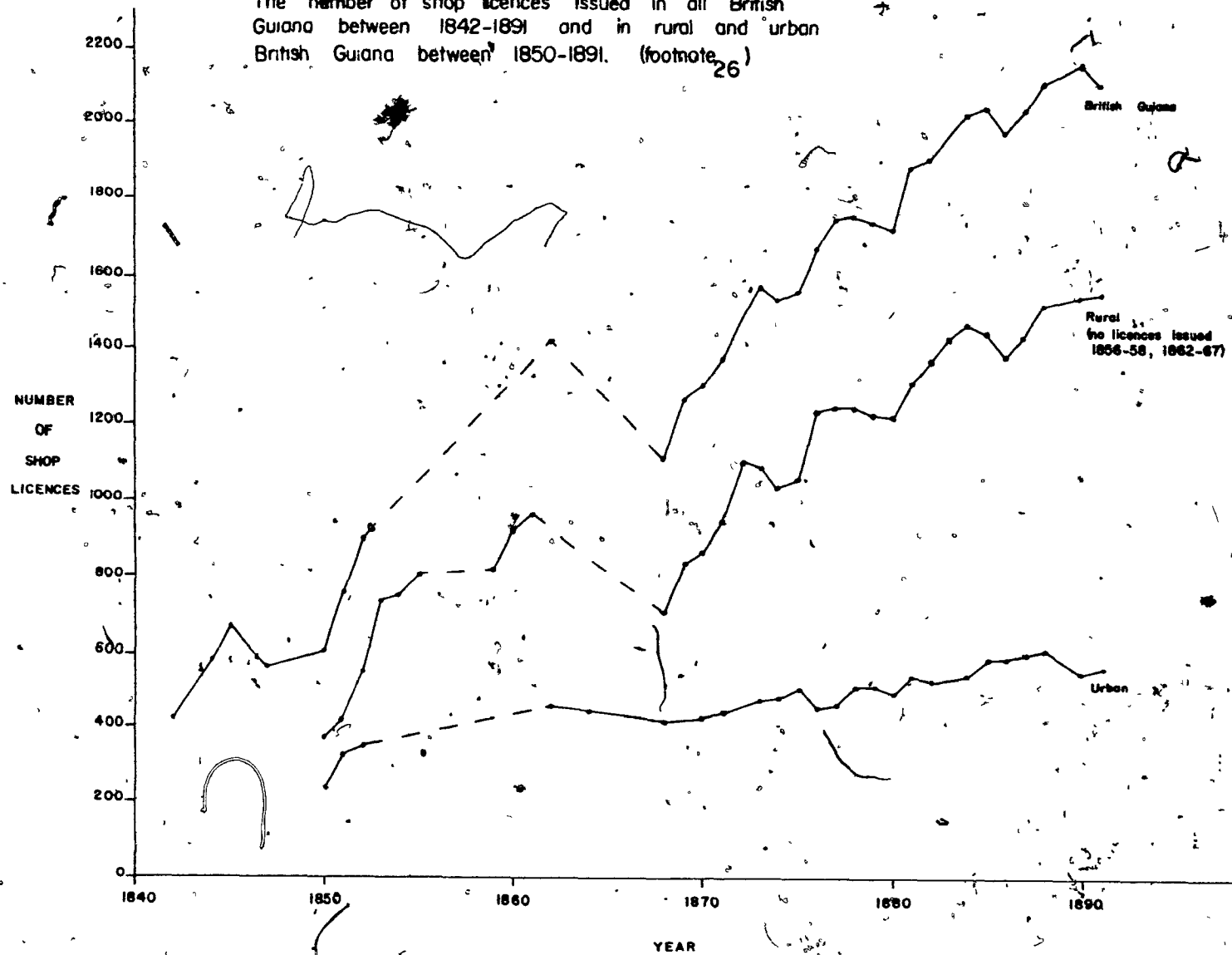
Class	Licence Rate	Shop Valuation
1	\$50 (£10.42)	\$15,000 and above (£3125-above)
2	\$40 (£ 8.33)	\$12,000--14,999 (£2500-3124)
3	\$35 (£ 7.29)	\$ 8,000--11,999 (£1667-2499)
4	\$30 (£ 6.25)	\$ 5,000-- 7,999 (£1042-1666)
5	\$25 (£ 5.21)	\$ 3,000-- 4,999 (£ 625-1041)
6	\$20 (£ 4.17)	up to---- 2,999 (up to- 624)

### The Proliferation of Shops, 1842-1891

In the aftermath of emancipation and apprenticeship the entrepreneurial niches in the commercial ecologies of Georgetown and New Amsterdam were rapidly filled. The rate of shop proliferation in rural British Guiana was only a little slower. In 1842 there were 420 shops in the colony.<sup>23</sup> In 1845 the number of shops had increased to 672.<sup>24</sup> Estimates for 1851 and 1852 place the number of licenced shops respectively at 750 and 900.<sup>25</sup> A doubling of the number of shops in ten years is not an unimpressive rate of growth. However, the number of licenced shops did not again double itself until 1880. The national totals as well as the urban and rural components are displayed in Graph 6-1. Only the national totals are available for the 1840's. Thereafter, urban and rural

GRAPH 6-1

The number of shop licences issued in all British Guiana between 1842-1891 and in rural and urban British Guiana between 1850-1891. (footnote 26)



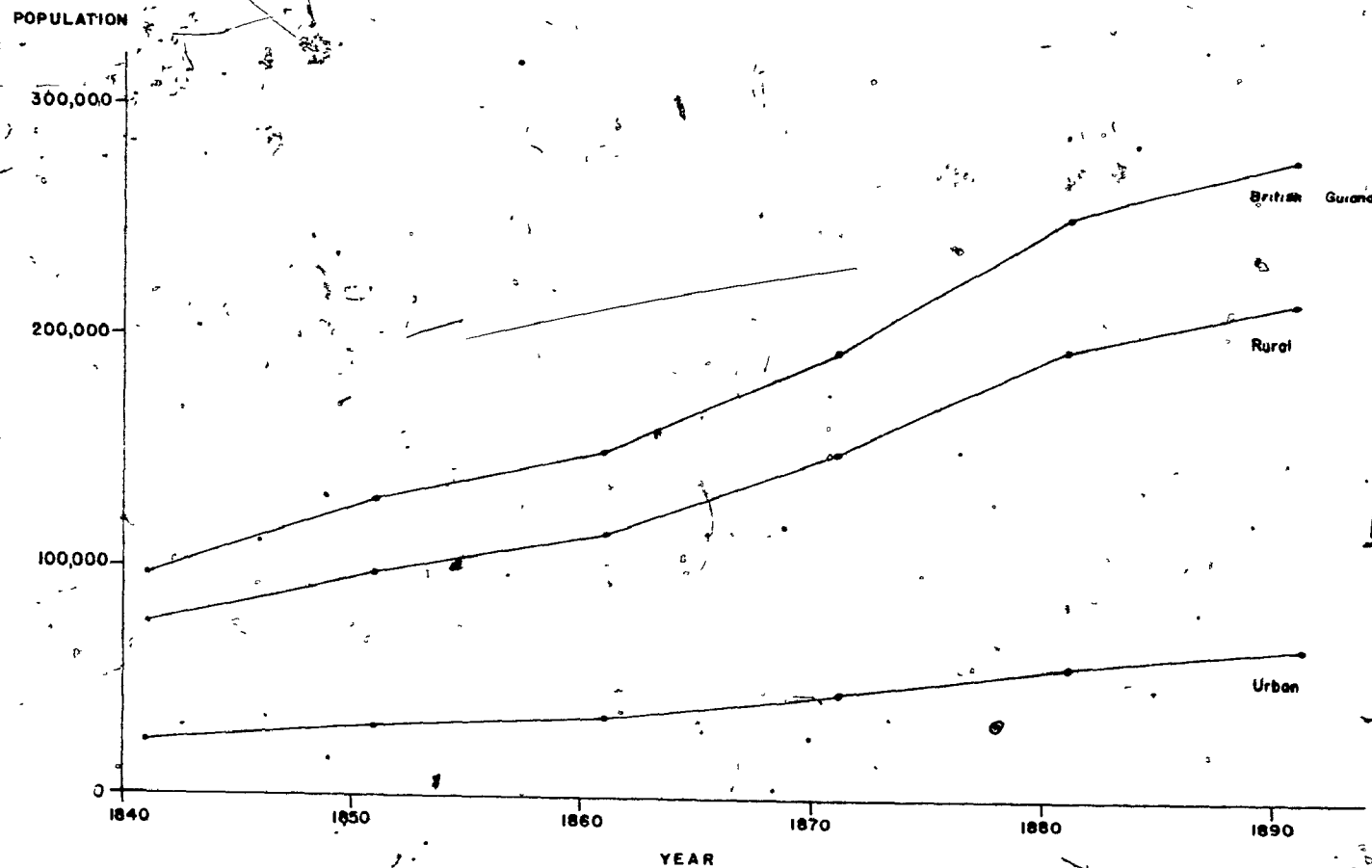
components were given explicitly in the documents, or can be either determined by a division of licence fees, or else judiciously estimated from incomplete data. An examination of the graph reveals two gross trends to the national totals curve. The first extends from 1842 to the mid-1860's. The second extends from the mid-1860's to the end and beyond the period under examination. An examination of the urban and rural components reveals that the urban licenced shop total increased slowly but steadily after 1851. It is the rural licenced shop total which manifest the greater degree of variation.

At this point reference should be made to Graph 6-2 and Graph 6-3. The former charts the population curves for the national as well as the urban and rural components. The latter graph displays the ratio of shops to population for the national as well as the urban and rural components of the population. The three graphs are then displayed together in semi-log form in Graph 6-4. The curves describing the totals of urban shops and urban population evidence a similar pattern of increase, this becomes clear on Graph 6-4. Between 1851-1891, the urban population of British Guiana increased from 30,141 to 62,079. During the same period the number of licenced urban shops increased from 336 to 558, an increase of 67 per cent. Instead of the number of urban shops doubling as did the urban population, the shops increased in size. This is borne out by the shop to population ratios after 1861. Before 1861, it appears that the field for entrepreneurial activity was yet wide open; also, that there were a great many small shops. After 1861, those shops better located and better managed began to evidence their advantages and gradually displaced shops less well advanced. Thereafter, the market potential increase



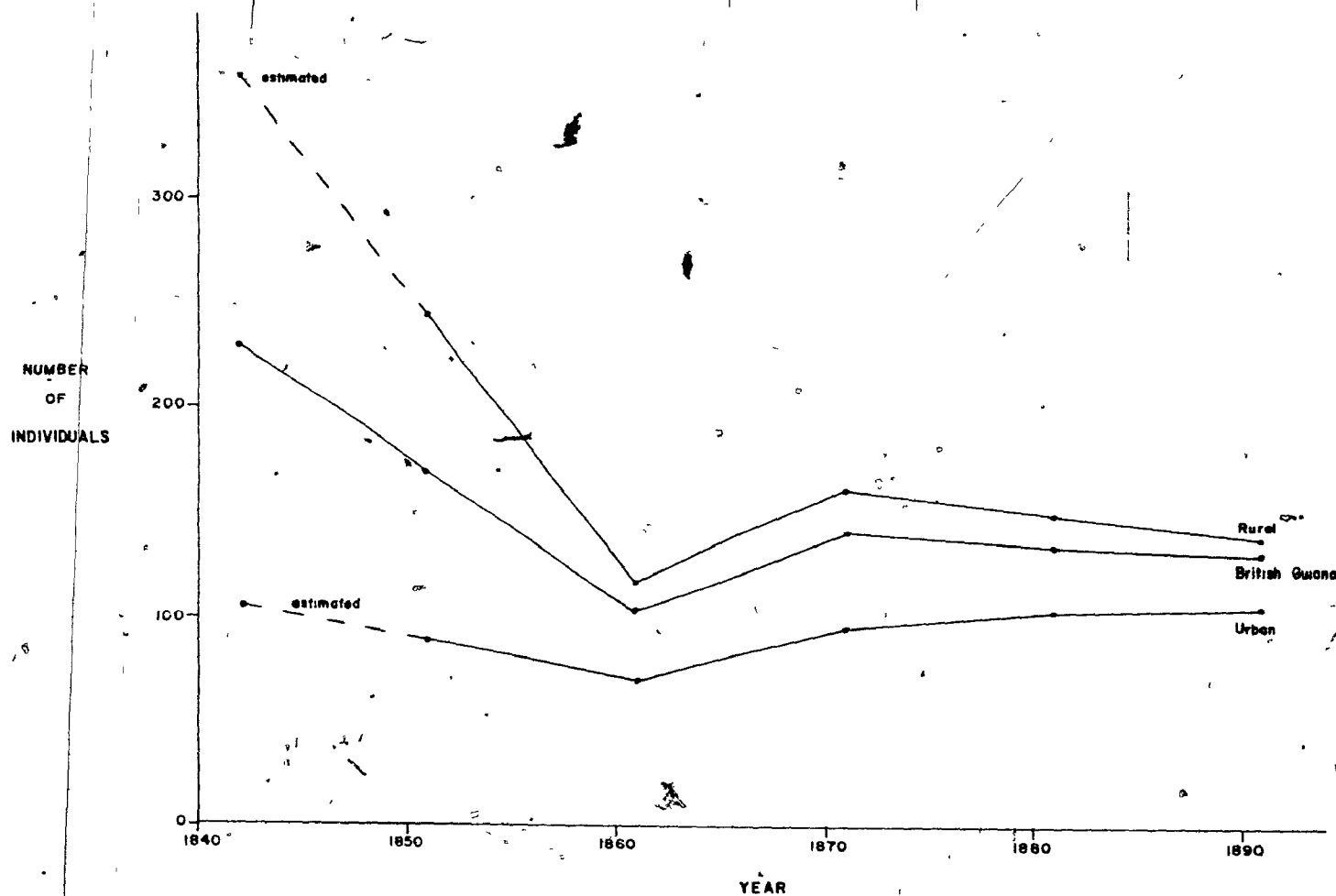
GRAPH 6-2

The total population of British Guiana and its rural and urban components between 1841-1891. (footnote 27)



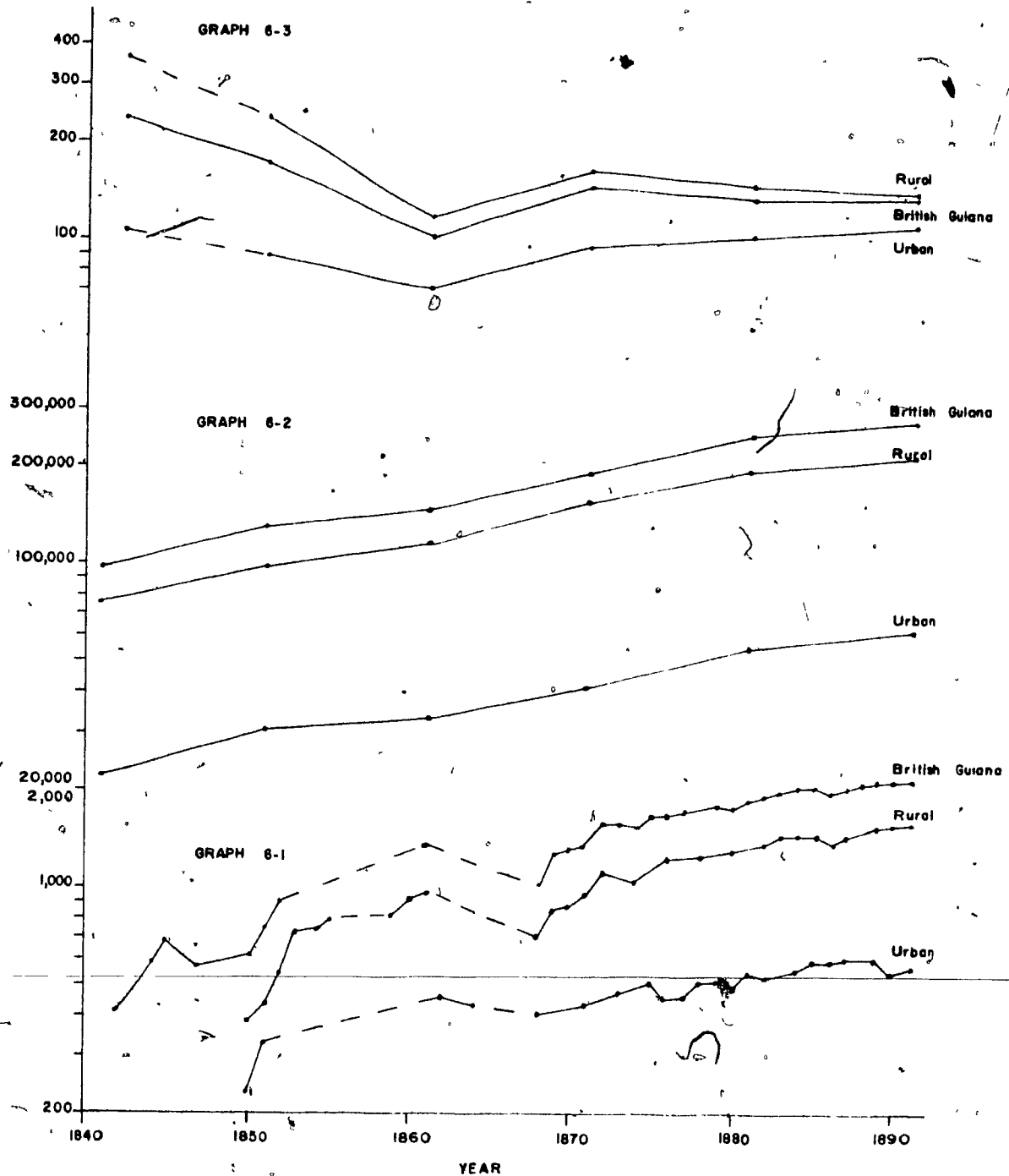
GRAPH 6-3

The ratio of shops to population in all British Guiana, rural British Guiana, and urban British Guiana between 1842-1891 — that is, 1 shop per "n" individuals. (footnote 28)



# GRAPH 6-4

Graphs 6-1, 6-2, and 6-3 in semi-log scale for purposes of comparison (footnote 29)



brought about by the rising urban population was shared between many established shops and stores and the 222 newcomers.

The rural shop component exhibits two distinct phases between 1851-1891. The first extends from 1851 to the mid-1860's. The second extends from the mid-1860's through and beyond the period under examination. Nothing can be stated with confidence about the numbers of rural shops during the 1840's. Demerara and Essequibo contained 310 rural shops in 1851; the inclusion of a judicious Berbice estimate of 92 shops results in a rural total of 402. In 1861, at the end of the first rural phase, there were 964 licenced shops in the three counties. Although the number of rural shops more than doubled during this ten year period, no correlation can be made with the growth of the rural population. In 1851, the rural population numbered 97,554. Ten years later it numbered 114,273. Clearly, the increase in the number of rural shops has its origin in other factors. The most salient of these was the fact that the number of rural shops was virtually zero at emancipation in 1834. The post-emancipation boom first satisfied the needs of the urban population and only then began to diffuse rapidly throughout the countryside. The second salient factor is that many of the shops were managed by the Portuguese. In 1851, many Portuguese were released from indentures entered into several years earlier.

Graph 6-3 indicates that the rural shop to population ratio increased dramatically between 1851 and 1861. In 1851 there was one rural shop for every 243 rural inhabitants; whereas, in 1861, the ratio had become one shop for every 119 rural inhabitants. As the population had increased by a mere 15 per cent in the ensuing decade while the number of rural shops had more than doubled, a concomitant increase in the shop

to population ratio was anticipated. The appearance of so many new shops suggest that many were small operations. Unfortunately, there are no reliable data available to indicate the turnover of goods or the rate of profit during the 1850's. But in 1843, 1 of the 12 shops in Trinity Parish, W.C.E., grossed \$48,000 (£10,000) and cleared a profit of \$4800 (£1000).<sup>30</sup> These figures were cited by Stipendiary Magistrate William Carbery, perhaps the most intelligent and diligent of these men, in his half-yearly report submitted in July 1844. The shop Carbery cited was one of the large European managed establishments which sold not only dry goods and provisions but also, because the proprietor held a retail spirit licence, considerable amounts of rum. In 1844, 19 retail spirit licences had been issued in Carbery's district. Rum was sold whose retail value was \$29,280 (£6100).<sup>31</sup> If a similar amount of rum had been sold in the previous year, each of the 12 shops (presuming of course that each held a retail spirit licence) may have sold about \$2400 (£500) worth of rum. This suggests that the bulk of the turnover of the shop cited by Carbery in 1843 was derived from the sale of dry goods and provisions.

If one assumes that the average turnover per store in 1843 was \$24,000 (£5000), the 12 stores grossed about \$288,000 (£60,000) or about \$259,200 (£54,000) if rum sales are excluded. The population of Trinity Parish remained almost constant between 1841 and 1851; it increased from 7884 in the former year to 8022 in the latter year. Assume for simplicity a population of 8000 in both 1843 and 1852. The per capita expenditure for food and goods may have been about \$32.40 (£6.75) in 1843. Each shop could expect a potential gross income of about \$21,600 (£4500). If the per capita expenditure of \$32.40 (£6.75) remained constant through 1852 (there is a possibility that expenditures may have declined slightly),

each of the 27 shops then open could have expected a gross income of \$9600 (£2000). The potential for profits obviously declined.

These figures and estimates for 1861 and 1871 are presented in Table 6-3. The impression given by Table 6-3 is that the large profits of the 1840's and early 1850's induced an over-expansion which could not be sustained much after 1861. This coupled with the decline in wages paid to estate labourers, which implies that per capita expenditure for food and dry goods may have been less than \$32.40 (£6.75) per year, hastened the demise of many small shops. In addition, those shops better sited, located, and better endowed with managerial expertise and capital proved to be more profitable than shops less well endowed. The rapid spread of shops in the 1850's suggests the character of a fad whose adherents in their enthusiasm went too far. Significantly, in 1855 the Portuguese admitted that the huckstering and shopkeeping fields were overstocked with entrepreneurs.<sup>33</sup>

The irony of the 1862-1867 no-rural-licence-period is that the number of rural shops decreased by 27 per cent. Or, if one has doubts about the 1868 licenced shop total, the decrease was 12 per cent between 1861 and 1869. During the same period the rural population increased by 30 per cent. This is evident on Graph 6-1 and in Table 6-3. After 1871, the number of shops increased at a rate only slightly faster than the rate of rural population increase. This was the result of a plethora of new small shops being established by Chinese and East Indians upon the completion of their indentures. But because the best locations had long been in the hands of the Portuguese and because of greater Portuguese experience in retailing, the newcomers were not able to enter the shopkeeping field at the rate which the Portuguese did during the 1850's. In addition, many

TABLE 6-3

Estimates of Shop Income for Shops in Trinity Parish, W.C.E.,  
in 1843, 1852, 1861, and 1871.

In these Calculations it has been Assumed that the Per Capita  
Expenditure of \$32.40 (£6.75) of 1843 for Dry Goods and  
Provisions Remained Constant in Succeeding Years

Year	Population	Total Personal Expenditure at \$32.40 (£6.75) per Capita	Number Shops	Estimated Gross Average Income per Shop
1843	8000 approx.	\$259,200. (£54,000)	12	\$21,600 (£4500)
1852	8000 approx.	\$259,200 (£54,000)	27	\$ 9600 (£2000)
1861	8619	\$279,254 (£58,178)	106	\$ 2635 (£ 549)
1871	11,178	\$362,170 (£75,452)	91	\$ 3979 (£ 829)

N.B. This table is essentially impressionistic rather than realistic.  
(footnote 32)

East Indians who decided to remain in the colony became farmers. Thus,  
there was not the same rush into shopkeeping as had taken place among  
the Portuguese during the 1850's.

#### Ethnicity Among Rural Shopkeepers, 1852-1875

The information available concerning the ethnicity of rural  
shopkeepers is by no means as complete as that for rural rumshopkeepers.  
This is because the number of retail spirit licences and their recipients  
were strictly supervised by the colonial authorities. In contrast, anyone  
with sufficient capital could purchase a general goods and provision shop  
licence. Government policy on the gazetting of various licence holders,

was also inconstant. Lists of most licencees were published 1850-1853, but only the 1852 gazettings appear to be complete. From 1854-1868 licence lists were not published. In addition, rural shop licences were not required between 1862-1867. In 1869 gazetting was resumed only to be concluded in early 1876. Such gazetting that exists was frequently incomplete.

Between 1851-1881 the number of rural Portuguese increased from 6006 to 6363. These were respectively 6.10 per cent and 3.23 per cent of the total rural population of 1851 and 1881. Most of the rural Portuguese were resident in Demerara. In 1851, the number and proportion of the total rural Portuguese population resident in Demerara were respectively 4421 and 73.60 per cent. These gradually increased until in 1881 the number and percentage were respectively 5231 and 82.20 per cent. The Portuguese accounted for 8.79 per cent and 4.65 per cent of the rural Demerara populations in 1851 and 1881. In Essequibo the number of Portuguese declined from 1301 in 1851 to 796 in 1881. These were respectively 5.21 per cent and 1.74 per cent of the county's population. The number of Portuguese resident in rural Berbice increased from 284 in 1851 to 467 in 1871 and then declined to 337 in 1881. The respective percentages of the county's rural population were 1.22, 1.55, and .86 per cent. The decline in the number of rural Portuguese was a result of reduced immigration and migration to the two urban centres, but more particularly to Georgetown.<sup>34</sup>

Between 1851-1881 the rate of increase in the number of Portuguese resident in Georgetown was greater than the rate of increase of the city



itself. In 1851, the Portuguese accounted for 7.05 per cent of Georgetown's population. By 1881, their number had increased from 1783 to 5019 and accounted for 10.77 per cent of the city's population. During the same period the percentage of Portuguese resident in New Amsterdam increased from 3.86 to 6.33 per cent of the town's total.<sup>35</sup> Some of the increase of urban Portuguese population was due to natural increase; some was also due to external immigration. But perhaps the bulk of the Portuguese population's increase in urban British Guiana was the result of an internal rural-urban migration. The pattern had been set in the 1840's when the Portuguese were first introduced in large numbers. After completing his indenture, the Portuguese entrepreneur would use his capital to establish a rural shop. Having saved more money from the profits of his shop and from the proceeds of the sale of the rural shop, a move would be made to the town. Such was the history of Manuel Pereira who immigrated to British Guiana in 1841, completed a three-year indenture, managed a shop with his wife on Leguan for a year, and then opened a shop in Albert-Town in late 1845.<sup>36</sup>

The migration of rural Portuguese to the more lucrative commercial opportunities of urban British Guiana effected an opening up of the hitherto relatively closed rural commercial economy. The number of rural Portuguese shops increased absolutely between 1852-1875. Concomitant with this absolute increase was the relative decline in the percentage of rural shop licences held by the Portuguese. This is evident in Table 6-4. The urbanward migration of the Portuguese coupled with the rapid post-1860 expansion of the rural population meant that rural Portuguese numbers were no longer sufficient to preserve their stranglehold on rural commerce. These gaps in the "Portuguese Wall" were filled by commercially minded

TABLE 6-4

(footnote 37)

A: The Number of Shop Licences and Ethnic Group of the Licencees in Essequibo, Demerara, Berbice, and the British Guiana Totals in 1852, 1870, 1875.

Year	Essequibo					Demerara					Berbice					British Guiana				
	Total	P	Cr	I	Ch	Total	P	Cr	I	Ch	Total	P	Cr	I	Ch	Total	P	Cr	I	Ch
1852	119	82	24	13	-	304	230	74	-	-	Incomplete Data					----	---	---	---	---
1870	252	124	23	96	7	433	299	36	82	16	143	78	8	50	7	828	501	67	228	30
1875	303	157	45	74	7	560	352	61	98	49	201	88	22	61	30	1064	597	128	233	106

B: Per Cent of Shop Licences Held by Different Ethnic Groups in Essequibo, Demerara, Berbice, and in all British Guiana in 1852, 1870, 1875.

Year	Essequibo				Demerara				Berbice				British Guiana			
	P	Cr	I	Ch	P	Cr	I	Ch	P	Cr	I	Ch	P	Cr	I	Ch
1852	68.90	20.16	10.92	----	75.65	24.34	-----	----	Incomplete data				----	----	----	----
1870	49.20	9.12	38.09	2.77	69.05	8.31	18.93	3.69	54.55	5.59	34.97	4.89	60.50	8.09	27.53	3.62
1875	51.81	14.85	24.42	8.91	62.85	10.89	17.50	8.75	43.78	10.95	30.34	14.93	56.10	12.03	21.89	9.96

P = Portuguese    I = East Indian  
Cr = Creole        Ch = Chinese

East Indians and Chinese. Substantial East Indian immigration commenced in 1844. By 1851, a very few had acquired shop licences in W.C.E. A year later, 13 East Indians held shop licences in the County of Essequibo. In the years between 1852-1870, significant numbers of East Indians and Chinese took up rural shopkeeping. At the same time, the number of Creoles engaged in rural shopkeeping remained nearly constant in Essequibo; whereas, in Demerara, the number of Creoles holding rural shop licences declined by 48.64 per cent.

Portuguese involvement in rural shopkeeping was greatest in Demerara, the county in which 75 per cent of all rural Portuguese lived. Not all were engaged in commerce. Many were small farmers. But it is not mere coincidence that the extensive Portuguese commercial interest, and the large Portuguese rural population existed in Demerara. Although the Portuguese were not absent from Essequibo and rural Berbice, their numbers were insufficient to occupy all commercially viable locations. The best positions had been occupied initially by Europeans and then by Portuguese in the 1840's and early 1850's. The less favoured macro- and micro-locations were left to be occupied by newcomers such as the East Indians and Chinese and by the indigenous Creoles. East Indians in 1870 held 27.53 per cent of all rural shop licences or approximately one-half the number of licences held by the Portuguese. Chinese and Creole interests in the same year did not exceed 11.71 per cent of the total number of licences issued.

The ethnic proportions of rural shop licences changed significantly between 1870-1875. The total number of licences issued increased by 28.50 per cent from 828 to 1064. Portuguese accounted for 40.67 per cent of the increase, Chinese for 32.20 per cent, Creoles for 25.84 per

cent, and East Indians for 2.11 per cent of the increase. Although the Portuguese accounted for the greatest fraction of the increase in shop licences issued, their proportion of the total fell by 4.4 per cent from 60.5 per cent to 56.1 per cent. But for the Portuguese resurgence in Essequibo the decline would have been nearer 8 per cent. Percentage-wise, the number of Portuguese licencees had probably peaked in the mid-1850's. Thereafter a marked decline in Portuguese licencees took place in Essequibo and quite probably in Berbice. In rural Demerara, very little change in the proportion of Portuguese licencees took place. This was partly because of shopkeeper migration from the adjacent counties. However, between 1870-1875 the decline in the proportion of Portuguese licencees in Demerara and certainly in Berbice accelerated. This decline was due to an upsurge in both Chinese and Creole licencee numbers.

The number and proportion of Chinese shopkeepers could only go up, having started at zero. In contrast, both the number and proportion of Creole licencees declined in Demerara between 1852-1870. In Essequibo little change took place. This may have also been the case in Berbice. But between 1870-1875 the number of Creole licencees in rural British Guiana increased by 48.7 per cent. The Creole share of the total number of licences issued increased from 8.09 per cent in 1870 to 12.03 per cent in 1875. Neither percentage was near the Creole licencee percentages for Demerara and Essequibo in 1852 of respectively 30 per cent and 21.15 per cent. This sudden increase in Creole shopkeeping cannot be easily explained. Furthermore, as there are no detailed lists of licencees for the years after 1875 it cannot be stated whether or not the trend continued.

It may be that many rural Creoles were encouraged to take up shopkeeping during the period when no licences were required between 1862-

1867. If so, perhaps many of their shops were not much more than corners in their dwellings. The re-imposition of the rural shop licence in 1868, may have forced some Creoles out of shopkeeping. More probably, many declined to acquire licences and ran clandestine operations. The policing of the licencing act may have left much to be desired in the years immediately after 1868. The commissaries of taxation could easily spot a moderately sized shop. But, any commercial activities centred in the home were not as easily detected. Efforts may have been made in 1871-1872 to licence all shops in the rural districts. Increases in the number of Creole licencees in various districts of the colony commenced at that time. If evasion of the licencing act was common, it is then probable that a good many small shopkeepers of Creole or other origin were actively engaged in business.

The commercial activities of the various ethnic groups were not evenly distributed throughout the three counties. This becomes evident upon a perusal of Tables 6-5, 6-6, and 6-7. The three counties can be divided with ease into nine districts. These districts are based upon physical geographical features or, particularly in Berbice, upon demographic distributions. With two exceptions, the proportion of Portuguese licencees declined successively in each district after 1852. The first exception took place in E.C.D. between 1852-1870. The percentage of Portuguese licencees increased from 68.57 to 80.33 per cent. The actual number of Portuguese-managed shops increased from 96 to 143. Most of these shops were situated in the western third of E.C.D. within fifteen miles (24 km.) of Georgetown. Most of East Coast Demerara's population was located within this small strip of coast. The large Negro villages of Buxton, Betervewaging, and Victoria rather than nurturing the growth of

TABLE 6-5

Number and Per Cent of Shops Managed by Four Ethnic Groups  
in Five Rural British Guiana Districts in 1852,\* (footnote 38)

<u>Number</u>						<u>Per Cent</u>				<u>Population 1851</u>	
<u>District</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>Portuguese</u>	<u>Creole</u>	<u>Indian</u>	<u>Chinese</u>	<u>Portuguese</u>	<u>Creole</u>	<u>Indian</u>	<u>Chinese</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Shop to Population Ratio</u>
W.C.E.	48	28	13	7	-	58.33	27.08	14.58	-	14756	1:307
Ess. Is.	71	54	11	6	-	76.05	15.49	8.45	-	8781	1:124
W.D.	119	98	21	-	-	82.35	17.64	-----	-	17818	1:150
E.B.D.	24	17	7	-	-	70.83	29.17	-----	-	8518	1:355
E.C.D.	140	96	44	-	-	68.57	31.42	-----	-	22499	1:161
<u>Grand Total</u>	402	293	96	13	-	<u>Average</u>	72.88	23.88	3.23	72372	1:180

\* No Berbice data

TABLE 6-6

Number and Per Cent of Shops Managed by Four Ethnic Groups  
in Nine Rural British Guiana Districts in 1870. (footnote 39)

District	<u>Number</u>					<u>Per Cent</u>				<u>Population 1851</u>	
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Portuguese</u>	<u>Creole</u>	<u>Indian</u>	<u>Chinese</u>	<u>Portuguese</u>	<u>Creole</u>	<u>Indian</u>	<u>Chinese</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Shop to Population Ratio</u>
W.C.E.	173	85	18	64	4	49.13	10.40	36.99	2.31	20134	1:116
Ess. Is.	79	39	5	32	3	49.36	6.33	40.51	3.80	10106	1:128
W.D.	170	108	10	44	8	63.52	5.88	25.88	4.70	35823	1:211
E.B.D.	85	48	11	22	4	56.47	12.94	25.88	4.71	13501	1:159
E.C.D.	178	143	15	16	4	80.33	8.42	8.98	2.24	34436	1:193
W.B.	29	19	2	8	-	65.52	6.89	27.59	----	8699	1:300
E.B.B.	40	26	1	13	-	65.00	2.50	32.50	----	5008	1:125
E.C.B. & Canje	53	24	3	23	3	45.28	5.66	43.40	5.66	10573	1:199
Corentyne	21	9	2	6	4	42.86	9.54	28.57	19.03	5840	1:278
<u>Grand Total</u>	828	501	67	228	30	<u>Average</u>	60.50	8.09	27.53	3.62	
D&E	685									D&E 114000	1:166
B	143									B 30120	1:211

TABLE 6-7

Number and Per Cent of Shops Managed by Four Ethnic Groups  
in Nine Rural British Guiana Districts in 1875. (footnote 40)

District	<u>Number</u>					<u>Per Cent</u>				<u>Estimated Population 1875</u>		
	<u>Total</u>	<u>Portuguese</u>	<u>Creole</u>	<u>Indian</u>	<u>Chinese</u>	<u>Portuguese</u>	<u>Creole</u>	<u>Indian</u>	<u>Chinese</u>	<u>Population</u>	<u>Shop to Population Ratio</u>	
W.C.E.	170	101	21	32	16	59.41	12.35	18.82	9.41	22082	1:130	
Ess. Is. and River	133	56	24	42	11	42.10	18.04	31.58	8.28	11298	1:85	
W.D.	204	111	9	55	29	54.41	4.41	26.96	14.21	39539	1:194	
E.B.D.	83	41	11	19	12	49.39	13.25	22.87	14.58	14813	1:178	
E.C.D.	273	200	41	24	8	73.26	15.01	8.79	2.93	39408	1:144	
W.B.	32	17	7	3	5	53.12	21.88	9.38	15.62	9059	1:283	
E.B.B.	67	36	8	18	5	53.73	11.94	28.87	7.46	5696	1:85	
E.C.B. & Canje	61	21	4	22	14	34.43	6.56	36.06	22.95	12997	1:213	
Corentyne	41	14	3	18	6	34.14	7.32	43.90	14.64	5948	1:145	
<u>Grand Total</u>	1064	597	128	233	106	<u>Average</u>	56.10	12.03	21.89	9.96	160840	1:151
D&E	863								D&E	127140	1:147	
B	201								B	33700	1:168	



a Negro commercial class appeared to foster the Portuguese shops. In 1870, of 178 shops in E.C.D. a mere 15 were managed by Creoles, the Portuguese accounted for 143, East Indians for 16, and Chinese for 4. By 1875 the total number of shops in the district had increased to 273; of this number, 41 or 15.01 per cent were managed by Creoles. This increase in Creole shopkeeping was the largest that occurred in the nine rural districts. It was also the most significant. It suggests that the Creole population was capable of competing with the Portuguese. Significant increases in the number of Creole shops between 1870-1875 also occurred in West Berbice and East Bank Berbice. Again these were areas containing large proportions of Negroes.

Contrary to the general decline in the Portuguese proportion of shops in the nine districts the number and percentage of Portuguese shops in W.C.E. increased from 49.13 per cent to 59.41 per cent of the district's total between 1870-1875. In the same district during the same period the percentage of East Indian shops dropped from 36.99 to 18.82 per cent of the totals. In fact, the number of East Indian shops declined from 64 to 32. Elsewhere in British Guiana the number of East Indian shops changed very little. The increase in Portuguese shopkeeping in W.C.E. thus appears to be more apparent than real. The decline in the number of East Indian shopkeepers was the likely result of returns to India or the taking up of farming. Their departure exaggerated the not unusual increase in the number of Portuguese shops thus creating a spurious counter-trend.

In achieving their commercial ascendancy the Portuguese established a series of local commercial monopolies throughout the colony. These spatial monopolies; that is, the dominance of the local economic and social spaces; were brought about through the joint efforts of the commercially-minded Portuguese and the dominance-minded colonial elite. The exertions of the elite were well-rewarded. Their unwitting tools, the Portuguese, frustrated the embryonic efforts of the Negro to rise by engaging in commerce. This re-enforced the structural pluralization of post-emancipation society and guaranteed the continued dominance of the elite.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER SIX

1. CO-111-277, Barkly to Grey, number 173, December 31, 1850, p.9.
2. Minutes of the Court of Policy of British Guiana, petition of Manuel Pereira, January 20, 1847.
3. CO-111-309, Wodehouse to Labouchere, number 16, February 1856.
4. Young, Alan, The Approaches to Local Self-Government in British Guiana, (London, 1958), p.53.
5. Adamson, Alan H., Sugar Without Slaves, (Yale University Press, 1972), p.247.
6. The Colonist, March 5, 1852.
7. Ibid., February 3, 1854.
8. Ibid., May 23, 1855.
9. Royal Gazette, October 9, 1855.
10. Barkly to Grey, op.cit. (footnote 1).
11. The Creole, June 17, 1864.
12. Royal Gazette, April 5, 1864.
13. Guiana Times, March 3, 1866, as quoted by the Royal Gazette, March 5, 1866.
14. The Creole, June 13, 1873.
15. The Argosy, June 9, 1888.
16. Ibid., March 23, 1889.
17. Ibid., March 30, 1889.
18. Local Guide of British Guiana, (Georgetown, British Guiana, 1843), Tax Ordinance of 1842.
19. Tax Ordinances of British Guiana, 1843-1850.
20. Ibid., 1841-1892.
21. Barkly to Grey, op.cit. (footnote 1).
22. Tax Ordinances, op.cit. (footnote 20).

23. Local Guide of British Guiana, op.cit. (footnote 18).
24. CO-111-227, Anti-Slavery Society submission to the Colonial Office, number 70, 1845.
25. Official Gazette, licence lists, 1851 and 1852; Minutes of the Combined Court of British Guiana, Annual Financial Reports, summaries of licence receipts for 1851 and 1852.
26. Ibid.
27. Census of British Guiana, 1841, 1851, 1861, 1871, 1881, 1891.
28. Ibid.  
Official Gazette, op.cit. (footnote 25)  
CC of BG, op.cit. (footnote 25).
29. Ibid.
30. CO-111-212, Light to Stanley, number 183, August 28, 1844; Stipendiary Magistrate William Carbery's half-yearly report.
31. CO-111-224, Light to Stanley, number 174, August 2, 1845; Stipendiary Magistrate William Carbery's half-yearly report.
32. Ibid.  
Light to Stanley, op.cit. (footnote 30).
33. The Colonist, May 23, 1855.
34. Census of British Guiana, op.cit. (footnote 27).
35. Ibid.
36. CP of BG, op.cit. (footnote 2).
37. Official Gazette, licence lists, 1852, 1870, and 1875.
38. Ibid.
39. Ibid.
40. Ibid.

## 7. THE COMPETITION FOR SPACE

### Multiple Shop Proprietorships in 1852 and 1870

A tactic frequently employed by the more ambitious Portuguese rural shopkeepers in their struggle to capture the trade in the early 1850's was the opening of additional shops. This was done near their first locus of operations or on adjacent estates and villages. These shops were either owned outright by the entrepreneur or were jointly owned in partnership with a friend or relative. Such was the substance of a charge made by a correspondent to The Colonist in March 1852. Under the pseudonym of "C," the correspondent asserted that the Portuguese

...have a scheme of their own which prevents competition, you will generally find that 3 or 4 shops in one neighbourhood belong either to one party, or one is interested in the whole. In the country...1, 2, or 3 of them are connected in the shops on 3 or 4 neighbouring estates; they willingly pay a high rent, often in advance, on the condition that no opposition should be allowed on the same estate.

"C" may well have been a disgruntled European or Coloured shopkeeper.

But his first charge against the Portuguese can, in part, be documented.

In W.C.E. in 1852 (see Cartogram 4-3), four Portuguese and two Creoles held two or more shop licences. In one case, a Portuguese held licences for the only shops on two adjacent estates. In a second instance, one of the three Portuguese shopkeepers in Danielstown ran the only shop on the adjacent estate of Sparta. A third example is provided by Catherine Gonsalves. She managed two of the four shops in Queenstown, the remaining two shops were run by Creoles. These Portuguese may have taken their cue (or vice versa) from Hilary Tilbury, an important European shopkeeper on Zorg and Golden Fleece estates. Tilbury managed two stores on Zorg, one

in the estate nucleus and a second in the village at the front of the estate along the public road. A third store was open on Golden Fleece, but whether it was in the nucleus of the estate or in the village at the estate's front is not clear. Tilbury's enterprise was not, however, usual among the European and Coloured rural shopkeepers.<sup>2</sup>

Similar efforts to saturate the commercial field of a group of estates or villages were undertaken in other parts of British Guiana. In W.B.D., Francis Rodrigues managed three shops in the estate nucleus and public road village of Klein Pouderoyen and a fourth shop in adjacent Malgretout. He was the only shopkeeper in Klein Pouderoyen. Seven other Portuguese in W.B.D. managed two or more shops in similar situations. In E.B.D., Antony d'Abria managed the three shops in Peter's Hall. In E.C.D., Francis Nunes ran the three shops in Bel Air; Manual Viera was the proprietor of three shops in Friendship Village; John R. de Silva, Manuel Monez, and Antonia Laguire each managed two shops in Buxton; and at least another ten individuals managed two shops in the same village or estate or on adjacent estates and villages in E.C.D.<sup>3</sup>

These multiple shop proprietorships were efforts to fill available commercial niches and at the same time to effect the displacement of European, Creole, or other commercial rivals. This was managed by ruthless price cutting and by combinations among the Portuguese. The goal was the creation of a local monopoly within a given area of the colony. Once the monopoly had been established, prices within the monopoly area could be manipulated at will. The local population was thus liable to be squeezed most effectively. This was possible because for most if not all small purchases (and most purchases of supplies made in the shops by the Negroes were small) people were generally unwilling to go any great

distance. Spatial friction thus provided the Portuguese with the means of securing local monopoly.

The extent of multiple proprietorships was such that in 1852, 25 per cent of the rural shopkeepers in West Coast Essequibo, West Demerara, and East Coast Demerara had licenced nearly 43 per cent of the shops. By 1870, the respective percentages were 13 per cent and 26 per cent. In absolute terms, the number of shops so owned scarcely changed at all. In 1852, of 307 licenced shops in the forementioned areas of the colony, 131 were the establishments of 57 proprietors. In 1870, of 521 licenced shops, 134 shops were the establishment of 58 individuals. The ethnic numbers and proportions of shop proprietorship in the aforementioned districts have already been presented in Table 6-6 and 6-7. Table 7-1 provides a numerical description of the ethnicity of those proprietors managing two or more shops in 1852 and 1870.

Table 7-1 reveals that in both 1852 and 1870 Portuguese entrepreneurs held the majority of both single and multiple shop proprietorships in the three mentioned areas of the colony. Their dominance was especially pronounced in multiple shop proprietorships. Yet, the number of multiple shop proprietorships scarcely changed between 1852 and 1870. Respectively, 33.76 per cent and 20.92 per cent of the total number of Portuguese proprietors held two or more shop licences in 1852 and 1870. This proportional decline suggests that in 1852 not all the possible commercial niches in the rural economy were as yet occupied. The more apparent were seized by shopkeepers wealthy enough to open additional shops. These were generally nearby not only for the convenience of supervision but also for the reasons stated earlier. In addition, ambitious Portuguese were able to get ahead faster and move up the social and

TABLE 7-1

Proprietors of 1-6 Rural Shops in W.C.E., W.D.,  
and E.C.D. in 1852 and 1870. (footnote 4)

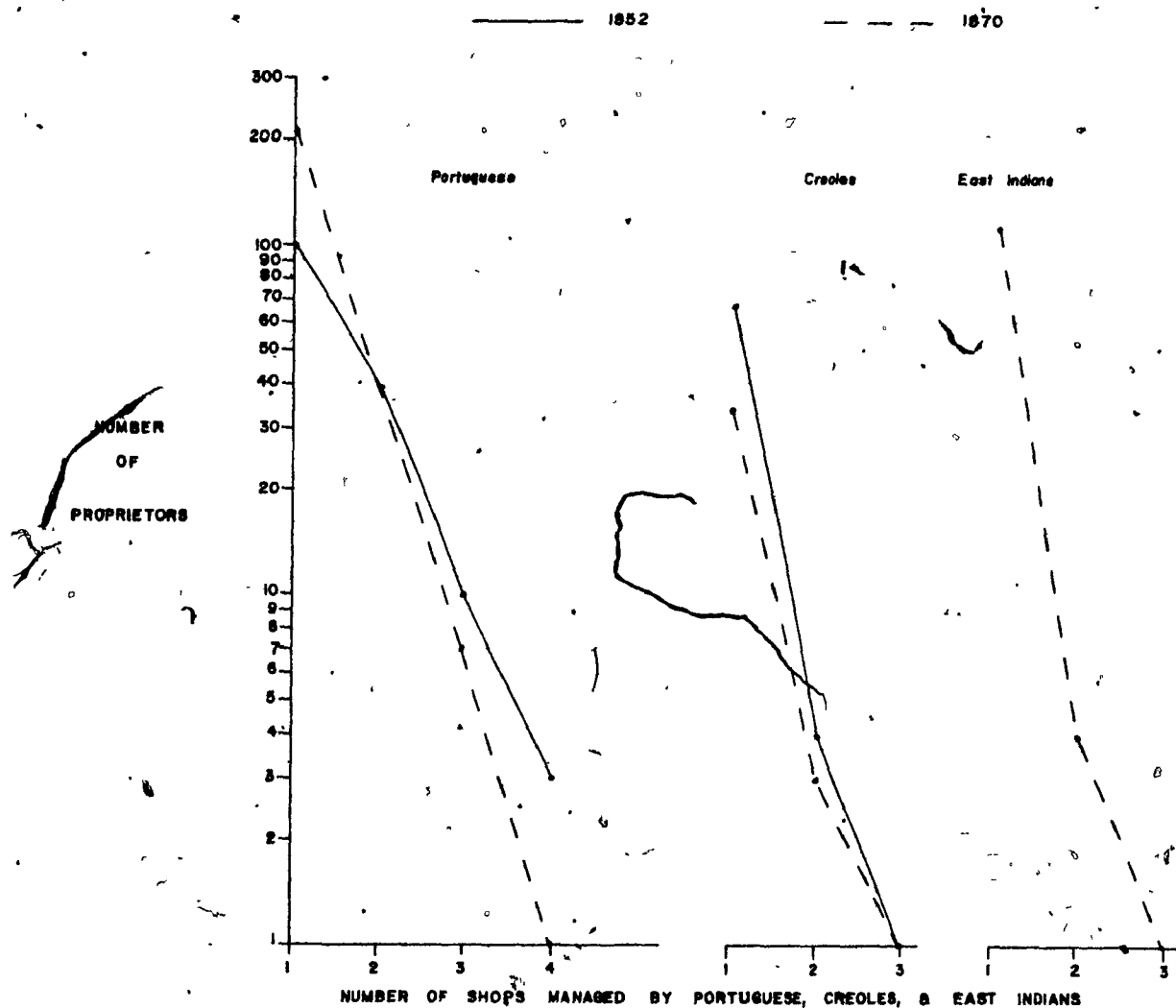
1852 Number of Shops Managed	Proprietor Numbers					Proprietor Percentages			
	Total	Portuguese	Creole	East Indian	Chinese	Portuguese	Creole	East Indian	Chinese
1	176	102	67	7	-	57.97	38.06	3.97	-
2	43	39	4	-	-	90.69	9.31	----	-
3	11	10	1	--	--	90.90	9.10	----	-
4	3	3	--	--	-	100.00	----	----	-
Proprietor Totals	233	154	72	7	-	66.09	30.90	3.00	-
1870									
1	387	223	34	114	16	57.62	8.78	29.45	4.13
2	46	39	3	4	--	84.78	6.52	8.69	----
3	9	7	1	1	--	77.78	11.11	11.11	----
4	1	1	--	----	--	100.00	----	----	----
5	1	1	--	----	--	100.00	----	----	----
6	1	1	--	----	--	100.00	----	----	----
Proprietor Totals	445	282	38	119	16	63.67	8.53	26.74	3.59



GRAPH 7-1

The number of single and multiple shop proprietorships held by representatives of three ethnic groups in aggregated West Coast Essequibo, West Coast Demerara, West Bank Demerara, and East Coast Demerara in the years 1852 and 1870.

(footnote 5)



economic scale of the colony with the profits of their small chains behind them. If they intended to remain in British Guiana their goal may have been a rumshop in town or an establishment in Water Street.

Portuguese predominance in multiple proprietorships may be interpreted in several ways. One may suggest that it is evidence of greater Portuguese initiative. This may be countered with the reminder that the Portuguese were being encouraged and assisted in their efforts whilst their Negro and Coloured rivals were being disfavoured. Graph 7-1 displays in semi-log form the relationship of Portuguese, Creole, and Indian shops for 1852 and 1870. Perforce, because there are no data concerning variations in rural shop size, one must assume that multiple shop proprietors were twice, thrice, or more times wealthy than a single shop proprietor.

#### Urban Shops and Stores, 1850-1877

Post-emancipation British Guiana society's character had been firmly established by 1850. Outwardly, very little had changed. A select coterie of Europeans continued to exercise the levers of power. The bulk of the population, that is the Negroes, continued to remain at the bottom of the social and economic scale. Yet, in order to maintain the relations of power between European and Negro, British Guianese society had been topologically transformed by the introduction of indentured labourers. At first introduced to provide steady estate labour, the indentees function as a counter or deadweight to Negro ambition was quickly perceived. When one group, the Portuguese, manifested a commercial bent; this was quickly seized upon and favoured by the elite as a

means of checking Negro attempts to improve themselves economically. In addition, a small and prosperous group such as the Portuguese were bound to be beholden to their patrons and adherents, albeit within limits, to the status quo.

Thus, it should be no surprise that the Portuguese had become by 1850 the masters of the petty trade of the colony. Indeed, Portuguese were already beginning to rise into the ranks of respectable and substantial Water Street merchants. Portuguese dominance had been first achieved within the rumshop trade. This was understandable as retail spirit licences were strictly controlled and issued only to those whom the elite favoured. Within the dry goods and provision field the Portuguese, although assisted by liberal extensions of credit, were more responsible for their successes. Through combinations to fix prices, an ability to exist at a low standard of living until their goals were achieved, and perhaps a better flair for management, the Portuguese came to control more than half the retail outlets by 1850 and almost two-thirds by 1856.

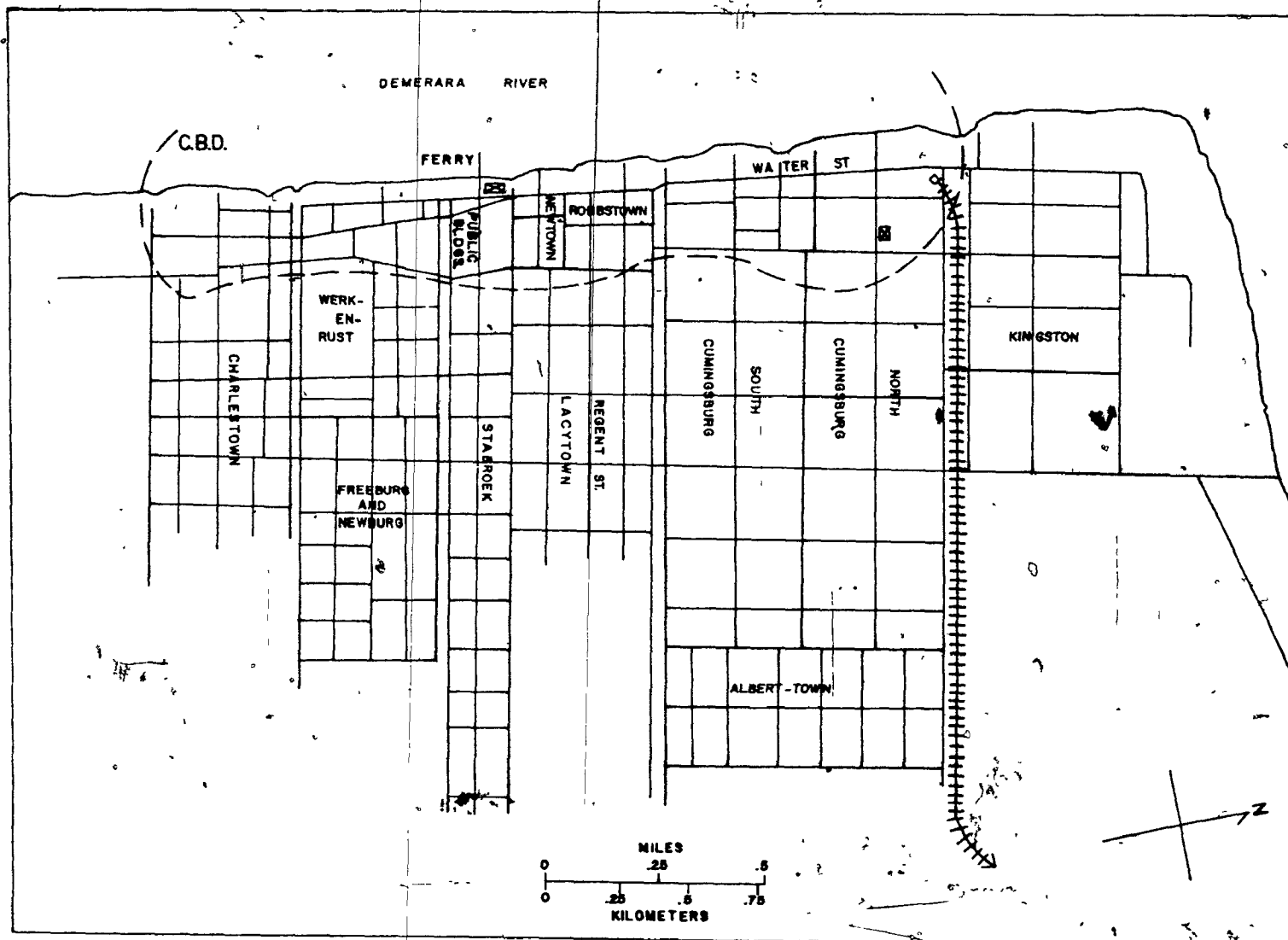
In so achieving these successes the Portuguese displaced aspiring Negro and other small shopkeepers. The elite, secure at the pinnacle of the commercial pyramid, had little to fear. The most important firms such as Booker, Brothers & Co. all had metropolitan connections. No purely colonial firm was capable of challenging these multi-national "giants." But the lower ranks of the commercial hierarchy were accessible to the ambitious Portuguese. By 1870, 11 of the 23 largest stores in Georgetown were owned by Portuguese. This achievement had its origins in the early 1840's when some Portuguese undertook importations from Madeira. It emerged out of the very smallest of beginnings, that is, the occupation of itinerant huckster.

Portuguese dominance of the Georgetown retail trade was not in proportion, to their numbers within the city. In 1851, they accounted for only 6.87 per cent of the city's population; yet, this small fraction of the city's population held almost 60 per cent of the shop licences issued for the city. Twenty years later in 1871, the proportion of Portuguese had more than doubled to 14.31 per cent of Georgetown's population. A year earlier in 1870, almost 75 per cent of the city's shop licences were held by Portuguese. The diminutiveness of their numbers contrasts strongly and indeed dramatizes their role as the colony's shopkeepers. Within the city in 1851, the greatest numbers of Portuguese were to be found in North and South Cumingsburg and in Robbstown and Newtown. These three districts contained the commercial heart of the city (see Map 7-1). In 1871, the greatest numbers of Portuguese were found in Lacytown, South Cumingsburg, North Cumingsburg and Charlestown in the extreme south of the city.

The traditional commercial core of Georgetown was situated along the waterfront from Stabroek northwards to Kingston. Newtown and Robbstown comprised the commercial core before 1800. After the third British conquest in 1803, Plantation La Bourgade ceased cultivation and was subdivided into residential and commercial lots. The new district or ward of the city was named Cumingsburg. At the same time, commercial waterfront developments were being constructed on the front lands of Plantations Werk-en-Rust and Le Repentir. Between the northern and southern sections of the central business district (C.B.D.) was Stabroek. This was the original core of the city. In the front lands of the ward, that is near the river, were situated the government buildings, the town market, and the Demerara River ferry landing. In terms of their relative importance at mid-century, the merchants situated in North and South Cumingsburg and

MAP 7-1

Georgetown Districts in 1870 and the Central Business District (C.B.D.)



in Robbstown and Newtown were greater in number and wealth than those situated south of Stabroek. Water Street, the principal business street parallel to the river and immediately east of the waterfront, came to be identified with the merchant interest. One spoke of Water Street as one spoke of the sugar interest.

The number of shops licenced and the ethnicity of their proprietors is given for each district of Georgetown in 1852 and 1870 in Table 7-2. From the table it is clear that in both years the greatest number of shops were to be found in North and South Cumingsburg and in Robbstown and Newtown. In 1852, 66.55 per cent of all the licenced shops were in these three districts. By 1871, this percentage had declined to 56.19 per cent. This relative decline was due to the proliferation of shops in Albert-Town and in Freeburg and Newburg. These two districts contained but a single shop in 1852. But by 1871 they contained respectively 11 and 10 licenced shops. Substantial increases in shop numbers also took place in Werk-en-Rust and in Charlestown. In 1870, 21.20 per cent of the licenced Georgetown shops were situated in the two districts. This was six percent more than the 15.20 per cent of the total in 1852. The areas in the vicinity of the waterfront in both Werk-en-Rust and Charlestown constituted a part of the commercial core.

With the exception of Robbstown and Newtown, every district in the city contained more licenced shops in 1870 than in 1852. The decline of almost 14 per cent in Robbstown was due to the clearance of the district by the fire of June 1864 and the reconstruction of the area which resulted in larger but fewer shops and stores. The fire, which also devastated the Water Street area of North and South Cumingsburg brought ruin to some merchants but enabled a more efficient use of the land to be planned

TABLE 7-2

Georgetown Shops in 1852 and 1870 by Districts and Ethnic Proprietorships. (footnote 6)

Ward	1852					1870								
	Total Shops	Portuguese	Creole	% P.	% Cr.	% of all Georgetown Shops	Total Shops	Portuguese	Creole	East Indian and Chinese	% P.	% Cr.	% I. & Ch.	% of all Georgetown Shops
Kingston	14	5	9	35.71	64.28	4.72	15	15	-	-	100.00	-	-	4.13
N. Cumingsburg	124	68	56	54.83	45.17	41.89	(49)	(38)	(11)	-	(75.55)	(22.45)	-	(13.49)
S. Cumingsburg							(41)	(99)	(42)	-	(70.21)	(29.79)	-	(38.84)
Albert-Town	---	---	---	---	---	---	(92)	(61)	(31)	-	(66.30)	(33.70)	-	(25.34)
Robbstown and Newtown	---	---	---	---	---	---	11	10	1	-	90.91	9.09	-	3.03
Lacytown	73	47	47	35.61	64.38	24.66	63	30	33	-	47.61	52.39	-	17.35
Stabroek	27	24	3	88.89	11.11	9.12	37	29	8	-	78.37	21.62	-	10.19
Werk-en-Rust	8	7	1	87.50	12.50	2.70	9	8	1	-	88.89	11.11	-	2.47
Freeburg and Newburg	23	18	5	78.26	21.73	7.77	40	33	4	1 I 2 Ch	82.50	10.00	7.50	11.01
Charlestown	1	1	---	100.00	---	.33	10	10	-	-	100.00	-	-	2.75
unplaced	22	18	4	81.82	18.18	7.43	37	35	2	-	94.59	5.40	-	10.19
Georgetown	4	4	---	100.00	---	1.35	---	---	-	-	---	-	-	-
	296	171	125	57.77	42.23	100.00	363	269	91	1 I 2 Ch	74.11	25.07	.82	100.00

N.B. In this table, "Creole" includes Europeans as well as Negroes and Coloureds.

with reconstruction. The number of Portuguese licenced shops increased absolutely in all of the ten districts of the city. There was a corresponding relative increase in all but Lacytown in the central part of the city. Contrary to the general trend, the number of shops licenced by Creoles increased from three in 1852 to eight in 1870 in Lacytown. The increase may have been due to refugees from the 1864 fire who, once established in Lacytown, decided to remain.

Their decision was not necessarily unwise; for Lacytown, located as it is in the centre of the town, was even then developing as the long axis or stem of the commercial "T." The reason for this is obvious. As Georgetown's settled area grew away from the river, the old commercial district became increasingly remote from those people living in the eastern marches of the city. The stem of the "T," an extrusion from the central business district, bisected the city's population distribution and reduced the distance those more remotely placed people needed to travel to the shops. The commencement of this pattern can be discerned in Map 7-2. It is apparent that the density of shops in Lacytown was greater than in any other area outside the central business district.

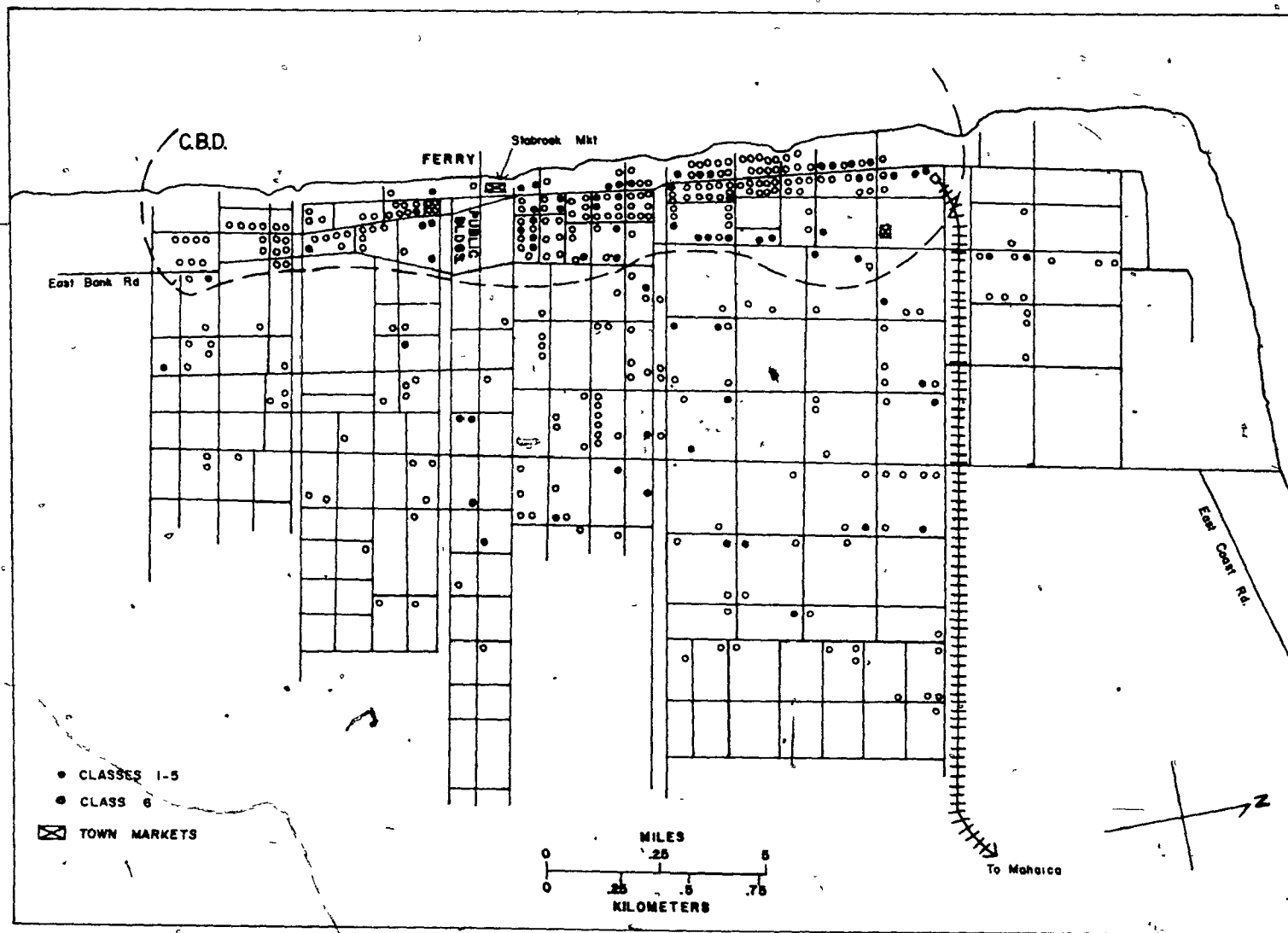
Because all shops and stores paid the same licence fee of \$20 (£4.16) in 1852, very little can be said about the varying sizes of the stores and the amount of money invested in premises. In 1870, the shops and stores of Georgetown were licenced according to the valuation of their premises in the town books (see Tables 6-1 and 6-2). The 363 stores within the Georgetown licencing district were separated into eight categories. However, only categories one through six are of express interest in the discussion at hand. Category seven included five rural shops located outside the limits of the city. Category eight listed shops under the



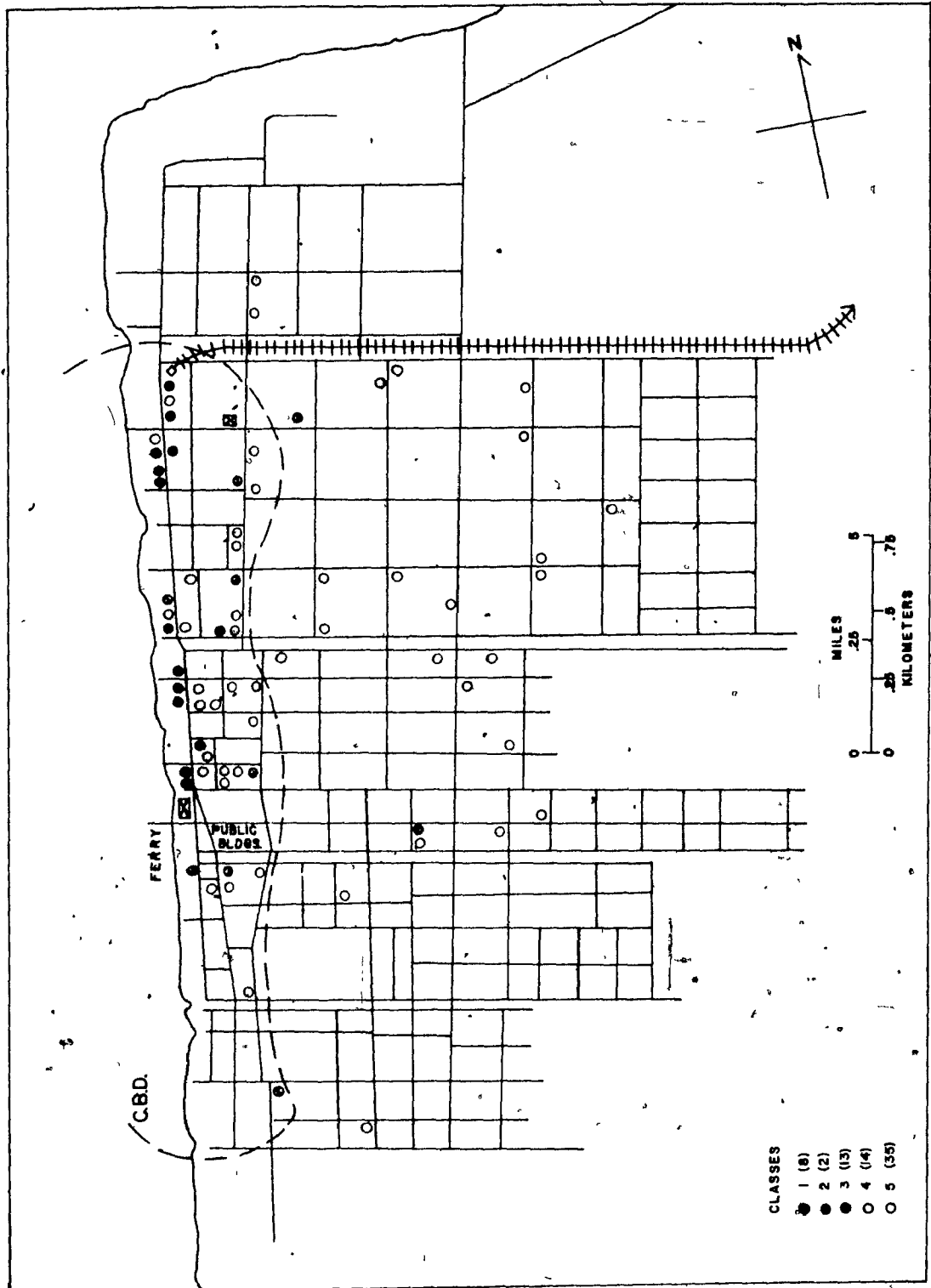
licence heading of "middle class." The nature of the "middle class" classification is not clear. The various tax ordinances make no mention of this class. They were not countinghouses, even though most of the "middle class" shops possessed waterfront locations, for the countinghouses possessed their own licence categories. Thus, the "middle class" stores have been located on the ethnic proprietorship maps but not on the shop classification maps (see Maps 7-2, -3, -4, and -5).

The distribution of the licences held under the six class system are presented in Table 7-3. From the table, it is apparent that the Portuguese while dominating the lower reaches of the commercial pyramid had not achieved mastery of the summit. Although unable to displace the European elite, the Portuguese did assert their supremacy over the Creoles in classes three through six. Their triumph was most complete within the sixth class of licenced shops. The premises of these shops were valued at less than \$3000 (£625). The potential range of shop sizes within this category was probably as great as the range within class one. A very small class six shop could literally have been little more than a counter and a barrel of saltfish. A large class six shop could have been a moderately sized establishment having in stock all the basic items needed by the people such as saltfish, salt pork, flour, rice, cooking oil, and some tinned goods. Given the possible range in sizes, it is surprising that many more ambitious Creoles were not engaged in this level of shopkeeping. Possibly, many Creoles were hucksters. But as there exist no lists of the huckster licences issued in 1870 one cannot state what was the proportion of non-Portuguese hucksters. However, in 1852, of 95 hucksters plying their trade in Georgetown, 60 or 63.15 per cent were Creole while the remainder were Portuguese.<sup>8</sup> This early Creole predominance at the bottom

MAP 7-2  
Georgetown — shop locations in 1870

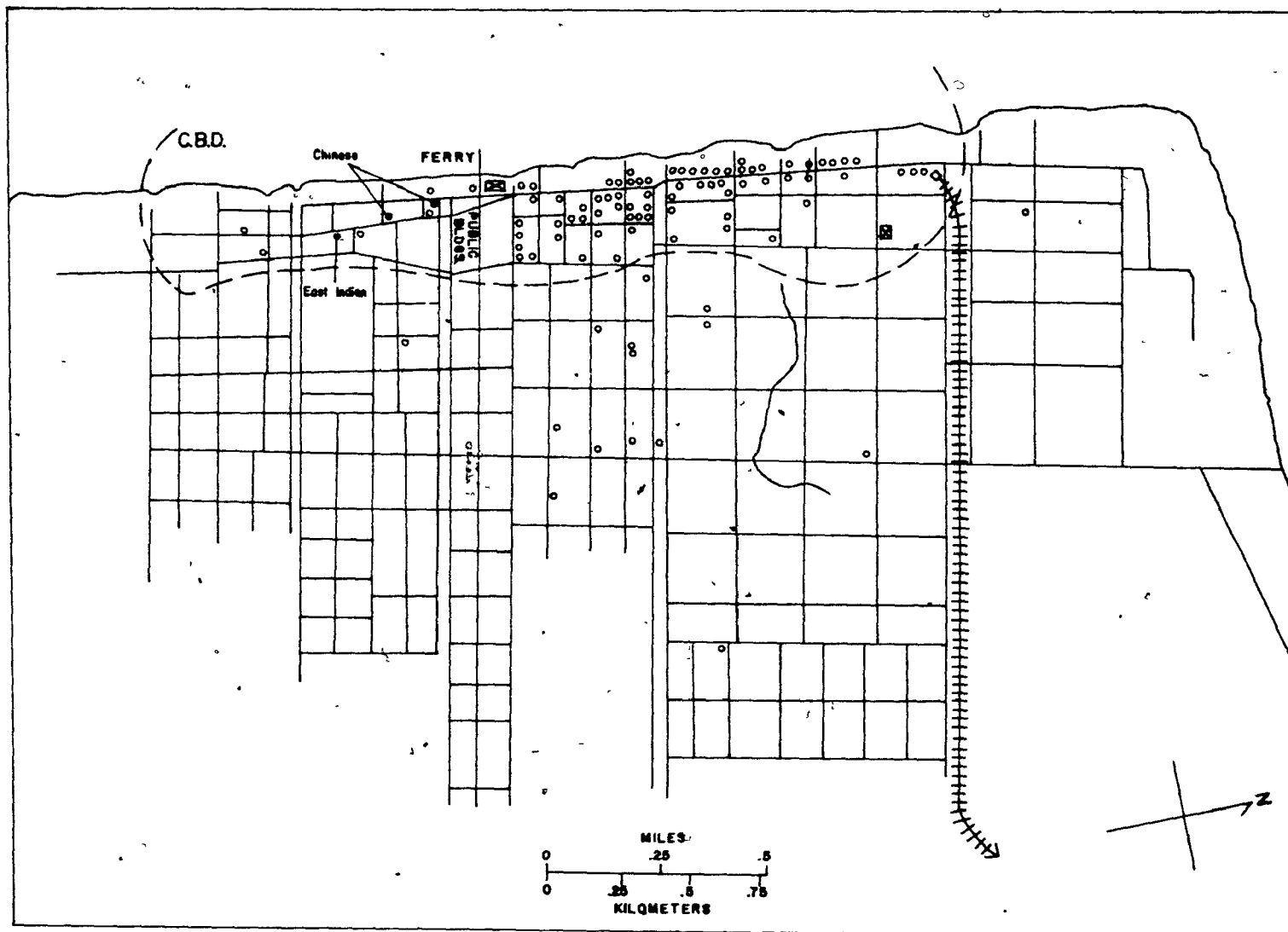


MAP 7-3  
Georgetown Shops in 1870



MAP 7-4

Georgetown - 1870 Creole (Coloured, European, or Negro) Shops and two Chinese and one East Indian Shop



MAP 7-5  
Georgetown - 1870 Portuguese Shops

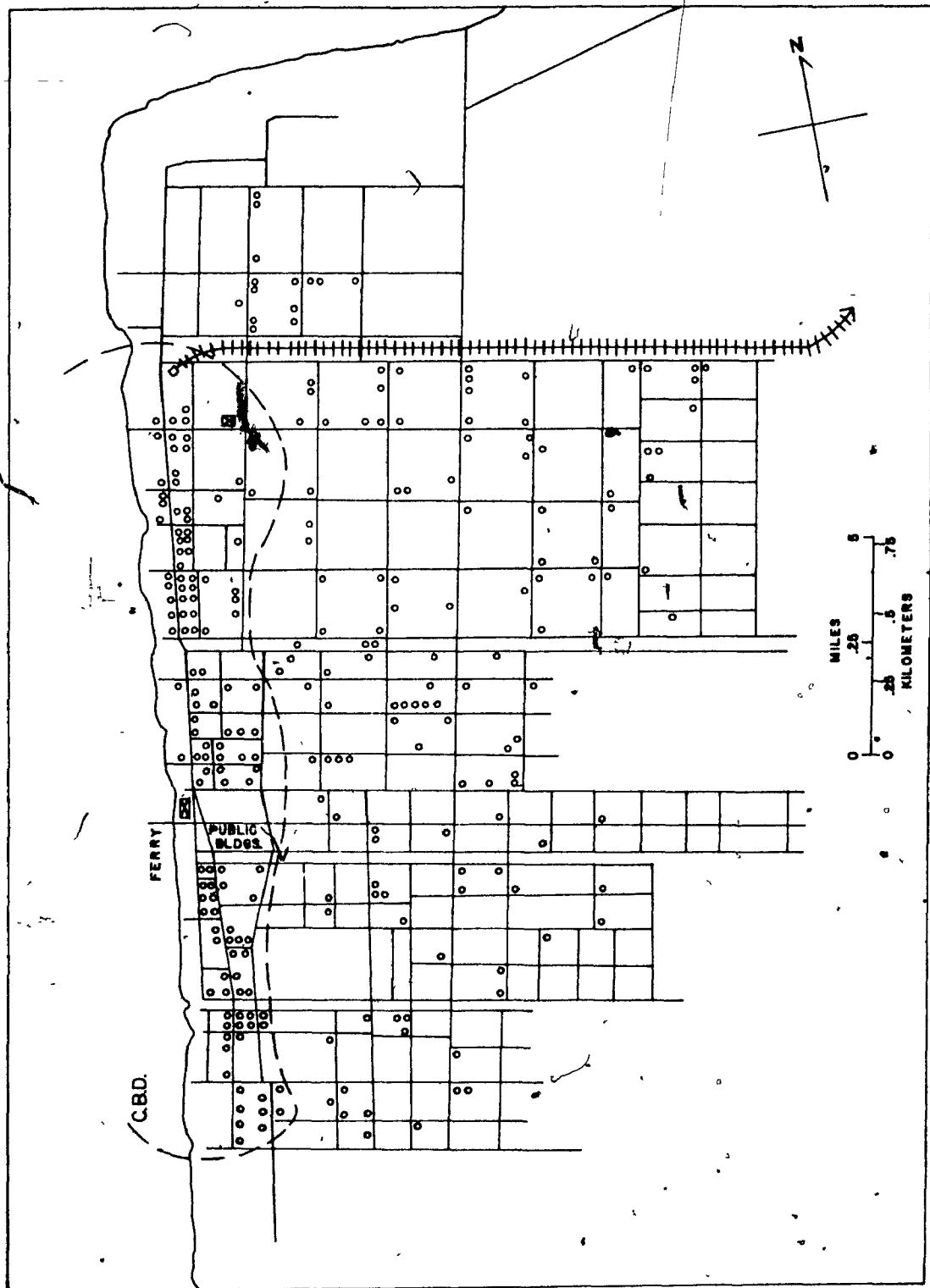


TABLE 7-3

Licencing and Valuation of Shops and Stores under the Six Class System  
in force in Georgetown in 1870.\* (footnote 7)

Class	Number Stores	Stores of				Total Valuation		Value of Stores of \$ (1£=\$4.80 BG)				% of Stores and Valuation of			
		P	Cr	I	Ch	\$	£	P	Cr	I	Ch	P	Cr	I	Ch
1	8	1	7	-	-	120,000	( 25,000)	15,000	105,000	-	-	12.5	87.5	-	-
2	2	-	2	-	-	27,000	( 5625)	-	27,000	-	-	-	100.00	-	-
3	13	10	3	-	-	130,000	( 27,083)	100,000	30,000	-	-	76.92	23.07	-	-
4	14	10	4	-	-	91,000	( 8958)	65,000	26,000	-	-	71.42	28.57	-	-
5	35	24	10	1	-	140,000	( 29,167)	96,000	40,000	4000	-	68.57	28.57	2.85	-
6	277	217	58	-	2	415,500	( 86,563)	325,500	87,000	-	3000	78.33	20.93	-	.72
<u>% Stores</u>															
Total	349	262	84	1	2	923,500	(192,396)	601,500	315,000	4000	3000	75.07	24.06	.28	.57
<u>% Evaluation</u>															
												65.13	34.10	.43	.32

\*class 1 stores were taken as having a valuation of \$15,000 (£3125). Classes 2-6 were assigned valuations corresponding to the mid-points of the ranges given in Table 2-6.

P = Portuguese I = Indian  
Cr = Creole Ch = Chinese

of the city's commercial hierarchy may have persisted through 1870.

The Portuguese share of the total shop premises evaluation did not closely correspond to the proportion of shops under their proprietorship. If consideration is given only to the stores in classes two through five, the discrepancy between the proportions of shop numbers and shop evaluations is lessened. Because class one was open ended, no firm statement can be made about the average value of the eight class one stores. It may have been approximately \$50,000 (£10,417) per firm. If so, the class one establishments accounted for at least one-third of the total shop assessment of Georgetown. The European share of the commercial sector and the concomitant power would have been impressive. Even discounting the class one stores and giving consideration only to classes two through five, the European and Creole share of the total shop evaluation is greater than the proportion of shops under their control.

These proportions were respectively 26.13 per cent and 22.58 per cent; while for the Portuguese, 72.99 per cent of the total shop assessment and 76.53 per cent of the total number of shops were in their hands. What this meant was that the Portuguese, while collectively perhaps more wealthy than the European and Creole merchants and shopkeepers, were yet second in precedence because they did not control the pinnacle of the commercial pyramid. This suited the European elite very well. Emphasis is given the foregoing assertion by the total store and evaluation percentages given in Table 7-3. The Portuguese, even though they held three-fourths of the store licences, controlled less than two-thirds of the assessed value.

Reference has been made above to Maps 7-2, 7-3, 7-4, and 7-5, and to Map 7-1 which delineates the wards or districts of Georgetown in

1870.<sup>9</sup> The base of each map is the street system which existed in that year. The street density varied from ward to ward and reflects the fact that each ward was taken out of cultivation and surveyed for commercial and residential use during different periods in the city's history. By 1842 most of the street system of the Georgetown of 1870 had been constructed. Thereafter, even though the city's population nearly doubled between 1841 and 1871, scarcely any physical expansion of the city took place. Instead, the 36,500 people of Georgetown in 1870 squeezed themselves into the space occupied by 18,586 people 30 years earlier. Since emancipation the second of the two town markets had been opened in 1852 in North Cumingsburg. This and the railway, initiated in 1845 and extended to Mahaica 25 miles (40 km.) away in 1864, defined the northern reaches of the central business district. As stated above, the C.B.D. spread outwards but adjacent to the city's initial locus of settlement. Of the two wings of the C.B.D. the more northerly was the more important.

The locations of all the shops and stores licenced in Georgetown in 1870 are given in Map 7-2. Classes one through five have been distinguished from the large number of class six stores. The concentration of shops in the northern wing of the C.B.D. is apparent as is the much weaker concentration of shops and stores in the southern wing of the C.B.D. Of the 206 stores and shops in the C.B.D., 149 or 72 per cent were situated in the north and 57 or 27 per cent situated in the south. In the remainder of the city, a nearest neighbour analysis resulted in an R-statistic of .72. On a scale of 0 to 2.15, in which 0 means a clustered distribution, 1 a random distribution, and 2.15 a regular distribution; the value of .72 means that although there is a tendency to a random distribution of shops



outside the C.B.D. on Map 7-2, such is not the case. There is a tendency toward clustering which is confirmed by a second statistical test for the significance of the nearest neighbour analysis result.<sup>10</sup> The initial proliferation of shops in Georgetown outside the C.B.D. was quite probably random. But with the passage of time, those shops less favourably located failed. In addition, the gravitational pull of shops upon one another encouraged clustering. Shops clustered together are able to cumulatively attract more potential customers than those shops in isolated locations. The clustering of shops in extra-C.B.D. Georgetown is most visible in Lacytown, immediately east of Robbstown and Newtown at the core of the C.B.D. The stem of the commercial "T" was already beginning to appear.

Map 7-3 plots the location of all class one through five stores. Clustering is evident in Robbstown and Newtown and in South and North Cumingsburg. All of the eight class one stores and the two class two stores are situated within the northern wing of the C.B.D. Of the 27 class three and four stores, all but 5 are located within the C.B.D.; and of these, 19 of the 22 in the C.B.D. are situated in the northern wing. The northern wing of the C.B.D. was thus characterized by a preponderance of large retail establishments. Class five stores account for 48 per cent of the stores plotted on Map 7-3. Of the total of 35, 15 were within the C.B.D. and 20 were located outside the C.B.D. From Table 7-3, it is evident that the Portuguese percentage of the class five stores was less than their respective shares of the class three, four, and six stores: Portuguese held 68.57 per cent of the class five licences; Creoles had 28.57; and an East Indian woman with one shop accounted for the remaining 2.85 per cent. The East Indian managed her shop in Werk-en-Rust. This ward

contained 203 East Indians in 1871 which accounted for 5.27 per cent of the ward's population of 20.67 per cent of the city's East Indian population. The proportions of Portuguese and Creoles holding class five licences within and without the C.B.D. were approximately equal. 41.66 per cent of the Portuguese and 40 per cent of the Creole class five licences were situated within the C.B.D. Within the C.B.D., 73.33 per cent of the class five stores were located in the northern wing of the business district. This agrees well with the proportional distribution of all stores within the C.B.D.

Map 7-4 locates all the European and Creole shops and stores plus the single East Indian and the two Chinese shops situated in Werk-en-Rust. The concentration of shops within the northern wing of the C.B.D. is immediately evident. Of the total number of Creole and European stores, 70 or 83.33 per cent were situated within the C.B.D.; 91 per cent of these were in the northern wing of the business district. Eight or 57.14 per cent of the extra-C.B.D. Creole stores were situated in Lacytown, the area of the evolving stem of the commercial "T". The concentration of shops within the northern wing of the C.B.D. suggests that few Creoles were engaging in the retailing of provisions. The retailing of provisions would have been very neighbourhood-oriented and clearly the distribution of Creole shops does not evidence a regular dispersion. From other sources of information, one knows that most of the firms in the northern wing of the C.B.D. were engaged in the selling of dry goods or were wholesalers and retailers of dry goods, provisions, hardware, and other imported goods. The concentration of Creole and European retailers within the northern wing of the C.B.D. also suggest that the number of commercially minded Europeans

and Creoles was not sufficiently large to facilitate dispersion throughout the city. That is, old established businesses tended to remain self-perpetuating through the succession of relatives or partners to the control of the firm. Surplus sons may have returned to England or gone elsewhere to make their fortunes for the British Guianese commercial field was relatively closed.

The distribution of Portuguese shops in the Georgetown of 1870 is given in Map 7-5. The contrast with the Creole and European distribution of Map 7-4 is strikingly obvious. Unlike the European and Creole shop distribution, the majority of the Portuguese shops were located outside the C.B.D.; 139 of the 262 shops and stores, or 53.05 per cent, were so situated. The remaining 46.95 per cent were located within the C.B.D. in the following numbers and proportions: 76 or 61.78 per cent in the northern wing; and 47 or 38.21 per cent were in the southern wing. Three-fourths of the Portuguese shops were class six shops; that is, the very smallest of the licenced town shops. Those located outside the C.B.D. appear to have favoured street intersections. There can be little doubt that these were almost exclusively provision shops. Within the C.B.D. a variety of shop functions were present. Many of the Water Street Portuguese operated small general goods stores in conjunction with or independent of the provisions business or were important wholesalers of all manner of goods.

Reference to Table 7-4 provides a summary, district by district, of the distribution of ethnic groups within Georgetown. In addition, the percentage of Portuguese as a fraction of the total Portuguese population of the city is also given. The table and Maps 7-4 and 7-5 reveal that although a mere 1.23 per cent of the total Portuguese population lived in

TABLE 7-4

Population Georgetown and Albert-Town in 1871  
 (Greater Georgetown Population 36,562)  
 (footnote 11)

Districts	Total	W	Cr.	P.	E.I.	Ch.	District Percentages					% of Town Population Resident in each District
							W	Cr.	P.	E.I.	Ch.	
Kingston	2445	128	2081	170	66	21	5.23	85.11	6.95	2.89	---	3.42
N.Cumingsburg	4946	258	3620	880	167	21	5.21	73.19	17.79	3.37	.42	17.75
S.Cumingsburg	5669	352	4280	900	135	2	6.20	75.49	15.87	2.38	.03	18.15
Albert-Town	1449	22	1352	61	14	---	1.51	93.30	4.20	.96	---	1.23
Robbstown & Newtown	995	180	506	307	2	---	18.09	50.85	30.85	.20	---	6.19
Lacytown	6543	150	5235	907	245	6	2.29	80.00	13.86	3.74	.09	18.29
Stabroek	2593	162	2091	209	87	44	6.24	80.64	8.06	3.35	1.69	4.21
Werk-en-Rust	3850	142	2739	566	203	200	3.68	71.14	14.70	5.27	5.19	11.41
Freeburg & Newburg	2075	30	1893	115	37	---	1.44	91.22	5.54	1.78	---	2.31
Charlestown	4065	88	3108	842	26	1	2.16	76.45	20.71	.63	.02	16.98
<u>Total</u>	<u>34630</u>	<u>1512</u>	<u>26905</u>	<u>4957</u>	<u>982</u>	<u>274</u>	<u>4.36</u>	<u>77.69</u>	<u>14.31</u>	<u>2.83</u>	<u>.79</u>	

P = Portuguese  
 E.I. = East Indian  
 Ch. = Chinese  
 Cr. = Creole  
 W = White

Albert-Town, and that it was the most Creole or Negro part of the city, 10 of the 11 shops were run by Portuguese. In Kingston, 85.11 per cent of the district's population was Creole; the resident Portuguese accounted for 6.95 per cent of the district's population and 3.42 per cent of the city's Portuguese population. Yet this minority managed 14 or the 15 licenced shops in the district. Similar circumstances prevailed in Newburg and Freeburg, and in Stabroek. Given this striking monopoly in the most Creole or Negro parts of the city one must conclude that either the Creoles were not very interested in shopkeeping or that having been displaced in the 1840's they were unable to regain more than a toehold in the trade.

#### Multiple Proprietorships in Georgetown, 1852 and 1870

As in rural British Guiana, the Portuguese practiced multiple proprietorships in Georgetown to a much greater extent than their Creole rivals. This was especially evident as early as 1852. Together, 241 Portuguese and Creole proprietors owned 296 shops; of these, 130 proprietors were Portuguese while 111 were Creole. Only seven of the Creole proprietors managed more than a single shop. The seven each held two shop licences and, judging from their names, appear to have been long established merchants. This was certainly the case with three of them: Steele, Loxdale, & Co.; Joseph Kaufman; and B. McGusty & Co. The proprietors concerned in these three firms were European. Among the Portuguese; 121 held a single licence, 17 held two licences, 4 held three licences, and 1 held four licences. The relationship is exponential and thus corresponds to the rural multiple shop proprietor relationship.

One cannot locate the 1852 licence holders with any greater precision than the district or ward in which their shops or stores were situated.

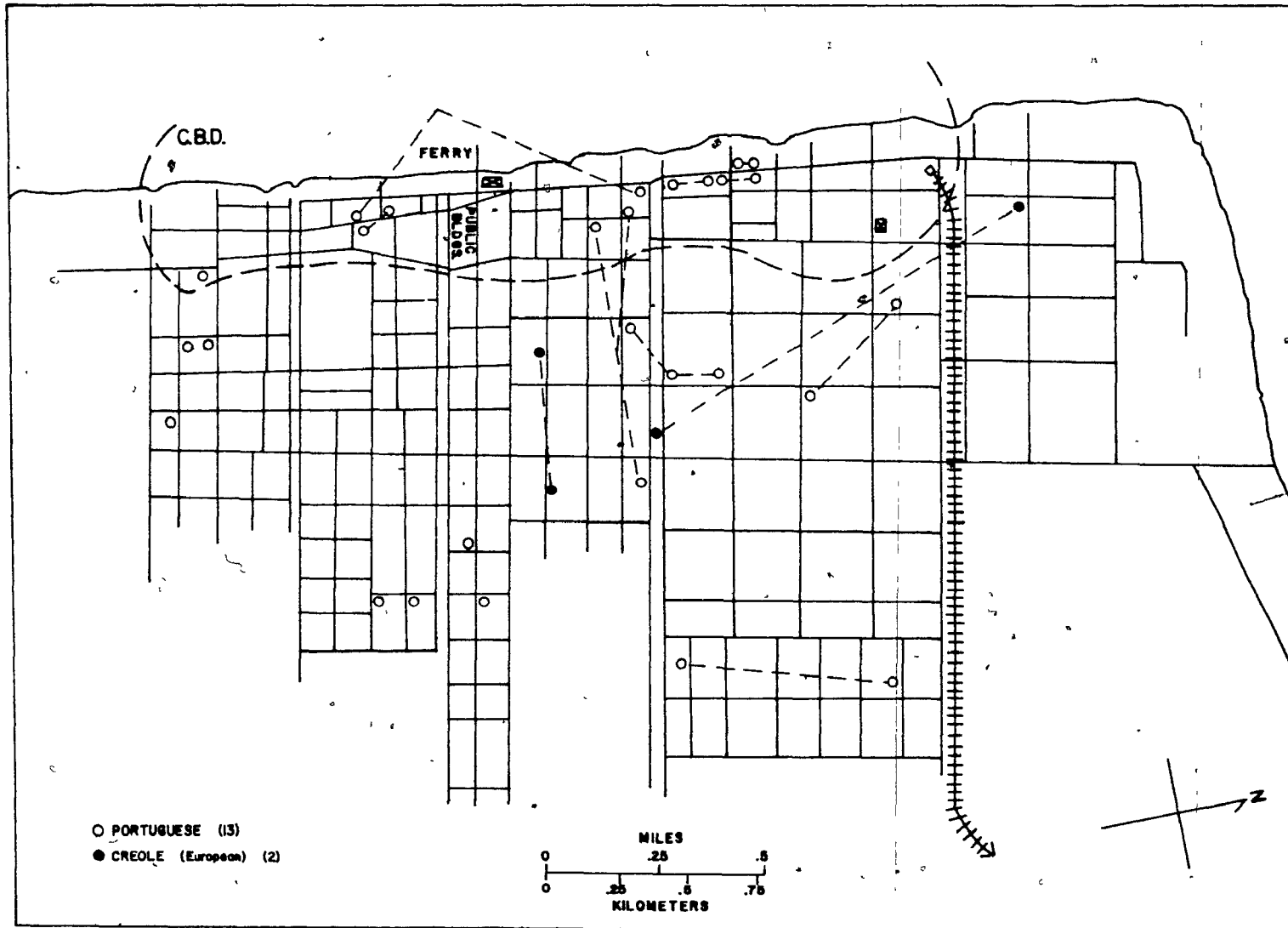
One can state that 22 of the 26 licenced stores in Robbstown and Newtown, a district completely within the central business district, were part of multiple proprietorships. Of these, 12 were run by 5 Portuguese while the 10 Creole shops were the property of 6 individuals. Both the Portuguese and Creole proprietors in some instance managed shops elsewhere in the city. Of the multiple proprietors, George Gonzalves held four shop licences in Robbstown; Manuel Gonzalves held three shop licences in Newtown; Sylvester Nunez held one shop licence in Robbstown and two in Kingston. Four of the Creoles held both of their licences in Robbstown and Newtown while two held a single licence in Robbstown and a second licence in Cumingsburg. The intensity of multiple shop proprietorships in Robbstown and Newtown suggests that first, rapidly expanding businesses needed all the space they could find and hence spread their operations about several buildings; second, that these were genuine chain stores; or third, that the struggle to outflank the competition was such that ambitious men would go to the extreme of licencing several shops in an attempt to saturate the commercial field and displace a rival.<sup>12</sup>

It is less easy to separate the multiple proprietorships out of the 1870 Official Gazette lists. Unlike the 1852 lists, such proprietorships were grouped under the licencees as a matter of policy. Secondly, given the large number of Portuguese and the frequency with which some names were held by several individuals, unless specifically noted in the official list it is unwise to search out multiple proprietorships based on names alone. It was possible to discern the number of multiple proprietorships within the class six shop range. There were explicitly indicated 13 Portuguese and 2 Creole multiple proprietorships within the

sixth class. The Creoles held 54 single proprietorships and 2 double proprietorships. The pairs were respectively located in Kingston and South Cumingsburg and at Lots 174 and 188 Lacytown. The Portuguese held 204 single proprietorships, 11 double, and 2 triple proprietorships. Twelve of the 13 Portuguese multiple proprietorships were situated in the same or in adjacent wards. In only one instance were the two shops separated by an intervening ward. This was the case of Manuel Nunez who managed one shop in Robbstown and a second shop in Charlestown.

The multiple proprietorships among class six stores in 1870 have been located and connected with dashed lines on Map 7-6. The average distance between pairs of shops is .26 miles (.42 km.). The median distance is .15 miles (.24 km.). The range extends from .03 to .96 (.05 to 1.55 km.) miles. If one excludes the two pairs of Creole shops the average distance between the pairs of Portuguese shops is .21 miles (.34 km.), the median is .14 miles (.23 km.), and the range is .03 to .65 miles (.05 to 1.05 km.). Eleven of the Portuguese shop pairs are less than .25 miles (.40 km.) apart. This suggests that this may have been the most convenient range in which two shops could be supervised. Also, it may indicate a desire to exploit fully the local commercial field. This could be said of the paired shops in Charlestown, Freeburg and Newburg, Werk-en-Rust, and Stabroek, districts either outside the central business district or in its southern wing. The concentration of pairs within the northern wing of the central business district, given the high concentration of stores there, is not surprising. But, even though the 1870 summary of multiple proprietorships is not as complete as that of 1852, the impression is created that the number and the proportion of

MAP 7-6  
Multiple Class 6 Shop Proprietorships in Georgetown - 1870





multiple proprietorships declined absolutely and relatively between 1852 and 1870. If this intuition is correct, it suggests that the period of rapid proliferation of shops was yet underway in 1852, but slowing down, and that by 1870 the less suitable locations were being abandoned.

The rise of the Portuguese in post-emancipation British Guiana was a social, economic, and geographic event of the greatest significance. Their introduction and advancement by the European elite forestalled a potentially revolutionary situation. The society, instead of being genuinely transformed after emancipation, merely underwent topological transformation. That is, the shape or form of the new differed from the old; but, the relationships among the nodes of power remained unchanged. Coercion has been held to be the underpinning of a plural society. But coercion can be exerted by other than forceable means. In a sense, the Portuguese and their shops were an occupying army. Having subdued the commercial efforts of the Negroes, they settled in and became the arm or tools of the European elite. Hence, their position as a buffer between European and Negro; hence, their thwarting or prevention of the accumulation of wealth in Negro hands; hence, their dispersal throughout the country but especially in the sensitive towns and in the densely populated areas such as East Coast Demerara.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER SEVEN

1. The Colonist, March 24, 1852.
2. Official Gazette, shop licence lists of 1852.
3. Ibid.
4. Official Gazette, shop licence lists of 1852, 1870, and 1875.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
8. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. Formula of the Clark-Evans nearest neighbour analysis test (R-statistic).

$$R = \frac{\frac{\sum_{i=1}^n r_i}{n}}{\frac{1}{2\sqrt{n/a}}} = \frac{\bar{r}_o}{\bar{r}_e}$$

where

a	area of the study area
e	density n/a
n	number of points
$r_i$	distance between the $i^{th}$ pair of nearest points
$\bar{r}_e$	expected mean distance
$\bar{r}_o$	observed mean distance

Significance test for the Clark-Evans R-statistic supplied through the courtesy of Terry Kulka.

$$Z = \frac{\bar{r}_o - \bar{r}_e}{\sigma_{\bar{r}_e}}$$

where  $\sigma$  the standard deviation

$$\sigma_{\bar{r}_e} = \frac{0.26136}{\sqrt{ne}}$$

11. Census of British Guiana, 1871.

12. Official Gazette, op. cit. (footnote 4).

## 8. STRUCTURAL PLURALISM, SOCIETY, AND SPACE

Writing of the "internal colonialism" and the "plural society" of contemporary Mexico, P.G. Casanova observed that:

Social and cultural marginality are obviously related to political marginality; they mutually influence each other. In order to understand the political structure of Mexico [and 19th century British Guiana], one must bear in mind that a large sector of the population is marginal with respect to the polity. To put it another way, marginal people are political objects for those who participate in the polity. They are not political citizens in terms of information, consciousness, organization, or action.

The polity in 19th century British Guiana was restricted to adult males of any ethnic group providing they met the property qualification for the franchise. In 1850, this meant that of an adult male population of 47,256 a mere 916 or 1.93 per cent possessed the franchise.<sup>2</sup> This electorate was almost exclusively European and remained so until the constitutional reforms of 1891.

Pressure for reform of the constitution of British Guiana had been gaining momentum during the 1880's. The principal proponents of reform were the Coloured professionals and the Portuguese merchants. Both groups sought a share of political power and hoped to acquire it by a liberalization of the franchise, an easing of the property and income qualification required of those eligible for election, and the abolition of the College of Kiezers so as to permit the direct election of members to the Court of Policy. The Colonial Office and the colonial elite acquiesced to these demands but conceded nothing. Ostensibly, the franchise was increased by a halving of the income qualification to \$480 (£100) per year.<sup>3</sup> The College of Kiezers was also abolished and the direct election of members to the Court of Policy assured. A common immovable property

qualification of \$7500 (£1562.50) was established for election to the Court of Policy and to the position of Financial Representative in the Combined Court. However, the reforms were nullified by the establishment of an Executive Council which assumed the executive and administrative functions of the pre-1891 Court of Policy; its eight members, inclusive of the governor, were all appointees of the Crown.<sup>4</sup>

Until its abolition in 1891, the College of Kiezers had performed the function of marginalizing much of the franchised population by its control of nominations to the Court of Policy. Election to the College had been for life, hence there was no check upon the politics of the Kiezers. The establishment of a Crown-appointed Executive Council in 1891 succeeded in perpetuating the marginalization of the polity and the mass of the population. The fact that in 1915 the electorate numbered 4312 and that Europeans accounted for a mere 732 or 17 per cent of this number meant very little. Similarly, the fact that Coloureds and Negroes accounted for 62.7 per cent of the electorate meant very little for power was effectively concentrated in the hands of the very smallest circle of men.<sup>5</sup>

It was this closed group at the apex of British Guianese society which arranged and guided the emplacement of the Portuguese "commercial caste" within post-emancipation society. An appreciation of this accomplishment is predicated upon an understanding of the political processes of British Guianese society in the aftermath of emancipation. This thesis has been concerned with the "whom," the "why," and the "how" of the evolution of society in 19th century British Guiana. It has become clear that the "whom" are the European elite — the "saccharine oligarchy" — and

their allies in international commerce and government. The "why" of their actions was the need, as perceived by themselves, to preserve and maintain a dominant position in British Guianese society through the potentially revolutionary change of emancipation. The "how" of this enterprise was the introduction and use of immigrant labour to counter-balance the Negro majority, and to thwart Negro attempts to effect fundamental changes in the social structure. One means to this end was the aid and encouragement given to Portuguese entrepreneurs in their efforts to capture the small scale retail trade of the colony. The result was the entrenchment of a structurally plural society.

A structurally plural society is one in which the segments possess unequal access to social and economic activities within the social domain. This domain includes all occupations, both skilled and unskilled, and the governing apparatus. Segments are conveniently defined by genetic or cultural attributes, taken either individually or collectively. Subordinate segments are allotted certain occupations in the structure created by the superordinate segment. Concomitant features are the exactions of deference and social and geographical distance vis-a-vis the persons of the elite.

Nineteenth century British Guiana was not a closed traditional society. Its truly "traditional" Amerindian element, although integral to the functioning of the slave society,<sup>6</sup> was marginalized almost to the degree of total exclusion from post-emancipation society. Post-emancipation society, as well as its predecessor, was a subsystem of a larger international system---the British Empire---and was thus open to external influences which constantly militated against stability. The goal of the post-emancipation elite was the creation of a stable society in which a

rank series of ethnically-defined "castes" would serve the interests of the dominant segment. Caste, as Furnival observed, is one means of resolving the conflict inherent in a plural society. However, caste requires ritual sanction and a common system of beliefs and symbols. Queen Victoria was one such symbol. Given isolation and time, the evolution of such a system might have been achieved; but neither isolation nor time were available to the elite. Improvements in communications such as the undersea cable, the inland telegraph, and the railroad militated against isolation. Indeed, the continuous influx of indentured labourers from Madeira, West Africa, India, and China also worked against isolation. In addition, the fundamental changes in the ownership of estates and in the manufacture of sugar reinforced an awareness of the outside world.

Two questions now arise. First, how far did the oligarchy achieve their ends through the methods they adopted? Second, did the Portuguese simply occupy their designated slot in the system, or did they go beyond it? The methods adopted by the oligarchy were certainly comprehensive. Great efforts were made to achieve not only occupational but also social and geographical segregation of the subordinate segments. On the estates, geographical segregation was achieved by the establishment of "Coolie yards" away from the "Negro yards" and Negro villages. Occupational segregation was practiced through the allocation of factory and heavy estate work to Negroes while Indians cut cane and tended to the less arduous estate duties. Segregation extended further, into the supply of services, and in particular to the supply of rum and provisions: this was increasingly allocated to a third segment, the Portuguese.

In their quest for profit, the Portuguese itinerant hucksters had sold in every part of coastal British Guiana; some moved up the commercial ladder and opened small shops. This geographic dispersion of the Portuguese was maintained and encouraged by the selective extension of credit and the granting of retail spirit licences. The result of these elite manipulations was to secure for the Portuguese local spatial monopolies in the supply of provisions and spirits. By 1850, all but a few intrepid Negroes were excluded from these occupations which afforded virtually the only ladder of vertical mobility through the strata of the plural society. The Negroes were not unaware of these tactics, but there was little they could do. When social tensions erupted in the anti-Portuguese riots of 1846, 1848, 1856, and 1889, the victims were compensated by the government with funds obtained from heavy duties on imported foodstuffs and other necessities---that is, by a regressive tax falling most heavily on the subordinate segments of the population whose limited income was spent mainly on the goods taxed. The resulting dislike of the Portuguese diverted resentment away from the oligarchy themselves, and facilitated perpetuation of the status quo.

Maintenance of the condition demanded that the Portuguese remained confined to the rural rum and provision trade, and to the lower orders of trading in the towns. As with the Chinese in Mauritius, the Indians in East Africa, the Gujarati in Fiji, the Syrians in West Africa, a small minority group was allotted or directed to the role of insulating the elite segment from the marginalized masses. Within this limited niche, they were allowed and even encouraged to develop a quasi-monopoly role the fundamental basis of which was geographical dispersion.



However, the Portuguese did not remain dispersed. Firstly, their monopoly of the petty commerce of the colony permitted them to amass wealth and thus move up the commercial ladder. The appearance of Portuguese wholesalers and importers in Water Street in large numbers by the late 1850's is evidence of this movement. Secondly, after 1851, the growth of the Portuguese population did not keep pace with the growth of the total population in British Guiana. This lag was due principally to the massive influx of East Indians after 1845. By 1852, the East Indian population which was almost exclusively rural, had already surpassed the Portuguese in absolute number. It was true that many indentured East Indians were dependent upon the estates for the bulk of their supplies; nevertheless, they were new potential customers for both the rural and town shopkeepers. The failure of the Portuguese population to keep pace with the growth rate of the total population and their shift from the country to town, meant that they could not occupy the new commercial opportunities appearing in the countryside. These opportunities were quickly seized and occupied by enterprising East Indians and later by Chinese upon the completion of their indentures.

While the overseas connections of the "commanding heights" of the commercial economy defended the oligarchy from Portuguese competition, providing sources of capital and organization denied to the interlopers, the gradual shift of the Portuguese into Georgetown corresponded with an upward movement within the commercial system which threatened the stability of the system as a whole. In particular, the spearhead of the Portuguese advance began to become "political citizens in terms of information, consciousness, organization, and action." The stage was thus set for the

shift of the Portuguese out of their intermediate role in British Guianese society as a whole into the more limited and essentially urban role which their descendents occupy today.

This lies beyond the scope of the present thesis, but the shift included the evolution of commercial structures of considerable elaboration among the Portuguese; the movement of some Portuguese out of commerce into other occupational areas available in the more open urban society; most fundamentally, a gradual erosion of the rural monopoly which permitted Indians and Chinese to take their place. By the 1870's these trends had become apparent and by the end of the period under study had become well established. Today, comparatively few Portuguese remain as rural shopkeepers in coastal Guyana. Most rural shopkeepers are either Indian or Negro. In the urban areas, the Portuguese still occupy an important position in the commercial ecology; but their numbers have declined because of emigration since World War II. Since independence in 1966 and the creation of the Co-operative Republic in 1970, Negro co-operatives and State marketing agencies have begun to appear suggesting that events of 130 years ago are at last in the process of being rectified.

Finally then, one sees in this seemingly small topic--the ascendancy of a minority group in a limited occupation field during a stage of colonial history---much more than just a small footnote to the history and geography of Guyana. One finds in it a means to the understanding both of the whole strategy of the "saccharine oligarchy" in the face of the revolutionary forces of emancipation, and also of the evolution of the present structural pluralism of a Guyanese society from which the quasi-monopoly role of Portuguese rural and urban traders has

only recently vanished. The modern pluralism is too often interpreted in the rather simple terms of a flight of the Negroes from the land; of alleged cultural differences which inhibit the Negroes from success in certain occupational fields demanding commercial practice of a high order; even of simple Negro-Indian duality within a society whose controlling element (until recently) has been the big expatriate corporations.

What one has here is the manner in which a complete Negro rural society failed to come about, or was aborted, in the critical post-emancipation years. Opportunity was denied in a critical area. The object of the maneuver may have been to force the Negroes to remain on the estates: it failed, but the effect was to force the Negroes into non-estate occupations in search of opportunity. The critical element was the establishment, by the Portuguese with the aid and encouragement of the oligarchy, of spatial monopolies over rural and urban rum and provision trading. This is a pattern not unique to the Portuguese in Guyana, but one which was widely replicated in colonial societies in many parts of the world. Even though the created and protected niche which the Portuguese in Guyana, like their fellows of other nations in other lands, has now almost everywhere vanished; its effects are still there to be traced in the present occupational and geographical distribution of population. Modern structural pluralism, and its geographical expression, is explicable only in terms of the structural pluralisms of a former, and more openly exploitative period of history.

FOOTNOTES TO CHAPTER 8

1. Casanova, P.G., Democracy in Mexico, translated by Salti, Danielle from the Spanish, (Oxford, 1970) p.88. Originally published as La Democracia en Mexico, (Mexico, D.F., 1965).
2. Clementi, Sir Cecil, A Constitutional History of British Guiana (London, 1937), p.366.
3. Ibid., p.362.
4. Ibid., p.309-312.
5. Ibid., Table 2.
6. Sister Dr. Noel Menezes, British Policy Towards the Amerindians in British Guiana, 1803-1873 (unpublished Ph.D. thesis, May 1973, University of London, London, England). Under the slave system, the Amerindians were annually given presents as a token or a recognition of their alliance first with the Dutch and later with the English. Their function was to track down runaway slaves and return them to the colonial authorities. After emancipation, their services were no longer needed and the gift-giving stopped.

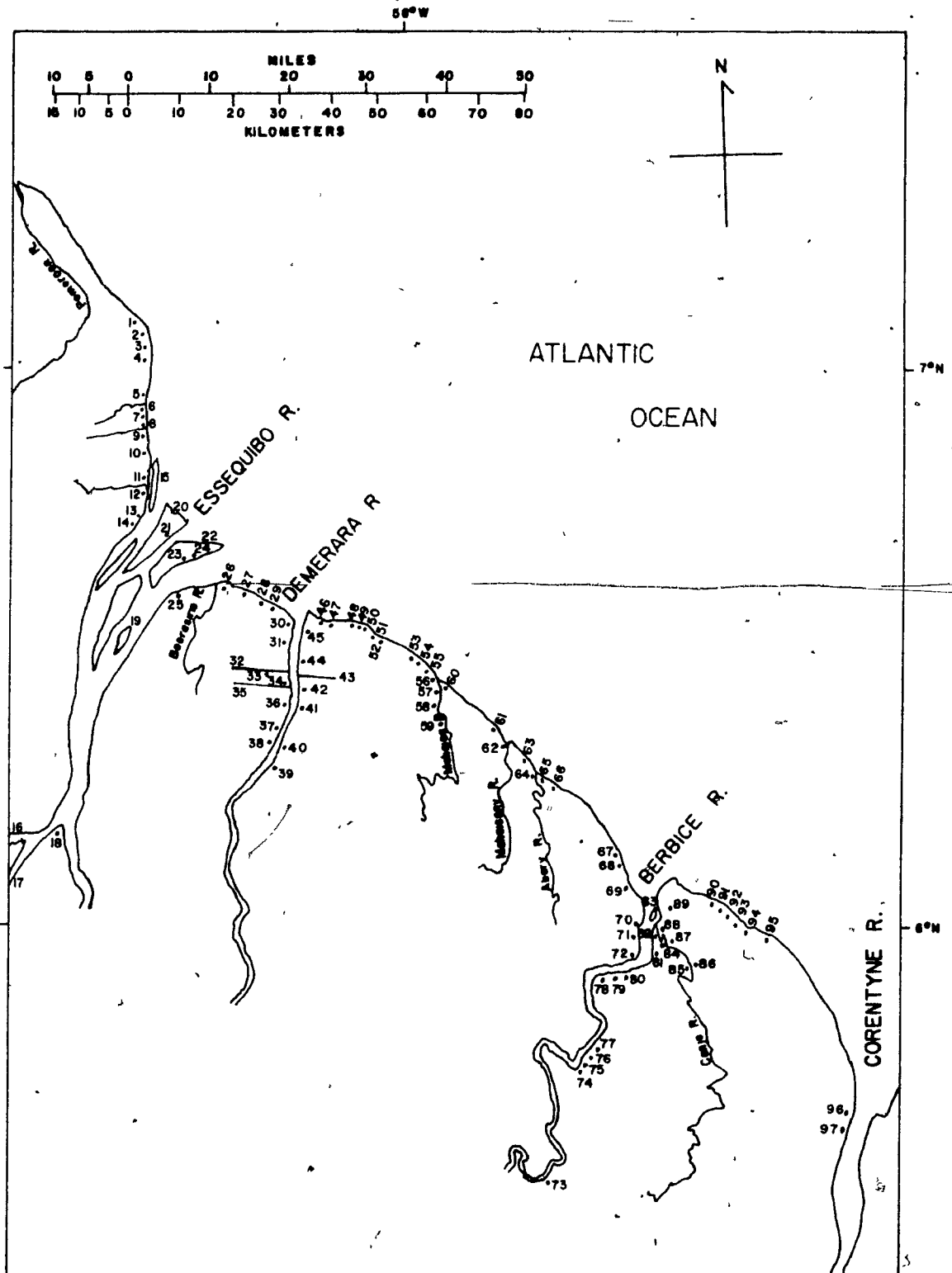
APPENDIX A

Location of estates, villages, and physical features mentioned in the text.

Map p.323

Numerical Index p.324

Alphabetical Index p.329



NUMERICAL INDEX FOR MAP

The numerical index proceeds from west to east. Estates or villages which are adjacent have been subsumed under the same number.

West Coast Essequibo

1. Eliza
2. Devonshire Castle  
Hampton Court
3. Sparta  
Danielstown (Fear Not)
4. La Belle Alliance  
Richmond  
Anna Regina
5. Aberdeen (Williamstown, Capoey Barracks)  
Columbia
- ~~6. Queenstown (Westfield, Mocha, Dageraad)~~
7. Hoff van Aurich
8. Abram's Zuil
9. Golden Fleece -  
Zorg
10. Suddie (Belfield, Maria's Lodge)
11. Airy Hall  
Adventure  
Riverstown
12. Huis t'Dieren  
Middlesex
13. Aurora
14. Spring Garden

Essequibo River & Islands

15. Tiger Island
16. Cuyuni River

17. Mazaruni River
18. Cartabo
19. Fort Island (Flag Island)
20. Wakenaam Island
21. Fredericksburg (Wakenaam)
22. Leguan Island
23. Enterprise (Leguan)
24. Endeavour (Leguan)  
Amsterdam (Leguan)

East Bank Essequibo & West Coast Demerara

25. Good Hope  
Greenwich Park
26. De Kinderen  
Met-en-Meerzorg
27. Stewartville
28. Den Amstel  
Fellowship
29. Windsor Forest

West Bank Demerara River

30. Demerara Ferry Landing  
Vreed-en-Hoop
31. Klein Pouderoyen  
Malgretout
32. Canal 1
33. Vauxhall (Canal 1)
34. La Retraite  
Stanley Town (La Retraite)
35. Canal 2
36. Patientia
37. Free and East
38. Reynestein  
Maria's Lodge



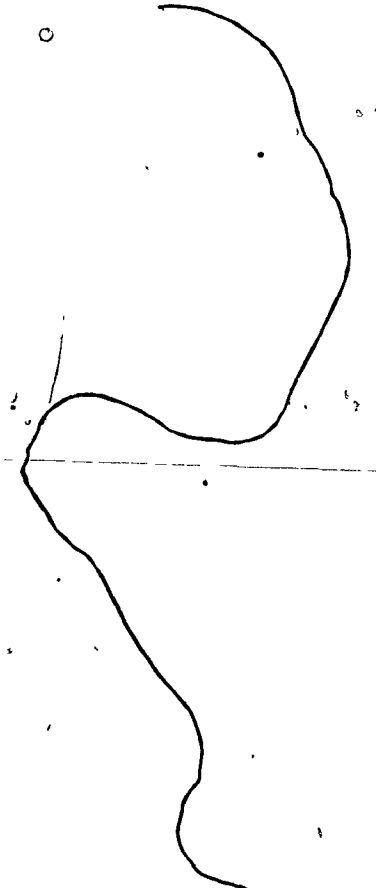
East Bank Demerara River

- 39. Hyde Park
- 40. Supply
- 41. Craig
- 42. Great Diamond
- 43. Canal 3
- 44. Peter's Hall

Georgetown (Stabroek before 1812)

- 45. Cumingsburg (LaBourgade)  
Albert-Town  
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- 55. Greenfield
- 56. Mahaica Military Post
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- 70. West Bank Berbice Ferry Landing
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- 73. Fort Nassau
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APPENDIX B

GLOSSARY

Amerindian	The original inhabitants of Guyana who are not to be confused with East Indians.
Apprenticeship	The institution devised by the British Parliament to ease the passage of slaves and masters from the slave society to the emancipated society. In British Guiana, apprenticeship commenced on August 1, 1834 and was terminated by an act of the Court of Policy on August 1, 1838.
Back Dam	The rear or savanna-facing dam of an empoldered estate in Guyana (see Figure 1-2).
Bit or Bitt	A small coin in general circulation during the first half of the nineteenth century in British Guiana. Three bitts were equivalent to one guilder and 24 bitts to \$1.00 or £0.21.
Black	See Negro.
Coloured	People of mixed African and European ancestry (see Creole).
Corentyne	One of several areas on the coast traditionally distinguished by the inhabitants of Guyana. The Corentyne is the easternmost region of the coast; it commences at Devil's Creek on the east sea-coast of Berbice and extends along the lands adjacent the Corentyne River to Crabwood Creek (see Map and Geographic nomenclature).
Creole	As used in this thesis, people of African and Afro-European origin whose birthplace was in Guyana or elsewhere in the West Indies. The term "Creole" is also used to discriminate between indigenous and foreign whether it be in terms of culture, food, fashion, or animals.
Currency	Until 1839, the official currency of British Guiana was the guilder (although the coinage of several countries was in circulation); in 1839, the British Guiana dollar was created and the currency decimalized (see Bitt, Dollar, Guilder, Joe, Pound Sterling, and Stiver).

Dollar, B.G.

The dollar became British Guiana's official currency in 1839. Rates of exchange were one dollar to three guilders and one dollar to £0.21. £1.00 was equivalent to \$4.80.

East Indian

People whose ancestors or themselves were born in India. East Indians were initially introduced as indentured estate labourers in 1836.

East Bank Berbice

Abbreviated as E.B.B., it commences at the upstream boundary of New Amsterdam and extends along the lands adjacent the river for an undefined distance (see Map p.323 and Geographic Nomenclature).

East Bank Demerara

Abbreviated as E.B.D., it commences at the upstream boundary of Georgetown and extends along the lands adjacent the river for approximately 25 miles or 40 kilometers (see Map p.323 and Geographic Nomenclature).

East Bank Essequibo

Abbreviated as E.B.E., it commences at the Boerasirie River which is the boundary with Demerara and extends upstream along the lands adjacent to the Essequibo River for an indeterminate distance (see Map p.323 and Geographic Nomenclature).

East Coast Berbice

Abbreviated as E.C.B., it commences at the downstream boundary of New Amsterdam and extends along the coast to the boundary with the Corentyne at Devil's Creek (see Map p.323 and Geographic Nomenclature).

East Coast Demerara

Abbreviated as E.C.D., it commences at the limits of Georgetown and extends along the coast to the boundary with Berbice at the Abary River (see Map p.323 and Geographic Nomenclature).

E.B.B.

See East Bank Berbice.

E.B.D.

See East Bank Demerara.

E.B.E.

See East Bank Essequibo.

E.C.B.

See East Coast Berbice.

E.C.D.

See East Coast Demerara.

Emancipation

The act of the British Parliament which freed the slaves on August 1, 1834 (see Apprenticeship).

European	People whose ancestors or themselves were born in Europe. In British Guiana, "European" did not encompass the Portuguese because of the latter's initial status as indentured labourers.
Geographic Nomenclature	Since the final decades of the eighteenth century and to the present day, coastal locations in Guyana have always included a reference to an estate's or village's position with respect to one of the four major rivers. For example, estates situated along the east bank of the Demerara River are said to be located in East Bank Demerara. Estates situated along the seacoast west of the Berbice River mouth up to the boundary with Demerara are said to be located in West Coast Berbice. In a similar fashion, estates located along the courses of the Canje, Abary, Mahaicony, Mahaica, and Pomeroon Rivers are known as Canje, Abary, etc., estates. Again, in a similar fashion, the estates fronting on Canals 1, 2, and 3, are known as the Canal 1, 2, or 3, estates (see Map p.323).
Georgetown	Formerly named Stabroek, the name was changed to Georgetown in 1812. Initially the capital of the United Colony of Demerara and Essequibo, the town became the capital of British Guiana in 1831.
Guilder	The major unit of currency in circulation in British Guiana prior to 1839. Before 1824, 12 guilders were equivalent to £1.00; in 1824, the colonial guilder was devalued and the rate of exchange was 14 guilders to £1.00. The guilder was superseded by the British Guiana dollar in 1839 (see Joe).
Hogshead	A large barrel in which sugar was packed and traditionally exported. A hogshead could contain from 800 to 1000 pounds (360 to 460 kilograms) of sugar.
Indian	See East Indian.
Koker	A Dutch word still current in Guyana meaning "sluice."
Joe	A unit of currency equal to 22 guilders.
Megass	The fibrous pulp remaining after the juice has been squeezed from the sugar cane. Soaked with hot water, the megass can be milled a second or more times. Dried, it was used as fuel for the sugar boilers and steam engines in the past and continues to be used as fuel on sugar estates in the present.

Middle Dam	The central longitudinal dam of a coastal estate which doubled as an access road (see Figure 1-3).
Muscovado	Raw sugar containing some molasses. A "muscovado estate" was a sugar plantation utilizing traditional methods to refine its product and was thus a producer of sugar containing molasses.
Negro	As used in this thesis, people of African racial origin but West Indian birth (see Coloured and Creole).
Portuguese	Portuguese citizens principally from Madeira but also, in small numbers, from the Azores and Cape Verde Islands who were introduced as indentured estate labourers. Because of their initial low status, the Portuguese were not considered to be European in British Guiana (see European).
Pound Sterling	Throughout this thesis, decimalized Pound Sterling equivalents have been given for the local currency. Prior to 1824, £1.00 was equal to 12 guilders; from 1824-1839, £1.00 was equal to 14 guilders; and from 1839 through the remainder of the nineteenth century, £1.00 was equal to \$4.80.
Rood	See Rhyndland Rood.
Rhyndland Rood	A measure of length introduced by the Dutch to Guyana and the equivalent of 12.356 feet or 3.766 meters.
Sea Dam	The front dam of a coastal estate intended to restrain the tides from the land of an empoldered estate (see Figure 1-1).
Stabroek	Initially founded by the French in 1782 and named Longchamps, it was renamed Stabroek by the Dutch upon the return of the colony to Dutch rule in 1784. In 1812, 11 years after the third British conquest of the colony the town was renamed Georgetown in honor of George III.
Stelling	A Dutch word still current in Guyana meaning "wharf" or "dock."
Stiver	A small unit of currency in circulation before 1839. Twenty stivers equalled one guilder, one stiver being the equivalent of £0.005.

W.B.B.	See West Bank Berbice.
W.B.D.	See West Bank Demerara.
W.C.B.	See West Coast Berbice.
W.C.D.	See West Coast Demerara.
W.C.E.	See West Coast Essequibo.
West Bank Berbice	Abbreviated as W.B.B., it commences at Plantation D'Edward and extends upstream along the lands adjacent the river for an indeterminate distance (see Map p.323 and Geographic Nomenclature).
West Bank Demerara	Abbreviated as W.B.D., it commences at Plantation Vreed-en-Hoop and extends upstream along the lands adjacent the river for an indeterminate distance (see Map p.323 and Geographic Nomenclature).
West Coast Berbice	Abbreviated as W.C.B., it commences at Plantation Cotton Tree at the mouth of the Berbice River and extends along the coast to the Abary River (see Map p.323 and Geographic Nomenclature).
West Coast Demerara	Abbreviated as W.C.D., it commences at Plantation Best at the mouth of the Demerara River and extends along the coast to the Boerasirie River (see Map p.323 and Geographic Nomenclature).
West Coast Essequibo	Abbreviated as W.C.E. and sometimes known as the Arabian Coast (the result of the corruption of an Amerindian word for Jaguar). Loosely defined, it encompasses all the occupied land between the Supenam River and the mouth of the Pomeroon River (see Map p.323 and Geographic Nomenclature).
White	See European.

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Research for this thesis was carried out in three places: Georgetown, Guyana; London, England; and at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. In Georgetown, the locus of activity was the Guyana National Archives; in London, activity was divided among the Public Record Office branches in Portugal Street and Chancery Lane as well as the British Museum Newspaper Library in Colindale. In both Georgetown and London primary sources as well as printed government reports and newspapers were examined. At McGill University, the resources of the University's libraries as well as libraries elsewhere in North America were exploited for their secondary sources.

The primary sources examined in Guyana were the original minutes of the various legislative bodies of the Colony of Berbice, the United Colony of Demerara and Essequibo, and the Colony of British Guiana. In addition, government announcements which were printed in the Official Gazette were perused. The receipt books of the Registrar General's Office were also examined as well as the censuses of British Guiana. The 1839 and 1841 censuses are especially noteworthy because they consist of transcriptions of the original census returns; that is, for each inhabitant of the colony a name, occupation, age range, residence, place of birth, and in the case of the 1839 census the colour and place of residence on August 1, 1838 (the date that apprenticeship was terminated) are given. Other sources consulted were the collection of local guides and handbooks, the bluebooks, and several newspaper microfilms. In London,

the dispatches between the Colonial Office and the Governors of British Guiana were examined. In addition, the various reports submitted by the colonial authorities or other persons were utilized. Of the secondary sources, Alan Adamson's excellent book, Sugar Without Slaves (Yale 1972), proved to be most useful.

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