

The Friendly Island

A Report on How Tourism Developed
in St. Maarten, Netherlands Antilles

Susan Lowes

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Preface

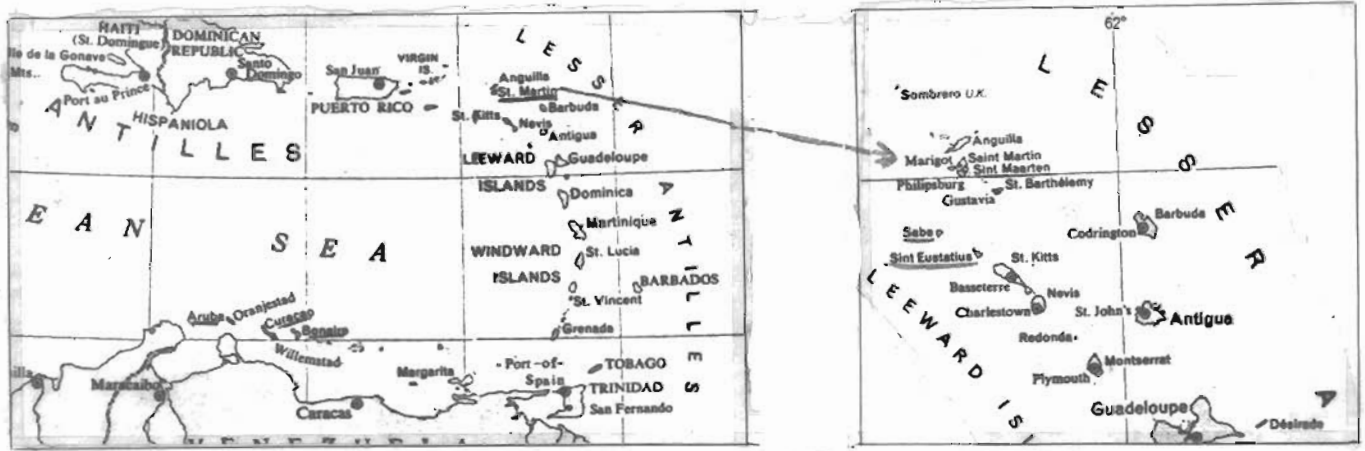
This paper is the result of two months fieldwork in St. Maarten in the summer of 1977. The research was undertaken as part of a doctoral program in anthropology at Teachers' College/Columbia University, and was funded by a Tinker Foundation Summer Field Training Program Award. The reader should keep in mind, therefore, that the "present" is 1977.

The information contained in this paper had three main sources: the first was a survey of the tourist-oriented stores, and some of the local ones, and of most hotels and guesthouses, to find out where the owners and managers came from, when, and why. Through this I learned a great deal about a certain sector of the in-coming migrant population -- what I shall call the "in-migrants." At the same time, I interviewed a series of older men and women in the island's "white" families, as well as political leaders and others; through this I was able to put together some information about the past. And finally, I spent a lot of time in the census office, trying to pin down the nature and extent of the in- and out-migration that had clearly been so important a feature of the past twenty years. (I returned for a second visit in the summer of 1978, which I spent in the Cadastral Office, checking interview information on land transfers and pushing back further into the past. This resulted in a more methodological paper, "Social and Economic Change in St. Maarten, Netherlands Antilles, 1868-1968, as Seen Through Land Transfers Deeds.")

I would like to thank all those who gave so much of their time to what must have seemed like a very noseey outsider, particularly the people who helped me with their family histories, and those in the Census and Cadastral Offices, who gave their time because they understood the importance of such research. I hope they find this attempt to write a small piece of St. Maarten history both interesting and useful.

Prologue

St. Maarten occupies one-half of a small (thirty-seven square mile) island in the northeastern Caribbean, part of the Lesser Antilles Island Arc.



It is one of the six Netherland Antilles, which together form an autonomous territory of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. Although the actual land area is small, the configuration and topology of the island are such that it covers a much larger area. It is divided into the sandy, western lowlands, where most of the beaches are, and the hillier central and eastern sections. There is only one real town on the Dutch side -- Philipsburg -- with a series of residential areas scattered in the valleys and up the sides of the hills. The population is over 11,000 and the island receives more than 160,000 overnight stays a year, plus an additional 100,000 visitors who arrive on cruise ships for one-day shopping sprees. There are over 25 hotels and guesthouses, and nearly 100 tourist-oriented stores and restaurants in the town of Philipsburg

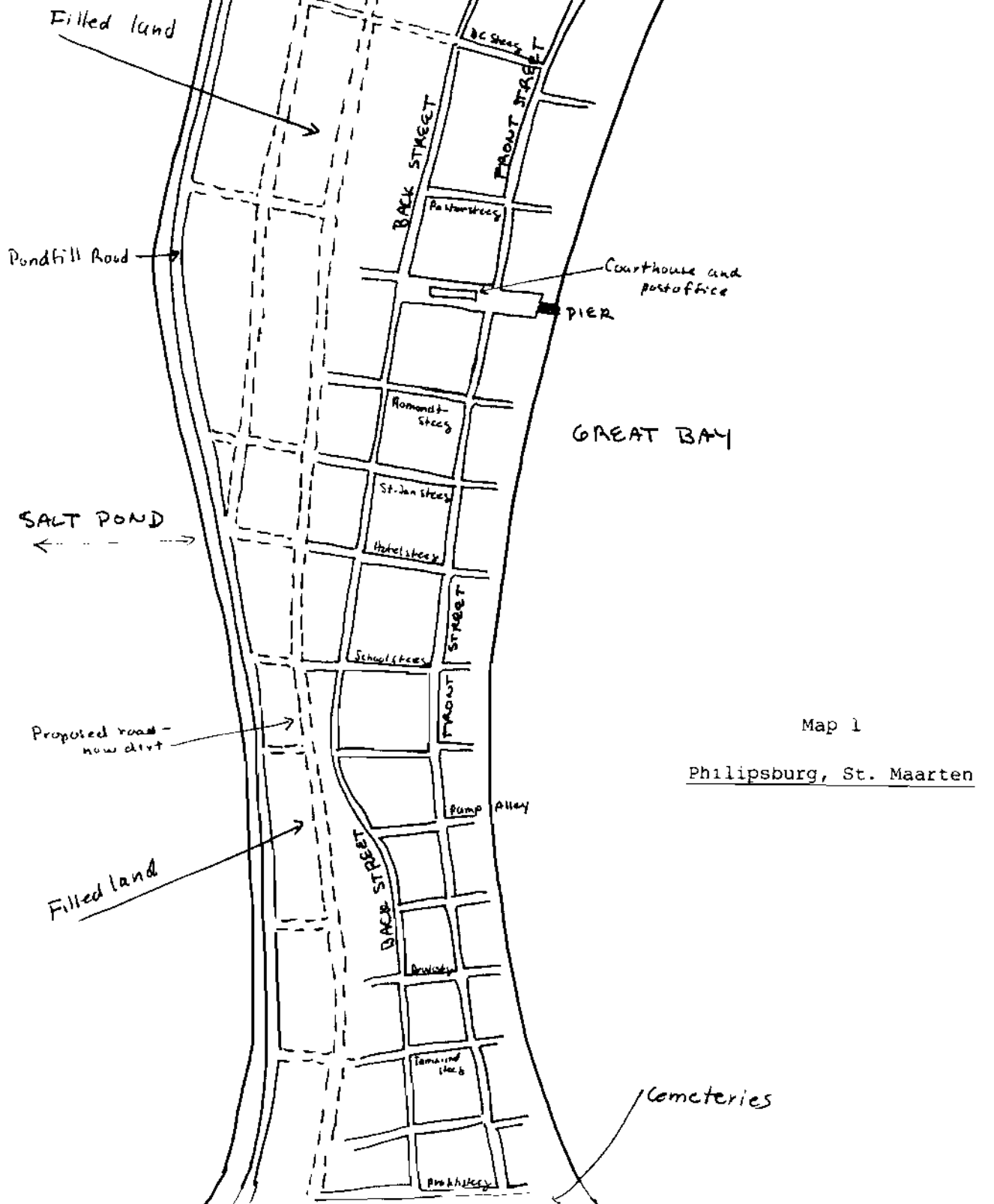
alone.¹ In only twenty years -- since the first tourist hotel opened in 1955 -- the island has become one of the major tourist centers of the Caribbean, a free port with the added attraction of casino gambling, many lovely beaches, and the reputation for being an exceptionally friendly island.

The town of Philipsburg occupies a narrow band of land between the bay and an old salt pond, and consists of two parallel mile-long streets (appropriately named Front Street and Back Street), connected by a series of narrow side streets, called "alleys." Front Street is lined with tourist stores, while Back Street is oriented more toward the local market. Recently a by-pass road has been built on filled-in saltpond land, and this has relieved a pressing traffic problem in the town's center. A series of large government-type buildings have arisen along the "pondfill", including the telephone building (a busy place on an island where few people have telephones), the utilities building, and a new government office building.

Map 1 shows the layout of the town. The main square is the social center. Midway down Front Street, it has the old courthouse (now housing the post office on the ground floor and the courtroom upstairs) at its head, the pier and tourist office at its foot, a bank and snackbar on one side, and a series of small stores on the other. Cruise ship tourists (and crews) use the beach beside the pier, where tourist-oriented daytrippers, visiting yachts, and motor launches from the bigger cruise ships all dock. The houses, shops and hotels along Front Street back onto the beach, which is used by everyone.

HILLSIDE

to Point Blanche



Map 1

Philipsburg, St. Maarten

Map 1
Philippsburg 1977

Although tourism did not come to St. Maarten until the mid-1950s, to understand what happened when it did arrive it is necessary to go back much further in time. As a noted historian once wrote: "Men make their own history, but not of their own free will; not under circumstances they may have chosen but under given and inherited circumstances with which they are directly confronted." So in St. Maarten, the present has been shaped by the past. And so, also, the present and the past have been shaped by forces outside the island's boundaries and beyond the control of its inhabitants. Since the time of its "discovery" by the Europeans, the island's economic, political, and social life have been repeatedly transformed by its changing relationships to the outside world. For the inhabitants, one of the crucial aspects of this process has been that such changes in the external situation have given rise to opportunities for new - and often previously excluded - groups of people to step into economic and political activities, while the old powerholders have been unable to maintain their hegemony. Although it is an oversimplification, it is convenient to delineate three such periods in St. Maarten's history, each marked by a shift in the island's relationship to the world economy, and each equally marked by a shift in the groups in political and economic power.

In the first period, beginning in the late seventeenth century (the island was colonized in 1631), St. Maarten was a producer of agricultural products -- primarily salt and sugar -- for export to Europe.² By the late 1800s, however, these exports were no longer competitive on the world market, and many of the inhabitants, forcibly imported less than a century earlier,

were compelled to make their living elsewhere. St. Maarten thus entered its second period, when it became a producer of another sort of product -- labor -- which did not go, as agricultural products had, directly to the European metropolis, but to other islands in the Caribbean where metropolitan companies had established themselves. The remaining inhabitants, down to less than 1500 in 1950 (see appendix), seemed relegated to the role of subsistence agriculturalists, their meager living eeked out with government welfare payments and remittances from abroad.

This situation changed drastically with the advent of tourism, and in the third - and current - period the island has reversed its relationship to the other islands of the Caribbean: where it was once "mined" for its labor supply, it now mines the surrounding islands. Thus, although always an exporter, the nature of the export has changed in each period -- from agricultural produce to labor power to tourist services.³

The end of the plantation period

Because the van Romondt family dominated the first period, and because the ways in which they acquired and eventually disposed of their property are important to the way in which the island developed in the following two periods, it is convenient to start our history with the year 1801, and the arrival of Diederik Johannes van Romondt, the first member of a family that was to dominate St. Maarten's economic and political life for the following one-hundred years. By the end of the century, van Romondts owned most of the good estate land, the salt concession and, with one or two other families,

controlled the merchant establishments and owned most of the large houses in Philipsburg. The other estate owners had gradually departed, leaving little but their names on building plaques and gravestones, and on the children of their slave-mistresses. By this time, however, sugar and salt production had declined, and for much the same reason: competition from more cheaply produced products (beet sugar in Europe, salt and cane sugar from islands with more favorable tariff arrangements and lower production costs), and an inability to raise the money to modernize production. When slavery was officially abolished in 1863, indemnities were low and many plantation owners in debt; much land was abandoned (Keur and Keur 1960:69). In 1900 there were reportedly only six estates that still grew sugarcane, and by 1915 there was only one. Salt production, despite an attempt by the van Romondts to reorganize and revive it in 1907, continued to decline and had virtually ended by 1930, while cotton production, never very large, had come to a standstill as early as 1916. There were still some cattle, but these too were on the decline (Keur and Keur 1960:98).

The van Romondt family fortunes had declined with those of the island as a whole and by the 1930s the family estates and businesses had devolved upon one heir in each of the family's two major branches, while the other members had begun in earnest to sell out and leave the island.⁴ Since the nature and process of the family's demise in large part determined the subsequent development of the island, I will briefly sketch out the evolution and dissolution of their businesses and properties. It may be helpful to read what follows with the genealogy at hand: not only will we pass down the generations rather quickly, but the habit of giving several members of the family the same name can be confusing even to the researcher.

Diederik Johannes van Romondt was an Amsterdammer who came to St. Maarten as a merchant, arriving at the age of twenty (Hartog 1964: 32). Judging from the sharp decrease in population and the number of estates, he arrived at a time when St. Maarten's economy had passed its peak and was entering a period of recession and consolidation that was to last well into the twentieth century. While there were ninety-two plantations in 1789, there were only twenty-three (with nineteen owners) by 1830 (Keur and Keur 1960: 68), and sixteen by 1860; and the peak population of 6200 in 1789 was down to about 3500 by 1830.⁵ No doubt in part because of these changes, Diederik Johannes was able to acquire both property and political power rapidly, the first because estate land was coming up for sale, presumably cheaply, and the second because of the growing shortage of people considered qualified for government and administrative positions. In 1849, Diederik Johannes married the daughter of a landowner, thus establishing an alliance with the governing planter class - as successful merchants were doing elsewhere in the Caribbean at this time. He was military and then civil governor from 1820 to 1840 and owned both a home in town, where he had his store, and an estate called "Mary's Fancy."

Political and economic alliances were reinforced through the marriages of Diederik Johannes' eight children, while the shortage of qualified people allowed the family to accumulate a considerable amount of political power by holding more than one government post apiece. One of Diederik Johannes' sons, Johannes Willem, married the daughter of a landowner, whose own father was also a commandant in the militia. Johannes Willem was both administrator of

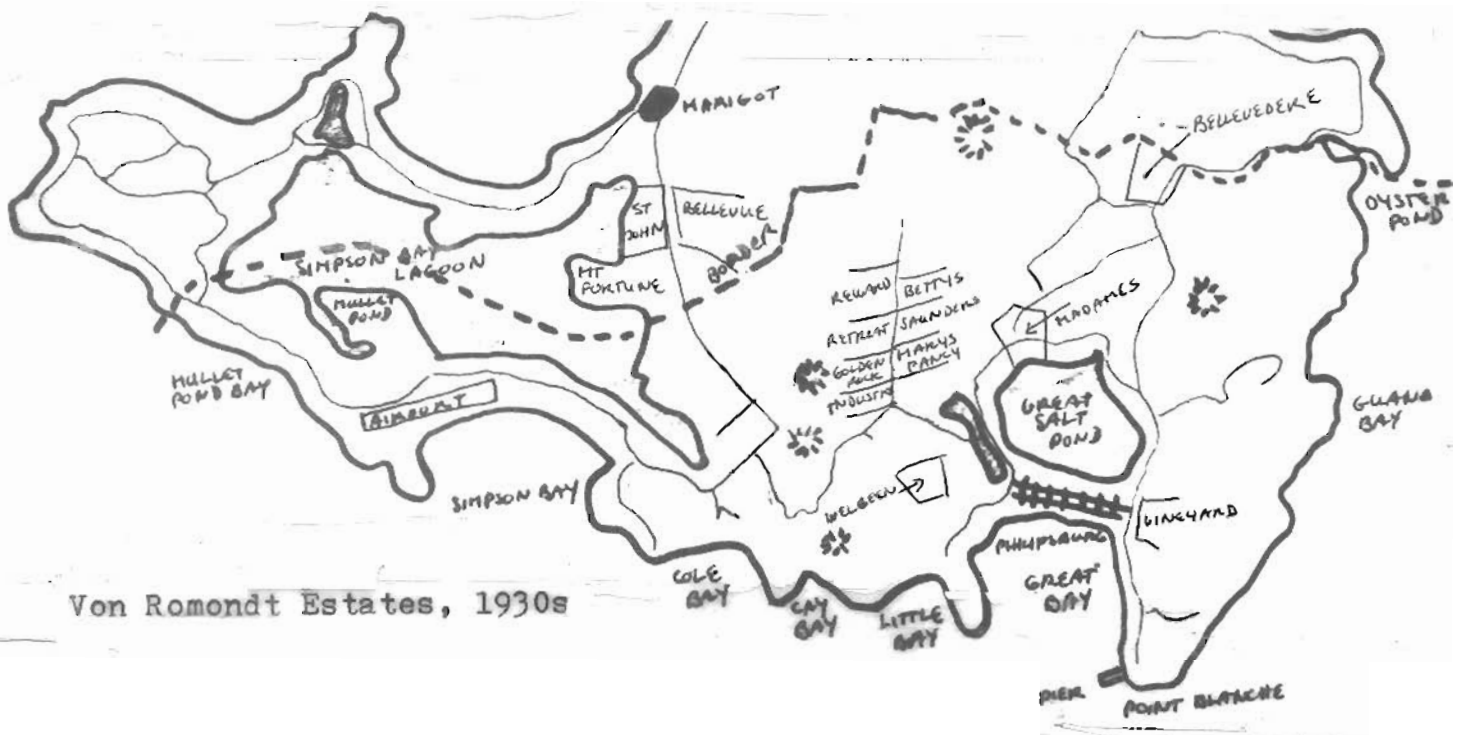
finance and receiver, and governed in his father's footsteps from 1840 to 1849. Meanwhile, a daughter, Susannah Elizabeth Illige, married Willem Henrik Rink, a Dutch lawyer who was administrator between 1790 and 1800, and governor from 1802 to 1806. They had no children -- perhaps not surprising since she was nineteen and he was seventy-seven when they married -- but Rink owned property in town and an estate called "Retreat," adjacent to "Mary's Fancy," both of which subsequently came into the van Romondt family.

Two of Diederik Johannes' other sons became the founders of the two branches of the family that were to remain the longest on the island. Although both were involved in aspects of sugar and salt production, Diederik Christian (who lived from 1807 to 1865) appears to have concentrated on politics and was at various times administrator of finance, colonial secretary, crown procurer, and officer of justice -- all potentially lucrative positions. He lived at his father's estate.⁶ August Alexander, on the other hand, concentrated on business -- A.A. van Romondt and Company, merchants and estate overseers, which was established across from his father's townhouse, where he lived.⁷

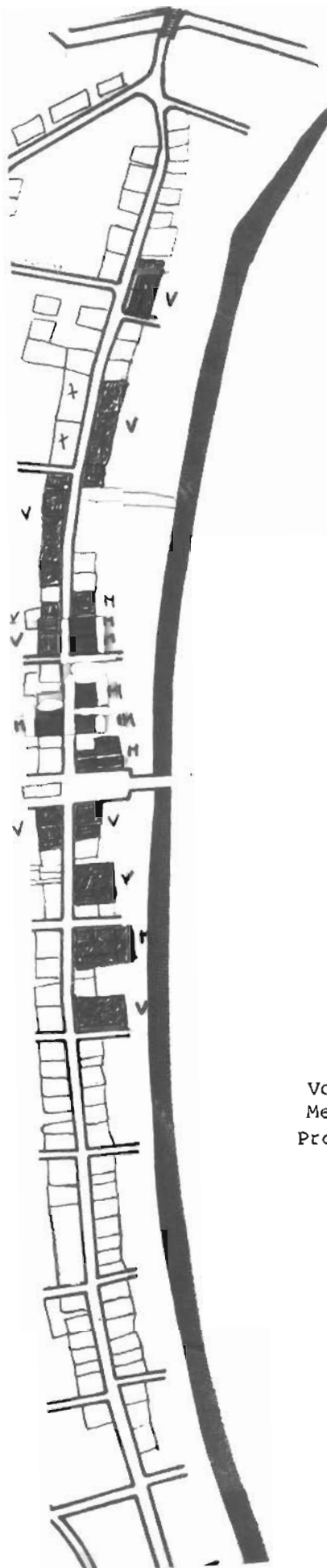
Diederik Christian had three children and August Alexander had nineteen (by two wives: see genealogies), but only one child of each seems to have gone into business. By this time there were apparently too few suitable women on the island for all the sons to find locally born wives, and some married women from nearby islands. Those of their children who remained on the island followed a similar pattern, but went even further afield.

By this time -- the late 1800s -- many members of the family had begun to sell off their properties, and those who remained began to consolidate the family lands into fewer and fewer hands. The major planter in the family, Diederik Johannes (the second), married a cousin, and when he died in 1918 his three daughters seem to have already left the island; his estate was sold by his widow (Hartog 1964: 409). His brother, Louis Alexander, had three children on the island, and each inherited a share of their father's estate lands when he died in the same year. One of Louis Alexander's sons, Louis Auguste, also bought property outside of town, where he lived for part of the time, and he built a large house on the main square, where he had his business. He is remembered as the island's true aristocrat and trend setter, the first to have a horse and carriage and one of the first to have an automobile -- which he apparently did not know how to drive.

One Diederik Christian's side of the family, there were fewer heirs, and more property was sold out of the family. Diederik Christian had three children, and the one who remained -- Diederik Charles, who died in 1904 -- also had three. One of these, Ernest Gerald, had an estate agency and shipping business that was apparently separate from that of Louis Alexander, but this seems to have been disbanded by the time his only child and sole heir, Nora -- who had left to go to school in the United States and had married an American -- returned to the island to manage his estates when he died in 1923.



Although their property was extensive, the van Romondts did not own all the land in town, and there were three other merchant families -- the Percivals, Nisbets, and Rijnenoerbs -- who held onto their land into the twentieth century. These three families and the van Romondts between them owned virtually all of the large two-storey houses on the more elegant up-street end of Front Street (indeed, it was the building of these houses that established the up street/down street distinction in the first place). Map 3 shows the properties they and the van Romondts owned in the 1900-1920 period. All three families had been in St. Maarten for some time and were, like the van Romondts, involved in other aspects of island life, including administration and estate management. But, as the estate economy declined and the need for merchant establishments declined with it, these families also began to sell off their properties and leave.⁸



Map 3
Von Romondt (V) and
Merchant Family (M)
Properties, 1900-1920

The rise of the "upstart whites"

In order to maintain its political and economic hegemony, a controlling group must not only be large enough to exercise its power, but it must be able to reproduce itself, either by giving birth to children who will take over the family enterprises, or by recruiting new members - usually by marriage, occasionally by adoption. But the cosmopolitan values and lifestyle that the controlling group endorses may have the unintended effect of encouraging the children to leave rather than to stay, while the sense of social position of those who remain may be so rigidly adhered to that they are unable to adapt to the new situation by changing their standards so that they can recruit new members. This must have been the dilemma that faced St. Maarten's ruling group in the first decades of the twentieth century. As the value of the island's products declined, so did its ability to support the upper class population in the style to which it had become accustomed. Many left, and others sent their children out, not expecting them to return. Yet despite their impending loss of power, the later generations of van Romondts appear to have refused either to change their lifestyle or to enlarge their numbers by intermarrying with other island people -- including other merchant families. And as the other merchant families also began to leave, they did not sell their properties to the remaining van Romondts, any more than they intermarried with them. Thus, much against their wishes, and almost despite themselves, the controlling group's decline opened up opportunities and made property available to a group of men and women who had hitherto been assiduously excluded from any but a minor role in the economy. While self-preservation might indicate that the ruling group, and the van Romondts

in particular, would have been wiser to recruit these "upstart whites" -- as they were reputed to have called them -- into their ranks, they were adamant in their refusal to do so. They loudly, although futilely, vowed not to let these people "come up past the Methodist church," a statement that reminds us of how the layout of the town reflected social values and also indicates their feelings of beleaguerment. (It should be remembered that here St. Maarten differs from most other Caribbean islands in that the contending grouping -- or groupings, since there were social and economic divisions among them -- were white, and that the snobbishness was thus more one of class than of a class-color combination.)⁹

Scorned though they may have been, these families nevertheless began to buy land and open small stores on Front Street, beginning just after World War I. They began down street, but as they moved up they bought from the departing merchant families and their heirs (but not from the van Romondts), as well as from two shopkeepers from off-island who had bought Diederik Johannes' original house and store. It was this property, much of it considered worthless at the time, that was suddenly to become valuable during the next period of the island's development, the tourist phase, and it was thus that a new group of people found themselves in a position to take advantage of the new opportunities.

Based on birth and past history, these "upstart" families came from two distinct social groupings, and acquired the capital to buy their land in two different ways. The first group, which I shall call for convenience sake the "plantation" families, are reported by their descendants to have been the sons

and daughters of men (generally Scots or English) who came to the island in the nineteenth century to fill such subsidiary plantation posts as flour merchant, book-keeper (the term generally used for estate overseer), and salt checker. They carry names like Conner, Wathey, Williams, and Davis. One of the first to open a store on Front Street was Albert Coenraad Wathey, whose sons and grandsons have figured so prominently in more recent St. Maarten history. He bought three Front Street and three Back Street properties between 1913 and 1924.¹⁰ He had a store and lived in a house opposite the Methodist Church, but moved up to an unoccupied corner of the main square after he married his second wife. The original house remained in the family, and other family members bought additional property over the next twenty years. Remembered as competitive with the van Romondts, Albert Coenraad is reported to have bought a Chevrolet soon after Louis Auguste bought his Ford; he is also said to have brought in the first typewriter (Hartog 1964: 400).

The other group to move onto Front Street came from Simsonbay, a fishing village on the western end of the island whose inhabitants trace their origins back to Scandinavian, French, and British military men who settled there after coming to the West Indies on missions to St. Barts and St. Thomas in the late eighteenth century. While this may be true, it is equally likely that they are descendants of yeoman farmers who were already in the Caribbean and were recruited into the militia, settling on the island they attacked -- a common practice in the Caribbean at that time. Names such as Vlaun, Halley, Peterson, Lejuez, and Williams preponderate, particularly since in the past members of the community frequently intermarried. In its dealings with the

outside world, Simsonbay was oriented toward the French-side capital of Marigot and toward Anguilla, with which it traded and where its inhabitants found some of their marriage partners. The village population was estimated to be about 400 in 1900 (Keur and Keur 1960: 103).

As the upper class population of St. Maarten declined, members of the Simsonbay community were recruited into the island's police force, and they used their savings -- as well as remittances from relatives abroad -- to buy property in town, often paying over time.¹¹ But they did not buy the larger houses, and their foothold in town seems to have been slightly more tenuous than that of the "plantation" families; many more of them were forced to leave the island in the post-1930 period, and fewer retain their land in town today. In addition, the distinction between the two groupings has been maintained in other ways: their members have seldom intermarried, and, while Simsonbay families have continued to marry one another with some frequency, the plantation families have increasingly found their husbands and wives from off island.¹²

By the late 1930s, there were only two major property-holding van Romondts left on the island, Nora and Louis Auguste, and they were having problems with their businesses. But, true to form, they refused to sell to the newer families, a refusal that affected the way they disposed of their properties. In 1937, Louis Auguste was in debt and having trouble finding people to work in his business. He had married late, and his children were young and in school in Antigua. Although his volume of business could not have been large, its nature was the key to its value. In addition to a

grocery and dry goods store run by his wife, he carried out part of the banking correspondence -- no bank having as yet been established on the island -- and controlled the car and tire dealerships, the KLM agency, and a shipping and insurance agency. When he came to sell, he sold not to someone on the Dutch side, but to L.C. Fleming, his counterpart on the French side, and included in the transaction a great deal of land outside of town. Fleming, however, soon decided that he was not interested in owning a business on the Dutch side -- he, too, apparently had trouble finding good help outside the family, and he already had extensive business interests of his own. Keeping only those estate lands that were along the French-Dutch border, he turned around and sold the businesses and the house in town to Cyrus Wilberforce Wathey, Albert Coenraad's son,¹³ who was apparently allowed to pay over time, not being able to afford to take such a major step on a cash basis. Upsetting as this must have been to Louis Auguste, it was a big step up in the Wathey family fortunes, for, as more than one St. Maartener remarked, the family definitely "came up" in the process.

The disposition of Nora's property was also to effect the future of the island, and similar forces were at work in her decisions. Her children were being educated in the United States, and she reportedly saw no future for them on the island. Her husband had little taste for running a plantation, and the burdens of working the estate in a declining economy fell largely on her shoulders. Instead of selling to private individuals, however, Nora sold most of the estate land and a lot of the town properties to the government. It is on the former that a major part of the island's non-tourist housing has been developed, and on the latter that the hospital and old-age home were built.

She later sold two estates very cheaply to one of her employees -- reportedly another part of her attempt to avoid selling to any of the "upstart" families -- and, to many a developer's chagrin, he retains them to this day. Two additional properties in town went to two local families, one from the Dutch side and one from the French side, and a final piece along the town beach was sold to an American who has since resold it to a hotel owner; it will be one of the few large hotels on private land.

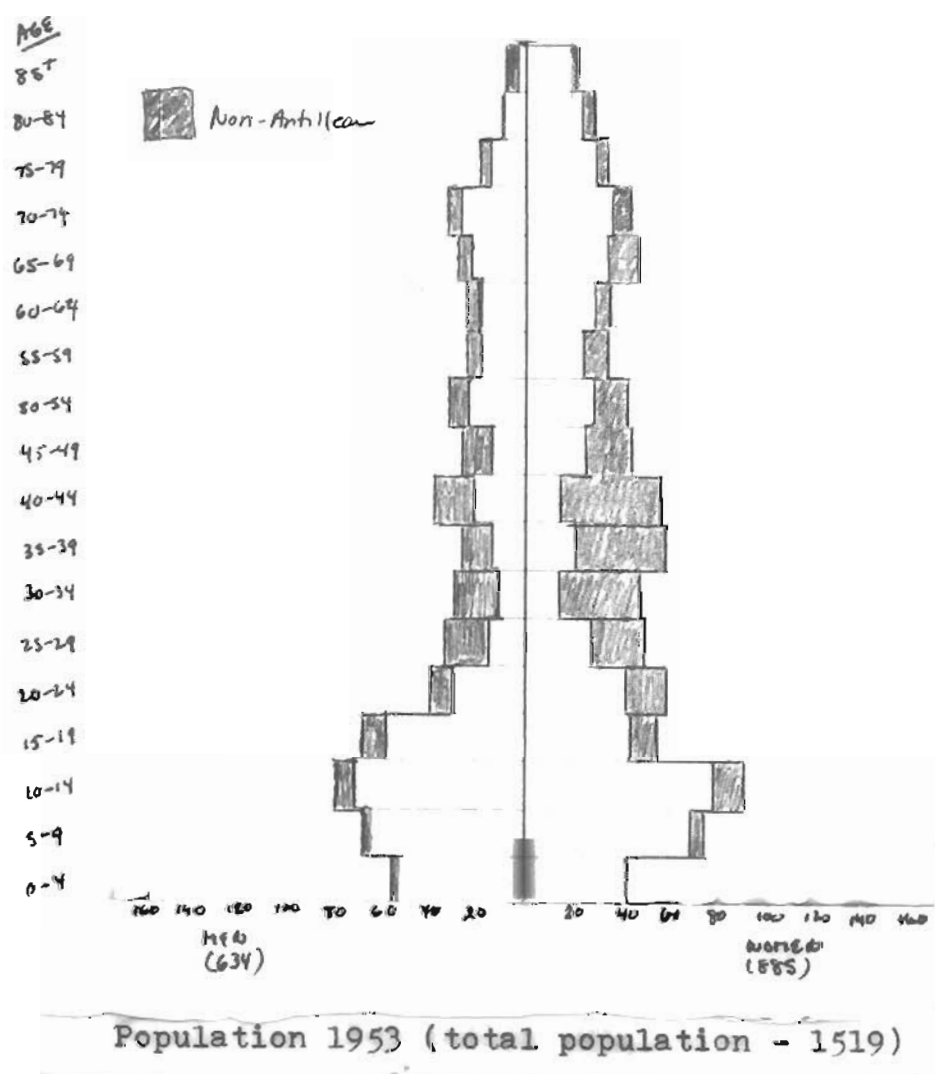
While these families were seizing the time and moving onto and then up Front Street, the bulk of the population was living at little above subsistence level. In 1920 there were only 2600 people on the island, and by 1930 only 2335. By the 1940s the island had become in large part dependent on remittances and Holland's largesse. The process of sending laborers off the island to work was thus a second aspect of this second period in the island's history. Labor migration began in earnest at the end of the nineteenth century, when islanders were recruited for six-month stints in the phosphate mines in Sombrero and in Connatable, French Guiana. In the early 1900s most males of working age went to Cuba or the Dominican Republic to work, often seasonally, on the sugar estates; a few others, including some women, went to St. Kitts to reap salt, which was ready earlier there than in St. Maarten (Hartog 1964: 394). After about 1920, people began to go to the United States, where they worked in laundries and restaurants, as elevator operators, janitors, and maids. Finally, when the oil companies moved into Curaçao and Aruba in the mid- to late-1920s, men and women went in great numbers to work in the refineries, particularly in the Lago refinery on Aruba.¹⁴ Two van

Romondts, at least, benefitted from this process: Ernest Gerald reportedly was recruiting agent for the Connatable mines and Louis Auguste performed a similar task for the oil companies, shipping laborers in his own boats.

Migration from Aruba was different, however, from either migration to Santo Domingo and Cuba or to the United States. People went in larger numbers -- at one point there were more St. Maarteners in Aruba than in St. Maarten itself -- and they expected to stay for a major part of their lives. They did not begin to return until automation led to severe cutbacks in personnel in the 1950s. They were paid well by Caribbean standards, had housing developments and schools built for them, and developed a community life. (Current friendships in St. Maarten often seem to be based on neighbourhood ties in the Lago housing development in Aruba.) Their children were born and educated in Lago hospitals and schools, and although many of the older generation took their pensions and used them to return to St. Maarten, buy land (and/or taxi cabs), and establish businesses, fewer of their children did so.¹⁵ This migration was also different in that it was not confined primarily to the black population, but included many whites as well.

By 1950, then, the population of St. Maarten was down to a meager 1484, while there were 627 people designated "St. Maarteners" (not including dependents) working in Aruba (Hartog 1961: 419). In the 1951 elections, there were 599 qualified voters on the island, 492 of whom voted, but there were over 1611 qualified to vote in St. Maarten but living in Curaçao and Aruba. A population pyramid constructed for St. Maarten from data collected in 1953 by a locally based doctor shows clearly a population whose economically active

age groups have migrated out. (Note that the pyramid distinguishes Antilleans from non-Antilleans, a distinction that is to become increasingly important.) According to the Keurs, at this time about 200 people were living on government pensions, while another 100 or so were paid in the government's employ (these included boatmen, road workers, police, clerks, teachers, etc.) (Keur and Keur 1060: 124). Thus over 300 of a total population of working age (over 15) of about 1000 can be presumed to have been paid by Curaçao. The number of larger stores had been reduced to less than ten (ibid., 212).



With so many people off the island, those who remained were in a good position to increase and consolidate their economic and political power, both by moving into the newly created government positions that had resulted from the Netherlands Antilles being granted a measure of self-rule in 1951 -- administrator and assistant administrator in each island, for instance, and various central government posts in Curaçao -- and by extending their family businesses as tourism developed. The "plantation" families -- Watheys, Buncampers, Cartys, Conners, for instance -- were in a particularly good position to take advantage of the new opportunities. Few of their children had migrated to Aruba, while many of the sons and daughters of Simsonbay people had; in addition, the "plantation" families appear to have moved into town earlier -- by a few years -- and to have been marginally better off and better established.¹⁶ The Watheys (father and sons) were in a particularly good position. One of the Cyrus Wilberforce's sons, Albert Claudius, was elected senator for the Windward Islands in the Netherlands Antilles parliament (Staten). Another son went into the family business. The value of these businesses, most of which had been a part of the van Romondt sale, suddenly increased. Thus the gasoline agency benefitted not only from the increased number of private cars and taxis, but provided fuel for the electric generator and desalinization plant; the car agency imported vastly increased numbers of cars, construction vehicles, trucks, and taxis; the banking agency became St. Maarten's first full-fledged bank -- an important step in encouraging investors; the KLM agency benefitted from the increased number of visitors; and the various shipping agencies benefitted from the increased

demand for food, tourist store items, and so on. The small size of the population meant that political and economic power tended, much as in the van Romondt days, to accumulate in the hands of a few people and it meant that these people were in a position to become the island's "gatekeepers," controlling the inflow of goods, capital, and personnel -- both private and governmental -- that accompanied the early phases of tourist development. The effort to retain this role -- and the attempts to undermine it -- make up much of the island's recent political history, and I will return to this issue later. First, however, the story of how tourism itself developed.

Tourism begins

As told by the residents, the story of the initial stages of tourist development has become a romantic tale of adventure and vision. The first initiative came from Eric Lavaetz, a hotel owner and member of an old Danish family on St. Croix who was looking for a new island on which to develop tourist homes and a hotel. The story is probably apocryphal, but Lavaetz is supposed to have arrived by boat, faking an engine failure so that he could explore the island without anyone knowing what he was up to. True or not, a very small original investment has paid off elegantly. In 1953 Lavaetz bought, for about \$30,000, a thousand acres of beach land on the French side (from two families), and in 1954 he bought the adjoining 320 acres on the Dutch side for about the same amount, this time from three families. The owners were apparently pleased to get rid of unwanted acreage, and thought

Lavaetz slightly mad. He proceeded to mark off the area in house plots, and then leased and remodeled the government guesthouse in town so that he could put up potential investors in style. Called the Passangrahan, it opened in February 1957. He hired two Americans to run it -- the man had reportedly worked for him in St. Croix and the woman arrived on a cruise ship and stayed. In 1958 she opened the first tourist shop in an old house down Front Street, selling mostly clothes that local women sewed to her designs.

At about the same time a group of Dutch investors decided to build a small hotel on Little Bay point, which they leased from the government. It opened as Little Bay Hotel in 1955, and had twenty rooms. The only other places to stay at this time were a small five-room hotel, the Seaview, which catered mostly to travelling salesmen, and two small guesthouses that also opened in 1955, one at the far up-street end of town run by an ex-seaman from the French side, and the other, the Lido, four rooms on the square owned by Chester Wathey, one of Cyrus's two sons. The latter, like Lavaetz's Passangrahan, was run by two Americans. Another American came as a visitor and returned to open a soft ice cream factory, and then a snackbar. Tourists were few, and generally both wealthy and adventurous. One small cruise ship stopped in about eight times a season, and the town had electricity only in the evening. Little Bay had its own generator, but water had to be trucked up from country wells.

As tourism developed, the "gatekeeper" role became important. It had several interrelated aspects. In the first place, the government controlled some of the best land on the island -- including a large part of the Lowlands, which had been bought in the 1940s to safeguard the need of having to extend

to airport runway, and most of Point Blanche and the Little Bay point, both acquired for military reasons in the eighteenth century. Thus any hotel developer who wanted to move onto the island and could not acquire private land had to obtain a lease from the government.

Secondly, not all islands with lovely beaches become tourist islands, and one prime necessity is the willingness and ability of those who control local economic and political life to provide what the developers need: information, infrastructural development (airports, roads, a water supply, electricity, housing), a labor force, and political stability. For the first, several local men -- including Albert Claudius Wathey, Jr. Cyrus's other son, and three other men from "plantation" families -- set up a tourist commission in the same year (1951) that the Netherlands Antilles' government opened up a New York office to promote tourism in all the Netherlands Antilles. For the second, the "swing" position that Albert Claudius held in the Staten, along with Holland's desire to move the island toward some measure of self-sufficiency, helped make money available for infrastructure, and the airport runway was extended, a desalinization plant built, roads upgraded, new housing areas developed, and schools constructed (Gastmann 1971). For the third, it was at this time that Lago was automating, and St. Maarteners were thus available to return to the island; many did, but they were soon too few in number to meet the demand, which was then filled by the plentiful labor force available on the nearby British islands and Haiti. And for the fourth, the overwhelming strength of one of the two political parties (that led by Albert Claudius Wathey), the government's ability to control the in-migration

of the labor force, and the laborers own recognition that their sole means of livelihood is tourism have led to a stability unusual in the Caribbean in the 1960s and 1970s.

The early years, 1955-1970

For the first fifteen years, there were two rather divergent patterns of ownership of the stores oriented toward the tourist industry. They were either established as branches of a chain (usually Curaçao-based), or were small, generally short-lived, efforts on the part of local or resident entrepreneurs. There were three sets of chains, and it was these that in effect "opened up" the island to other owners. The first set were the branches of stores owned by Curacalean Sephardic families. There were four of these: Penha (1960), El Globo (1961), Spritzer and Fuhrman (1961), and Yellow House (1963). Penha and Yellow House sold a similar mixture of traditional tourist items -- European name-brand clothes, sweaters, scarves, shoes, and French perfume. El Globo sold cameras, watches, radios, and other items known in St. Maarten as "electronics," and Spritzer sold high quality, expensive jewelry. All but El Globo, which closed in 1975, bought property, although not immediately, and put up new buildings in place of old houses.

For those unfamiliar with the role of Sephardic firms in the Caribbean, it may be useful to sketch in a very brief background. The migration of the Sephardic Jews began with their flight from Spain at the time of the Inquisition (which began in 1478). They fled to Portugal, to northern Europe (particularly Amsterdam and Antwerp), and thence to the New World, primarily to Brazil, which was at the time under Dutch control and where there were

already Sephardim who had fled directly from Spain and Portugal. When Brazil was taken by the Portuguese in 1654, many Sephardim went to North America, to Suriname, the Guianas, and to the British, French and Dutch islands of the Caribbean. They were often involved in the sugar industry, but also became moneylenders and merchants (Merrill 1964). The earliest to arrive in Curaçao came in several groups in the mid- to late 1600s and were soon involved in commerce; they quickly became prosperous, kept themselves socially separate, and frequently intermarried (Emmanuel 1970: 468-75; Karner 1968: 11). The names Capriles and Devalle, the families that own El Globo and Yellow House, occur among the very first groups of in-migrants (Karner 1968: 17). By the early 1900s, Sephardim had extended their commercial involvement to include banking, shipping, insurance, and today, although they are less endogamous, Sephardic merchants are among the most prosperous in Curaçao.¹⁷

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Sephardic merchants were among the first to come to St. Maarten. They were familiar with the tourist business, which had begun earlier in Curaçao, with Antillean regulations, and with the Dutch language; they had personal connections with people on the island, so that it was possible to find managers, a major concern for any business headquartered elsewhere. Although the owners visited the island from time to time, none came to manage a store and they did not, therefore, become directly involved in St. Maarten life.

The second set of chains were the branches of stores owned by Indian families in the other Netherland Antilles. The first was Boolchand, which has stores in Curaçao and opened in St. Maarten in 1964; the second was also

Curacao-based and opened in 1967; while a third, Aruba-based, opened in 1969. These were followed by other Indian stores -- from St. Kitts (1970), from Jamaica (1972), and from Beirut (1976). Not only did each family open one or more additional branches in St. Maarten itself, but in several cases a manager left the original store to set up on his own. By the summer of 1977 there were twenty Indian stores in Philipsburg, under eleven owners.

The Indians are all, according to their own testimony, Sindhi, and stem from a group of merchants who established themselves in what was then the northwestern Indian province of the Sindh in the early part of this century. Some families subsequently founded businesses in British overseas ports (Hong Kong, Singapore, Gibraltar), in the Canary Islands, and in the Caribbean, where they remain to this day. When the Sindh became part of Pakistan in 1947, many Sindhi fled to India to avoid religious persecution, and many ended up in the cities of Bombay and Poona. Thus the older storeowners in St. Maarten, or their fathers, were generally born in the Sindh, while the younger ones more often come from Bombay or Poona. A few have been in the Caribbean since the 1930s.

The Indian stores have carved out two retail "niches" for themselves: electronics (six stores in 1977) and so-called tourist items (seventeen stores in the same year). A store will generally specialize in one or the other and the larger chains have one store of each type. In addition, some owners have a tourist-oriented store on Front Street and a store more oriented to the resident market on Back Street. At first, owners and employees regarded St. Maarten somewhat differently: the married owners expected to stay, and became

involved in local business activities; employees and managers, on the other hand, came under contract and did not expect to remain for more than a few years. Except for certain business matters, the Indians at first mixed very little with the rest of the population, a distance that we shall see was repeated by other store-related people. In recent years, and with the younger generation, both the distance and the temporary nature of the stay have altered markedly.

A third group of chains includes the Chinese stores and restaurants -- fifteen in 1977. They cannot technically be considered chains because they are not branches of companies established elsewhere, but the three founding owners nevertheless first had businesses on three other islands (Curaçao, Aruba, and the Dominican Republic), and almost every Chinese business on St. Maarten is an offshoot of one of these three, as sons, relatives from other islands, and some employees have set up their own businesses. All of these Chinese originated from the Canton area of Kwangtung province, but left at different times, so that while many of the older generation came to the Caribbean from China in the 1930s, many of the younger ones were born in Hong Kong.

The Chinese, too, carved out a retail niche for themselves, with the stores, most of which are on Back Street, selling housewares and catering to a local clientele, while the restaurants, about evenly divided between Front and Back Street, cater both to tourists and to local people -- Chinese food is about the only relatively inexpensive food on an island where restaurant prices are geared to the tourist. Almost all the Chinese have families, and

many have young children. They are divided into two mutually unintelligible dialect groups, and tend to socialize with those who speak their dialect. Like the Indians, but for different reasons, they have until recently not mixed very much with the rest of the population, in part because of language barriers and in part because they work seven days a week.

Finally, a few other branches of stores from other islands were established during this early period: a liquor store (centered in St. Barts); a clothing store, which turned to crystal, watches, and jewelry (centered in Curaçao); a store that specializes in linens (also centered in Curaçao); and a tourist knick-knack store that has branches all over the Caribbean.

While what I have called the chains accounted, along with a few other outside stores, for the majority of the early stores and restaurants, there were also attempts by residents to establish small business -- for instance, the wives of a local builder and of two hotel managers, the ex-manager of a small hotel, a man who had worked for the telephone company and his son. Of the ten or so of these, all but two had closed by 1970 and they were owned and run by members of two of the island's wealthier families. The late 1960s also saw the first non-St. Maarteners come specifically to open tourist stores; but these too (there were about eight of them) were almost all closed within a few years, and although their names are remembered, most of their owners have been forgotten. It would appear that lack of capital, lack of experience, and -- perhaps most important of all -- too few tourists, made it difficult for them to remain in business.

All but one of the original chain stores rented empty spots for their first sites, but by about 1970 several of them had bought property, in many cases tearing down old wooden houses and putting up concrete "arcades" housing several stores. In the process there was a certain amount of moving about, as the sites vacated by the builders were taken over by other renters,¹⁸ as new branches were opened, and as everyone attempted to get a better site toward the center of town.

As far as can be determined, only two St. Maarten-born black men -- Melford Hazel, Sr. and C.A.Flanders -- had properties on Front Street in the 1950s,¹⁹ and by the late 1970s they were still two of the very few black men directly involved in owning tourist businesses. Their histories, as they tell them, are somewhat similar and reflect the experiences of many St. Maarteners -- and other West Indians -- although their successes are their own. Both were born at the turn of the century. Hazel was the son of an ex-slave who had worked for the van Romondts, and Flanders was born on the French side. Both went to the Dominican Republic with their fathers to work on the sugar plantations between 1910 and 1920. Hazel then went to the United States, where he worked as an elevator operator and in a laundry, returning to the island when the Depression hit New York; Flanders went to Curaçao and Aruba in the late 1920s, and briefly to the United States, before returning to St. Maarten in the 1940s. Hazel used money earned in the United States to buy a truck and open a grocery, bought a number of pieces of property, and became involved in various other small businesses. In 1947 he was able to buy a large property on Front Street that now, greatly expanded over the years,

houses a fifty-room hotel. Flanders also acquired his property in 1947, reportedly in partial payment for a bad debt, but while still in Aruba. He too established a hotel, but it took longer to build. It houses two stores, however, which have been rented out since 1967, and also a movie theater.²⁰

The problems that these men, and others like them, had pointed to a problem that people everywhere with little capital have in trying to establish businesses, and point to an important aspect of the "gatekeeper" role. One of the major difficulties faced by those who wanted to become involved in tourist development was to get loans, or to get large enough loans to make rapid expansion possible. This was particularly true in the early period when there were few banks on the island. Only when the large metropolitan-based banks moved into the island -- and this was only when there was enough business to make it worth their while -- did the situation ease slightly for the small local entrepreneur.

1970 to the present

The years 1970 and 1971 saw the opening of four major hotels (three with casinos), and the consequent addition of about 600 hotel rooms -- a more than 300 percent increase over 1969, for a total of about 900 rooms. There were almost twice as many tourists in 1972 as in 1971, up to almost 78,000.²¹ Other hotels expanded in the late 1960s, and several small guesthouses were opened. While two of the largest hotels (including the 600-room Mullet Bay) were on Lavaetz's original Lowland tract, all but one of the others were on government land, as were many of the guesthouses, both in Point Blanche and

near the airport. The guesthouses were in general run by Americans, while the larger hotels were opened by American companies. The kind of benefits St. Maarten offers to the outside investor apply mostly to hotels and are similar to those in other areas that wish to attract foreign capital. The most important is a ten-year exemption from corporate income tax, from income taxes on shareholders, and from property taxes, as long as the investment is at least 50,000 guilders (about \$30,000). In addition, there are exemptions from customs duties on materials imported for construction and initial equipment; permission to repatriate profits, dividends, loan interest, and amortization payments; tax deductions for start-up costs, for salaries paid to directors working as executives, and for certain interest payments to independent investors (Touche Ross 1977: 44ff). Most of these are of greater benefit to the large investor, and to those who start from scratch, than to the small guesthouse or storeowner. The ten-year tax holiday has meant that the larger hotels on the island take some time before they begin to contribute to the local economy through taxation -- and it is not unknown for them to close up shop on the eve of making such a contribution (see Vaughan 1974 for a more thorough description of this problem).

Despite these benefits, there seem to have been growing pains, and three of the four major hotels that opened in 1970 closed briefly soon thereafter; they reopened under new owners, a partial reorganization that immediately consolidated hotel ownership. Thus by the summer of 1977, there were 7 hotels with over 50 rooms, 5 with between 10 and 49 rooms, and about 15 small guesthouses with under 10 rooms -- and the trend toward fewer owners showed signs of continuing. This was accompanied by a change in the type of

tourist: more were coming on one-week "packages," and increasing numbers were from Latin America.

Starting in 1971, the number of tourist-oriented stores and restaurants in Philipsburg increased dramatically year by year, so that by 1977 over seventy new places had opened -- compare this to the forty or so stores that opened between 1955 and 1970, most of which have since closed. Some of the new businesses were extensions of the Indian, Chinese, and other "chain" enterprises discussed earlier, but the most noticeable influx was in small boutique, art-object, and craft-type stores, almost all foreign owned, generally by young American or European couples. (There were also several older American women who "retired" to the island to open stores.) All came because business was promising, and because it was possible, when business was good, to open a store with little capital or experience and make a success of it (in general, only the restauranteers had had experience elsewhere). Few of the younger people expected to stay in St. Maarten for long -- and few did -- and their social life also tended to be separate.

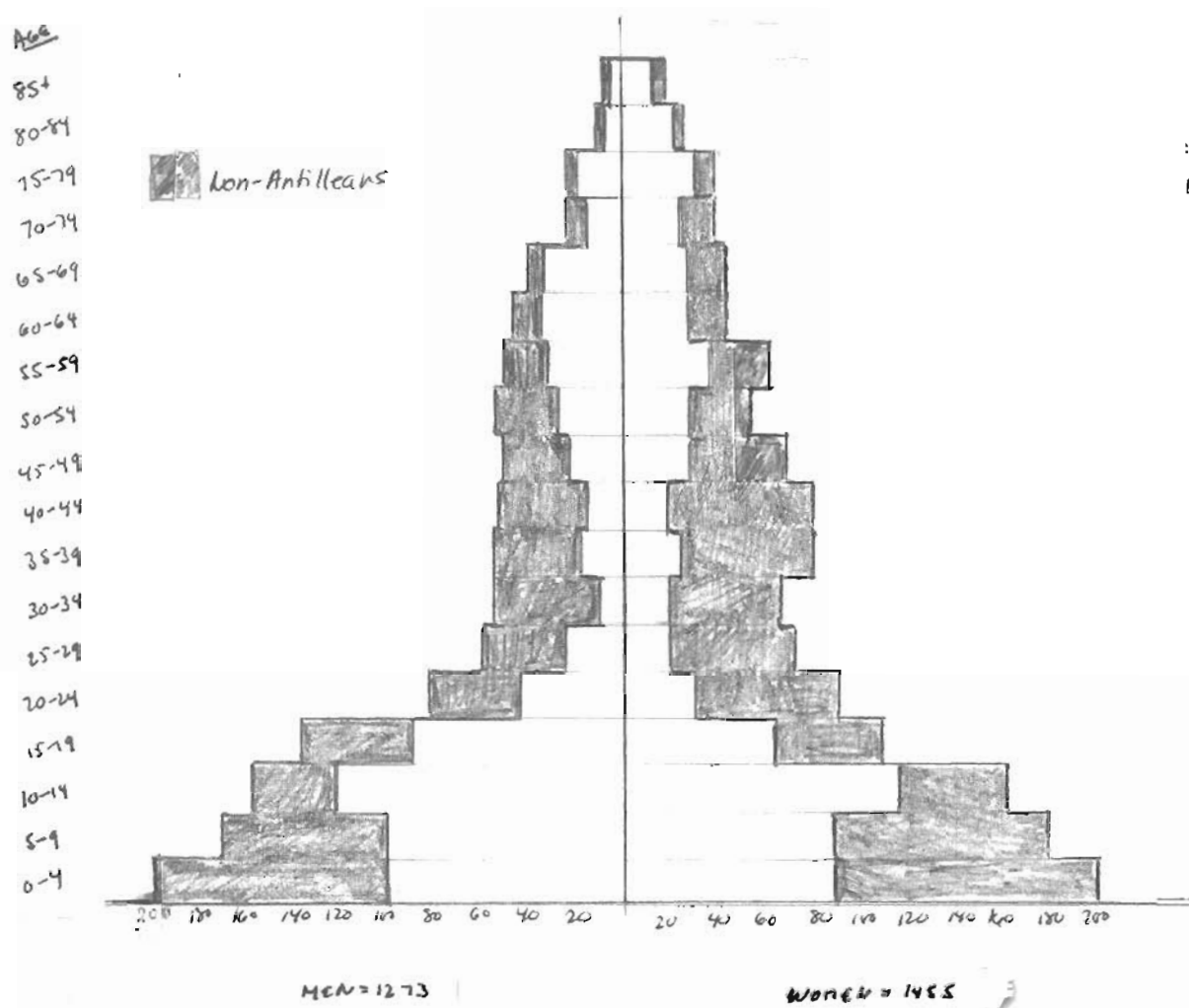
Toward the end of this period, another trend was becoming evident as a number of young St. Maarteners -- generally educated at universities in the United States and Canada -- began to become involved in infrastructural businesses, construction, real estate, media, various distributorships, small groceries, as well as in the tourist businesses. Aside from the few failed stores in the late 1950s and early 1960s, mentioned earlier, and aside from the few retail stores owned by members of wealthier families, there was, until 1977, very little local ownership of tourist retail stores. But by the late

1970s several newly constructed buildings had opened on Back Street, and others were under construction, all built by St. Maarteners. They were doubly important in that they not only marked a renewed local involvement in tourist businesses, but the spatial expansion of tourism into a new part of town. In the first part of the century, Back Street, while a respectable place to live, had only a few large homes, along with many smaller houses. By 1960 the street had become a mixture of homes and small grocery stores. The first businesses to move in were the Chinese restaurants, followed by the Indians' second (local) stores, and a few other stores that sold mostly to the local market. Only two retail stores -- a liquor store and a sewing shop -- were geared to tourists. Back Street was not considered a good location if one wanted to attract tourists, who were regarded as timid and fearful of back streets and the "alleys" leading down to them. Three of the four new buildings -- all were to be arcades -- were owned by St. Maarteners who had made their money elsewhere, and were built on family or inherited land. Most of the small stores in the arcades were leased to St. Maarteners, several of whom are women who had other jobs and hired still other women as managers. By 1978, there were also a number of new arcades planned for Front Street.

Some aspects of the labor force

Such a large increase in hotel construction and tourist activity brought with it a tremendous increase in population, as well as a change in the island's population structure. Thus the population of 6104 in 1969 increased by at least 13 percent a year in the following three years, and by 1973 had reach 9829 (see appendix -- this includes, of course, both natural increase

and net in-migration). If the age pyramids on the next two pages, one taken from data in the 1960 census and the other from the 1972 census, are compared with the 1953 pyramid presented earlier, the changing structure of the population becomes clear. Not only has the male-female ratio become increasingly less one-sided, but the pyramid gradually takes the shape of one



Population 1960 (total population - 2728)

AGE

85+

80-84

75-79

70-74

65-69

60-64

55-59

50-54

45-49

40-44

35-39

30-34

25-29

20-24

15-19

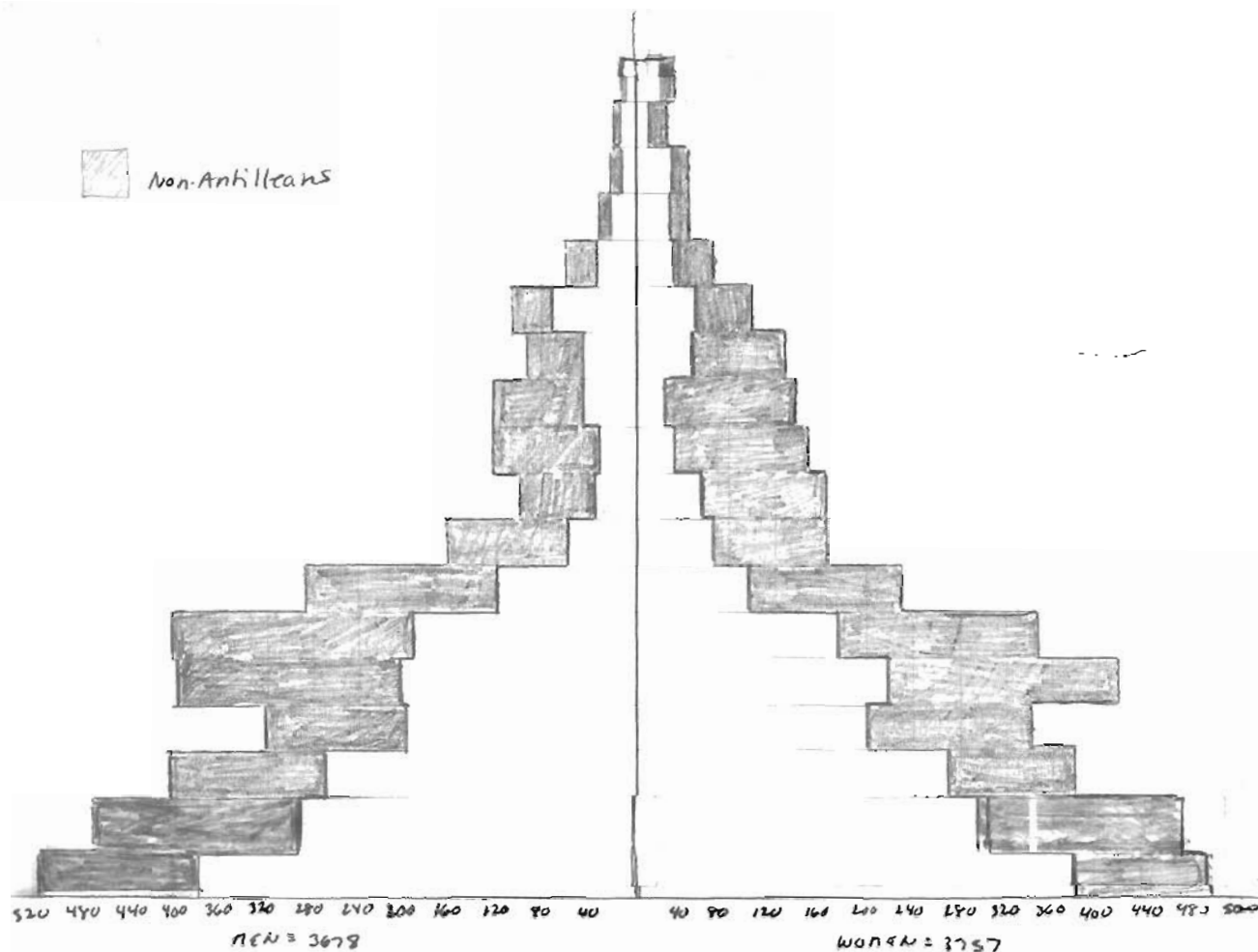
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Non-Anthillians



AGE

90-95

85-89

80-84

75-79

70-74

65-69

60-64

55-59

50-54

45-49

40-44

35-39

30-34

25-29

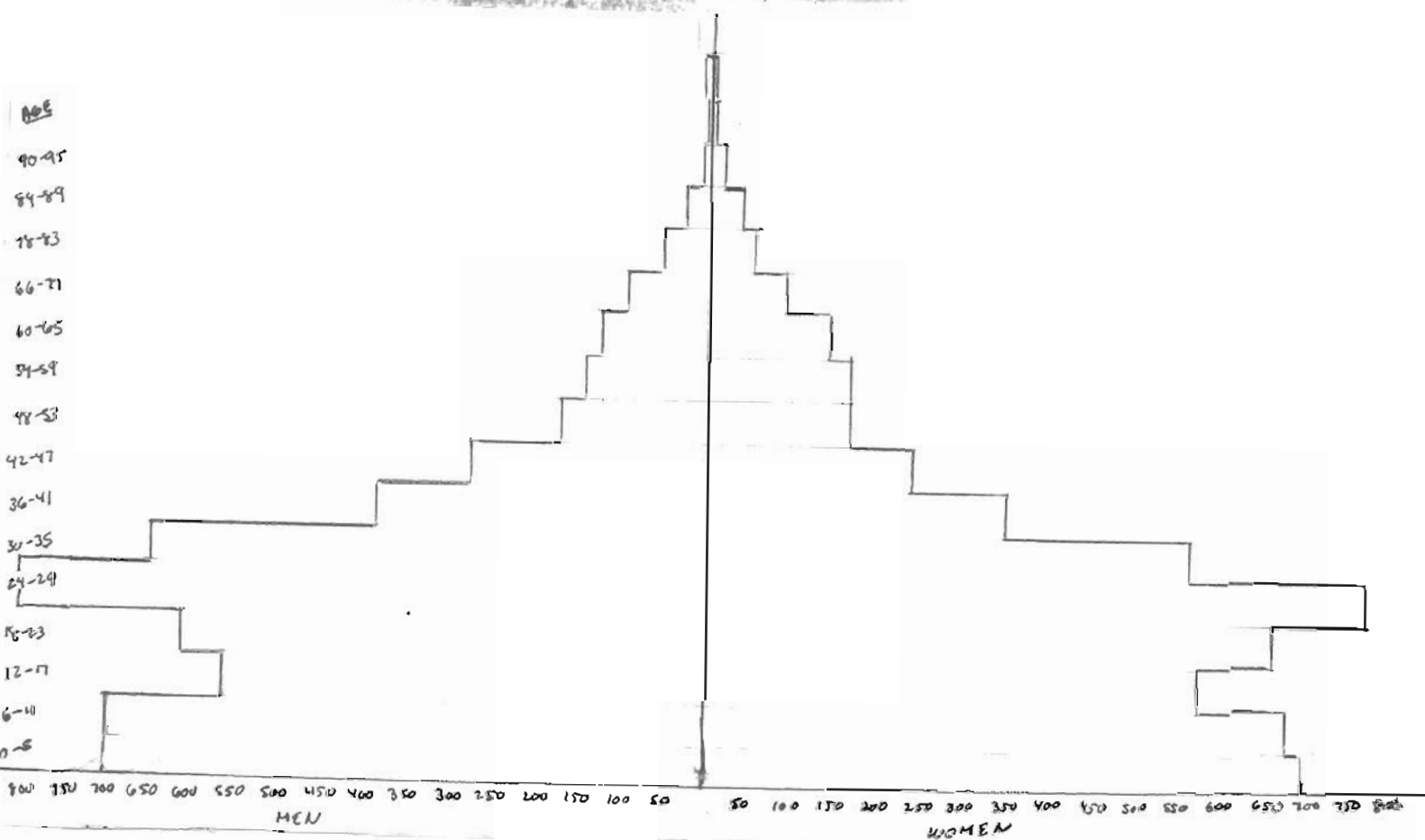
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15-19

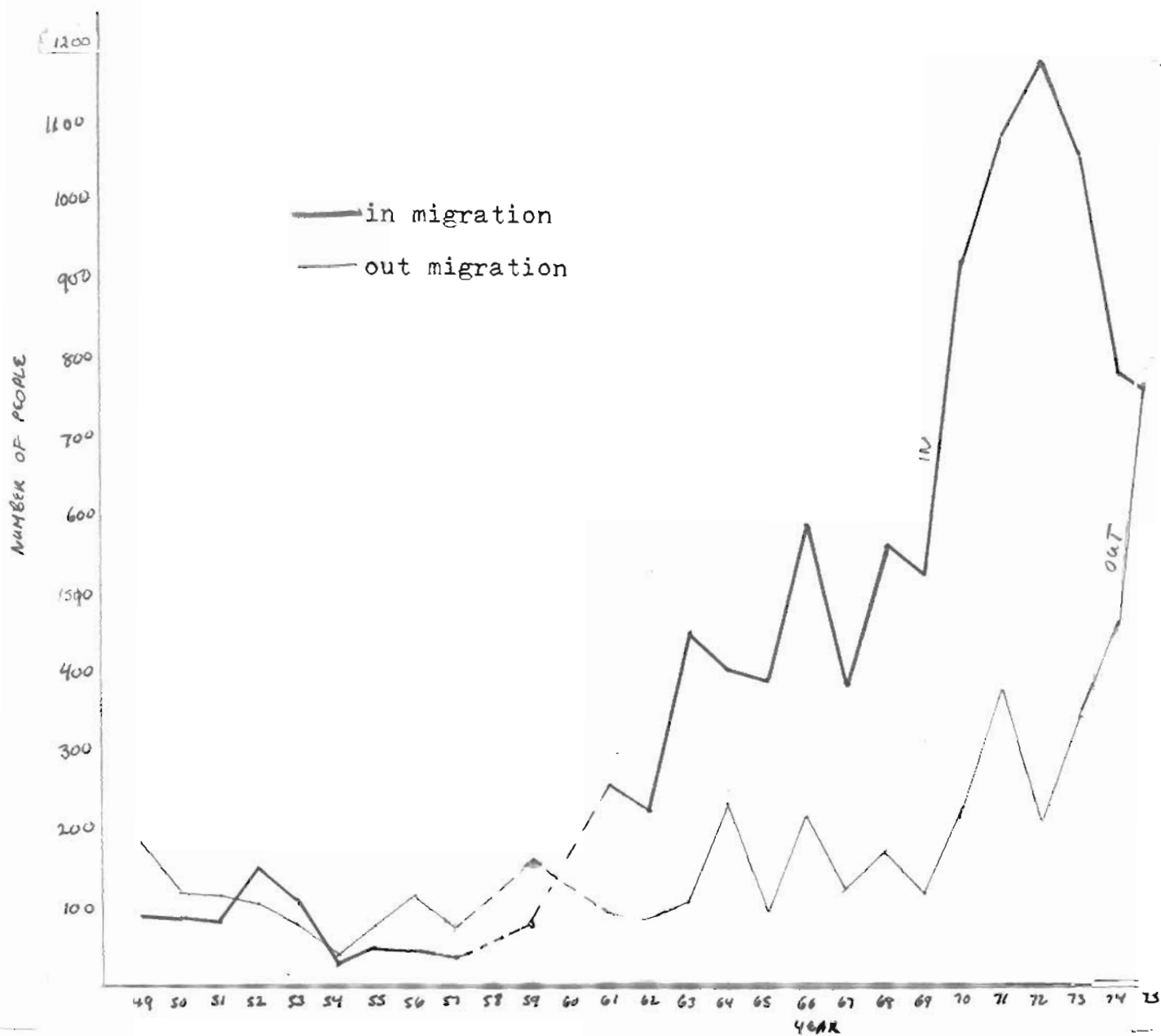
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indicating an in-migrant, rather than an out-migrant population (i.e. it bulges in the middle, because the in-migrants particularly swell the number of the population of working age). (A 1975 pyramid is included for purposes of



In- and Out-Migration, 1949-1975

comparison, but it was drawn up by the St. Maarten census bureau and the age-cohorts are slightly different.) In addition, census data show that a slightly larger percentage of the population in each age cohort has never been married.²²

To understand the importance of migration, it is useful to look at the accompanying list, which gives in- and out-migration figures for the years 1949 to 1975. (Subtracting one from the other gives net in- or out-migration; combining this with the figures in the appendix gives net birth and death rates.) Plotting in- against out-migration for these years not only shows that the two roughly parallel each other, at least until the mid-1970s, but that years of great in-migration were also years of great out-migration, an unexpected finding that indicates a population turnover of some sort.²³

As other Caribbean islands have learned at some cost, a successful tourist spot must appear to the tourists to be a tranquil, idyllic place in the sun; tourists do not seem to want to accept the fact that the places they visit have the right to have problems too. Many people in St. Maarten, at all levels, are aware of the fickle nature of tourist allegiances -- they consider the Cuban Revolution of 1959, which sent flocks of tourists looking for new beaches, in large part responsible for their initial success, and regarded a strike in Aruba in the summer of 1977 as foolish. Consciously or not, however, stability is maintained through more than goodwill, and here the structure of the population -- and, in particular, the Antillean/non-Antillean distinction that was made in the population pyramids -- becomes important. As

IN-MIGRATION, by year

	Men	Women	Total
1949	34	53	87
1950	36	46	82
1951	36	40	76
1952	70	80	150
1953	36	75	111
1954	9	17	26
1955	20	30	50
1956	19	28	47
1957	24	18	42
1958	no data		
1959	41	39	80
1960	no data		
1961	146	112	258
1962	175	179	224
1963	221	228	449
1964	224	180	404
1965	221	175	396
1966	304	282	586
1967	187	197	384
1968	289	271	560
1969	279	251	530
1970	540	385	925
1971	628	511	1139
1972	693	539	1232
1973	571	494	1065
1974	374	407	781
1975	345	430	775
1976	no data		

OUT-MIGRATION, by year

	Men	Women	Total
	58	125	183
	52	70	122
	52	68	120
	53	53	106
	33	55	88
	15	23	38
	37	33	72
	56	63	119
	32	41	73
	no data		
	60	70	130
	no data		
	44	52	96
	37	53	90
	45	64	109
	147	91	238
	43	56	99
	111	103	214
	75	48	123
	86	82	168
	60	62	122
	136	99	235
	198	180	378
	101	110	211
	170	178	348
	238	222	460
	447	330	777
	no data		

Source: St. Maarten Census Bureau files

Note: Missing year 1960 was year of census

the table below shows, non-Antilleans increased as a percent of total population between 1953 and 1975, while Antilleans decreased concomitantly:

<u>Place of birth, by percent of population</u> ²⁴			
	<u>1953</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1975</u>
Netherlands Antilles	72.7	54.0	51.2
Holland and Suriname	1.4	7.0	3.8
British West Indies	15.5	37.0	13.4
French West Indies	7.1		4.9
Elsewhere	3.3	2.0	16.5*
Outside the Netherlands Antilles			
but with Dutch citizenship			9.6
<u>Total population</u>	1519	2728	9563

*Includes those born in the Netherlands Antilles but without Dutch citizenship.

While in 1960, 41 percent of the population had been born on St. Maarten (1960 Census: 9), by 1975 this was true for only 27 percent.²⁵ Thus although the percent of non-Antilleans increased substantially between 1953 and 1960, it remained about the same between 1960 and 1975, the difference being made up of Antilleans from other islands. Not surprisingly, non-Antilleans formed a greater percentage of the economically active population than did Antilleans in both 1960 and 1972 (61 percent and 55 percent respectively).

The distinction between Antillean and non-Antillean has several aspects, all of which help ensure the stability and tractability of the workforce. In the first place, of a population of 10478 in 1975, 6584 were over the voting age of 18, but only 4061 were eligible to vote: in other words, 38 percent of the population of voting age could not take part in the electoral process. Furthermore, any non-Antillean coming to the Dutch side of St. Maarten must get a work permit, as well as a residence permit if he or she plans to live there, and it is difficult to get a residence permit without having a job.²⁶ With the work permit go certain guarantees for the worker, however -- employees must be over 21, they must be paid a minimum wage for the job category (set for all the Netherlands Antilles), and can only be fired for cause.

Insisting on work permits helps ensure the stability of the workforce in several ways. First, since any person without a permit cannot, in theory at any rate, live or work on the Dutch side, the government does not have -- again, in theory -- the problem of supporting an unemployed non-Antillean population; indeed, in 1977 it was officially stated that there was no unemployment. This does not mean, however, that the "reserve army of labor" -- the unemployed part of the labor force whose existence acts to hold down wages and control labor unrest -- is of no importance. On the contrary: it is simply one step removed, and lives on the French side, on the nearby British islands, or in Haiti. In the late 1970s, the French side of the island was far less developed and not only did many French St. Maarteners work on the Dutch side, but many in-migrants lived there as well. In addition, the

fact that St. Maarten's economy has expanded rapidly -- even in the recession years of 1971 and 1972, when tourism slumped throughout the Caribbean, in-migrants exceeded out-migrants -- has meant that the Dutch side did not have to grapple seriously with the problem of unemployment, including by withdrawing work permits, which was done primarily as a check on potential "troublemakers."

The restrictions designed to protect the employees are seen by some store owners as dampening the spirit of free enterprise that they believe to be the essence of the island's economy, but in fact not only are the restrictions in practice not that restrictive, but they are in certain ways actually to the employers' advantage. For the first, the only wage stipulation is a minimum, and cost of living increases, merit increases, and so on, are all at the employer's discretion. Further, store owners -- despite complaints that it is impossible to fire workers, that to do so needs extensive documentation, that it often leads to court cases, and that it costs money in severance -- do fire people, and generally have the weight of respectability on their side.

The advantage to the employers is that the labor force in St. Maarten is guaranteed an income higher than that on any island in the immediate area, feels a certain security, and has been disinclined to express dissatisfaction. One result of this combination of security and insecurity has been that there has thus far been very little labor unrest, as well as very little successful trade union organization, and trade unions have not played the major political role in St. Maarten that they have throughout most of the English-speaking Caribbean.

While it may be possible to control the number of non-Antillean in-migrants through a system of work permits, the same does not hold true for Antilleans, and particularly for Windward Islanders, all of whom are free to

travel from island to island and have a long history of doing so. Not only did the number of Antilleans on St. Maarten nearly double between 1960 and 1975, but, more to the point, the number of people of working age increased dramatically, as the following table shows.

Potential Antillean workforce²⁷

<u>Age</u>	<u>1953</u>	<u>1960</u>	<u>1972</u>	<u>1975</u>
0 - 19	478	788	2321	2602
<u>20 - 49</u>	<u>251</u>	<u>288</u>	<u>1324</u>	<u>2225</u>
50 and over	376	396	521	632

The increase in the number of Antilleans of working age shows every sign of continuing. In 1972, there were almost 1000 Antilleans between the ages of 10 and 19 on the island, all of whom, if they were to stay, would be of working age by 1982. In addition, data for the years 1974-1978 shows that in general there is net in-migration for all groups, and if this trend continues -- thereby adding to the population of the 10-19 cohort -- the number of Antilleans of working age in the population would become even greater.²⁸ The opening of the island's first high school in the late 1970s has added to the likelihood that people will stay. The government thus faces a major problem of finding jobs for all these people.

According to the Keurs, in the very early days of tourism, the St. Maarten-born population, particularly the women, disdained working in the hotels (although many in fact did), preferring to work for the government. For

the year 1957, the Keurs list a total working population (full and part-time) of approximately 360, one-third of whom were on the government payroll (Keur and Keur 1960: 141-142). Government employment was then, and has remained, a coveted occupation -- because it is felt to be secure, promotion is assured, and the rise to the top relatively rapid,²⁹ and despite the tremendous expansion and diversification of the economy, the government workforce in 1977 was about one-third of the total working population (high as this is, other Caribbean islands are burdened with a similar situation). Equally important, the government employs almost half the Antillean working population. Thus by expanding the bureaucracy, the government has been able to provide at least a partial solution to the problem of finding jobs for its own population. It remains to be seen if it will be able to continue to do so, and if this will promote overall development goals.

St. Maarten has lived through many changes since its colonization in 1631, and they are far from finished. At the beginning of this article, three periods in St. Maarten's history were sketched out. In each, St. Maarten -- and St. Maarteners -- found themselves, because of changing conditions elsewhere, in a different relationship to the world around them. In each, the new situation meant great changes on the island itself, and gave rise to opportunities for previously excluded groups. The third and most recent period, which began with the arrival of the first tourist development in the mid-1950s, has seen a ten-fold increase in population and multiple changes in life on the island; but it has not been those who came to the island -- either

to establish businesses or to work in them -- who have been the ones to move into positions of economic and political power. Indeed, these groups, in part for reasons pointed to above, have often done precisely the opposite. It is thus to St. Maarteners that tourism has given new opportunities. But while economically tourism seems to have been accepted as the only possible means of livelihood for the island, it has only been toward the end of this period that St. Maarteners in any numbers have begun to take direct advantage of this. By the late 1970s who was to control this development, and in what ways, had become very much an issue.

The "plantation" families, who had inherited the van Romondt's mantle, were facing some of the van Romondt's problems. Unable to find suitable marriage partners, a number of Albert Claudius's generation -- particularly the women -- remained unmarried, which diminished the number of legitimate heirs. And while for the van Romondts, a declining economy forced succeeding generations to leave, for the ruling class of the 1960s and 1970s, it was an expanding economy that made it possible for them leave, but this time not to find work but to win degrees in American and Canadian universities. Many have not returned, and those who have have in general gone into entrepreneurial pursuits -- car sales and repair, lumber and building supplies, shipping, food import and sales. Few have been willing to give this up for the risky business of island politics.

On the other hand, the new generation of black St. Maarteners referred to earlier have increasingly been taking on new roles. Not only have they been entering the retail trade, but they have increasingly become involved in

infrastructural businesses -- construction, engineering, and so on -- and in the media. And, in part as an inevitable result of an expanded civil service, they have been becoming heads of departments and in general taking over the upper regions of the civil service. At issue is whether the old guard can peaceably give way to the new -- if, despite its growing pains, St. Maarten will be able to remain the "friendly island" on which its reputation lies.

Notes

1. This is a rough estimate, meant to give some idea of magnitude, and includes only those stores that are mainly tourist-oriented; quite a few sell to both tourist and local markets. It also does not include restaurants, where the tourist-local distinction is also fuzzy, or the branches that some of the stores have in the hotels.

Tourism and its related activities are not quite the sole economic activities on the island. There is also a Japanese-owned fishing industry which uses St. Maarten as its home port, and has, in addition to the fleet, a factory ship and a large warehouse. The ships' crew are Taiwanese and Korean, but the warehouse employs a few locals. The other industry is a West German-owned rum distillery. Molasses is imported from other islands (from Cuba on a Russian ship when I was there), distilled, and sent to West Germany for bottling -- all made economical by virtue of the Netherlands Antilles' associated status in the EEC.

2. The island was originally colonized by the Dutch West India Company and was subsequently bandied about between the Spanish, French, British and Dutch, for a total of sixteen changes of flag, until it settled under Dutch rule in 1816. It is half owned by the French (St. Martin) and half by the Dutch (St. Maarten), an apparently amicable split that occurred in 1648.

3. Although the tourists themselves come to St. Maarten, little of what they spend stays on the island -- it is spent on imported food, tourist items (from camera to jewelry to clothing), and hotel furnishings, on foreign employees

who send their money home, on accommodation in hotels whose foreign owners invest their profits overseas. Thus tourist dollars are exported, and tourism is technically an export.

4. I have reconstructed these outlines of van Romonut family history in part from fragmentary references in Hartog (1964, 1974a, 1974b), Teenstra (1837), and Keur and Keur (1960), and from wills and deeds. There is no history of the family as such, and no written history of St. Maarten save Hartog's large but highly anecdotal account, which concentrates more on military exploits and religious developments than it does on social or economic affairs. Some of the earlier information, and almost all of the later information, comes from informants; some has been checked out in the Kadastral office, but that proved an exceptionally difficult and time-consuming task.

Although I have crosschecked continually, people's memories are selective, and there are undoubtedly family members who have been forgotten, particularly in the earlier years; in the later years, however, informants remember people that Hartog did not list in his geneologies (Hartog 1964: 681-82). But it seems to me very unlikely, as an example, that there were no daughters in the third generation, and it seems plausible that they married off the island and were forgotten. The important point, however, is who remained, not who left, and informants were remarkably consistent in their enumeration of van Romonut property.

5. Without knowing the nature of my sources (Keur and Keur, Hartog), it is difficult to make sense of what seem to be contradictory statements about either prosperity or population. Fragnals, however, notes that sugar prices

were at an all-time high in 1792-93, due in part to the effects of the Haitian revolution (1976: 41), while the early to mid-1800s were in general a time of decline for the sugar islands, and Knight notes an overall West Indian trend toward fewer estates between 1815 and 1830 (Knight 1978: 126). Hartog agrees with the Keurs that the peak population year was 1789, but gives a population figure of 5520 and a plantation figure of 70 for 1790 (Hartog 1964: 224). Teenstra, on the other hand, gives a peak figure of 9000 for 1816 (1837: 235), but since this seems to me out of line with all the other information I have, I have discarded it, despite its more contemporary nature. Of the 70 plantations in 1790, Hartog lists 20 as Dutch-owned, 40 as English and American-owned, and 10 as French-owned (Hartog 1964: 224), while of 54 families in 1705, only 20 had recognizably Dutch names. Thus despite being "Dutch," the island has from the beginning had a cosmopolitan mix.

6. It is possible, however, that it changed hands between Diederik Johannes' tenure and that of his son. Teenstra says that Diederik Christian got the property from A. Cannegieter, who had it in 1819; Diederik Christian's wife, however, was the daughter of Abraham Cannegieter du Cloux.

7. The van Romondts were as involved in salt as they were in sugar. Under the original Dutch-French treaty, anyone on the island had the right to collect salt from the ponds, but after 1835 parcels of the Great Salt Pond were granted as concessions to individuals and companies. According to one St. Maarten woman, whose grandfather worked for the van Romondts, the concessionaires were granted sections or strips of the pond, and they in turn allotted smaller parcels to "captains," who worked on a sort of sharecropping

basis, with reaping for the employer from Monday to Friday, and for oneself on Saturday. Men hacked the salt out of the pond, and the women washed it in the canal and then carried it in baskets to a huge pile near the pier -- a strenuous task that involved climbing to the top of the pile on shaky ladders. Production was checked at the pile by "receivers," who worked for the owners.

8. They sold primarily to "plantation" families; Nisbet sold somewhat later to Spritzer and Fuhrman, and to Edward Brooke.

9. It should also be rembered, however, that few "white" families that have been in the Caribbean since the eighteenth or early nineteenth centuries (or even later) are as pure as they might like to believe.

10. His father, John William, had a shop and lot on Back Street, the first bought in 1873 and the second in 1875, but both were sold in a mortgage forfeiture to the A.A. van Romondt Company in 1886. A third lot, on Front Street, was transferred to another party in 1874. This would mean that he died without any land.

11. In the nineteenth century, the police appear to have come from Holland, and at least two of the older and wealthier family's males married daughters of Dutch and German policemen in the mid to late 1800s.

12. Interestingly, this marriage of a leading family on the Dutch side with a leading family on the French side, in the fifth generation, appears to be the first such in recent history, although there have since been several more, and although most of the popluation seems to ignore the border.

13. Albert Coenraad had five children, but only one of them, Cyrus Wilberforce, appears to have gone into the family business, and he also bought additional property in his own right. He and his father were married to sisters -- he married his father's second wife's younger sister. Albert Coenraad's brothers' branch of the family seems to have had more members, but less property.

14. The Aruba refineries are owned by Standard Oil of New Jersey (earlier, Standard Oil of Indiana), and the Curaçao one by Royal Dutch Shell. Refineries were built there because the companies wanted to get the oil out of Venezuela as quickly as possible, and because the islands had a labor force available and had political stability (Hartog 1961: 314).

15. The Cadastral records show that many bought the properties while they were still overseas.

16. For a more detailed and fully documented analysis of this process, see my "Social and Economic Change in St. Maarten, Netherlands Antilles, 1868-1968, as Seen Through Land Transfer Deeds " (1978).

17. Ashkenazim also came to Curaçao, but not until after 1925 (Emmanuel 1970: 475), and in the late 1970s there was only one Ashkenazim-owned store in St. Maarten, a jewelry store.

18. The situation is somewhat complicated by a landlord-tenant relation in St. Maarten whereby in return for a very long lease and reduced rent, the tenant puts up the building. For this purpose, I have classified this relationship as buying, on the grounds that the tenant is effectively in possession of the land.

19. When the van Romonats sold some of their property on Front Street, they sold it to a black man from St. Thomas. People remember little about him, except that he was an "upstanding" person.

20. There is one other St. Maarten-born man who has a building on Front Street, which he runs as a small hotel. He too made his money in Aruba, and built some apartments outside of town on his return. However, he did not open the hotel until 1971.

21. The room figures come from my count; the tourist figures come from the Bureau voor de Statistiek 1972b. Tourist figures from the St. Maarten Tourist Office are much higher, often almost double, but the former figures seem to accord better with a rough estimate of the number of hotel rooms times the number of nights available (taking into account higher occupancy rates in the winter).

22. The 1960 census separates the categories "single" and "cohabitation," but the 1972 census does not.

23. Starting in 1968, the census bureau kept a record of in- and out-migrants by name, sex, birthyear, birthplace, nationality, intended job, where coming from and going to, family relationship, and religion; but such information was only collected for three years. I sampled one year, and the results roughly confirmed that while a large number of the in-migrants were born in the British islands and on the French side, those who left tended to be Dutch. Also, more of the older in-migrants were Netherlands born outside the Antilles.

24. Data for 1953 are from Tjon Sie Fat, for 1960 from the census, and for 1975 from my own account of census file data.

25. This last figure comes from a count the St. Maarten census bureau did from the registration cards, and it is the only accounting that breaks out the islanders by place of birth. Unfortunately, this accounting gives the total population as 9563, which differs from the final figure in the appendix and from the 1972 census figure.

26. When people started returning from Aruba and Curaçao around 1950, registration procedures were imprecise, and people have been gradually accounted for as they came into the census office to register births and deaths. This contributes to a part (albeit a small part) of the population increase each year.

27. For 1953, see Tjon Sie Fat; for 1960 and 1972, see the censuses; for 1975, data is from the census files. For 1975 I had to extrapolate the Antilleans from the total figures, which I did by using the percentage of Antilleans in each age group in 1972 and applying it to 1975 data; it therefore should only be taken as a guide. The age-groupings are used as they are because this was the only way to compare all four years, but according to 1972 census figures, about half of the population between the ages of 15 and 19 was working.

28. Data for four recent years in- and out-migration:

	<u>1973</u>		<u>1974</u>		<u>1975</u>		<u>1976</u>	
	<u>In</u>	<u>Out</u>	<u>In</u>	<u>Out</u>	<u>In</u>	<u>Out</u>	<u>In</u>	<u>Out</u>
Netherlanders born inside the NA	448	201	389	240	286	352	399	251
Netherlanders born outside the NA	212	70	202	107	249	141	193	82
Foreigners	402	50	177	109	236	250	514	64

These figures come from a summary of monthly tabulations for these years. On the tab sheets was a "catch up" category for those who had come in in the

preceeding years but had not been registered (see note 25), and this category was particularly high in 1975; this may partially explain why this was the only year in which there was net out-migration.

29. In Island, not federal, government.

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APPENDIX
POPULATION CHANGE
ST. MAARTEN

<u>Year</u>			<u>Total</u>	<u>% Increase</u>
1658			300	
1705			251	
1715	361 white	244 slave	605	
1740	533 "	1239 "	1772	
1751			2569	
1789			5571	
1816			3559	
1850			2890	
1862	1441 "	1883 "	3324	
1850*	600 "	3000 "	3600	
1880			2839	
1900			3174	
1908	1207 men	1863 women	3072	
1913			3550	
1915			3282	
1920			2633	
1928			2197	
1930 (census)	984 <u>men</u>	1351 <u>women</u>	2335	
1935	1090 "	1584 "	2674	
1940	736	1268	2004	
1945	673	1071	1744	
1950	591	893	1484	
1951	582	876	1458	- 1.7
1952	604	921	1525	4.6
1953	624	947	1571	3.0
1954	637	960	1597	1.7
1955	631	967	1607	.06
1956	606	954	1560	- 2.9
1957	618	936	1554	- .03
1958	630	907	1537	- .11
1959	636	901	1537	--
1960 (census)	1274	1457	2731	78.
1961	1397	1531	2928	7.2
1962	1559	1691	3250	11.
1963	1769	1874	3643	12.
1964	1879	1993	3872	6.
1965	2098	2141	4239	9.4
1966	2333	2357	4690	11.
1967	2518	2562	5080	8.3
1968	2770	2800	5570	9.6
1969	3056	3084	6104	9.6
1970	3509	3395	6904	13.
1971	4007	4807	7814	12.
1972	4688	4318	9006	15.
1973	5138	4691	9829	9.
1974	5351	959	10310	4.9
1975	5332	5126	10458	1.4
1976 (est)	5658	5523	11191	7.

Sources: For 1658-1930, Hartog 1964, pp. 228, 419, 422, 704, except for 1850*, which is from Knight 1978. For 1930-1949, Tjon Sie Fat, 1954. For 1950-1976, St. Maarten Census Bureau files. Note that for 1789, Keur and Keur give 2000 whites and 4200 slaves (Keur and Keur 1960: 44). Note also that the male-female ratio reverses in 1970.