



New York State Archives

New Netherland Council Curacao Records A1883

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Overview of the Records

Repository:	New York State Archives
Summary:	The Curaçao records, in Dutch, document the West India Company's activities in the Caribbean during the seventeenth century; supply information about the administration of affairs on Curaçao; and depict the commercial relationship between the islands and New Netherland. The series includes administrative records and correspondence, and business records relating to trade and shipping. The records were maintained by Petrus Stuyvesant, who served as director of Curaçao and dependencies during the years 1642-1644, 1646-1664.
Creator:	New Netherland. Council
Title:	New Netherland Council Curacao records
Quantity:	0.5 cubic feet
Inclusive Date:	1640-1665
Series:	A1883

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Administrative History

The records in this series document the seventeenth-century Dutch administration of the Caribbean islands of Curaçao, Aruba, and Bonaire and the beginnings of the development of trans-Atlantic trade routes linking North America, West Africa, the Caribbean, and Western Europe.

The Dutch took control of Curaçao in 1634 intending to make it a source of salt, which at the time was vital for food preservation. The records were created by the Dutch West India Company (WIC) during its administration of the trading post on Curaçao, as well as shipping and trade on the islands of Curaçao, Bonaire, and Aruba. They represent the earliest records of territories still administered by the Netherlands. The Dutch islands became a major trading center under Petrus Stuyvesant and Matthias Beck's administrations as directors-general. Trade also developed between New Netherland and the islands; New Netherland provided building materials, provisions, and merchandise and received dyewood and slaves from Curaçao, horses from Aruba, and salt from Bonaire. Salt was critical to the herring industry, in that preserving fish in a brine solution allowed the Dutch to stay at sea longer.

The Curaçao records represent two distinct time periods relating to Petrus Stuyvesant's association with the Caribbean: first, as director of Curaçao, 1643-1644; and later as a visitor to the Caribbean in 1655 while director-general of New Netherland, Curaçao, Bonaire, and Aruba (1646-1664).

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Scope and Content Note

The Curaçao records document the West India Company's activities in the Caribbean during the seventeenth century, supply information about the administration of affairs on Curaçao, and depict the commercial relationship between the islands and New Netherland. Records of the first period include instructions from the West India Company to Stuyvesant and his council detailing how Curaçao should be regulated and resolutions representing the administrative decisions of Stuyvesant and his council from January 5, 1643 to November 9, 1644.

Records of the second period relate to the management of affairs on Curaçao, particularly during Matthias Beck's tenure as vice-director, and include instructions from Stuyvesant to Beck and correspondence between Beck, Stuyvesant, and the WIC directors in Amsterdam. Also included are commercial records such as bills of lading, manifests, orders, memorandums, charters, accounts, lists of supplies requested from New Netherland, and receipts for items received. A ship's journal and related documents in the series describe a voyage during which 110 slaves perished before the journey ended in shipwreck. The ship sent to rescue survivors was itself captured by English pirates. The captors removed surviving slaves from the ship and spirited them away, never to be seen again.

Petrus Stuyvesant's name appears on many of the records, both as vice-director of Curaçao from 1642 to 1644 and director-general of New Netherland, Curaçao, Bonaire, Aruba, and their dependencies from 1647 to 1664. There is also correspondence of vice-directors of Curaçao Lucas van Rodenburgh (1644-1655) and Matthias Beck (1655-1664); Balthazar Stuyvesant (Petrus Stuyvesant's son); and Wilhelmus Valckingburgh, domine (an ordained minister of the Dutch Reformed Church) on Curaçao.

This series originally constituted volume 17 of the New York Historical Manuscripts in the New York State Library. The original records are in the Dutch language.

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Other Finding Aids

Available at Repository

Folder list and calendar prepared by the New Netherland Project are available at the repository.

Indexed by E.B. O'Callaghan in *Calendar of Historical Manuscripts in the Office of the Secretary of State, Albany, N. Y.* (Albany: Weed, Parsons and Company, 1865).

Translated in: *Curacao Papers, 1640-1665*, trans. and ed. Charles T. Gehring, ed. Jacob Adriaan Schiltkamp ("New Netherland Documents Series," vol. 17) (Interlaken, N.Y.: Heart of the Lakes Publishing, 1987).

Online Index

This index includes more than 1,000 names referenced in the Curacao records. Please note that the indexes record names as they appear in the records. It is possible that a single individual is referenced multiple times. Each entry includes the individual's name, role, document date and link to the digitized document and transcript.

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Use of Records

Access Restrictions

There are no restrictions regarding access to or use of the material.

Alternate Formats AvailableAlternate Formats Available

Scanned images of this series are available at the New York State Archives.

Photostat use copies of selected documents are available at the New York State Archives.

[New Netherland Council Curacao records, 1640-1665](#)

Administrative Information

Processing Information

The records were arranged as a separate series by Archives staff in the early 1980s. Folders are marked 17:1 through 17:110.

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Access Terms

- Administrative records
- Colonies--Administration
- Dutch--Curacao
- New York (State)--History--Colonial period, ca. 1600-1775
- Slave trade
- Aruba--History--Sources
- New York (State)
- Slavery
- Bonaire--History--Sources
- Curacao--History--Sources
- Administering
- Dutch--New York (State)
- Shipping
- Commerce
- New Netherland
- Manuscripts
- Netherlands--Colonies--America--Administration
- Dutch Colonial Records
- West-Indische Compagnie (Netherlands)
- Stuyvesant, Peter, 1592-1672