



Introduction lesson

Lesson 5.1: West-India

West-India

With West-India, or The West, they used to imply part of Middle America, the current Caribbean and the colonies in the northern part of South- or Latin America. The name West-India or The West hails from the time that Christopher Columbus thought he had reached India via the western route. The America's were later also called The New World, as opposed to the Old World (Europe, Africa and Asia).

Inspection

In the instructions captain Menkenveld receive it was stated that he must first sail to Berbice and try to sell as many Africans there as possible. When The Unity sailed onto the river Berbice, the surgeon-major of the colony came on board to inspect the prisoners. The inspection, called 'visitation' in the logbook, was important to prevent the spread of epidemics for diseases such as small pox or leprosy. Following the inspection the ship sailed on to Fort Nassau.

Auction in Berbice

Organizing an auction cost a lot of time and money. Heart rending situations could occur during an auction. There was little benevolence and children were frequently separated from their (foster)parents. This did not happen to the Africans who came from The Unity. During the first auction all the children on board were sold. This was a total of six smaller children, zero through roughly 13 years of age. These children were sold with their (foster)mother. On July 21st the captain of The Unity held the first public auction. A total of 66 slaves were sold. During the second auction 58 men, 20 boys and 15 girls were sold. Captain Menkenveld also sold 8 slaves directly: 3 men, 3 women, a boy and a girl.

Auction in Essequibo

In Berbice the sales prices for the slaves was not very high. If that was the case, as was written in the captain's instructions, he was to sail on to Essequibo to sell the remaining African prisoners there. Here to the Africans were 'visited' by a surgeon from the colony. Upon arrival to Fort Zeelandia, the slaves were given banana's, 'pisank' as it was written in the logbook, for a few days to gain some strength. On August 19, 1762 two auctions were held. During the first public auction 80 slaves were sold and during the second 40. On that same day 21 slaves were sold directly. On August 18th, the day before the auctions, one of the African women delivered a baby. She was allowed to recover for one day and was sold, with her baby, on August 20th. Mother and child were the last slaves from The Unity that were sold.

More information

Auction in Berbice: <http://eenigheid.slavenhandelmcc.nl/trajecten-van-de-reis-en/west-indie-en/veiling-berbice/?lang=en>

Auction in Essequibo: <http://eenigheid.slavenhandelmcc.nl/trajecten-van-de-reis-en/west-indie-en/veiling-essequibo/?lang=en>

Result of the auctions: <http://eenigheid.slavenhandelmcc.nl/trajecten-van-de-reis-en/west-indie-en/resultaat-slavenhandel/?lang=en>