

“Recent Acculturation of Bush Negroes in Surinam and French Guiana”

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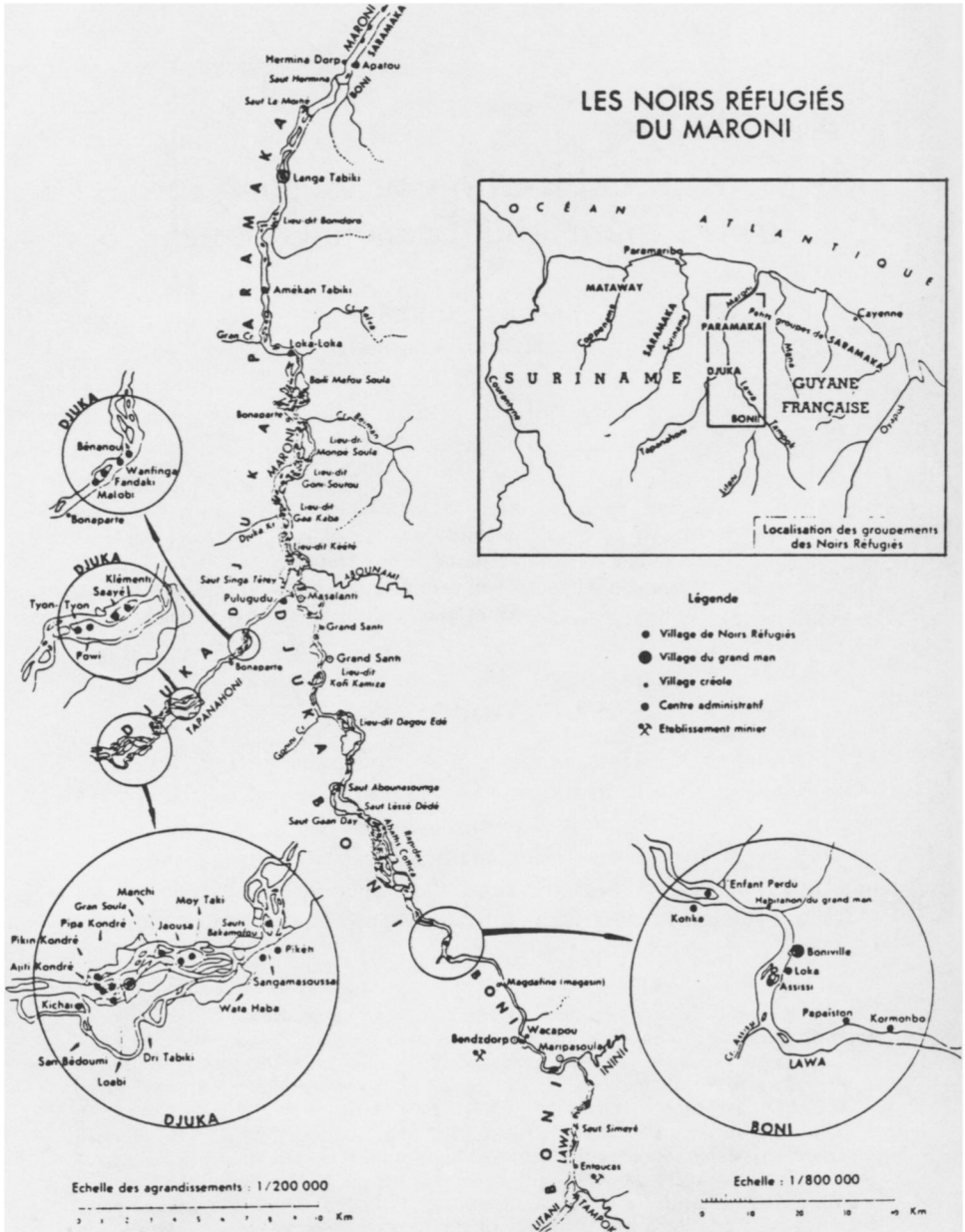
RÉSUMÉ

Le texte essaie de déterminer jusqu'à quel point les Noirs Réfugiés de l'intérieur du Surinam et de la Guyane française ont subi l'influence des développements urbains dans leur milieu. L'auteur procède en faisant une revue de leur histoire et en décrivant les différents secteurs de leur culture pour y voir des influences, soit de la tradition, soit des développements modernes avec lesquels ils sont en contact.

INTRODUCTION

This paper* assesses the extent to which the Bush Negroes, an Afro-Maroon society in interior Surinam and French Guiana, have recently been undergoing acculturation to the urbanized coastal society. After briefly describing the historical background and tribal organization of the Bush Negroes, the paper discusses research on African versus non-African influences on Bush Negro culture,

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Reprinted from Hureault 1970.

successively examining social organization and kinship, religious beliefs and practices, the arts, and language. Focussing on motivation for culture change, the paper then assesses the acculturation effect of trade with the coast, temporary work on the coast, changing values and appearances, interior development, tourism, education and emigration, urbanization, and finally recent politicization.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

There is an extensive contemporary literature on the colonial history of the Guianas and on the historical development of Bush Negro communities in the interior (e.g. R. Price 1973d: 293-295; de Groot 1963, 1965, 1969; Bastide 1971; etc.), as well as various recent republications of informative archival materials, first-hand accounts of Bush Negro rebellions (e.g. Louis 1748, Stedman 1796, Coster 1866, King 1885, etc.).

One is tempted to write, not without some justification, that the primary colonial influence in western Guiana (i.e. present-day Guyana) was British, in central Guiana (Surinam) was Dutch, and in eastern Guiana (Guyane Francaise) was French. However, such a statement is at best a gross oversimplification. Not only has the political history of each of the three Guianas been a bewildering contest between British, Dutch, and French colonization (as was also the case for most eastern Caribbean islands), but also their social history has involved a very complex racial, ethnic, and cultural amalgam in the settlement process (for a detailed chronology, see Appendix I).

Our concern in this paper is not with this socio-political history nor even primarily with the historical background to the development of Bush Negro tribes. Rather, we are more immediately concerned with recent acculturation of Bush Negroes. Therefore we are obliged to be highly selective in providing only a brief summary of Bush Negro history.

For more than three centuries the Guianas have been a classic setting for the development and possible survival of Maroon communities. The evolution — and in some cases eventual dissolution — of these communities in the Guianas may be traced in six distinct stages.

First, following the initial period when the Guiana coast was explored and claimed by Spain, African slaves (largely from West Africa, particularly the Gold Coast) were brought to the Guianas during the seventeenth century, when Britain, France, and the Netherlands began to compete vigorously for control of this South American region.

Second, from the late seventeenth century through the mid-eighteenth, slaves began to escape in significant numbers from coastal plantations to the interior, where they eventually formed Bush Negro tribes.

Third, after half a century of brutal guerilla warfare waged by these Bush Negro tribes against colonial and European troops, a number of treaties — most of them short lived — were concluded between colonial authorities and several Bush Negro tribes, including the Saramakas, Aucas or Djukas, and other scattered groups.

In 1761 the Aucas, led by a Negro named Arabi, who was probably a Moslem, were granted the right by the Dutch to establish their own republic, provided that no further refuge be given to escaped slaves. The following year the Saramakas also won limited autonomy from the Dutch, with the caveat that a Dutch "adviser" would act in liaison with the tribal leader, the "gran man".

Fourth, renewed hostilities erupted in the late eighteenth century, resulting in further defection from the plantations and in the formation of new tribal allegiances. One group, the Bonis, led a migratory existence, waging border warfare with Dutch colonial troops and even attempting to extract extortion from other Bush Negro tribes, then finally sought refuge deep in the interior in territory claimed by the French. By the end of the eighteenth century the Maroons in British (western) Guiana, and many of those in the more accessible areas of French (eastern) Guiana, had been exterminated. Yet they survived as Bush Negro tribes in Dutch (central) Guiana and to some extent in remote areas of French Guiana.

Fifth, military and other pressure on the Maroons in the Guianas eased with the British abolition of the slave trade in 1807 (note that the British occupied central Guiana 1799-1816) and of slavery in 1833, and with Dutch abolition of slavery thirty years

later in 1863. These liberalizing policies, coupled with continuing economic recession further converted the coastal population into a multicultural melange. With the number of plantations declining rapidly, and the remained facing the complete depletion of their labour supply, Chinese from Java and China (since 1850), East Indians (1873-1916), and Javanese (1890-1931) were imported as plantation workers to fill the void while now-freed Negroes augmented the urbanized "Creole" population. In the meantime, the Bush Negroes, profiting from being left alone, retreated into relative or complete isolation for over a century. Secure in their physical isolation, they had not succumbed to force of arms, nor did they now succumb to gradual assimilation into the coastal Negro society, at least not yet. In interior Dutch and French Guiana they were to remain lively sociocultural entities, virtual "states within a state", for decades.

Sixth, eventually acculturation did become increasingly noticeable among Bush Negroes, reflected in a de-Africanization of their culture and in integration into the national economy and politics, perhaps likely to increase as a result of independence being granted to Surinam in December, 1975. It is, of course, this sixth stage with which we will be primarily concerned in this paper.

BUSH NEGRO TRIBES

The total Bush Negro population in the Guianas may be estimated at almost 50,000. The most recent census data available give 39,000 in Surinam (9% of the total Surinam population) and about 8,000 (13,4% of the total population) in French Guiana. These Bush Negroes are perhaps the largest concentration of well-defined Maroon descendants in the Americas retaining a largely African culture (Price, 1973a: 293), contrasting with smaller pockets of more assimilated Maroons in Caribbean islands and Brazil.

There are two principal Bush Negro tribes, the Djukas and the Saramakas, each numbering 15 - 20,000; plus three smaller tribes: the Bonis or Alukus, the Paramakas, and the Matawais, each numbering approximately a thousand; and a sixth, very small tribe, the Kwintis, numbering only a few hundreds; as well as minor scatterings of Maroon descendants such as Negro refugees from Brazil on the Oyapok River. The larger tribes are sub-divided into

sub-tribes and kin lineages. The main body of Djukas are along the Tapanahoni, lower Lawa, and upper Maroni Rivers (mostly in Surinam, although those east of the Maroni and Lawa are in French Guiana). These Djukas are separated from their co-tribesmen along the lower Maroni and in the Cottica marshlands by the Paramaka people, claiming the central portion of the Maroni (on the Surinam — French Guiana frontier). A small number of Djukas are also found along the Sarakreek, between the Tapanahoni and the van Blommesteinmeer. The Saramakas are primarily concentrated along the upper Suriname River, separated from the Creolized Saramakas of the Afobaka-Brokopondo area and upper Commewijne, as well as from a few along the lower Maroni. The Bonis live mainly in French Guiana, along the upper Lawa on the Surinam frontier; some have resettled far downriver along the lower Maroni. The Matawais and other small groups of Bush Negroes (such as the Matuaris, Koffiemaccas, Coeroentis, etc.) are found along the Saramacca, Coppename and other rivers in central Surinam.

These tribes and sub-tribes tend to be basically quite similar due to their original formation under like historical and ecological conditions. But significant variations can exist in, e.g., language, diet, dress, marital customs, art, community organization, attitudes toward wage labour, etc., especially between the Saramakas and Matawais, on the one hand, and Djukas, Bonis, and Paramakas on the other hand.

There is an ample literature (in English, French, and Dutch) on specific Bush Negro tribes or sub-tribes in Surinam and French Guiana, some of it quite dated but much of it fairly recent (for a comprehensive bibliography, see R. Price 1972, 1974). Extensive research on aspects of Bush Negro culture has been conducted among the Tapanahoni and Maroni Djukas by, for example, van Lier (1919, 1940), Kahn (1928, 1931a, 1931b), and more recently by de Groot (1965, 1969), van Velzens (1966, 1972) and van Wetering (1966, 1972, 1973), and among the Cottica Djukas by Kobben (1967a, 1967b, 1968, 1969a, 1969b, 1973). For four decades M. J. Herskovits provided detailed descriptions of the retention of African culture traits among a wide variety of Afro-American and Afro-Caribbean societies (1941, 1966), including the Bush Negroes in Surinam, particularly the Saramakas (1930, 1934, 1936b); later these studies would be updated by Richard Price (1970a, 1970b, 1973a, 1973b, 1973c, 1973d). Jean Hurault has written extensively

on the art, social organization, and traditions of the Bonis (1960, 1961, 1965, 1968, 1970); one could also note reference to the Bonis in the earlier description of the history of French Guiana by Henry (1950), as well as recent commentaries within more comprehensive works by T. J. Price (1970) and R. Bastide (1971).

BUSH NEGRO CULTURE: HOW AFRICAN?

There can be little doubt that traditional Bush Negro culture retains many African elements. Writing in the 1930s, Herskovits rated this culture as "purely African" with reference to social organization, institutions, religion, magic, folklore, and masks; and "strongly African" with reference to technology, economic life, art, and language (Herskovits 1930, 1934, 1936b; Bastide 1971: 12-14). Herskovits considered Bush Negro culture to be more African in most respects than backcountry Haitian society, and far more than in other distinctive Afro-American cultures, such as among Jamaican Maroons, rural Trinidadian culture, various Cuban sects, Virgin Islands and other Afro-Caribbean cultures, and African survivals he noted in the American South, such as among the Gullah Islanders off the South Carolina coast (Herskovits 1941, 1966).

More contemporary writers would still seem to largely concur with Herskovits. For example, Richard Price has written (1973d: 293) that the Bush Negroes of Surinam "have long boasted (with the possible exception of Haiti) the most highly developed independent societies and cultures in the history of Afro-America." Lowenthal has further commented (1972: 186) that "...unlike most Creoles ... Bush Negroes take pride in their African ancestry and believe that most elements of their culture stem from Africa... In this they separate themselves from the Creole mainstream more deliberately than even the Amerindians. But Bush Negro self-esteem requires not ties of fellowship with the wider Black world; still determined to keep to themselves, they rely on traditional bonds of community to resist creolization, nationalization, and modernization. In this endeavour the Bush Negroes surpass the Jamaican Maroons, thanks to greater numbers, tribal cohesion, territorial remoteness, ethnic segregation, and economic viability."

According to Bastide (1971: 12), "it is above all among the Bush Negroes ... that we find Fanti-Ashanti Gold Coast culture in

its purest form." Other African influences on Bush Negro culture include Kromanti and Akan, also from Ghana, Nago and Fon from Dahomey, Baoulé from the Ivory Coast, etc. The Bush Negroes are somewhat distinctive in the primacy of Fanti-Ashanti influence; other Afro-American cultures tend to be derived primarily from different African cultures: Haitian from Dahomean Fon with some Nigerian Yoruba influence, Brazilian from Yoruban with some Dahomean, Jamaican Maroon from Kromanti, Trinidadian and Cuban from Yoruban, etc.

However, despite the strength of African elements in Bush Negro culture still emphasized by anthropologists and other social scientists, this culture should not be viewed as unchanging, nor has it always been completely African. As Lowenthal has explained (1972: 188):

Bush Negroes are in no sense purely African. New World life and culture contacts have profoundly altered them. Even their rebel slave forebears were partly creolized. By the time their tribal organization was firmly fixed, almost all Bush Negroes were Creole-born. Tribal anomalies reflect Guianese geography and military exigencies, along with African institutional modes, and in ways that they are all alike Bush Negro tribes often diverge markedly from Africans. Thus the matrilineal and matrilocal character of Bush Negro society, both more rigorous and more uniform than the wide range of ancestral African forms, may reflect local reactions against coercion, 'pushing to its logical conclusion', in one scholar's view, 'an attitude prevalent among the Negroes of the New World in general.' In the authority of headmen, in the divisions of labour between men and women, Bush Negro tribal systems are not Old World retentions, but responses to New World conditions. Indeed, the market-place activity of Paramaribo is more reminiscent of West Africa than are the trade patterns of Bush Negro settlements.

Of course, the de-Africanization and acculturation of Bush Negroes has assumed two directions: First, Bush Negroes have acquired certain aspects of their culture from neighbouring Amerindians (Arawaks, Kalina/Galibi, Wayana/Roucouyennes, etc.), such as hunting and fishing techniques, preparation of foods and types of foods eaten, some crafts, weaving, canoe-building, some aspects of religion and magic, etc. (Bastide 1971: 61-62; Lowenthal 1972: 188). Nor are some Bush Negroes completely racially distinct; on the one hand, closer to the coast some amalgamation with racially hybrid Creoles has occurred (Lowenthal 1972: 186), and on the other hand, in the interior some fusion took place between Bush Negroes and Amerindians, creating Black Indians known as "Saca-

tras" (Bastide 1971: 75). Second, Bush Negroes have become increasingly acculturated to coastal society in many ways.

ASPECTS OF CULTURE RETENTION OR CHANGE

a. *Social Organization and Kinship*

Much attention has been devoted in the literature on Bush Negroes to their social organization and particularly their complex patterns of kinship (for details see, for example, R. Price 1973a, 1973c, 1973d: 295; Kobben 1967b, 1968, 1969a, 1969b; Bastide 1971: 52-57; Hurault 1970: 8-12, etc.; Lowenthal 1972: 189). It is, of course, somewhat misleading to refer to a single Bush Negro culture, because, as we have already noted above, differences may exist between tribes or even sub-tribes, including variances in social organization, kinship practices, and marriage customs.

To generalize, though, each tribe is headed by a paramount chief ("gran man"), serving as a civil authority and sort of high priest, assisted by an assistant head man ("gran fiskari"). Some sub-tribes are in turn headed by lesser chiefs, and most villages by a headman and often also a assistant headman, who are responsible to the "gran man". It should be noted, however, that villages range from principal, fairly large and permanent ones to seasonal, temporary encampments; the former, averaging two hundred people each, consist of a core of matrilineally related kinsmen, spouses and lineage descendants, whereas the latter are unstructured. Matriliney dominates Bush Negro kinship, with matriclans (assuming various forms in each tribe or sub-tribe) forming the basic unit of social organization. Each sub-tribe, or smaller tribe, is divided into totemic matriclans (called "lo") headed by a "gran kapiting", and each "lo" is further divided into matrilinear extended families which were traditionally (but no longer) polygamous. Each "lo" has its own territory, although a single "lo" may be found in several villages, while there are usually several "lo" within a particular village. Villages are divided into specific kin quarters. In keeping with the prevalent practice of matrilocality, a husband resides in his mother's village, his wife in that same village, living separately, or in her mother's village. It is not unusual for villages in one sub-tribe to be closely affiliated with kinsmen in a village in another geographically distant sub-tribe; for example, Langa Uku, a Cottica Djuka

village, is closely linked with Loabi, a Tapanahoni Djuka village (Kobben 1967b).

These patterns of social organization and kinship would seem to have remained primarily African, with limited Amerindian and modern coastal acculturation. The typical Bush Negro double descent pattern is found in Fanti-Ashanti culture: a child inherits his/her mother's totem and taboos but also certain taboos relating to his/her father and his "obia" (magical objects). Clan exogamy and various matrimonial regulations, which vary from tribe to tribe, but which are prevalent, for example, among the Bonis and Saramakas, can also be traced back to Africa. Other African traditions relating to kinship include the Fanti-Ashanti naming of children according to the day of the week on which they were born; these names are virtually identical for males or similar for females in Ghana and Guiana (Bastide 1971: 55-56). Some sexual practices (including promiscuity among females when husband is away hunting), and a rather casual attitude toward marriage and divorce, are largely West African in origin, as are many strict regulations governing sexual relations and ultimately marriage between kin and non-kin.

b. *Religious Beliefs and Practices*

Following the early lead of Herskovits (1941, 1966) and others, recent writers have continued to stress African influence on Bush Negro religious beliefs and practices (e.g. Hurault 1961, 1970; Bastide 1971: 57-61; R. Price 1973a, 1973d: 295; Lowenthal 1972: 187-188; van Velzen 1966; and particularly van Wetering's detailed studies of witchcraft among the Tapanahoni Djukas: 1972, 1973).

Bush Negro social organization is reinforced by a prevalent belief in social order, but this is counterbalanced by a strong respect for oracles, spirit possession, divination and witchcraft. A complex series of shrines and cults serve as foci for groups of residentially dispersed kin. Traditionally, most Bush Negroes share a belief in a supreme being referred to as "nana" (an Agni word from West Africa used by the Djukas), "masu gadu" (a Fon word used by the Bonis), "kompon" or "nyane" (Fanti-and Ashanti words used by the Saramakas). However, they are also pantheistic, believing in numerous gods, spirits, and totems imported from Fanti, Ashanti, Fon, Yoruba, and other West African cultures. They tend to believe

in the struggle between “white” versus “black” magic, and in spirits such as the “akra” (similar to the Fanti-Ashanti “kra”) throughout lifetime and the “winti”. Belief in the latter accounts for elaborate mourning ceremonies and the long (18-24 months) mourning period after death. Witchcraft has remained a significant feature of Bush Negro beliefs to recent times. In a single year (1961-1962), at least eighty people were denounced as witches after their deaths; at least thirty murders among the Tapanahoni Djukas were due to witchcraft; and “boto feti” — canoe expeditions against kin suspected of witchcraft — are still common (van Wetering 1972).

Yet despite the obvious similarity between Bush Negro beliefs and West African, some acculturation away from Africanisms is apparent. Bush Negroes have long shared with their Amerindian neighbours a profound respect for the rivers along which they have settled and a deep feeling for nature-spirits (jungle, animals, etc.). On the other hand, with increasing contact with coastal society and more generally the outside world, Christian influences are affecting Bush Negro beliefs, morals and life-styles. Moravian missions have become prevalent in several Bush Negro communities, notably Langatabbetje, the chief village (“zetel opperhoofd” in Dutch) of the Paramaka “gran man”.

c. *The Arts*

Far more attention has been devoted to the study of the fine arts — woodcarving and decorating — of Bush Negroes than to their other art forms: music, folklore, etc. Their intricate woodcarving (of plates, haircombs, utensils, etc.) with simple instruments, and elaborate decorating (of hut portals, canoe paddles, drums, etc.) in colourful geometric designs, have long captured the attention of visiting European and North American scholars: Panhuys (1912, 1930), Kate (1929-1930), Herskovits (1930, 1934, 1936b, 1941), Kahn (1931b), Dark (1951, 1954), Hurault (1961, 1965, 1970), R. Price (1970b). Herskovits, concentrating on the Saramakas, stressed the African influence on their fine arts, whereas Hurault, later studying the Bonis, concluded that their art was essentially a recent and indigenous innovation; while Bastide has compromised in commenting (1971: 61) that at least Boni art “nevertheless remains African in spirit”. Bastide (1971: 61 and 171-190) agrees with Herskovits (1936b) that Bush Negro folklore is essentially African,

particularly Fanti-Ashanti, in origin. Bush Negro ceremonial music — singing, drumming, dancing — to date remains very African, although Bush Negro communities are within easy radio contact with coastal broadcasting stations.

d. *The Language*

We have noted above that Herskovits believed the language of the Bush Negroes, at least the Saramakas, to be strongly African (slightly less African, perhaps, than dialects spoken in Yoruban cults in Bahia, Brazil or in Cuba, but more African than dialects spoken in rural Haiti or Jamaica). Herskovits pointed out the remarkable similarity between dialects used in many far-flung Maroon settlements, even between the Gullah Islanders in South Carolina, for example, and the Bush Negroes (1941: 275-291). Yet more recent authors (Bastide 1971: 61; R. Price 1973b) have pointed-out that there is no simple Bush Negro language but a wide variety of dialects and pidgins, collectively called "taki-taki", infused with words not only from several African languages but also from the two official colonial languages — Dutch (for most Bush Negroes) and French (for the Bonis) — and even from English and Portuguese. Perhaps one might expect some degree of linguistic standardization among Bush Negroes in the not-too-distant future with increasing education, mobility, and contact with the coastal society.

MOTIVATION FOR CULTURE CHANGE

a. *Trade with the Coast*

Some degree of acculturation resulted from the long standing tradition of brief trading trips to the coast. Bush Negroes had won a monopoly over the Amerindians and others in river transport during the eighteenth century; their contemporary descendants still dominate trade between the interior and the coast. A number of writers have commented on the resulting increasing dependence of Bush Negroes on the coastal society for such manufactured items as textiles, kitchenware, some canned foods, tools and plastic products, weapons, outboard motors, etc. (R. Price 1973d: 293, 295-296; Lowenthal 1972: 187).

b. *Temporary Work on the Coast*

For many decades the traditional Bush Negro economy of hunting, fishing, gathering and swidden horticulture has been supplemented not only by the river trade but also by periodic male wage labour on the coast (R. Price 1973d: 295; Lowenthal 1972: 187, 189; Hurault 1960: 76-137). The opportunities for such temporary labour have been increasing in recent years, with the employment of Bush Negroes in major bauxite-mining "company towns" such as Moengo and Paranam, and in construction and other day labour. The huge Moengo development, as well as the Afobaka hydroelectric development which supplies power to Paranam, are situated in close proximity to Bush Negro settlements. Lowenthal has written that "in supplementary subsistence agriculture with temporary mining and construction jobs, Bush Negroes continue to thrive, despite primitive technology, soil exhaustion, and economically restricting ritual observance" (1972: 187).

c. *Changing Values and Appearances*

Increasing contact with the coastal society has already been having, and will certainly increasingly have, a profound affect on traditional Bush Negro culture. A marked reorientation toward materialism and a mercantile economy, and away from a more autonomous existence, is becoming more and more apparent. A feeling of artistic and cultural superiority over coast Creoles is being offset by admiration for a rising standard of living and for materialism (R. Price 1973d: 295-296; Lowenthal 1972: 189; Hurault 1965; Neumann 1967).

While most huts in interior villages are still constructed in the traditional (African-Amerindian) manner, using only palm thatch and local woods, the number of huts, or more substantial houses, with corrugated metal rooves seems to be increasing, as does the proportion of dugout canoes now sporting outboard motors. However, one peculiar feature of this transition may be noted: if some Bush Negro homes have quite a collection of metal kitchenware, it does not seem to be used in day-to-day cooking; the hand-carved wooden bowls, plates, and stirring paddles are used while the metal pots and pans (sometimes as many as twenty or thirty) are hung on the walls as decorative status-symbols!

Apart from the effect of contact with the coastal society and a monetary economy on a reorientation toward materialistic values, traditional Bush Negro culture, values, and life-styles are also being affected by education and the infiltration of Christian, particularly Moravian, values. The church has of course discouraged pantheism and witchcraft, thereby affecting the traditional Bush Negro social structure and perhaps even the veneration felt for nature-spirits. Perhaps the church will also promote a rather inappropriate modesty; the present author noted that in some communities where Moravian presence was felt young women were donning bras and other articles of "European" clothing (in this steaming jungle, just north of the Equator, the customary garb for adult females is a skirt, for younger females simply a string of beads around the waist, and for adult males a brief loin-cloth; "European" clothing is sweaty and cumbersome).

d. Interior Development

Aside from their temporary or permanent migration to the coast, an increasing proportion of Bush Negroes are engaged in interior development, which can only serve to further hasten erosion of their traditional culture. They have long been heavily engaged in logging and balata export (R. Price 1973d: 295). In recent years Bush Negroes have supplied approximately half of Surinam's lumber needs, though their involvement seems to be diminishing with the advent of mechanized logging (Lowenthal 1972: 187). In addition to the above-mentioned major bauxite mining operations at Moengo, adjacent to the Cottica Djuka territory, and Paranam, close to the Brokopondo Saramakas, extensive mining operations have opened up deep in the interior, such as gold at Maripasoela-Benzdorp, on the French Guiana-Surinam border in Boni country. As the interior is rich in bauxite, gold, platinum, manganese, iron ore, diamonds, and beryllium, it is only a question of time before large scale mining operations invade the formerly relatively isolated Bush Negro country.

Clearly the interior is rapidly becoming more accessible from the coast. Not only have outboard motors on rivercraft speeded up river travel and made access possible up rivers often swollen with heavy rainfall, but also other more rapid modes of transportation are coming into existence. During the 1970s roads have been

extended from coastal areas deep into the territory of the Saramakas on the upper Suriname and of the Matawais on the upper Saramacca. By 1972 at least fourteen airfields were already operating in Bush Negro country in the interior (three in the Boni country, three in the territory occupied by the Tapanahoni, upper Maroni, and lower Lawa Djukas, four in the upper Suriname Saramaka country, three in Matawai and one in Coppename territory). Doubtless this development of transportation will serve to increase Bush Negro mobility and to lessen their isolation in the once-remote interior. Even by motorized dugout, the Tapanahoni Djuka villages were a good two or three days, travelling upriver, of hard work fighting rapids from the coastal port of Albina downriver; but these communities are only 180 kilometers by air from the major coastal city of Paramaribo.

While interior development may provide employment opportunities for Bush Negroes, it is not always in their better interest. For example, construction of the Afobaka Dam on the Suriname River during the mid-'60s (as part of a gigantic hydroelectric project to supply power to the ALCOA development at Paranam) resulted in the flooding of almost half of the Saramaka territory, the removal of an estimated six thousand tribesmen without consultation, and the separation of the Brokopondo group from the main body of Saramakas upriver (R. Price 1973d: 296; Lowenthal 1972: 189; Mathews 1966).

e. The Impact of Tourism

Despite the relative difficulty, and even danger, of tourists visiting Bush Negro communities in the interior by hiring a dugout canoe expedition, many such expeditions have been organized, and in recent years even occasionally advertised by travel agencies in, for example, Toronto and New York. Moreover, an increasing number of tourists are flying directly into the interior by charter aircraft. Given the sensitivity of Bush Negro culture to outside influences, it is perhaps unfortunate to find the government of Surinam collaborating with travel agencies and expedition organizers in promoting tourism instead of carefully protecting Bush Negro communities. While visiting Bush Negro communities in 1972, the present author was most impressed with the Bush Negroes' sense of courtesy, hospitality, simplicity and relative non-

commercialization; this could all change rapidly with an increased volume of tourist traffic.

f. Education and Emigration

The education of Bush Negroes has enhanced their ability to emigrate permanently out of the interior. While most of the educated emigrants have headed for Paramaribo, some have studied and worked in the Netherlands (a flow which may be lessened with the granting of independence to Surinam) or France. The background to this emigration is the supplying of educational and medical services to remote Bush Negro areas (R. Price 1973d: 295). Unlike their Amerindian neighbours, Bush Negroes have suffered little from tuberculosis, and perhaps also less from malaria (some Amerindians live in swampy areas whereas most Bush Negroes do not, with the exception of the Cottica Djukas and some small central groups), which fact, combined with the medical attention they have received, accounts for their having the highest rate of natural increase for any ethnic group in Surinam (Sausse 1951a, 1951b; Schaad 1960). But progressive depopulation due to emigration, particularly of males, has become a problem for Bush Negro settlements in recent years (R. Price 1973d: 295). Contact with the outside world is confined to men, according to Lowenthal (1972: 189); women tend to remain at home, where they control inheritance, dominate ritual, and maintain tribal integrity.

g. Urbanization

The urbanization of Bush Negroes has assumed two forms: on the one hand, they have become "creolized", or acculturated to the coastal Negro population, in fringe areas most affected by culture change; on the other hand, they have migrated into Paramaribo and other urban centres on the coast.

The Afobaka Dam project compelled many Bush Negroes to relocate nearer the densely inhabited coastal belt. In the new communities of the Brokopondo group of Saramakas, tarpaper wooden shacks with electricity and running water have replaced the former palm-thatched, dirt-floored huts, "benefits" secured at the cost of increased dependence on the central government (Lowenthal 1972: 189; Mathews 1966: 333-337, 365-366). Similar extensive "creolization" is likely to occur, or has already progressed, at

Albina (to which port many Djukas and some Bonis have migrated), around Moengo (particularly in the closest Cottica Djuka villages), at the interior mining centre of Maripasoela-Benzdorp (affecting the Bonis), and in the remaining Saramaka and Matawai villages now reached by road. All along the road between Albina, Moengo, and the Javanese settlements immediately east of Paramaribo may be seen "creolized" Bush Negro communities with housing representing varying degrees of acculturation.

As for the urban migrants to Paramaribo, Lowenthal has suggested (1972: 189) that "money is not the only attraction; the bright lights, shops, movies and reputed sexual license of the city entice young men from the Bush Negro villages. Many are also pushed out for breach of law or custom, often for contravening rigid tribal sexual codes."

Some writers (Herskovits 1936; Lowenthal 1972: 32, 92, 178, 186, 189) have suggested that urban Bush Negroes continue to regard themselves as distinct from Creoles (the general urban Negro population), on the one hand choosing to remain aloof and to live by themselves, yet on the other hand being obliged to segregate themselves. As Lowenthal and Lamur have explained, "many Creoles vaunt a 'European' superiority toward Bush Negroes, whom they chide for being deliberately 'primitive' and 'African'. Bush Negroes in Paramaribo, underpaid and overcharged, are shunned and derided as 'stupid', 'heathen', and 'naked'" (Lamur 1965; Lowenthal 1972: 190).

The effect of urbanization on certain particular aspects of Bush Negro culture have been discussed by Bastide (1971: 101) on the basis of earlier research conducted in Paramaribo by Herskovits (1936):

Certain important features of the Maroons' culture have completely vanished, in particular the carrying round of the dead: one can see how this custom was bound to be lost in the big cities, where funerals and burials were strictly controlled by law. Other practices, however, including magic and divination, have assumed even greater importance than before. Here again, the development is understandable. In a city, the security of the inhabitants is less assured than in a close — and united — community. The problems which arise are far more numerous, and can seldom be solved by purely rational methods; thus people have perforce to turn to magic when they are looking for a house, or a new job. Lastly, the atmosphere of a big city is conducive to erotic freedom. In bush villages, sexual activities were under social control; the anonymity of urban life removes all such restraints. As a result of all these factors,

the diviners (lukuman) and sorcerers (wisiman) have a more important role to perform among the Creoles than they do in Bush Negro society.

h. *Politicization*

Surinam was a self-governing colony within the Union of the Netherlands from 1922 to December 1975, when it became fully independent. The new country is based on a rather shaky alliance between the large Creole and East Indian minorities, forming equal proportions within the total population, with the Javanese, Bush Negroes, Amerindians, and other ethnic groups holding the Balance of power (for details on ethnic proportions in the population of Surinam, compared to French Guiana and Guyana, see Appendix II). To tip the balance of power in their favour, Creole politicians have been paying court to Bush Negroes, accepting the urban ones as never before, referring to the rural ones as "Bush Creoles" now, and urging Black solidarity against a likely Asian alliance between East Indians (some of whom are Moslems) and Javanese Moslems (Lowenthal 1972: 190).

Richard Price has appropriately concluded (1973d: 296):

Today, Bush Negro societies are facing pressures for socio-cultural change. While it may once have been easy for them to maintain a world view rooted in isolationism and in a belief in their superiority over both whites and coastal blacks, the recent rise in the standard of living on the coast has made them increasingly aware that their societies have, in some respects at least, been left behind. The construction by ALCOA and the Surinam government of a giant hydroelectric project was only the most dramatic of many recent events to stress to Bush Negroes the need for more effective accommodation to the outside world. Having now become involved, almost in spite of themselves, in the party politics of Surinam, and finding themselves dependent on the decisions of corporations based thousands of miles away, some Bush Negroes are beginning to realize that their traditional isolationist strategy holds little promise for the future. At the same time, it seems clear that, while beginning to make the difficult adjustment to a new role as part of a larger, developing nation, Bush Negro societies are still managing to retain (and will continue to maintain for a long time to come) much of their traditional individuality and vitality.

Hopefully we can share Price's optimism about the survival of Bush Negro culture. Yet it might seem realistic, given the many pressures for change described in this paper, to conclude that much of this culture is likely to be lost in the near future.

APPENDIX I

Integrated History of the Guianas

- Late 15th century — explored by Spain
- 1593 — claimed by Spain
- 1630 — central Guiana temporarily settled by English
- 1643 — French settled eastern Guiana
- 1651 — wealthy exiled English royalists from Barbados established British colony of Surinam with Jews driven from Brazil by Portuguese (1665)
- 1667 — central Guiana captured by Dutch, traded for New Amsterdam (New York City)
- 1668 — central and western Guiana ceded to Netherlands
- 1676 — eastern Guiana occupied by Dutch
- late 17th C —
early 18th C — slave rebellions in central Guiana
- 1760 — treaties with Bush Negro "tribes"
- 1773 — Amsterdam stock exchange crisis and fall in prices for tropical produce; 150 year recession followed (800 plantations in operation 1800; 10 in mid 20th century)
- 1796 — western Guiana ceded to British
- 1798 — political prisoners sent to eastern Guiana (official penal colony not established till 1854)
- 1799 - 1802
and 1804 — British occupation of central Guiana; during Napoleonic Wars captured by British, returned 1816
- 1802-1803 — western Guiana ceded to Netherlands
- 1803 — western Guiana occupied by British
- 1807 — abolition of slave trade in western Guiana
- 1815 — western Guiana ceded to Great Britain
- 1808-1817 — Portuguese occupied eastern Guiana
- mid 19th century — colonization by Dutch small farmers
- 1833 — abolition of slavery in western Guiana
- 1863 — abolition of slavery in central Guiana; plantations faced total extinction re labour supply, so Chinese from Java and China contracted (since 1850) — but tended not to voluntarily extend contracts, so limited immigration from Barbados
- 1873 — major East Indian (Hindu and Moslem) migration — halted due to pressure from Indian government 1916

- 1890-1931 — major recruitment of Javanese laborers
- 1922 — Surinam integral part of Kingdom of Netherlands, as self-governing member of Union of the Netherlands
- 1935 — last shipment of convicts to eastern Guiana; 1944 decree abolishing penal colonies; last penal colony abolished 1946 and 2800 convicts repatriated; French Guiana made overseas dept. of France
- 1966 — independence of Guyana (formerly British Guiana)
- 1975 — independence of Surinam

APPENDIX II

The Guianas: Population Profile by Ethnic Groups (1975)
(figures rounded to nearest thousand)

<i>Guyana</i>			<i>Surinam</i>		
"East Indians"	50.2%	381 (thou.)	"East Indians"	35%	151
"Africans"	31.5%	239	"Creoles"	35%	151
mixed "Creoles"	12.1%	92	Javanese	15%	64
Amerindians	4.6%	35	"Bush Negroes"	9%	39
Portuguese	0.7%	6	Amerindians	2%	9
Chinese	0.6%	5	Chinese	2%	7
Other Europeans	0.3%	2	Europeans	1%	4
total	100%	760	Jews & Lebanese	1%	4
			Others	-	1
			total	100%	430
<i>Guyane française</i>			<i>Total Guianas</i>		
"Creoles"	75%	35	"East Indians"	42.6%	532
"Bush Negroes"	13.4%	8	"Creoles"	23.0%	288
Europeans	6.6%	4	"Africans"	19.1%	239
Amerindians	5%	3	Javanese	5.1%	64
total	100%	60	"Bush Negroes"	3.8%	47
			Amerindians	3.8%	47
			Europeans	1.3%	16
			Chinese	0.9%	12
			others	0.4%	5
			total	100%	1250

Explanation of terms

"East Indians" refers to Hindus and Moslems descended from immigrants from the Indian subcontinent. "Creoles" are largely of African Negro descent,

mixed to greater or lesser extent with other ethnic origins. "Bush Negroes" figures refer only to descendents of escaped African slaves (Maroons) claiming affiliation to specific Bush Negro tribes.

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