



COLONIAL AMERICAN MERCHANTS SATIRIZED IN ART 1750s-1760s



John Greenwood, *Sea Captains Carousing in Surinam*, ca. 1752-1758

Oil on bed ticking, 37 ¾ x 75 ¼ in. (95.9 x 191.1 cm.) Saint Louis Art Museum, Museum Purchase 256:1948. Reproduced by permission of the Saint Louis Art Museum.

Prominent Rhode Island merchants and sea captains are depicted in this painting set in a tavern in Surinam (Dutch Guiana), a major trading stop in the Caribbean on the north coast of South America. The group includes Capt. Nicholas Cooke (smoking a pipe at the table) and Joseph Wanton (passed out in a chair), both later governors of Rhode Island; Capt. Esek Hopkins (talking to Cooke), later commander of the Continental navy; and Stephen Hopkins (pouring rum on Wanton), later a signer of the Declaration of Independence. The men had commissioned the painting from John Greenwood, a Boston portraitist who lived in Surinam at the time (Greenwood portrays himself leaving the tavern, holding a candle).

Slavery and Justice: Report of the Brown University Committee on Slavery and Justice (Brown University, 2006), p. 27.



The richest man in North America in the mid 1700s was Peter Manigault of South Carolina, his wealth estimated at \$3,000,000 in today's value. He and his fellow merchants and planters of Goose Creek, South Carolina, made the region near Charleston home to the highest proportion of wealthy households in British North America. In a drawing from the 1760s by an acquaintance, Manigault is depicted with friends in witty after-dinner camaraderie at Manigault's home.

Toasts or comments by the men, seated clockwise around the table:

- (1) Peter Manigault: "Your to[a]st Howarth"
- (2) Taylor, an officer: "Hey to the Midnight Hark a-way, Hark a-way"
- (3) Demere, an officer: "Success to Caroline G-d damn"
- (4) Captain Massey: "This one bumper, dear Isaac"
- (5) Mr. Isaac Codin: "I shall be Drunk, I tell ye Massey"
- (6) Coytmore, an officer: "Whose to[a]st is it"
- (7) Colonel Howarth: "Squire Isaac, your Wig you dog"
- (8) Mr. George Roupell: "Pray less noise Gent[leme]n"

George Roupell, *Mr. Peter Manigault and His Friends, Goose Creek, South Carolina, ca. 1760*

Ink and wash drawing on paper, 10.25 x 12.37 in. Winterthur Museum, Winterthur, Delaware. 63.73. Permission pending.

Michael J. Heitzler, *Goose Creek: A Definitive History*, Vol. I: *Planters, Politicians, and Patriots, 1670-2003* (The History Press, 2005), pp. 86-87.