

# Exploring Suriname Under Dutch Rule: Unveiling the Social Histories of Medicine (1750-1950)

Suriname, an enchanting country nestled on the northeastern coast of South America, has a rich historical tapestry intertwined with Dutch colonization. From 1750 to 1950, the Dutch ruled over Suriname, leaving an indelible impact on its social and medical histories. In this article, we embark on a captivating journey through time, uncovering the fascinating stories of Surinamese society and the developments in medicine during this period.

## The Dutch Colonization of Suriname

Suriname fell under Dutch rule in 1667, following the Treaty of Breda, which marked the end of the Second Anglo-Dutch War. The Dutch West India Company (WIC), a powerful colonial trading company, gained control of the region and began exploiting its natural resources, particularly sugarcane and coffee plantations.

During the period from 1750 to 1950, Suriname experienced a significant transition as the Dutch established their dominance over the colony. The Dutch influence permeated every aspect of Surinamese society, including its medical practices and healthcare systems.

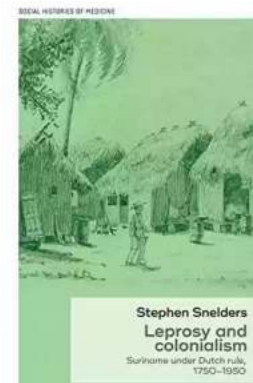
### **Leprosy and colonialism: Suriname under Dutch rule, 1750–1950 (Social Histories of Medicine)**

by Robert Coram(1st Edition, Kindle Edition)

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

Language : English

File size : 1756 KB



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Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Print length : 290 pages



## **The Social Fabric of Suriname under Dutch Rule**

Suriname's population under Dutch rule was highly diverse, comprising various ethnic groups. The indigenous Amerindians, African slaves, Europeans, and later immigrants from India, Indonesia, and China, all played a crucial role in shaping Surinamese society.

The interactions between these different communities provided a fertile ground for cultural exchange and the development of unique traditions, languages, and customs. It was within this vibrant social fabric that the foundations of medicine and healthcare were laid.

## **Medicine and Healthcare in Suriname**

Suriname, like many other colonial territories, faced numerous health challenges during this period. The tropical climate and poor living conditions led to the spread of diseases such as malaria, yellow fever, and tuberculosis.

The Dutch made concerted efforts to establish healthcare infrastructure in Suriname, including hospitals, clinics, and medical schools. These institutions

aimed to provide medical treatment and education to the diverse population of the colony.

## **Traditional Healing Practices**

While Dutch medical practices played a significant role, the indigenous peoples of Suriname maintained their traditional healing methods. Surinamese Maroons, descendants of escaped African slaves, utilized herbal medicines, rituals, and spiritual practices to heal ailments, preserving their cultural heritage against the backdrop of Dutch influence.

Additionally, Sranan Tongo, a Creole language developed by enslaved Africans, became a crucial medium for sharing medicinal knowledge. It served as a platform for transmitting indigenous healing practices and integrating them with the Dutch medical system.

## **The Role of Dutch Physicians and Surgeons**

Dutch physicians and surgeons were instrumental in improving healthcare in Suriname under Dutch rule. They introduced modern medical techniques and treatments, bringing European knowledge to the shores of South America.

These medical professionals documented their experiences, leaving behind valuable insights into the medical practices of the time. Their journals and reports provide a glimpse into the lives of patients, the prevalence of diseases, and the advancements made in medical science during this period.

## **Exploring Suriname's Colonial Hospitals**

Within Suriname, several hospitals were established by the Dutch to cater to the medical needs of the growing population. These hospitals, such as the

Gouvernements Ziekenhuis and the 's Lands Hospitaal, played a vital role in providing medical care and training local healthcare professionals.

Visiting these colonial hospitals, which still stand today, offers a unique opportunity to delve into the past and witness the cross-cultural exchange that took place within their walls. The architectural beauty of these buildings itself tells the story of their historical significance.

## **The Legacy of Suriname's Medical Histories**

As Suriname gained independence from the Netherlands in 1975, the echoes of the Dutch rule and the impact it had on the country's medical histories persisted. Today, Suriname's healthcare system reflects a blend of Dutch medical practices, traditional healing methods, and modern advancements.

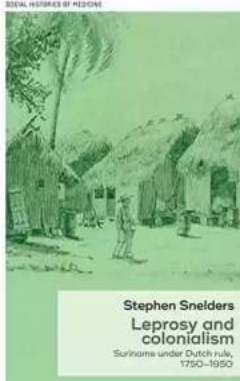
Researching and understanding the social histories of medicine in Suriname from 1750 to 1950 not only sheds light on the intricate tapestry of its past but also provides valuable insights for healthcare professionals, anthropologists, and historians.

## **A Journey Through Time and Cultures**

Suriname under Dutch rule from 1750 to 1950 presents a captivating narrative of societal transformation and medical advancements. The coexistence of Dutch medical practices, traditional healing methods, and the contributions of other communities created a unique dynamic in Surinamese society.

Exploring Suriname's colonial hospitals, uncovering the stories of Dutch physicians and surgeons, and understanding the legacy of this period all contribute to a deeper understanding of Suriname's social and medical histories.

As we embark on this journey, we invite you to indulge in the rich tapestry of Suriname's past, where cultures intertwined and medicine evolved, shaping the nation we see today.



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Leprosy and colonialism investigates the history of leprosy in Suriname within the context of Dutch colonial power and racial conflict, from the plantation economy and the age of slavery to the modern colonial state. It explores the relationship between the modern stigmatization and exclusion of people affected with leprosy, and the political tensions and racial fears originating in colonial slave society, exerting their influence until after the decolonization up to the present day. In the book colonial sources are read from shifting perspectives, of the colonial rulers and, 'from below', the ruled. Though leprosy is today a neglected tropical disease, recognizing influences of our colonial heritage in our global management of health and disease, and exploring the perspectives of other cultures are essential in a time in which migration movements make the permeability of boundaries, and transmission of diseases, more common than perhaps ever before.



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