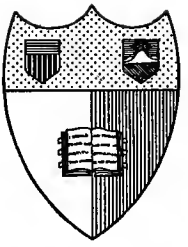

THE GUIANA BOUNDARY

A POSTSCRIPT TO THE WORK OF THE AMERICAN COMMISSION

BY GEORGE L. BURR

REPRINTED FROM THE

American Historical Review

VOL. VI NO. 1 OCTOBER 1900

THE GUIANA BOUNDARY

A Postscript to the Work of the American Commission

My theme is not the award. All that America or Americans asked was arbitration, and arbitration there has been. Venezuela herself, our client, even had she not been awarded that for which she most hotly strove—the mouth of her great river—could as the weaker power find ample cause for gratitude in any boundary which has such guaranty of permanence.

But, now that the episode has safely passed from politics to history, it seems to me due to those whose interest in the history of Guiana outlives the dispute as to ownership, and who may still treasure the work done for President Cleveland's Commission as a lasting gain to our knowledge of the exploration and settlement of the western world, that some effort should be made to check its results by the new evidence laid before the final tribunal. I trust it is not presumption for me to undertake the task; and certainly in no pages could it find so fitting place as in those of the American Historical Review.

The labors of the American Commission, it will be remembered, were cut short in the midst, early in 1897, by the treaty of arbitration between Great Britain and Venezuela. Some months before, indeed—as early as November 10, 1896—the treaty was so nearly assured that Secretary Olney could request the Commission to suspend its deliberations; and it can now be no breach of confidence to add that for weeks prior to this the shadow of the coming event had narrowed the field of research. Thus, much was left undone. There could be no such sifting and testing of Spanish claims as of Dutch. The history of present-century Guiana was scarcely entered on. And, even in the field explored, more than one tempting avenue of inquiry was left unentered.

To these tasks the advocates of Great Britain and of Venezuela could now address themselves. Their time, it is true, was but scant. By the terms of the treaty "the printed Case of each of the two Parties, accompanied by the documents, the official correspondence, and other evidence on which each relies" must be in the hands of the other party and of the judges within, at farthest, nine

months from the exchange of the ratifications. But the ratifications were not finally exchanged until mid-June; and, though a whole half-year more had gone before Great Britain announced as her counsel Sir Richard Webster, Mr. Asquith, and Mr. Rowlatt, and before Venezuela retained Mr. Mallet-Prevost, General Harrison, and General Tracy, and yet many months more ere there was added to the British side Sir Robert Reid and to the Venezuelan Mr. James Russell Soley, scholars were from the first at work under the direction of the two governments. Nor were the counsel strangers to the question at issue. Sir Richard, at least, as Attorney-General of Great Britain, must long have known it well; and of yet longer standing or deeper study were Mr. Harrison's relations with it as President of the United States, Mr. Tracy's as a member of his Cabinet, and Mr. Mallet-Prevost's as the Secretary of President Cleveland's Commission.

It was not strange, then, that even the Case of each country, submitted in mid-March of 1898, was able to include in the huge mass of appended evidence a considerable number of fresh documents. Much bulkier and more important was the new evidence published by the Counter-Case which each filed with the other five months later, on the 15th of August. And not less interesting than these new documents were the fresh maps embodied in the handsome atlases with which each state accompanied both Case and Counter-Case. So ended the gathering of evidence. The printed argument next prepared by each party and submitted on December 15 could only interpret and discuss, not enlarge, the testimony already presented. The same restriction governed, of course, the oral argument, which in almost interminable detail dragged on at Paris before the arbiters from June to October of 1899; yet, even at this late stage, by joint consent, more than one item of new testimony was laid before the judges.

Multiple and various were the fresh sources of this fresh evidence. Most fruitful to the British side were perhaps the Hydrographic Depository at Madrid, the colonial archives of British Guiana (where less than had been supposed proved to have fallen a prey to tropical destroyers), and the records of the old Walcheren town of Veere. To the Venezuelans the archives of the old Spanish-American realms, reinforced afresh by those of Spain and of the Capuchin order at Rome, yielded most of value.

But alas for any who shall seek to study these new documents by themselves! Scattered in their chronological order through the vastly greater mass of reprinted ones, they are, save to the most wearisome search, as effectively lost in the thousand pages of Vene-

zuela's evidence and the nearly two thousand of Great Britain's as— well, as those who wished the judges uninfluenced by earlier conclusions could prefer them to be.

That it is not my purpose to discuss anew the whole of this evidence or the arguments by which it was made to serve the interests of either party I need not say. I have read it all afresh and for its re-weighing have skipped no page of case or argument, not even of the four or five thousand printed pages in which the French compositor has done what he could to make unintelligible the pleas before the judges at Paris ; but while leaving uncorrected no palpable slip brought to light in the work done for the American Commission, my aim is rather to point out, without debate, the content of the evidence newly found and the light it seems to throw on the doings and relations of Spaniards and Dutch in Guiana. I cannot bring myself to turn from this study without the passing remark that no American has cause for aught but pride, at least as regards historical knowledge and insight, in the part played by his countrymen, whether as counsel or as judges, in the great lawsuit.

I shall the better reach my aim if my treatment frankly follows that of the American report. Let me, then, deal first with the earliest relations of Spanish and Dutch in Guiana, next with the adjustment of these at the peace of Westphalia, and with the rights and claims of the Dutch West India Company, then with the successive advances by the Dutch into the Essequibo and its neighbor rivers of western Guiana and with their claims in this quarter, and finally with the counter-advances and the rival claims of the Spaniards.

As to the period prior to the last decade of the sixteenth century no fresh evidence was offered either by Great Britain or by Venezuela. Both countries frankly relinquished all assertion of European settlement in Guiana before this date. The Venezuelans still urged with vigor the Spanish discovery and exploration of these coasts, and their British opponents, in belittling these, were able to point out a serious slip in the work of the American experts ;[1]

[1] It was, I am happy to add, the *only* such slip they pointed out, and they cleverly made the most of it The error was a mistaken reading (American Commission's Report, III. 175, 189, 190) of a manuscript note on an old Spanish map of Guiana. The note tells of a certain Arawak cacique, who in the year 1553 went up the Essequibo and descended on the other slope to the Amazon. The blunder lay in failing to notice that the mention of the cacique belonged to the note, and the consequent conjectural ascription of the exploit to "some unnamed explorer—presumably the Spaniard whose explorations the map is meant to illustrate." What made the slip easy was that the map bears elsewhere, in several places, names of Indian caciques; that the "Año 1553" which in this case follows is preceded by a period (after the fashion of the sixteenth century); and that a couple of near-by notes begin likewise with a date. But the blunder was

but neither longer questioned that European settlement in Guiana began with Berrio's town of Santo Thomé on the Orinoco. It is indeed the explicit assertion of the earliest of the new documents submitted by Great Britain—an exceedingly interesting letter of January 1, 1593, from Don Antonio Berrio himself to the King of Spain, wherein he reports his "ten years spent in continual labors" to penetrate to El Dorado—that "from the mouth of the river Amazon to that of the Orinoco the map shows more than four hundred leagues," and that "in all this breadth and more than fifteen hundred leagues in depth there is not a spot peopled by Spaniards." This letter of Berrio and two later ones printed with it make it impossible longer to credit Fray Pedro Simon's date of 1591 or 1592 for the founding of Santo Thomé, and, when added to Raleigh's silence[1] and to the letters of Felipe de Santiago and of Roque de Montes earlier produced by England, leave small ground for believing that the town can have come into existence (save perhaps as an Indian village harboring Spanish guests) earlier than the very end of 1595.[2] As we know indubitably from Keymis that in April, 1596, it was a "rancheria of some twentie or thirty houses," it can hardly be placed later; and Berrio's letters make it all the clearer that from 1592 on such an occupation of Guiana had been contemplated and in preparation.

At last, too, we are given the text of that letter of Berrio's lieutenant, Domingo de Ybarguen y Vera, of October 27, 1597, which served as the basis of such wild statements in the British Blue-Books. The Dutchmen seized by him prove to be only "five Flemings, . . . found on land, belonging to a Flemish ship which had come to traffic at Margarita and Cumaná, and in this island" (Trinidad); and of the Essequibo he says only "I then went to the river Essequibo, where I had much information as to the people

grave, and I blush for it. Let me only plead in defense that the map, which fell into my hands just at the close of my work in Washington, was mentioned at all only to dismiss it as having "no direct bearing on the question of boundary." The further British claim that "the map cannot be earlier than the seventeenth century because it shows two Spanish towns in Trinidad" I cannot for a moment accede to. It shows no towns in Trinidad. One of the marks thus interpreted is only the ⁹ of Trinidad ⁹ (*i. e.*, Trinidado—a spelling common among the early explorers, *cf.* Raleigh, Keymis, Wyatt), and the other but a fleck (such as abound on the map) which happens to be near the Spanish word *palmar*, a palm-grove. The handwriting and the orthography, as well as the substance of the notes, show it clearly of the middle of the sixteenth century.

[1] To which should perhaps be added that of Robert Dudley, who sent a boat up the Orinoco in February, 1595, and whose own narrative is now supplemented by the more detailed one of his captain, Wyatt (first published last year by the Hakluyt Society). Yet it is unlikely that Dudley's boat went so far up as the site of Santo Thomé.

[2] This date receives a slight further support from another letter produced by England, written to the King of Spain in 1609 by one of Domingo de Vera's twenty-two hundred colonists.

wearing clothes and using the same arms in fighting as the people of New Granada"—a passage no longer suggestive of "white men."

But, while Great Britain thus gave over all assertion of Dutch settlement in Guiana prior to 1613, she still stoutly fought the claim that Spain had ever occupied the Essequibo. She even brought bodily to the arbiters the carved keystone of the old fort at Kijkoveral, sometimes thought the work of Portuguese or Spaniards, to show that the emblem on it is not a cross, and offered much expert testimony to prove the architecture Dutch—a conclusion else most probable. To the other evidence for the presence of Spaniards, however, she could oppose only the silence of Spanish records; and this the Venezuelans were able to meet with a fresh paper of much interest—a letter of the Duke of Lerma, who writing on behalf of the King of Spain, February 2, 1615, to the president of the Spanish Council of the Indies, mentions, among the places against which the Dutch were rumored to be planning an attack, Essequibo, "where there are some persons, from twelve to fifteen Spaniards, who there till the soil to raise cassava root, from which bread is made for the Governor of Trinidad and Orinoco."

But not only did both sides agree in accepting for the beginning of Dutch trade on the Guiana coast the year 1598, and for the beginning of Dutch attempts at settlement there the year 1613, there was a unanimity substantially as great as to the first establishment of the Dutch in the Essequibo. If the British lawyers did not explicitly relinquish Major John Scott's tradition of its settlement by "one Captain Gromwegle" in 1616, they admitted its uncertainty, and were content with insisting that "an organized colony under the West India Company was in existence on that river" soon after the creation of the Company in 1621. In support of this they produced, from the manuscripts of the British Museum, the journal of certain "Heads of Families sent by the Directors of the West India Company to visit the Coast of Guiana" in 1623. This journal, written in French (the families seem to have been Huguenots), tells us that "the Directors of the West India Company had resolved at entering on their administration to send to the river Amazon and coast of Guiana," and were begged by one Jesse Des Forests, "who, with the permission of the States-General of the United Provinces, had enrolled several families desirous of inhabiting the said Indies," that these "might be employed in the service of the said Company." But "the said Directors thought that, instead of transporting the said families, it would be better to send a certain number of heads of families, in order . . . to see the places and to choose

themselves the place of their dwelling." These deputies sailed, accordingly, on July 1, 1623, in the ship *Pigeon* of 100 tons, "to make the voyage to the Amazon." Reaching that river on October 20, they pushed northwestward along the coast, prospecting as they went, as far as the Wiapoco, where they arrived in December. There they selected a place for their colony, and there they were left by their ship, which returned to Holland on the first day of 1624. In the following summer (so, at least, one must infer from the scanty extracts, which, alas, are all that is printed of this precious document), a flotilla having meanwhile arrived from Holland, they pressed on westward with their prospecting and on August 15, 1624, reached the Demerara. Thence, on the 16th, they write, "our sloop went to Ezikebe [Essequibo] to carry our master on board the Admiral to learn his wishes;" and, on the 22d, "our sloop having returned, our ship went to Ezikebe to fetch the remainder of the merchandise which the Admiral had left there." There they tarried till the 28th, when they returned to the Demerara, and, having first transferred the Admiral into a ship which was to return home, they sailed on September 9 for the Carribbean Islands. In this description of the Essequibo, which shows that they ascended the river as far as the confluence of Cuyuni and Mazaruni, they remark that "the Spaniards of San Thomé" (so the British editors acutely translate the "Saint Omer" of the French text) "formerly traded there, but now they dare not go there," and their journal later quotes "a Frenchman who lived there three years," and who had been "above the second fall of the river, where there was a crystal mine;" but there is no mention of any previous Dutch occupation, nor is there anything to imply that the expedition here described had other aim or result than exploration and trade. Yet it is at least not improbable that a Dutch outlier may have remained in the river from this time forward; and the difference between this date of August, 1624, and that of 1625, reached by the Americans and accepted by the Venezuelans, is insignificant. It is a thousand pities that this journal, which so happily helps replace a lost record-book of the West India Company, could not be published in full.

On the vicissitudes of the trading-post in the Essequibo prior to the end of the long war with Spain no further light has been thrown. As to the hostile activity of Dutch fleets and privateers in the Orinoco and its creeks Great Britain was able, however, to produce from Spanish archives testimony of moment: (1) a report of the Spanish governor, the Marquis of Sofraga, who, writing from Bogotá in July, 1631, avers that, after the sacking of Santo

Thomé by the Dutch in 1629, "other squadrons of corsairs came and settled and fortified themselves in the arms and creeks of the river Orinoco" as well as in the island of Tobago, and that "information has been received that the same or another squadron was coming this year to take possession of the city and of a quicksilver mine which is said to have been discovered close to it on the bank of the said river Orinoco;" (2) a memorandum by Don Juan Desologuren, dated in November 1637 at the same Spanish-American capital, wherein, relating the expulsion of the Dutch from Tobago by the Spaniards in 1636 and their taking refuge in the Essequibo and the Berbice, he asserts that "on the river Orinoco itself, and on its most important mouth, in the same part of the mainland as the settlement of Santo Thomé de la Guayana, at thirty leagues' distance from it, there were ten Dutch waiting for reinforcements to fortify themselves from the year 1636;" (3) some eight or ten documents of the Spaniards of Orinoco in 1637 and 1638, whose testimony goes to support that already published as to the presence of Dutchmen in the Amacura immediately before and after the renewed Dutch sack of Santo Thomé in 1637. Just what faith, in the absence of all confirmation from Dutch sources, these Spanish rumors deserve, it is not easy to know; but it can no longer be doubted that they have a basis of fact.[1] That there was on the part of the Dutch West India Company, however, any thought of settlement here, is, in view of the silence of its records, hardly to be believed; and side by side with the documents just described is produced a letter written to the King of Spain in 1634 by the Bishop of Porto Rico, who, making now his first pastoral visitation in Guiana (which seven years before had been transferred to his diocese), reports the interesting news that Santo Thomé "had been removed, for rather more than a year, six leagues distant from where it used to be, in order to occupy a more concealed position on the river Orinoco, and one not so unhealthy, beside which the place is better defended against the Dutch," and who urges especially upon His Majesty the necessity of better protecting his colony from these foes, yet expressly names as the nearest post of the Dutch that on the Essequibo.

No fresh evidence has thrown new light upon the purpose or the interpretation of the disputed clauses of the Treaty of Münster. The British advocates persist in seeing in them an express admission of a right of the Dutch to all conquests they could make in America; while their opponents, going to the opposite extreme, would make them an express grant to the Dutch of what they had

[1] The suspicion uttered in the American Commission's report (I. 294), that they may rest on an error, must therefore be withdrawn.

already seized or could conquer from the Portuguese alone, and hence, by implication, prohibition of all else. In support of their contention the Venezuelans were indeed able to produce a plea of the West India Company in its controversy with the English over New Netherland a dozen years later (November 5, 1660) which averred that "the King of Spain, first discoverer and founder of this new American world," had "at the conclusion of the peace made over to the United Netherland Provinces all his right and title to such countries and domains as by them in course of time had been conquered in Europe, America, etc.;" and the Britons on their side could point, not only to the contemporary report of the French envoys at Münster (that, while "the King of Spain consents to be debarred from extending his boundaries in the East Indies," and to limit them to what he now occupies there, he agrees that "the conquests which may be made by the United Provinces either over the natives of the country or over the Portuguese shall remain theirs"), but also to the verdict of the later Dutch statesman Basnage that "this article was advantageous to the Republic because Spain bound her hands and undertook not to make any new conquests in the East, while the Dutch retained the power to extend their limits far and wide in America, and particularly in Brazil." Yet, despite these dicta, and the clever arguments based upon them, I cannot believe that to any historian who has breathed the air of the seventeenth century they will carry conviction. As we know from their own lips, the Dutch, who drew the treaty, had no mind that Spain, in such a document, should assume either to permit or to forbid their conquest of territory hers only by claim. The treaty left them free by its silence, it did not make them so by its stipulations; and no more than this, surely, can have been meant by Basnage[1] or the French envoys. As for the quoted words of the West India Company, they were a desperate special plea to meet an English claim of prior settlement, and were blushed for as soon as uttered; for in the very next paragraph their authors protest that they deem "such claim and forced argument" unnecessary.[2] Of the rights and claims of the Dutch West India Company, indeed, nothing really new was learned by either side, and the sweeping statements of the British Blue-Books were now abandoned or greatly modified.[3]

[1] Had I not held this view of Basnage's meaning and looked on it as self-evident, I should be more chagrined by my omission of these words of his from my report to the American Commission than by anything else these later researches have suggested.

[2] Brodhead, *Documents relative to the Colonial History of New York*, II. 139.

[3] That so misleading a statement as that "the Wild Coast was the original name of the coast between the Orinoco and the Essequibo" (where, of course, for Essequibo should be read Amazon) could be retained in a footnote to the British evidence was, I am convinced, only an oversight: no attempt was made, in the argument, to use or to defend it.

More fortunate was the inquiry into the doings of the Dutch on the Essequibo. Upon the earliest history of that settlement, it is true, no fresh light was thrown, unless one take seriously the Spanish rumor[1] that a part of the Dutch colonists expelled from Tobago in 1636 "finally settled on the river Essequibo, a hundred leagues off, a hundred and twenty in number with many negroes"—a rumor which, however unreliable in itself and discredited by the silence of Dutch records, gains a touch of plausibility from the "sap of sugar cane" sent home by the Essequibo commander in the following spring, but which, even if credible, loses all significance through the known return to Holland of the Essequibo colonists in the summer of 1637. On the character and activities of the colony just at the end of the seventeenth century, however, a flood of knowledge is brought us by the discovery and the publication in full of an official diary of its administration covering the two years from July 1, 1699, to June 14, 1701—a document filling more than a hundred printed pages. Yet this gossipy journal's yield for the history of the colony's civilization is much greater than for that of its boundaries. As to the whereabouts of these it tells us nothing; but nowhere had we so vivid a picture of the part played in the life of the colony by its outrunners and postholders. From it we first learn of the existence somewhere above the rapids in the Cuyuni of a dye-store (*i. e.*, a station for the bartering-in of annatto from the Indians) such as we already knew to have existed somewhere on the Mazaruni.

To our knowledge of Dutch doings in the Pomeroon and the Moruca the new research was of especial profit. In the neglected archives of the old Dutch town of Veere the British searchers found a body of papers which nearly or quite doubles our knowledge of the Guiana colony planted in 1658 by the Walcheren cities. Especially is this true as regards its obscure later years. From a long letter written in March of 1663 by the then Commandeur in the Pomeroon, J. De Fijn, we learn not only of the thrift and importance of the colonists settled on the Moruca, but furthermore of the maintenance in that river of a fort, known as the *Huis Nassau*. The prosperity of this colony is confirmed by fresh Spanish testimony. Writing from Santo Thomé in March, 1662, to the King of Spain, Don Pedro de Viedma reports that "he had sent a person to reconnoitre the settlements," and that "there are two foundations, one of 150 Dutch and another of 280, and to these are added 200 wealthy Indians, of those expelled from Brazil, and that in the two settlements they have introduced 1500 negro slaves for their

[1] In Don Juan Desologuren's memorandum of November 19, 1637, mentioned above.

plantations; and that besides these there is the fort of Essequibo, which has been founded more than thirty years, and that "the person who was sent to reconnoitre was told by the Dutch that they were expecting more people for the purpose of completing the settlement of those rivers, and two shiploads of negroes." And in a later letter of the same month he is able to state that the Dutch in the Pomeroon and the Moruca now number "more than a thousand men, with four hundred Indians and a greater number of negroes, founding a new Brazil." Similar in purport are the sworn statements of one Clement Gunter, a member of the Dutch colony, who in 1655, on a trading expedition into the Orinoco, was arrested and imprisoned by the Spanish authorities.

Of the history of the second Dutch colony in Pomeroon and Moruca (1686–1689) nothing new is told us; nor is our knowledge of the later Dutch occupancy of those rivers materially increased by the later researches. The British searchers seem even to have overlooked or underrated a land-grant of whose existence I have knowledge through another channel and which it can now be no breach of faith to publish for the behoof of history—it is the grant to Frederic Beissenteufel, on January 6, 1760, of a thousand acres on the west side of the Moruca at its mouth.[1] Of the existence of this plantation we had known, and that it was at the mouth of the river, but not on which side; and the grant is interesting, not alone as our one proof of Dutch settlement west of that river, but because it fixes as well the site of the Dutch lookout established here in 1757 and of the fortified post maintained on the same spot from 1784 onward. As we know these to have been on Beissenteufel's land, they too must have been at the west of the Moruca.

But, if British search missed this at home, it unearthed in Spain a precious paper which had eluded the search of the Venezuelans—the lost diary of Inciarte, the young Spanish officer who in 1779 made, as "Commissioner of Settlements on the Eastern Side of the Lower Orinoco," an elaborate reconnoissance of the whole region from Orinoco to Pomeroon, and whose summary report had alone been hitherto known. Interesting especially is his minute description of the Moruca post—"an ordinary house, roofed with thatch and barred with large beams, without mud and wattle," its means of defense consisting of "two four-pounders and sundry swivel-guns, all dismounted." Other evidence of Dutch occupation, whether in the Moruca or the Pomeroon, he seems to have

[1] "Aen Fredrik Bysenteufel syn toegestaen een duysent akkers aen de Westsyde van Moroca van de nieuwe brandwagt de kreek opwaarts, als mede eenige broodgronden, mits de Indiaenen geen hinder doende."

found none save that in the latter river, just above where it receives the Tapacuma creek, he saw "a silk cotton tree, at the side of which," as an Arawak Indian assured him, "in times past a Dutchman from Essequibo had his dwelling and good farms." There, having landed, Inciarte "found almost on the very bank a cocoa plantation of a few huge trees with a multitude of little plants"—probably a survival of the colony of the preceding century. Yet more interesting, perhaps, is the map drawn up at the same time by the young engineer and now first published. It is the most careful one of this region prior to the researches of Schomburgk, and it leaves us no doubt as to the site of the points described by Inciarte. It is amusing to note how even this careful explorer shared the Spanish belief in a *town* of Essequibo—"*villa de Esquibo*"—which he places on the west shore of the river, opposite Fort Island.

It was already known—though now in more detail—that, on the basis of his reconnoissance, Inciarte recommended to the Spanish authorities the establishment of two fortified settlements, one at the site of the Dutch post on the upper Moruca, the other in the Pomeroon; but the Venezuelans now produce a somewhat startling body of documents showing that this project for the occupation of lower Guiana was never lost from sight by Spain till the very eve of the revolt of the colonies.

As to the Waini and the Barima, Inciarte's diary and map are, of course, not less precious evidence than as to their eastern neighbors. Of the only trace of European occupation he found here—the abandoned plantation of the Dutchman "Mener Nelch"—he speaks no more fully than in the report we had already; but its site, on the Aruka, he describes with more minuteness. More novel and not less interesting is the much earlier testimony of the above-quoted letter of De Fijn, Commandeur of the Dutch in the Pomeroon, as to a seventeenth-century reconnoissance of the Barima. "Having left the river Orinoco," writes the Dutch governor, who is reporting to his principals in Holland a trading trip which at their instance he has just made to Santo Thomé, "and coming by way of the river Barima on January 15, 1663, I resolved to inspect the aforesaid place, in order to see whether it was suitable to dwell in and whether vessels could navigate the river." Accordingly he pushed up the stream some twenty hours as far as a creek (doubtless the Aruka) 16 or 17 Dutch miles, as he thought, from the mouth of the river. Here, "fully half an hour up," he found high land "with fairly good soil and which could well be settled by our people if the population in these regions be-

came so great that all the lands now lying idle were cultivated." It is our earliest tidings of Dutch interest in the Barima. Nor does the new research bring us aught else which adds to our knowledge of Dutch activity in these parts or makes more probable the existence there at any time of a Dutch post or of other settlers than those already known; for the present-day testimony, Indian and official, to the presence along the Barima of signs of old-time cultivation proves nothing as to its date or source.

But to the history of the Barima there comes a contribution from an unexpected quarter. In April of 1899 M. Henri Froidevaux, than whom there is no more eminent student of French colonial history (he has since been called to a lectureship in that subject at the Sorbonne), wrote for the *Revue des Questions Historiques* an admirable review of "the American reports on the Anglo-Venezuelan controversy." It is not merely a review: it supplements. Much more, he states from personal knowledge, might have been learned of the part played in the Barima by the French of the Antilles in the eighteenth century. The errand of Nicolas Gervais, the French Bishop of Oran, on these shores about 1730 was, he intimates, something beyond the conversion of the Indians. He knows of "French designs on this region between 1730 and 1740," mentioning the formation at this date at St. Pierre in Martinique of a private company whose object was to colonize the territories between the Orinoco and the Essequibo and which sent in 1738 an expedition, under one Foucaut du Razet, "to visit these places and there make the inspection necessary for the proposed establishment." This expedition, whose report, he says, may be found in the archives of the French Ministry of the Colonies,[1] coasted the mainland from the Essequibo to the Barima and along the southern mouth of the Orinoco, seeking four Frenchmen who were alleged to have been for seventeen months in that region. The Caribs entered readily into negotiations with them, which are recounted at some length. Foucaut du Razet heard also, in these parts, from a Frenchman who had long lived in the Essequibo, the story that this region had been given to the Elector of Bavaria, who had ceded it to the King of Sweden—only, in this French version, it was not the King of Spain, but "*La France*," that "gave this part of *la France équinoxiale*" to Bavaria. What is more, he can tell us what became of the Swedish enterprise which, a few years earlier, stirred such alarm in Orinoco and Essequibo. "The King of Sweden," he says, "sent thither three years and a half ago[2] one of his

[1] "Correspondance Générale, C[14], Guyane, Tome XVII. (1737–1740), fol. 339 et s."

[2] It is not easy to reconcile this date, so exactly given, with the 1732 of which we learn from the Spanish testimony.

vessels to reconnoitre the place and take possession; but this vessel having perished on the way back to Europe, with all on board, *par le travers de la Bermude*, no Swede has ever again been seen here."

This Swedish legend[1] has been made an object of careful research by an English scholar, too, the Rev. George Edmundson, who devoted to it an interesting article in the *English Historical Review* for January, 1899. For a cession to or by the Elector of Bavaria he can find neither proof nor probability, nor was a Swedish charter or royal commission ever granted for such a Guiana colony; whence he concludes that the Barima project "was probably a private enterprise, connived at perhaps and indirectly supported by the Swedish government, but without any actual sanction of the authorities." Is it not possible that the Bavarian legend is an outgrowth of the actual Guiana grant in 1669 by the Dutch to the Count of Hanau? The promoter of this Hanau scheme, the versatile Dr. Becher, had earlier been in relations with the court of Bavaria, and this court is said to have made (about 1665) overtures first to the Dutch West India Company and then to England for the grant of a stretch of the Guiana coast.

As to the Amacura, except the evidence already mentioned for the presence of Dutchmen there in 1730–1740, nothing new has come to light.[2] Nor, although Dutch haunting and harassing of the Orinoco was yet more abundantly shown, was there found any evidence of attempt at possession in that river.

More fruitful was the research as to the great western branches of the Essequibo. The much vexed question of the Cuyuni posts was set almost at rest by it. Nothing was found, indeed, as to the short-lived, if existent, one of 1703; but as to that of 1754–1758 there is now produced from the archives at Madrid[3] a letter from the banks of the Caroni written on August 27, 1758, by the Capuchin missionary Father Bispal to the Spanish commandant Iturriaga, which contains this luminous passage: "In the river Cuyuni the

[1] As illustrating the obtrusiveness of this legend it is interesting to note that Inciarte, writing in 1779 from the Dutch post of Moruca to his chief the Spanish Intendant at Caracas, reports that the under-postholder there, "Paul Fernero" (Paulus Vermeere), "said that the former Director-General of Essequibo told him in a letter, that the lands and rivers of Moruca and Guaina [Waini] belonged in ownership to the Dutch, and the creek of Barima and its lands to Sweden." The Director-General meant must be Storm van's Gravesande; but Vermeere's statement is wholly incredible.

[2] Something has rather been lost; for the Spanish mission of Amacuro, mentioned in a footnote of the American Commission's report (I. 297) was on the Paria coast, and the "Amacura" guarded by Indians in 1797 proves but a misreading of Moruca.

[3] Hydrographic Depository, Madrid, B, 4a, Viceroyalty of Santa Fe, Vol. II., doc. No. 16.

Dutch continue doing somewhat; last year, 1757, in an island of the said Cuyuni called Tocoropati, two days' journey above the mouth of the said river, they commenced a fortified house on the top of a little hill in the said island, and a cane plantation and a sugar mill in the lower part of the island; and this year the house is already built and fortified, and the mill is grinding the cane from the plantation." This testimony is confirmed and amplified by two letters of the following month (from the same archives), in which the Capuchin prefect, Benito de la Garriga, reports to Iturriaga the Spanish raid on the Dutch post. "Navigating down stream," he writes, "they found an island of much elevation called Tocoropata, where the Post was a short time previously (it was abandoned because it had not sufficient lands for plantations), and on the way they burnt the houses, with those of the ten negroes, in which also lived several postholders; and, after half a day's navigation, they arrived at Aguigua, on the mainland, on this side of Cuyuni, where the Dutch had taken the preliminary steps for establishing the post —the farm cleared and not burned, large, with one or two huts, with the object of at once making a stronghold when they had sufficient provisions—in the meantime maintaining themselves on flour of maize and wheat, spending the articles of barter given them by the Governor for their support." In the face of such evidence the British relinquished their claim that the post was at or near the mouth of the Curumo, and both sides agreed in recognizing the island of Tokoro as the first site of the post. Adequate explanation seeming to both thus found of Schomburgk's Indian tradition of a post in that island, they further concurred in placing the restored post of 1766–1769 not far above that island in the Tonoma rapids where it found its last site. It is not improbable that in this they were right; yet, in view of the explicitness of that tradition, of the absence of evidence for any other site, of the known presence of bread-grounds at the new post, and of the Dutch governor's aggressive purpose, I must still think it possible that the first site of this later post too was at Tokoro. No other Dutch dealings in the upper Cuyuni or Mazaruni were disclosed, save that the dye-collecting, timber-cutting, and food-gathering there was made more vivid by fresh illustration.

On Dutch or Spanish claim to boundary in Guiana no new light was thrown. It was made clearer than ever that the Spaniards counted the Dutch intruders and that the Dutch felt free to encroach on unoccupied lands; but the Dutch remonstrance of 1769 remains the one official communication between the two states suggesting a definite frontier.

As to Spanish occupation and Spanish aggressions, however, the Venezuelans produced fresh evidence of some importance. The existence of the westernmost of the Spanish missions, that of Curumo, was established by the contemporary testimony of the Capuchin prefect, from which we learn the date of its formal dedication, or "founding" (June, 1749), the number and tribe of its Indians (180 Caribs), and the precise duration of its existence (a year and four months), and was confirmed by that of the Spanish governor of the province. Much of detail (which, however, as in the case of the Curumo mission, only strengthened results already reached for the American Commission) was gained, too, as to the identity and activities of these missions in general. Of the remoter Spanish movements in the Wenamu, the Mazaruni, the Siparuni, rumored by a scared Dutch postholder in 1756, nothing more could be learned. The existence and site of the Spanish fortified post on the Cuyuni, they were able, however, to support by added evidence. Regarding no point of fact was the controversy so keen or so stubborn. A page of Governor Marmion's manuscript was photographed in the Spanish archives to demonstrate that the new town which in October, 1793, he reported as having been begun was near the union of the Cuyuni with the Curumo, and not (as it had been unintelligibly transcribed for Great Britain) with the Orinoco;[1] and the original of Schomburgk's great physical map of Guiana had to be produced in court to show his representation of the ruins of this post (on the south of the Cuyuni, a little below its confluence with the Curumo), somehow left out in the British reproduction of the map.

As to Spanish doings in the coast region, I have already spoken of the recovery of the interesting journal of Inciarte's bold reconnoissance in 1779, and of the documents showing the Spanish schemes later based on it. Next to these in interest was perhaps a fragment, of the year 1785, from the diary of Captain Mateo Beltran, the Spanish coast-guard who during that decade was a terror to the Dutch in the region adjoining the Orinoco. But, while these amply illustrate the Spanish aim to control this district, there is in them no mention of the slightest actual settlement there.

Such is what seems to me the most important new evidence brought to light during the course of the arbitral proceedings; and such in brief are the changes which this evidence makes necessary

[1] There fell into my hands in 1898, bought from the Paris bookseller Dufossé (in whose catalogue Professor Jameson, my old colleague of the boundary investigation, espied it and pointed it out to me), what is clearly an earlier draft of this report of Marmion's, corrected and annotated by his own hand. It tells nothing more, but confirms the testimony of the final document. It now belongs to the Cornell University Library.

in the historical conclusions reached for the American Commission. It goes without saying that I have left much undiscussed. The scholar who shall some day write in full the story of Spaniards and of Dutch in South America must sift for himself afresh the whole of the vast unindexed mass. But, till he shall appear, I trust this postscript to the researches of the American Commission may be of some use to the student of this chapter of colonial history.

GEORGE LINCOLN BURR.