

Register of Persons

Americans

Abraham Lincoln (1809–1865), the sixteenth President of the United States, served from 1861 to 1865. As a Whig in the 1840s and 1850s, Lincoln supported negro colonization. Lincoln joined the American Colonization Society in 1855, and openly advocated the policy by pairing it with gradual compensated emancipation as a solution to the problem of slavery. With the establishment of an office for colonization in 1862 and an appropriation of \$600,000 for the cause, he appeared to be making colonization part of his administration's policy. Although the administration less actively pursued colonization in 1864 and 1865, efforts appear to have been delayed by political factors and never completely shelved.

William Henry Seward (1801–1872) was the U.S. Secretary of State in 1861–1869. As fitting for his position, Seward took a lead role in American foreign relations. Although he proved to be a loyal stalwart of Lincoln's administration, he personally diverged from the president over the wisdom of colonization. Seward therefore proved a reluctant executor of the program and, at times, dragged his feet on the pursuit of negotiations for colonization sites. Seward authored the 30 September 1862 circular to the European powers, soliciting proposals to receive black emigration from the United States and therefore initializing the formal phase of negotiations over Suriname. In 1865, Seward barely survived an assassination attempt on the same night that John Wilkes Booth shot and killed Lincoln. Seward's prolonged recovery from his injuries overlapped with a brief post-war resumption of interest in colonization. Seward's duties in this period were transferred to William Hunter, a long-time diplomat who served as acting secretary for the interim period.

James Shepherd Pike was the U.S. Minister to the Netherlands in 1861–1866. Pike, a Maine Republican, became Lincoln's minister to the Netherlands in 1860. Pike had deep antipathy for blacks, but wanted to see them set free, and kept separate from whites. At first, he wished the South would be granted leave from the Union without trouble. As ambassador, he fought for and temporarily gained an advantage for the Union's war cause, as the Netherlands, refusing to follow England and France entirely, recognized the belligerent status of the Confederacy but blocked their

ships from entering neutral Dutch ports in all but times of distress. Early in the war, as Lincoln avoided talk of slavery on the domestic front, Pike encouraged the Europeans to view the war as a struggle for the end of slavery. Pike thought Lincoln's emancipation proclamation did not go far enough. Pike opposed the colonization treaty with the Dutch and thought an alternative was to give blacks a region of their own in the South.¹

Caleb Smith was U.S. Secretary of the Interior in 1861-1862. Smith was one of the strongest advocates of colonization in Lincoln's cabinet, and helped to secure congressional funding for the project in 1862. The government's emigration office was placed under the charge of the Department of the Interior at his direction. Smith resigned from the cabinet in December 1862 due to declining health, and accepted an appointment to a federal judgeship in his home state of Indiana. Smith's departure saw the elevation of deputy secretary John Palmer Usher to be head of the department. Usher's tempestuous relationship with the president's policy of colonization became a recurring point of tension within the administration and, in 1864, induced Congress to suspend funding.

Henry Sawyer (1827-1877), a U.S.-born businessman, came to Suriname in 1847, was married there in 1849, worked as a businessman and served as the consul of the United States in Paramaribo, Suriname, from 1858 until his death in 1877. Sawyer was interested in technology, innovation, and promoting Surinamese business. He introduced new American machinery to Suriname, sold steam-ground rice, imported wine, formed various gold and metal prospecting partnerships (including the New York and Suriname Company) and opened a photograph atelier.² It is unclear if Sawyer had any strong views about colonization.

William Hunter was U.S. interim Secretary of State in 1866. A career diplomat, Hunter filled the role of acting secretary of state for William H. Seward in 1865 when the latter was recovering from a succession of injuries caused by a carriage accident and subsequent attempt on his life the same night that Lincoln was assassinated.

Edward Boonen Graves (1803-1865) was a New York merchant who forwarded a call for laborers in Suriname. His grandfather, Jan Boonen Graves, was a Dutch-born

¹ R.F. Durden, *James Shepherd Pike: Republicanism and the American Negro, 1850-1882* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1957).

² *De West-Indiër: dagblad toegewijd aa nee belangen van Nederlandsch Guyana*, February 28, 1866. *Suriname: Koloniaal nieuws-en-advertentieblad*, October 23 (1874); May 11 (1877); November 8 (1872); *Surinaamsch Weekblad*, August 1 (1858).

merchant who had once been the Dutch consul for North Carolina and Georgia for a number of years before moving to New York in 1797. A contemporary, Walter Barrett, wrote, “The firm of Boonen Graves & Co.... has never faltered or failed...It has been chiefly engaged in the trade with Holland and its colonies. It has among its correspondents some with whom an active intercourse had continued for over sixty years, and these are both English and Dutch.”³

James Mitchell was U.S. Commissioner of Emigration in 1862–1865. Mitchell was a former midwestern agent of the American Colonization Society, as well as administrator of Indiana’s state colonization office. He came to know Lincoln in the early 1850s while traveling to Springfield, Illinois, on Colonization Society business. Lincoln appointed Mitchell as an agent and then commissioner of the newly formed emigration office in 1862. After the departure of his ally Caleb Blood Smith from the department of the interior where he was situated, Mitchell became involved in an increasingly rancorous political feud with the new secretary, John Palmer Usher. Mitchell was nonetheless able to shift the focus of the president’s colonization policies away from private contractors and toward diplomatic arrangements with the European powers in the West Indies. Mitchell saw his office shuttered by Usher in late 1864, and remained involved in an effort to revive it at the time of Lincoln’s death.

John Palmer Usher was U.S. Secretary of the Interior in 1863–1865. Previously the assistant secretary of the interior, Usher took over the department in January 1863 after the resignation of Caleb Blood Smith. He inherited his predecessor’s oversight of the government’s colonization functions, although its diplomatic charge remained in the state department. Usher himself became personally involved in a proposed colonization project on the isthmus of Panama in late 1862, which he unsuccessfully attempted to revive. He is known for his involvement in a succession of political feuds that plagued later, and potentially competitor, colonization projects. These included a perpetually beleaguered attempt in 1863 to settle a freedmen’s colony on the Ile à Vache off the coast of Haiti, as well as infighting with James Mitchell over control of the emigration office in 1864.

³ W. Barrett, *The Old Merchants of New York City, Third Series* (New York: Carleton Publishers, 1865), 288.

The Dutch Diplomatic Network in the United States⁴

Th[eodorus] M[arinus] Roest van Limburg (1806-1887): The Dutch Minister Resident in Washington D.C., Roest van Limburg was the primary organizer of and correspondent for the Dutch colonization project. Roest van Limburg, a critic of the Lincoln Administration, was also frustrated by the difficult task set for him by the Dutch government. He had previously worked as an editor of a newspaper in the Netherlands, and in the Dutch diplomatic service in Vienna and Lisbon. He served in Washington from 1856 to 1868. In 1858, he married Isabella Cass, the daughter of the former Vice President of the United States, the democratic politician Lewis Cass of Michigan.

Rud[olph] C[hristian] Burlage (1809-1883). Born in Amsterdam, Burlage served as the Dutch Consul General in New York from 1855 to 1883. Burlage had founded an iron foundry in Germany and had worked in England before moving to New York, where he established a commission house, a successful firm that remained in business until his death.⁵

Louis Amedee (sometimes spelled Amadee) Couturie (1827?-18??) was a French-speaking consul for the Netherlands in New Orleans. Born in Guadeloupe, he moved to New Orleans and established an import firm that dealt in wines and brandy from France. His business partner for some time was an Ernest Bordelois. Despite his reservations about the Suriname colonization scheme, Couturie was a consummate diplomat, willing to follow orders from his superiors. During the Union General Benjamin Butler's occupation of New Orleans, Couturie became caught up in a legal dispute when he used his consulate to protect silver coins belonging to a New Orleans bank.

Lesser-known Dutch consuls in the United States include George K. Zeigler, who was the American consul for the Netherlands in Philadelphia. He was a supporter of the colonization scheme. Henry Raden was the interim consul for the Netherlands

⁴ For more information on the structure of the Dutch diplomatic network in the United States see ch. 5 of M.J. Douma, *How Dutch Americans stayed Dutch* (Amsterdam: University of Amsterdam Press, 2014).

⁵ F. de Goey, *Consuls and the Institutions of Global Capitalism* (New York: Routledge, 2016: first edition 2014 Chatto & Pickering), 101-5; H. Krabbendam, "Capital Diplomacy: Consular Activity in Amsterdam and New York, 1800-1940," in G. Harinck and H. Krabbendam (eds.), *Amsterdam-New York: Transatlantic Relations and Urban Identities since 1653* (Amsterdam: VU University Press, 2005), 167-81.

in Boston in 1862. The Boston city directory of 1862 lists Francis Hirsch as the Boston consul for Prussia, Austria, and the Netherlands. By 1864, Christian Bois had taken the post. A[lfred] Schuiking was the Dutch Vice Consul in Washington D.C. Little else is known about these men.

Diplomats in the Netherlands

P[aul] Th[erese] van der Maesen de Sombreff (1827-1902) was the Dutch foreign affairs minister from 1862-1864. De Sombreff worked with U.S. Ambassador James Shepherd Pike to hammer out an agreement on colonization. A member of the second cabinet of Dutch prime minister Johan Rudolph Thorbecke.

Isaac Dignus Fransen van de Putte (1822-1902) was the Dutch colonial minister from 1863 to 1866. A liberal opponent of the Dutch culture system, he had been a sugar planter on Java. He had a brief stint as Prime Minister of the Netherlands in 1866.

W[illem] J. C. ridder Huyssen van Kattendijke (1816-1866) was the interim Dutch foreign affairs minister from 2 January 1864 to 15 March 1865. From The Hague, he was a marine officer who became a liberal politician.⁶ He had practical maritime experience sailing in the Mediterranean, in the East Indies, including the route to Japan, and in the West Indies. He became the Dutch Navy Minister in 1861. Much impressed by the news of the battle between the *Monitor* and *Merrimac*, he encouraged Dutch research for armored ships.

E[pimachus] J[acobus] B. “Eppo” Cremers (1823-1896) was the Dutch foreign affairs minister from 15 March 1864 to 1 June 1866. A liberal politician and supporter of I.D. Fransen van de Putte.

G[erhard] H[endrik] Uhlenbeck (1815-1888) was the Dutch colonial minister from 1 February 1862 to 3 January 1863. Born in Ceylon, he came from a family of naval officers and businessmen. He was partially responsible for proposing the 1862 law for the emancipation of slaves in Suriname and the Dutch West Indies. He also hoped to end the Dutch cultivation system and replace it with free labor in the Dutch East Indies.⁷

⁶ K. Huyssen van Kattendijke-Frank (ed.), *Met Prins Hendrik naar de Oost: De reis van W.J.C. Huyssen van Kattendijke naar Nederlands-Indië, 1836-1838* (Zutphen: Walburg, 2004).

⁷ A. Goss, *The Floracrats: State-Sponsored Science and the Failure of the Enlightenment in Indonesia* (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press, 2011), 43-4.

Gerhardus Henri Betz (1816-1868), was a member of Thorbecke's liberal cabinet as the minister of finances from 1862 to 1865. He was also the ad interim Dutch colonial minister in January and February 1863. He was responsible for ending Dutch trade protectionism and ushering in an era of free trade.

Adrian David Van der Gon Netscher (1811-??). A Dutch planter who encouraged colonization to increase the laboring population in Suriname. Born in Rotterdam, he became a coffee planter in British Guiana from 1848 to 1857, before returning to live in the Netherlands. He was a writer and an artist.