



Seven generations (Hedrich von) Wiederhold in the Dutch East Indies

Part I (1747- 1826)

A distant ancestor from Hessen serving with the VOC

Pirates versus Perak, tin versus silver and the virtuous Hendrik against the wily sultans

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Summary

Just before the transfer of sovereignty to the state of Indonesia, I moved with my parents from the former colony of the Dutch East Indies to the Netherlands. My maternal family had lived on the island of Java for many generations.

In the last thirty years I have reconstructed the life of my ancestors in the Dutch East Indies. In doing so, I traced a fascinating family history, using information from researchers in Germany, the Netherlands and Malaysia, as well as family documents, VOC archives and historical reports from Malaysia. My first ancestor in the Dutch East Indies was a young, enterprising German, Hendrik Julius Wiederhold, who left his hometown of Wanfried (Hessen) in 1747 to depart for Amsterdam. He served as a soldier with the VOC in the East Indies and never returned to his native country.

In Part I, I go back in time 270 years; I will discuss Hendrik's German background and give an account of his journey overseas to Batavia, his career in Malacca (the Malaysian peninsula) serving the VOC for more than 40 years, and his life as a citizen of Malacca. Virtually literal reports have been found of his experiences as a commander ("resident") of an outpost of the VOC in the sultanate of Perak, where he had to carry out his duties in a hostile environment. These reports give a fascinating insight into his daily life and the difficult and hazardous circumstances in which these 'servants' of the VOC carried out their duties in the outposts.

I will make frequent digressions to the daily affairs of the VOC and the complicated political situation on the Malaysian peninsula. I will also discuss the many confrontations of the VOC (and later the Dutch Republic) with the rapacious Malaysian pirates, the warmongering Bugis and the competition of the British East India Company in the area. Finally, I will discuss the later British occupation of Malacca in the Napoleonic era, the controversial foundation of Singapore by Thomas Raffles and the final Dutch loss of Malacca to the British.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Why did I write this account?

My maternal family, named Hedrich von Wiederhold, has lived on Java for many generations. I have always been fascinated by the question how this German name ended up in Indonesia. My maternal grandfather¹ had studied this matter, but he had died in a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp two years before I was born. Most of my family's possessions and documents in the Dutch East Indies were lost during the war. However, from the scant information held by my great-uncle,² I gathered that the Wiederhold family had been living on East Java for a considerable period of time and had owned sugar plantations.

In the last twenty years I have looked for the roots of the Hedrich von Wiederhold family in Indonesia. Almost by coincidence, I discovered a fascinating story. The first ancestor of the family landed in Java almost 270 years ago and was a 'servant'³ of the Dutch East Indies Company (VOC) for more than 40 years.

I would like to share Hendrik Julius's experiences and those of his descendants with my family. But I hope they will also prove interesting for anyone interested in the VOC and Dutch colonial history, especially because the story of the first Wiederhold in the East takes place in a part of the archipelago that is unknown to many: the Malaysian peninsula.

1.2 Our family in the Dutch Indies

My father moved in the latter part of the 1930s from Enschede to the Dutch East Indies to serve with the Airforce of the Royal Dutch East Indies Army.⁴ He was stationed at the Singosari airfield near Malang and met my mother in the town. She had been born in Malang and lived there with her parents and younger brother.⁵

My parents⁶ married on 19 January 1942 in Malang, when war had just broken out in the Dutch Indies. My father was stationed on Sumatra (Pakan Baru) and flew patrols over the Strait of Malacca to intercept suspicious vessels. He was given two days' leave to marry my mother. On his marriage day, 2.5 hours after the wedding ceremony, he was called back to the front by a liaison officer. The next day his squadron went on a mission to bomb Japanese transport ships in Muntok⁷ harbour.⁸ My parents did not see each other for the next four years.

After the surrender of the Royal Dutch East Indies Army, my father was taken prisoner of war in Bandung. My mother and grandmother were placed in women's camps in Solo and Ambarawa. My grandfather, who had been drafted to serve with the Royal Dutch

¹ Willy Andrew George Constant Hedrich von Wiederhold (Pladju, 29 November 1903 – Chungkai, 26 May 1945).

² Engineer Thomas Lucien Hedrich von Wiederhold (Pasuruan, 3 November 1896 – Malaga, 19 April 1970).

³ The term used for the employees of the VOC at the time.

⁴ In Dutch: Koninklijk Dutch-Indisch Leger or KNIL.

⁵ Goentoerweg 5. The house still exists.

⁶ Bernard Johannes Molenkamp (Enschede 1917 – Enschede 1996) and Germaine Hedrich von Wiederhold (1925).

⁷ Muntok is located on the western tip of the island of Bangka in Indonesia.

⁸ A transcript of his notes made during the war, which my father had made during a conversation with the historian P. Boer, is available from me or from a copy held by the Dutch Military History Service (Militair Historische Dienst).

East Indies Army infantry, was deported to Siam, together with a great number of other prisoners, to work on the Burma railway.

Immediately after the Japanese surrender, my father was called back to active service.⁹ My mother and grandmother returned to Malang by themselves,¹⁰ but were placed in internment camps again, this time by the Indonesians. They had lost contact with other family members years earlier. A year later, they found out that my grandfather had died and was buried in Chunkai in Siam,¹¹ a few months before the Japanese surrender on 15 August 1945.¹²

In the Dutch East Indies a power vacuum remained after the Japanese surrender on 15 August, leading to a chaotic situation. On 17 August Indonesia declared its independence. Irregular extremist groups¹³ moved about, plundering and killing at random. Tens of thousands of Dutch inhabitants¹⁴ and even Japanese were killed, until some control was re-established by the British and later the Dutch. Even afterwards, the situation remained tense and dangerous. My parents and my grandmother personally experienced the terrors of this time, which almost cost them their lives.

My father fortunately managed, with great effort, to find my mother. He took her to Brisbane,^{15,16} where he had been posted temporarily. In Brisbane, I was born and named after my deceased grandfather. After some time, we had to return to Java, where the battle for Indonesian independence had broken out. We lived in Rijswijk, a neighbourhood in Batavia. My father worked at Tjililitan airport and was picked up for work and returned every day by an armed transport.

Before the transfer of power to the independent state of Indonesia, our family left on leave to the Netherlands. Because of the further developments in Indonesia, we stayed in the Netherlands permanently. Soon my grandmother moved from Surabaya to the Netherlands. Three younger brothers were born; we grew up in Enschede.

At home, there was much talk about Indonesia, the beautiful period before the war and the hard times afterwards.

It was never discussed how the name of Hedrich von Wiederhold had ended up on Java. My mother and grandmother were more interested in the Wiederhold coat of arms, which hung in our living room and was spoken of with pride. The Wiederhold family had, according to family history, an interesting past, originating in Germany. One of the

⁹ I will return to this later. I possess an account of his experiences, describing how he was ordered to take the Kalibentang airport, near Semarang, from the Japanese, and was captured by Indonesian extremists.

¹⁰ Their house had by then been occupied. They moved in for a month with my mother's grandmother, Mrs. D. Lammers, who owned a private maternity hospital and whom the Japanese had allowed to stay in her home. The Indonesians boycotted the Dutch by shutting down the water and electricity supply. Giving food to Dutch people was punishable by death. Later, the three women were interned in an Indonesian camp in Malang, where they survived for almost a year in appalling circumstances.

¹¹ Modern Thailand.

¹² Letter of Mr. W.P. Broekema, B.B.G. Afd. Onderwijs Bangkok, dated 12 July 1946. Broekema had been in the same camp.

¹³ Robber groups, Muslim groups, and irregular troops of the TNI (Indonesian army) and Pamudas (armed youth militias). They have often been unjustly labelled 'freedom fighters'. See: H. Th. Bussemaker, *Bersiap! Opstand in het paradijs. De Bersiap-periode op Java en Sumatra 1945-1946*. Zutphen: Walburg Press, 2005.

¹⁴ Europeans, Indo-Europeans, Chinese, Indonesians loyal to the Dutch government and others.

¹⁵ During the war, the Dutch East Indies Government had been located in Australia. My father was posted to the department of Traffic and Waterworks with the 19th Transport Squadron in Brisbane.

¹⁶ This happened on 10 July 1946. They left from the military airport at Tjililitan. My father was a member of the crew. There were only a few passengers on board, including the Baron van Aerssen. The journey had various stages: East Timor, Clonkerry (Australia) and Brisbane.

family members was Conrad Widerhold, a career soldier who had become very famous in Germany because of his role in the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648). Because of him, many genealogical researchers are still actively studying the Widerhold family tree. Less well-known Wiederholds have also received some attention in the process.¹⁷

1.3 Connecting the dots

One morning around 1980-81, an elderly German couple called at my mother's door.¹⁸ Alfred Widerhold from Kassel had been doing genealogical research on the Widerhold family for 55 years and had written a detailed book about it. He had come upon the 'Indonesian' branch of the Wiederholds, part of the so-called 'Homburg- and Münde-line'. In a Dutch phone book he had found the name and address of my grandmother, Mrs. J. H. Hedrich von Wiederhold-De Bruin,¹⁹ and wanted to get in touch with her. My grandmother was at first very reluctant to receive Alfred. But when he showed her the Widerhold family crest, she connected the dots. This was the start of an interesting relationship. Alfred had already charted the Indonesian branch, based on documents which apparently had survived.

He showed us that seven generations earlier, Heinrich Julius Widerhold from Wanfried (Hessen) had entered into service with the VOC in 1747 and travelled to the East. His descendants had always lived in the Dutch East Indies until their departure after the war. This cleared up the connection between the Widerholds in Germany and the Indonesian branch. In the past 30 years, I have looked further into Widerhold's traces in the Dutch East Indies.

1.4 Method and justification

Slowly the 'skeleton' created so clearly by Alfred Widerhold was fleshed out. As my research progressed, the past came to life. The family histories which my mother and grandmother had told me, were confirmed and supplemented with actual supporting evidence.

My wife Yvonne and I have, sometimes with my mother, travelled to Germany, Malaysia and Indonesia several times in order to follow the traces of the Wiederholds and create an image of their lives.

In order to get a good picture of the situation, I read a great deal about the VOC²⁰ and Dutch colonial history. I received great support from a colleague at KPMG, the late Peter Hollander, registered accountant. He greatly assisted me in my research at the Dutch National Archives in The Hague, as well as introducing me to other researchers. I am still very grateful to him. The National Archives own an overwhelming amount of digitally accessible materials regarding to the VOC and other relevant subjects. As I went along, I found much more than I had expected. Moreover, I was very lucky: the

¹⁷ Among others, Professor Gio Wiederhold, professor at Stanford University. I am in frequent correspondence with Gio and have met him personally. Gio is one of the first 'Computer' professors in the United States. He has created a digital database of all Wiederholds, so that connections between current and past Widerholds can be identified immediately.

¹⁸ Alfred Widerhold, Boyneburgstrasse 2, D3500 Kassel. Rundbrief Nr. 5, January 1983.

¹⁹ Jeanette Henriëtte Hedrich von Wiederhold-De Bruin (1902-1994).

digitalisation of source material continued apace, so that many sources in the Netherlands, Germany, United Kingdom and Malaysia became accessible.

The Dutch Central Bureau for Genealogy turned out to own a publication about the European population of Malacca under Dutch rule,²¹ containing interesting information about the second and third generation of Wiederholds in the area. Peter Hollander pointed me in the direction of the Malaysian historian Barbara Watson Andaya, who has published several interesting books about Perak in the eighteenth century, in which Hendrik Julius Wiederhold features as well. She has also provided me personally with additional information. Finally, I was happily surprised by a publication in the *Indische Navorser*, published by the Indonesian Genealogical Society (Indisch Genealogische Vereniging or IGV). Roel de Neve, secretary of the IGV, had studied the names Wiederhold and Hedrich von Wiederhold on his own initiative and published the results.²²

This study for me personally was an exciting journey of discovery, as well as a great hobby. Moreover, my family history was a great starting point to learn more about the history of the VOC and the Dutch East Indies, as well as engross myself in the way of life of my ancestors.

It should be noted that I will not discuss the history of the Dutch East Indies in full, but only the main events. I do not intend to give a complete, academically reliable summary.²³ I only wish to touch upon some 'highlights' in order to clarify my account. In doing so, I have made a few excursions in the history of the VOC, in so far as this is relevant for the story of the Wiederholds. Readers interested in the VOC I would like to refer to the very accessible works of authorities such as Femme Gaastra²⁴ and Els Jacobs.²⁵

In order to liven up the story, Hendrik's experiences are written in present tense, while general historical events are set in the past tense. Furthermore, I use several terms for the same thing: the VOC is also called the 'Company'; the Dutch East Indies also 'Indonesia' or 'the East'; a 'sultan' is sometimes called a 'ruler'. When I thought this was necessary, I have used explanatory footnotes.

Now on to the story of the Widerholds in Germany and Hendrik Julius Wiederhold, an enterprising young German,²⁶ who entered into service with the VOC and left for the East – he never returned to the country of his birth.

2. The Wiederhold family in Hessen

2.1. Distribution of the name in Germany

²¹ P.A. Christiaans, 'De Europese bevolking van Malacca onder het laatste Nederlandse bestuur, 1818-1825'. *Jaarboek Centraal Bureau voor Genealogie*. Part 40 (1986) p. 257-287.

²² *De Indische Navorser*, vol. 18 (2005) no. 4.

²³ Historians David Armitage and Jo Guildi have called for historical writing which not just mentions dry historical facts and figures, but – in my words – places history in a contemporary context, which can teach us valuable lessons. In my view, many of the issues which the reader will encounter in my account are still relevant. I would like to answer the call of Armitage and others. I will leave it to the reader to translate the experience of the past into the present.

²⁴ Femme S. Gaastra, *De geschiedenis van de VOC*. Zutphen: Walburg Press, 1991.

²⁵ Els M. Jacobs, *Koopman in Azië*. Zutphen: Walburg Press, 1993.

²⁶ N.B. Germany did not yet exist as a united nation state, but I will use the name for want of a better term.

The family name Wiederhold (also written 'Wedderholt' or 'Widerholt') is mentioned in Hessen around 1450. The name is still common in the area, especially around the city of Kassel.

At first it was a family of small businessmen, craftsmen, traders, clergymen and teachers, with a few mayors and a governor. A rather large number of Wiederholds were professional soldiers. In 1637 one branch of the Wiederhold family was knighted and received the right to call itself 'Von und in Wiedenhoven'. The family crest, which I have mentioned before, was introduced.^{27, 28, 29, 30}

The family was not yet very well known. This changed during the Thirty Years' War (1618-1648), when Conrad Wiederhold,³¹ a professional soldier, saved the family name for posterity. His actions ensured that the Wiederhold name became a popular subject for genealogical study. Thanks to him, I was able, centuries later, to discover the family tree of the Wiederholds in the Dutch East Indies.

2.2. Conrad Wiederhold (1598-1667)³²

Germany, as it is now known, did not yet exist. It was subject to the rule of the Holy Roman Emperor, but in fact consisted of hundreds of more or less autonomous states. Actual power had been located with the Habsburgs in Austria since 1453. In 1618 the Thirty Years' War broke out in Germany.

At first, this consisted of a series of religious conflicts, escalating into a devastating war between the German states themselves, with the imperial army and with Sweden. Conrad Wiederhold made his name during this war. He was a mercenary (mounted musketeer), who joined the army at the age of 17.

After his education he served with the Hanse republic of Bremen, married the daughter of the garrison commander of Helgoland³³ and then travelled throughout Europe,³⁴ where he became an expert in the latest military innovations.

He also served in the army of the Netherlands and was posted in Delfzijl. In Venice, the heartland of military innovation, Conrad met the Duke of Württemberg. Later, he joined the Duke's army at his request. He was quickly promoted and distinguished himself on the battlefield. In 1632 he was promoted to Oberst-Leutnant (Lieutenant-Colonel).

In 1634 Conrad was named commander of the fortress of Hohentwiel (located near the modern town of Singen on Lake Boden). Hohentwiel was owned by Eberhard III Von Württemberg. It was the last Württembergian outpost against the imperial troops of the Holy Roman Empire.³⁵ Eberhard III himself fled to Strasbourg and left the defence of

²⁷ Field quarterly, silver and azure, with ram escutcheon. Quarters 1 and 4 in gold with black eagle; quarter 2 and 3 in red, chevron silver with three green clover leaves.

²⁸ *Kneschke's Adelslexicon*. Band 9, p. 567.

²⁹ *Geslechter und Siegelkunde. Das Geschlecht von Wiederhold*, undated document from the 19th century in Gothic script.

³⁰ By Württembergian decree of 29 November 1824 for Cuno van Wiederhold, a Württembergian major-general, the status of nobility was again confirmed.

³¹ Obrist (Chief) Conrad Widerhold.

³² Friedrich Carst. *Historie und genealogisches Adelsbuch des Königreichs Württemberg. II. Genealogie des Ritterschaftlichen Adels*. Stuttgart, 1839.

³³ During a military parade attended by the daughter of the commander of Helgoland, who was on horseback, Wiederhold's musket accidentally fired. The horse of the commander's daughter spooked. He managed to save her and thus won her heart.

³⁴ Especially England, the Netherlands, France, Portugal, Spain, Italy and Corfu.

³⁵ Ferdinand II and Ferdinand III, Arch Dukes of Austria.

Hohentwiel to Conrad. Despite Eberhardt III's request to leave Hohentwiel to the emperor, Conrad emphatically refused. He defended the fortress very ably for fourteen years, and survived no less than five sieges by the imperial, Spanish and Bavarian troops. He took all steps necessary: all possible defensive positions in the surroundings were razed to the ground. Nearby fiefdoms were obliged to pay tribute. Raids were carried out across southern Germany in order to weaken the enemy as much as possible.

Conrad was feared, but at the same time respected for his fairness, integrity and moral character. He never forgot the escaped Duke, who was seriously short of money. He brought him cash through soldiers dressed as beggars. He was also a strictly religious protestant. During the sieges, he built a church in the fortress,³⁶ where he often preached himself. Conrad was rewarded for his services and received, among other rewards, the fiefdom of Neidlingen and the title of *Kriegsrat*.³⁷

He cared greatly for the poor, the sick and the injured. The education of young people was near to his heart and he created a fund for this purpose with a starting capital of 15,000 guilders. After his death, of natural causes, he was buried with his wife in St. Martin's church in Kirchheim. Their monuments and epitaphs are a great homage.

The fortification Hohentwiel was widely known, especially during the Romantic period. In the Napoleonic era, Hohentwiel was blown up by French troops under general Van Damme, although it took them seven weeks to destroy the solidly-built fortress. In the midst of the ruins, a bust of Wiederhold has been placed. To honour his memory, the town of Singen regularly organizes the *Wiederhold Feste*. He was feared among the population for a long time. Mothers with unruly children threatened to call Wiederhold. I'm not sure this was effective – pedagogical ideas have changed since then.

2.3. Widerhold's link with the Netherlands

As mentioned before, Conrad Widerhold briefly served in the Netherlands. There is another connection between the Widerholds and the Netherlands, which is interesting to mention. Georg Reinhard Wiederhold van Weidenhoven was a military businessman, a 'colonel'. He worked as a mercenary with a regiment of Wallonian horsemen, which he recruited himself and equipped at his own cost.

He fought in the Dutch Eighty Years' War first under the royalist Hendrik, Earl van den Berg,³⁸ on the Spanish side, against the Dutch troops. He was knighted by the emperor of the Holy Roman Emperor³⁹ and called himself 'Widerholt van Weidenhofen', lord of Poederooijen, colonel and governor of Boekholt.⁴⁰ He acquired the fiefdom Poederooijen on 27 May 1645. Georg Widerholt then changed to the Dutch side, when

³⁶ To obtain an organ for his new church he took the city of Überlingen on Lake Bodensee. He did not want money, but only the organ, and he got it.

³⁷ Conrad continued his profession as an army commander and took service with, among others, Louis XIII.

³⁸ A son of the oldest sister of William of Orange and therefore a cousin of Stadtholder Frederik Hendrik. He was a prominent soldier in the Spanish camp, who moved to the Stadtholder's side because of dissatisfaction with Spanish dominance and through bribes.

³⁹ Carst, *Adelsbuch des Königreichs Württemberg*; Adelsblatt 1889, p. 71.

⁴⁰ See Regionaal Archief Rivierenland 3508 Wapenalbums Familiewapens Bommelerwaard Nr. Wied/3122 and the register of the Gelders Archief, Register Leenakteboeken van Gelre en Zutphen e.a. no. 325, p. 719-721 by Sloet e.a.

Hendrik van den Berg started to work for the Republic (Dutch States General) in 1632. At that point he led five companies, with a total of 619 men.⁴¹

On 1 November his five companies were reduced to one of 150 men, in order to save money. The Dutch States General only pay him a captain's wage. Therefore, in 1642 he joined the Landgravine of Hessen, even though he continued to live in Holland.

Georg first lived in the centre of Delft, his favourite town.⁴² In 1642 he bought a plot from the Earldom of Holland at the Buitenhof 37 in The Hague and built a house there.⁴³ This house is currently named the Vijverhof, also known as Noyelleshuis,⁴⁴ and houses the Ministry of General Affairs. Various sketches of the town made in the 17th century indicate the house as belonging to 'Capiteyn' (Captain) Widerholt, on the road from The Hague to Rijswijk and Delft.

Georg Reinhard fought in the last year of the Thirty Years' War as a colonel under general Karl Rabenhaupt against the imperial army led by general Holzappel. At the siege of Homberg castle in Homburg/Efze (Northern Hessen) he lost the upper part of his leg by a ricocheting missile.⁴⁵ He died the next day, 8 February 1648.

He was buried the next month in the New Church in Delft, next to his wife, Elizabeth Voller, who had predeceased him. His tomb with name and titles is mentioned in old inventories, but has now disappeared.^{46,47}

3. Hendrik Julius Wiederhold

3.1. His family

Hendrik Julius Wiederhold is born on 6 June 1724 in Wanfried in Hessen, as Heinrich Julius, son of the merchant Arnold Heinrich Wiederhold^{48,49} and Anna Maria Walter.⁵⁰

3.2. Heinrich Julius leaves for Amsterdam

⁴¹ He was hired by Hendrik, Earl van den Berg, after the latter had betrayed the Spanish cause in the southern Netherlands, to serve the Spanish with the troops he had raised.

⁴² He is mentioned in the city archives of Delft in relation to tax declarations.

⁴³ Dr. W. Moll, 'Die Haghe.' *Jaarboek-Die Haghe*, 1945, p. 106, 107, 132

⁴⁴ [https://nl.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vijverhof_\(Den_Haag\)](https://nl.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vijverhof_(Den_Haag)). The plot was located at the corner of the Vijverdam and the Buitenhof. It was bought from the Earldom of Holland and the house was built on Widerholt's instructions by stonemason Adriaanszoon 't Hooft and mason Thomas Jaspersen Hogendorp. When the building was finished, Widerholt's finances were rather desperate, probably because of developments in the war. In 1680 the house was acquired by the Count de Noyelles, also a career soldier.

⁴⁵ Karl Freiherr Rabenhaupt von Sucha. *Der Dreissigerjährige Krieg in Selbstzeugnisse Chronike und Berichte*. <http://www.30jaehrigerkrieg.de/rabenhaupt-karl-freiherr-rabenhaupt-von-sucha-3/>

⁴⁶ Lord of Boekholt (Bocholt?) and Van Poederooijen.

⁴⁷ Gio Wiederhold (see note 17) and I were unable to find the tomb. Graves were often 'reused' in this period. The tomb is mentioned by Phileleutherus Timaretes (pen-name of Theodorus Janssonius van Almelooven), Albertus Frese, *Verzameling van gedenkstukken in Nederland, uit geestelyke etc. etc.*, Vol. 2.

⁴⁸ Son and sixth child of Christoph Heinrich Wiederhold and Katharina Elisabeth Hillgard (born 18 January 1665 in Münden, died 5 November 1730 in Göttingen). Christoph's father was Heinrich Wiederhold, merchant and mayor of Münden (born 24 January 1620, died 27 September 1680 in Münden); in the village of Bühren in St. Blasius' church a tombstone is still present. His father was Johannes (born 1578 in Homberg, died 30 May 1626 in Münden), first teacher in Hannover, later minister in Bühren.

⁴⁹ Born 10 March 1698 in Münden, died 17 March 1757 in Wanfried.

⁵⁰ *Stammfolgen Wiederhold aus Homberg/Efze*; bearbeitet und verlegt von Alfred Wiederhold, Kassel (1981); *55 Jahre Familieforschung Wiederhold*. Vortrag von Alfred Wiederhold, Kassel (1985).

In his twenties, Heinrich leaves his place of birth and leaves for Amsterdam. In 1747 he joins the VOC (Dutch East Indies Company, also known as the Company) as a soldier. We do not know how he travelled to Amsterdam. Most Germans from Hessen either walked through the Eastern Netherlands or sailed down the Rhine.⁵¹ The journey to Amsterdam was not free of risk at this time. Travellers were often assaulted and robbed. The situation in the Dutch United Provinces was unstable in any case. The French had invaded the Dutch United Provinces in 1747 and had already taken Dutch Flanders and Bergen op Zoom.

We don't know why Heinrich Julius wanted to go to the East Indies. His father was a merchant and councillor in Wanfried and also owned an inn in the town. Undoubtedly his father knew people who knew about the VOC; perhaps stories about the East made Heinrich Julius curious. He was not the only German who joined the VOC, because the United Provinces were very attractive throughout Europe in terms of labour opportunities.

3.3. Germans serving the Company

In the mid-eighteenth century, every year some 33,000 Germans moved to the United Provinces in search of work. Many of them joined the VOC, or as it was called at the time, became 'servants' of the VOC. This was a remarkably high number of migrants compared to the Dutch population of ca. 2 million.⁵² If we calculate this rate for the contemporary Netherlands, with ca. 16 million inhabitants in 2016, this would mean more than 250,000 German immigrants per year!

Throughout the existence of the VOC (1602-1799) 60% of the soldiers and 40% of the sailors were foreigners. Most of those working on VOC ships came, in the seventeenth century, from Norway, Denmark, the German North Sea coast and the Baltic states. The soldiers and craftsmen were mostly men from the inland German states. Without this immigration, it would have been impossible for a multinational like the VOC to have existed for such a long period of time.

The literature sketches a persistently negative image of the lower personnel of the VOC, of foreign origins, who are described as 'a grey mass, a collection of thieves and vagabonds, who join as soldiers or sailors, as a desperate move in a hopeless situation'. Similarly, the ship's surgeon Nicolaas de Graaff wrote in his travel journal around 1700⁵³ that the VOC was a haven for the poor, including men from Poland, Sweden, Denmark, 'the North', Jutland, Hamburg, Bremen, Lübeck, Danzig, Königsberg, High-Germans, 'the East', Westphalia, Bergen, Gulik, Cleve *'and all other kinds of Krauts, bastards, mutts, wage labourers and other cows, who still have the grass between their teeth...'*

This very negative image should be nuanced, in my view. No doubt there were many migrants who matched the prejudice sketched above. But there were also several good reasons for young German men to leave their native country. Not just the generally depressed economic situation, but also an eagerness to travel, curiosity, entrepreneurial spirit, 'Wanderschaft'⁵⁴ or the wish to avoid being pressed into the army were valid

⁵¹ Roelof van Gelder, *Het Oost-Indisch avontuur: Duitsers in dienst van de VOC*. Nijmegen: SUN Press, 1997.

⁵² <https://www.rug.nl/staff/r.f.j.paping/urbanisatietilburg2009powerpoint.pdf>

⁵³ Nicolaas de Graaf joined the VOC as ship's surgeon in 1639, travelled extensively with the VOC and published travel journals.

⁵⁴ The obligation for apprentices to undertake work experience elsewhere.

reasons. Among the migrants we find students, craftsmen, soldiers, merchants, accountants, surgeons and many other skilled men.

In what is now the Netherlands people often looked down on economic migrants and especially on Germans. For this group it was impossible to sail to the East other than as simple soldiers or sailors, despite their qualifications. The VOC's policy was to appoint only Dutchmen as ship's commanders, magistrates in the East and high-ranked businessmen.⁵⁵ The same applied to Hendrik Julius. He was probably a capable writer and bookkeeper, but joined the VOC as a soldier.

3.4. Joining as a soldier in the VOC Chambers in Amsterdam

Hendrik Julius (we'll call him 'Hendrik') joins as a soldier for a wage of 9 guilders per month (about 186 euros in current value), at the VOC Chamber in Amsterdam,⁵⁶ located in the East India House, which still exists.⁵⁷ The VOC did not set specific physical requirements for its soldiers. We only know that soldiers from Württemberg had to be at least 1.50 metres tall.

Hendrik is hired and leaves with the ship 'Domburg' to Batavia. In his ship's wage book, the General Land- and Sea joining rolls,⁵⁸ and later correspondence by the VOC his first name is 'Dutchified' as Hendrik⁵⁹ instead of Heinrich. At departure, he is given 18 guilders spending money. A sum of 150 guilders is written off, probably as a reimbursement for his stay in Amsterdam. Furthermore, 9 guilders and 25 cents are charged for his sea chest.

All this information is taken from his ship's wage book at the ship 'Domburg' under the name 'Hendrik Julius Wiederhold'. From the moment of joining until his death, more than 40 years later, all (financial) transactions were accounted for in his ship's wage book – a remarkable achievement for this period. Therefore I would like to discuss briefly the payroll of the VOC: the General Land- and Sea joining rolls and the ships' wage books.

3.5. The 'General Land- and Sea joining rolls' and the ships' wage books: the VOC's payroll⁶⁰

Each Chamber of the VOC maintained its own payroll, according to nationally arranged rules. Every year the Company made a list of all its personnel on land and sea, the 'servants' in Asia and the Cape of Good Hope. These General Land- and Sea joining rolls list thousands of VOC servants, with their ranks and stations.

The Land joining roll distinguished between civilian and military personnel. Every servant of the VOC was assigned a rank with a matching wage. Within each rank, there were several positions.

⁵⁵ Van Gelder, *Het Oost-Indisch avontuur*.

⁵⁶ The VOC had six Chambers, of which the Amsterdam Chamber was one of the most important.

⁵⁷ Current address: Kloveniersburgwal 48, Amsterdam.

⁵⁸ In Dutch: Generale Land- en Zeemonsterrollen.

⁵⁹ In the register of the National Archive his name is wrongly spelled as Wiederholt, apparently as the result of a copying error. In the various VOC documents his name is spelled ending in D.

⁶⁰ A great overview of the personnel administration of the VOC was written by the late Peter Hollander. It is available on the website of the VOC Chamber (Caemer) Die Haghe; non-members may approach the secretary of the Chamber or the present author (http://www.voccaemer.nl/fileadmin/afbeeldingen/Het_personeel_van_de_VOC.pdf)

The basis of the payroll were the ships' wage books. These listed the personal details and wages of all those sailing on each VOC ship. The data were entered per employee. The payroll started with the date on which the ship left the shore and ended with the payment of the sum the sailor (or a rightful claimant) was owed at the end of the contract. For safety, copies were sent both to the office in Batavia and the relevant VOC Chamber in the Netherlands. Each year all changes in the ship's book were listed under the name of the ship when it left shore.

The VOC personnel was at its largest around 1750, when it employed around 25,000 people. It was a painstaking job to keep the payroll up to date, but the VOC was very good at 'payroll management'. Of all eighteenth-century ship's wage books, about 95% have survived: 2.797 books out of 2.950 journeys from the Netherlands. Thanks to this well-oiled administrative machine we now have a series of ships' book with over 700,000 names of VOC servants, which have been written down in a uniform manner with very few mistakes.

Since 2003, the archives of the VOC have been listed as Unesco World Heritage in the 'documents' category. Unesco considers the archive the largest and most impressive of all early modern European trading companies active in the East. The VOC archives are kept by government organizations in Cape Town, Chennai, Colombo, Jakarta and The Hague. About 25 million pages have survived. According to Unesco, they constitute the most detailed and most complete source from early modern world history, as they contain relevant information about the history of hundreds of local political and trade organizations in Asia and Africa. The VOC archives, moreover, contain a wealth of information, on a variety of subjects (climate, sociology, botany et cetera), that is still of value to scientists.

4. Hendrik's journey to Batavia

4.1. The ship Domburg

Hendrik travels to Batavia in the ship 'Domburg', weighing 850 ton. It was built in 1740, commissioned by the Zeeland Chamber. On its third journey to Java, it leaves the roadstead at Texel on 3 March 1747,⁶¹ commanded by captain Leendert Bonekamp. The weather that day is bleak (2 degrees Celsius) and cloudy with a north-westerly wind. The ship is carrying 201 sailors, 112 soldiers and three craftsmen.

The 'Domburg' does not, as was usual at the time, visit the Cape of Good Hope. Instead, the Domburg is at Bay False⁶² from 10 June to 4 July 1747, before it continues on its way to Batavia. The ship arrives there on 17 September 1747.⁶³ On the way back to the Netherlands, in early 1748, the Domburg is shipwrecked somewhere between Batavia and Cape Town, carrying cargo valued at 212.281 guilders. To my knowledge, the wreck has never been found.

Hendrik's journey to the East was not free of danger. Ships could sink or be captured on the way. For the sailors and soldiers on board, the living circumstances were very hard, as I will discuss this in more detail in the next section.

⁶¹ Those sailing on the ship were brought from Amsterdam to Texel in smaller vessels.

⁶² A bay about 48 km from Cape Town.

⁶³ Cees Basker, curator of the West-Fries Museum, letter dated 8 July 1997 to Mr. P. Hollander.

4.2. Travelling to the East by ship in Hendrik's time

Between 1602 and 1795, 4,721 VOC ships, carrying a total of 973,000 Europeans, sailed from the Republic to Asia. In the same period, 3,354 ships with 366,900 occupants returned from the East to the Republic.

The average number of people on board the ships during the outward journey was 206, while this was 109 on the return journey. The difference can be explained by the death of many Company servants either on board or in the East. Many other servants preferred to settle down overseas.⁶⁴

The occupants formed a mixed group, originating in the Republic, Germany, Scandinavia and other countries around the Baltic Sea. The officers and passengers enjoyed separate cabins, while the rest of the crew had to find space below deck or in the "cow bridge", the lowest deck above the hold. In this low, narrow and dark space the men slept close together, between the cannons, the ship's gear and their sea chests, in hammocks made of sailcloth with a mattress, pillow and blanket.

Fresh air only entered through the portholes and hatches, but these were closed in bad weather. The crew was 'aired' every day in front of the main mast, if the weather permitted. Lighting below decks was limited. The portholes and hatches admitted some light, when they were open in fine weather. If necessary, the crew used oil lamps.

The food on board was sufficient in calorific energy but very fatty and salty and lacked vitamins. Great amounts of food were taken on board for the journey. For a crew of 350, the ship carried 55,000 pounds of bread, 22,000 pounds of meat, 10,000 pounds of bacon, 3,700 pounds of butter and 700 cheeses.

The rations were described in detail in the so-called 'article letter' of the VOC and were carefully measured. For normal sailors, the ration per week was 330 grams of meat, 660 grams of bacon, 220 grams of butter for the bread, one 'mutsje' or dram (25 cl) of vinegar and one dram of olive oil. Provisions often spoiled because of the bad quality of the purchased goods and the circumstances on board.

Great amounts of beer, brandy, wine and water were carried. Every crewman received two litres of beer per day at the beginning of the journey. The supply of beer lasted about three months. Furthermore, everyone received four drams of gin or brandy per day, diluted with water. At the time, gin was considered a medicinal drink, not an alcoholic beverage. When the beer ran out, the drinking water supply was drawn upon. This was sufficient for four months. Because of the heat and biological pollution, its quality rapidly decreased.

Three meals were taken on board every day. Breakfast was consumed at 8 AM, after morning prayers, and consisted of groats mixed with plums or raisins, often diluted with water, beer or wine. The noon meal consisted of boiled beans or peas with a butter or fat sauce. Four days a week this was supplemented with salted cod, two days a week with bacon and one day a week with salt beef. For dinner, the leftovers of the noon meal were used, supplemented with bread and beer. Fresh meat was sometimes on the menu, when chickens or pigs were slaughtered. The sailors also caught fish, or, when they were near land, seals and turtles. There were few complaints about the food and drink:

⁶⁴ VOC Kenniscentrum. <http://www.voc-kenniscentrum.nl/themas.html>

feedback by complainants was mercilessly punished with a flogging and a stay in the lockup. This effectively quelled any complaints.

Mortality rates on board of VOC ships are not exactly known; it is estimated that about 15% of occupants did not survive the outward journey, against 10% for the return. On board, diseases like malaria, beriberi, colds, pneumonia and scurvy were common. The cold and rain in Europe and the hot days and cold nights in the tropics often caused common colds and pneumonia.

The men did not always own adequate clothing to protect themselves against the cold. Sometimes they had sold their warm clothes in Amsterdam, because they had been told they wouldn't need them in the hot climate. Some men didn't own more than one set of clothing, so that they had to sleep in their wet clothes. In order to prevent illness as a result of the cold and wet weather, the ships' occupants were given extra wine and brandy several times a week, usually in the morning on an empty stomach.

After a publication by the Scottish scientist James Lind⁶⁵ in 1753, about the beneficial effects of lemon against scurvy, the VOC quickly moved to provide the ships' occupants with one spoon of 'lemon' juice a day, before breakfast. Immediately the percentage of deaths on board fell to 2-3%.

The board of the VOC, the 'Heeren 17' (Seventeen Lords) had issued various hygienic instructions.⁶⁶ Every day, the ships must be cleaned and waste disposed of; several times a week the baggage should be brought up to the deck, so that the hold could be scrubbed. In this period, diseases were usually blamed on 'bad air' (miasma). Therefore, the sailors' and soldiers' quarters were regularly sprayed with vinegar; gunpowder and juniper berries were burned to 'clean' the air.⁶⁷

When, despite these preventive measures, disease broke out on board, the ill had to be isolated. In practice this usually did not succeed, because of the limited space. For the treatment of wounds after accidents, the ships employed surgeons, but they could only offer basic medical assistance. If the surgeons could do nothing, the 'comforters of the sick' stepped in. The comforters were 'preachers' without any education. They read prayers in the morning and evening and sang a few psalms. On Sundays they were expected to give a sermon, while they also assisted the sick and dying by reading prayers.

Still, it was not all bad. After the daily labour, there was time for entertainment during the journey. In good weather, plays were performed and there was music, singing and dancing. Chess and checkers were also popular, but cards and dice were expressly forbidden and punished with a fine. Sometimes physical games got quite wild, such as the 'miller's game', where the players were roughly treated physically and mentally. Hendrik Julius must have been strong, because he survived the long and no doubt arduous journey on the 'Domburg', in contrast to some of the other occupants of the ship. But this was not the end of the challenges that he faced. On arrival in Batavia, new ordeals awaited him.

⁶⁵ James Lind, *A treatise of the scurvy in three parts. An inquiry into the nature, causes and cure of that disease*. Edinburgh: A. Kincaid & A. Donaldson, 1753.

⁶⁶ In the so-called 'article letters'.

⁶⁷ With today's knowledge we can say that this has a slightly disinfecting effect. The burning of gunpowder releases sulphur dioxide, which certainly has disinfectant qualities. Vinegar is known for its bactericidal effect.

In the next chapter I will discuss Batavia, its history and its role in the trade network of the VOC.

5. Batavia

5.1. History and role of the city of Batavia for the VOC

Batavia had been founded in 1619 with the express intention to function as the headquarters of the VOC. The VOC focused primarily on trade and especially on selling spices⁶⁸ from the East in Europe, which brought in large profits for the Company. But the VOC had little to offer in terms of European products that were of value for the Asian market. To finance its trade, therefore, large quantities of silver, gold and cash had to be brought in from Europe. Governor-general Jan Pieterszoon Coen (1587-1629) quickly realized that a strong trade network in Asia was required to systematically solve the shortage of precious metals.

The sale of Chinese silk to Japan was at first a reliable and profitable source of gold and silver, as well as copper. This silver was used to buy textiles in India, which were then traded for pepper and spices in South East Asia. Thus the VOC slowly built a network of factories (trading posts), which supplied silver, tin, timber, skins, copper, sulphur, ivory, betel nuts and opium. This pan-Asian trade network was also called the 'Indian outer trade'.⁶⁹

Coen knew that a permanent base in Eastern Indonesia was necessary for the proper functioning of the 'outer trade'. Several possible settlement locations were considered. The first option was the town of Malacca, which in the early seventeenth century was held by the Portuguese. 'Governor' Cornelius Matelief de Jonge was sent in 1605 from the Netherlands with a fleet of twelve ships, carrying 1,300 men, to take Malacca. He was assisted by the sultan of Johor, who had been expelled by the Portuguese. Despite heavy battles on land and sea, the Portuguese were expelled only in 1641. This was too late according to Coen, who did not want to wait this long. Therefore, he conquered Jacatra on the island of Java on 30 May 1619 and founded the town of Batavia as headquarters and distribution centre of the VOC.

Coen's initial intention was to make Batavia a free trade post with a Dutch colony of citizen settlers, who would be free to trade. This failed, because the town was not desirable enough to attract colonists from Europe. The VOC board therefore changed its policy and decided on 13 April 1652 to refuse further colonists from the Netherlands, with the exception of wives of the higher and middle management of the VOC. The trade privileges of the Batavian citizens who had already settled there were withdrawn. The Company took over the monopoly on trade in lucrative goods, as this brought in large amounts of money for the town of Batavia. Furthermore, until the end of the Eighty

⁶⁸ Pepper, nutmeg, mace and cloves.

⁶⁹ Trade within Asia was very profitable for the VOC until the end of the seventeenth century. Later, trade with Japan by way of Dejima largely dried up and the export of silver and gold from Japan was forbidden. In the second half of the eighteenth century trade moved from expensive luxury goods to cheaper mass-produced items, which lowered the profit margin.

Years' War, privateering was very profitable,⁷⁰ especially the capture of Portuguese carracks⁷¹ in de Strait of Malacca.

Batavia developed into a large town, designed according to a Dutch model, with typically Dutch canals and houses.⁷² The town quickly became a commercially powerful force, taking up an independent position in between the existing principalities of Java. The primary aim of the VOC was trade, as mentioned above, not expansion of territory. Nevertheless, the VOC was often drawn into the conflicts between the principalities in the Indonesian archipelago. In exchange for military support the VOC received important trading posts and monopolies.

5.2. Hendrik's arrival in Batavia

We don't know much about Hendrik's arrival, except for the date, 17 September 1747. In Batavia this is the dry season; the monsoon will start in a few months. The temperature will have been around 30 degrees Celsius during the day and about 20 at night.

5.3. The soldiers' life in Batavia

Using travel journeys by contemporaries, we can gain an impression of the usual course of events and living circumstances at the time of Hendrik's arrival. Hendrik, with his fellow soldiers, will have entered the castle of Batavia through the Water Gate. The castle was the fortress that served as the command post of the governor-general and his staff, from which the entire area under control of the VOC was ruled. The castle had a garrison of about 800 to 1000 soldiers and housed facilities such as barracks, a hospital, a laboratory et cetera. It was located on the Sunda Kelappa, Batavia's port. This also held the huge and heavily guarded warehouses of the VOC and a large shipyard.⁷³

The soldiers were assigned to the bulwarks of the castle and the city gates. They were housed in barracks. Those who were more or less healthy and were to serve on land were given three days' leave, the so-called 'baarse dagen' (newbie days). They could use this time to visit Batavia and get used to the climate and the inhabitants. Next, the new arrivals were assigned to their definitive posting and position, depending on their job experience in Europe and the qualities they had shown to possess. Hendrik was no doubt assigned on the basis of his writing and bookkeeping skills. After this, the soldiers could be sent to one of the many outposts of the Company.

Countless soldiers and sailors were already ill when they arrived, or fell sick because of the sudden change in climate and food. In the 'Inner Hospital', built in 1640, 160,000 Company servants died, 75% of them after 1733. Mortality rates rose alarmingly especially in the eighteenth century. Of the 473,000 people who arrived between 1730 and 1798, 25% died in the damp and badly ventilated Inner Hospital. There was a reason for its popular name, the 'Murder Pit'. The VOC had unknowingly contributed to

⁷⁰ This was arranged by law. The privateers were granted special permission by the government, the so-called 'privateer letters' (in Dutch: kaperbrieven).

⁷¹ Large merchant ships.

⁷² Hendrik E. Niemeijer. *Batavia. Een koloniale samenleving in de 17^e eeuw*. Amsterdam: Balans Press, 2005.

⁷³ The Sunda Kelappa still exists, but the function of the port has changed. Under Dutch rule, a new port, Tandjong Priok, was built. The modern Sunda Kelappa harbour is primarily aimed at national traffic, for example Bugi schooners. The castle was mostly demolished under Dutch rule to make space for maritime works. The VOC warehouses and shipyard still exist and function as a maritime museum and exhibition space respectively.

this by the creation of great numbers of fish ponds in Batavia. Together with the canals, they were prime breeding grounds for malaria mosquitos.

Until the eighteenth century VOC soldiers in Asia wore no uniforms and were shabbily dressed. Often they went barefoot. Even if there was military clothing available, it was expensive and, due to the wool that was used, not suitable for tropical climates.

The garrison food in Batavia was boring. In big cauldrons, rice and katjang (an overarching term for legumes) were cooked for 100 to 200 men, of which everyone could eat his fill. It could be made palatable with salt, pepper and vinegar. Thursdays and Sundays a soup of buffalo meat and rice was created, the so-called 'Poespas'. On Sundays a kind of coconut paste was also served, called 'Liplap'. I wouldn't be surprised if the soldiers sometimes bought local food at the pasar,⁷⁴ at their own expense.

6. Hendrik's posting to Malacca

6.1. A new post

Hendrik survives the hardships of Batavia. In March 1748, almost six months after his arrival in Batavia and a year after his departure from Amsterdam, he is transferred to Malacca.⁷⁵ Malacca is located on the Malaysian peninsula, ca. 250 km north-west of the modern Singapore and about 1,280 km in a direct line from Batavia.

Most likely, Wiederhold has by then transferred to the civilian branch of the VOC, perhaps because of his skills in writing and bookkeeping, because he will be taking on financial and administrative tasks in Malacca.

First a little bit about the background of Malacca, the importance of this town for the VOC and its role in the trade networks within Asia.

6.2. The position of the town of Malacca in the VOC's trade network

Malacca is located on the Strait of Malacca. This was the most important sea route between the Middle East and India on the one hand and China/Japan on the other. In the fourteenth century the city was one of the biggest transit harbours of Asia. In 1511 Malacca was taken by the Portuguese. The reigning dynasty of sultans fled and created a new principality in Johor, in the southern part of the Malaysian peninsula, north of the modern Singapore. The sultanate of Johor also included Riau, an important trading centre.

Relations between the VOC and the princes of Johor at first were cordial, because they had a shared enemy in Portugal. This changed when competition grew between the VOC, Malacca and Johor. The VOC considered Malacca a serious threat to the further development of Batavia. All sea traffic to Java, Sumatra, Borneo and the Moluccan archipelago had to pass through the Strait of Malacca.

A small squad of vessels could control all movement of ships in the narrow strait⁷⁶ and thus control all trade in Indonesia. This made the position of Batavia very vulnerable.

⁷⁴ Market.

⁷⁵ VOC Land joining roll. He receives nine months' wages for 1748 in Malacca.

⁷⁶ About 16 nautical miles wide.

The VOC therefore decided to take Malacca by force, legitimized by the war between the Republic and Spain and Portugal, which was still going on.

As stated above, Cornelius Matelief de Jonge had attacked the town in 1606 with ca. 1,300 men. The secret instruction by the VOC board explicitly ordered him to 'show an aggressive stance towards the Portuguese by attacking Malacca directly and indirectly by distancing the Portuguese allies, such as the sultan of Johor, from the Portuguese sphere of influence and by offering them protection'. But only in 1641, after long battles on land and sea, the Portuguese were finally defeated. Supported by the sultan van Johor, Malacca was finally taken.⁷⁷ The churches, houses and fortresses that the Portuguese had built, such as the fortress A Famosa, were left intact and modernize. Malacca became an important regional centre for government and trade.

The VOC's policy was ambivalent. On the one hand it tried to re-establish Malacca's position as an international centre of trade and to profit from the collection of import and export duties and moorage. On the other hand, Malacca should not be allowed to grow so much that it would take over Batavia's position. The VOC achieved the latter aim: Malacca never regained its ancient glory after its conquest by the VOC.

Trading vessels could anchor in several places. Asian merchants traded in the Riau archipelago (Johor) goods which they smuggled, with or without the cooperation of local sovereigns, to and from areas controlled by the Company. However, this damaged the interests of Malacca.

6.3. The town of Malacca in the 18th century⁷⁸

In Hendrik's time, the town of Malacca had approximately 15,000 inhabitants. Of these, some 540 were 'servants' of the VOC; there were also Portuguese mestizos, Malaysians, Bugis, Minangkabaus (originating from Sumatra), other Indonesians and Chinese. At the highest point of the city, there was the reformed church of St. Paul (formerly attached to a convent), as well as the fortress A Famosa, built by the Portuguese, and the residence of the governor of Malacca.

Later, in the lower city, around Heeren Street and Jonker Street, a city hall (1650), a church, warehouses and houses for VOC servants were built. Malacca remained strongly influenced by the Portuguese, even after the occupation by the Dutch. It was seen as a very attractive Asian city.

Inland, Malacca was surrounded by a flat, marshy area with cononut trees. Behind this was an impenetrable forest. Three roads ran from the city to the villages along the coast and the privately owned estates inland. The area around the city walls was dangerous, because of threats by Minangkabaus and pirates. For this reason, it was impossible to practice agriculture here. Rice and other supplies had to be imported from elsewhere.

Dutch traces are still visible today, in the names of buildings such as the Stadhuijs (Town Hall) and the formerly Dutch Reformed Church, now called Christ Church. Several streets have Dutch names, such Heeren Street, and there are several Dutch

⁷⁷ Leo Akveld. *Machtsstrijd om Malacca. De reis van VOC-admiraal Cornelis Cornelisz. Matelief naar Oost-Azië, 1605-1608*. Zutphen: Walburg Presss, 2013.

⁷⁸ Partially taken from D. Mayjer Timmermans Thijssen, *Twee gouverneurs en een equipagemeester. In en om Malacca 1778-1823*. Bilthoven: Knuf, 1991.

fortresses. There are still families living Malacca with names such as Minjoot, Mosbergen, Van der Beek, Kraal, De Windt, Westerhout and Van Dorcht.⁷⁹

6.4. Hendrik joins the Low German Reformed Church, marries and has children⁸⁰

Hendrik had probably been raised as a Calvinist⁸¹ and joins the Low German Reformed Church in Malacca, as was usual at the time. Apparently he tries to adapt as much as possible to his Dutch environment. The Church is an important entrance to social life in Malacca for Hendrik. There are two churches in Malacca, with a separate minister for the church of St. Paul and for the lower city. Most likely, Hendrik is a member of the church in the lower town.

On 16 November 1750 he becomes a deacon, in charge of care for the poor.⁸² There were four deacons in Malacca. They were chosen by the church council, but their 'calling' required the approval of the Police Council, because Church Council members had to be members of the church and of blameless character. In Wiederhold's time there were about 100 Council members, actually more women than men. Sailors, soldiers and craftsmen could not become members. Hendrik Julius apparently passed muster and can be rightly considered a 'paragon of virtue'.

Hendrik worked his way up⁸³ from soldier to respected citizen of Malacca and deputy merchant of the VOC. He is mentioned in the official list of names of the VOC.⁸⁴ This was a 'who is who', published in Amsterdam and naming the higher and middle ranks within the VOC's administration. The list of names list his job as 'deputy merchant, payer of soldiers' wages, caretaker of business, recipient of the Domains and tradesman'. He apparently belonged to the 'inner crowd' of Malacca, working for the VOC, but with his own business on the side.

Servants of the VOC could earn their fortune in their own business. From Hendrik's ship's wage book it can be determined that he never takes out his wage in cash. Instead he takes out bills of exchange,⁸⁵ through the trading company Swaen and Swart and through Johannes Boelen,⁸⁶ a wine merchant in Amsterdam. Most likely he uses this money to buy goods, which he then sold in Malacca. In the city, almost everything had to be imported.⁸⁷ Because Johannes Boelen was a famous wine merchant in this period, I assume that Hendrik imported wine and gin. Johannes's brother David was governor of Malacca when Hendrik lived there. This was undoubtedly expedient for business. This kind of self-trade by VOC servants using bills of exchange is recorded in official records and apparently was considered normal in this period. Furthermore, it was profitable for

⁷⁹ D. de Wit, *History of the Dutch in Malaysia*. Selangor: Nutmeg Publishing 2007.

⁸⁰ From 1571 this was the Low German Reformed Church. The name Low German served to distinguish it from the Welsh, Schottish and other churches.

⁸¹ Hessen was largely Calvinist.

⁸² This church, now known as Christ Church, was built from 1741-1753. It was originally painted white, but the English later painted it red, in order to hide the red siri juice that the native population spit against the walls. During Wiederhold's stay in Malacca, the pastors were Gerard Cornelis Bastiaanse, Saloman van Echten, Joannes Theodores van der Werth, Pasquil de Siva and Hotzeens Petrus August Theodorus van Huijsum respectively.

⁸³ G.J. Schut. *Het Indisch Sion: de Gereformeerde Kerk onder de VOC*. Hilversum: Uitgeverij Verloren, 2003.

⁸⁴ *Naam-boekje Van de Wel. Ed. Heeren der Hooge Indiase Regeeringe, Gequalificeerde Personen enz. op Batavia*. Josia Souten en Wed. Reinier Ottens Boekverkopers. Amsterdam 1794.

⁸⁵ A bill of exchange is a paper guarantee that the indicated amount will be paid. In this case, the VOC in Amsterdam guarantees that the payment will be made to the exchange office.

⁸⁶ Johannes Boelen lived from 1710-1791 and was wine merchant in Amsterdam. See National Archives 1.10.08 1981.

⁸⁷ Located on the Herengracht/Prinsengracht.

the VOC. Bills of exchange which are not immediately collected⁸⁸ place less of a burden on the VOC's capital.

Hendrik marries the widow Catharina Willekens, a member of his church; most likely they met in church. Three children are born from this marriage: Anna Maria, Catharina Sophia and Jan Arnold. Clearly he has not forgotten his parents in Wanfried, since he passes on his parents' names, Anna Maria and Arnold, to his children.

His son Jan Arnold Wiederhold⁸⁹ later joins the VOC as 'leerling aan de pen' (pupil of the pen). His daughter Catharina Sophia⁹⁰ marries Johan Hendrik Werth, head surgeon of the VOC and 'first' (director-surgeon) of the hospital in Malacca.⁹¹ After Catharina Willekens's death, Hendrik marries Catharina Puijt, widow of Hendrik Dinkgreef.

7. Hendrik leaves for Perak

7.1. Introduction

On 27 December 1764 Hendrik leaves for Perak, a sultanate to the north of Malacca. He becomes governor ('resident') at the outpost of Tanjung Putus, in charge of the Company's tin trade.

In this chapter I will first explain what is going on in Perak and surroundings, and the complex situation in which Hendrik finds himself. Therefore, I will start by explaining the importance of Perak for the VOC and the complex and dangerous political situation in the area. Chapter 8 discusses Hendrik's experiences during his time as governor.

7.2. Perak: geography and its importance for the VOC

The sultanate of Perak is about 300 kilometres north of Malacca. To the north, Perak borders the sultanate of Kedah, a vassal state of the kingdom of Siam. To the south it borders Selangor, a sultanate known as the home of Bugi pirates.

The name Perak is derived from the Malay word for silver, perak.^{92,93} Perak was rich in tin ore, which resembles silver. The Perak river, called in Malay the Sungai Perak,⁹⁴ is the second-largest river of the Malay peninsula. On the riverbank, many tin mines and smelting works were located. Tin ore was also found in the river bottom and collected by the local population.

Tin was an important product for the VOC's trade on the intra-Asian market, especially for trade with China.⁹⁵ The VOC bought tin in Siam, but was forced to do so against unattractively high market prices. It therefore tried, early in its existence, to build a monopoly in the tin trade elsewhere. At first, Banka was an important supplier of tin for the VOC. When the tin supply from Banka stagnated, the importance of the Malay peninsula grew.

⁸⁸ They were usually collected after about nine months.

⁸⁹ Jan Arnold is baptized in Malacca on 7 July 1754 and dies in or after 1824, probably in Malacca.

⁹⁰ Catharina Sophia is baptized on 29 January 1753 in Malacca and buried in Malacca on 13 March 1818.

⁹¹ This hospital is located on one of the bastions of Malacca closest to the sea.

⁹² *Zakwoordenboekje voor de Indonesische taal*, Nederlandsche Stoomvaart Maatschappij.

⁹³ Cassiterite, tin oxide.

⁹⁴ The Perak is mentioned in Rudyard Kipling's *The Crab That Played with the Sea*.

⁹⁵ When China became an important supplier of tea, the tea was paid for with tin. Tin was used in China to line wooden tea chests. Japan was also interested in tin, since tin foil was used as offerings in temples.

7.3. Perak: political situation in the seventeenth and eighteenth century

Perak's relations with Aceh and Siam

Perak was dominated by the sultanate of Aceh in the early seventeenth century, but later became more or less independent. Another important power in the region was the kingdom of Siam (now Thailand). The sultan of Kedah was a vassal of the king of Siam. This was not the case with Perak, but Siam considered Perak and several other sultanates in the peninsula her tributaries.

In practice this did not work out, because Siam was busy defending invasions from Burma and could not enforce the payment of tribute. Instead, the sultanates on the peninsula made a symbolic payment in the form of gold and silver flowers every three years.⁹⁶ For the moment this was sufficient, but the kingdom of Siam and its vassal Kedah remained a potential danger for Perak.

Perak threatened by the Bugis

Perak regularly suffered attacks from pirates and marauders in the Strait of Malacca. In the 20s and 30s of the eighteenth century, the sultanate was constantly threatened by belligerent Bugis and Minangkabauers.

The Bugis' presence was an unintended consequence of the pepper monopoly which the VOC had established on the Moluccan archipelago. In order to guard this monopoly, the VOC had conquered Macassar on Celebes,⁹⁷ so that it could control the trade route to the Moluccas. In Macassar, the fortress Rotterdam had been built.^{98 99} From Macassar, the VOC waged war against other principalities on Celebes. The war meant that many Bugis living on Celebes, who were excellent sailors, moved west overseas, where they terrorised the area with piracy and plundering.

This meant that in the late seventeenth century large groups of Bugis settled down in the Riau archipelago belonging to the sultanate of Johor and later also in the sultanate of Selangor.¹⁰⁰ They quickly gained influence in these sultanates. They caused many headaches for the sultans, such as the sultan of Johor, but were also hired by them as fighters when necessary.

The Strait of Malacca was a favourite operating area for Bugi pirates. They often used fake VOC flags on their vessels in order to trick their victims. They also possessed light¹⁰¹ and heavy guns. (Deserted) Europeans had taught them how to use these.

The Bugis were a serious threat to the VOC. Twice they attacked Malacca. Perak was attacked and plundered in 1740 from Selangor.¹⁰²

Threats by pirates from Sumatra

⁹⁶ The so-called Bunga Mas dan Perak.

⁹⁷ Sulawesi.

⁹⁸ This fortress still exists and has recently been restored.

⁹⁹ During the war with the VOC, the Bugi states Luwu and Wajo fought the Dutch, with their allies Bone and Soppeng. Many leaders of defeated principalities fled west with their followers.

¹⁰⁰ The VOC and its most important ally, the ruler of Bone.

¹⁰¹ Including muskets, weapons which shot debris and glass and caused injuries which were almost impossible to treat in the tropical climate.

¹⁰² Selangor was at first heavily influenced by nearby Riau (Johor), but tried to extricate itself from Johor when it became steadily richer due to trade with the British. It even declared itself independent.

Other threats for Perak came from the other side of the Strait of Malacca, on Sumatra, especially the pirate strongholds along the Siak river. The rulers and princes in this area became engaged in privateering on a large scale in the 50s of the eighteenth century. The VOC was also affected by this development. In 1759 the nearby VOC fortress of Pulau Gontong on Sumatra was pillaged by raja Mahmud and his successor Ismaël of Siak. Of the garrison, 65 out of 72 men were murdered and the weapons in the fort were stolen.¹⁰³ The only (married) European woman in the fortress was carried off as a slave.¹⁰⁴ This was sufficient reason for the VOC to despatch a fleet to undertake a punishment expedition against the pirates.¹⁰⁵ The pirates were well ensconced and offered heavy resistance with firearms on sea and land. Raja Ismaël fled after a heavy battle, in which hundreds of VOC soldiers and sailors were killed.¹⁰⁶

7.4. Persistent attempts by the VOC to gain a tin monopoly in Perak

The VOC persisted in trying to gain a tin monopoly in Perak. At first it did so by negotiating with the rulers of Aceh, but because of the negative attitude of the sultan of Perak this discussion was unsuccessful. Therefore, the VOC resorted to the use of force. It took the VOC almost 100 years to achieve the tin monopoly in Perak.

Agreement with Aceh

In the seventeenth century the VOC had already tried to gain a tin monopoly in Perak. In 1655, it established the trading post of Tanjung Putus on the Perak river, which we will encounter later. Because the area was suffering from internal wars for a long period, this trading post was not successful.

Perak originally was under the formal control of the kingdom of Aceh, which meant that the VOC had to start out by negotiating with Aceh. In 1639, the Company was granted the right to buy all tin that it needed for its trade with Surat (Gujarat in India). But the VOC had not counted on the resistance of the sultan of Perak, Mudzaffar Shah II.

Perak opposes the VOC

The Company then tried to reach a direct agreement with the sultan of Perak. The governor of Malacca, Johan van Twist,¹⁰⁷ even gave the sultan 18,000 guilders in order to win his favour.

As a result the governor received many flattering words, a high Malaysian title and the permission to start a factory at Tanjung Putus. But the tin monopoly still eluded the VOC.

Perak barricaded by the VOC

The Company did not give up. It installed a trade barricade, forcing all merchant vessels destined for Perak to visit Malacca first, in order to buy a permit and pay tolls. Javanese traders were forbidden to sail to Perak or risk a public flogging. Sultan Mudzaffar was

¹⁰³ Teddy Sim, *Piracy and surreptitious activities in the Malayan Archipelago and adjacent seas*. Singapore: Springer, 2016.

¹⁰⁴ She was later freed by the VOC, together with her husband.

¹⁰⁵ This assignment is described in detail in the memoirs of Jan Ambrosius Hoorn: *Verdrinken zonder water, de memoires van VOC matroos Jan Ambrosius Hoorn, 1758-1777*. Zutphen: Walburg Press, 2014.

¹⁰⁶ The brig 'Zeepaard' ('Sea horse') was also involved in this assignment. 'Zeepaard' was probably also charged with keeping an eye on affairs in Perak. The ship was still on active duty in Wiederhold's time.

¹⁰⁷ Governor of Malacca 1641-1642.

not intimidated and threatened to cancel his permission to establish a factory at Tanjung Putus.

Then, the VOC blocked the mouth of the Perak river. The sultan did not give in. However, this barricade was effective, because the VOC got its hands on a great part of the tin from Perak. Furthermore, Perak's trade with the Acehians, Arabs, Bengalese and Javanese was effectively wiped out. The traders from Aceh complained to their prince, who in his turn pressured the stubborn sultan to reach an agreement with the VOC.

Eventually, in 1650 senior merchant Johannes Truijtmán reached an agreement about a new treaty with Aceh. The barricade was raised and the VOC received a monopoly on the trade of tin from Aceh. Still, this agreement was not without problems. The factory at Tanjung Putus was reopened, but was soon ambushed by the Malaysians. Tin was still smuggled from Perak to both Aceh as well as merchants from other powers. The result therefore was hardly encouraging.

The VOC barricades Aceh and Perak

The Company did not give up and started a new trade barricade, now blocking both Perak and Aceh. As a result of this pressure, the VOC was able in 1653 to finally sign a contract with Sultan Mahmud Iskandar Shah of Perak. This contract also created the possibility to build a VOC fortress and trading post at Pulau Pangkor, an island in the mouth of the Perak river, in 1670. When finally there seemed to be light at the end of the tunnel, other difficulties emerged. The fortress at Pulau Pangkor was attacked and destroyed in 1690 by the Malaysians under the command of Panglima Kulup. It remained unoccupied for more than fifty years.

Better relations between the VOC and Perak in the second half of the eighteenth century

Despite the initial opposition, the sultans of Perak slowly started to understand that good relations with the VOC could be to their advantage, not least because Perak had been attacked and plundered in 1740 by the Bugis from nearby Selangor. Perak therefore could use the VOC's protection. This created a new opening for negotiations, which the VOC was eager to enter.

From Malacca merchant Ary Verbrugge was sent to Perak to negotiate. In 1746 he reached a deal with the sultan of Perak, Muzafar Syah. The Company finally achieved the tin monopoly, which had to be paid in silver reals. Furthermore, the VOC received the right to establish a factory and fortress, under the command of a resident, at the aforementioned Tanjung Putus, upstream from Pulau Pangkor.

A win-win situation

The 1746 contract between the VOC and Perak was renewed in 1753, after the death of sultan Muzafar Syah, by his successor sultan Iskander. Wiederhold had many dealings with this ruler after he was assigned to his post.

For sultan Iskander, the agreement with Company meant more than just a greater degree of safety for Perak. It was also an important source of personal income because of his share in the tolls charged on tin. This led to resentment among the nobility, who were eager to get their hands on a share.

Perak knew unprecedented wealth under sultan Iskander's rule. He managed to keep the peace internally, as well as maintain good relations with his neighbours and with the VOC.

8. Hendrik as resident in Perak

8.1. Introduction

In 1765 Hendrik became resident of Perak and commander of the post at Tanjung Putus.¹⁰⁸ He is charged especially with the implementation of the contracts that the VOC had concluded with Perak. Moreover, in the name of the VOC he manages the daily contacts with sultan Iskander and later his successor Mahmud.

Detailed correspondence has survived from this period between Wiederhold and the governor of Malacca, Thomas Schippers. Furthermore, extremely interesting (Malay) sources have survived from the sultanate of Perak. These have been studied intensively by historian Barbara Watson Andaya. She has not only examined Dutch correspondence from the VOC archives, but also provides a historical perspective according to local Malay sources. Much of what follows has been derived from her work.¹⁰⁹

8.2. The general duties of the resident of Perak

The resident was usually appointed for a period of three years. He was responsible for the maintenance of the trading post and fort and to maintain discipline in the garrison. He reported directly to the VOC governor in Malacca, both regarding trade as well as relevant events in Perak and surrounding areas. The resident thus served as the 'eyes and ears' of the governor in Malacca. He systematically gathered information about the crew of the vessels which arrived from the Riau archipelago and other places in Perak. The VOC was eager to learn what others thought about its actions.

The resident also personified the direct contact between the sultan's court and the governor in Malacca. This could occur for all kinds of reasons, such as formal matters of protocol and the interpretation of the adat.¹¹⁰ Not an easy task, because the sultan's court was often hostile towards the VOC. Matters of protocol also played an important role and should not be underestimated. If the VOC used the wrong seal on a letter to the sultan, this could cause enormous commotion.

On the other hand, the governor of Malacca also attached importance to details of protocol, such as the colour of the cover in which letters to him were sealed. For example, when sultan Iskander in 1755 sent a letter to the governor in a white instead of yellow cover, the recipient considered this a great insult. He refused to give the usual gun salute upon reception of the letter in Malacca. The whole matter, however, was caused by a painful misunderstanding. White was a more royal colour for Malaysians than yellow. The resident had some explaining to do.

When VOC representatives visited Perak, the resident arranged the extensive ceremonial affairs. These matters of ceremony and protocol were at least partially meant to impress the local rulers.

¹⁰⁸ The fortress no longer exists (personal correspondence between Barbara Watson and G.C. Molenkamp).

¹⁰⁹ Barbara Watson Andaya, *Perak, the Abode of Grace. A study of an Eighteenth-Century Malay State*. Kuala Lumpur: Oxford University Press, 1979.

¹¹⁰ The local Malay customs, an unwritten law.

Almost all residents spoke Malay and had a reasonably extensive knowledge of local customs. However, the servants of the VOC in Tanjung Putus were not allowed to keep Malaysian women.¹¹¹

8.3. The forts of Dingdinh on Pulau Pangkor and Tanjung Putus

Tanjung Putus

Tanjung Putus is located a few kilometres upstream in the mouth of the Perak river. A small stone fortress was built on the northern shore of the Perak river.¹¹² A few kilometres further upstream the court of the sultan was located. The fortress was completed on 18 October 1748. It replaced the fortress of Dingdinh, on the island of Pulau Pangkor, which the Company had restored and taken into service shortly before.

Of the fortress Tanjung Putus no remains have survived, but the remains of the fortress of Dingdinh on Pulau Pangkor are now a tourist attraction. We may assume that Tanjung Putus was built and functioned in the same way as Dingdinh. A description of Dingdinh will therefore make a good addition to the sketch of the fortress Tanjung Putus in the Malaysian and Dutch sources.

The fort Dingdinh

The fortress was located on the island of Pangkor in the mouth of the Perak river. Originally, it was a square wooden building, later rebuilt in stone. Governor Balthasar Bot reported in 1678 that: “59 people were tasked with the barricade of Perak” and “that the VOC owned a fortress on the island with nine guns. Among the people were an inspector, accountant, captain, surgeons, soldiers and sailors. The fleet consisted of the yacht ‘Laren’, the barge ‘Cacap’ and the boat ‘Dingdinh’.

The fortress is built solidly, without aisles and bastions, like a house. Every side is about ten metres {long}. The walls are of sufficient thickness and built in stone. They are about 30 feet high.

There are twelve to fourteen guns, aiming in all directions. The guns are placed on a strong platform within the high walls, at a height of sixteen feet. In this fortress the resident sleeps with about 30 soldiers, who sleep below the platform of the guns. The fortress is about 100 metres away from the sea. Near the bay is a low wooden house, where the resident spends his time during the day.”

Because of the trade barricades introduced by the VOC, relationships between the VOC and the Malaysians were very tense and the garrison always lived in fear of a Malaysian attack. This fear became reality when, as mentioned, in 1690 the garrison was attacked and the fortress destroyed. Only in 1747 repair work was undertaken and a new garrison installed.

When the VOC, a little later, had concluded a new contract with Perak and permission was granted to build a fortress at Tanjung Putus, Dingdinh was abandoned and the garrison moved to Tanjung Putus.

The garrison of the fort at Tanjung Putus

¹¹¹ Watson Andaya, *Perak, the Abode of Grace*, pp. 89-93.

¹¹² Atlas of mutual heritage (<http://www.atlasofmutualheritage.nl>)

The garrison of the fortress was small, like that of the fortress Dingdinh, consisting of no more than 40-60 Europeans and Malaysians. The fortress controlled the trade in tin and all ships and boats on the river were checked for smuggled wares, at night and during the day. In the fortress the tin was received, weighed, melted down and delivered.

For the men of the garrison, life was hard. A letter dated to 1791 from the governor of Malacca to the resident in Perak indicated what was expected of the soldiers in Tanjung Putus. It is likely that circumstances were the same in Wiederhold's time.

"The garrison is expected to deepen the ditches around the fort, using all available men. Twice a year, the high grass should be cut. When work is undertaken outside the fort, a corporal and six men should stand guard and a guard post should be placed outside the fort. Everyone, Europeans and natives, must undertake guard duties. If there is no Company ship present, a corporal with five men must guard the river from a vessel on the opposite shore. They do not have to be dressed in uniform, unlike in Malacca. Because they often work in the mud, a jacket and undergarments are sufficient".

8.4. Hendrik's two most important contemporaries

Introduction

As resident of Perak, Wiederhold's most important interactions were with his boss, Thomas Schippers, governor of Malacca, and the sultans of Perak, first Iskander and then Mahmud.

Thomas Schippers, governor of Malacca

As resident, Wiederhold has to report directly to Thomas Schippers,¹¹³ governor of Malacca from 1764 to 1772. Schippers was eager to maintain harmonious relations with Perak. He had an extensive knowledge of the existing local relations and sensitivities.

He aimed to avoid interference in the relations between Perak and its neighbours, but at the same time tried to protect the image of the VOC, and, as he said, 'maintain the honour of the old Holland'. Schippers insisted that Dutch relations with Perak should be based on generosity. He wanted to gain the sultan's trust by approaching him in a soft and friendly manner. "A contract only works when both parties find satisfaction in it," was his opinion. Most likely this was also the instruction he gave to Hendrik.

In order to mollify the sultan, Schippers sometimes acted as his personal agent and bought items for him in Malacca. He once bought the sultan a cannon, a valuable iron dish and a transport ship for tin. In return, the sultan went to great lengths to pander to the Company's wishes. For example, when the VOC in 1767 complained to the sultan that thefts had occurred from its stores, he undertook immediate action. He ordered that anyone who was found in the VOC quarters after sundown would be killed on sight.

Iskander, sultan of Perak, and his successor sultan Mahmud

Although Perak experienced a prosperous period under sultan Iskander, several problems threatened to weaken his position and caused him great worry. Firstly, piracy was a great threat in the region. In March 1764 a pirate gang had threatened the fort, the VOC ships and the Perak itself. The ship 'Buitenzorg' was captured and the entire crew killed or taken into slavery. It was a disgrace for the VOC. As a result of this

¹¹³ Thomas Schippers came from the Netherlands and joined the VOC as a junior merchant.

disaster, voices in the sultan's court started to question the strategy of the sultan of looking to the VOC for protection.

His own family was also a cause of worry for the sultan. The 'anaks raja', the sultan's sons from his (many) wives, had to find their own way in life. This often ended in piracy. The son of the sultan's favourite wife, raja Muda, was a gambler and opium addict with significant debt, and was disinherited by his father. When his father asked him to finally do something useful with his life, Muda promised to 'build a new life at sea'. Muda asked the sultan for a starting capital of some thousands of reals and some sailing vessels. Happy that his son finally took some initiative, the sultan bought a few more ships for his son. Muda would be able to take care of himself and the sultan needn't worry any more. However, this was not to be.

Muda immediately set to work and left court with eight ships and a Company passport. Unfortunately, a slew of complaints came in about piracy by Muda in the Strait of Malacca. At least ten people had been killed.¹¹⁴ The sultan was extremely embarrassed towards the VOC, but was too afraid to take his son to task. There were more family issues which required his attention. His brother and later successor Mahmud forced the sultan to lend him large sums of money, intimidating him by saying that he would no longer support the agreement which Perak had concluded with the VOC.

Mahmud did not agree with sultan Iskander's policy regarding the security of Perak, in which the principality relied heavily on the VOC. Mahmud was not stupid and he saw problems in the long term. He feared that Perak, despite the VOC's protection, would remain vulnerable. From the north (Kedah) Perak had to take into account the powerful kingdom of Siam and also Aceh. Mahmud doubted whether the VOC, when it came to it, would be able to defend adequately Perak from Malacca. Malacca itself was under pressure from the Bugis from the south.

The city of Malacca controlled limited resources. Thomas Schippers was the governor of Malacca, but he was only a small player with very little influence with the VOC Board in Amsterdam. The survival of the post in Perak was not certain. The costs were high and the Company already received more tin than it could and wanted to trade. The governor-general in Batavia had already insinuated that the outpost might be closed and the contract with Perak cancelled.

With all this in mind, Mahmud was more liberal in his ideas about relations with Selangor than sultan Iskander held. Although Perak and Selangor had been arch enemies in the past, in the long term Selangor could offer better protection than the VOC could.

There were other factors at play. The VOC was struggling to supply sufficient silver reals for the sale of tin. In February 1763, for example, 12,000 reals were sent to Perak, but in November of the year, the supply had already run out. This was very inconvenient for Perak. In the first place, suppliers of tin had to be paid strictly on time. Furthermore, Perak was in dire need of reals. Perak's entire economy revolved around tin. Virtually everything that Perak needed had to be imported and paid in hard cash. Reluctantly, other currencies were accepted at times, such as Indian rupees, but these were not as attractive.

¹¹⁴ On the coasts of Perak, Selangor, Mergui, Ujung Salang and Tavoy.

8.5. Hendrik visits the successor of sultan Iskander¹¹⁵

After the death of sultan Iskander and the accession of the new sultan Mahmud, Hendrik visits the court of the sultan in July 1765 in order to bestow his well-wishes on the new ruler. The sultan promises the resident that under his rule the existing agreements with the VOC will be renewed. 'Do not fear, Wiederhold,' he speaks to Hendrik, 'do not take the death of my brother too hard, because with me you will find everything twice as well.' He puts his money where his mouth is, because when his pirate brother raja Muda returns from the sea, he is immediately arrested and forbidden to undertake such expeditions in the future.

Although the new sultan, according to Hendrik, is showing more affinity with the Bugis than his predecessor, this will, in his opinion, not endanger relations with the VOC, as he writes to the governor. After his installation as the new sultan Mahmud, writes a letter to the governor in Malacca himself, in which he professes his 'unswerving loyalty to the VOC'. Strengthened by these expressions of friendship, the VOC immediately starts new negotiations, silently hoping to lower the buying price of tin. In vain, because sultan Mahmud neatly points out that British free traders have concluded agreements with neighbouring sultanates, in which they offer a much higher price for tin than the VOC in Perak. In the end, the existing contract remains unchanged.

8.6. Selangor presses its advantage

In the meantime, the influence of the Bugis in the area keeps growing. This is also noticeable in Perak. Two weeks after the installation of the new sultan, a canoe with a Bugi crew tries to avoid an inspection by the fort at Tanjung Putus. When this fails, the Bugis resort to violence. The delinquents are arrested by the sultan. But despite his promise to Hendrik that he will do everything to punish those involved, he refuses to hand them over. They are 'orang islam'¹¹⁶ and can therefore not be extradited to a Christian court of law. This would anger the Bugis and disturb the peace in the region.

The Company has limited options to respond. Not long before, Bugi pirates had entered Perak and plundered the sultanate, while the VOC had been powerless to stop them. The VOC undertakes attempts to limit the growing economic power of the Bugis in the region, but without much success. The stronghold of the Bugis in the Riau archipelago, under command of the sultan of Johor, is flourishing. The Bugis increasingly manage to influence the sultan of Johor, who favours the Dutch. This is the background against which Hendrik must carry out his duties.

He becomes embroiled in a difficult situation when raja Lumu, leader of the nearby Bugi stronghold Selangor,^{117,118} attempts to approach Perak, without concrete motivations. This is the first approach in twenty years of tension between both sultanates. For Hendrik this is no doubt a reason for concern, because the Bugis of Selangor are certainly no friends of the VOC; only in 1756 they had besieged Malacca.

¹¹⁵ NA 3075 OB 1767, Wiederhold to Schippers, 13 May 1765, 11 June 1765, 20 August 1765, NA 3104 OB 1768, Wiederhold to Schippers, 5 May 1766, 27 September 1766, 3 November 1766, 17 December 1766, 28 October 1766; NA 3045 OB 1766, Wiederhold to Schippers, 16 December 1766.

¹¹⁶ Muslims.

¹¹⁷ Raja Lumu was considered the most important Bugi leader in Selangor, although the region was ruled by Daeng Lakani, who had been charged with the government of Selangor by Daeng Kemboja.

¹¹⁸ He was enthroned in 1740 as Sultan Sallehuddin Shah Almarhum Daeng Chelak; he lived 1705-1778.

8.7. Hendrik enters a wasps' nest

In September 1766, one year after the enthronement of sultan Mahmud, a Selangorese vessel appears in the mouth of the river Perak. The captain informs Wiederhold that two emissaries from Selangor are on board and asks for permission to sail onwards. The emissaries carry a letter for sultan Mahmud with a surprising offer from raja Lumu. He 'wishes to put aside all differences between Perak and Selangor' and offers to negotiate a new treaty between the two states. Lumu proposes to travel to Perak in person to discuss this proposal face to face with the sultan of Perak.

The previous sultan, Iskander, had, after the renewal of the treaty with the VOC in 1753, refused to respond to negotiation attempts from the Bugis and had considered them enemies of Perak until his death. But, as just mentioned, sultan Mahmud was willing to negotiate and decided to send two emissaries to Selangor. At the same time it was important not to insult his ally, the Company. He knows that the Company distrusts Selangor and will resist any kind of treaty. A very delicate situation.

Sultan Mahmud therefore wisely invites Hendrik to his palace to discuss. Hendrik is not sure that sultan Mahmud's motives are wholly friendly and refuses to leave the fortress for reasons of security. He announces that sultan Mahmud should first communicate with the governor of Malacca and refuses to let the raja of Selangor pass without further instructions from Malacca.

Sultan Mahmud then writes to the governor of Malacca and explains that he has certainly no intentions to actually talk with the raja of Selangor. But in October 1766 his two emissaries return from Selangor with the message that the raja of Selangor still means to travel to Perak himself to talk with sultan Mahmud, or his brother, raja Muda. This leads to some commotion among the population, since they doubt the true intentions of the raja of Selangor. Sultan Mahmud is open to the advances of Selangor, but is unsure how to act.

With the recent memories of the earlier Bugi invasion, extra precautions are necessary. Hendrik must appease the population at any price. The sultan requests Hendrik to station the VOC brig 'Zeepaard',¹¹⁹ an armoured two-master, in Perak.

Sultan Mahmud is facing a difficult dilemma. Although he has told Wiederhold and the governor in Malacca that he certainly does not intend to receive raja Lumu from Selangor, he cannot simply refuse an emphatic request to meet the raja. According to the adat, it is a serious insult. On the other hand, he must play it safe, take proper precautions to arm himself and prepare for the defence of Perak. But this would at the same time raise suspicion with the Dutch. The least sign of military activity among the local rulers of the archipelago is followed closely and with suspicion by the VOC.

In order to soothe Wiederhold's suspicions, sultan Mahmud decides on a compromise. He sends Wiederhold a message that he will man the ramparts of the royal palace, in case raja Lumu will enter the river. He promises not to store powder there.

¹¹⁹ Brig or brigantine. In the Netherlands, the brigantine was not used until the first half of the eighteenth century. The first brigantines in merchant shipping had a round bow and a falling stern, but later the front of the ship was given a sharper profile. From this, the brig developed. The brigantine was a two-master; the masts were made of one piece of wood and were extended with one or two staves. The foremast was cross-checked; the main mast was checked alongside with one or two sails above it. The bowsprit was extended with a jib tree and often had a yard with blind. The brig had an armament of five guns on port and five on starboard and ten other weapons on the ship. The brig 'Zeepaard' had already been involved in a punitive expedition on Sumatra.

On 24 October 1766 sultan Mahmud sends message to Hendrik that raja Lumu has been seen in the area with six vessels and that his fleet has laid down anchor at Pulau Pangkor, where the former fortress of Dingdinh is located. The raja has sent six men in order to notify the court of the sultan Perak of his arrival and requests that his fleet may be permitted to pass the fort at Tanjung Putus. Sultan Mahmud decides to ask for assistance from the VOC and the brig 'Zeepaard'. While waiting for the ship, he sends out two of his own vessels in order to make contact with raja Lumu. Mahmud permits the raja to continue his journey up the river Perak, as long as he does not commit violence. The sultan of Perak in the meantime again assures Hendrik that he is and will remain loyal to the VOC. Meeting raja Lumu will, according to him, never be beneficial to either the VOC or Perak. The sultan emphasizes that he will never permit the resident to come to any harm. Hendrik still doesn't really feel safe.

When Hendrik protests, the sultan suggests to allow the raja of Selangor to sail upriver in small canoes only and to limit the time of the meeting with the sultan of Perak to thirty minutes. After this, the raja of Selangor will depart. Reluctantly, Hendrik gives his permission for this arrangement.

Suddenly, other problems arise; the atmosphere at Mahmud's court turns against the sultan.

8.8. Discussion at sultan Mahmud's court

Apparently Wiederhold's stance has led to a heated discussion at the sultan's court. Some members of the court doubt whether the resident is within his rights to refuse raja Lumu, or anyone else, access to Perak, or to impose conditions on his visit. The previous sultan Iskander is seen as a shining example. In matters such as these, Iskander had always emphasized his independence from the VOC. The treaty with the VOC, according to the court, relates only to the trade of tin. It does not give the resident authority to make demands regarding the reception of local kings and princes.

Sultan Mahmud finds himself in a difficult position. He again ensures Hendrik that the sultan's visit will have no negative consequences for the Company. But he also warns that, if Wiederhold continues to refuse the whole Selangorese fleet to pass without restrictions, this would lead to all kinds of trouble, perhaps even to violence against the garrison of the fort.

Malacca is about one week's travel from Perak and can offer no direct assistance. The small garrison at Tanjung Putus would be unable to defend itself against a major force of well-armed Bugis. Hendrik sees therefore no other option but to reluctantly give in, and to let Lumu pass.

8.9. The Bugis arrive in Perak

On 6 November 1766 the ships of the Bugis sail into the Perak river and are received with great ceremony. However, sultan Mahmud prudently does not show himself at the reception and leaves his brothers to observe the honours. Eleven days later, the raja of Selangor and his followers depart.

The VOC at first is not informed about the results of the visit of Selangor to Perak. The only message sent by sultan Mahmud to the VOC is that the new friendship with

Selangor not only guarantees peace between Perak and Selangor, but also between Selangor and Malacca. Furthermore, the grandson of Mahmud is married to the daughter of raja Lumu. More seems to be afoot than a simple visit out of friendship.

8.10. Consequences for Hendrik

Hendrik's actions have hit a sore spot with Thomas Schippers. As discussed above, Schippers adheres to the policy to act as carefully as possible in matters such as these and especially to make sure that the sultans will not feel the Company is bossing them around. The, to his eyes, undiplomatic and unprecedented refusal by Wiederhold to let raja Lumu pass does not match this policy. Hendrik is recalled to Malacca in November of the same year.¹²⁰

9. Back in Malacca

Hendrik continues his work in Malacca. His eldest daughter Anna Maria dies shortly after 25 August 1767.

He is appointed 'dispenser of soldiers' wages in April 1777,¹²¹ and junior merchant and recipient of payments from the domains on 16 July 1787. After the death of his wife Catharina Willekens, he marries Catharina Puijt, widow of Hendrik Dinkgreef, in Malacca on 27 April 1783.

His suspicion as resident of Perak turns out to be justified. Two years after he has left Perak, the truth comes out. The two rulers in Perak have concluded a secret treaty and promised each other mutual aid in case of an attack by a third party. Dark clouds gather above Malacca.

Hendrik is still alive when the Bugis from Selangor and Riau attack Malacca, as will become clear in the next section. Apparently the Selangorese had been attempting to strengthen their position in the area for a long time through their secret alliance with Perak.¹²² Hendrik may have laughed in his sleeve, although the situation was perhaps too precarious.

10. What happens in and around Malacca in later times?

10.1. Introduction

The diplomatic governor Thomas Schippers is succeeded in 1777 by Pieter de Bruijn, a hardliner. Competition between Malacca and the free harbour Riau grows apace and Riau gradually usurps Malacca's trading role. Tensions increase. As Hendrik had suspected, the Bugis become more and more aggressive. The VOC finally takes measures to subdue them once and for all, but the Bugis retaliate and lay siege to Malacca. A Dutch fleet is dispatched to free Malacca. The area remains unsettled and the British continue to gain influence in the area. Eventually Malacca falls into British hands and Singapore is founded.

¹²⁰ Barbara Watson Andaya. *Perak, the Abode of Grace*, pp. 258-268.

¹²¹ *Maandelijkse Nederlandsche Mercurius*, Vol. 44-47; April 1717, p. 183.

¹²² The conflict that led to the siege of Malacca was partially caused by clumsy maneuvers by the government of Malacca, as a result of action in the Fourth Anglo-Dutch War, which the government wanted to profit from.

10.2. The Bugis attack Malacca

In 1783-1784 the VOC attacks the pirate lair in Riau with a fleet of thirteen ships and 1,500 men. The attempt fails miserably. The fleet has hardly returned when the Bugis launch a counterattack.

On 14 January 1784 six vessels appear from Selangor, bring 100 men to shore and approach the outskirts of Malacca from the north. From the south, the Bugis from Riau invade under command of raja Hadji himself, who is seen by the population as a saint ('keramat hidup').

On 14 March, the Bugis start incursions into the eastern part of Malacca, which is now under (cannon) fire from three sides. Only the road to the sea is still passable. The townsmen undertake daily attempts to drive out the enemy, but at night the Bugis return in full force. Malacca's position quickly becomes untenable.

10.3. Malacca freed and final reckoning with the Bugis

A fleet under the command of Jacob Pieter van Braam, general of the National War Squadron in East India, arrives on 29 May and bombs the Bugi vessels and batteries on the shore. Van Braam then lands with a heavily armed squad of 600 men. He frees the city in 1784 and finally dries out the Bugis for good. The enemy leaves its posts in confusion, partially because of rumours that raja Hadji has been killed in battle. Twenty-four Bugi vessels and a great amount of weaponry are taken. Van Braam continues his operation and chases the Bugis from Selangor and Riau.

A garrison is stationed in Riau and the building of fortifications commences immediately. In Selangor two new forts and a battery are built. However, the situation remains tense.

10.4. The situation in and around Malacca

In 1785 the garrison of the VOC in Selangor is threatened by the Malaysians and routed. In 1786 the Company carries out an expedition to Selangor with a squadron of thirteen ships to restore order and to depose the ruler of Selangor.

In 1787 the post in Riau is abandoned temporarily because of an attack by the Soloccans, a pirate people with ties to raja Ali, who has been deposed by raja Hadji. Not until 1788 the VOC is able to retake the post and reinforcements called Upper and Lower Fort are hurriedly completed. For the moment the VOC is again the foremost power in the Strait van Malacca.

10.5. Wiederhold dies

Hendrik, still in service to the VOC as a junior merchant in Malacca, dies on 17 May 1788, aged 63. This occurs after a long illness, as reported by his son Jan Arnold.^{123,124}

¹²³ 1. Family document. 2. According to the ship's wage book of the Domburg, Hendrik receives the last full wage for a whole year in 1787.

¹²⁴ Letter from his son J.H. Wiederhold to his business partner P. D. Elwijk, dated 24-05-1788 (VIBDN11020241).

The sources give no indication of the location of his burial. Only a few funerary monuments have survived from this period, but his is not one of them.

10.6. The British gain a foothold

The last treaty that the VOC had concluded with Perak dates to 1785. At that time, new threats to the VOC had appeared in the Strait of Malacca, specifically British merchants sailing between India and China. The dominant position of the VOC in Asia has been an eyesore for the British East India Company for a while. It closely watches the developments, so that it can grab its chance sooner or later and break the VOC's monopoly. The opportunity presents itself in the Malaysian peninsula, where British traders manage to outbid the VOC by offering higher prices for tin.

The British manage to take the island Penang, to the north-west of Malacca, and opposite the sultanate of Penang, on 17 July 1786, and name it 'Prince of Wales Island'. At this point, the standing of the VOC is lower than ever and the contract between the Dutch and Perak is cancelled.

On the island, the British East India Company founds the city of Georgetown in 1788 and thus, for the first time in 150 years, gains a firm foothold in South East Asia. Georgetown is located in an less favourable position for trade than Malacca. However, soon new and unexpected chances present themselves for the British.

10.7. Malacca falls into British hands

The VOC goes bankrupt in 1789 and its possessions are taken by the Dutch state. In the Netherlands the Batavian Republic is declared in 1795 with French support. Stadtholder Willem V flees to England.

In February of the same year, France, Spain and the Republic are at war with England. Willem V asks the British in his Kew Letters to manage all Dutch possessions in the East in order to prevent them falling into French hands, a request with which the British eagerly comply.¹²⁵

The British fleet enters the river Perak in August 1795 and forces the garrison of the fort at Tanjung Putus to surrender. On 26 August 1795 Malacca is taken by the British. Although Malacca is now under British control, the actual running of the town remains in Dutch hands. The British are shocked by the enormous collection of torture instruments they find in the basements of the City Hall. Their first act is to empty out the old, 'backward' torture chambers and burn the instruments of torture in public.

After the Treaty of Amiens of 1802,¹²⁶ in which peace is concluded between England and France, Malacca should have been returned to the Dutch. However, this does not happen. Just over a year later, England and France are again at war. The British have already destroyed the old (Portuguese) fort A Famosa and the walls of Malacca for security reasons.¹²⁷ In 1810 Thomas Stamford Raffles arrives in Malacca and from there

¹²⁵ The Kew Letters are a series of letters from the stadtholder dating to 1795. In these letters, Willem V called for rebellion against the French and ordered the colonial governors to hand over the Dutch overseas possessions to the British, so that they would not fall into French hands.

¹²⁶ In this treaty, the Netherlands regained the Cape of Good Hope, but lost Ceylon.

¹²⁷ Today, remains of the city wall can still be seen.

undertakes the conquest of Java, which is still under Dutch rule. He introduces important administrative changes and improvements.

10.8. Malacca returns to Dutch control

After Napoleon is finally beaten in Europe, the Treaty of London of 1814 lays down that Malacca should be returned to the Dutch and that Johor and Riau will remain under Dutch authority. However, the British presence in the region is not so easily removed.

The British resident Farquhar concludes an agreement with the sultan van Johor on his own initiative, going against the Treaty of London. The Dutch send a few ships from Malacca to Johor to restore order.

A heated discussion with the British ensues, in which the Dutch in the end draw the short straw, under the influence of the anti-Dutch Raffles. Actual control over Malacca is not returned to the Dutch until 21 September 1818.

10.9. Raffles founds Singapore; the Dutch monopoly is broken

Raffles tries, after the handover of Malacca, to establish UK trade interests in the strategically important area as soon as possible. Although, as said, the British had already settled down on Penang and founded Georgetown, Raffles believes that this is a far from optimal trade location in comparison to Malacca.

Raffles at first tries to conclude as many contracts as possible with local rulers, but to his disappointment and annoyance, 'Mister' (the Dutch) has been ahead of him in most cases. Eventually he turns his eyes to an inhospitable island just off the coast of Johor in the Riau archipelago, Singhapura, with a clear objective: "*One free port in these seas must eventually destroy the spell of Dutch monopoly.*" Singhapura had been of no importance until this time. It was a densely forested island, only inhabited by a few fishermen. Raffles establishes here, on 28 January 1819, the stronghold Singapore, against the Treaty of London, without permission from the sultan of Johor and under loud Dutch protests. This is not a problem for Raffles, because the Dutch authorities had not bothered to occupy the area. A small detachment of soldiers would have been sufficient and the legal position of the British is very weak.

Raffles' motto is: 'do first, then fight the legal battles'. He loses no time. Within a few weeks, he has settled 2,000 people on the island, mostly Malaysians and Chinese. A few months later, 5,000 and offices and businesses have been settled on the island. There is no way back. The legal wrangling between Dutch and British lawyers only leads to irritation on both sides. The delaying tactics of the British and the indecision of the Dutch ensure that the foundation of Singapore under British rule has become fact.¹²⁸

10.10. The last Dutch attempts to trade in Perak

¹²⁸ John Keay. *The Honourable Company. A History Of The British East India Company*. 1991. London: Harper Collins Publishers, 1993. Pp. 339ff.

The Dutch try in 1819 once more to settle on Pulau Pangkor, but are unsuccessful. The British have by now agreed with the sultan of Perak that the existing contracts with the Dutch are invalid. Concluding new contracts with the Dutch is forbidden.¹²⁹

10.11. The definitive transfer of Malacca to the British

In 1824, when the Treaty of London is reviewed,¹³⁰ it is decided that the Netherlands will exchange Malacca for a number of British possessions¹³¹ and will give up all Dutch claims to Singapore. The transfer of Malacca takes place on 5 April 1825.

10.12. The decline of Malacca

The growth of Singapore causes the decline of Malacca. Furthermore, the harbour is not deep enough for the growing draft of ships in the Strait of Malacca. Finally, the gradual silting up of the harbour seals its fate.

A scion of the third generation of Wiederholds Jan (John) Arnold Wiederhold (born 6 May 1796) has had enough and leaves around 1826 to start a business in East Java. He becomes the owner of several sugar plantations¹³² in Kluharan and Wonoredjo, near Pasuruan, under a contract with the government which allows him to develop unclaimed land. The Culture System, introduced in 1830 by governor-general Johannes van den Bosch, creates favorable circumstances for businessmen on Java. The sugar plantations grow and prosper. John Wiederhold is one of the first European sugar merchants in East Java. This ends the adventure of the Wiederholds in Malacca after almost eighty years.

10.13. The Wiederholds settle on Java

Johan Edward, son of Jan (John) Arnold and therefore the fourth generation, becomes owner of the kina¹³³ plantation Boemikaso near Pengalengan (Preanger), landowner in Kebobang and owner of a sugar factory in Pasuruan, which he sells in 1878. This son marries one Johanna Hedrich. According to a Royal Decree dated 19 November 1890, his son John Edward adds 'Hedrich' to the name Wiederhold, changing it to 'Hedrich von Wiederhold'. The aim of this was to save the name Hedrich from extinction in the maternal line, since Major Hedrich had died during the Java War in Magalan and left no male heirs.

His son Constant marries Gertruda Antonia Theodora Lammers. On 29 November 1903 in Pladju a son is born, Willy Andrew George Constant (my grandfather).

His marriage to Jeanette Henriette de Bruin (born Surabaya, 26 November 1902) results in two children, born on Malang: Germaine (my mother) and Robert Hedrich von Wiederhold. Germaine marries my father Bernardus Johannes Molenkamp on 19 February 1942. My grandfather Willy Andrew George Constant, before the outbreak of

¹²⁹ R. O. Winstedt, 'Dutch East India Company'. In: *A History of Malaya*. Kuala Lumpur & Singapore: Marican & Sons Ltd. 1982. Pp. 128-130.

¹³⁰ For the British The Treaty of Holland.

¹³¹ Including Bengkulu on Sumatra.

¹³² These were called 'sugar mills' in this period.

¹³³ Quinine.

the war with Japan, owns the Technische Handelsmaatschappij Malang (Technical Trading Company Malang).

He is conscripted into the Royal Dutch Army of the East Indies (KNIL) and after the capitulation of the KNIL is taken to Burma, where he is forced to work on the Burma railway. He dies as a prisoner of war in Japanese captivity on 26 May 1945 in Chunkai, a few months before the Japanese capitulation.