

Becoming Dutch by means of the empire: foreigners in the Dutch East Indies and Holland, 1811-1870

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Between 1811 and 1815 the Dutch East Indies were in British hands. Governor Raffles brought with him many British officers and civil servants from the upper class. After Java was restored to the Dutch not all British left the country for Great Britain or the British Empire. Some stayed and built a new life.

In this lecture I will describe the way in which these foreigners were able to become prominent Dutch citizens in the Netherlands. Some of these families are considered now to be 'totally' Dutch, like, for instance, the Loudon-family or the noble Quarles van Ufford-family. Their successful integration depended strongly on their, to use Bourdieu concepts, so called cultural, social and economic capital and the way they deployed their capital. These three forms of capital were accumulated by these people in the Dutch colony in order to maintain and enhance their position not only in the colonial society but also in the national Dutch society. In this manner these people became Dutch. I will illustrate this by some 'colonial' family histories.