

DH Benelux 2026

Storytellers by Design Workshop

Plantage Peperpot

and the Suriname Time Machine

Background on the Suriname Time Machine Project

Suriname's history is documented across many scattered archives, maps, registers, photographs, newspapers, family histories and institutional collections. The Suriname Time Machine (STM) brings parts of this material together through maps and linked data. It allows users to move through historical places, such as streets in the capital city of Paramaribo, plantations throughout the land, as well as buildings and other structures, and to connect these places with people, events, archival records and visual material. This can make the STM a useful case study for digital storytelling.



Left to right: Location of Suriname in South America, map by SurinameCentral, 2024; relief location map of Suriname with Peperpot marked, adapted from Wikimedia Commons; detail of a 1930 historical map showing Plantage Peperpot near Meerzorg, Mopentibo and La Liberté, Suriname Time Machine. https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Suriname_Location_South_America.png; https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Suriname_relief_location_map.jpg; <https://data.surinametijdmachine.org/?lat=5.8002&lng=-55.1136&z=13>

For this workshop, the STM data presents the data of one place: Plantage Peperpot, a former plantation on the Suriname River. Peperpot is a good example because it has several kinds of material connected to it: historical data, images, maps, architectural remains, 3D models and present-day heritage traces.

Case Study Dataset: Plantage Peperpot

Plantage Peperpot lies along the Suriname River, near La Liberté, Mopentibo and Meerzorg. The exact foundation date and first owner are not fully clear, but the plantation appears in the historical record before 1737, connected to Simon van Halewijn and a larger group of plantation properties. Over time, Peperpot was linked to different crops and forms of production, including coffee, cacao, bananas and citrus. The uploaded historical dossier describes Peperpot as a place whose function changed several times, from a relatively small plantation or possible *kostgrond* to a later production landscape with coffee infrastructure, workers' housing and twentieth-century plantation buildings.

The plantation also carries the history of slavery and emancipation. In 1863, 51 enslaved people were emancipated at Peperpot, and the dossier notes the Surinamese family name Sumter in connection with the plantation. Later, Peperpot became part of broader plantation economies that involved Creole, British Indian and Javanese labour. By the twentieth century, the plantation landscape included a coffee barn, plantation houses, a mechanical coffee factory, workers' housing, a sluice and other material remains. Some of these structures were later restored, reused or documented as heritage.

Today, Peperpot is not only a historical plantation name. It is also a nature and heritage landscape, as it got turned into a nature park in 2006, and a touristic resort.



Left to right: View of the houses at Plantage Peperpot, photograph by Burke, Gomez, 1891; 3D model of the Peperpot plantation house, 3D Warehouse, 2014. <https://images.surinametijdmachine.org/en/object/NG-1994-65-4-6-3>; <https://3dwarehouse.sketchup.com/model/8ff9cfcee106dacf5f84f5284be214d7/Suriname-Peperpot-plantation-house>

Possible entry points for digital storytelling

By looking at Peperpot through these materials, several entry points become possible:

- The history of one plantation through maps, buildings and changing crops – a kind of plantation biography
- The coffee barn as a starting point for a story about labour, production and architecture
- The plantation house as a way to discuss power, ownership and visibility
- The shift from plantation landscape to nature park and heritage site
- What photographs show, and what they do not show
- How linked data can connect a place name to people, objects, buildings and archival records
- How to tell a story when the colonial sources name owners and administrators more clearly than enslaved or labouring people

NOTE

Peperpot is not a neutral heritage site. Most of the available sources were created through colonial administration, plantation ownership, museum collecting or later heritage documentation. This means that some people, especially owners and administrators, appear more clearly in the records than enslaved people, labourers, Indigenous communities or women. A digital story about Peperpot therefore needs to work with the available material, but also show the gaps, silences and unequal visibility within that material.

Additional Resources

Peperpot image examples (from the Rijksmuseums Collection)

<https://images.surinametijdmachine.org/en/object/NG-1994-65-4-3-1>

<https://images.surinametijdmachine.org/en/object/RP-F-2010-75-7-1>

Suriname Time Machine Data

<https://data.surinametijdmachine.org/>

<https://data.surinametijdmachine.org/places?place=stm-00566>

<https://data.surinametijdmachine.org/explore?lat=5.7904&lng=-55.1176&z=13&place=stm-00566>

Peperpot 3D models

<https://3dwarehouse.sketchup.com/search/models?q=Peperpot>

Peperpot plantation house model

<https://3dwarehouse.sketchup.com/model/8ff9cfcee106dacf5f84f5284be214d7/Suriname-Peperpot-plantation-house>

Historical Peperpot dossier

Philip Dikland, Plantage Peperpot aan de Surinamerivier, 2000, supplemented 2006, 2008, 2012.
<https://drive.google.com/file/d/0B88mZFItv8emR0hIY2MxQnBxRXc/view?resourcekey=0-q9k5ucnG0bNidiL4D68X7A>

Slave registers and life courses

van Galen, C. W., Mourits, R. J., Rosenbaum-Feldbrügge, M., A.B., M., Janssen, J., Quanjier, B., van Oort, T., & Kok, J. (2023). Slavery in Suriname. A Reconstruction of Life Courses, 1830–1863. *Historical Life Course Studies*, 13, 191–211. <https://doi.org/10.51964/hlcs15619>

Citizen science and contentious heritage

van Oort, T., Prats López, M., Ganzevoort, W., & van Galen, C. (2025). Citizen Science and Participatory Engagement with a Contentious Past: The Historical Database of Suriname and the Caribbean. In I. Saloul & B. Baillie (Eds.), *The Palgrave Encyclopedia of Cultural Heritage and Conflict*. Palgrave Macmillan. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-61493-5_319-1

Plantation dataset

Rosenbaum-Feldbrügge, M., van Galen, C., & Swaters, D. (2023). Suriname Plantation Dataset Version 1.0. IISH Data Collection. <https://hdl.handle.net/10622/VT43W>

Surinaamse Almanakken dataset

van Oort, T., Altink, N., Swaters, D., Smits, E., Pikulić, D., Rosenbaum-Feldbrügge, M., Quanjier, B., & van Galen, C. (2025). *Plantations Surinaamse Almanakken* [Database]. <https://hdl.handle.net/10622/4VOJYS>

Slave register source guide

Nationaal Archief. (n.d.). Suriname: Slavenregisters, 1816–1863.
<https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/onderzoeken/zoekhulpen/suriname-slavenregisters-1816-1863>