

CHAIN SMOKING:
LINKING VIRGINIA'S AND BARBADOS' COMMERCIAL TOBACCO
PRODUCTION

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1. The Evolution of Jamestown and Barbados: Historians' Shifting Focuses

As Jamestown's saving grace and John Rolfe's claim to fame, tobacco maintains a special place in Virginia history. The weed simultaneously altered English New World motives and determined the future of countless immigrants who left England's crowded port cities with little more than the clothes on their backs and the belief that they could start over in Virginia's wilderness. These adventurous, often desperate, souls gambled with their lives only to find themselves unprepared and unwanted in a hostile, alien world.

The English, having failed to establish a permanent American colony thus far, looked to Spanish colonies for guidance. Certain that they could acquire the monetary success of the infamous conquistadores, while saving the poor natives from heathenism or Spanish Catholicism, 142 passengers and crew embarked from England on three ships bound for the New World. Having survived a four month long journey across the Atlantic Ocean, they arrived in Powhatan territory with unrealistic expectations of their new neighbors and the land under Chief Wahunsonacock's influence. The Native Americans refused to accept English superiority or Christianity, and understood politics and exploitation as well as the Europeans they encountered. A tense relationship of mutual distrust developed immediately, and the English eventually realized that they could not depend on the natives to keep them alive forever. Cultural conflict only added to the colonists' troubles as disease, starvation, martial law, and native attacks claimed many of the original settlers' lives.

As Englishmen succumbed to their fates and nearly all hope for the settlement's future seemed lost, an imported species of tobacco took hold in the failing colony. Men who earlier could not feed themselves began growing the weed in the streets of Jamestown. Eventually, the settlers learned that the colony's future lay in tobacco, not gold. They adopted the crop with earnestness, abandoning nearly all other tasks to increase tobacco production. Although nearly everyone in the colony grew tobacco most men never substantially profited from their own labor. Wealthy planters maintained control of the commercial tobacco production and took advantage of Virginia's chaotic environment, wrought with high death rates and an overwhelming sense of fear, to exploit their unfortunate neighbors for personal gain.

Despite the high death toll, the natives' unwillingness to submit or convert, and the absence of precious metals or a northern passage to the Indies, the English considered Jamestown a success. The establishment of an agriculturally based export system quickly became the goal of English investors and hopeful immigrants. During the following two decades, Englishmen claimed territory along the North American coast and in the Caribbean. They poured from the mother country by the shipload, bound for the New World, some unwillingly and nearly all indentured with the exception of the religious heretics bound for New England.

Barbados shares a story amazingly similar to Virginia's confusing beginnings of high death rates, exploited labor, and tobacco. Barbados, however, benefitted from the twenty years' of experience the English acquired in Jamestown. Most people traveled to the island under the indenture system already in place in Virginia and England's subsequent colonies. Like the Virginians, the Barbados settlers also braved the

transatlantic voyage, the seasoning period, and their indentured contracts to better their monetary situation and societal standing. The original Barbadians' initiatives, however, differed dramatically from the first Jamestown colonists. They did not expect to discover large deposits of specie. And, since Spanish slave raids and disease had long destroyed the native population of Barbados, no one promoted the island's settlement in the name of Protestantism. Englishmen immigrated to Barbados to establish a colony to export agricultural products.

By the time Captain Henry Powell and his men colonized Barbados in 1627, Virginians had been exporting tobacco for over a decade. Englishmen in newly established colonies, including Barbados, could not resist the weed's lure. Within two weeks of landing in Barbados, Powell imported crops, including both tobacco and sugar, to the island. Fully aware of Virginians' success with the weed, Barbadians quickly attempted to infiltrate the tobacco trade. Fortunately for the Virginians, the Barbados weed gained harsh criticism and a poor reputation. Perhaps just as fortunate, the Barbadians' early reputation as a ““Dunghill wharone England doth cast forth its rubidge, Rodges, and hors,” and limited land rendered the island an undesirable destination for many indentured servants.¹ By the mid-1640s, Barbados' tobacco economy had given way to sugar. Small-scale farmers continued cultivating the weed, but cane increasingly dominated the island's exports.

Barbados' short-lived tobacco era remains virtually unstudied by modern historians. Defined by high slave importation rates and violence toward labor, the

¹ Charles H. Firth, ed. *The Narrative of General Venables, with an Appendix of Papers Relating to the Expedition to the West Indies and the Conquest of Jamaica, 1654-1655* (London: Longman's Green, 1990), 145.

island's glamorous sugar years often eclipse the island's tobacco culture. Viewed as a failed attempt to penetrate the Virginia and Spanish tobacco trade, the initial years of settlement are often briefly mentioned as a precursor to the sugar years, underemphasizing the weed's importance in Barbados' establishment. Tobacco, not sugar, dominated early Barbados. The original Barbados colonists' adoption of the head right system, indentured labor, and an economy based on agricultural exports, especially tobacco, stemmed directly from lessons learned at Jamestown. This study will emphasize the connections between Jamestown and Barbados' initial settlements, and the environment's role in shaping the future of each colony.

Too often, early historians of colonial America described English monarchs, explorers, and colonists as though they lived in a vacuum. The initial Jamestown settlers left behind friends and family in England and crossed miles of ocean to colonize a newly "discovered" world. Despite time and distance, however, these men did not become disconnected from England. The Virginia Company, based in London, although often infrequently and inefficiently, sent men, news, and goods to their New World outpost, reaffirming bonds between Jamestown and the mother country. The colonists also lived among natives and non-English European settlers in the Americas. Jamestown, therefore, did not exist in a vacuum, affected only by events occurring within the colony itself. Jamestown existed within a larger, connected, and complicated Atlantic world.

In recent years historians have largely abandoned the idea that the Jamestown colonists remained isolated from the rest of civilization. Modern histories of Jamestown emphasize English imperialism's place within a larger European, Atlantic, and even global context, resulting in a broader and more accurate portrayal of English American

colonialism. According to this new interpretation, the English colonists participated in the international and intercontinental networks that developed during Europe's New World exploration: networks connecting diverse peoples from four very different continents and shaping European, African, and American societies, politics, and cultures.

Anglo-Americans, no matter the colony in which they resided, depended on, learned from, and reacted to developments not only in Europe but also in various other colonies throughout the Americas. The relations between tobacco production in colonial Virginia and Barbados, for example, demonstrates such inter-colonial connections. Although no published study of Virginia-Barbados tobacco connections exists, the historiographies of Virginia, Barbados, the English Empire, and the Atlantic world provide a starting point from which to conduct a thorough investigation of Virginia-Barbados tobacco links.

Numerous Jamestown histories cover everything from Anglo-native relations to labor to Virginia politics. Every colonial Virginia history emphasizes tobacco's vital role in securing the colony's survival and England's continued participation in the Americas. Most works published within the last decade or so acknowledge Jamestown's place within the larger Atlantic world linked by trade, migration, and immigration routes. Many historians emphasize England's influences on Jamestown, and vice versa, but fail to emphasize inter-colonial networks, such as those between Virginia and Barbados. Historians who have demonstrated such inter-colonial relationships often focus on connections that Virginia shared with other colonies, resulting in inaccurate generalizations and underemphasizing the level of intimate relations that existed between two specific colonies.

In *American Slavery, American Freedom*, Edmund Morgan attempts to demonstrate the connection between American slavery and American revolutionary freedom rhetoric by focusing on early Virginia history.² Morgan describes a mobile, interconnected Atlantic World before Jamestown's settlement, emphasizing Drake's late sixteenth-century harassment campaigns against the Spanish in Central and South America. After Jamestown's founding, however, Morgan emphasizes Virginia's isolation. Even as he outlines English encounters with various native tribes, he emphasizes that the colonists remained dependent on England for supplies and men. He also demonstrates how Jamestown became part of the American eastern seaboard, later known as the United States. Morgan's emphasis on the colonists' detachment from England, however, portrays a Virginia only minimally connected to the outside world. According to Morgan, Virginia's, and ultimately British North America's, isolation, and its distinctive slave-based agricultural economy led to the American Revolution.

Although Morgan reaches a bit far to connect American republicanism directly to Virginia slavery, his study of colonial Virginia accounts, records, biographies, and unprinted manuscripts provides an interesting and intimate look at Jamestown labor and tobacco culture. Morgan emphasizes Jamestown's racist structure and dependence on bound labor despite pre-Jamestown rhetoric propagating overseas expansion as a means to liberate and convert natives. According to Morgan, unrealistic native and English expectations resulted in cultural conflict characterized by violent confrontation in America. Motivated by greed and fully aware of their own mortality, men took

² Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1975).

advantage of Virginia's chaotic environment to exploit their neighbors and reap profits. No man could escape tobacco's hold on the colony. Virginia's successful planters turned planter-merchants, lengthened servitude durations, monopolized the best lands, and ensured freedmen remained somehow bound to their former masters to prevent unwanted competition.

Despite Morgan's overemphasis on Virginia as a case study for American history, *American Slavery, American Freedom* provides an intimate look into early Virginia's labor struggle and tobacco culture. His focus on Virginia in particular, rather than following developments throughout the entire eastern coast of English colonial America, allows for a more comprehensive and interesting study than most works concerning English colonization and the development of American slavery. His narrow focus, however, underemphasizes outside events' influences on developments in Virginia.

Darrett B. Rutman and Anita H. Rutman's *A Place in Time: Middlesex County, Virginia 1650-1750* describes a Virginia far removed from Morgan's account of Jamestown's initial years.³ The Rutmans' Virginians were not as concerned with native attacks and starvation as the initial colonists described by Morgan. They were more concerned with communal ties and building a viable livelihood in America. To demonstrate that southern communities existed in colonial North America, the Rutmans isolate Virginians to a further extent than did Morgan.

Constructing a computer database from local colonial Middlesex records, and utilizing sources from similar communities when necessary, the Rutmans provide,

³ Darrett B. Rutman and Anita H. Rutman, *A Place in Time: Middlesex County, Virginia 1650-1750* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1984).

perhaps as accurately as possible, a glimpse into daily life and interaction in colonial Middlesex and dispel the notion that southern colonies failed to develop viable communities, like those in New England. According to the Rutmans, southern communities not only existed, they also greatly influenced many aspects of daily life.

The Rutmans, mainly concerned with dispelling notions that Virginia communities did not exist, or that those that did exist were somehow inferior to New England communities, discuss the connection between the Chesapeake, New England, and the mother country but do not acknowledge that the Caribbean colonies also played a role in this transatlantic relationship. The historians recognize the importance of Virginian tobacco exports during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, but only briefly mention outside competition from Spain and Maryland, and completely neglect Barbadian tobacco exports. When describing the effects of increased New World tobacco production on Virginia planters' profits, the Rutmans credit only Maryland and Virginia with increased tobacco production, implying that the Chesapeake alone controlled the tobacco market by the mid seventeenth century.

The Rutmans' contribution to the understanding of the colonial Virginia communities more than compensates for the neglect of a Virginia-Barbados connection. Not only did the authors first publish this work in 1984, before historians' widespread acceptance that a transatlantic community existed, the Rutmans' demonstration of the existence of Virginia's communities required no such acknowledgment. The work provides insight into the possible motives and experiences of a tobacco-cultivating colony.

In *Robert Cole's World: Agriculture and Society in Early Maryland*, Lois Green

Carr, Russell R. Menard, and Lorena S. Walsh outline the most influential, yet often neglected, aspect of seventeenth-century Chesapeake life: farm building based around tobacco cultivation.⁴ Although most historians emphasize tobacco cultivation's importance for Chesapeake settlers, Carr, Menard, and Walsh are the first to fully demonstrate the degree to which seventeenth-century colonists' lives revolved around agriculture and farm building. Even *A Place in Time*, in which the Rutmans placed a small portion of the colonial Virginia population under a microscope, failed to communicate the importance that farm building and tobacco cultivation played in early Virginia life. Through the use of contemporary records, largely the Cole family's plantation records, Carr, Menard, and Walsh reveal farm building's role in every aspect of colonial life. They emphasize colonists' desire to acquire land, their decisions concerning which land to purchase, lease, or rent, and the number of servants, and later slaves, they acquired for their plantations.

Carr, Menard, and Walsh dismiss colonial Americans' reputation as wasteful, disorganized agriculturalists. Seventeenth-century colonists' daily, seasonal, and yearly lives revolved around farm building and tobacco cultivation. Planters sought the most efficient utilization of their resources. Tobacco planters' main source of profit, therefore, dictated Chesapeake life. Carr, Menard, and Walsh also emphasize that planters could not control every aspect of tobacco cultivation, such as weather and market variations, demonstrating the amount of knowledge, foresight, and risk taking necessary for a planter to make profits each year.

⁴ Lois Green Carr, Russell R. Menard, and Lorena S. Walsh, *Robert Cole's World: Agriculture and Society in Early Maryland* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

The amount of research required in producing such a full and convincing picture of seventeenth-century Chesapeake life is impressive. *Robert Cole's World* provides an unbelievably clear view of seventeenth-century life in an interesting manner. The historians also provide several illustrations and maps to demonstrate or emphasize key points and agricultural methods. And, while mainly relying on Maryland plantation records, the historians portray the life of average Chesapeake colonists without drawing far-fetched conclusions or ignoring diversity among early planters. *Robert Cole's World* may provide the most detailed, and interesting, account of everyday Chesapeake life during the seventeenth century. Like the Rutmans, however, their narrow focus underemphasized the importance of intercolonial networks.

By contrast, in *Adapting to a New World: English Society in the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake*, James Horn emphasizes the emergence of a Chesapeake society that still maintained close ties with England.⁵ Horn stresses Englishmen's acceptance of an Atlantic World defined by constant interaction and divergence between the Old World and the New. American colonists naturally tried to recreate an environment similar to that they knew in England. Their New World experiences, however, forced the colonists to adapt to the new environments, creating distinct societies over time. Horn conducts a study of England, Virginia, and Maryland, focusing on the colonists' English origins, the development of a Chesapeake society, and comparing both European and Chesapeake attitudes toward societal issues including sex, marriage, family, and the community.

Horn emphasizes the colonists' determination to make money. English immigrants traveled to America to make money, primarily from tobacco. They attempted

⁵ James Horn, *Adapting to a New World: English Society in the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

to recreate English society in America. Nearly everything they encountered forced the colonists to adapt. Still, they continued to view themselves as English. The settlers wanted leave behind their poverty, not their heritage. They remained connected to the mother country, creating an interconnected Atlantic World.

In his later book, *A Land as God Made It: Jamestown and the Birthplace of America*, Horn, like Edmund Morgan, emphasizes the trials that seventeenth-century Virginia colonists faced as they attempted to establish a permanent English American colony, procure profits for themselves and investors, convert natives to Christianity, and at times, merely survive.⁶ By studying various secondary sources and drawing heavily from John Smith's and Richard Hakluyt's writings, Horn provides a fairly balanced account of English and Native American experiences during the English conquest of Virginia. Horn emphasizes the hardships that the colonists faced, beginning with internal divisions and self-interest, which only escalated as starvation, disease, and native attacks reeked havoc on the unprepared colonists.

The Jamestown colonists also feared Virginia natives, who alternately feigned friendship and waged war against English settlers. Years of mistrust, misunderstanding, and contempt, defined the relationship between the Powhatans and the colonists. Far from portraying the natives as passive victims of English exploitation, Horn underscores Wahunsonacock's determination to drive the English from his lands, or at the very least restrict their presence to a small section of his territory. As a powerful chieftain over several native groups, Wahunsonacock refused to be demoted to an English king's

⁶ James Horn, *A Land as God Made It: Jamestown and the Birth of America* (New York: Basic Books, 2005).

subordinate and increasingly displayed his independent status to the colonists. *A Land as God Made It* is essential for understanding early English-Native relations and English internal struggles during Jamestown's settlement. Horn refrains from interjecting his personal views of English or native culture in this work and attempts to understand Jamestown through both native and English eyes.

In *A Land as God Made It*, Horn was ultimately concerned with two worlds, that of the Jamestown settlers, and that of the natives they encountered. Still, he connected the settlers to Spain, England, and the various European colonies from which immigrants set sail for the New World more so than the Rutmans or Carr, Menard, and Walsh. His work also emphasized the hardships encountered by the initial Jamestown colonists without disconnecting them from England as Morgan did in *American Slavery, American Freedom*.

Karen Kupperman, in *The Jamestown Project*, emphasizes Jamestown's influence on successive English colonies.⁷ Like Horn and Morgan, Kupperman stresses Jamestown's, and tobacco's, importance in Anglo-American developments. Unlike Morgan, however, Kupperman does not discuss the tense English-colonial relations as a precursor to the oncoming American Revolution in the eighteenth century.

Kupperman portrays Jamestown as an inauspicious colonial endeavor occurring in the midst of various European colonial enterprises. Kupperman claims that Jamestown did not immediately grab most Englishmen's attention. By becoming the first permanent English settlement, however, Jamestown's significance grew, and the colony provided the model from which all future successful settlements were based.

⁷ Karen Kupperman, *The Jamestown Project* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007).

The English discovered through trial and error in Jamestown that land ownership, representative government, familial structures of both men and women, and the development of a marketable crop were necessary components of a permanent colony. Kupperman dismisses Jamestown's reputation as an immediate tobacco monoculture, but she nevertheless emphasizes the weed's role in shaping Jamestown's, and English America's, future.

Rather than portraying Jamestown's establishment as a singular, important event in history, Kupperman emphasizes the colony's place within a very active and mobile world. This work emphasizes the existence of not only an Atlantic, but also a global, world. Kupperman utilizes a variety of secondary sources and draws heavily from John Smith's works as well as colonists' personal correspondence, providing general overviews of contemporary works that greatly influenced English understanding of the New World and tying the colony to Europe's religious conflicts, mobile society, and monarchical competition.

April Hatfield's *Atlantic Virginia: Intercolonial Relations in the Seventeenth Century* examines the connections early Virginians experienced with Englishmen across the Atlantic Ocean, as well as with the French, Dutch, Spanish, Africans, and Native Americans.⁸ Hatfield stresses early colonists' acceptance of an Atlantic world in which mariners, merchants, traders, and native guides connected people throughout North America, Europe, Africa, and the Caribbean. Hatfield emphasizes the colonists' use of existing Native American networks and development of their own Atlantic oceanic

⁸ April Lee Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia: Intercolonial Relations in the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

routes, such as the tobacco and slave trades, that enabled communication, created permeable boundaries, and provided a strengthened sense of their position in a larger world.

Hatfield utilizes various secondary sources as well as contemporary personal accounts and maps, deeds books, assembly records, and personal letters. Hatfield's focus on colonial networks led her to work with sources from various colonies including New York and Barbados, rather than strictly concentrating on Virginia materials. Hatfield's range of secondary sources includes economic, social, and anthropological studies focusing on the Native Americans, Europeans, and African slaves.

Hatfield demonstrates Virginians' emersion in the Atlantic World by emphasizing many colonists' dual roles as both merchants and planters. These colonists settled along navigable waterways and cultivated crops through their own labor or that of their servants and slaves and even transported their products to market on their own ships. Those who did not transport their own crops likely maintained some semblance of contact with the mariners who ventured into Virginia and socialized with, and carried news to, the colonists.

Colonial Barbados' tobacco era boasts a much smaller historiography than that of Jamestown's weed. Most historians focus primarily on the island's more lucrative sugar trade. Barbados' tobacco era, although comparatively much less successful than that of sugar, warrants further study. The weed played a major role in the settlement, as well as in the political, cultural, and economic development, of the island. Barbados' early adoption of tobacco also demonstrates the links between two seemingly unconnected

colonies, Virginia and Barbados, and further reveals the existence of inter-colonial networks and spheres of influence.

Vincent Harlow's *A History of Barbados 1625-1685* provides a political history of Barbados from the first English settlement through the late seventeenth century.⁹ Mainly concerned with a few major political players and their relationship with the Barbados planter class, Harlow paints a picture of an outlaw-minded population plagued by confused beginnings and constant imperial interference. While Harlow rarely mentions Barbados tobacco, the staple crop upon which the colony was originally built, *A History of Barbados* nevertheless provides very important information regarding the politics affecting the Barbados tobacco system.

Harlow's work remains an important source in the study of the Barbados tobacco system. Although the word "tobacco" does not even appear in the index, Harlow's study provides the background information necessary for understanding Barbados' role in the Atlantic community as a staple crop exporter. More contemporary works on Barbadian history certainly exist; most historians cite *A History of Barbados* as a valuable resource.

In *No Peace Beyond the Line: The English in the Caribbean 1624-1690*, Carl and Roberta Bridenbaugh demonstrate the chaotic and dangerous world in which English West Indian colonists found themselves during the seventeenth century.¹⁰ The Bridenbaughs lament that very few sources exist; yet they provide a wealth of evidence

⁹ Vincent Harlow, *Colonising Expeditions to the West Indies and Guiana 1623-1667* (Nendeln, Liechtenstein: Kraus, Reprinted Limited, 1925).

¹⁰ Carl and Roberta Bridenbaugh, *No Peace beyond the Line: The English in the Caribbean, 1624-1690* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972).

for their arguments. They draw heavily from accounts by John Smith and Richard Ligon, the Winthrop papers, colonial records, and English state papers. The Bridenbaughs' extensively researched and well-written arguments have made *No Peace Beyond the Line* a common reference for West Indian studies.

The Bridenbaughs portray a confused, dangerous, and uncertain world beyond the line between the Azores and the Tropic of Cancer, which symbolized the boundary of western European foreign relations. The Bridenbaughs outline the social, political, and economic changes in English West Indian society, mainly that of Barbados, St. Kitts, and Jamaica, during the seventeenth century including foreign wars, colonial and native invasions, and staple crop transitions. West Indian colonists formed alliances with, and invaded, neighboring colonies throughout the period, especially between 1650 and 1690, and experienced no significant period of peace. The Bridenbaughs stress the hostility in the region by emphasizing Barbados' status as the only colony in the West Indies not to have been invaded during the period.

According to the Bridenbaughs, mere survival became the initial West Indian settlers' primary objective. The colonists, faced with death or adaptation, only slowly learned to overcome prejudices against native foods and survival methods. The Bridenbaughs stress West Indians' waste in the form of natural resources and human life through "pestilence, war, and violent Nature...disrupting [European and African] lives, destroying buildings and whatever else they owned, and arousing great fears."¹¹ The unruly lives West Indian colonists led prevented the transplantation of the English culture they so desired. Survival and profit, not peace, defined the seventeenth-century West

¹¹ Ibid., 413.

Indies. Natives also posed a problem for many West Indian settlers as most colonies, excluding Barbados, had native populations. While early colonists owed their survival to the natives, including the acquisition of cultivation techniques, the Caribs remained hostile towards the Europeans and added to their troubles.

In *White Servitude and Black Slavery in Barbados, 1627-1715*, Hilary Beckles conducts a socioeconomic study of this poor and neglected laboring class.¹² His book stands in stark contrast to Vincent T. Harlow's political history of big names and large landholders. Beckles did not conduct the first study of indentured servitude. Eric Williams's *Capitalism and Slavery*, published in 1944, studied the process in which American colonies shifted from indentured to enslaved labor.¹³ Unlike previous historians who studied the American indentured class as a whole, or Williams who focused heavily on Jamaica, Beckles specifically focuses on Barbados' servitude. Thus, he avoids the generalizations made by previous historians who treated both mainland and West Indian servitude as the same institution. Both Williams and Beckles provide evidence that white servitude paved the way for black slavery in general, and in Barbados specifically.

Although Beckles did not specifically study the relationship between Virginia and Barbados, he acknowledges Virginia's influence on certain Barbados policies including the island's land tenure system. Even Barbados' decision to cultivate tobacco resulted

¹² Hilary Beckles, *White Servitude and Black Slavery in Barbados 1627-1715* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989).

¹³ Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1944).

from Virginia's successes with the crop. He does not, however, argue that Barbadians based all decisions upon Virginia's successes and failures.

White Servitude and Black Slavery provides a wealth of knowledge concerning an oft-ignored portion of Barbados history. Beckles emphasizes the importance of the island's early years of English settlement in the development of Barbados society, slavery, and prosperity. Where Harlow's *A History of Barbados* provides an overview of Barbados politics, providing the background for the evolution of Barbados society, Beckles' work paints a portrait of that society, which was comprised mainly of poor laboring servants hoping to break the chains of poverty and establish themselves in a New World.

In *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713*, Richard Dunn studies the outlaw-minded Englishmen who immigrated to the Caribbean islands.¹⁴ Dunn emphasizes sugar's role in creating a distinct Caribbean society that differed from English colonies on the mainland. Dunn claims that while the Caribbean islands did not produce "mythmakers in the heroic vein of Capt. John Smith, John Winthrop or William Penn," Caribbean sugar planters deserve a closer study.¹⁵ These men enjoyed levels of wealth and imported cargoes of slaves unimaginable on the mainland, creating a very different world than their North American counterparts.

Sugar and Slaves emphasizes the Atlantic World. The English Caribbean colonists on most islands, excluding Barbados which remained fairly isolated, found themselves living among natives, Spanish, French, and Dutch neighbors. They helped

¹⁴ Richard S. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1972).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, xxiii.

create the triangle trading system, and many English islanders migrated to the mainland. English islanders, such as Henry Winthrop, maintained contact with their mainland relatives. Still, Dunn emphasizes the unquestionable divergence between the island colonies and those in North America.

In *Sweet Negotiations: Sugar, Slavery, and Plantation Agriculture in Early Barbados*, Russell Menard argues against the notion of a sugar revolution financed by the Dutch in seventeenth-century Barbados.¹⁶ Menard dedicates much of his work to refute the generally accepted views of early Barbados history, especially the idea of a Barbados sugar revolution. Menard does not contest that Barbados experienced many changes during the period typically labeled the “sugar revolution.” Instead, he asserts that the changes were not significant enough to be considered revolutionary because the transition to the plantation system, the defining characteristic of the sugar revolution, had already begun before the introduction of widespread sugar cultivation. The shift to sugar did not create the plantation system credited to the sugar revolution; the switch to sugar merely hastened the process. In other words, sugar did not revolutionize Barbados; the island revolutionized sugar.

Menard convincingly disputes most historians’ portrayal of Barbados’ transition to sugar as a revolution by emphasizing their reliance on Richard Ligon’s *True and Exact History of Barbados*, published in 1657, and John Scott’s manuscript titled “The Description of Barbados,” in which the authors suggest key concepts adopted by future historians. Rather than blindly accepting his predecessors’ interpretation of Ligon’s and

¹⁶ Russell Menard, *Sweet Negotiations: Sugar, Slavery, and Plantation Agriculture in Early Barbados* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006).

Scott's accounts of Barbados sugar, Menard researched the archives first-hand and found that his skepticism of a revolution was not unsubstantiated. Menard utilized several contemporary sources including letters, petitions, deeds, and personal accounts of Barbados, as well as secondary sources including both early and more modern histories of the island in order to dispute the idea of a sugar revolution.

In *Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic Empire*, Alison Games recreates individual biographies and general immigration experiences through the use of English port registers.¹⁷ She studies records from the year 1635 in particular because of the high immigration rates occurring in that year resulting from the English Civil War and her belief that, by 1635, a viable Atlantic world existed.

Although a study of 1635's colonial immigration and migration does not include the original settlers of Virginia or Barbados, Games' work demonstrates Englishmen's mobility before and during England's exploration and colonization period during the late sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Games' study of port records and personal correspondence also emphasizes inter-colonial connections recognized through migration and merchant contacts after the successful establishment of permanent English colonies, as well as the increasingly limited political opportunities settlers experienced as the early years of settlement gave way to the 1630s and 1640s.

Games emphasizes migration's role in creating the Atlantic World. Everyone, discounting natives, who lived in the New World had foreign roots. In other words, the settlers or their parents had personally moved to the New World from Europe or Africa.

¹⁷ Alison Games, *Migration and the Origins of the English Atlantic World* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

Living in closer proximity to one another than their European counterparts, the English, Dutch, French, Portuguese, and Spanish formed networks of interaction with one another in ways unachievable in England. The presence of natives and Africans, and the scarcity of females during the beginnings of most colonies, added elements to colonial life absent in England. Every colony was unique, but the large numbers of servants, vagrants, and men in most colonies meant that settlers found the transference of cultural practices extremely difficult. Although New Englanders experienced a more balanced sex ratio, colonists there also lived in a world quite different from England because of the large number of religious non-conformists sneaking aboard ships and starting over in the New World. High mortality rates and chaotic environments also influenced the Atlantic World experience.

Historians such as April Hatfield, Karen Kupperman, James Horn, and Alison Games have demonstrated the existence of inter-colonial networks. They have not, however, exhausted the subject. Future historians must continue to question their findings and add to, or perhaps even dispute, the Atlantic world concept. Every historian who provides a different perspective, focuses on a distinctive portion, or dispels an accepted misconception of colonial history, takes us one step closer to understanding the past, which is, after all, our only hope of understanding the present and preparing for the future.

This thesis will demonstrate the connections between Virginia's and Barbados' commercial tobacco production. The Jamestown colonists' adoption of tobacco altered England's New World objectives and influenced the country's future American colonies. A study of Barbados' tobacco era provides the perfect opportunity to demonstrate

Virginia tobacco's influence on England's New World Empire. Barbados, remembered for its lucrative sugar years, actually began as a tobacco exporting colony, but the island's planters transitioned to sugar cultivation to reap higher profits. Historians often neglect Barbados' crucial tobacco years. Learning from Jamestown, the Barbados colonists immediately adopted commercial agriculture, specifically tobacco, aiding in the colony's survival. Barbados' entrance into the tobacco trade added to a glutted market, influencing Virginia planters' profits and English legislation concerning its colonies. This thesis will emphasize the links between two seemingly disconnected colonies, illustrating the Atlantic World's existence and Jamestown's influence on Barbados.

2. No Smoking: England's New World Motives before Jamestown

As England's first permanent New World colony, Jamestown maintains a special place in American history. The Virginia colonists established a province based on commercial agriculture that provided the model for future English settlements. Englishmen did not originally intend to cultivate tobacco, however. They first promoted Virginia's colonization as a means to acquire wealth and national power like that of their Spanish contemporaries, hopefully by finding precious metal or another form of ready wealth. Unfortunately for Englishmen, Virginia offered no large deposits of gold or silver or easily manipulated native populations from which Europeans could extract labor. The Virginians, therefore, adapted their goals, and eventually accepted commercial tobacco production as their primary objective

Despite previous claims by men like Richard Hakluyt that establishing a New World settlement could be accomplished with ease in such a fertile, utopian environment, Jamestown's original colonists suffered tremendous hardships.¹⁸ They died from starvation, disease, and cultural conflict with neighboring natives and Spaniards, who did not appreciate English presence their territory. When nearly all hope seemed lost, tobacco fever overtook Jamestown and transformed the failing colony into a productive

¹⁸ Richard Hakluyt, "A Discourse Concerning Western Planting," 1584, Leonard Woods, ed., (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Press of John Wilson and Son), 106, http://books.google.com/books?id=BnMFAAAAQAAJ&dq=Richard+Hakluyt+claims+c+colonization+will+be+easy&printsec=frontcover&source=in&hl=en&ei=-111S9qVI5SWtgf4I927Cg&sa=X&oi=book_result&ct=result&resnum=11&ved=0CEEQ6AEwCg#v=onepage&q=with%20ease&f=false (accessed 12 Feb. 2010).

agricultural exporter. Although significantly inferior to the Spanish variety, Virginia tobacco provided the ailing settlement with a fairly valuable commodity.¹⁹

The colonists' shift to agriculture simultaneously saved Jamestown from eminent failure and ensured England's continued involvement in North America. The colonists' adoption of this second-rate product, however, did not result in the payoff that Virginia Company investors expected when they risked their fortunes in this risky experiment. Hoping for large profits and quick returns, English shareholders found the colonists' inability to locate precious metals hidden within Virginia's wilderness disheartening. Tobacco, the colony's saving grace, surely disappointed men expecting the levels of wealth comparable to that of Spain's New World possessions.

Many Englishmen enviously watched as the Spanish imported shiploads of gold and silver into Europe during the sixteenth century. Their lust for the Iberians' imperial power and the *conquistadores*' personal prosperity tempted many Englishmen to risk their lives in attempts to exploit the New World's wealth. Although exploration and colonization can be viewed as different enterprises, the two went hand in hand during the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries. After all, an area required exploration before a viable colony could be established. And, once established, colonies served as bases for further exploration.

Sixteenth-century Europeans believed that only a certain amount of wealth, measured in terms of land ownership, existed in the world. Land provided raw materials

¹⁹ William E. Burns, *Daily Life Through History: Science and Technology in Colonial America* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 11-13.

like timber, naval stores, and most importantly, gold and silver.²⁰ When Columbus encountered America in 1492, he unknowingly set in motion a European race to claim as much New World wealth as possible. The Europeans did not care that native peoples had lived in this newly encountered territory for centuries. The colonists actually believed they were saving the natives from their sinful lifestyles by spreading the true faith to lost souls. As the civilized messengers of God, the Europeans had an obligation to bring light to the ignorant savages. In Spain's case, the New World provided the wealth to spread Catholicism around the world. Later, the English saw America's resources as a means to halt the spread of Catholicism.²¹

Jamestown undoubtedly provided a model for future English New World colonies. The Virginia experiment, however, was the culmination of over one hundred years of English trial and error in America. Englishmen had been exploring, and attempting to settle the New World since Columbus' time. Spanish success in Central and South America lured Englishmen across the Atlantic Ocean in hopes of obtaining personal wealth and prestige and increasing their nation's power and influence. Like the many men before them, the Virginia Company shareholders and the original Jamestown colonists understood that England's future depended on the exploration and colonization

²⁰ Sir Thomas Dalby, *An Historical Account of the Rise and Growth of the West India Colonies and the Advantages they are to England in Respect to Trade* (London: Printed for Jo. Hindmarsh, 1690), 2; Josh Zuiderveen, "Colonial Activity in the America," *Colonial & Postcolonial Literary Dialogues*, <http://www.wmich.edu/dialogues/themes/colonizers.html> - citations (accessed on 12 Feb. 2010).

²¹ Karen Kupperman, *The Jamestown Project* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 15.

of America. They hoped to establish a permanent settlement that could not only provide markets for English goods but would also provide the mother country with valuable resources. Before Jamestown, however, the English focused their New World activities on commerce raiding, fishing, discovering precious metals or an alternative spice route, and converting natives.

Equipped with no firsthand knowledge for establishing a successful American colony, the English naturally looked to the Spanish. They expected, therefore, to acquire valuable commodities in the form of precious metals. If they could not find gold and silver, they wanted to break Iberia's spice trade monopoly by discovering an alternative route to Asia. And, by befriending the natives, the English expected to establish new markets for the English goods with the longtime victims of Spanish Catholicism's persecution.

By the end of the sixteenth century, Iberians held territory throughout the Caribbean and Central and South America. Englishmen made several attempts to end Spain's New World domination before 1607, but they were largely unsuccessful. Other than completing various small-scale trading ventures, a few successful commerce raiding campaigns, and losing an entire colony of settlers, England did not accomplish much before founding Jamestown. English monarchs issued several charters for exploration and colonization during the late fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, but they lagged far behind the Spanish and Portuguese in territorial acquisition; and they discovered no rewarding mines or wealthy native cities.

Although the Iberians' New World colonization successes far outshone their English counterparts, men sailed to mainland America in England's name during the late

fifteenth century. Henry VII authorized John Cabot, a Venetian citizen, to make an expedition to the New World as early as 1496, a full century before the Jamestown colonists landed in Virginia.²² Cabot returned to England as a hero who attracted crowds and enjoyed a certain level of prestige. He praised Newfoundland's abundant fish populations and temperate climate. Although they did not actually encounter any natives, he and his men stumbled upon evidence of recent human activity in the area.²³

Cabot's fellow explorers verified his positive account of Newfoundland. His discoveries and his belief that he could locate an alternative route to Asia through Newfoundland apparently impressed the English monarch. In 1498, Henry VII granted Cabot a second patent. Not only did the king grant the Venetian permission to claim land in England's name, he also encouraged the submission of persons already living in the area, foreshadowing English attitudes towards European superiority over native

²² "First Letters Patent granted by Henry VII to John Cabot," 5 March 1496 in H.B. Biggar, ed., *The Precursors of Jacques Cartier, 1497-1534* (Ottawa: Canadian Archives Publications 1911), 8-10. Latin text first printed by Hakluyt in 1582. Manuscript: National Archives Public Record Office, Treaty Roll 178, membr. 8. Web version by Sam Cronin (2004). http://www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/History/Maritime/Sources/1498chronicles.htm#_ftn1. (accessed 9 Oct. 2009); Maurice B. Toby, "A brief Chronicle...from the first yere of King Henry ye 3rd, A.D., 1217 until the present yeere, 1565," as printed in David B. Quinn, ed., *New American World: A Documentary History of North America to 1612*, (New York: Hector Bye, Inc. 1979), 1:95. Quinn claims that the original document was destroyed in the nineteenth century, and the copy he used is "now also missing;" Oscar Theodore Barck Jr. and Hugh Talmage Lefler, *Colonial America* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1958), 19.

²³ "Letter of Lorenzo Pasqualigo to His Brothers Alvise and Francesco, Merchents in Venice," 23 August 1497, H.B. Biggar, ed., *The Precursors of Jacques Cartier*, 14-15; "John Day *alias* Hugh Say to the Grand Admiral [Christopher Columbus]," *circa* December 1497 to January, 1498, printed in Quinn ed., *New American World*, 1:98-99.

“savagery.”²⁴ Cabot’s second expedition disappeared without establishing a permanent colony, dominating the local natives, or locating a passage to the East Indies. His achievements, however, were not lost on his successors. Englishmen continued searching for an alternative route to Asia long after Cabot’s fatal 1498 voyage. John Smith later argued that John Cabot reached mainland America before Columbus, although the later is universally credited with discovering America.²⁵

Cabot’s disappearance did not intimidate ambitious Englishmen. Henry VII issued patents for New World exploration to several others, including Richard Warde, Thomas Asshehurst, John Thomas, João Gonsalves, Francisco Fernandes, and Hugh Elyot in 1501 and 1502. Although each of these patents granted the men “full and unrestricted authority to sail and transport themselves to all parts, regions and territories of the eastern, western, southern, arctic and northern seas,” Henry VII made clear his intention not to interfere in regions already inhabited by Christian princes.²⁶ These

²⁴ “Raimondo Soncino to Francisc of Sorza, duke of Milan,” December 18, 1497, as printed in Charles Deane and B. H. Nash, trans., *Original Narratives*, 2:425-429 <http://www.elfinspell.com/PrimarySourceCabot.html>; Francis Newton Thorpe, ed., “The Letters Patents of King Henry the Seventh Granted unto Iohn Cabot and his Three Sonnes, Lewis, Sebastian and Sancius for the the Discouerie of New and Unknowen Lands,” *The Federal and State Constitutions Colonial Charters, and Other Organic Laws of the States, Territories, and Colonies Now or Heretofore Forming the United States of America* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1909), http://avalon.law.yale.edu/15th_century/cabot01.asp#1 (accessed 30 Oct. 2009).

²⁵ John Smith, “The Generall Historie of Virginia, New-England, and the Summer Isles with the names of the Adventurers, Planters, and Governors, from their first beginning An. 1584 to this present 1624...Divided into sixe Bookes,” in *Captain John Smith: Writings With Other Narratives of Roanoke, Jamestown, and the First English Settlement of America*, James Horn, ed. (New York: The Library of America, 2007), 227.

²⁶ “Letters patent for Richard Warde, Thomas Ashehurst, John Thomas, João Fernandes, Francisco Fernandes, and João Gonsalves,” 19 March 1501, “Letters Patent to Hugh

voyages, which were primarily exploratory and trading missions, resulted in accounts of several English-native encounters but no permanent settlements or the discovery of lucrative precious metals. Between 1501 and 1505, several voyages left Bristol annually at Henry VII's encouragement. A few natives even joined Englishmen on their return trips to Europe. As early as 1502, three native men traveled to England to be presented to the king.²⁷

While other Englishmen explored and traded in the New World, John Cabot's son, Sebastian, renewed Englishmen's interest in locating a Northwest Passage to the East Indies. Although the exact date is somewhat questionable, Sebastian Cabot reportedly procured two ships and three hundred men at his own expense and sailed to America sometime between March 1507 and March 1508. The exact dates of the voyage remain a mystery because several varying accounts of the venture exist. When he returned to England in 1509, he confirmed his father's previous reports of Newfoundland's large fish populations. He also boasted that he encountered nonthreatening bears and intelligent, copper-possessing natives. Cabot failed, however, to discover an alternative spice route.²⁸ A 1556 Venetian account of the voyage blamed

Elyot, Thomas Ashehurst, João Gonsalves, and Francisco Fernandez 9 December 1502," in Quinn, ed., *New American World*, 1:104, 105-109, 111-116.

²⁷ "Report of Men Brought from the New Found Isle," (1502), in Quinn, ed., *New American World*, 1:110; Kenneth R. Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement: Maritime Enterprise and the Genesis of the British Empire, 1480-1630* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 49-50.

²⁸ "The First Account of Sebastian Cabot's Voyage," (1516), in Quinn, ed. *New American World*, 1:124, originally in Peter Martyr, *De Orbe Novo Decades* (Alcala, 1530), *decade VII, fol. Xciiv* reprinted by Richard Hakluyt, ed., *De orbe novo decades* (Paris, 1587), and translated by Michael Lok, *De novo orbe, or The historie of the West Indies* (1612), first reprinted in modern form by J.W. Williamson, *The Voyages of the*

Cabot's mutinous men for the crew's premature return to England.²⁹ Unfortunately for Cabot, he did not return to England early enough. Henry VII's death diminished Cabot's chances of obtaining another charter.³⁰

Henry VII's death did not end England's New World participation, but the country's expeditions slowed considerably. Henry VIII's ascension to the throne coincided with a general lack of English interest in ventures that did not promise quick profits. The Cabots' expeditions showcased Newfoundland's exceptional fisheries, but did not entice London merchants to risk their fortunes in American ventures. English merchants, for the most part, felt that the Continental trade, not Newfoundland fisheries, promised more wealth.³¹

A few men, however, remained enthusiastic about the New World and convinced the new monarch to charter new expeditions to the Americas. Eight years into his reign, Henry VIII granted a patent to the first Englishman who seriously attempted to plant a permanent colony in North America, John Rastell.³² A lawyer, publisher, and writer,

Cabots and the English Discovery of North America under Henry VII and Henry VIII (London, 1929), 70-72, then reprinted in *The Cabot Voyages* (1962), 266-268, 269-270, 121-127; Andrews, *Trade, Plunder, and Settlement*, 50, 51-53.

²⁹ Giovanni Batista Ramusio, *Navigazioni et Viaggi, III* (Venice, 1556), fol. 4, and 417, translated in J.A. Williamson, *The Voyages of the Cabots* (1929), 77, in Quinn, ed., *New American World*, 1:126.

³⁰ "Report by Marcantonio on Sebastian Cabot's Voyage," 1534, printed and translated in H.P. Biggar, *Precursors of Jaques Cartier* 182-183, <http://www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/History/Maritime/Sources/1496cabotpatent.htm>; Quinn, ed., *New American World*, 1:126.

³¹ Andrews, *Trade, Plunder, and Settlement*, 56-57.

³² "Patent from Henry VIII Granting Protection to John Rastell and Others," 5 March 1517, in Quinn, ed., *New American World*, 1:161.

Rastell advocated overseas expansion as a means to educate and convert natives, while procuring profits for England.³³ Despite his seemingly good intentions, Rastell's mission failed horribly. His captain refused to transport the colonists beyond Ireland, and Rastell never actually reached America. He continued encouraging overseas expansion, however; and in 1519, two years after his failed attempt, Rastell produced *A new interlude and a mercy of the iij elements*. The play satirized his semi-expedition while showcasing his knowledge of America.³⁴

While Rastell pushed for colonization, various Englishmen, including Roger Barlow and Robert Thorne, continued promoting the discovery of a westward passage to Asia. During the mid-1520s, they advocated, designed, and prepared for a spice route through the North Pole. Thorne bought a ship for the expedition, but he passed away in 1532. The ambitious undertaking never materialized, and the passage remained undiscovered.³⁵

In 1527, Henry VIII backed John Rut's expedition to find the ever-elusive passage, but after losing one ship near Labrador and encountering hostility in Santo

³³ John Rastell, *Interlude of the Four Elements*, circa 1517-1519, in Quinn, ed., *New American World*, 1:168-171; Barck and Lefler, *Colonial America*, 21. Barck and Talmage claim that Rastell was the first English writer to use the term America in 1517 *A New Interlude*; Andrews, *Trade, Plunder, and Settlement*, 54.

³⁴ Quinn, ed., *New American World*, 1:161-169; J.A. Williamson ed., *The Voyages of the Cabots and the English Discovery of North America under Henry VII and Henry VIII* (Hakluyt Society, Second Series, No. 120, 1962), 85-93, Somaya Ebrahim (2004) http://www.bris.ac.uk/Depts/History/Maritime/Sources/1498chronicles.htm#_ftn1. Andrews, *Trade, Plunder and Settlement*, 53-55.

³⁵ Andrews, *Trade Plunder and Settlement*, 53.

Domingo, the mission ended in utter failure.³⁶ In 1536, Richard Hore secured a charter to search North America for the passage. The men set sail from Gravesend in April and reached Canada two months later. Short on supplies and unable to establish good relations with the local natives, one ship full of men sailed off to fish, while the remaining men foraged for anything they could find. Although the men eventually returned to England, stories leaked that the men had resorted to cannibalism before seizing a French ship and sailing home.³⁷

Between 1530 and 1542 Englishmen, including William Hawkins, Robert Reneger, and Thomas Borey, entered and profited from the Brazil trade. After the French penetrated the Guiana trade and the Portuguese took ever-stronger measures to oust the invaders, friendly Brazilian business ended. Between the 1540s and 1570s, no English-Brazilian trade records exist. During these decades, Caribbean commerce became increasingly dangerous, and looting and plundering became the norm.³⁸ Of course, even commerce raiding could not satisfy some Englishmen's lust for wealth and glory. The desire to discover an alternative route to Asia still consumed the minds of men like

³⁶ Ibid., 55.

³⁷ Richard Hakluyt, *Principall Navigations* (1589), in Quinn, ed., *New American World*, 1:206-208; Andrews, *Trade, Plunder, and Settlement*, 57; Henry S. Burrage ed., *Early English and French Voyages, Chiefly from Hakluyt, 1534-1608* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1906), 105-110.

³⁸ Andrews, *Trade, Plunder, and Settlement*, 58-60.

Francis Drake, who searched the western coast of North America for the end of the still ambiguous Northwest Passage as early as 1579.³⁹

In England, Queen Elizabeth listened to impressive schemes involving the creation of an English Empire. In 1578, she granted Sir Humphrey Gilbert a patent to discover, explore, and settle part of the “heathen and barbarous lands” not physically held by Spain or any other “Christian Prince.”⁴⁰ Gilbert’s promotion of the Northwest Passage and establishment of an English colony began as early as 1566, when he wrote *A Discourse of discoverie of a new passage to Cataia*. He published the work a decade later, years before obtaining his charter.⁴¹

The Richard Hakluyts, two cousins by the same name, also promoted Gilbert’s plan. Richard Hakluyt the elder, an English lawyer, studied Spanish and Portuguese accounts of Mexico and India because English exploration and colonization lagged far behind the Iberians. Focusing primarily on geography and economics, the elder Hakluyt advocated England’s colonization of North America to provide new markets and a place for England’s poor, thereby opening jobs for England’s remaining population. He prepared notes for Gilbert in 1576; ironically, he argued for an agriculturally based

³⁹ Zelia Nuttal, *New Light on Drake* (London: Hakluyt Society, 1914), 250-252, 317-318, 319n. *Extracts* in Quinn, ed., *New American World*, 1:463; Wade G. Dudley, *Drake: For God, Queen, and Plunder* (Washington DC: Potomac Books, Inc. 2003), 45.

⁴⁰ “Letters Patent to Sir Humpfrey Gylberte,” 11 June 1578; “Queen Elizabeth’s Charter to Sir Humphrey Gilbert of 11 June 1578” in Lindley S. Butler and Alan D. Watson, eds., *The North Carolina Experience: An Interpretive & Documentary History* (Chapel Hill: University of Chapel Hill Press, 1984), 35.

⁴¹ Sir Humphrey Gilbert, *A discourse of a discoverie for a new passage to Cataia*, (London, 1576) in Quinn, ed., *New American World*, 3:5-22.

colony.⁴² Of course, the merchants, who jeopardized their fortunes, and the adventurers and soldiers, who risked their lives, in the first colonization attempts wanted quick profits that agriculture did not provide. They preferred to explore North America's interior in hopes of finding precious metals.

In 1582, the younger Hakluyt published his cousin's notes describing the materials needed to build a city in the New World, such as limestone and timber needed for buildings. The Hakluyts believed that a permanent colony would provide valuable commodities to England and a market for English goods like linen. In his notes, the younger Hakluyt attempted to cover every possible situation that Gilbert might encounter. He discussed the crops that could be grown in various climates and soils. He also mentioned the possibility of procuring leather from American animals and naval stores needed for English ships and houses.⁴³ Unfortunately for Gilbert, Newfoundland proved a less than ideal place to establish a sixteenth-century colony, especially when the men arrived too late to plant crops. The colony lasted barely a month before the men decided to return to England. On their homeward journey, the ship on which Gilbert was sailing was lost in a storm.⁴⁴

⁴² Richard Hakluyt, "Divers Voyages touching the discoverie of America," (London, 1582), in Quinn, ed., *New American World*, 3:23-26; Quinn, *Set Fair for Roanoke: Voyages and Colonies, 1584-1606* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 4.

⁴³ Richard Hakluyt, "Divers Voyages touching the discoverie of America," (London, 1582), in Quinn, ed., *New American World*, 3:23-26.

⁴⁴ William S. Powell, "An Elizabethan Experiment" in Butler and Watson, eds., *The North Carolina Experience*, 31. Although Gilbert's ship was lost at sea, one ship from the expedition returned to England to describe Gilbert's demise.

Interested in establishing a base from which to harass Spanish shipping, Elizabeth quickly renewed Gilbert's patent to the deceased's half-brother, Walter Raleigh.⁴⁵ Raleigh, soon-to-be Sir Walter, quickly sent an exploratory expedition headed by Philip Amadas and Arthur Barlowe, members of his household. Not quite a year after Gilbert landed in Newfoundland, Amadas and Barlowe sighted land in modern-day North Carolina, then known as Virginia. Barlowe's suspiciously glowing account of the 1584 expedition, and the appearance of two natives in London who had returned to England with the explorers, apparently impressed Elizabeth and encouraged Raleigh to outfit a colonization expedition.⁴⁶

Barlowe's Virginia smelled so strongly of sweet "odoriferous flowers" that the men recognized the scent of their destination before they sighted land.⁴⁷ The Englishmen rested on an island generously possessed of abundant wildlife and huge cedar trees. After spending two days in their utopian campsite, they noticed natives rowing toward the island in a small boat. Their encounter with one of the natives seemed promising. They treated him with European wine, meat, and goods, and he returned their hospitality by giving them freshly caught fish. During their stay, the Englishmen met, and feasted with, several friendly natives who were "very handsome, and goodly people, and in their

⁴⁵ "Letters Patent to Walter Raleigh," in Quinn, ed., *New American World*, 3:267-271.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 3:31-32.

⁴⁷ Richard Hakluyt, *The Principal Navigations, Voyages, Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation*, ed., Jack Beeching (New York: Penguin Books, 1972), 270, first printed in Raphael Holinshed, *Chronicles*, III (1587), 1369.

behaviour as mannerly, and civill, as any in Europe.”⁴⁸ Pleased with Barlow’s report of abundant wildlife, peaceful natives, and a seemingly perfect location, Raleigh began planning a colonization expedition for Roanoke. Elizabeth allowed Raleigh to set his plan in motion, as long as he did not personally take part in the attempt.⁴⁹

On April 9, 1585, Raleigh’s colony of 108 male colonists, as well as about 500 others including soldiers, political men, and adventurers, departed Plymouth for Roanoke. Elizabeth recalled Ralph Lane, a professional soldier and member of her household, from Ireland and placed him in Raleigh’s service.⁵⁰ Elizabeth also provided a ship, the *Tiger*, for the colony’s use. All seemed to be going well. The men left England adequately supplied, supposedly well informed of their destination by Hakluyt and Barlowe, and with a strict military organization put in place by Raleigh himself.

The years of pro-colonization propaganda, however, gave the men a false sense of security. Men like Arthur Barlowe, who had caught only a glimpse of Virginia and exaggerated the benefits of living in that environment, and men like Hakluyt, who had relied on the often-irrelevant accounts of others, described a utopian wilderness. The English could easily transplant themselves among the friendly natives and would have little trouble feeding themselves with the overabundant wildlife in the region. The colonists discovered first-hand, however, that living in the wilderness, virtually isolated

⁴⁸ Ibid., 277, 276-282.

⁴⁹ William A. Link, *North Carolina: Change and Tradition in a Southern State* (Wheeling, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, Inc., 2009), 18-19; William S. Powell, “An Elizabethan Experiment,” in Butler and Watson, eds., *The North Carolina Experience*, 31-32.

⁵⁰ Butler and Watson, eds., *The North Carolina Experience*, 32.

from any real sense of English authority and without constant reinforcements, was more difficult than either Hakluyt or Barlowe believed.

The types of colonists Raleigh sent to Virginia demonstrated his misunderstanding of the amount of work involved in founding a permanent New World colony. He sent men like John White, Thomas Harriot, and Thomas Cavendish, who later became legends for their accomplishments and the knowledge they provided the world. Although Raleigh sent artists, scientist-mathematicians, astronomers, or future globe circumnavigators, he could not make up for the lack of knowledgeable agricultural experts or experienced farmers.⁵¹

The colony faced problems from the outset. Although Elizabeth placed Lane in charge of the Roanoke settlement, Raleigh maintained a certain level of influence over his colony. He ensured that Sir Richard Grenville, a distant relative, led the fleet to Virginia. During the transatlantic expedition, a severe storm separated Grenville from the rest of the fleet. Despite Spanish protest, Grenville remained in the West Indies for about a month while he repaired a damaged ship, procured goods, and harassed his hostile Spanish hosts.⁵²

Grenville's delay, however, was ultimately in vain. His newly repaired ship ran aground in the harbor as he entered Roanoke. Although God "miraculouslie delivered

⁵¹ Link, *North Carolina*, 20; Powell, "An Elizabethan Experiment," in Butler and Watson, eds., *The North Carolina Experience*, 32; "The Holinshed *Chronicle* account of the 1585 voyage," Quinn, ed., *New American World*, 3:286-287, first published in Raphael Holinshed, *Chronicles*, 2nd edition, 3:1401-1402.

⁵² "The Holinshed *Chronicle* account of the 1585 voyage," Quinn, ed., *New American World*, 3:286-287 first published in Raphael Holinshed, *Chronicles*, 2nd edition, 3:1401-1402; Quinn, *Set Fair for Roanoke*, 46.

him,” He did not bestow the same mercy on the Roanoke colonists’ provisions, which were ruined when saltwater began filling Grenville’s ship. So there stood 108 male colonists, no women or children among them, on the Roanoke shore, without adequate agricultural knowledge or sufficient provisions as Grenville his fleet hoisted anchor and supposedly headed for England. Despite the urgency of the situation, Grenville did not immediately return to the anxious Raleigh to request that a supply ship be sent to the colony. Just as God had miraculously saved Grenville from imminent death in that treacherous harbor, He happened to send a “richlie laden” Spanish ship right across Grenville’s path on his return route to England. Unable to bypass such a perfect plundering opportunity, Grenville seized the ship by force, and returned to England by October. There, he made plans with Raleigh to resupply the colony the following spring.⁵³

Lane’s men arrived too late to plant crops, and Grenville’s provisions were ruined. The colonists, therefore, depended on local natives for food. Past English endeavors suggest that Lane’s men would not have placed more importance on feeding themselves than finding gold or a route to Asia, even if they had arrived earlier in the planting season. The natives understood the one-sided relationship well. Many native groups neither needed, nor wanted, the parasitic white men to survive the winter. They found the white man’s arrogance annoying and degrading. Lane’s men suffered numerous attacks, not all unprovoked, and constantly questioned the natives’ motives. As for their conversion attempts, the Roanoke colonists completely failed. When Grenville’s relief expedition did not return by Easter as promised, Lane and his men

⁵³ “The Holinshed *Chronicle* account of the 1585 voyage,” Quinn, ed., *New American World*, 3:286-287, 3:1401-1402.

hitched a ride to England with Sir Francis Drake, who had stopped to check on the colony.⁵⁴

When Raleigh's personally financed relief expedition finally landed on Roanoke, it found the colony completely abandoned. About two weeks later, Sir Richard Grenville's fleet arrived in Virginia. Bewildered, but determined that England maintain possession of Virginia, he left fifteen men with two years' provisions to hold the colony. Unfortunately for the men left to fend for themselves, Grenville, a sixteenth-century Englishman, and a privateer at that, took advantage of a few plundering opportunities before returning to England, gambling with his men's lives.⁵⁵

The Roanoke colonists failed to find precious metals or live peaceably among the converted natives, but Englishmen continued to endorse colonization for these very reasons.⁵⁶ Men like Hakluyt, Raleigh, and John White viewed Lane's temporary colony as more of a learning experience than an utter failure. In 1587, another expedition, including women and children, departed England for Virginia under Captain Simon Fernandes, a Portuguese native turned English Protestant, who had sailed to America several times by 1587. Fernandes claimed that he explored the Outer Banks of North

⁵⁴ "Ralph Lane's narrative of the Roanoke Island Colony," in Quinn, ed., *New American World*, 3:295-306, originally published in R. Hakluyt, *Principall Navigations* (1589), 737-747, *Principall Navigations III* (1600), 25-264; *Principall Navigations VIII* (1904), 320-345; Quinn, *Set Fair for Roanoke*, 12, 34, 121, 234.

⁵⁵ Richard Hakluyt, *Hakluyt's Voyages: The Principal Navigations Voyages Traffiques and Discoveries of the English Nation...* Irwin R. Blacker, ed. (New York: The Viking Press, 1965), 286-300.

⁵⁶ "Comments by John Hooker on the Virginia Colony," 12 Oct. 1586 in Quinn, ed., *Roanoke Voyages*, 3:312-313 originally printed in R. Holinshed, *Chronicles II* (1587), 2nd numeration, sigs. A-3-A4.

Carolina with the Spanish before Lane's colony. Fernandes also sailed with Gilbert's 1578 expedition and Barlowe and Amadas' reconnaissance mission in 1584.⁵⁷

White's settlers enjoyed no better luck than Lane's colonists. When they landed in the Caribbean to prepare for their northward journey to Virginia, they encountered difficulty finding drinkable water. Those who washed their faces or drank from a standing pond they discovered in Santa Cruz fell sick, and suffered a painful burning sensation in their faces causing their eyes to shut for nearly a week. To make matters worse, Captain Fernandes bypassed an expected stop to pick up cattle on Hispaniola. Fernandes only informed White that his Hispaniola-based contact was likely dead after White asked him why they had not stopped on the island.⁵⁸

Then, after almost landing in the Cape Fear region rather than Roanoke, Fernandes proved himself to be a less than reliable captain. White's colonists planned to find Grenville's men, then sail to the Chesapeake, as suggested by Lane and endorsed by both Hakluyt and Raleigh. Fernandes, however, refused to take the colonists past Roanoke. Historian David Beers Quinn offers two possible motives for Fernandes' refusal to transport the colonists to the Chesapeake. He suggests that Fernandes may possibly have "run into trouble" with the Chesapeake natives on Barlowe's 1584 mission or he might have wanted to take advantage of privateering opportunities in the West

⁵⁷ "Letter from Richard Hakluyt to Sir Walter Raleigh," in Quinn, ed., *New American World*, 3:313, originally printed in E.G.R. Taylor, *Hakluyts*, II (1935); "John White's Narrative of the fourth Virginia Voyage," Quinn, ed., *New American World*, 3:314; Quinn, *Set Fair for Roanoke*, 6-7, 22-23.

⁵⁸ "John White's Narrative of the fourth Virginia Voyage," (1587) in Quinn, ed., *Roanoke Voyages*, 3:314-316, originally printed in R. Hakluyt, *Principall Navigations* (1589), 764-771.

Indies. Regardless of the reason, Quinn points out that Fernandes and his men remained in Virginia long enough to have transported White's colonists to the Chesapeake and reach the Caribbean in time to raid Spanish ships.⁵⁹

Without any other option, White's colonists searched for Grenville's men, but found no trace of them, other than the remains of "one of those fifteene, which the savages had slaine long before."⁶⁰ White then ordered the men to repair the overgrown houses left by Lane's previous settlement and build new structures necessary for the 150 new colonists, including women and children.⁶¹

Almost immediately, evidence surfaced that Lane's colonists experienced tense relations with the local natives. George Howe, one of White's twelve assistants, fell victim to native attack while crabbing alone "almost naked, without any weapon, save onely a small forked sticke, catching Crabs therewithal, and also being strayed two miles from his companie." According to White's account, Howe suffered sixteen arrow wounds before having his head "beat [into] peeces."⁶²

Two days later, twenty-one men joined Manteo, a native who had traveled to London with Barlowe's reconnaissance expedition, to visit his mother's tribe and inquire as to the whereabouts of Grenville's men. Manteo had spent much time with the English, learning their language and teaching Thomas Harriot his own native tongue. When

⁵⁹ Ibid., 316; Quinn, *Set Fair for Roanoke*, 282, 281-282.

⁶⁰ "John White's Narrative of the fourth Virginian Voyage," in Quinn, ed., *Roanoke Voyages*, 3:316.

⁶¹ Ibid., 316-317, 314.

⁶² Ibid., 317.

Manteo and the English reached his tribesmen, over whom his mother ruled, they appeared quite hostile. When the Englishmen turned their guns on the natives as they kept walking, Manteo's kin fled. After Manteo identified himself, the previously unreceptive natives returned unarmed. A few tribesmen even hugged the colonists.⁶³

Although White's account provides no synthesis of the natives' plea that the English not steal their corn, the heartfelt request sheds light on the original hostility toward the white-skinned interlopers. Perhaps even more revealing, the colonists met a native who was rendered lame at the hands of Lane's men. White, of course, made no comment on the event that permanently crippled a former ally. He only mentioned that the natives understood that Lane's men mistook them for another tribe and, therefore, they did not hold the new colonists in contempt.⁶⁴ Unfortunately, White's men made the same mistake, attacking a friendly group of natives, mistaking them for Howe's killers.⁶⁵

Like Lane's colony, White's colony faced tense native relationships, all the more complicated because of Lane's previous settlement. With virtually no choice, thanks to the self-interested Fernandes, the colonists settled in an area already rife with suspicion, hate, and fear. They knew that the Chesapeake offered a better location than Roanoke to establish a permanent settlement. They also knew that Lane's colony failed partially because the settlers could not feed themselves. They knew as well that relief expeditions were long in arriving. All of this knowledge, however, did not save the 1587 colony.

⁶³ *Ibid.*, 317- 319; Quinn, *Set Fair for Roanoke*, 39-40, 232-233, 284.

⁶⁴ "John White's Narrative of the fourth Virginian Voyage," in Quinn, ed., *Roanoke Voyages*, 3:317-319.

⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, 319.

Seeing no other option, the colonists convinced White to return to England and procure supplies for their survival. White, however, fared no better with his quest to obtain supplies than he did with his voyage to Virginia. England's war with Spain, French pirates, and a treacherous Atlantic storm delayed White's relief expedition. By the time he returned to Roanoke in 1590, the colonists had vanished; the exact details of their disappearance remain a mystery to this day.⁶⁶

The English gained nearly a century of New World experience between John Cabot's 1497 voyage to Newfoundland and the disastrous Lost Colony in North Carolina. During that time, English exploration and colonization motives ranged from locating a route to Asia, and commerce raiding, discovering gold and silver, to converting natives and saving them from Spanish cruelty. As their goals shifted and their knowledge increased, the English focused less on the North Atlantic and more on Roanoke and, later, the Chesapeake.

The English had a variety of motives for New World settlement but no real plans and very little organization. Each failed colonization attempt offered new learning experiences, sometimes acknowledged, but most often ignored. Many mistakes made during these unsuccessful attempts carried into the Jamestown expedition, two decades after the Lost Colony. It would take a miracle, in the form of an American weed, to convince the English to abandon expectations of quick profits and native generosity and, ultimately to alter English initiatives and realities in the New World.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 318-321; "John White's Account of the Attempted Virginia Voyage in 1588," originally printed in R. Hakluyt, *Principall Navigations* (1589), 71-773, "John White's account of the 1590 Voyage in Search of the 1587 colonists," "John White to Richard Hakluyt," 4 Feb. 1593 in Quinn, ed., *New American World*, 3:325, 3:331-339.

3. Addicted: Jamestown “Discovers” Tobacco

The “Lost Colony” at Roanoke marked Sir Walter Raleigh’s last effort to colonize Virginia, but the disappearance of John White’s colonists did not halt English New World participation. Two decades passed between the 1587 expedition and a subsequent English North American colonization attempt in 1607. During that time, James I replaced Elizabeth as the English monarch, officially ending the privateering era as he attempted to keep the peace with Spain.

Reconciliation with Spain did not mean that England recognized the Iberians’ claims to the Americas; nor did the truce bring about mutual feelings of trust and friendship. The Spanish continued to disapprove of English encroachment on land that the Pope, and therefore God, had granted them. Englishmen, on the other hand, still viewed the Pope’s bequest as illegitimate and still craved Spanish wealth, which could only be acquired by exploiting New World resources.⁶⁷

Raleigh’s monopolistic claim to Virginia died with the Virgin Queen when he found himself at the mercy of the Stuart monarch, James I. King James did not trust Raleigh, and he consequently sentenced Sir Walter to death for treason. Raleigh’s license to Virginia officially expired in 1591, but his arrest and subsequent execution answered any lingering questions concerning his role in America.⁶⁸

⁶⁷ Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1975), 11-14, 17, 28-30; James Horn, *A Land as God Made It: Jamestown and the Birth of America* (New York: Basic Books, 2005), 34; Karen Kupperman, *The Jamestown Project* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), 5-7.

⁶⁸ Benjamin Woolley, *Savage Kingdom: The True Story of Jamestown, 1607, and the Settlement of America* (New York: HarperCollins Publisher, 2007), 13-14.

On April 10, 1606, James I approved a charter allowing Virginia's colonization so long as he received 20 percent of any precious metals discovered in the area. The king's concern with precious metals demonstrates Englishmen's continued obsession with gold and silver. The charter provided for two separate colonies controlled by two different groups of people. The southern colony, located between 34 and 41 degrees latitude, fell under jurisdiction of the Virginia Company, a joint-stock company based on the Dutch model.⁶⁹

The Virginia Company investors expected its colonists to discover vast sources of wealth in America, but not necessarily in agricultural commodities, though Virginia offered plenty. The financiers preferred precious metals. They risked their fortunes financing the 1606 expedition only because they expected quick returns on their investments. Despite the Roanoke failures, they still expected to plant an English colony with little effort among the American natives and discover mines or a passage to the East Indies. They did not realize that the natives who had lived in the region for thousands of years would not accept English sovereignty; nor would they feed the white men while they searched for mineral deposits and Asia-bound passages that did not exist. English-native relations soured very quickly, and Englishmen learned very slowly that they could not remain permanently in Virginia if they did not produce agricultural commodities.

After years of exploring, starving, dying, and increasingly finding themselves at odds with the natives, the colonists finally accepted that they needed to produce agricultural commodities. Even after adopting tobacco as the colony's chief commercial

⁶⁹ Woolley, *Savage Kingdom*, 18; "Virginia Charter" in David B. Quinn, ed., *New American World: A Documentary History of North America to 1612* (New York: Arno Press: 1979), 5:191-197.

product, they refused to feed themselves. They shifted from gold and silver to tobacco, but their purpose for colonizing Virginia remained the same. The settlers and the Virginia Company backers invested their lives and their profits in Virginia to get rich, not to grow corn or even tobacco. Commercial tobacco cultivation proved a bittersweet development. After years spent fantasizing about hidden gold-filled mines, investors found tobacco's success a disappointment. Still, tobacco was a success, and the commodity brought renewed attention to and investment in Jamestown. In short, tobacco saved the dying colonists, provided the mother country with an English-grown version of a popular import, and guaranteed England's continued participation in North America.

On December 20, 1606, the Jamestown colonists set sail for Virginia with a list of instructions carefully drafted by Richard Hakluyt. According to Hakluyt, the men should locate a "safe port" on a navigable river that could be easily defended and escapable in case of Spanish or native attack. Hakluyt encouraged the men, if they found a river with two main branches, to choose the one that ran the most northwesterly route, which could lead them to the "other sea." He suggested that the men concern themselves not only with constructing fortifications and planting corn, but also with exploring the interior for minerals.⁷⁰

Previous endeavors, like the Roanoke attempts, demonstrated that Europeans and natives rarely fostered friendly relationships. Hakluyt, therefore, discouraged the colonists from building their fort among thick forests that could provide shelter for attacking natives. Although Hakluyt understood the likelihood of native hostility, he

⁷⁰ "The Company's Instructions, 1606," in David Hawke, ed., *U.S. Colonial History: Readings and Documents* (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., 1966), 61, 60-62.

encouraged the colonists to maintain good relations with their new neighbors with whom they could trade for necessities like corn.⁷¹

Despite such encouragements, Hakluyt instructed the colonists not to place full trust in their native neighbors. He believed their best interest lay in maintaining a certain level of secrecy and intimidation when dealing with “the naturals.”⁷² Hakluyt thought that the English should not broadcast their intentions to plant a permanent colony in Virginia until after they successfully obtained an adequate supply of corn and other necessities through trading. To ensure that the natives understood the full superiority of European firepower, Hakluyt suggested that only the best marksmen should fire their weapons in the natives’ presence. Poor marksmanship could embolden the natives, who would more wholly fear a weapon that hit its mark every time it was fired, than one that only occasionally killed an enemy. He also encouraged the colonists not to advertise “the killing of any of your own men,” or the number of sick men in the colony. Any signs of internal weakness could embolden the natives and encourage attacks.⁷³

Hakluyt clearly stated that the colonists should be just as suspicious of one another as the Spanish and natives. One ill-intentioned colonist could ruin the entire enterprise. To ensure that no “ill-dispositioned persons slip away” in the remaining pinnace, leaving his fellow colonists destitute, Hakluyt suggested that the settlers remove the pinnace’s sails and anchors upon arrival. He also believed that colonial leaders

⁷¹ Ibid.

⁷² Ibid., 61.

⁷³ Ibid., 62.

should maintain complete control over the native trade. Self-interested persons, not invested in Jamestown's future, could easily ruin the future of the trade and the colony itself. He also encouraged the leaders to maintain control over which colonists left the settlement and the information they provided in their letters home. Negative publicity could only hinder the future of the Virginia enterprise.⁷⁴

The Virginia Company determined the colonial councilors, the men who would lead the colony, before the settlers left England. Placing the names in a sealed box, they instructed the colonists not to open it until they reached Virginia. Evidently, the settlers suppressed their curiosity for the duration of the journey. No one seemed aware that the company listed a yeoman farmer's son and experienced soldier by the name of John Smith on the councilors' list until opening the box in Virginia. While at sea, rumors spread that he planned to usurp the leadership of the colony by force, resulting in his imprisonment. Despite his unpopularity with many Jamestown gentlemen, John Smith utilized his experience in dealing with foreign people, living off the land, and waging war in the Virginia wilderness.⁷⁵

Captain Christopher Newport's vast privateering experience in the West Indies and his connections to several London merchants made him an obvious choice to command the Virginia fleet. In the late 1580s he sailed under Sir Francis Drake. In 1590 he received his first command. Newport intended to search for the lost colonists of

⁷⁴ Ibid.

⁷⁵ "The Proceedings of the English Colonie in Virginia..." in *Captain John Smith: Writings with Other Narratives of Roanoke, Jamestown, and the First English Settlement of America*, James Horn, ed. (New York: The Library of America, 2007), 42-44; Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 76.

Roanoke, but a storm separated his ship from the rest of the fleet. Rather than searching for White's lost colonists, he lost his right arm in an attempt to commandeer two Mexican treasure ships.⁷⁶

In 1606, Captain Newport commanded the *Susan Constant*. Captain Bartholomew Gosnold, a lawyer, explorer, and Jamestown promoter, commanded the *Godspeed*. John Ratcliffe, a company investor and future colonial councilman, commanded the *Discovery*. Together, the *Susan Constant*, the *Godspeed*, and the *Discovery* transported just over one hundred colonists and about forty mariners from England to Virginia.⁷⁷

Most colonists considered themselves “gentlemen,” but six carpenters, a blacksmith, a sailor, a barber, two bricklayers, a mason, a tailor, a surgeon, several laborers and boys, and “diverse others to the number of 105” also comprised the expedition, but apparently, no farmers.⁷⁸ Many settlers boasted military or privateering experience living abroad in less than ideal conditions. In Virginia, however, they received no wages nor did they encounter opportunities for quick wealth. Most settlers planned to remain in Virginia only temporarily. They would explore the interior, find gold or silver, or a passage to the East Indies, and then return to England. Their experience and expectations did not prepare them for Virginia's disappointments.⁷⁹

⁷⁶ K.R. Andrews, “Christopher Newport of Limehouse, Mariner,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series, 11, (Jan., 1954): 28-41.

⁷⁷ Horn, *A Land as God Made It*, 39-40; Martha W. McCartney, *Virginia Immigrants and Adventurers, 1607-1635: A Biographical Dictionary* (Baltimore: Genealogical Pub. Co., 2007), 590.

⁷⁸ “The Proceedings of the English Colonie in Virginia” in *Captain John Smith's Writings*, Horn, ed., 42, 45-46.

⁷⁹ Horn, *A Land as God Made It*, 40-41.

They stopped in the Canaries before sailing to Dominica where they traded with natives. Then, they headed to Guadalupe and “a little Ile called Monica.” They also spent some time in Nevis, Mona, and the Virgin Isles before sailing toward Virginia. After several days passed without the men spotting land, some mariners wished to return to England without landing the colonists in the Chesapeake. A storm prevented change of course, however, and they eventually found their destination. The colonists went ashore expecting some well-deserved rest, but five natives attacked, wounding two of the colonists.

After surviving a harrowing four-month transatlantic journey, a treacherous storm, and a surprise attack, much work remained. That night, they opened the box, learned the names of the councilors, and read their orders. Among the councilors were Master Edward Maria Wingfield, Captain Bartholomew Gosnoll, Captain John Smith, Captain John Ratcliffe, Captain John Martin, Captain George Kendall, Master Robert Hunt (the preacher), and Master George Percy.⁸⁰

The councilors, as ordered, chose the first year’s president, Master Edward Maria Wingfield, an experienced military man and Virginia Company stockholder. The government consisted of a jury to rule on “matters of the moment,” with major input from the councilors. The president had two votes in the council, but held no real power. Captain John Smith, still at odds with many of the company, “was not admitted to the

⁸⁰ “The Proceedings of the English Colonie in Virginia” in *Captain John Smith’s Writings*, Horn, ed., 42-44.

Councill as the rest.”⁸¹ After thirteen weeks of imprisonment, mostly at sea, Smith finally convinced his fellow colonists of his innocence and was admitted to the council.⁸²

On April 29, the colonists planted a cross at the opening of Chesapeake Bay, claiming the area in the name of England.⁸³ After further exploration, they decided to establish Jamestown on an island fifty miles from the coast that offered protection from Spanish warships and native attack.⁸⁴ The chosen site, which was swampy, heavily forested, and surrounded by natives, proved a less than ideal location.⁸⁵ Nevertheless, the settlers immediately began planting corn, cutting down trees to make room for their tents, and to “relade” their ships. Unfortunately, they did not unload their weapons. Natives mounted a surprise attack, wounding seventeen men and killing a boy. Learning from their carelessness, the president ordered the men to build fortifications immediately. Additional guards and increased demand for a protective palisade took men away from preparing the fields, clearing land, an exploring the interior.⁸⁶

⁸¹ Ibid.; Frank E. Grizzard, *Jamestown Colony: A Political, Social, and Cultural History* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2007), 233.

⁸² “The Proceedings of the English Colonie in Virginia” in *Captain John Smith’s Writings*, Horn, ed., 44.

⁸³ George Percy, “Discourse: The Founding of Jamestown 1606-1607,” in *Captain John Smith’s Writings and Other Narratives*, James Horn, ed., 921.

⁸⁴ Horn, *A Land as God Made It*, 49-50.

⁸⁵ Oscar Theodore Barck Jr. and Hugh Talmage Lefler, *Colonial America* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1958), 39.

⁸⁶ “The Proceedings of the English Colonie in Virginia” in *Captain John Smith’s Writings*, Horn, ed., 43-44; Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 90; Wesley Frank Craven, *Dissolution of the Virginia Company: The Failure of a Colonial Experiment* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1932), 71-72. It is important to note

Mother Nature wasted no time in seasoning the colonists. Sickness quickly overtook the settlers. Plagued by poor lodging, extreme heat, and a poor diet, many colonists succumbed to death. Newport's sailors lingered in Virginia, exploring the interior and exploiting the colonists. They provided the opportunity for a slightly more varied diet, despite the overwhelming presence of worms in their grain; but, if they had not delayed their return to England, they might have expedited the return of a supply ship to the colony. Apparently, things were going so badly that the president himself attempted to commandeer the pinnace and flee the colony. The councilors immediately deposed him and selected Captain John Ratcliffe as the new leader.⁸⁷ After exploring the interior per the company's instructions, Captain Newport departed for England on June 15, 1607, carrying much anticipated news to the Virginia Company, and leaving behind one hundred men in Virginia.⁸⁸ Only thirty-eight colonists survived through December.⁸⁹

Captain John Smith, although not yet the president, oversaw the management of "all things abroad."⁹⁰ He led by example, working hard and expecting the same of others. When the natives' generosity began to wane, he traveled to their villages to trade for victuals. Despite his success in gaining necessities, the colonists wasted the corn that he

that corn could have also referred to either wheat or maize.

⁸⁷ "The Proceedings of the English Colonie in Virginia," in *Captain John Smith's Writings*, Horn, ed., 47-48.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 44.

⁸⁹ Barck and Lefler, *Colonial America*, 40.

⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, 48.

obtained, forcing Smith to continue traveling into the interior to trade with natives.⁹¹ By 1608, Smith found himself president by default as a result of his fellow councilmen's deaths or abandonment of the colony. Smith implemented his work or starve policy by dividing the surviving men into work gangs, each responsible for specific tasks.⁹²

The Virginia settlers experienced complicated relations with the natives. A great deal of diversity existed among the native tribes, a fact not lost on the settlers. Some groups mounted surprise attacks, suggesting possible conflict among with the natives, while others brought food to Jamestown. The English did not transplant themselves to a simple, static world. Political networks existed before the white man's arrival; the colonists merely added another variable into the equation. As Newport and Smith explored the interior, they recorded the names of various tribes and each group's reception of the adventurers, demonstrating their awareness of the area's diversity.⁹³

Exploration played a major role in Jamestown's initial years. The Virginia Company investors, and the planters and laborers alike, wanted to find precious metals in the Virginia interior. Newport did not find gold or silver or the Northwest Passage during his explorations, and neither did the colonists he left behind. Despite native stories claiming that the James River contained large deposits of copper, and possibly gold, the colonists found neither. On a return journey to Jamestown, however, Newport and his

⁹¹ Ibid., 48-49.

⁹² Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 78-79.

⁹³ Both John Smith's and George Percy's accounts demonstrate the diversity of Virginia's native populations; April Lee Hatfield discusses Atlantic networks in *Atlantic Virginia: Intercolonial Relations in the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2007).

men did encounter natives who possessed copper and pearls. During their excursion his men met and feasted with different native groups while developing relations with their new neighbors. Pretending they were more interested in trade than taking the natives' land, Newport and his men followed the Virginia Company's instructions not to offend Virginia's natural inhabitants or reveal their intention to plant a permanent English colony in the area.⁹⁴

The colonists did not encounter the vast sources of gold and silver that they sought, but their interactions with the area's natives brought them into repeated contact with tobacco, the colony's future source of wealth. The natives placed great religious significance on the weed, which was used as much for their religious ceremonies as for smoking. John Smith described a ceremony in which a native, "with a Crownet of feathers on his head, painted as ugly as the divell," threw deer meat and tobacco into a fire at the end of each song. Apparently, the natives also believed that tobacco, if placed in water, pacified foul weather.⁹⁵

Tobacco originated in the New World, but found its way to Europe shortly after Christopher Columbus landed in the Americas. Several varieties exist, ranging between two and twelve feet in height and bearing between eight and ten leaves and clusters or bunches of flowers. Botanists believe that early European New World explorers encountered much smaller tobacco than is grown today, however. As natives and, later,

⁹⁴ Horn, *A Land as God Made It*, 50-54.

⁹⁵ John Smith, "A True Relation of such occurrences and accidents of note, as hat hapned in Virginia..." in *Captain John Smith's Writings and Other Narratives*, Horn, ed., 19-20; Thomas Harriot, "A briefe and true report of the new found land of Virginia," in Quinn, ed., *New American World*, 3:145.

Europeans transferred tobacco from one place to another, the size and quality of the plant changed, creating new varieties. When Europeans began settling the Americas during the fifteenth, sixteenth, and seventeenth centuries, tobacco cultivation existed in both North and South America.⁹⁶

The Virginia natives did not introduce Englishmen, or any European, to tobacco. Although the local natives had smoked tobacco for centuries before contact with Europeans, West Indian natives introduced Europeans to tobacco after Columbus landed in Santo Domingo in 1492. Though Columbus did not understand the reason, he realized that the natives he encountered valued the weed. In his journal, he stated that the “dry leaves... must be a thing very appreciated among them, because they had already brought me some of them as a present at San Salvador.”⁹⁷ Various Spanish sources refer to natives “drinking,” “chewing,” and sniffing tobacco. Apparently impressed with the plant’s supposed medicinal properties, the Iberians took tobacco to Spain, where it was adopted and, consequently, spread throughout Europe.⁹⁸

Like the Spanish, the Roanoke explorers and colonists encountered tobacco from local natives. One of John White’s drawings showcases tobacco patches close to the

⁹⁶ E.R. Billings, *Tobacco: Its History, Varieties, Culture, Manufacture and Commerce with an Account of Its Various Modes of Use, from Its first discovery until Now* (Hartford CT: American Publishing Company, 1875), 17-45.

⁹⁷ Christopher Columbus as cited in Jerome E. Brooks, *The Mighty Leaf: Tobacco Through the Centuries* (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1952), 11.

⁹⁸ Brooks, *The Mighty Leaf*, 12-17.

natives' cornfields.⁹⁹ According to Thomas Harriot, this weed, deemed "tobacco" by the Spanish, "is an herb...the leaves thereof being dried and brought into powder, they use to take the fume or smoke thereof by sucking it through pipes made of clay into their stomach and head." Harriot promoted the medicinal qualities of tobacco, claiming that the weed could open the smoker's pores and preserve his body "from obstructions." He claimed that smoking prevented natives from suffering "many grievous diseases" known in England and believed enough in tobacco's medicinal uses that he considered the weed one of "the commodities for sustenance of life" grown by the local natives.¹⁰⁰

Harriot supplied Sir Walter Raleigh with tobacco. In turn, Raleigh, made smoking fashionable with the upper crust of English society. James I did not like Raleigh or his tobacco, and in 1604, three years before the founding of Jamestown, he published his *Counterblaste to Tobacco*. He considered the "custome of *Tobacco* taking" a "vile" practice, yet his subjects continued to mimic "the barbarous and beastly maners of the wilde, godlesse, and slavish *Indian[s']*... stinking" practice.¹⁰¹

Despite tobacco's increasing popularity, Englishmen did not colonize Virginia to cultivate and export it. As Jamestown's original colonists died of starvation, disease, and

⁹⁹ David Beers Quinn, *Set Fair for Roanoke: Voyages and Colonies 1584-1606* (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1985), 33, 71.

¹⁰⁰ Thomas Harriot, "A briefe and true report..." in Quinn, ed., *New American World*, 3:145-146.

¹⁰¹ Quinn, *Set Fair for Roanoke*, 164; James I, *A Counterblaste to Tobacco*, Imprinted at London by R.B., (1604), printed in Carl Avery Werner, *Tobaccoland: A Book About Tobacco: Its History, Legends, Literature, Cultivation, Social and Hygienic Influences, Commercial Development, Industrial Processes and Governmental Regulation* (New York: The Tobacco Leaf Publishing Company, 1922), 62-63.

native attack throughout the initial years of settlement, they focused mainly on survival and discovering gold and silver or a passage to the East Indies.

The men died in large numbers. When Smith returned to Jamestown after an exploratory voyage on which he was taken prisoner by the Powhatans, he found only a few surviving colonists. When the first supply ship arrived in January 1608 carrying 120 men, Jamestown's total population reached only 140. Among the newly arrived colonists was Robert Cotton, listed as "*a Tobacco-pipe-maker.*"¹⁰²

On September 10, 1608, the council elected John Smith president, and the settlers began repairing the church and other buildings. Unfortunately, a random fire destroyed all but three buildings, undoing everything that had been done and ensuring that the colonists remained dependent on natives for food. To make matters worse, Newport, who had returned to Jamestown, liberally traded with Wahunsonacock, the Powhatan leader who held influence over more than twenty tribes. Newport undermined Smith's more conservative trading methods, and devalued English goods in the natives' eyes.¹⁰³ Trade rates decreased, Newport's sailors' consumed victuals meant for the colonists and sold the rest at excessive rates, and their fellow countrymen died all around them. Yet, the colonists refused to cultivate crops for their own survival and to export to England. They declined to see the reality of the situation and chose to search for gold rather than utilize the resources at hand.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰² Horn, *A Land as God Made It*, 74-75; "The Proceedings of the English Colony in Virginia..." in *Captain John Smith's Writings and other Narratives*, Horn, ed., 58-60.

¹⁰³ Horn, *A Land as God Made It*, 75-76, 79-80; Grizzard, *Jamestown Colony*, 174.

¹⁰⁴ Horn, *A Land as God Made It*, 80.

When Newport delivered the second group of men to Jamestown, the colony numbered about two hundred, including the seventy or so new arrivals. As with the original group and the first reinforcements, many gentlemen appeared on the list of newcomers. This time, however, a “Mistresse Forest and Anne Buras her maide,” as well as “eight Dutchmen and Poles,” also appeared on the list.¹⁰⁵ Anne Buras later married John Laydon in the first English marriage ceremony in Virginia. The Dutchmen later betrayed the English, selling arms to the Powhatans and taking part in a plot to murder Smith.¹⁰⁶ Despite the reinforcements, the colony continued to decline. Relations with the natives became increasingly tense. Natives stole from the colonists and attempted to poison Smith, who threatened the natives who would not supply Jamestown with corn. He lost his influence with Wahunsonacock by the end of 1608.¹⁰⁷

In May 1609, Jamestown’s third group of 150 colonists departed England for Virginia.¹⁰⁸ The year 1609 also brought many changes to Jamestown. Along with the new supply of men, the colony received a new charter, which extended Virginia’s boundaries and allowed investors to buy stock in the company at a cheaper rate, thus expanding the company’s ownership. The new patent granted each new investor land and part of the colony’s profits. It also changed Jamestown’s government from a royally

¹⁰⁵ “The Proceedings of the English Colony in Virginia...” in *Captain John Smith’s Writings and Other Narratives*, Horn, ed., 77-79.

¹⁰⁶ “The General Historie of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles...” in *Captain John Smith’s Writings and Other Narratives*, Horn, ed., 366, 376, 386.

¹⁰⁷ “The Proceedings of the English Colony in Virginia...” in *Captain John Smith’s Writings and Other Narratives*, Horn, ed., 81-87; 89, 91-93.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, 397.

appointed council to a council directly elected by the investors. The investors also elected the council's head, the treasurer.

John Smith's critics convinced the Virginia Company that the young ex-soldier dealt too harshly with the natives on whom the colonists depended for food. The company approved Smith's strict authority over the colonists, but wished to maintain good relations with the area natives, so it replaced him and the presidential role with a new governor, Lord Delaware, who enjoyed more control than the council. The new charter revitalized the Jamestown venture. Many new "adventurers" signed up to invest, and even relocate, in Virginia.¹⁰⁹

Propagandistic promotion for increased action in Jamestown included the usual arguments for creating a mercantilist relationship between England and its New World colonies, allowing the mother country to become self-sufficient. After 1609, religious justifications also increased. Religious zealots claimed that God wanted Englishmen to venture to Virginia to convert natives. They saw a direct connection between God's instructions in Genesis 12:1-3 and their current situation. If God commanded Abraham to "Get thee out of thy countrey, and from thy kindred, and from thy fathers house, unto the land that I will shew thee, and I will make thee a great nation," then surely he expected Englishmen to leave the comforts of England and travel to this newly discovered land to spread the Gospel. The natives hoarded America, wasting God's gifts

¹⁰⁹ Kupperman, *The Jamestown Project*, 243; Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 79.

and living ignorant of his blessings. The English needed to rise to the occasion and save the “savages” from eternal damnation.¹¹⁰

The Virginia Company’s revised plans and new emphasis on religion did not override its desire to discover minerals or an alternative route to the East Indies. The company’s instructions to Sir Thomas Gates, Delaware’s deputy governor, clearly demonstrated the investors’ initiatives. The company instructed Gates to convert the natives, but he should also ensure that “oure fleetes come not home empty nor laden with useless mechandize.” After Gates ensured that the colonists performed all tasks necessary for survival, such as repairing buildings and planting crops, he should continue searching for an alternative passage to the East Indies or valuable minerals.¹¹¹

The company also suggested that the men make “wines, pitche, tarre, sope ashes, steele, iron, pipestaves...sowing...hempe and flaxe...gathering silke of the grass, and providing the [silk]worme and...fishinge for pearle, codd, sturgion, and such like.”¹¹² In reference to the Powhatans, the company instructed Gates to deal with, but not trust, Wahunsonacock, whose people were expected to submit and provide tribute to the English. By the time that the company issued the new charter, rumors surfaced linking the Powhatan chief to the disappearance of Raleigh’s lost colonists. The company, hoping that at least a few Roanoke settlers survived Wahunsonacock’s slaughter,

¹¹⁰ Horn, *A Land as God Made It*, 138-141.

¹¹¹ Instructions for Sir Thomas Gates for the government of Virginia,” in Quinn, ed., *New American World*, 5:213, 217.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 5:217.

encouraged Gates to search for his fellow Englishmen who could provide valuable information about the interior and various Virginia native groups.¹¹³

The Virginia Company instructed the Jamestown colonists to create three settlements on high, dry ground to prevent the further spread of disease and death. They also implemented a new, more direct course to Virginia, allowing the settlers to arrive in Jamestown in a healthier condition. Unfortunately for the first expedition under this new route, a storm blew the ships off course, stranding the flagship commanded by Newport, and carrying the new charter and Gates, to Bermuda. John Smith refused to surrender his power when neither the new instructions nor the new leader arrived in Virginia with the rest of the fleet.¹¹⁴ This turned out to be a bad decision for Smith, who coincidentally suffered a serious injury about five weeks later. Smith returned to England in October 1609, before the “starving time,” a period of unprecedented hardships, began.¹¹⁵

The men stranded in Bermuda built two new ships and repaired the wrecked *Sea Venture*, but did not arrive in Virginia until May 1610, nearly a year late, and without extra food. Among the late arrivals was John Rolfe, who later married Pocahontas and introduced new tobacco cultivating techniques to Jamestown. Like Smith, Rolfe did not live in Jamestown during the “starving time” winter of 1608-1609. During this bitter winter the colonists resorted to eating dogs, cats, rats, mice, boots, and snakes. As the men took to the woods in search of sustenance, they fell victim to native attacks. The

¹¹³ Horn, *A Land as God Made It*, 149.

¹¹⁴ Kupperman, *The Jamestown Project*, 247-249; George Percy, “A Trewe Relacyon of the procedeings and ocurentes of Momente which have hapned in Virginia...” in *Captain John Smith’s Writings and Other Narratives*, Horn, ed., 1094.

¹¹⁵ Kupperman, *The Jamestown Project*, 251.

food shortage became so serious that cannibalism ensued. Some men dug up graves to eat the corpses. While one man reportedly killed his pregnant wife and tossed their unborn child into a river before salting and eating her flesh.¹¹⁶

The hardships the colonists faced during the first six months of 1610 suggested difficult times ahead. The men who survived, or luckily missed, the “starving time” still faced harsh realities in Jamestown. The new colonists added to the food demand, which neither the colonists nor the natives could satisfy. Like Ralph Lane’s colonists at Roanoke, Gates’ colonists decided their best interests lay in abandoning the colony and going home to England. Had Lord Delaware, the newly appointed life-term governor, not arrived in Virginia in early June with four hundred men, and more importantly, new supplies, he would have encountered a scenario very close to Grenville’s relief expedition to the Roanoke colony. Gates’ men, disgruntled and disappointed with Virginia, had already abandoned the colony and made their way down the James. They encountered a longboat before reaching the Atlantic, however. When the colonists learned of Lord Delaware’s recent arrival in Virginia, they returned to Jamestown and awaited their new leader.¹¹⁷

Lord Delaware and his new council implemented a strict regimen, but he did not remain in Virginia for long. The colony’s new leader fell sick and returned to England, leaving Captain George Percy, a former soldier, past Virginia council president, and “a man of honour and resolution” temporarily in charge. When Lord Delaware left, about

¹¹⁶ George Percy, “A Trewe Relacyon,” in *Captain John Smith’s Writings and Other Narratives*, Horn, ed., 1099-1100; Kupperman, *The Jamestown Project*, 254.

¹¹⁷ “The General Historie of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles...” in *Captain John Smith’s Writings and Other Narratives*, Horn, ed., 411-412.

two hundred men were still alive in Jamestown, a small number considering the four hundred reinforcements he had brought with him to the colony less than a year earlier.¹¹⁸

Because Lord Delaware's ill health forced him to return to England in the spring of 1611, his deputy governors ruled during most of his governorship. When Deputy Governor Sir Thomas Dale arrived in May 1611, he discovered that the colonists already lacked the fervor they displayed under Lord Delaware's strict control. With only three months' supply left in the community store, the men refused to plant corn for their own survival. Sorely irritated, Dale instructed immediate planting, and by the end of the month, the men possessed "an indifferent crop of good Corne."¹¹⁹

Dale's strict laws and orders ended the colonists' slothfulness. He put the men he found bowling in the street to work repairing their dilapidated houses and preparing posts and rails to build a new town. Deserters were hunted down and executed. Dale made examples of anyone who did not follow his orders, believing that "feare of a cruell, painfull and unusuall death more restraines [the colonists], than death itself."¹²⁰

In August 1611, Sir Thomas Gates returned to Jamestown to replace Dale as deputy governor. Approving Dale's plans and the work already accomplished, Gates ordered the men to build a watch house, a church, and a store house before building himself and his men dwellings and enhancing fortifications. The following year, the

¹¹⁸ Ibid, 416-418; Tyler, Lyon Gardiner, ed., *Narratives of Early Virginia, 1606-1625*. (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1907), 3-23. Accessed online <http://www.americanjourneys.org/aj-073/summary/index.asp>. 7 Feb. 2010.

¹¹⁹ Ibid., 419, 418-419; Barck and Lefler, *Colonial America*, 43.

¹²⁰ "The General Historie of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles..." in *Captain John Smith's Writings and Other Narratives*, Horn, ed., 420, 419-420.

colonists took Pocahontas, Wahunsonacock's young daughter, prisoner to bargain with the chief who had formerly taken several Englishmen hostage. John Rolfe, "an honest Gentleman, and of good behaviour," fell in love with the young captive. She apparently felt the same, and in 1612 they married, an act accepted by both the colonists and the natives.¹²¹

Jamestown experienced many changes during 1612. The king granted the Virginia Company, known as the London Company since 1609, a new charter, incorporating the Bermuda Islands within the company's territory. The charter also placed the control of the colony with the company and the colony itself, rather than with the king, by authorizing four general courts and the governor and council to make laws governing the colony, providing they did not contradict existing English laws.¹²²

The same year, John Rolfe also introduced a new method for curing a West Indian tobacco species in Virginia. Despite an earlier claim by Sir Edwin Sandys, the future treasurer of the London Company, that "you can't build an empire on smoke," the colonists adopted the crop as their own.¹²³ Apparently, Sandys underestimated tobacco's appeal. Although the English considered Virginia's native plant "poore and weake, and of a byting tast," they knew that other varieties existed elsewhere.¹²⁴

¹²¹ Ibid., 425; 421-425.

¹²² Barck and Lefler, *Colonial America*, 44.

¹²³ George Louis Beer, *The Origins of the British Colonial System 1578-1660* (New York: Peter Smith, 1933) 78; Edwin Sandys quoted in Barck and Lefler, *Colonial America*, 45-46; Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 27.

¹²⁴ Quoted in Darrett B. Rutman and Anita H. Rutman, *A Place in Time: Middlesex County, Virginia 1650-1750* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1984), 39.

The colonists understood that Virginia's native short, small flower bearing tobacco could not compete with the Spanish West-Indian *Nicotiana Tabaccum* that grew "two or three yards from the ground, bearing a flower of the breadth of our bell-flowers in England."¹²⁵ Somehow, Rolfe acquired seeds of the West-Indian variety and planted them in Virginia. Planters continued experimenting with tobacco and eventually developed several different varieties including "sweetcented" and "oronoco."¹²⁶

The colonists imported *N. Tabaccum* from the West Indies, but they turned to local natives for their cultivation model. Like the Virginia natives, they spread a handful of seeds into the prepared seedbeds. Then, they covered their seeds with dirt or straw. Once the seedlings were sturdy enough to be transplanted, they moved them into previously prepared hills, planting one seedling per hill. They hoed the hills to ensure that they remained sturdy enough to support the crop and to prevent the invasion of unwanted weeds. Next, they cut, cured, and packed their crops in wooden casks. The planters' hill method did not even require them to fully clear the land before they planted their seeds, which meant that new immigrants or recently freed indentured servants could begin planting fairly quickly. Colonists who did clear land could do so by "girdling," or cutting a strip of bark from around tree trunks, killing the limbs rather than actually cutting down the tree, which required more time and labor.¹²⁷ After the trees died, the colonists, like the natives, planted corn and tobacco under the bare branches. When the

¹²⁵ Quoted in Brooks, *The Mighty Leaf*, 52-53. Brooks attributes the quotation to "Virginia's first recorder and secretary" but provides no footnote.

¹²⁶ Brooks, 53; Rutman and Rutman, *A Place in Time*, 40.

¹²⁷ Rutman and Rutman, *A Place in Time*, 40.

branches finally fell, planters burned them, leaving stumps and saving labor in a land plagued by high death rates.¹²⁸

By 1614, around seven thousand London shops sold tobacco, mostly imported from the Spanish. By 1616, tobacco dominated Jamestown's list of cultivated crops. Still, the Virginians only exported 2,500 pounds that year. Of that 2,500, only 2,300 went to London, which paled in comparison to 58,300 pounds legally imported into England from the Spanish. In 1617, the Jamestown colonists exported 20,000 pounds of tobacco. A decade later, that number rose to 500,000. Virginia's success convinced Bermuda colonists to follow suit.¹²⁹ In 1623, John Smith claimed that a "great abundance" of tobacco grew in Bermuda, though he believed that the island's "Silke, Saffron, Indico, Madar, Sugar-canes, Wine, Oile, and such like" offered a greater chance of profit than tobacco. Nevertheless, the Bermuda colonists "neglected many things [that] might have prevailed for their good," to grow the weed.¹³⁰

Profitability continued to lure colonists into tobacco production, at the expense of everything else. The Virginia Company attempted in vain to curb tobacco cultivation. King James, who hated tobacco, placed a shilling per pound import duty on the weed to raise his revenue. The following year, King James limited English tobacco imports to

¹²⁸ Lois Green Carr, Russell R. Menard, and Lorena S. Walsh, *Robert Cole's World: Agriculture and Society in Early Maryland* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 35; Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 158-162.

¹²⁹ Beer, *The Origins of the British Colonial System*, 87; W. Noel Sainsbury, ed. *Calendar of State Papers, Colonial Series, America and the West Indies 1574-1676* (London: Longman, Green, Longman & Roberts, 1860-93), vol. I, 18; Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 90; Brooks, *The Mighty Leaf*, 54.

¹³⁰ Smith, *The Generall Historie*, Horn, ed., 528, 531, 556.

55,000 pounds. The colonists, irritated but determined to make profits, sold their crops to Holland. Realizing its mistake, the Privy Council ordered in 1621 that the colonists export their crops solely to England, where they would enjoy a monopoly.¹³¹

The quality of Virginia tobacco never matched that grown in the Spanish colonies. The Spanish possessed a superior seed, which they refused to share with foreigners. Planters, therefore, generally received lower prices for their tobacco exports. As the supply increased, their profits became smaller. The Virginia legislature attempted to resolve this problem by passing laws to discourage overproduction and improve the quality of the colony's tobacco. In 1629, the Virginia burgesses limited each colonist to three thousand plants. Apparently, the limit did not increase planters' profits. The following year, they lowered the limit to two thousand plants per colonist. In 1633, the limit decreased yet again, allowing each planter to cultivate fifteen hundred plants. The Virginia House of Burgesses also ordered tobacco inspections, and that the colonists burn the inferior plants.¹³²

Despite the burgesses' efforts, Virginia's tobacco prices declined throughout the first half of the seventeenth century. Legislation failed to increase planter profits and unintentionally resulted in poorer quality tobacco. Each new law allowed colonists to cultivate and export a set number of plants. Planters, therefore, attempted to get as many leaves as possible from each plant, reducing the quality of their crop.¹³³

¹³¹ Barck and Lefler, *Colonial America*, 49.

¹³² William E. Burns, *Daily Life Through History: Science and Technology in Colonial America* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 2005), 11-13; Beer, *The Origins of the British Colonial System*, 94-96.

¹³³ *Ibid.*, 96-97.

Tobacco's initial success lured thousands of English men and women to Virginia over the next few years. During the 1620s, the tobacco market experienced an economic boom. The colonists preferred to grow tobacco rather than corn, which yielded lower profits. Thus, they continued trading with, or intimidating, the natives so they did not have to be bothered with feeding themselves.¹³⁴ Despite English initiatives encouraging the colonists to produce other commodities like silk and potash, they preferred to participate in the more lucrative tobacco market. By 1623, Edwin Sandys' projects to build up Virginia "vanished into smoke (that is to say into Tobaccoe)."¹³⁵

The colonists finally recognized that their future lay in agricultural production, not gold, silver, or discovering a passage to the East Indies. Rather than focusing their attention on exploring the interior in hopes of discovering mineral-rich land, the Virginia colonists sought to procure manual labor. They could grow tobacco nearly anywhere, but they could not do it on their own. Those who did not squander their measly profits on alcohol invested in labor.¹³⁶

Originally, the colony's bound labor came in three forms. Tenants constituted the largest form of bound labor before the introduction of private land ownership. They remained under company supervision but kept half of their profits. Servants kept nothing. Their masters received their servants' profits in return for food, shelter, and

¹³⁴ "The General Historie of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles..." in *Captain John Smith's Writings and Other Narratives*, Horn, ed., 494, 497; Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 108.

¹³⁵ Quoted in Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 108-109. This quotation is on p. 109.

¹³⁶ Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 114-124.

clothing for a predetermined number of years. Apprentices found themselves working for whomever would pay for them for seven years. If they survived the seven years without committing a crime (and, subsequently starting their seven years over), they became tenants for an additional seven years.¹³⁷

Indentured servitude provided a means to extract England's idle poor, lessening the overpopulation burden in the mother country and supplying Virginia planters with a much needed labor source. Servants sold their labor in return for food, clothing, shelter, and a passage to the New World. Ideally, servants would establish their own plantation upon completion of their indenture contract. Most servants did not outlive their contract, however, because of Virginia's seasoning period and harsh working conditions.¹³⁸

Although both males and females could contract their labor to a Virginia planter, planters preferred male labor for their tobacco fields. This led to an extremely unbalanced gender ratio, which, when coupled with the high death rate among women giving birth and among children, made natural reproduction nearly impossible.¹³⁹ High death rates among men and women and the difficulty ex-servants experienced when attempting to establish themselves among the planter class naturally created an exploitative environment. Planters wanted to extract as much labor as possible from their servants at as little cost as possible. Servants wanted to perform as little work as possible

¹³⁷ Ibid., 116.

¹³⁸ Allan Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves: The Development of Southern Cultures in the Chesapeake, 1680-1800* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986), 32-33, 35.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 33; James Horn, *Adapting to a New World: English Society in the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of Chapel Hill Press, 1996), 31, 36; Carr, Menard, and Walsh, *Robert Cole's World*, 18, 33, 158.

and survive their contract. Freedmen hoped to establish their own profitable plantation and acquire their own indentured servants.¹⁴⁰

With the adoption of tobacco, the colonists transformed English New World motives from precious metals to commercial agriculture based on bound labor. To encourage immigration and agriculture, the Virginia Company abandoned its former colonial model in which all colonists worked for, and all land belonged to, the company. After 1618, the company, and later the Virginia government, implemented the head right system, granting fifty acres of land for each individual an Englishman brought to the New World. Under the head right system, a wealthy Englishmen could pay for a person who could not finance his own passage to the New World. The planter received fifty acres of land for each person he brought to Virginia as well as five to seven years' indentured labor. When, or if, the servant completed his contract, he could move to the frontier of the settlement, improve the land, and establish his own plantation. Many servants, however, never established their own plantations. If they outlived their contracts, they often found the established planters' monopoly on the tobacco trade impenetrable and frontier life hazardous.¹⁴¹ In 1619, African slaves arrived in Virginia to supplement indentured labor. Still, the Virginia colonists initially preferred white indentured labor over black slave labor. Until mortality rates decreased and the Dutch became

¹⁴⁰ Kulikoff, *Tobacco and Slaves*, 35.

¹⁴¹ Daphne Gentry, "Headrights, VA-Notes," The Library of Virginia (2010), http://www.lva.virginia.gov/public/guides/va4_headrights.htm (accessed 11 Feb. 2010); Rutman and Rutman, *A Place in Time*, 38; Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 94, 215-234.

increasingly involved in the slave trade, paying higher prices for permanent labor remained unattractive to English colonists.¹⁴²

Thus, tobacco transformed Jamestown from an English outpost where gentlemen and company employees believed they could temporarily settle, acquire quick profits, and return to England into a place that offered land, permanent residence, and the small possibility of attaining prosperity. Immigrants came, and died, by the thousands. By 1620, the colony's population reached about two thousand and continued to increase. An unexpected native attack in 1622 resulted in thousands of deaths, the Virginia Company's bankruptcy, and royal control of Virginia. Still, English men and women immigrated to Virginia, especially when the English Civil War began. After completing their indentures, they settled the Virginia frontier, eventually spreading throughout the Chesapeake area, including Maryland.¹⁴³

They struggled through seasoning, their indentured contract, and native attacks so they could acquire land and join the planter elite, which few ever did. Although Englishmen "discovered" tobacco before they "discovered" Virginia, it took disease, native hostility, starvation, and internal dissension for the colonists to take advantage of resources that they had had at their fingertips all along. Future colonization promoters and leaders accepted Virginia's new model based on tobacco. They abandoned the notion that natives would graciously accept English sovereignty. They adopted agriculture, especially tobacco, from the start, based on the newly established head rights and indentured systems. Jamestown's success paved the way for future colonies.

¹⁴² Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, 297-298.

¹⁴³ Rutman and Rutman, *A Place in Time*, 39. The English began settling Maryland in 1634; Carr, Menard, and Walsh, *Robert Cole's World*, 16.

The colonists originally expected to quickly establish a lucrative colony, temporarily live among natives who would sustain and revere them, and return to England with wealth and glory. Virginia, however, did not offer the vast sources of minerals or a passage to the East Indies, and the natives refused to bow to the colonists' desires. Ironically, the colonists became obsessed with a New World weed, cultivated in the "savage" manner. They nearly starved themselves rather than grow native corn. Then they nearly starved themselves growing native tobacco. The colonists struggled for a decade before they established a system that brought some semblance of stability to Jamestown. Their mastery of tobacco led to future English colonies based on the same system. Jamestown may have been founded as a virtually smoke-free colony, but they built "an empire on smoke."¹⁴⁴

¹⁴⁴ Edwin Sandys quoted in Barck and Lefler, *Colonial America*, 45-46.

4. Second-Hand Smoke: Barbados Adopts Tobacco

In 1627, two full decades after Jamestown's initial settlers established England's first permanent New World colony, around forty settlers landed in Barbados. The Barbados colonists' New World experience differed greatly from their Virginia predecessors. The Jamestown colonists settled in an already inhabited, temperate climate too late to plant crops.¹⁴⁵ The Barbados settlers landed in a much-visited, yet uninhabited, tropical environment in February, before the end of the planting season. Most importantly, however, the Barbados settlers benefitted from the knowledge and experience gained in Virginia during the previous twenty years.

Like the Jamestown settlers, the Barbados colonists traveled to the New World to get rich. Unlike the Virginians, however, the Barbadians did not necessarily expect to discover gold-filled mines or copper-laden rivers within the colony's interior. They went to Barbados to establish a commercial agricultural center. Upon their arrival in the New World, the Barbadians immediately planted profitable crops including tobacco to export to Europe. They mimicked Virginia's already established commercial agriculture production based on head rights and indentured servitude and quickly entered the tobacco market, competing with Virginia planters.

Barbadians imitated Virginians' commercial tobacco production, head rights system, and indentured servitude, but they did not create a mirror image of Virginia. The islanders encountered a much different environment from the Jamestown colonists. Although seasoning quickly claimed the lives of many Barbados settlers, they did not

¹⁴⁵ [virginiaplaces.org](http://www.virginiaplaces.org), "Virginia's Climate," <http://www.virginiaplaces.org/climate/index.html>. (accessed on 20 Feb. 2010).

suffer the initial “starving time” experienced by the Jamestown colonists. The Barbados colonists’ starving time came later, during the sugar revolution, when planters demonstrated the same levels of obsession for their sugar as the Jamestown colonists exhibited for tobacco.¹⁴⁶

The Barbadians delayed their starving time by not initially wasting time searching for precious metals or a passage to the East Indies. Nor did they live among hostile natives whom they believed would feed them while they bowled in the streets. This forced them to obtain their own food supply by utilizing the island’s resources or importing food from abroad. The absence of a native population also meant that the colonists did not constantly fear native attacks and could concentrate more of their attention on agriculture.

Unlike Virginia, Barbados was extremely small. With only 166 square miles of land to choose from, the Barbadians could not continue moving out to the frontier when land became scarce or they depleted the soil. The Barbados colonists, therefore, experienced a land shortage crisis long before the Virginians. Like the Jamestown colonists, however, the Barbadians lived in a very exploitative environment. The wealthy planters quickly consolidated their power and created an agricultural monopoly on the island. Many indentured servants who traveled to Barbados to become wealthy planters never established their own plantations on the island. Those who survived the seasoning period and their indentured contracts found the land shortage disappointing and moved to other English colonies.

¹⁴⁶ Richard S. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1715* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972), 58.

The Barbadians differed from the Virginians in another crucial way. Unlike the tobacco-obsessed Virginians, the islanders planted various crops including cotton, indigo, and sugar, allowing for more flexibility and more agriculturally diverse exports. The islanders initially clung to tobacco with nearly the same fervor as the Virginians, forcing the government to place limitations on tobacco production and enact measures to improve their crops' quality. Barbados' tobacco, however, earned a very poor reputation, and could never compete with Virginia tobacco in terms of quality. English taxes that granted preferential treatment to Virginia tobacco also caused Barbados planters much grief.

Barbadians' agricultural diversity allowed an easy transition to cotton, and later sugar, making the island a much more lucrative investment than Virginia. The political and economic gains Barbados planters enjoyed from sugar production cannot be overemphasized. But the early settlers whose descendants later became the wealthy Barbados sugar elite established a society based on tobacco. Only those planters who became wealthy from tobacco cultivation, or obtained adequate credit, acquired the means to make the transition to sugar production. Unfortunately, very little first-hand information about the Barbados tobacco era exists. Despite this fact, the evidence that has survived clearly demonstrates the importance of tobacco in the early history of Barbados and the connections between Virginia's and Barbados' commercial tobacco production. The Barbados settlers benefitted from twenty-years of experience gained at Jamestown. They did not search for unrealistic wealth in the form of gold and silver. They did not waste time searching for a passage to the East Indies. Instead, they

immediately adopted commercial agriculture that proved successful in Virginia.

Barbadians grew tobacco because Virginians grew tobacco.

Although Barbados earned recognition as “the most considerable island the English have among the Carribees,” known primarily for its lucrative sugar industry and high slave importation rates, the colony did not always command such high regard.¹⁴⁷

Barbados once carried the reputation of the “Dunghill wharone England doth cast forth its rubidge, Rodges and hors.”¹⁴⁸ Even the island’s name, from the Portuguese “Los Barbados,” hints at the “barbarity of the country.”¹⁴⁹

John Powell, an experienced sea captain, claimed Barbados for King James I in 1625. Two years later, his brother, Henry Powell, and a small contingent of settlers colonized the island under Sir William Courteen, a wealthy Anglo-Dutchman and experienced Caribbean trader. The Spanish, who controlled much of the surrounding area, did not interfere with the English interlopers. Locked in a power struggle with the

¹⁴⁷ Nathaniel Crouch aka Robert Burton, *The English Empire in America or, a View of the Dominions of the Crown of England in the West Indies...* (London: 1685), reprinted by and for S. Fuller in 1735.

¹⁴⁸ Charles H. Firth, ed., *The Narrative of General Venables, with an Appendix of Papers Relating to the Expedition to the West Indies and the Conquest of Jamaica, 1654-1655* (London: Longman’s Green, 1990), 146.

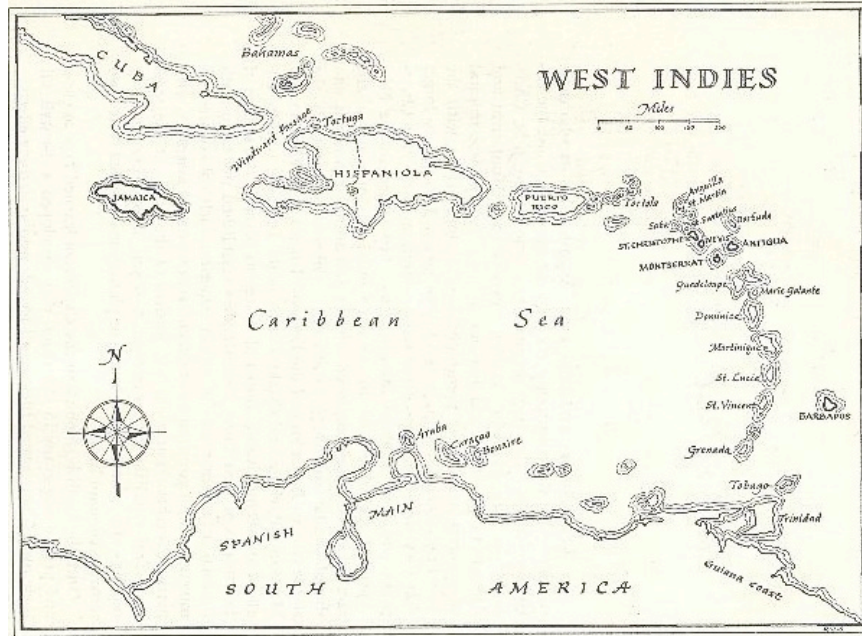
¹⁴⁹ J. Fuller, *The naval chronicle: or, voyages, travels, expeditions, remarkable exploits and achievements, of the most celebrated English navigators, travellers, and sea-commanders, from the earliest accounts to the end of the year 1759: ... In three volumes.* Adorned with cuts. Vol. 2. London, 1760. Eighteenth-Century Collections Online. Gale. EAST CAROLINA UNIV. 30 Mar. 2009, <http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&contentSet=ECCOArticles&type=multipage&tabID=T001&prodId=ECCO&docId=CW100317914&source=gale&userGroupName=gree96177&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>.

Dutch, and engulfed in the Thirty Years' War, Spain did nothing to stop English settlement of the tiny island.¹⁵⁰

Before the seventeenth century, only Spaniards and Native Americans occupied the West Indies. Compared to Mexico and Peru, the Caribbean islands' offered little chance for accumulating wealth, but required extensive manpower to inhabit and protect. Thus, the Spanish concerned themselves only with inhabiting the large islands of the Greater Antilles and Trinidad. Still, Spain attempted to prevent other Europeans from settling in the Caribbean to protect trade between the mother countries and the colonies (See Map 1).¹⁵¹

¹⁵⁰ Captain John Smith, "The Generall Historie of Virginia, New England, and the Summer Isles, together with, The True Travels, Adventures, and Observations" in *Captain John Smith: Writings with Other Narratives of Roanoke, Jamestown, and the First English Settlement of America*, James Horn, ed. (New York: The Library of America, 2007), 763; Hilary Beckles, *A History of Barbados: From Amerindian Settlement to a Nation-State* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 7; Jerome Handler and Frederick W. Lange, *Plantation Slavery in Barbados: An Archaeological and Historical Investigation* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1978), 15; Russell R. Menard, *Sweet Negotiations: Sugar Slavery and Plantation Agriculture in Early Barbados* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 2006), 1; Sir Alan Burns, *History of the British West Indies* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1954), 196; Otis P. Starkey, *The Economic Geography of Barbados: A Study of the Relationships between Environmental Variations and Economic Development* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1939), 52; Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 49.

¹⁵¹ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 15-16.



Map 1

Map by Richard J. Stinley. (Adapted from an endsheet in Richard Pares, *Yankees and Creoles: The Trade between North America and the West Indies before the American Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass., 1956); courtesy of Longman Group Limited of Great Britain. In Richard S. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, xxii.

Despite Spanish efforts to maintain complete control over the Caribbean, the Dutch, French, and English managed to colonize the area. The English attempted to settle Guiana as early as 1604 and tried again in 1609, 1617, and 1620, but every attempt failed because of disease and Spanish, Portuguese, and native attacks. Between 1604 and 1640, the English only successfully established five colonies in the Caribbean- St. Christopher, Barbados, Nevis, Antigua, and Montserrat. These islands were small, somewhat isolated from the Spanish colonies by trade winds that favored travel to and from Europe rather than from Spanish America.¹⁵²

In 1624, the English occupied St. Christopher. After allying themselves with the French to decimate the island's native population, the two European powers' colonists

¹⁵² Ibid., 17-18.

spent the next several decades vying for control over the island. Despite the trade winds, the Spanish mounted an unsuccessful attack on St. Christopher in 1629, adding another element to the already chaotic environment.¹⁵³

When the *William and John* landed in Barbados in February 1627, Henry Powell, his eighty colonists, and seven or eight slaves captured during the transatlantic journey constituted the entire island's population.¹⁵⁴ Archaeological evidence and early Spanish sources suggest that natives inhabited the island in pre-Columbian times. Spanish slave raids and disease appear to have contributed to the complete absence of a native population before Powell and his men landed in Barbados, possibly as early as 1536.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵³ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 18.

¹⁵⁴ Smith, "The True Travels," in Horn, ed., *Captain John Smith's Writings*, 763. Smith claimed that Powell brought "forty English with seven or eight negroes." Perhaps the discrepancies between the numbers in various sources can be attributed to mariners and non-Englishmen who accompanied the expedition. Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, 7; Handler and Lange, *Plantation Slavery in Barbados*, 15; Menard, *Sweet Negotiations*, 1; Burns, *History of the British West Indies*, 196; Starkey, *The Economic Geography of Barbados*, 53.

¹⁵⁵ Handler and Lange, *Plantation Slavery in Barbados*, 15. Handler and Lange assert that Spanish raids resulted in the disappearance of a Barbadian native population by 1541. Hilary Beckles claims that the Portuguese explorer, Pedro a Campus, landed in Barbados in 1536 and reported that the island was uninhabited. Beckles also describes the various waves of native groups who lived on the island at different times. Support for a pre-Columbian native population can also be found in Menard, *Sweet Negotiations*, 12; Winthrop D. Jordan, *White Over Black: American Attitudes Toward the Negro, 1550-1812* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1968), 64; and Beckles, *A History*, 15; Gary A. Puckrein, *Little England: Plantation Society and Anglo-Barbadian Politics, 1627-1700* (New York: New York University Press, 1984), 5. Although Spanish raids and disease are usually credited with the disappearance of Barbados' Native American population, Puckrein claims that there is no satisfactory explanation for their disappearance. It is important to note that *Little England* was published in 1984, perhaps before most historians accepted Handler's view.

When the English settled the island, they discovered several artifacts, including clay pots, that suggested natives at least visited the island before European contact.¹⁵⁶

Within two weeks of arriving on the island, Henry Powell sailed to Dutch Guiana and returned with various plants and a group of Arawaks, enemies of the Spanish, to teach the English the “tropical agriculture, and regional political geography.”¹⁵⁷

Although Powell guaranteed the Arawaks their freedom and the ability to return to Guiana in two years, the colonists ignored his pledge and enslaved the natives for nearly twenty years. The Guiana natives’ enslavement demonstrates the Barbadians’ willingness to alienate and exploit the very people who held the key to their survival, ignoring possible lessons learned from the Jamestown colonists. The Barbadians may not have depended on the Arawaks to the same degree that the Virginians depended on the Powhatans, but they needed the Guiana natives’ agricultural knowledge.¹⁵⁸

Powell also imported several plants from Guiana, including tobacco seeds, sugar cane, potatoes, and corn.¹⁵⁹ Since the Dutch obtained most of their tobacco from

¹⁵⁶ Samuel Clarke, *A true and faithful account of the four chiefest plantations of the English in America : to wit, of Virginia, New-England, Bermudus, Barbados : ...* (London, 1670), 58, *Sabin Americana*. Gale, Cengage Learning. East Carolina University. 20 Feb. 2010
<<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/Sabin?af=RN&ae=CY3800371239&srchtp=a&ste=14>.

¹⁵⁷ Smith, “The True Travels,” in Horn, ed., *Captain John Smith’s Writings*, 763; Larry Gragg, *Englishmen Transplanted: The English Colonization of Barbados 1627-1660* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 88; Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, 18.

¹⁵⁸ Gragg, *Englishmen Transplanted*, 19-20; Burns, *History of the British West Indies*, 196. Burns claims that the Arawaks were supposed to teach the Barbados colonists to cultivate “cassava, maize, tobacco, and other crops.” Although Sir Alan Burns claims that the Arawaks were freed in 1655, he provides no source to check this date.

¹⁵⁹ Gragg, *Englishmen Transplanted*, 19.

Venezuela and the Guyanas during first few years of the seventeenth century, Powell likely imported the “Cracostabak” or Caracas variety into Barbados.¹⁶⁰ Ironically, planters chose not to focus on sugar cane production, which would eventually become island’s most lucrative export. Sugar did not become a major crop in Barbados until the Dutch reintroduced the crop to the island in the 1630s, transforming Barbados from a relatively unprofitable colony into England’s first large-scale sugar cultivating possession in the Caribbean.¹⁶¹

Barbados’ initial population consisted entirely of males who received wages rather than land titles for their journey and labor on the island. After James Hay, the earl of Carlisle, gained control of Barbados, however, he granted land to the island’s inhabitants. By 1628, around 250 colonists owned nearly 40,000 acres. Throughout the 1630s, Henry Hawley, Barbados’ governor under Carlisle, initiated a head right system similar to that used in Virginia, only on a much smaller scale. Each planter received ten acres for himself and ten additional acres for each servant he brought to the island. Despite Hawley’s frugal land grants, in contrast to those in Virginia, the colonists held title to the island’s best land by the end of the decade.¹⁶²

Like Virginia, Barbados initially received rave reviews for its climate, wildlife, and natural resources. John Smith, who apparently visited Barbados in August with John

¹⁶⁰ Jonathan I. Israel, *Dutch Primacy in World Trade, 1585-1740* (Oxford, NY: Clarendon Press, 1989), 66.

¹⁶¹ Jerome S. Handler, *The Unappropriated People: Freedmen in the Slave Society of Barbados* (Baltimore MD: The John Hopkins University Press, 1974), 16.

¹⁶² Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 50-51.

Powell, claimed that the island contained “an infinite number of Swine, some Turtles, and many sorts of excellent fish...Ducke and Mallard; excellent clay for pots, [and] woods and stone for building.”¹⁶³ In 1627, Barbados appeared to offer the colonists the perfect conditions to grow various crops for export. Smith claimed that “all things we there plant doe grow exceedingly, so well as tobacco,” which he attributed to the “exceedingly good ground” found in Barbados.¹⁶⁴ Tobacco, cotton, ginger, and indigo cultivated on small plots of twenty to thirty acres, farmed by indentured servants, African slaves, and captured natives, dominated Barbados’ economy during the earliest years of settlement.¹⁶⁵

The Barbadians delayed their “starving time” during the initial years of settlement, partially because the colonists immediately began growing crops like cassava, sweet potatoes, and maize. They also benefitted from the descendents of a pair of breeding hogs left behind by a previous Portuguese excursion. Henry Powell’s initiative to cultivate crops and the Portuguese foresight to place livestock in Barbados in case storms forced future mariners onto the island meant that the islanders benefitted from realistic goals and good luck, not superior survival skills.¹⁶⁶ The Barbadians were just as

¹⁶³ Smith, “The True Travels,” in Horn, ed., *Captain John Smith’s Writings*, 763-764.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 196, 197.

¹⁶⁵ Handler and Lange, *Plantation Slavery in Barbados*, 15.

¹⁶⁶ Clarke, *A true and faithful account*,” 57-58, *Sabin Americana*, Gale, Cengage Learning, East Carolina University.
<<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/Sabin?af=RN&ae=CY3800371239&srchtp=a&ste=14>.

wasteful as their Jamestown predecessors. Within three years, the Portuguese hog population no longer existed.¹⁶⁷

The Barbadians' luck only went so far. Courteen and Powell initially established a colony based on more realistic goals than the Virginia Company. Confusion over the colony's patent, however, created levels of chaos similar to those in the early years of Jamestown. After Courteen and his associates sank over £10,000 into the island, the earl of Carlisle took over Barbados. Both men received royal patents and established separate colonies on the island. By 1629, however, the English government recognized Carlisle, a Scot and loyal supporter of King James I, as the official Lord Proprietor over the English Caribees, the Leeward Island, and Barbados.¹⁶⁸ Political confusion consumed Barbados' early years. Carlisle found himself in financial trouble, and therefore, rented out large tracts of land to Colonel Marmaduke Royden, a London merchant. Carlisle granted Royden full judicial and taxing authority over these areas.¹⁶⁹

Along with the chaotic political situation of the Courteen-Carlisle power struggle, the settlers faced environmental hardships. They settled an uninhabited, heavily forested island. Before they could build proper housing and community buildings and establish

¹⁶⁷ Starkey, *The Economic Geography of Barbados*, 53.

¹⁶⁸ W. Noel Sainsbury, *Calendar of State Papers: Colonial Series, America and the West Indies 1574-1660* (London: Longman, Green, Longman & Roberts, 1860); reprint, (Burlington, Ontario: TannerRitchie Publishing, 2005), 85, 97, hereafter cited as CSCP. Citations are to the reprinted edition; Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 49; Vincent T. Harlow, *Colonising Expeditions to the West Indies and Guiana 1623-1667* (Alderley, England: Clarendon Press, 1926), 7.

¹⁶⁹ Harlow, *A History of Barbados*, 7-8. Harlow cites the *Deeds of Barbados*, vol. I, 483. Although a fire destroyed the original copy of the document, Mr. Darnell Davis transcribed the deeds and deposited them in the library of the Royal Colonial Institute, London, the "Davis Collection," also Rawlinson MSS. C. 94, f. 28.

plantations, they needed to clear land. Barbados' tropical rainforest took years to clear.¹⁷⁰ The colonists also faced an unfamiliar climate of eight "hot, yet not scalding" months every year, and four cooler months, described as having temperatures similar to those in England during May. The island's humid air resulted in a very "unwholesome" climate wrought with disease and dehydration. Barbados' humidity reached levels high enough to rust the colonists' swords, knives, and locks and to render watches and clocks useless.¹⁷¹

Slavery existed in Barbados from the beginning, but indentured servitude remained the island's main source of labor before the shift to sugar. Like the colonists traveling to the Chesapeake, most white Europeans traveling to Barbados during the 1630s and 1640s did so under a contractual indentured servitude agreement.¹⁷² Tobacco planters considered indentured servants a better investment than slaves, who could be five times more expensive. High mortality rates meant that owning a laborer for life accounted for little because nearly 33 percent of bound laborers died within the first three years after arriving in Barbados.¹⁷³

¹⁷⁰ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 52.

¹⁷¹ Clarke, *A true and faithful account*, 60.

¹⁷² Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, 15-16. Beckles illustrates the importance of a labor force in colonial Barbados by recounting the individual stories of Henry Winthrop and Thomas Verney. Winthrop, once an indentured servant himself, wrote his uncle, Thomas Fones, of his intention of remaining in Barbados and planting tobacco with his own servants. Verney, somewhat of a black sheep and failure in England, established a tobacco plantation and rose to the status of the "property-owning elite."

¹⁷³ J.R. Ward, *British West Indian Slavery 1750-1834: The Process of Amelioration* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), 10; Carl and Roberta Bridenbaugh, *No Peace Beyond the Line: The English in the Caribbean 1624-1690* (Oxford University Press, 1972), 104, 117; Beckles, *White Servitude and Black Slavery in Barbados*, 121-123.

Of course, factors other than slave costs also affected Barbados planters' decisions to import white servants rather than black slaves. According to historian Richard Dunn, the concept of a socially obligated working class resembled life in England more than a permanent slave class. And, Englishmen also displayed an unwillingness to "live among foreigners."¹⁷⁴

Slave imports did not reach phenomenal numbers during Barbados' tobacco years. Although slaves appeared on the island with the initial settlement expedition, the African population grew extremely slowly until the sugar revolution in the 1640s.¹⁷⁵ In fact, Henry Winthrop, Massachusetts Governor John Winthrop's son, allegedly claimed that only fifty slaves, including both Indian and African laborers, lived in Barbados in 1629.¹⁷⁶ Moreover, during the 1630s, the slave population reached no more than eight hundred.¹⁷⁷

The rise in Barbadian slave imports during the sugar revolution can probably be attributed to greater need for labor in cane fields, fewer indentured servant emigrants, and lower slave prices in comparison with servant labor.¹⁷⁸ In 1638, slaves cost planters an

¹⁷⁴ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 68-77.

¹⁷⁵ Franklin W. Knight, *The Caribbean: The Genesis of a Fragmented Nationalism*, 2nd ed. (NY: Oxford University Press, 1990), 111. Knight specifically states that slave imports "expanded rapidly after 1650."

¹⁷⁶ Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, 18. Beckles claims that Henry Powell made this statement in 1629 but provides no footnote, and the reference does not appear to be included in *Winthrop Papers*, Stuart Mitchell, ed., (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1929-47).

¹⁷⁷ Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, 18.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 30-31.

average of £40.88 apiece. Less than ten years later, on the eve of the sugar revolution in 1645, the price of the average slave had decreased to £20.98.¹⁷⁹ Although Richard Ligon claimed that Barbadians held 100,000 Africans slaves in the 1640s, Richard Dunn dismisses Ligon's estimate as an exaggerated guess that should be dismissed. Dunn asserts that Barbados planters only held 5,850 African laborers in bondage in 1645.¹⁸⁰ Carl and Roberta Bridenbaugh provide numbers similar to Dunn's estimate. They claim that only a few hundred slaves lived in Barbados in 1640, but by 1645, the islanders owned 5680 slaves purchased from the Dutch.¹⁸¹

Despite the small number of slaves, Barbadians quickly ensured "that Negroes and Indians, that came here to be sold should serve for Life, unless a Contract was made before to the contrary."¹⁸² African labor quickly became associated with permanent slavery. Many Europeans discussed permanent African slavery "as if it were a matter of

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., 30. I use the term "sugar revolution" to describe Barbados planters' quick shift to sugar cultivation during the mid-to-late 1640s. The year 1645 is typically referred to as the eve of the "sugar revolution." The transition, however, did not occur in one year. For a better understanding of the "sugar revolution," see Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, and Menard, *Sweet Negotiations*.

¹⁸⁰ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 74-75. Dunn discounts Richard Ligon's *True History of Barbados*, 43, 46, estimate of Barbadian slaves reaching 100,000 in the 1640s. Dunn also claims that John Scott's 5,680 estimation may be "a complete fabrication," but historians such as Vincent T. Harlow, *A History of Barbados, 1625-1685*, 44-45; and Alfred D. Chandler, "The Expansion of Barbados," *Journal of Barbados Museum of Historical Society*, 23 (1945-1946) 106-110, accept Scott's estimation.

¹⁸¹ Bridenbaughs, *No Peace Beyond the Line*, 33.

¹⁸² Menard, *Sweet Negotiation*, 12.

common knowledge.”¹⁸³ Henry Whistler, a visitor to Barbados, described the island’s hereditary slave system in his journal as “miserabell Negors borne to perpetuall slavery theay and theyer seed....they sele them from one to the other as we doue shepe.”¹⁸⁴

Still, during the tobacco years, Barbados planters invested more heavily in indentured labor than slave labor. Like the indentured servants traveling to Virginia, most men going to Barbados under a contractual labor agreement traveled alone. Most servants were men in their teens or twenties and did not travel as part of a family unit.¹⁸⁵ Passenger lists for voyages traveling from England to Barbados provide some demographic details of the people who became Barbados’ inhabitants.

The passenger list of the *Hopewell*’s February 1634 voyage to Barbados provides a good example of the usual emigrants traveling to Barbados. Of the 147 passengers traveling on the *Hopewell*, 35 were in their teens, and 98 passengers were in their twenties. The ship carried only three men in their forties, and none of the passengers were over the age of forty-six. The youngest passenger was only eleven years old.¹⁸⁶ Another ship, carrying ninety-one passengers to Barbados in April 1635, included twenty-five passengers in their teens and forty-three passengers between the ages of twenty and twenty-nine. Only two men on this voyage were over thirty-nine years old.

¹⁸³ Jordan, *White Over Black*, 64, 65. Jordan claims the idea of permanent African slavery arrived with the first settlers in 1627.

¹⁸⁴ Charles H. Firth, ed., *The Narrative of General Venables*, 146.

¹⁸⁵ John Camden Hotten, ed., *Original Lists of Persons of Quality* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1976), 39-43, 51, 63, 70, 73-75, 139-143.

¹⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 39-43. I counted anyone between the ages of 10 and 19 as a teen.

The youngest passenger on this voyage was listed as being ten years old (Refer to Figure 1).¹⁸⁷

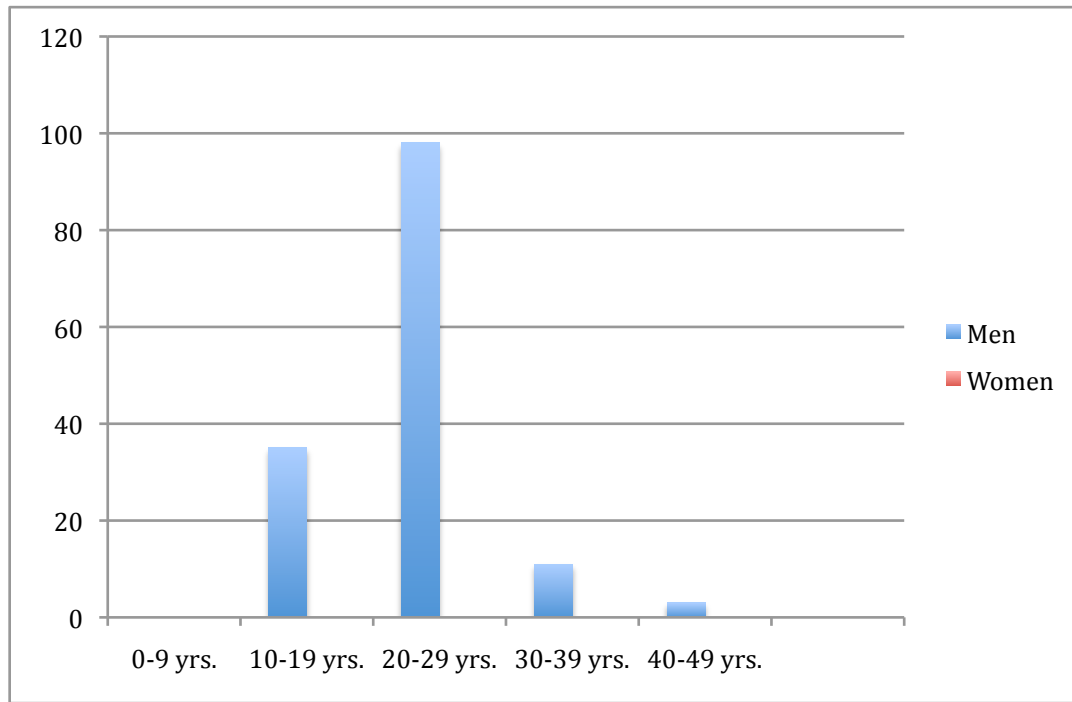


Figure 1

Source: John Camden Hotten, ed., *Original Lists of Persons of Quality* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1976), 51-52.

Although the previous two passenger lists represent the typical demographics of emigrants traveling to Barbados, mainly young men, some ships carried uncommonly large groups of women. The *Ann & Elizabeth*, a ship transporting emigrants to Barbados and St. Christopher on April 27, 1635, for example, offered a different demographic makeup. This particular ship carried 108 passengers, 19 of whom were women.

Although the ship carried an unusually large number of female passengers, the ages of the travelers remain characteristic of indentured servants traveling to the Caribbean in the

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 51-52. Again I counted anyone between the ages of 10 and 19 as a teen. The two men over the age of 39 were both listed as 40 years of age.

seventeenth century. Thirty-nine males and six females were in their teens. Forty-five males were between the ages of twenty and twenty-nine. Thirteen of the nineteen women were also in their twenties. All of the males fell between the ages of fourteen and thirty one. The women's ages ranged from eighteen to twenty-seven (Refer to Figure 2).¹⁸⁸

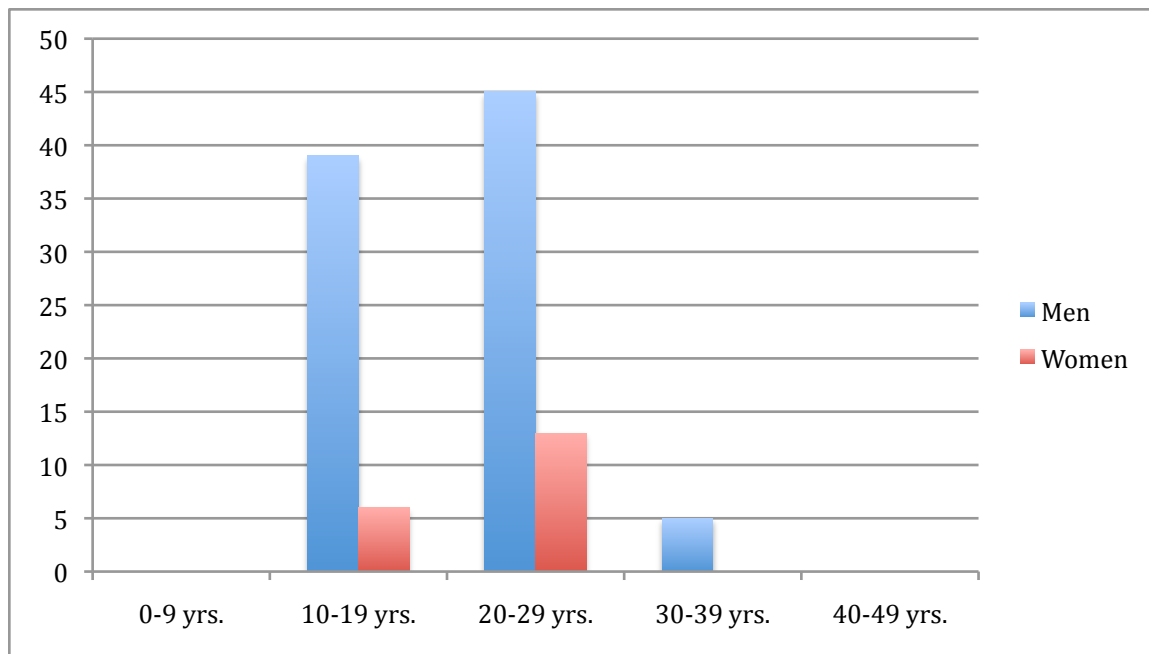


Figure 2

Source: John Camden Hotten, ed., *Original Lists of Persons of Quality* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1976), 70-71.

Perhaps even more interesting, on May 2, 1635, the *Alexander* carried 162 passengers to the island of Barbados, including 19 women.¹⁸⁹ The men's ages on this

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 70-71. This ship appears to have carried an uncharacteristically large number of women to the Caribbean and does not offer an accurate portrayal of the average emigrant demographics. It is also important to point out that the ship is listed as having sailed to both Barbados and St. Christopher, not all of the women onboard necessarily settled in Barbados.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 73-75. The interesting fact about the *Alexander* is not that it carried the same number of women passengers as the *Ann & Elizabeth* but that two ships in a row carried an unusual number of women. Also important to note is that all 19 women were reportedly traveling to Barbados.

ship mirror the characteristic ages of indentured servants sailing to the Caribbean, but the ship carried two women in their mid-thirties.¹⁹⁰ Although the *Ann & Elizabeth* and the *Alexander* carried an unusually large number of women, most ships carried extremely few or no women to Barbados. The *Expedition*, for example, set sail on November 20, 1635, carrying 204 passengers, all of whom were males.¹⁹¹

Like the early Virginians, Barbadians suffered a noticeable gender and age imbalance because, like Virginia planters, Caribbean planters preferred young white males for their tobacco fields.¹⁹² Like the Virginians, the Barbados colonists realized that land acquisition meant nothing if they did not obtain the labor to improve and farm their holdings. Planters imported thousands of indentured servants over the years.

Like their Virginia counterparts, these servile emigrants hoped to complete their terms of indenture, usually laboring for their masters for five to seven years, and acquire land and servants of their own in order to rise to the status of the Barbados planter elite.¹⁹³ Former indentured servants seldom encountered an easy transition from bound laborer to plantation owner. Henry Winthrop, son of Massachusetts Governor John Winthrop, for example, was a free man who oversaw his own servants, and actually

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., 73-75. The men's ages ranged from 13 to 46. The women's ages ranged from 17-36.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 139-142. Although this ship's passenger demographics appear to represent the average indenture cargo, the ship did carry Mr. Edward Steevens, who at age 53 did not represent the average indentured emigrant.

¹⁹² Beckles, *White Servitude and Black Slavery*, 34.

¹⁹³ Sidney W. Mintz, *Caribbean Transformations* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing Co., 1974), 148; Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 52-53.

contracted their labor, as well as his own, to another planter while he built up his plantation.¹⁹⁴

Barbados' small size meant that very few indentured servants ever acquired land on the island. The unlikelihood of an indentured servant entering the landed gentleman class in Barbados became apparent very early in the colony's history. From the beginning, unequal landownership characterized the island. A few influential gentlemen owned rather large estates, ranging from six hundred to one thousand acres, while poorer immigrants received smaller parcels of land. Richard Dunn points out, however, that wealthy men could pay for larger tracts of land, while the small farmers who received thirty to fifty acres under Carlisle's initial head right system, likely did not complain about their smaller holdings. Although they did not own huge estates in Barbados, they held title to more land than most small farmers in England.¹⁹⁵

Over time, Barbados planters earned a poor reputation for their harsh treatment of indentured servants. As reports of inhumane treatment reached England, Barbados gained a very unfavorable reputation.¹⁹⁶ Barbados planters possessed the right to physically punish their servants and often did so mercilessly. Richard Ligon attributed indentured servants' poor treatment to their temporary status as a profitable resource for

¹⁹⁴ Henry Winthrop to Emmanuel Downing, 22 Aug. 1627, *Winthrop Papers*, Stuart Mitchell, ed., (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1929-47), 1:356-357.

¹⁹⁵ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 51.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, 72.

their masters.¹⁹⁷ Ligon claimed “I have seen such cruelty there done to Servants as I do not think one Christian could have done to another.”¹⁹⁸

By 1659, servants considered the treatment they received at the hands of their masters so un-Christian that they sent a petition to England, complaining of their suffering. Servants found themselves under the command of the “most inhuman and barbarous persons” who “bought and sold” their servants “like chattel property...for the debts of their masters.” White Christian laborers were “whipped at the whipping posts, as rogues, for their masters’ pleasure,” fed poorly, “and in many other ways made miserable, beyond expression or Christian imagination.”¹⁹⁹ Indentured servants were also less inclined to travel to Barbados once the promise of available land dwindled.²⁰⁰ In 1645, on the eve of the sugar revolution, “more than sixty percent of the 18,300 white males [living in Barbados] were property owners, and there were only 5,680 slaves.”²⁰¹ The large number of tobacco planters on the tiny island, naturally meant that most plots consisted of less than ten acres.²⁰²

¹⁹⁷ Ligon, *True History of Barbados*, 44.

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, 221.

¹⁹⁹ Marcellus Rivers, *England’s Slavery or Barbados’ Merchandize* (London, 1659), 4-5, Copy from the British Library: Early English Books Online, <http://eebo.chadwyck.com.jproxy.lib.ecu.edu/home> (accessed 30 Oct. 2009).

²⁰⁰ Beckles, *White Servitude and Black Slavery*, 8-10. According to Beckles, the earl of Carlisle declared on November 25, 1647, that no more available land existed in Barbados on page 8.

²⁰¹ Herbert S. Klein and Ben Vinson III, *African Slavery in Latin America and the Caribbean*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986), 53.

²⁰² *Ibid.*

By the end of the 1630s, planters owned the island's best land. A lord proprietor declared "that land no longer existed for Barbados servants and that only migration to the Leeward Islands could assist them in making the transition from wage laborer to property owner."²⁰³ The earl of Carlisle declared in 1647 that former servants who toiled in Barbados could actually acquire land in his other provinces because of the land shortage and excessive rates required to purchase the remaining land. Understanding people's concern about settling a less developed island, Carlisle promised to send ships and commodities to Antigua regularly if only more people would settle the island.²⁰⁴ Although Carlisle issued this proclamation as the island was transitioning to sugar, the evidence remains relevant for this study. Barbados' available land did not disappear overnight. The shortage of land was an obvious obstacle from the beginning of the colony's history. Carlisle's proclamation emphasizing the lack of land meant that the situation was very problematic in 1647, after only twenty years of settlement in Barbados. Many indentured servants took this proclamation to heart and moved to other islands in the Lesser Antilles and formed "a peasantry."²⁰⁵

Virginia made tobacco "the most profitable New World agricultural staple on the European market" during the early seventeenth century. The tobacco trade lured

²⁰³ Beckles, *White Servitude*, 8.

²⁰⁴ James Hay Carlisle, "A declaration by James Earl of Carlisle, Lord of the Caribee Islands, or province of Carliola," 1648, Copy from the British Library, EEBO, (accessed on 18 Feb. 2010), [http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/full_rec?SOURCE=pgimages.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=99859732&FILE=../session/1266520666_19926&SEARCHSCREEN=CITATIONS&VID=162766&PAGENO=1&ZOOM=&VIEWPORT=&SEARCHCONFIG=var_spell.cfg&DISPLAY=AUTHOR&HIGHLIGHT_KEYWORD=.](http://eebo.chadwyck.com/search/full_rec?SOURCE=pgimages.cfg&ACTION=ByID&ID=99859732&FILE=../session/1266520666_19926&SEARCHSCREEN=CITATIONS&VID=162766&PAGENO=1&ZOOM=&VIEWPORT=&SEARCHCONFIG=var_spell.cfg&DISPLAY=AUTHOR&HIGHLIGHT_KEYWORD=)

²⁰⁵ Mintz, *Caribbean Transformation*, 148.

Barbadians for many reasons.²⁰⁶ The crop required little initial investment, so even planters who were not extremely wealthy could afford to cultivate the plant. The crop also required a relatively short time to mature.²⁰⁷

Profits ranked high among Barbados planters' concerns, and tobacco proved lucrative in Virginia. Like emigrants to Virginia, Englishmen relocated to Barbados for economic gain.²⁰⁸ Important Englishmen gained control of the best land on the island, quickly developing a Barbados planter elite that socially and politically dominated the island.²⁰⁹ Profits ranked so high among Barbadians' concerns that they ignored much of the political strife that occurred in England. The elite gentlemen, who controlled the Council and Assembly, remained neutral, or at least silent, on matters concerning English political conflict during the tobacco years.²¹⁰ According to Richard Ligon, these

²⁰⁶ Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, 13.

²⁰⁷ Gragg, *Englishmen Transplanted*, 88-89; Sir Thomas Dalby, *An Historical Account of the Rise and Growth of the West India Colonies and the Advantages they are to England in Respect to Trade* (London: 1690), 16-17. Although written in 1690, Dalby's account provides details on tobacco cultivation, harvesting, and shipping.

²⁰⁸ Puckrein, *Little England*, 11.

²⁰⁹ Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, 12, 22. Beckles provides a chart based on the Barbados deeds listing the Barbados inhabitants who owned at least five hundred acres during the 1630s. Only ten men had acquired such a substantial landholding on the island: the governor, four councilors, the governor's brother (who also governed the island), and the deputy governor. Only three of the ten men were not office holders.

²¹⁰ Nicholas Foster, *A briefe relation of the late horrid rebellion acted in the island Barbadas, in the West-Indies : wherein is contained, their inhumane acts and ...* (London, 1650), 3, *Sabin Americana*. Gale, Cengage Learning. East Carolina University. 20 Feb. 2010.

<http://galenet.galegroup.com/servlet/Sabin?af=RN&ae=CY405459253&srchtp=a&ste=14> (accessed on 20 Feb. 2010).

Barbados planters went to great lengths to avoid even discussing divisive English political issues.²¹¹

Like the Virginians, Barbados planters cultivated several species of tobacco, but their crops never rivaled that of their North American competitors. Not only did Barbados produce an inferior crop because of limited land and poor processing techniques, they also faced a shortage of labor to cultivate, and vessels to transport, their “earthy and worthless” tobacco to potential markets.²¹² Barbados tobacco gained such a poor reputation for its quality, that although the colonists “planted tobacco for export,” they “preferred to smoke the weed brought from Virginia.”²¹³ Contemporaries considered Barbados tobacco “the worst,” and “the rottenest driest goods as ever I saw in my life.”²¹⁴ Massachusetts Governor John Winthrop was among the many smokers who considered the island’s crop “verye ill conditioned, flowle, full of stalkes and evill coloured.”²¹⁵ Perhaps an even more degrading description came from Richard Ligon who felt that the island’s tobacco constituted “the worst that grows in the world.”²¹⁶

²¹¹ Ligon, *A True and Exact History*, 57-58; Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, 12.

²¹² Clarke, *A True and Faithful Account*, 58; Gragg, *Englishmen Transplanted*, 91-92.

²¹³ Dalby, *An Historical Account*, 26, 319; Smith, *A Generall Historie*, 40; Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, 14. Beckles also discusses Barbadians’ preference to import Virginia tobacco rather than smoke the tobacco cultivated on the island.

²¹⁴ Quoted in Menard, *Sweet Negotiations*, 140. Menard cites Archibald Hay to Peter Hay, 10 Oct. 1637, Hay of Haystoun Papers, Scottish Records Office, Edinburgh (“your tobacco of Barbados of all that cometh to England is acompted the worst;” and Samuel Atkins to John Cooks, undated, Recopied Deed Books, RB 3/1, 509, BNA (“the rottenest driest goods as ever I saw in my lyfe”).

²¹⁵ John Winthrop to Henry Winthrop, 30 Jan. 1629, *Winthrop Papers*, Mitchell, ed., 2:67

²¹⁶ Beckles, *White Servitude*, 24; Ligon *True and Exact History*, 113.

Despite these criticisms, Barbados planters continued to sow their seeds from January to August. The weed demanded “continual Care and Field-labour, in Sowing, Planting, Hoeing, Weeding, Worming, and renewing” before a planter could harvest and cure his crop. Even if he performed each of these steps with precision, his tobacco could become waxy from the island’s “great Fogs and Mists” that seemed to form precisely during the curing period. A planter who hurried his tobacco through the process, not allowing the leaves enough time to dry, ruined his crop, “For if it had not been perfectly Dried, it will certainly Rot, Perish and become good for nothing.”²¹⁷

Barbados planters’ poor quality tobacco has been attributed to poor soil, lack of rotation space on the island, and planter carelessness.²¹⁸ Although early Barbados settlers praised the island’s soil, constant tobacco harvests very likely caused soil depletion in Barbados. The island’s small size also limited planters’ ability to rotate fields. Planter carelessness, however, is somewhat less obvious. Barbados planters’ inattention to detail, such as cleaning and packaging their tobacco properly, may have largely caused Barbados tobacco’s “ill” color and “earthy and worthless” yields.²¹⁹ Interestingly, this quotation appears quite often to describe the poor quality of Barbados’ tobacco crop. Perhaps the poor quality in this particular instance stems from inexperience rather than

²¹⁷ Dalby, *An Historical Account*, 26. It is important to note that Dalby’s account was published long after the so-called “sugar revolution,” demonstrating tobacco’s continued presence on the island.

²¹⁸ Menard, *Sweet Negotiations*, 21. Menard claims that planters’ carelessness and emphasis on quantity rather than quality greatly contributed to Barbados tobacco’s poor reputation.

²¹⁹ Menard, *Sweet Negotiations*, 21; John Winthrop to Henry Winthrop, 30 Jan. 1629, in *Winthrop Papers*, Mitchell, ed., 2:67; Ligon, *True and Exact History of Barbados*, 24.

Barbados soil or planter carelessness because the letter was written only two years after the island's settlement and the introduction of tobacco. Also, this chapter later presents more evidence of Barbados planter carelessness by providing pieces of legislation that specifically instructed planters to package their tobacco properly for export. A glutted market and English legislation that placed a lower import duty on Virginia tobacco than on the West Indian weed only added to Barbados planters' troubles.²²⁰

Historian Hilary Beckles praises Barbados planters' willingness to experiment with new technology and their "sensitivity to internal market forces and commitment to profit maximization which separated Barbados planters from previous colonial settlers."²²¹ Unfortunately, this sensitivity did not prevent the Barbados tobacco planters from contributing to, and suffering from, a glutted market. Beckles' theory does not fit well with Russell Menard's argument that Barbados planters were careless with their crops and emphasized quantity over quality. Had the planters exhibited such "sensitivity," surely they would not have exported improperly packaged and unclean tobacco. Menard convincingly claims that Barbados planters actually shipped unpacked, and therefore unprotected, rolls of tobacco to London.²²²

Not only did Barbadians prove insensitive to buyers' preference for cleaned and well-packaged tobacco, but their pitiful crop added to a glutted market. An imperial order of January 1631 restricted the planting of tobacco in both St. Christopher and

²²⁰ W. L. Grant, James Munro and Almeric W. Fitzroy eds., *Acts of the Privy Council, Colonial Series, 1630-80*, Sainsbury, ed., 1:174-175; Beckles, *White Servitude and Black Slavery in Barbados*, 22.

²²¹ Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, 13; Beckles, *White Servitude and Black Slavery*, 23.

²²² Menard, *Sweet Negotiations*, 20-21.

Barbados. This Privy Council Order claimed “the great abuse of tobacco, to the enervation of both body and courage, is so notorious that the King has directed the planting of it to be limited in St. Christopher, Barbados...until such time as more staple commodities may be raised there.” The order also required that Barbados planters export only “sweet, wholesome, and well-packed up tobacco,” and that Caribbean tobacco only be exported to London.²²³

Although Barbados planters boasted diverse agricultural commodities, in April 1637, the king reprimanded Barbados and other Caribbean planters for focusing too many resources on tobacco cultivation resulting in the “neglect of cotton, wools and other useful commodities....and of grain and corn....which compels them to receive supplies from the Dutch and other strangers.” The Caribbean governors not only “received instructions concerning the growth of their tobacco,” but were prohibited from trading with foreigners.²²⁴

Also in 1637, Archibald Hay, proprietary trustee after the earl of Carlisle’s death, requested that Peter Hay, Barbados’ receiver general, to “encourage the planters to shift from tobacco to cotton production.”²²⁵ In 1639, King Charles I ordered Barbados Lieutenant Governor Henry Hawley to check each tobacco plantation and ensure that

²²³ CSPC 1574-1660, January 1631, 6:125; Captain John Smith, *The Generall Historie*, Horn, ed., 33. Smith claims that “the cultivation of tobacco was so overdone in the colonies, and the English government thought its production should be restricted.”

²²⁴ CSPC, 1574-1660, April 1631, 4:251.

²²⁵ Gragg, *Englishmen Transplanted*, 92; Jordan Goodman, *Tobacco in History: The Cultures of Dependence* (New York: Routledge 1993), 182.

planters were in fact limiting the production of tobacco.²²⁶ In May 1639, Barbados tobacco planting, along with the other Leeward Islands, was restricted until the fall of 1641.²²⁷ According to Hilary Beckles, Barbados planters considered the restriction unfair, and largely ignored the act, which they believed favored Virginian planters.²²⁸ English legislation clearly favored Virginia tobacco over that grown in the West Indies. In January 1631, for example, the Privy Council ordered a 2s. per pound tax on Spanish tobacco, a 12d. per pound tax on tobacco grown in the English West Indies, and a 9d. per pound tax on Virginia tobacco.²²⁹

The Privy Council remained heavily involved in issues concerning Virginia tobacco. The English government constantly attempted to persuade Virginians to grow less tobacco and more corn.²³⁰ In 1630, Virginia leaders succeeded in reducing the colony's tobacco exports by one-third. The Privy Council also realized, however, that planters' ability to grow and sell tobacco determined Virginia's future. If competition

²²⁶ CSPC, 1574-1660, March 27, 1639, 1574-1660, 4:292.

²²⁷ Gragg, *Englishmen Transplanted*, 92. This restriction resulted from a treaty between West Indian Lieutenant General Thomas Warner and Chevalier de Poincy, lieutenant general of the French West Indies.

²²⁸ Beckles, *A History of Barbados*, 14. Although Beckles claims that the legislation was largely ignored, Larry Gragg claims that it was effective. He quotes a letter from Daniel Fletcher to Archibald Hay claiming "and for tobacco, there is None planted." Fletcher to Hay, 25 June 1640 in Gragg, *Englishmen Transplanted*, 92. A more thorough investigation is needed to determine whether Fletcher was exaggerating, but most sources indicate that tobacco did not completely disappear from the island.

²²⁹ CSPC, 1574-1660, 6 Jan. 1631, 6:125.

²³⁰ *Ibid.*, 27 Feb. 1628, 88; 15 Apr. 1630, 5:113.

from Spanish or other English planters proved too much for Virginia planters, the council feared they would abandon the colony.²³¹

Barbadians did not completely rely on tobacco. The island's cotton, unlike its tobacco, earned a very favorable reputation. Barbadians had cultivated cotton since 1628, but tobacco's early success made the weed Barbados' dominant crop.²³² Although tobacco remained the chief plant until after 1645, both "cotton and ginger" were produced on the island as well.²³³ Cotton may have eventually rivaled tobacco, but it did not remain Barbados' preferred crop for long.²³⁴ Barbadians' success lured other Caribbean planters into cotton cultivation and resulted in a glutted market.²³⁵ Barbadians continued to use tobacco as currency on the island for years after the rise in cotton cultivation. Between 1639 and 1648, planters relied primarily on tobacco to finance transactions. Between 1640 and 1642, cotton payments outnumbered tobacco expenditures, but tobacco remained a steady and important payment method. Cotton payments nearly doubled from 43 to 79 percent of transactions between 1639 and 1640, while tobacco payments plummeted from 57 to 21 percent. After that initial shift, when cotton constituted the payment method for over 70 percent of the island's transactions for three consecutive years, however, cotton transactions steadily decreased for the

²³¹ Ibid., 17 Feb. 1626, 83, 15 Apr. 1630, 5:113.

²³² Smith, *The Generall Historie of Virginia*, Horn, ed., 20. Captain John Smith claims that cotton and tobacco were cultivated for export, and in 1628, there were eighteen plantations.

²³³ Ibid., 33.

²³⁴ Gragg, *Englishmen Transplanted*, 95.

²³⁵ Beckles, *White Servitude and Black Slavery*, 24-30.

remainder of the decade, and reached 8 percent in 1648. Tobacco transactions remained between 32 and 47 percent during cotton's decline, demonstrating the weed's continued importance in Barbados. Planters' initial obsession with sugar in the late 1640s eclipsed their earlier fixation on cotton and tobacco. Sugar temporarily replaced both crops in 1649, constituting one hundred percent of the island's transactions.²³⁶ Still, Barbados tobacco exports constituted the method of payment in 10 percent of the island's transactions in 1650, five years after the sugar revolution.²³⁷ Many planters, even the wealthy, continued to plant a diversity of crops including tobacco for consumption and export.²³⁸

Eventually, large-scale Barbados planters transitioned from tobacco to sugar and became rich virtually overnight.²³⁹ The transition to sugar resulted from the glutted English tobacco market, and tobacco profits made the switch possible.²⁴⁰ Although the wealthiest planters transitioned from tobacco to sugar, or from tobacco to cotton to sugar, Barbados tobacco did not disappear from the island. In 1650, Nicholas Foster published his *A Brief Relation of the Late Horrid Rebellion Acted in the Island of Barbadas*, in

²³⁶ Gragg, *Englishmen Transplanted*, 92-93; Menard, *Sweet Negotiations*, 18. Menard's statistics are from the Recopied Deed Books, RB 3/1, 3/2, 3/3, Barbados National Archives.

²³⁷ Deeds Book, RB 3/1, 3/2, 3/3 *Commodities used in Transactions in Barbados, 1639-1652*, recopied in Menard, *Sweet Negotiations*, 18.

²³⁸ Gragg, *Englishmen Transplanted*, 94; Dalby, *An Historical Account*, 26. Dalby claims that mainly small planters cultivated tobacco at this time.

²³⁹ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 19-20.

²⁴⁰ Karl Wats, "Slavery and Economics in Barbados," *British History: Empire and Sea Power*, http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/empire_seapower/Barbados_01.shtml. 05-01-2001.

which he explained tobacco's role in the pre-sugar years. According to Foster, Barbadians tired of the small profits they made exporting tobacco, eventually shifting to sugar. He pointed out, however, that Barbadians still exported small quantities of tobacco, along with ginger, indigo, cotton, and of course, sugar.²⁴¹

Although sugar and tobacco both reached Barbados in 1627, Barbados planters did not produce sugar cane on a large scale for export until tobacco prices began to fall as a result of the glutted market. Sugar was reintroduced in the 1630s, and Barbadians were using the cane as currency as early as 1644.²⁴² Three years later, in 1647, sugar "rivalled tobacco, its main competitor," and 60 percent of Barbados transactions included sugar as the method of payment in 1648.²⁴³ Sugar fever quickly engulfed the island.

The sugar revolution concept has dominated Barbados histories since the seventeenth century. Russell, however, demonstrates that a Dutch-credited, slave-inspired, "revolution," never actually occurred. Since the 1640s, when Richard Ligon recorded details of Barbados, including sugar plantations, historians have portrayed the islanders' shift to sugar revolutionary.²⁴⁴ According to early histories, sugar cultivation,

²⁴¹ Nicholas Foster, *A Brief Relation of the Late Horrid Rebellion Acted in the Island of Barbadas* (London: Printed by I.G. for Richard Lowndes and Roberb Boydell, 1650), 3.

²⁴² Menard, *Sweet Negotiations*, 12.

²⁴³ *Ibid.*, 17.

²⁴⁴ Menard, *Sweet Negotiations*, 3. For a contemporary account of sugar plantations, see Ligon, *True and Exact History*. Ligon records details of seventeenth-century Barbados life including diet, slavery, indentured servant conditions, and details concerning sugar cultivation.

financed by Dutch creditors, simultaneously brought slavery and great plantations to Barbados and “drove out diversified farming.”²⁴⁵

Menard asserts that Barbados experienced significant changes during the mid-seventeenth century, including sugar’s adoption. He argues, however, that the changes were not significant enough to be considered revolutionary. The island’s transition to the plantation system began before sugar’s introduction. Menard convincingly argues that the so-called sugar revolution, born out of a depressed Barbadian market, never took place. Tobacco dominated exports between 1644 and 1647, as planters began shifting to sugar. The island was actually experiencing a “diversified export boom” during the beginning of the so-called sugar revolution that actually enabled the transition to sugar.²⁴⁶

Barbadians’ success with tobacco and cotton before the sugar revolution allowed planters to invest in sugar. Creditors issued loans to planters based on their success with previous plantations. Moreover, slavery did not exist in Barbados in large numbers until large scale sugar cultivation existed on the island. The infrastructure allowing slavery to thrive in Barbados began early in the island’s history.²⁴⁷ Sugar did not create a plantation society in Barbados; cane merely “sped up and intensified an ongoing process.”²⁴⁸

Despite previous historians’ emphasis on the Dutch role in Barbadian planters’ transition to sugar, Menard claims that little evidence supports this theory. The Dutch role as the saviors of the Barbadian economy and the source of credit from which planters

²⁴⁵ Menard, *Sweet Negotiations*, 3.

²⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 3, 22.

²⁴⁷ *Ibid.* 11-12.

²⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

built their sugar plantations has been largely exaggerated. Barbadian planters created the “myth of the Dutch,” as a result of the Navigation Acts.²⁴⁹ Menard credits English merchants and Barbados planters with financing the sugar shift. Planters gradually transitioned to sugar by utilizing the profits they earned from tobacco, cotton, and indigo. These profits allowed the planters to purchase slaves and establish the plantation system necessary for profitable sugar production. According to Menard, Barbados’ transition to a plantation economy would have occurred without the so-called “sugar-revolution.” The profits of sugar production and the English merchants’ credit merely ensured the shift occurred more rapidly than if the planters completely financed the transition.²⁵⁰

Despite sugar’s success, tobacco remained an important part of Barbados society. Several laws passed by the legislature protecting farmers’ tobacco crops and requiring fines to be paid in tobacco, demonstrate tobacco’s continued importance in Barbados. In April 1631, almost fifteen years before the sugar revolution occurred in Barbados, a law established that Governor Hawley and his council would hear all cases amounting to less than five hundred pounds of tobacco.²⁵¹ Five years later, in July 1636, the legislature

²⁴⁹ Ibid., 49-51. This quotation is on p. 51.

²⁵⁰ Ibid., 49-63. For a comprehensive study of Barbados’ shift to sugar and “the myth of the Dutch,” see Menard, *Sweet Negotiations*.

²⁵¹ Acts passed in the island of Barbados. From 1643, to 1762, inclusive; carefully revised, ... By the late Richard Hall, ... And since his death, continued by his son, Richard Hall. To which is added, an index; and abridgment: ... London, 1764, 33. Eighteenth-Century Collections Online. Gale. EAST CAROLINA UNIV. 30 Mar. 2009 <http://find.galegroup.com/ecco/infomark.do?&contentSet=ECCOArticles&type=multipage&tabID=T001&prodId=ECCO&docId=CW125639676&source=gale&userGroupName=gree96177&version=1.0&docLevel=FASCIMILE>. Although this particular law came into effect well before the sugar revolution, it is relevant to the argument presented in this chapter because it demonstrates the important role tobacco played in establishing Barbados political structure.

passed a law creating parish courts to hear cases worth up to one thousand pounds of tobacco.²⁵²

On March 13, 1648, three years into the sugar revolution, the government required surveyors to obtain a warrant from the governor to survey lands. Refusal to acquire such warrants resulted in the forfeiture of ten thousand pounds of tobacco, a prison sentence, and the loss of the guilty party's title as surveyor.²⁵³ An October 7, 1652, law required farmers who killed a neighbor's hog for damaging their tobacco crop to reimburse the neighbor for the hog. The legislation, however, allowed the tobacco planter to subtract damages caused by the hog from the reimbursement.²⁵⁴

Several destroyed sugarcane fields resulted in an April 14, 1655, law that penalized tobacco planters who burned their crop too close to cane fields.²⁵⁵ A January 9, 1661, law required surveyors to make an agreement with tobacco planters whose crops they destroyed in order to make highways.²⁵⁶ A September 27, 1661, law established that secretaries should be paid fifty pounds of tobacco for every deed they recorded. A secretary who was dishonest, however, was fined 100 pounds of tobacco for every pound over fifty he took.²⁵⁷

²⁵² Ibid.

²⁵³ Ibid., 15.

²⁵⁴ Ibid., 17.

²⁵⁵ Ibid., 21-22.

²⁵⁶ Ibid., 48.

²⁵⁷ Ibid., 44.

Despite tobacco's obvious role in Barbados' establishment and transition to sugar, historians have largely neglected studying the island's pre-sugar years. Barbados' tobacco never competed successfully with sugar, which brought unprecedented wealth and glory to the island and England. Still, tobacco dominated the island's exports during the settlement's initial years.

Whether the overwhelming success of the sugar era and its many implications or the lack of tobacco era sources is to blame for this neglect is hard to determine, but neither constitutes a valid reason. Although Barbados' tobacco era pales in comparison to the colony's years as a sugar exporter, historians' neglect of the Barbados tobacco era is unwarranted. The weed played a very influential role in colonial Barbados history, affecting social, political, and economic institutions within the colony and affecting the global tobacco market as a whole.

Barbadians adopted tobacco because Virginians grew tobacco. The early Jamestown colonists' establishment of a viable commercial tobacco production system lured future colonists, including those in Barbados, into the tobacco market. The Barbadians immediately imported and planted tobacco on the island, hoping to mimic the Virginians' success. Environmental factors, both political and natural, meant that Barbadians could never fully duplicate their predecessors' success. Virginians accepted their roles as agricultural exporters only after they tried everything else. Barbadians' early acceptance of agriculture resulted in their planting various crops allowing for an easier transition to sugar, a more lucrative crop, when tobacco proved less profitable than they had originally hoped. Still, Barbadians grew tobacco from the beginning, and continued to do so after the sugar transition. Their determination to grow tobacco,

despite the island's inferior quality and small profits, demonstrate the role Jamestown played in molding future colonies like Barbados.

Conclusion: Smoke in Mirrors: Tobacco Transforms England's Empire

Jamestown's tobacco simultaneously changed New World motives and guaranteed English involvement in the New World. The original Jamestown colonists and Virginia Company investors did not initially want to establish an agricultural settlement. They lusted after New World gold and silver, not tobacco. Virginia, however, did not offer large deposits of wealth similar to those found in Spain's American territories. Early English colonization promoters emphasized America's abundant wildlife and natural resources and victimized the continent's native population. They painted a utopian setting in which colonists could easily settle and even thrive. The 104 men who constituted the original settlement, and the many who followed, found that the Virginia wilderness only appeared utopian at a distance. The initial seasoning period, starvation, and disease claimed the lives of many. Laziness, bad judgment, and native attacks added to the already high death toll.

When nearly all hope seemed lost, tobacco fever gripped the colony. Although Virginia tobacco never rivaled the Spanish weed's quality, it transformed Jamestown from a failing colony into a modestly profitable agricultural exporter. Tobacco profits paled in comparison to the levels of wealth the Virginia Company investors expected when they risked their fortunes in the New World experiment. They wanted the *conquistadores'* wealth. Instead, they received the dried leaves of a native weed. Still, after over a century of failed exploration and colonization attempts, and Jamestown's own struggles, tobacco was better than nothing. The weed saved the colony as the English abandoned expectations of quickly obtaining unrealistic levels of wealth and grew tobacco in the streets.

Commercial tobacco cultivation proved a bittersweet development. After years of dreaming about hidden gold-filled mines, investors found tobacco's success a disappointment. Still, tobacco was a success, and the weed brought renewed attention and investment to Jamestown. In short, tobacco saved the dying colonists, provided the mother country with an English-grown version of a popular import, and guaranteed England's continued participation in North America. Ironically, the colonists became obsessed with a New World weed, cultivated in the "savage" manner. They nearly starved themselves rather than grow native corn. Then they nearly starved themselves growing native tobacco. The colonists struggled for a decade before they established a system that brought some semblance of stability to Jamestown. Their mastery of tobacco led to future English colonies based on the same system. Jamestown may have been founded as a virtually smoke-free province, but the colonists built "an empire on smoke."²⁵⁸

In 1627, two full decades after Jamestown, the English settled Barbados. Like the Jamestown settlers, the Barbados colonists traveled to the New World to get rich, but their colonization experience differed greatly from their Virginia predecessors. They did not necessarily expect to discover gold-filled mines or copper-laden rivers within the colony's interior. They went to Barbados to establish a commercial agricultural center.

Jamestown's success lured Barbadians into the tobacco market. They imitated Virginians' commercial tobacco production, head rights system, and indentured servitude, but they did not create a mirror image of Virginia. Virginians accepted their roles as agricultural exporters only after they tried everything else. Barbadians' early

²⁵⁸ Edwin Sandys quoted in Oscar Theodore Barck Jr. and Hugh Talmage Lefler, *Colonial America* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1958), 45-46.

acceptance of agriculture resulted in their planting various crops allowing for an easier transition to sugar, a more lucrative crop, when tobacco proved less profitable than they had originally hoped. Still, Barbadians grew tobacco from the beginning and continued to do so after the sugar transition. Their determination to grow tobacco, despite the island's inferior quality and small profits, demonstrate the important role Jamestown played in molding future colonies like Barbados.

Barbados' short-lived tobacco era remains virtually unstudied by modern historians who prefer to examine the island's more glamorous sugar years. Despite the scarcity of primary sources concerning Barbados' tobacco era, the weed's role in developing the island's structure, allowing the shift to sugar, and demonstrating the connections between Jamestown and future English colonies cannot be overemphasized.

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