

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

THE CREOLE ARCHIPELAGO: COLONIZATION, EXPERIMENTATION, AND
COMMUNITY IN THE SOUTHERN CARIBBEAN, C. 1700-1796

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TESSA MURPHY

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Dissertation Abstract

“The Creole Archipelago: Colonization, Experimentation, and Community in the Southern Caribbean, c.1700-1796.”

This dissertation examines how two of the most powerful empires in the early modern Atlantic World tried—and largely failed—to assimilate, erase, or remake a distinctive society that was forged outside the sphere of colonial rule in early America. As Amerindians, free people of color, poor whites, and others for whom there was little room in the plantation societies of the colonial Americas migrated to spaces not claimed by European Crowns, they forged distinctive borderland communities that existed alongside and competed with those sanctioned by colonial officials. Focusing on the southernmost reaches of the Caribbean, this dissertation argues that the thousands of men and women who settled in Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Tobago before the islands became colonies created and maintained a ‘Creole Archipelago:’ a set of economic, social, and informal political networks that united the islands in a shared community. The persistence of inter-island networks that transcended or disregarded the geographic and imagined political boundaries of early modern empires would repeatedly frustrate French and British attempts to control settlement and trade and to police the boundaries of political and racial belonging in their respective American realms. The resultant diplomatic and military contests that animated the southern Caribbean in the long eighteenth century challenged evolving European legal, economic, and racial norms and, by extension, undermined the practice of imperial rule.

Drawing on census and trade records, government correspondence, and Catholic parish registers archived in the Caribbean, France, Great Britain, and the United States, my research reveals significant exchanges and interconnections between spaces often studied according to imperial or national boundaries. By tracing the circulation of people, goods, and information, this dissertation highlights regular and sustained interactions that shaped what are often thought of as

‘British,’ ‘French,’ or ‘Latin’ America. Focusing on the everyday interactions that contributed to the construction of the Atlantic World, I re-situate a little-studied American borderland as a site in which broader ideologies and practices of empire were first elaborated, experimented with, and negotiated.

Focusing on a region of the Atlantic World that first evolved outside the sphere of imperial rule invites a new approach to the study of colonization. A close examination of the shared practices and norms that were developed in the absence of formal agents and institutions of empire suggests that historians can overemphasize the role of metropolitan laws and institutions in the formation of early America. Rather than a European geopolitical contest in which competing Crowns vied for territory and influence, the colonization of the southern Caribbean entailed innovation and compromise on the part of people who came not from Europe but from Africa and the Americas; as this dissertation shows, imperial attempts to erase or absorb these innovations in the latter half of the eighteenth century were lengthy, violent, and only partially successful.

Finally, this study illustrates the benefits of a microhistorical approach to Atlantic or global history. Looking closely at one small part of the early modern world allows for an appreciation of how abstract phenomena such as the rise and consolidation of empires, the elaboration of transatlantic trade systems, and the circulation of revolutionary ideologies were both experienced and influenced by people often omitted or marginalized in studies of the wider Atlantic World. Through their daily interactions and exchanges, Amerindians, free and enslaved Africans, and Europeans from a variety of nations forged and maintained an inter-island community whose very existence—and persistence in the face of substantial pressures to reform—revealed the limits of early modern imperial rule.

The dissertation is divided into three sections. In the first, I explore the genesis of the Creole Archipelago, tracing when and why Amerindians, free and enslaved Africans, and Europeans from a variety of nations chose or were forced to settle outside the sphere of formal colonial rule in the southern Caribbean. In the absence of colonial institutions and authorities such as governors, courts, and customs officers, the thousands of men and women who settled in the islands developed their own economic, social, and informal political practices and their own understandings of the relationship between race, legitimacy, and authority. Amidst the plantation colonies of the early Americas, the emergence of a society in which Amerindians and free people of color exercised considerable economic, social, and political influence generated practical and symbolic contests between colony and borderland.

In the second section, which is composed of three chapters, I explore the wide-ranging political, economic, demographic, and social consequences that accompanied the Creole Archipelago's incorporation into existing European empires after the Seven Years' War (1756-1763). I argue that previous experiences of colonial rule elsewhere in the Americas shaped British and French designs for the new colonies, as metropolitan officials sought to transform the archipelago into a center of sugar production as rapidly and as efficiently as possible. Exercising the autonomy and authority they had enjoyed for decades, many residents of the Creole Archipelago sought and secured concessions and accommodations under newly-introduced colonial rule. Still others sought to escape colonial rule entirely, migrating to parts of the southern Caribbean where officials struggled to make their presence felt. Highlighting the extent to which colonial officials were willing to accommodate existing practices in order to keep residents of the Creole Archipelago in the islands, part II emphasizes the importance of local knowledge in shaping colonial rule.

The third and final section of the dissertation examines the resurgence of the Creole Archipelago during the age of democratic revolutions. Following R. R. Palmer, I analyze conflicts often distinguished as ‘the American Revolution’ and ‘the French Revolution’ as two key moments in a much longer chain of transatlantic upheaval. The first of two chapters in part III explains why British subjects in the southern Caribbean, like their counterparts in North America, were eager to break with British rule, and sheds new light on how and why British imperial strategies were re-ordered following the conflict. By focusing on how the American War of Independence was experienced and interpreted by people living in another part of British America, this chapter de-centers the Thirteen Colonies in order to highlight the war as one of several inter- and intra-imperial conflicts to animate the British and French empires during the long eighteenth century. This analysis is carried through the final chapter, in which I examine two little-studied conflicts that occurred in the southern Caribbean during the 1790s: Fedon’s Rebellion and the Second Carib War. In contrast to recent interpretations of the era that focus on how the ideals of the French Revolution were interpreted and re-deployed by free and enslaved residents of the Caribbean, my analysis emphasizes how longstanding local and regional contests once again came to the fore during this period of transatlantic upheaval.

Finally, a brief epilogue chronicles the demise of the Creole Archipelago and considers its long-term legacies. The conflicts described in chapter six resulted in the exile of thousands of people from the southern Caribbean, as colonial officials brought their experiment in incorporating new colonial subjects to an abrupt and violent end. Despite their eventual removal beyond the boundaries of the islands, former residents of the Creole Archipelago succeeded in influencing agricultural and trade practices, understandings of subjecthood and of racial belonging, and concepts of legitimate authority in the respective British and French Empires. The issues that

animated the southern Caribbean in the long eighteenth century—including attempts to rationalize and maximize the efficiency of economic production, contests over political participation, debates over the meaning of indigeneity and the place of non-white colonial subjects—highlight the importance of this and other borderlands in shaping the early modern Atlantic World.

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Historians often seem to use their acknowledgements to comment on the solitary nature of research and writing. I feel very fortunate that I can't do the same. Far from being a lonely endeavor, pursuing this project has allowed me to find colleagues, mentors, and friends in Chicago, London, Aix, Paris, the Caribbean, and many places in between.

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PART I

Introduction

Even with sixty experienced rowers manning the 45-foot dugout canoe, the voyage took most of the day. Ten hours after leaving St. Vincent, the sleek wooden vessel, carved out of a single copperwood tree, finally traversed the forty-league expanse of Caribbean Sea separating the small volcanic island from the northern coast of South America. As they came within sight of their destination, the canoe's Amerindian passengers let out whoops of joy. Paddling against the churning waters of the Dragon's Mouth, a series of rough straits created as South America's Orinoco River flows north to meet the Caribbean Sea, the weary rowers barely had time to notice the cashew trees bursting with fruit, the troops of cattle, and the simple huts they passed as their boat hugged the coast of Trinidad.¹

The journey was not an unusual one for the Amerindians of the southern Caribbean, who are commonly referred to as 'Caribs,' to undertake.² Long before Europeans sailed across the Atlantic, the Caribbean's indigenous inhabitants regularly traversed the region in their dugout canoes, or *pirogues*. What is unusual about the voyage described above is that it took place not in a distant pre-Columbian past but at the end of the eighteenth century, as French Revolutionary soldier Alexandre Moreau de Jonnès accompanied a group of Caribs on a mission to replenish supplies for their shared battle against British troops. Three hundred years after Europeans first

¹ This account is sourced from Alexandre Moreau de Jonnès, *Aventures de guerre aux temps de la République et du consulat* (Paris: Pagnerre, 1852), 156-159.

² A Franco-Carib dictionary authored by a Dominican missionary who spent several years living with the indigenous people of Dominica in the mid-seventeenth century indicates that the region's Amerindian inhabitants referred to themselves as 'Callinago,' and the term 'Kalinago' increasingly finds favor among scholars. I have elected to retain the term 'Carib' because of its predominance in the seventeenth- and eighteenth-century sources on which I draw. On how the region's Amerindian inhabitants referred to themselves, see Raymond Breton, *Dictionnaire caraïbe-français: meslé de quantité de remarques historiques pour l'esclaircissement de la langue*. (Auxerre: Gilles Bouquet, 1665), 229. On scholars' use of the term 'Kalingo' vs. 'Carib,' see Stephen Lenik, "Carib as a Colonial Category: Comparing Ethnohistoric and Archaeological Evidence from Dominica, West Indies," *Ethnohistory* 59, N. 1 (Winter 2012: 79-107).

arrived in America, the Caribs' versatile maritime technology had been widely adopted by British, Dutch, French, and Spanish settlers and their African slaves. *Pirogues* had long been used to ferry people back and forth between the small volcanic islands that form an arc across the southern Caribbean. But as competing European Crowns claimed individual Caribbean islands as their colonies, people who had long relied on *pirogues* to traverse geographic boundaries—whether Carib, European, African, or mixed race—found that they were also regularly criss-crossing linguistic, economic, and political borders. Maritime routes long favored by Caribs gained new significance during the colonial era, as regular inter-island travel helped create a space of interaction and exchange that both transcended and challenged the boundaries of European rule in the Americas.

This project is about the creation of that space, and about how European colonial officials tried—and ultimately failed—to assimilate, erase, or remake a distinctive society that was forged outside the sphere of their rule in early America. It is, at its core, a story about negotiation, experimentation, and the everyday contests that shaped early modern Atlantic empires. In the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, as millions of people from Africa, America, and Europe converged in the Caribbean, some were pushed or chose to settle in islands that lay beyond the boundaries of formal colonies. In this watery borderland, no European Crown succeeded in asserting dominion and no one group—whether Amerindian, European, or African—clearly predominated. In order to negotiate sometimes competing and sometimes shared goals, people who made their lives in these 'neutral' southern Caribbean islands were forced to accommodate one another, forging familial, social, economic, and informal political ties. Over the course of several generations, the creation and maintenance of these ties gave rise to a distinctive inter-island community, which I call the 'Creole Archipelago.'

The concept of creolization and its corollary, creole, have been used by historians, anthropologists, linguists, and others in reference to such diverse phenomena as culture, language, cuisine, music, and people; little wonder, then, that the terms remain difficult to define.³ As applied to persons, the term ‘creole’ has at different moments and in different geographic locations been assigned to slaves born in America rather than in Africa, to the offspring of Spaniards born in the Americas, to people of mixed Afro-European ancestry, and to any individual, regardless of race, born in the New World.⁴ In this project, creolization is broadly defined as the process by which a unique hybrid—whether a language, a culture, or a people—is produced through sustained interactions and exchanges in a new setting. An emphasis on the processual nature of creolization serves to highlight both its dynamic nature and its broader, long-lasting impacts. As they established small mixed-agriculture plantations, traded with sailors from a variety of nations, baptized their children and buried their dead, Amerindians, Africans, and Europeans who made their lives in the southern Caribbean forged new and distinctive economic, familial, social, and informal political ties. Because these ties frequently transcended or disregarded the geographic and imagined political boundaries of early modern empires, they also acted as an inherent challenge or threat to state-sanctioned structures and, by extension, to imperial rule.⁵

³ On cultural creolization, see Edward Kamau Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1971); on the creolization of language, see Robert Chaudenson, *La créolisation: théorie, applications, implications* (Paris: L’Harmattan, 2003).

⁴ Ralph Bauer and José Antonio Mazzotti argue that ‘creole’ first appeared as the Portuguese ‘crioulo,’ a term used “to distinguish black slaves born in Brazil from those brought from Africa.” The authors discuss the etymology and evolving understandings of what constitutes a creole person in their introduction; see Ralph Bauer and José Antonio Mazzotti, eds. *Creole Subjects in the Colonial Americas: Empires, Texts, Identities* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2009), 1-59.

⁵ Linda Rupert’s work on contraband and creolization in colonial Curacao demonstrates how both processes “drew on and moved beyond the specific configurations provided by the Dutch imperial structure.” Linda Rupert, *Creolization and Contraband: Curacao in the Early Modern Atlantic World* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 2012), 248.

In its broadest sense, the ‘Creole Archipelago,’ refers to both a physical place—the southern Caribbean islands of Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Tobago—and a shared community that emerged as people who lived in said place—a mix of Amerindians, Africans and Europeans from a variety of nations—engaged in regular and sustained exchange, interaction, and mutual accommodation. This definition is indebted to Richard White’s creation of the term ‘middle ground’ as a means of understanding the negotiated relationships developed between natives and newcomers in North America’s Great Lakes region. In electing not to apply White’s influential and widely-adopted term to the southern Caribbean, I seek to honor his later reflection that the middle ground was intended to refer not only to a process of negotiation and mutual accommodation but to “a quite particular historical space that was the outcome of this larger process;” for White, and for me, geography matters.⁶

Map 0.1: Location of the Creole Archipelago within the Caribbean



⁶ White makes this observation in the preface to the twentieth-anniversary edition of his work. See Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011 [First published 1991]), xii.

Geography was key to the emergence and the persistence of the Creole Archipelago. The Lesser Antilles—so-called in order to distinguish the smaller southerly islands of the Caribbean from their much larger neighbors to the north—extend from the Virgin islands in the north to Tobago in the south.⁷ Within the Lesser Antillean group the Windward Islands—Dominica, Martinique, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Grenada, so-called because of their location to windward of sailing ships—form an arc of volcanic peaks from north to south.⁸ The distance between each of the Windward Islands amounts to no more than twenty-five miles, a stretch of water that in good weather can usually be traversed in a simple vessel such as a *pirogue*. As Julius Scott has shown, the ability to independently undertake relatively short maritime crossings allows individuals and the news and ideas they carry to circulate across geographic, linguistic, and political borders, forging networks that bypass official circuits.⁹ In both a practical and an ideological sense, the concept of an archipelago is essential to understanding how multiple and overlapping linkages forged by individuals helped to create and sustain the community described in this project.

In arguing for the emergence and importance of values and practices that spanned and united the southern Caribbean in a shared economic, social, and informal political space, my use of the term Creole Archipelago also seeks to provide an alternative to the imperial or national approaches typically favored in studies of early America and the Atlantic World.¹⁰ Rather than

⁷ Also included in this group are the Leeward Antilles of Aruba, Bonaire, and Curacao, which lay too far to the east to be easily accessed by *piroque* from the Windward Islands.

⁸ Guadeloupe, which is just north of Dominica, is a Leeward Island due to its location to the Leeward of sailing ships, while Tobago lies to the south east of the Windward Island chain.

⁹ Julius S. Scott, “The Common Wind: Currents of Afro-American Communication in the Era of the Haitian Revolution,” (Doctoral dissertation, Duke University, 1986).

¹⁰ The imperial or national framework commonly used by historians does not by any means preclude an influential and in-depth analysis; see, for example, J.H. Elliot, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492–1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007); Jack P. Greene, *Pursuits of Happiness: The Social Development of Early Modern British Colonies and the Formation of American Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988); Anthony Pagden, *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c. 1500-c.1800* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995); James Pritchard, *In Search of Empire: The French in the Americas, 1670-1730* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004). My point is simply that

privileging geographies of empire—according to which, for example, the geographically and historically distinct islands of Barbados, Dominica, and Jamaica are grouped together as part of the British West Indies—the concept of a Creole Archipelago allows for an analysis of early America according to terms that would have made sense to those who lived there. As they visited friends and family members in the French colony of St. Lucia before returning to their small plantations in the British colony of St. Vincent, or left their estates in British Dominica in order to conduct business in French Martinique, residents of the eighteenth-century southern Caribbean created a lived reality that did not always conform to the imagined boundaries of empire.

Although prominent historians of early America have long argued that the distinctive societies and cultures that emerged in different parts of the continent merit analysis on their own terms, most histories of the Atlantic World continue to be written according to imperial or national boundaries.¹¹ Places where no single empire succeeded in asserting its rule are often excluded from these colonial historiographies and are instead analyzed as ‘frontiers,’ ‘peripheries,’ or ‘borderlands.’ While these designations largely fail to de-center empire as the key unit of analysis—a border or a frontier may be a fruitful “meeting ground [or] a place of convergence,” but they are by their very nature located at an edge, while a periphery implies a center—they nonetheless provide an essential vocabulary for connecting seemingly remote or anomalous sites within a broader body of literature.¹² Most influential to the present project is literature on

imperial or national distinctions remain the norm in determining suitable areas of inquiry for studies of colonial America.

¹¹ One of the earliest and most important works to emphasize the importance of understanding regional differences in early American history is Jack P. Greene, *Imperatives Behaviors & Identities: Essays in Early American Cultural History* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992).

¹² Jay Gitlin, Barbara Berglund, and Adam Arenson, “Introduction: Local Crossroads, Global Networks, and Frontier Cities,” in Jay Gitlin, Barbara Berglund, and Adam Arenson, eds. *Frontier Cities: Encounters at the Crossroads of Empire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 3. On peripheries, see Christine Daniels & Michael V. Kennedy, eds. *Negotiated Empires: Centers and Peripheries in the Americas, 1500-1820*. New York: Routledge, 2002). Works such as these significantly nuance earlier discussions of the American frontier

borderlands, which continues to be broadened, expanded, and refined as historians debate the applicability and the limits of borderlands as a category of analysis.¹³

Although Herbert Bolton initially developed the concept of borderlands to describe northern New Spain, more recent studies apply the term to the Great Lakes region, the Mississippi River Valley, and even to areas outside the Americas in which the presence of competing empires in close proximity to one another allowed for increased intercultural interaction and exchange.¹⁴ In the Atlantic World, borderlands often emerged in regions that were technically under the rule of a European Crown, but in which the familiar agents and institutions of colonial rule, like a Governor, Courts, council and assemblies, were largely absent. Because borderlands were usually geographically distant from centers of colonial control, people who lived there developed their own mechanisms for dealing with problems and for organizing daily life. The people who accomplished this organizing were often individuals who were best positioned to mediate between competing influences, like the children of one European and one indigenous parent who could speak multiple languages and understand different cultures.¹⁵

A Caribbean archipelago may seem a surprising place to label a borderland. The porousness usually associated with border regions would not seem to apply to islands, where the sea acts as a

as a place “where savagery and civilization meet.” for this characterization, see Frederick Jackson Turner, “The Significance of the Frontier in American History,” *Proceedings of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin*, 1893.

¹³ The literature on American borderlands is considerable; among the discussions that have most informed my thinking are Pekka Hamalainen and Samuel Truett, “On Borderlands,” *The Journal of American History* 98 (Sept. 2011): 338-361; Jeremy Adelman & Stephen Aron, “From Borderlands to Borders: Empires, Nation-States, and the Peoples in Between in North America History,” *The American Historical Review* 104 (June 1999): 814-841.

¹⁴ Herbert E. Bolton, *The Spanish Borderlands: A Chronicle of Old Florida and the Southwest* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921). Subsequent studies that identify the characteristics of borderlands in other parts of colonial America include Daniel Usner, *Indians, Settlers, and Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley before 1783* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1992); White, *The Middle Ground*.

¹⁵ On mixed-race people as intermediaries in the colonial world, see James H. Merrell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999); Alida C. Metcalfe, *Go-Betweens and the Colonization of Brazil, 1500-1600* (Austin: The University of Texas Press, 2005); Tanis Thorne, *The Many Hands of my Relations: French and Indians on the Lower Missouri* (Columbia: The University of Missouri Press, 1996).

clear boundary. Indigenous peoples, who occupy a key role in most considerations of borderlands in mainland North, South, and Central America, are often assumed to have died out soon after the arrival of Europeans and Africans in the Caribbean. And the small size of the Caribbean means that few islands were geographically distant from centers of colonial power.

While acknowledging these important distinctions, I contend that the Creole Archipelago can be fruitfully analyzed as a borderland for a number of reasons. As Fernand Braudel demonstrates in his study of the Mediterranean world, the sea can serve as a highway rather than a boundary.¹⁶ The mountainous topography of the southern Caribbean creates natural barriers *within* islands rather than around them; even in the present day, road conditions sometimes render it easier to travel by sea from one island to the next than by land from one side of a single island to another. Second, the presumption of wholesale Amerindian extinction in the colonial Caribbean is false; as this project shows, people identified as ‘Carib’ continued to shape possibilities for the settlement, agricultural and economic development of the southern Caribbean until the forcible removal of some 5,000 survivors from the region at the end of the eighteenth century. In addition, although many residents of the Creole Archipelago were not indigenous to the Americas, as the eighteenth century progressed most could arguably be described as ‘native’ to the southern Caribbean: as people of mixed Amerindian-Afro-European ancestry born and raised in the region, most would be unfamiliar with—and perhaps unwelcome in—other parts of the early modern world.¹⁷ Finally, including the Creole Archipelago as one of a multitude of early American

¹⁶ Fernand Braudel, *The Mediterranean and the Mediterranean World in the Age of Philip II, Volume I* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1995 [First published 1949]).

¹⁷ Legislation banning people of African descent, whether free or enslaved, from setting foot in metropolitan France is discussed in Sue Peabody, *There Are No Slaves in France: The Political Culture of Race and Slavery in the Ancien Régime* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996) and in Jennifer Palmer, “Atlantic Crossings: Race, gender, and the construction of families in eighteenth-century La Rochelle” (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Michigan, 2008).

borderlands throws into relief some of the common historical processes and events that shaped these seemingly disparate regions.¹⁸

Chief among these is the Seven Years' War (1756-1763), a global conflict that re-ordered the British and French empires and prompted widespread attempts to absorb or remake former border regions. Although the conflict is often examined in terms of its impact in continental North America or in Europe, this dissertation emphasizes the importance of the war as a turning point not only in the southern Caribbean but in the Americas and the broader Atlantic World.¹⁹ Prior to the Seven Years' War Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Tobago were recognized as 'neutral,' meaning that no European power successfully exercised dominion over the islands.²⁰ Like other borderlands, the islands therefore served as an outlet in which people marginalized by colonial rule, such as Amerindians, poor farmers, former slaves, or people of mixed race, migrated in an effort to continue to exercise autonomy and authority. In the wake of the Seven Years' War such outlets began to disappear as colonial officials worked to extend formal institutions and laws into spaces that previously lay 'beyond the line.'²¹ Attempts to remake the borderlands would have disastrous consequences; as this project shows, the seeds for the revolutionary conflicts that wreaked havoc in the Atlantic World in the 1770s through 1790s were sown not only by pamphleteers in Philadelphia and Paris but by on-the-ground contests over landownership,

¹⁸ The need to identify common historical processes that united borderland regions is discussed in Hamalinen and Truett, "On Borderlands."

¹⁹ On the impact of the Seven Years' War, see Fred Anderson, *The Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Knopf, 2000); Daniel Baugh, *The Global Seven Year's War, 1754-1763: Britain and France in a Great Power Contest* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2011).

²⁰ Although Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Tobago were often called 'neutral islands' before they were incorporated into European empires in 1763, the term also frequently appears in primary sources in reference to European colonies with 'neutral' or open ports, such as Dutch St. Eustatius. My use of the term 'Creole Archipelago' instead of 'neutral islands' seeks to avoid this potential confusion.

²¹ On attempts to extend formal rule into former American borderlands in the wake of the Seven Years' War, see Eric Hinderaker & Peter C. Mancall. *At the Edge of Empire: The Backcountry in British North America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003). On the world 'beyond the line,' see Carl & Roberta Bridenbaugh, *No Peace Beyond the Line: The English in the Caribbean, 1624-1690* (New York: Oxford, 1972)

political participation, and the legal status of non-white peoples in many American borderlands in the wake of the Seven Years' War.²²

Studying a region of the Atlantic World that first evolved outside the sphere of imperial rule reveals the limitations of linear nationalist narratives of early American history in which colonial subjects first seek to replicate the society from which they came, then gradually develop their own identity and experience growing pains before finally achieving independence.²³ In the Creole Archipelago, and in other borderlands, people instead experienced a transition from autonomy to colony. As Frederick Cooper and Jane Burbank warn, historians of empire would be wise to avoid “relying on...misleading shorthands and signposts,” including “a transition from empire to nation-state... [and] a focus on Europe and the west as uniquely powerful agents of change.”²⁴ A close examination of the shared practices and norms that were developed without formal agents or institutions of empire suggests that historians have overemphasized the role of metropolitan laws and institutions in the formation of early America. Residents of the southern Caribbean did not come from a single, shared Old World that they could work to replicate in the new. Many of the most important and longest-lasting economic, technological, and informal political features of the Creole Archipelago were created by people who came not from Europe but from Africa and the Americas; as this project shows, British and French attempts to erase or

²² Many historians locate the initial causes of the American Revolution in conflicts produced by the Seven Years' War; see Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War*.

²³ On how the development of an American identity helped provoke the independence movement, see Jon Butler, *Becoming America: The Revolution Before 1776* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000). Although Jack Greene and others acknowledge that the world created by colonists differed in many ways from the societies they left behind, Greene asserts that they did so in spite of being “[a]nimated by a powerful urge to re-create an English or British world in the new.” Greene, *Imperative Behaviors & Identities*, xv. Historians of the colonial United States increasingly recognize the contributions of non-Europeans in the nation's early history; see Gary B. Nash, *The Unknown American Revolution: The Unruly Birth of Democracy and the Struggle to Create America* (New York: Penguin Books, 2005); Daniel Richter, *Facing East from Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2001); Alan Taylor, *American Colonies: The Settling of North America* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001).

²⁴ Frederick Cooper and Jane Burbank, eds. *Empires in World History: Power and the Politics of Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010), xi.

absorb these features were lengthy, violent, and only partially successful. My examination of the Creole Archipelago reveals the extent to which the colonization of the Caribbean, so often narrated as a story of relentless European domination and expansion, also entailed negotiation and compromise on the part of multiple state and non-state actors.

This story is in many ways a transatlantic one, in that the Creole Archipelago could only take root after thousands of people crossed the ocean from Africa and Europe and settled in islands previously occupied only by Amerindians. But by focusing primarily on local and regional actors and events, this project also departs from much existing work in Atlantic history. Scholars of the Caribbean have long cautioned against treating the region's past as merely the "overseas history" of individual European Crowns.²⁵ Recent works take up this warning by highlighting the importance of inter-imperial competition and exchange in shaping the region.²⁶ Despite these advances, histories that explore the circulation of ideologies and actors across and within an Atlantic space too often have the unintended effect of continuing to privilege Europe as a site of genesis and innovation while relegating Africa and the Americas to sites of extraction and reception. By focusing on how colonies were affected by events and ideologies originating in and emanating from abroad, such an approach keeps the Americas on the periphery of an Atlantic World in which Europe remains the center.²⁷ Placing the Creole Archipelago at the core of my

²⁵ Gordon K. Lewis, *Main Currents in Caribbean Thought: The Historical Evolution of Caribbean Society in its Ideological Aspects, 1492-1900* (Omaha: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 17.

²⁶ Recent works on inter-imperial exchanges and contests in the Caribbean include Kristen Block, *Ordinary Lives in the Early Caribbean: Religion, Colonial Competition, and the Politics of Profit* (Athens, GA: The University of Georgia Press, 2012); Christian Koot, *Empire at the Periphery: British Colonists, Anglo-Dutch Trade, and the Development of the British Atlantic, 1621-1713*. New York: New York University Press, 2011); April Lee Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia: Intercultural Relations in the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004). For an argument that Spanish and English imperial histories in colonial America cannot be disentangled and should be studied alongside one another, see Jorge Canizares-Esguerra, "Entangled Histories: Borderland Historiographies in New Clothes?" *American Historical Review* 112 (June 2007: 787-799).

²⁷ Although 'transatlantic history' most often involves a consideration of how Europe affected America, a number of historians explore how developments elsewhere in European empires affected the metropole. See for example Eliga Gould, *The Persistence of Empire: British Political Culture in the Age of the American Revolution*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2000).

analysis affirms Frederick Cooper's argument that policies seen to emanate from an imperial center were in reality often worked out on the ground, as officials dispatched from distant metropolises encountered the practical limitations of abstract plans.²⁸ My comparison of British and French attempts to transform southern Caribbean islands into productive and efficient plantation colonies in the wake of the Seven Years' War testifies to the importance of considering local and regional realities in discussions of the wider Atlantic.

In addition to expanding present understandings of borderlands and of early American and Atlantic history, this study contributes to the field of Caribbean history. Unlike Barbados, Saint-Domingue, or Jamaica, whose initial settlement and turn to plantation production have been analyzed by leading scholars of early America and the British and French empires, most islands in the southern Caribbean have not been the subject of recent historical monographs.²⁹ The most recent book-length histories of individual southern Caribbean islands typically date to the eighteenth or nineteenth century and are used in the present project as primary sources rather than secondary works.³⁰ A lack of academic conversation and exchange between Anglo- and Francophone scholars further contributes to this silence in Caribbean historiography: the few French-language works exploring French colonization of Grenada are largely uncited by English-language historians, while the histories of Dominica, St. Vincent, and Tobago prior to their

²⁸ Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in Question: Theory, Knowledge, History* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 173.

²⁹ One cannot dismiss this lacuna on the basis of the small size of the islands; Bermuda, at less than 21 square miles, was recently the subject of a scholarly monograph. Michael J. Jarvis, *In the Eye of All Trade: Bermuda, Bermudians, and the Maritime Atlantic World, 1680-1783* (Chapel Hill: Published by the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture by the University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

³⁰ Thomas Atwood, *The History of the Island of Dominica. Containing a Description of its Situation, extent, Climate, Mountains Rivers, Natural Productions, etc. Together with an Account of the Civil Government, Trade, Laws, Customs, and Manners of the different inhabitants of that Island. Its Conquest by the French, and Restoration to the British Dominion*. London: Frank Cass & Co., 1971. (First published 1791); Henry H. Breen, *St. Lucia: Historical, Statistical, and Descriptive* (London: Longman, Brown, and Green, 1844); Charles Shepherd, *An Historical Account of the Island of Saint Vincent* (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1997 [First published 1871]); Henry Iles Woodcock, *A History of Tobago* (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1971. [First published 1867]).

incorporation into the British Empire in 1763 are so little known that even rigorous scholars tend to erroneously assume that the islands were formerly French possessions.³¹ In reconstructing the history of the southern Caribbean, my research seeks to rectify these silences and errors, and to integrate the study of the region into existing historiographies of the Caribbean, early America, and the Atlantic World.

In addition to filling significant historiographic gaps, this project highlights lesser-studied elements of early Caribbean and American economic history. As Sidney Mintz notes, works focusing on the rise of the plantation complex and the associated turn to chattel slavery largely dominate studies of the Caribbean.³² Beginning with the pioneering works of C.L.R. James and Eric Williams, scholars have sought to highlight the Caribbean as a site in which many features commonly associated with modernity, including industrial production, transatlantic capitalism, dislocation and the emergence of a proletariat, first emerged.³³ Attempts to comprehend a “brutal history [that] continue[s] to impose a crushing weight upon the present” have also produced countless works that grapple with slavery as lived experience.³⁴ Without denying the importance of sugar and slavery in shaping the Caribbean’s past and present, through my work I show that the

³¹ On French colonization of Grenada, see Jacques Petitjean Roget, *L’histoire de l’isle de Grenade en Amérique, 1649-1759* (Montréal: Les Presses de l’Université de Montréal, 1975).

³² Sidney Mintz, *Three Ancient Colonies: Caribbean Themes and Variations* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010), 10.

³³ C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L’Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (New York: Vintage, 1989. [First published 1938]); Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1994 [First published 1944]). Subsequent explorations of the relationship between Caribbean sugar production, slavery, and the birth of the modern world include Sidney Mintz, *Sweetness and Power: The Place of Sugar in Modern History*. New York: Viking-Penguin, 1985); Richard Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972); Richard B. Sheridan *Sugar and Slavery: An Economic History of the British West Indies, 1623-1775* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974); Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1993).

³⁴ Mintz, *Three Ancient Colonies*, 1. For a recent exploration of the experiences and meanings of Caribbean slavery, see Vincent Brown, *The Reaper’s Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2010).

processes that are often seen to define the Caribbean as a ‘socio cultural area’ also involved considerable variation and complexity.³⁵

I do this by focusing on a region of the Caribbean in which sugar monoculture did not take root until the latter half of the eighteenth century. Although residents of the Creole Archipelago owned plantations, before the Seven Years’ War most practiced a system of mixed agriculture that yielded provisions as well as secondary export crops such as coffee, cacao, and cotton. The vast majority had small estates and owned few slaves. The black and Amerindian slaves who did work on these plantations, like their masters, were usually born in the Americas. While enslaved people were inarguably subject to the violence that everywhere accompanied human bondage, this project shows that conditions in the Creole Archipelago—particularly the smaller scale of slavery, the type of labor performed by the enslaved, and the ties that island-born slaves succeeded in forging with one another and with free people, whether, white, black, or Amerindian—offered greater opportunities for freedom than that found in neighboring sugar colonies. Free people of African descent also enjoyed considerably greater social and economic influence in this borderland region than they did elsewhere in the colonial Americas.³⁶

The distinctive economic, social, familial, and intimate relations forged by regular interactions between people of African, Amerindian, and European ancestry in the Creole Archipelago would come under attack as the plantation complex spread into much of the Americas. In the wake of the Seven Years’ War, as the formerly neutral islands were rapidly assimilated into

³⁵ The role of the plantation complex in shaping the Caribbean is explored in Sidney Mintz, “The Caribbean as a socio-cultural area.” *Cahiers d’Histoire Mondiale* X, N. 4 (1966: 912-937).

³⁶ On the greater possibilities for freedom and the wider influence exercised by free people of color in situations where the plantation complex did not fully dominate, see Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998); T.H. Breen & Stephen Innes, *Myne Owne Ground: Race and Freedom on Virginia’s Eastern Shore, 1640-1676* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1980); Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia*. (New York: Norton, 1975).

existing empires, colonial officials and new settlers from Europe sought to impose and police racial divisions commonly associated with colonial American and particularly Caribbean societies.³⁷ Elsewhere in early America, attempts to negotiate the place of non-white peoples were quickly overwhelmed by the plantation complex and its attendant racial, economic, and social restrictions.³⁸ The same was not true in the Creole Archipelago. In the decades after the Seven Years' War, lifelong residents of the southern Caribbean used both diplomatic and violent means to attempt to preserve the economic, social, and race relations they had forged in decades prior. Knowing that the Creole Archipelago was created and that it endured for generations, continuing to shape economic, social, political, and race relations in Europe's largest empires well into the eighteenth century, reminds us that at other times and in other places people who have been forgotten or minimized in historical studies also have made significant and lasting contributions.

This dissertation is divided into three sections. In the first, I explore the genesis of the Creole Archipelago. After tracing when and why individuals and families chose or were forced to settle outside the sphere of formal colonial rule in the southern Caribbean, I explore the implicit—and at times explicit—threats that the existence of this community was seen to pose to mercantilist trade, racial hierarchies, and the rule of law. Although representatives of the respective English and French Crowns mutually agreed not to colonize the islands of Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, or Tobago, by the turn of the eighteenth century increasing numbers of white and free-colored small planters were establishing themselves among the island's Carib inhabitants. In the absence of colonial institutions and authorities such as governors, courts, and tax collectors, people who

³⁷ The idea that initially cooperative relationships subsequently gave way to divisions along racial lines in North America is explored in Jane T. Merritt, *At the Crossroads: Indians and Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier, 1700-1763* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2003).

³⁸ On the negotiated nature of race relations in early America see Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone*; Block, *Ordinary Lives*; Philip Boucher, *France and the Americas Tropics to 1700: Tropics of Discontent?* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2008); Jenny Shaw, *Everyday Life in the Early English Caribbean: Irish, Africans, and the Construction of Difference* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2013).

settled in the islands developed their own practices of economic, familial, social, and informal political organization. These shared practices created networks that spanned and united the archipelago as a community that existed alongside the British, French, Spanish, and Dutch empires. The correspondence of British and French officials in neighboring colonies such as Martinique, Guadeloupe, and Barbados betrays a deep sense of concern about the creole society that was being established outside their sphere of rule, and sheds light on practical and symbolic contests between colony and borderland that would persist long after imperial rule was extended to the islands.

In the second section, which is composed of three chapters, I explore the wide-ranging political, economic, demographic, and social consequences that accompanied the Creole Archipelago's incorporation into existing European empires after the Seven Years' War (1756-1763). By virtue of the 1763 Treaty of Paris, St. Lucia became a colony of France while Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent, and Tobago were ceded to Great Britain. I argue that previous experiences of colonial rule elsewhere in the Americas, particularly in Caribbean settlements such as Barbados, shaped imperial designs for the new colonies. Drawing on decades of amassed experience in the administration of plantation colonies, metropolitan officials sought to transform the former borderlands into a center of sugar production as rapidly and as efficiently as possible.

Chapters three and four complement chapter two by exploring the range of responses to the political, economic, and legal reforms introduced in the wake of the 1763 Treaty of Paris. Exercising the autonomy and authority they had enjoyed for decades, many residents of the Creole Archipelago sought concessions and accommodations under colonial rule. Still others sought to escape colonial rule entirely, migrating to parts of the southern Caribbean where officials continued to struggle to make their presence felt. Highlighting the extent to which colonial officials

were willing to accommodate existing practices in order to keep residents of the Creole Archipelago in the islands, these chapters demonstrate the importance of local knowledge in shaping colonial rule.³⁹

The third and final section of the dissertation examines the resurgence of the Creole Archipelago during what R.R. Palmer and others call ‘the age of democratic revolutions.’⁴⁰ Like Palmer, I analyze conflicts usually distinguished as ‘the American Revolution’ and ‘the French Revolution’ not as discrete events but as two key moments in a much longer connected chain of transatlantic upheaval. The first of two chapters in part III explains why British subjects in the southern Caribbean, like their counterparts in North America, were eager to break with British rule, and sheds new light on how and why British imperial strategies were re-ordered following the conflict. By focusing on how the American War of Independence was experienced and interpreted by people living in another part of British America, this chapter de-centers the Thirteen Colonies in order to highlight the war as one of several inter- and intra-imperial conflicts to animate the British and French empires during the long eighteenth century.

This analysis is carried through the final chapter, in which I examine two significant but little-studied conflicts that occurred in the southern Caribbean during the 1790s. In contrast to recent interpretations of the era that focus on how the ideals of the French Revolution were interpreted and re-deployed by free and enslaved residents of the Caribbean, my analysis emphasizes how longstanding local and regional contests once again came to the fore during this period of transatlantic upheaval. Decentering French Revolutionary ideals allows me to

³⁹ As Frederick Cooper argues, “imperial systems were shaped as they developed, influenced by prior state structures and royal goals but not determined by them.” Cooper, *Colonialism in Question*, 165.

⁴⁰ Robert Palmer, *The Age of the Democratic Revolution: A Political History of Europe and America, 1760-1800* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1959 & 1964).

demonstrate that non-European actors, including Amerindians, slaves, and free people of color, were motivated by ideologies of their own creation.

Finally, a brief epilogue chronicles the demise of the Creole Archipelago and considers its long-term legacies. The conflicts described in chapter six resulted in the exile of thousands of people from the southern Caribbean, as colonial officials brought their experiment in incorporating new colonial subjects to an abrupt and violent end. Although many of the people who created and maintained the Creole Archipelago now found themselves forcibly removed thousands of miles beyond the borders of the southern Caribbean, I argue that important traces of the society they created endured. Taken together, these chapters demonstrate the importance of this small corner of the Caribbean in shaping agricultural and trade practices, understandings of subjecthood and of racial belonging, and concepts of legitimate authority in the respective British and French Empires.

Studying a group of islands with a total area of just over 900 square miles—some 300 miles smaller than Rhode Island—inevitably invites questions of scale. Is the southern Caribbean simply too small to matter? Is the Creole Archipelago located too far from centers of wealth and power to be anything but peripheral? While such questions are to a certain extent a product of the very imperial and nationalist historiographies that this project seeks to challenge, they do bear addressing. In the course of researching and writing this dissertation, I have increasingly come to see its geographic scope as a significant strength. By zooming in on a chain of islands in and across which people from Africa, Europe, and America regularly travelled, traded, warred, and settled, this study succeeds in capturing many of the intimate everyday interactions that contributed to the construction of early America. Looking closely at a small part of a much larger early modern Atlantic World allows for an appreciation of how abstract global phenomena such as the rise and consolidation of empires, the elaboration of transatlantic trade systems, and the circulation of

revolutionary ideology were experienced by real people. This is microhistory in the sense of “world history from the perspective of the individual,” and I believe it is all the more important because the perspective is that of individuals often omitted or marginalized in studies of the Atlantic World.⁴¹ Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Tobago were small places where very big things—attempts to rationalize and maximize the efficiency of economic production, contests over political participation, debates over the meaning of indigeneity and the place of non-white colonial subjects—happened. In tracing these happenings over the course of a century, this project sheds new light on a little-studied part of the Atlantic World, and shows how contests that play out in largely forgotten or ignored parts of the world can resonate far beyond their borders. Through their daily interactions and exchanges, Amerindians, free and enslaved Africans, and Europeans from a variety of nations forged and maintained an inter-island community whose very existence—and persistence in the face of substantial pressures to reform—revealed the limits of early modern colonial rule.

⁴¹ Dale Tomich and Michael Zeuske, “The Second Slavery: Mass Slavery, World Economy and Comparative Microhistories,” *Review: A Journal of the Fernand Braudel Center* XXXI, no. 3 (2008: 91-100), 97.

Chapter 1: Creating the Creole Archipelago: The Settlement of the Southern Caribbean, c.1650-1760

*“The French have always been and still are very troublesome and incroaching neighbours...”*¹
-Edwin Stede, 1689

On May 30, 1689, Colonel Edwin Stede, Lieutenant Governor of Barbados, sent a troubling report to the Earl of Shrewsbury, his superior as Secretary of State for the Southern Department of England. “The French have been always been and still are very troublesome and incroaching neighbours” wrote Stede, who complained that they take “great liberty to hunt, fish and fowl in, upon and about the...islands [of] St. Lucia, St. Vincents and Dominico.” Stede explained that these southern Caribbean islands, located some 110 miles west of his post in Barbados, provided his troublesome neighbors with “provisions for the maintenance of the people at Martinico...[and] furnish them with wood and timber.” Describing his recent visit to St. Lucia, the Lieutenant Governor reported that at least 100 of these ‘incroachers’ had built modest dwellings on the island, and had “planted several parcels of land with things necessary for first settlers.” To “hinder them from further settling there,” Stede “sent all the people away to Martinico with their food, and then burnt their houses and destroyed their settlements and plantations.” Despite Stede’s efforts, he expressed concern that “the French [will] continue to do what they please in those islands, I having...no means to prevent it.”²

Colonel Stede’s plaintive letter offers a glimpse of some of the myriad problems that plagued colonial officials as they attempted to control the settlement and development of the early modern Americas. Belying the notion of islands as isolated entities, throughout the colonial era people, goods, and information circulated across the Caribbean’s geographic and political

¹ I have elected to retain all typographical errors and archaic or misspellings in quotations. British National Archives [BNA] Colonial Office [CO] 71/2 N. 18, Stede to Shrewsbury, May 30 1689.

² BNA CO 71/2 N. 18, Stede to Shrewsbury, May 30 1689.

boundaries, frustrating metropolitan attempts to establish authority, monitor colonial subjects, and police trade. As in much of the colonial world, the weight of empire was lightest at the frontier. Located at the southernmost reaches of the Lesser Antillean archipelago, the islands of Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Tobago remained outside established circuits of transatlantic trade and migration until well into the eighteenth century. Yet the islands' location at the edge of the respective French, British, Dutch, and Iberian Empires did not dissuade thousands of individuals from Europe, Africa, and the Americas from establishing themselves in this Atlantic periphery; as this chapter explores, the prospect of living outside the sphere of direct colonial rule served as an attraction for many early settlers. As generations of men and women carved out settlements, established plantations, and formed families in the frequently-contested islands of the southern Caribbean, they created an inter-island community that colonial officials like Colonel Stede found increasingly difficult to monitor or control.

Both the size of this community and the threats that it was seen to pose to colonial legal, economic, and racial norms grew as the eighteenth century progressed. By the time that St. Lucia and Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent, and Tobago were formally incorporated into the respective empires of France and Great Britain as a result of the 1763 Treaty of Paris, the islands were collectively inhabited by close to 9,000 free people of Amerindian, African, European, and mixed-race, and more than 23,000 black and Amerindian slaves.³ Where did these people come from?

³ A French census of St. Lucia indicates that as of 1760 the island had a population of approximately 4,000 slaves, 800 whites, and 200 free people of color. Archives National d'Outre Mer [ANOM] Dépôt des Papiers Publics des Colonies [DPPC] G1/506, Recensement Sainte Lucie 1760.

British officials who took control of St. Vincent in 1763 estimated the island's population to consist of 1,138 Caribs; 3,430 slaves; and 1,300 free people. BNA CO 101/1 n.9.

Grenada's population in 1763 was estimated by British colonial officials to consist of approximately 3,500 free settlers & 10,000 slaves. BNA CO 101/1 N.5.

The population of Dominica in the wake of the 1763 Treaty of Paris was reported to be 1,718 free settlers, 5,872 slaves, and "from 50 to 60 Caraib familys" BNA CO 101/1 N. 91.

Although British officials who assumed control of Tobago in 1763 reported that the new colony was uninhabited, a British Captain who travelled to the island in 1757 noted that "...there are about three hundred families of

Why did they settle in these islands, and what did they do once there? What ties did they create and maintain with people in neighboring colonies and elsewhere in the Atlantic world? What was the nature of their relationship to colonial authority? Perhaps most crucially, what does the genesis of creolized communities outside the sphere of imperial rule reveal about broader processes of early modern Atlantic colonization and about social, economic, political, and race relations in the colonial Americas?

This chapter surveys the settlement and subsequent economic, social, and political development of the southern Caribbean islands of Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Tobago from the mid-seventeenth century until the outbreak of the Seven Years' War (approximately 1650-1760). During this period Grenada was a colony of France, albeit a greatly neglected one; the latter four islands were commonly referred to as 'neutral,' meaning that the English and French Crowns mutually agreed to relinquish any claim to sovereignty in favor of the islands' indigenous Carib inhabitants. The islands' political status belied both their degree of integration into and their role in shaping the late-seventeenth and eighteenth century Caribbean-Atlantic world. As people like the 'incroachers' described by Stede ventured beyond the frontier of legally-recognized colonies, they carried with them many features of the societies from which they had come, including plantation production, racialized slavery, and complex socio-racial hierarchies designed to dictate the respective possibilities available to people of African, Amerindian, and European ancestry. Yet by establishing themselves in places where formal institutions of empire such as courts, governors, and assemblies did not often reach, these

Indians...[who] seem to live in great union with the French, who are settled on Tobago to the number of not above eight or nine families..." Quoted in Jean-Claude Nardin, *La mise en valeur de l'île de Tobago (1763-1783)* (Paris: Mouton & Co., 1969), 291.

individuals also exercised considerable influence in defining the distinctive features of the society in which they lived.

Although both colonial contemporaries and modern historians frequently depicted the first people to settle the Caribbean as rough, lascivious, and amoral, more recent scholarship challenges this portrait.⁴ While acknowledging the often violent nature of initial colonization, historians of the colonial Americas have instead begun to characterize a given colony's first settlers as pioneers who played a key role in establishing economic, social, and legal practices that persisted for decades or even centuries.⁵ Their influence was especially strong on the geographic fringes of transatlantic empires, where colonial officials, institutions, and laws struggled to make their presence felt.⁶

The southern Caribbean's distance—both physical and symbolic—from centers of political and economic power allowed the free men and women who settled there to create and perpetuate a 'Creole Archipelago:' a set of economic, social, and informal political networks that united the islands across geographic and political boundaries. The genesis and the persistence of these networks would repeatedly frustrate French and British attempts to control settlement, development, and trade in their respective American realms, creating problems and possibilities that shaped Atlantic colonization in ways that historians have yet to appreciate. Rather than a

⁴ See Natalie Zacek, *Settler Society in the English Leeward Islands, 1670-1776* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), 6; Larry Gragg, *Englishmen Transplanted: The English Colonization of Barbados, 1627-1660* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) 8-10.

⁵ On the role of early settlers on the long-term development of American societies see Carl Sauer, *The Early Spanish Main* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1966); Richard Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972); James Pritchard, *In Search of Empire: The French in the Americas, 1670-1730* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004).

⁶ On "authority's fragmented voice" at the edges of the French Atlantic, see Kenneth J. Banks, *Chasing Empire Across the Sea: Communications and the State in the French Atlantic, 1713-1763* (Kingston, Ontario: Queen's University Press, 2003), especially 184-216; Amy Turner Bushnell & Jack P. Greene, "Peripheries, Centers, and the Construction of Early Modern American Empires" in Christine Daniels and Michael V. Kennedy, eds. *Negotiated Empires: Centers and Peripheries in the Americas, 1500-1820* (New York: Routledge, 2002).

European geopolitical contest in which competing Crowns vied for territory, the process of colonizing the southern Caribbean was one in which a multitude of Amerindian, African, European, and mixed-race people, each with different and often conflicting motivations, gradually constructed a new society in the early Americas. Many features of this society were at odds with those promoted by colonial officials, who repeatedly tried to assimilate or eradicate their ‘troublesome’ neighbors. Yet as this dissertation shows, inter-island channels of trade and communication, practices of mixed agriculture, and understandings of racial belonging first developed in the Creole Archipelago would continue to undermine and challenge colonial designs throughout the long eighteenth century.

Many of the people who constructed this Creole Archipelago owned plantations, but their relatively small holdings did not produce the sugarcane that made planters in Barbados and Martinique so prosperous. Instead, small estates in the islands, worked by slaves born not in Africa but in the Americas, yielded provisions such as manioc and plantains, as well as secondary cash crops such as tobacco, cotton, cacao, and coffee. Rather than shipping their produce across the Atlantic, residents of the Creole Archipelago secreted their cargoes in small watercraft to neighboring colonies, where merchants welcomed the additional exports and planters depended on the provisions to supplement the diet of their slaves. The planters who engaged in this commerce were not wealthy white men who ventured from Europe to make their fortunes in the Americas; by the mid-eighteenth century, most of the free residents of the Creole Archipelago, like their slaves, had been born and would spend their entire lives in the New World. Many of these slaveowners were themselves men and women of African descent, who settled in the islands in a deliberate attempt to evade the restrictive legislation imposed on free people of color in slave societies. Free from the strictures of colonial officials, these free-colored planters enjoyed

economic and social privileges that were increasingly unimaginable to their counterparts in English and French colonies. In the decades after the Creole Archipelago was assimilated into the respective English and French empires, free-colored residents of the southern Caribbean would draw on a combination of diplomacy and violence to defend their customary right to own land and slaves, to intermarry with whites, and to exercise political authority.

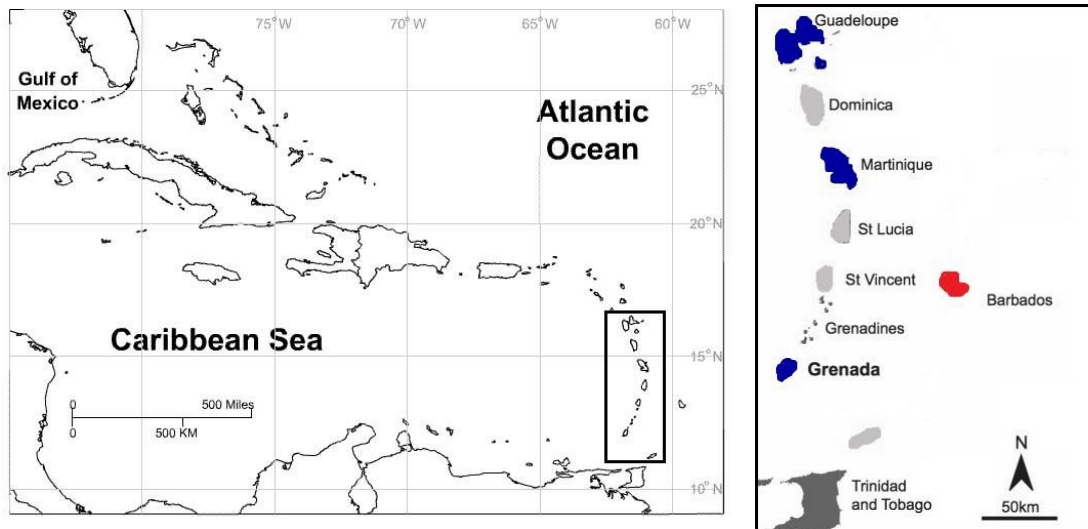
The years between initial European settlement of the southern Caribbean in the mid-seventeenth century and the 1763 Treaty of Paris were marked more by war than by peace in the region. In addition to the widespread privateering that afflicted the Atlantic during what is often referred to as the ‘golden age of piracy,’ European conflicts including the War of the League of Augsburg (1688-1697), the War of Spanish Succession (1701-1713), and the Seven Years’ War (1756-1763) also played out in an Antillean theater.⁷ People who elected or were forced to settle beyond the boundaries of empire lived with the additional threat that officials like Colonel Stede would succeed in evicting his ‘incroaching’ neighbors. But while life in the islands was inarguably precarious, it was not without order. In the absence of formal agents and institutions of colonial rule, residents of the Creole Archipelago, like ‘rogues’ elsewhere in the Atlantic World, constructed a community whose distinctive features would endure long after the islands were incorporated into existing European empires.⁸ Amidst the slave societies of the colonial Caribbean, the existence of a community where European legal, mercantilist, and racial orders did not always reach served as both an attraction to individuals who sought to live outside the expanding

⁷ On piracy see Marcus Rediker, *Villains of all Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age* (London: Verso, 2004). While the Caribbean battles of the War of Jenkins’ Ear (1739-1748) were fought primarily in the Greater Antilles and Cartagena, the conflict further unsettled the Lesser Antilles by greatly increasing privateering throughout the circum-Caribbean.

⁸ On the role of ‘rogue colonialism’ in shaping New Orleans during French colonial rule and long thereafter, see Shannon Dawdy, *Building the Devil’s Empire: French Colonial New Orleans* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008); Dawdy argues that “colonialism was as much a creation of rogues and independent agents as it was the project of imperial states,” 19. Dawdy’s argument could be made even more strongly in the case of the southern Caribbean, where imperial states lacked the legal authority to exert their influence.

plantation complex, and as a persistent challenge to the practical and ideological foundations of imperial rule.

Map 1.1: Location and Sovereign Status of Southern Caribbean Islands c. 1660⁹



Clearing the Land: Initial European Settlement of the Southern Caribbean, 1650s-1720s

A combination of geography and diplomacy conspired to turn the southernmost islands of the Caribbean into an attractive refuge for individuals and families seeking to avoid the sugar plantation complex that would come to define the economy and society of the broader region. The ability to move between islands on small watercraft, coupled with Carib determination to prevent European colonization of a number of islands, meant that large parts of the southern Caribbean remained outside the sphere of imperial rule for more than a century after Europeans began settling the area.

Although islands in the southern Caribbean were first sighted by Columbus on his second voyage to the Americas in 1493, early Spanish colonizers focused their efforts on the larger, more

⁹ Map sourced from Wikimedia commons, edited to show the French colonies of Guadeloupe, Martinique, and Grenada in blue; the English colony of Barbados in red; and the ‘neutral’ or Carib-dominated islands of St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Tobago in grey.

northerly Greater Antilles and the American main.¹⁰ Following Charles I's ascension to the throne of England in 1625 and the appointment of Cardinal Richelieu as King Louis XIII's Chief Minister in 1624, the respective Crowns of England and France began to devote greater resources to Atlantic commerce and colonization. English possession of Barbados and the Leeward Islands originated in the 1620s, while French settlements on Guadeloupe and Martinique date to 1635.¹¹ Although the development of France's colonies proceeded somewhat more slowly than that of Barbados, techniques of sugar cultivation introduced to the Caribbean by Dutch planters expelled from Brazil soon prompted the rapid consolidation of large plantations in Barbados, Martinique, and slightly later in Guadeloupe. Settlers from England, France, Ireland, and elsewhere in Europe flocked to the colonies; by 1640, the 116-square mile island of Barbados counted some 30,000 inhabitants, or 200 people per square mile.¹² Decades before larger English and French colonies in the Greater Antilles, such as Jamaica and Saint-Domingue, began to emerge as centers of plantation production, the respective Crowns elaborated and experimented with strategies of colonial rule in the Lesser Antilles.

Although land grants were initially available to settlers in English and French colonies in the Lesser Antilles, by the turn of the eighteenth century the transition to large-scale sugar cultivation rendered such concessions increasingly difficult to secure.¹³ Purchasing the land and slaves necessary to establish a profitable sugar plantation was out of the question for most former

¹⁰ A brief account of failed Spanish attempts to settle the island of Dominica in the early sixteenth century can be found in Joseph Boromé, "Spain and Dominica 1493-1647," *Caribbean Quarterly* 12 N.4 (December 1966): 30-46.

¹¹ On the colonization of the Lesser Antilles, see Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*; Gabriel Debien, *Les Engagés pour les Antilles (1634-1715)* (Paris: Société de l'Histoire des Colonies Françaises, 1952); J. H. Parry & William Sherlock, *A Short History of the West Indies* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987); Liliane Chauleau, *Dans les îles du vent: La Martinique XVIIe-XIXe siècle* (Paris: Éditions Harmattan, 1993).

¹² Parry & Sherlock, *A Short History of the West Indies*, 56-66.

¹³ On the availability of land grants in seventeenth-century Barbados, see Alison F. Games, "Opportunity and Mobility in Early Barbados," in Robert L. Paquette, & Stanley L. Engerman, eds. *The Lesser Antilles in the Age of European Expansion* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), 169. For Martinique and Guadeloupe, see Paul Butel, *Histoire de Antilles françaises, XVIIe-XXe siècles* (Paris: Éditions Perrin, 2002), 37.

indentured servants or *engagés*, who typically received 300 pounds of tobacco upon completion of a 36-month contract.¹⁴ Instead, former *engagés* who remained in Barbados, Martinique, and Guadeloupe established smallholdings in regions that sugar planters found less desirable. The drier, sandy soil in areas such as southwest Martinique is poorly suited to the cultivation of sugar, but small planters quickly discovered that other cash crops such as cacao and cotton, as well as foodstuffs such as manioc, sweet potatoes, and plantains, could still flourish in the less sought-after—and therefore less expensive—land. As even these outlying areas of the colonies grew increasingly crowded, would-be planters were increasingly obliged to look beyond the borders of existing Caribbean colonies. While English subjects in Barbados quickly fanned out to the Crown’s other outposts in South Carolina and the Leeward Islands, French subjects residing in Guadeloupe and Martinique had fewer options.¹⁵ The vast wilderness of New France, some 3,000 miles’ sail from the Lesser Antilles, held little attraction for those who dreamed of establishing profitable tobacco or sugar plantations. Instead, small planters from Martinique and Guadeloupe began to set their sights on nearby islands.

Although English and French officials commonly referred to St. Lucia, Dominica, St. Vincent, and Tobago as ‘neutral,’ individuals who migrated to the islands were in fact moving into highly contested spaces. Relations between Europeans and indigenous Caribs—so dubbed in order to distinguish them from the purportedly peaceable Arawaks they had allegedly driven from the

¹⁴ On payments made to *engagés*, see Christian Huetz, “Indentured Servants Bound for the French Antilles,” in Ida Altman and James Horn, *To Make America: European emigration in the early modern period*. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1991), 176. Dunn estimates that planters in the Barbados needed a workforce of at minimum 20 slaves in order to establish even a small sugar plantation. Richard Dunn, “The Barbados Census of 1680: Profile of the Richest Colony in English America,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 26, N. 1 (January 1969), 12.

¹⁵ On Barbadians in South Carolina, see Richard Dunn, “The English Sugar Islands and the Founding of South Carolina,” *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* Vol. 72, No. 2 (April 1971): 81-93. For the Leeward Islands, see Zacek, *Settler Society in the English Leeward Islands*.

Lesser Antilles—were decidedly acrimonious.¹⁶ Armed conflict between Caribs and settlers who sought to appropriate the land on which they lived originated almost immediately after contact and persisted well into the eighteenth century.¹⁷ In his study of English colonization of Barbados, Richard Dunn argues that the island was chosen in part because of its location more than a hundred miles east of the southern Caribbean island chain through which Caribs regularly traveled and traded; French colonists who settled among Caribs in Guadeloupe, Martinique, and particularly France’s southernmost colony of Grenada lived in fear of Amerindian raids.¹⁸

The writings of missionaries present in French colonies during the initial years of settlement support Dunn’s conclusion. Jesuit priest Pierre Pelleprat alleged that “the Caribs have made several incursions in various quarters...pillaging and burning houses, clobbering the men and kidnapping the women.”¹⁹ Located some 180 miles south of Martinique—a distance that could take as many as four days to cover by sail—the isolated French colony of Grenada was particularly vulnerable. Although Grenada was claimed for the French Crown by Martiniquan governor Jacques du Parquet in 1649, the infant colony’s distance from centers of French control, coupled with its proximity to Carib strongholds in St. Vincent and Trinidad, rendered Grenada unattractive to potential settlers.²⁰ The limited influence that the French Crown was able to exert in Grenada

¹⁶ For a discussion of early relations between Europeans and the indigenous peoples of the Lesser Antilles, see Philip Boucher, *Cannibal encounters: Europeans and Island Caribs, 1492-1763* (Baltimore: John Hopkins University Press, 1992).

¹⁷ A detailed discussion of the effects of European colonization on the lives of island Caribs can be found in Gérard Lafleur, *Les Caraïbes des Petites Antilles* (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 1992), especially pages 11-32 and 155-170.

¹⁸ Dunn writes that English settlement “was only feasible in sites removed as far as possible from contact with the Spanish and Indian [Carib] population centers” and that the English purposely refrained from settling Guadeloupe and Martinique “because these places were so heavily populated by Caribs.” Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 17-19.

¹⁹ “[l]es Caraïbes ont fait plusieurs courses dans divers quartiers...pillant, & bruslant les cases, assommant les hommes, & enlevant les femmes.” Pierre Pelleprat, *Relation des missions des PP. de la Compagnie de Jesus dans les Isles, et dans la terre ferme de l’Amerique Meridionale*. (Paris: Sebastien Cramoisy & Gabriel Cramoisy, 1655) 89-90.

²⁰ Grenada’s status as a peripheral colony in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth century is discussed in Jean-Pierre Sainton, *Histoire et Civilisation de la Caraïbe (Guadeloupe, Martinique, Petites Antilles) Tome II: Le temps des matrices: économie et cadres sociaux du long XVIIIe siècle* (Paris: Éditions Karthala, 2012), 31-33.

allowed many of the features that defined the Creole Archipelago to flourish in this ostensibly colonial space.

Historians generally fail to analyze Caribbean Amerindians as political actors, yet Carib resistance to European incursion had important diplomatic and territorial consequences in the southern Caribbean.²¹ Seeking to secure their claims to sovereignty and assure the safety of subjects in their respective colonies, in March 1660 representatives of the English and French Crowns met with Caribs assembled in Guadeloupe. After lengthy negotiations, the three parties signed a treaty stipulating that “the said islands of St. Vincent and Dominica will forever belong to the said savages [Caribs] and cannot be inhabited by one or the other of the said [English and French] nations.” In exchange, Carib representatives promised to cease their depredations on English and French colonies, and to permit French missionaries already resident in St. Vincent and Dominica to remain there “so as to civilize them and to render them sociable.”²² By engaging in diplomatic negotiations with Carib representatives, agents of the respective English and French Crowns implicitly acknowledged the Amerindians’ role as competing sovereign powers. As Caribs withdrew from Guadeloupe and Martinique in accordance with the treaty they, like their European rivals, began to act as agents of colonization, increasing their settlements on islands over which they continued to hold dominion. By the mid-seventeenth century, St. Vincent was home to an estimated nine to ten thousand Caribs.²³

Although historians often equate the signing of the 1660 Treaty with the end of European clashes with Caribs, archival evidence suggests that diplomacy failed to put a definitive end to

²¹ One exception to this is Hilary McD Beckles, “Kalinago (Carib) Resistance to European Colonisation of the Caribbean,” *Caribbean Quarterly* 38, N.2-3 (June 1992): 1-17.

²² “les dit isles de St. Vincent et de la Dominique demeureront à toujours aux dits sauvages sans qu’elles puissent être habituées par l’une ou l’autres des dits nations,” “affin de les civiliser et de les rendre sociable.” ANOM Fonds Ministériels [FM] C10D3, dossier 2, Dominica, n. 88. 1 mars 1660, Traité fait avec les Français et les Anglais au sujet des isles Caraïbes.

²³ Pelleprat, *Relation des missions*, 108.

hostilities.²⁴ Nowhere was the tenuous nature of peace more keenly felt than in Grenada. Unlike Guadeloupe and Martinique, Carib representatives did not assent to French colonization of the island during the 1660 negotiations, and the sparsely-populated outpost remained a frequent target of attack. Successive Governor-Generals of France's *iles du vent*, an administrative unit grouping the Windward Islands of Grenada, Guadeloupe, and Martinique under a single government, despaired of ever brokering peace with the region's indigenous inhabitants. "[T]here is no way to reason with people without faith and without religion, who are more like beasts than men," wrote Governor-General Jean-Charles de Baas-Castelmore in 1674, suggesting that the French should instead enslave or wage war against the Caribs.²⁵ The frustrated official was not the only person to urge the extirpation of the southern Caribbean's native inhabitants. At a meeting in Martinique in 1679, assembled French planters declared that "experience has taught us that the only way to deal with such a perfidious nation is to apply the extreme remedy of destroying them."²⁶

The history of the Caribbean's indigenous inhabitants is often narrated as one of foreign domination. Yet a comparison of extant population figures for the three Windward Islands to which France laid claim highlights the extent to which Caribs succeeded in delimiting the establishment of European colonies. Despite benefitting from the support and protection of French officials, Grenada's population remained anaemic compared to that of French settlements that had received Carib approval: in 1671, Martinique counted 4,326 free inhabitants and 6,582 slaves, Grenada only 283 free people and 222 slaves. The disparity was even more pronounced thirty years later: by 1700, Martinique had 21,640 total residents and Guadeloupe 10,929; Grenada's population, both

²⁴ In his general history of the French Caribbean, Paul Butel writes that the 1660 treaty created "une paix générale." Butel, *Histoire des Antilles francaises*, 34.

²⁵ "...[A]vec des gens sans foy, et sans Religion et qui sont plus bestes qu'ils ne sont hommes, il n'y a nul fondement a faire," ANOM FM C8A1 f.294, Jean-Charles de Baas Castelmore, June 1674.

²⁶ "l'expérience nous fait assez cognoitre qu'il n'y a plus d'assurances avec une si perfide nation; que celle d'y appliquer l'extrême remède à les detruire..." ANOM FM F3 26, f. 186, Compte-rendu de l'assemblée tenue au Marin...pour étudier les moyens de faire la guerre aux Caraïbes de St. Vincent et de la Dominique, August 27 1679.

free and enslaved, totalled just 870.²⁷ Despite the promise of land grants in the colony, official neglect and the threat of Carib attack meant that only a small number of settlers could be enticed to one of the most vulnerable reaches of France’s American realm.

Table 1.1: Respective Populations of France’s Windward Island Colonies, 1671 & 1700²⁸

	Martinique 1671	Guadeloupe 1671	Grenada 1671	Martinique 1700	Guadeloupe 1700	Grenada 1700
Free people	4,326	3,172	283	7,029	4,533	297
Slaves	6,582	4,365	222	14,566	6,396	520

The few French settlers who did venture to Grenada in the last decades of the seventeenth century soon sought to leave the colony, and administrators despaired of ever being able to maintain a population of resident planters. “[G]iven the dire circumstances in which the planters find themselves...you will soon witness the desertion of half of them,” warned François-Roger Robert, Intendant of France’s Windward Island colonies, in 1689. Robert implored his superiors in France to forbid anyone to leave the infant colony without obtaining permission from himself or the governor; if able-bodied men abandoned the island, the remaining inhabitants would be even more vulnerable to attack from Carib or rival European forces.²⁹

The frequent decampment of free settlers and slaves that plagued administrators in Grenada also affected more settled colonies such as Barbados, Guadeloupe, and Martinique. The geography of the Lesser Antillean archipelago played an important role in facilitating quick and discreet relocations between islands. A north-westerly current sweeps up past Grenada, St. Vincent, and

²⁷ As a further point of comparison, as of 1684 the white population of Barbados totalled more than 19,500 individuals, a decline from a high of almost 22,000 in 1676, while the number of enslaved people reached 46,600. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 87.

²⁸ ANOM DPPC G1 498 N. 54 & N. 62, Recensement générale des isles d’Amérique, 1671 & 1700.

²⁹ “[S]y vous ne déffendes aux marchands, aux navires des Compagnies, et aux Corsaires de recevoir personne sur leur bord sans congé des gouverneurs ou de moy, dans la nécessité ou sont les habitans, et accablé de dettes, vous en verrez bientost deserté la moitié,” ANOM FM C8A 5 f.262, Francois-Roger Robert, December 23 1689.

St. Lucia towards Martinique, and on to Dominica and Guadeloupe.³⁰ Although travelling south against the current can present challenges, the calmer Caribbean Sea along the western or ‘Windward’ side of the archipelago allows small craft to hug the coastline, and Caribs and colonists alike could stop in sheltered bays or smaller, uninhabited Grenadine islands as necessary.³¹ Located twenty-one miles south of Martinique, in good weather travelers departing the southern coast of the French colony could attain St. Lucia in approximately four hours’ journey, with St. Vincent a further four to five hours’ journey from the southern tip of St. Lucia.³² Only Tobago, located to the southeast of the Lesser Antillean archipelago and therefore exposed to the rougher Atlantic Sea on the eastern or Leeward side of the islands, proved difficult to access; owing in part to its remote location, the island attracted few settlers.³³

The mountainous, densely-wooded interior of the islands significantly impeded the forging of roads in the Lesser Antilles, and Carib dugout canoes, or *pirogues*, were quickly adopted by settlers both as the primary mode of transportation between islands and as a means to navigate the rocky coastline from one part of an island to another. Highly versatile vessels, *pirogues* were crafted from individual hollowed-out *gommier* or copperwood trees and ranged from eight to as

³⁰ Boucher, *France and the American Tropics*, 15.

³¹ Arthur Stinchcombe argues that “it did not take a governmentally or capitalistically organized enterprise to go from one island to another;” residents could travel distances of up to 25 miles on water craft they built themselves. Arthur Stinchcombe, *Sugar Island Slavery in the Age of Enlightenment: The Political Economy of the Caribbean World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995), 47.

³² Although mentions of travel times are scarce in surviving firsthand accounts, available anecdotal evidence supports Stinchcombe’s claims above. For instance, on his journey through the Caribbean Père Labat mentions that his journey from St. Vincent to St. Lucia took about 5 hours, and after departing St. Lucia at approximately 3 a.m. the missionary arrived in Martinique “while it was still dark.” Jean Baptiste Labat, *The Memoirs of Père Labat, 1693-1705*. Translated by John Eaden (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1970 [First published 1722]), 140, 142. Père Lavalette, who lived in St. Pierre, Martinique but supervised a Jesuit plantation in southern Dominica, journeyed to the neighboring island every Sunday after giving mass. “Combien de fois ai-je passé le canal de la Dominique en pirogue!” he remarked in his memoir. Quoted in Camille de Rochmonteix, *Le Père Antoine Lavalette à la Martinique: D’après beaucoup de documents inédits* (Paris: Librairie Alphonse Picard et Fils, 1907), 77. In his study of communications in the French Atlantic, Banks notes that a passenger boat service traversed the 30 kilometers (approximately 18 miles) between St. Pierre and Fort de France, Martinique, daily; the journey took a maximum of four hours each way. Banks, *Chasing Empire*, 97.

³³ On the difficulty of navigating to Tobago by *pirogue*, see ANOM C10E2, “Quelques réflexions et observations concernant l’île de Tabago,” April 1784.

much as sixty feet long. The vessels could be paddled or fitted with a sail, and could carry as little as two to as many as sixty passengers, depending on the distance travelled and the purpose of the journey.³⁴ French administrators quickly recognized the ease of mobility offered by *pirogues* as a threat, and a 1721 law banned residents of Grenada from owning vessels capable of carrying more than three passengers. Colonists who elected to keep larger *pirogues* in defiance of the law were obliged to keep them chained inside their dwellings when not in use or be forced to compensate the owners of any slaves who availed themselves of the *pirogues* to abscond to nearby islands.³⁵ Settlers and administrators alike were acutely aware of the disadvantages posed by banning personal watercraft “so necessary in an island for fishing, for transporting goods and people from one area to another and from their plantations to the parish [town],” but frequent references to the ban throughout the 1720s and 1730s suggest that enforcement of the ordinance was at least attempted, if not always successfully.³⁶ Colonial officials’ preoccupation with the prospect that settlers and slaves might desert attests to the facility with which individuals navigated between islands, and by extension between colonial and non-colonial spaces.

Settlers who braved the journey from Grenada, Martinique, or Guadeloupe to neighboring non-colonial spaces soon discovered that their difficulties were far from over. With volcanic peaks rising as high as 4,800 feet, near-vertical inclines ill-suited to the cultivation of sugar, and dense, often impenetrable tropical woodlands, the physical environment of the Creole Archipelago proved foreboding to many settlers. The widespread deforestation that now characterizes many parts of the Lesser Antilles bears little resemblance to the environment that greeted the first settlers

³⁴ Daniel Marc Antoine Chardon, *Essai sur la colonie de Sainte-Lucie, par un Ancien Intendant de cette Isle* (Neufchatel: l’Imprimerie de la Société Typographique, 1779), 30; Jean-Pierre Moreau, *Un flibustier français dans la mer des Antilles en 1618-1620* (Clamart, France: Editions Jean-Pierre Moreau, 1987), 175-176.

³⁵ ANOM FM C10A 1 dossier 5, Jean Louis de Fournier de Carles de Pradines, Lieutenant de Roi a la Grenade, exerçant les fonctions de gouverneur, September 20 1721.

³⁶ “si nécessaires dans une isle pour la pêche, pour le transport des denrées, celui des personnes d’un quartier à un autre, et de leurs habitations à la paroisse.” ANOM FM C10A2 f.2 N.101.

who attempted to carve out plantations in the islands.³⁷ Vast swamplands were said to produce “reeking fumes that cannot not fail to corrupt and infect the air” and settlers complained that “the heat of the climate...drives them to the grave.”³⁸ Planters wealthy enough to enlist slaves to complete such arduous tasks as clearing woodland and desiccating swamps discovered all too quickly that the forested highlands of the islands’ interiors provided an attractive refuge for runaways. Giving chase to the maroons who absconded to other parts of the islands was often too perilous to even attempt, as “the shore is lined with large roots...[and] if by accident you misstep, you would be lucky to [just] break your legs.”³⁹

Despite the obstacles posed by the physical environment, as well as the threat of Carib attack, the turn of the eighteenth century witnessed increasing numbers of French subjects venturing beyond the territory to which their Crown laid claim. After the upheavals engendered by the War of Spanish Succession—over the course of the twelve-year conflict, the French raided the English colonies of Montserrat and Nevis, while the English attacked Guadeloupe and permanently expelled the French from the Leeward Islands of St. Christopher—the 1713 Treaty of Utrecht ushered in several decades of peace and relative stability in the Lesser Antilles.⁴⁰ Appeased by the diminished chance of attack by naval forces and privateers, small planters, free people of color, and runaway slaves from the French colonies of Guadeloupe and Martinique began

³⁷ The causes and consequences of this deforestation are treated in more detail in chapter 2. A discussion of the present impact of repeated wood harvests in St. Lucia can be found in Otto J. Gonzalez & Donald R. Zak, “Tropical Dry Forests of St. Lucia, West Indies: Vegetation and Soil Properties,” *Biotropica* 28, N. 4b (1996: 618-626)

³⁸ “des exhalaisons puantes qui ne peuvent manquer de corrompre l’air, et de l’infecter... l’obstacle que la transpiration perpétuelle occasionnée par la chaleur du climat apport à la réparation des forces les conduit enfin au tombeau.” Unless otherwise noted, all translations are my own. Chardon, *Essai*, 17-18.

³⁹ “les rivages sont bordés de certaines grosses racines... lesquelles on est contraint de passer, si par hasard le pied venait à manquer, on courrait fortune de se rompre les jambes.” Moreau, *Un flibustier français*, 178-179.

⁴⁰ The stability experienced by residents of France’s colonies may also be explained in part by internal factors: after changing almost annually throughout the early eighteenth century, the position of Governor-General of France’s *Iles du Vent* was occupied by Francois du Pas de Mazencourt, the Marquis de Feuquières, from 1717-1727, and by Jacques-Charles de Bochart, Marquis de Champigny, former Governor of Martinique, from 1727-1744.

to migrate to more remote areas of the region. Although both English and French officials continued to complain about their “troublesome and incroaching neighbours,” they were never able to replicate the full-scale evacuation of the islands that Colonel Stede claimed to have executed in 1689. Attempts to persuade inhabitants of Dominica, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent to return under the dominion of the French Crown with promises of land grants and threats of attack also failed.⁴¹ By the first decades of the eighteenth century, settlers who had established themselves outside the sphere of imperial rule were there to stay.

Creolized Communities: The 1730s to the 1750s

The middle decades of the eighteenth century witnessed the rapid growth and consolidation of a distinctive society in the Creole Archipelago. Owing to persistent land scarcity and several natural disasters that affected the economic prospects of small planters, as well as increasingly onerous legislation concerning free people of color, more and more residents of Guadeloupe and Martinique relocated to neighboring islands as the century progressed. Describing a landing he made in the port of Gros Islet, northern St. Lucia, in February of 1732, Jacques-Charles de Bochart, Governor General of France’s Windward Island colonies from 1727 to 1744, reported that the island was settled by hundreds of French smallholders. Noting that “most of these people are from Diamant,” in southwest Martinique, the Governor attributed their relocation to “the poor quality of the soil...and the dryness that reigns” there. “These planters produce foodstuffs and raise poultry, a few have planted cotton,” which Bochart reported that they regularly transported, along with small quantities of wood, back to Diamant to sell.⁴²

⁴¹ For an example of a failed French attempt to order the evacuation of Dominica, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent in 1721, see ANOM FM C8A 28 F.153, Marquis de Pas de Feuquières, November 15 1721. The Governor General of France’s Windward Island colonies argued that evacuating the islands would reduce illicit commerce; in exchange, de Feuquières proposed affording grants of land in Martinique, Guadeloupe, or Grenada to the evacuees. De Feuquières’ order failed to prompt an evacuation.

⁴²“La plupart de ces hommes sont sortis du quartier du Diamant de la Martinique, qui par la mauvaise qualité des terres de ce quartier et la secheresse qui y regne, on pris le party d’aller faire des établissements à Sainte Lucie, d’où

Bochart's brief description provides important insight into the establishment of settlements in the Creole Archipelago, as well as the relationship between these settlements and existing colonies. Abandoning a peripheral area of Martinique in which it was difficult to grow plantation commodities, smallholders opted instead for the more fertile lands freely available in nearby St. Lucia, just twenty-one miles south. In addition to replicating the small-scale mixed agriculture they had practiced in Diamant, settlers took advantage of remaining tropical forest in St. Lucia to bring much-needed wood to Martinique. Proximity to Diamant allowed individuals who relocated to St. Lucia to maintain economic and social ties they had created in the French island; in addition to selling their wares in Martinique, residents of St. Lucia regularly travelled to the colony's southwest coast to partake in religious celebrations.⁴³

Bochart's 1732 visit to St. Lucia likely coincided with a period of increased migration to the island. A 1727 earthquake, coupled with a blight on cacao throughout the Lesser Antilles—the number of cacao trees in Martinique fell from an all-time high of 13.5 million in 1726 to just 360,000 by 1734—resulted in the financial ruin of many small planters.⁴⁴ Rather than attempting to raise the capital necessary to replant their fragile crops in what was by Bochart's own admission poor soil, many planters elected to sell their holdings and migrate to islands where land was freely available. "Unable to procure in Martinique what they need to maintain themselves, they

ils vont vendre leur denrées au quartier du Diamant, pour en rapporter ce qui leur est nécessaire. Ces habitants font, pour la plupart, des vivres et elevent des volailles, quelques'un ont planté des cottons; il y a quelques ateliers pour la fabrique des bois à batir, mais en petite quantité, parce que les bois du voisinage de la mer on été enlevées par les Anglais" FM C10A 2 dossier 1 N. 18, Correspondence of the Marquis de Champigny, February 29 1732.

⁴³ Surviving Catholic registers for the Church of St. Henri, in the neighboring village of Anses d'Arlet, show that people living in St. Lucia regularly traveled to the parish to act as godparents, attend weddings, or baptize their children. See, for example, Archives Départementales de la Martinique [ADM] Cote 2E2/1 pg. 128, Baptême du fils illegitime de Christophe, negre libre demeurant à Sainte Lucie, et d'une Caraibesse, 1722; ADM Cote 2E2/1 pg. 147, Baptême d'Angelique petite negresse née en legitime mariage de Marc et Magdeleine negresse libre demeurant à Sainte Lucie. Unfortunately parish registers for Diamant are not extant for the period prior to 1763.

⁴⁴ Elisabeth, *La Société Martiniquaise*, 42. "Le malheur des tems a la perte des cacao les avoient forcés de se jeter pour y vivre plus commodement" in St. Lucia, reported the Marquis de Champigny in 1731. See C8A42 F132, M. de Champigny, 23 October 1731.

determined to abandon [the colony] and go to neighboring islands,” explained Bochart. Clearly concerned by the desertion of hundreds of colonists, particularly members of the island’s militia, the Governor attempted to encourage impoverished small planters to stay in Martinique by distributing the seeds of the coffee bush, a plant only recently introduced to the Caribbean.⁴⁵

Bochart’s attempt to retain small planters in Martinique met with limited success. By the 1730s, the respective populations of Grenada and the neutral islands, though still considerably smaller than those of established colonies in the Lesser Antilles, were far from insignificant. The following table, culled from enumerations archived by the French Department of the Marine and Colonies, illustrates the population of the respective islands circa 1730.

⁴⁵ “[N]e pouvant se procurer dans la [Martinique] de quoy s’entretenir, ils se déterminèrent a l’abandonner et a passer aux isles voisines,” ANOM C8B9 N. 94, *Mémoire sur la culture du café aux îles du Vent*, 1731. Jean-Pierre Sainton dates the introduction of coffee to Martinique to 1721; by 1733, the colony exported some 3,000 tonnes of the crop. Sainton, *Histoire et civilisation de la Caraïbe*, 135.

Table 1.2: Respective Populations of Martinique, Grenada, St. Lucia, Dominica, and St. Vincent
c.1730⁴⁶

	Martinique	Grenada	St. Lucia	Dominica	St. Vincent
Caribs	No data	24	37	419	No data
WHITES					
White men	5,205	257	100	150	172
White women	2,762	141	6	58	34
Girls 'eligible for marriage'	1,625	50	2	11	17
White boys under 12	2,868	132	17*	74	32
White girls under 12	2,509	126		58	29
Total white population	14,969	706	135	351	284
FREE PEOPLE OF COLOR					
Free men of color	318	38	No data	12	19
Free women of color	658	53	33	10	18
Free children of color	519	20	74	8	66
Total free colored population	1,495	111	107	30	103
SLAVES					
Male slaves	20,118	1,683		266	318
Female slaves	15,664	965		45	83
Child slaves	16,849	1,235		84	66
Elderly or infirm slaves	4,386	492		No data	No data
Total slave population	57,107	4,375	147	395	467
Total free population	16,164	900	316	800	387
TOTAL POPULATION	73,371	5,275	463	1,195	854

The above table is striking for a number of reasons, not least of which that Grenada, an official colony of France since 1649, counted only slightly more free inhabitants than did the neutral island of Dominica. The effects of imperial neglect and mismanagement, coupled with persistent fears of Carib attack, reveal themselves in the population figures for the French colony: only 817 free settlers, along with 24 Caribs and 59 *engagés*, had chosen to make their homes in

⁴⁶ Unfortunately, no enumerations for Tobago are extant for the period prior to 1770. The figures for Martinique are offered as a general point of comparison; the data for the island dates from 1738 and is sourced from Etienne Ruz, *Etudes Historiques et Statistiques sur la population de la Martinique, Vol. I* (Saint-Pierre, Martinique: Imprimerie de Carles, 1850), 212.

ANOM DPPC G1/498 N. 47 (Grenada, 1731); N.82 (Dominica, 1730); N. 92 (St. Vincent, 1732); ANOM DPPC G1/506 N. 3 (St. Lucia, 1732). *The census for St. Lucia counted 'white children' without regard to sex.

Grenada more than 75 years after the island was formally incorporated into the French empire. Martinique, an island approximately three times the size of Grenada, counted more than thirteen times the number of slaves and almost eighteen times the number of free people than its sister colony. Although Grenada was not a neutral island, its location at the far reaches of the French empire subjected the colony to many of the same processes that shaped the Creole Archipelago in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries.

The fact that the above population counts were archived by France's Ministry of the Marine and Colonies betrays the extent to which French colonial officials monitored the purportedly neutral or Carib territories in their midst. French officials generated a census of St. Vincent in 1732; of Dominica in 1730, 1731, 1743, 1745, and 1753; and of St. Lucia in 1730 and then almost annually from 1745 until 1763. These censuses were primarily intended to gauge the extent of European settlement in the islands, which helps explain why Caribs, who likely constituted the majority of the population of St. Vincent in 1730, are not enumerated. Despite this bias, surviving enumerations are indispensable in that they lend concrete numbers to the otherwise impressionistic reports of observers such as Bochart.

In addition to worrying about the growing populations of the purportedly neutral islands, colonial officials repeatedly expressed concern about the nature of the societies being constructed beyond the reach of their laws. French subjects who left Martinique to establish themselves in St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Dominica lived in a state of independence and threatened to "detach themselves from their homeland," reported Jacques Pannier d'Orgeville, Intendant of the French Windward Islands, in 1731. The settlers avoided paying taxes on their slaves or their land; worse still, their location outside of French territories meant that in the event of war "they could just as

easily take the side of the English as of us,” d’Orgeville worried.⁴⁷ The intendant’s complaints reflect persistent concerns about the creation of creolized communities outside the sphere of colonial rule in the early Americas. To whom would these settlers owe taxes, much less allegiance? What might their independent nature mean in the event of another Franco-British war?

More than a decade after d’Orgeville and Bochart aired their concerns, French officials in Martinique found the situation little improved. In 1744 the Governor of Martinique, André Martin de Poinable, noted that the number of planters in both St. Lucia and Dominica “increased each day.” Once again, the French official was quick to note that the settlers “were drawn there by nothing more than a love of independence.” Poinable was particularly incensed that settlers were allowing unqualified men to act as notaries and judges. “[M]urders and assassinations frequently occur in these neutral islands and continue to go unpunished” he complained, repeating a familiar refrain about the inherently lawless nature of people who lived beyond the jurisdiction of colonial law.⁴⁸

Ironically, Poinable’s account can also be read to suggest that by the middle decades of the eighteenth century an ordered society was emerging in the Creole Archipelago. In 1739, officials in Martinique reported that despite not “having any official appointments” or being “vested with the necessary power,” one Sieur Le Grand had won the respect of residents of Dominica; the planter ably filled the roles of “commander, intendant, and judge” in the nearby

⁴⁷ “nos habitans s’entretiennent la dans l’indépendance, se detachent de leur patrie qu’après les y avoir laissé longtemps, s’il survenoit une guerre ils prendroient aussy aisement party avec les anglois qu’avec nous.” ANOM C8A 42 F. 245, M. d’Orgeville September 2 1731.

⁴⁸ “...le nombre d’habitants y augmente tous les jours et on peut dire qu’ils n’y sont attirés que pour l’amour de l’indépendance ou ils y vivent. M. de la Croix y a nommé des notaires qui tous les jours passent des actes. Celui qui est estably à la Dominique nommé le Maus petit Marchand mis a son aise y a fait même le fonction de juge dans quelques occasions. Je ne crois pas, Monseigneur, devoir vous laisse ignorer qu’il arrive frequemment dans ces iles neutres des meurtres et des assassinats qui restent tous impunis.” ANOM C8A 56 F. 143, André Martin de Poinable, Governor of Martinique, to Jacques Charles Bochart, Governor General of the French Windward Islands, February 8, 1744.

neutral island.⁴⁹ By agreeing to vest authority in specific individuals like Le Grand, residents of the Creole Archipelago began to construct economic, social, and informal political hierarchies recognized by other members of their community, even if these hierarchies did not always meet with the approval of officials in neighboring colonies.

“Without Aspiring to the Same Prerogatives as Whites:” Race in the Creole Archipelago

Although allegations of ‘regular murders and assassinations’ were likely exaggerated, some residents of the Creole Archipelago did have a contentious relationship with colonial law. Free people of color who elected to live outside the sphere of imperial rule were likely motivated to do so in part because of the increasingly restrictive conditions to which they were daily subjected. By settling in islands where colonial legislation explicitly designed to limit the economic and social possibilities of people of African descent did not reach, free people of color exercised an important and often-overlooked role in shaping the culture of the southern Caribbean.

Whether the offspring of white planters and their slaves or the free descendants of people trafficked from Africa, free people of color could be found in American colonies almost as soon as the colonies were founded. Official attempts to regulate the position of slaves and free blacks in French colonial society had by 1685 resulted in the creation of the *Code Noir*, France’s first comprehensive slave code. Article IX of the Code stipulated that if an unmarried man fathered a child with one of his slaves he should marry her, thereby freeing and legitimating both mother and child. Although the article was rarely if ever enforced, its inclusion in a legal document designed to regulate the treatment of slaves speaks to the frequency of relations between planters and

⁴⁹ “Le Sieur LeGrand qui les commande a scu s’en faire aimer et respecter sans être cependant muni d’aucun caractère apparent, il y fait les fonctions de commandant, d’intendant, et de juge, et je lui dois la justice de vous temoigner, Monseigneur, qu’il se comporte en tout avec tant de sagesse, et qu’il s’est attiré tant de confiance que les habitants se soumettent a ses decisions avec la meme resignation que s’il était revetu de pouvoir necessaire sans qu’il nous en revienne la moindre plainte... il a assez de désintéressement pour rendre tous ses services gratuitement sans rien exiger des habitants, et sans avoir aucuns appointements.” ANOM FM C8A 50 F315, M. de la Croix, July 1 1739.

enslaved women.⁵⁰ Affirming the normalcy of such relationships, a visitor to Martinique in 1681 noted that planters who did not free their mixed-race children at birth normally did so when sons reached the age of twenty and daughters fifteen.⁵¹ A slave could also be freed by an act of manumission, or by virtue of being named the executor of his master's estate or guardian of his children.⁵²

By the beginning of the eighteenth century, these practices had created sizeable populations of free people of African and mixed Afro-European descent in the French Atlantic. Although Articles 57 and 59 of the Code Noir explicitly stated that free people of color were to enjoy the same "rights, privileges, and immunities" as freeborn French subjects, a number of white subjects and officials objected to being placed on equal footing with people descended from slaves.⁵³ In 1683, the Governor of Martinique expressed his belief that "mulattoes whose birth is a product of vice" could not expect to receive favorable treatment.⁵⁴ By explicitly linking the very existence of

⁵⁰ Article IX states: "The free men who will have one or several children from their concubinage with their slaves, together with the masters who permitted this, will each be condemned to a fine of two thousand pounds of sugar: and if they are the masters of the slave by whom they have had the said children, we wish that beyond the fine, they be deprived of the slave and the children, and that she and they be confiscated for the profit of the [royal] hospital without ever being manumitted. Nevertheless we do not intend for the present article to be enforced if the man who **was not married to another person during his concubinage with his slave would marry in the church the said slave who by this means will be manumitted and the children rendered free and legitimate.**" Louis XIV, *Le Code Noir ou recueil des reglements rendus jusqu'à présent* (Paris: Prault, 1767), Translated by John Garrigus. https://directory.vancouver.wsu.edu/sites/directory.vancouver.wsu.edu/files/inserted_files/webintern02/code%20noir.pdf accessed November 9, 2014. Emphasis added.

⁵¹ Cited in Abel A. Louis, *Les Libres de Couleur en Martinique, Tome 1: Des origines à la veille de la Révolution française 1635-1788* (Paris: L'Harmattan, 2012), 41.

⁵² Article 56 states: "Children made universal beneficiaries by their masters, or named executors of their testaments or tutors of their children, will be held and regarded as manumitted." *Le Code Noir*, John Garrigus, translator.

⁵³ Article 57 states: "We declare their manumissions enacted in our islands to serve in place of birth in our islands and manumitted slaves will not need our letters of naturalization in order to enjoy the advantages of our natural subjects in our kingdom, lands and countries under our obedience, although they be born in foreign lands." Article 59 states: "We grant to manumitted slaves the same rights, privileges and liberties enjoyed by persons born free: desiring that they merit this acquired liberty and that it produce in them both for their persons and for their property, the same effects that the good fortune of natural liberty causes in our other subjects." *Code Noir*, John Garrigus translator.

⁵⁴ "Les mulâtres qui tirent leur naissance du vice ne devraient pas recevoir d'exemptions." Quoted in Louis, *Les libres de couleur*, 140.

people of mixed race to acts of illicit sex, such statements denied free people of color a legitimate place in colonial society.⁵⁵

Such discriminatory attitudes led to the drafting of legislation designed to limit the economic and social opportunities available to free people of color.⁵⁶ On July 1 1726, Martinique's Superior Council registered an edict of King Louis XV which rendered all free people of color "ineligible to receive from whites any donation, due to death or otherwise, of any denomination."⁵⁷ In short, people of African descent were forbidden to be named legatees of whites, regardless of any ties of family or friendship; the illegitimate sons and daughters of white planters who might previously have inherited part of their father's estate now found themselves excluded by law. Four years later, the regular collection of a head tax from which only island-born whites were exempt further alienated the respective free-colored populations of Martinique and Guadeloupe.⁵⁸

Debates over the collection of the head tax, or *droit de capitation*, imposed on slaves and on foreign subjects residing in France's colonies animated colonial and metropolitan officials throughout the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries. Although Article 59 of the Code Noir specified that free people of color were to enjoy the same rights and privileges as other French subjects, officials in the French Caribbean repeatedly drew distinctions between the two groups. Officials regularly enumerated whites and free people of color separately in censuses, imposing a head tax on the latter group alone. In 1730, a royal ordinance lent official sanction to this practice

⁵⁵ For more on French opposition to *mésalliance*, see Doris Garraway, *The Libertine Colony: Creolization in the Early French Caribbean* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005), especially 207-211.

⁵⁶ In 1723, the Intendant of Martinique alleged that allowing free people of color to benefit from exemptions not afforded to foreign born whites "entretient leur orgueil." Quoted in Louis, *Les libres de couleur*, 142.

⁵⁷ "incapables à l'avenir de recevoir des blancs aucune donation entre vifs, ou à cause de mort, ou autrement..." Cited in Elisabeth, *La Société Martiniquaise*, 290. This legislation mirrors that found in the respective *Code Noir* issued for Bourbon (Article 51, 1723) and Louisiana (Article 52, 1724). Comparable legislation was never extended to Saint-Domingue, where illegitimate mixed-race children stood to inherit sizeable estates from their white fathers. See Auguste Lebeau, *De la condition des gens de couleur libres sous l'Ancien Régime* (Poitiers: Masson, 1903), 114.

⁵⁸ Elisabeth, *La société martiniquaise*, 304.

for the first time, imposing a tax of 100 pounds of raw sugar on all inhabitants of the island with the exception of creole whites.⁵⁹ In justifying the Crown's decision, Jean-Frédéric Phélypeaux, the comte de Maurepas, who served as France's Minister of the Marine and Colonies from 1723 until 1749, reasoned that free people of color "should consider themselves lucky to enjoy freedom, without aspiring to the same prerogatives as white creoles."⁶⁰

The Comte de Maurepas' dismissal of free people of color as "lucky" to be free highlights the tenuous place occupied by people of African descent in the colonial Americas. Given both the financial burden imposed on free people of color, as well as the discriminatory attitudes they faced, it is little wonder that they began to seek spaces in which their ancestry would not limit the possibilities available to them. In establishing themselves beyond the authority of officials such as Maurepas, free people of color sought to participate in defining the terms of social, economic, and political inclusion in their community. Léo Elisabeth's detailed study of race relations in colonial Martinique reveals the lengths to which people were willing to go in order to safeguard this participation. According to Elisabeth, in direct response to the enforcement of the 1730 head tax free people of color began to leave Martinique for the "disputed" islands of St. Lucia, Dominica, and St. Vincent. Elisabeth's examination of surviving censuses and parish registers, represented in the table below, indicates that almost 500 free people of color quit the French colony in the space of a single year: between 1732 and 1733, the number of free-colored individuals recorded in the census of Martinique declined by 476.

⁵⁹ Abel A. Louis, *Les Libres de couleur en Martinique*, Vol. 1, 143-4.

⁶⁰ "...doivent s'estimer heureux de jouir de la liberté, sans ambitionner les mêmes prérogatives des créoles blancs..." Cited in Christiane Duval née Mezin, "La condition juridique des hommes de couleur libres à la Martinique au temps de l'esclavage" (Doctoral dissertation, Université de droit d'économie et de sciences sociales de Paris, Paris II, 1975), 177.

Table 1.3: Change in Reported Population of Free People of Color in Martinique, 1732-1733⁶¹

PARISH	1732	1733	Change
Fort-Royal	113	115	+2
Case-Pilote	25	38	+13
Lamentin	35	23	-12
Trou-au-chat	21	0	-21
Rivière-Salée	64	74	+10
Anses d'Arlet	139	98	-41
Diamant	69	46	-23
Sainte-Luce	57	35	-22
Rivière-Pilote	27	0	-27
Marin	0	0	0
Salines	4	0	-4
François	17	0	-17
Vauclin	9	0	-9
Robert	20	0	-20
Saint-Pierre	318	137	-181
Precheur	23	12	-9
Carbet	55	54	-1
Sainte-Marie	15	0	-15
Trinité	83	30	-53
Marigot	4	9	+5
Grand Anse	16	5	-11
Basse-Pointe	24	0	-24
Macouba	28	0	-28
TOTAL	1152	676	-476

The dramatic changes in population noted above must be treated with caution; rather than indicating the complete disappearance of all free people of color in a given parish, reported populations of zero may reflect the attitudes of local militia captains tasked with conducting the enumerations. Militia captains in parishes such as Macouba, Basse-Pointe, Rivière-Pilote, and Sainte-Marie may have simply declined to note the race of neighbors, friends, business associates, or extended family members on whom they did not wish to impose further taxes. Increases in the population of free people of color in a number of parishes point to the possibility of internal

⁶¹ Data from Leo Elisabeth, *La Société martiniquaise*, 307.

migrations not captured by the census; some of the individuals who left Trinité, on Martinique's Leeward coast, may have relocated southwest to Rivière-Salée. Even accounting for internal migration and officials' misrepresentations, however, Elisabeth's figures suggest a considerable exodus of free people of color from Martinique in the early 1730s.

The regional dimensions of this emigration are significant. The southwestern parishes of Diamant, Anses d'Arlet, and Ste. Luce, from which 86 free people of color are reported to have departed between 1732 and 1733, lie a mere twenty-one miles north of St. Lucia. The 114 individuals enumerated as having left Martinique's northern parishes of Basse-Pointe, Precheur, and Saint-Pierre would have similarly only had to travel twenty-five miles across the channel separating the French colony from Dominica.

Many free people of color and small white planters were already accustomed to regularly undertaking such journeys in order to maintain connections with friends, family, and business associates. Surviving registers for the parish of Anses d'Arlet, in southwestern Martinique, reveal that residents of St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and even Tobago continued to travel to the community to baptize children, marry, or serve as godparents even after they settled in the neighboring islands.⁶² On July 21, 1734, Pierre Delat and his wife Marie Elizabeth Potier, identified as residents of St. Vincent, brought their infant son to be baptized in the church of St. Henri in Anses d'Arlet. Baby Prospert had been born in St. Vincent just two weeks earlier, on July 6, but his parents wasted little time in bringing the newborn to be christened in their parish of origin, where Augustin Larcher and Jeanne Lepine—residents of Anses d'Arlet who were perhaps friends or former neighbors of Prospert's parents—acted as godparents.⁶³ Other parents also braved the journey by sea with their

⁶² See, for example, ADM Cote 2E2/1 pg. 128, Baptême du fils illegitime de Christophe, negre libre demeurant à Sainte Lucie, et d'une Caraibesse, 1722; ADM Cote 2E2/1 pg. 147, Baptême d'Angelique petite negresse née en legitime mariage de Marc et Magdeleine negresse libre demeurant à Sainte Lucie.

⁶³ ADM Cote 2E2/1 July 21 1734, Baptême de Prospert Delat.

newborns, suggesting that travel between the islands of the Creole Archipelago was a fairly unremarkable endeavor. On June 29, 1733, Etienne Lefort and his wife Marianne Dorival, residents of Ouassigany, St. Vincent, brought their one-month old son Etienne André to southern Martinique. The baby had been baptized by Père Maréchal, a Jesuit missionary in St. Vincent, two days after his birth, but his parents wanted to ensure that his baptism was also recorded in their parish of origin.⁶⁴

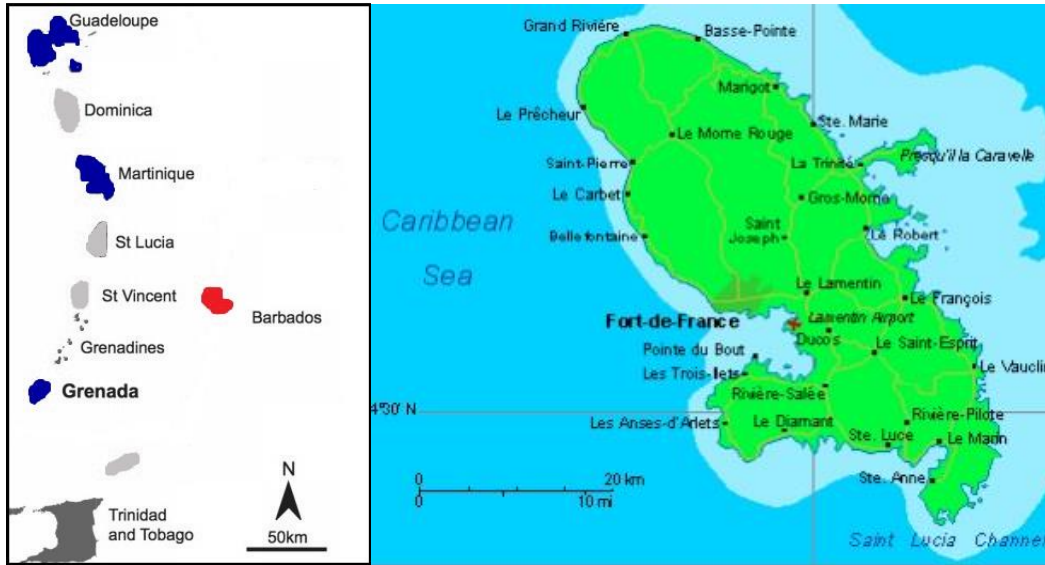
Residents of other southern Caribbean islands continued to make similar trips to Martinique in order to participate in the religious life of the French colony throughout the eighteenth century. On July 30, 1742, Jean Baptiste LaVerge LaFeuillée and Catherine Adenet married in the church of St. Jean Baptiste, in Basse-Pointe, Martinique. Although the groom was a resident of southern Dominica, he elected to travel to cross the channel separating the island from the northern tip of Martinique in order to wed his bride in her parish of origin.⁶⁵ Jean Cevet, a native of Fort Royal who had lived for several years in Tobago, did the same when he married a woman named Marie Rose in her home village of Anses d'Arlet in 1734.⁶⁶ As these journeys make clear, the decision to leave Martinique in order to settle in neighboring islands did not require individuals to abandon familial, economic, and social connections established in the French colony. Instead, the growing number of people who settled in Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Tobago in the mid-eighteenth century managed to maintain their religious, familial, and social connections in Martinique, while avoiding the problems that may have affected many of them had they remained under French colonial rule: like many who quit Martinique in the years after 1730, Jean Cevet and Marie Rose were described as mulatto.

⁶⁴ ADM Cote 2E2/1, June 29 1733, Baptême Etienne André Lefort. 'Ouacigany,' the site of present-day Kingstown, St. Vincent, was more commonly rendered by the French as 'Ouassigany.'

⁶⁵ ADM, Parish records Basse-Pointe, July 14 1742, Mariage LaVerge LaFeuillé et Adenet.

⁶⁶ ADM Cote 2E2/1, October 26 1734, Mariage Jean Cevet and Marie Rose.

Map 1.2: Location and Parishes in Martinique⁶⁷



In addition to records like the marriage of Jean Cevet and Marie Rose, extant population counts for Dominica and St. Lucia corroborate Elisabeth's contention that many of the people who abandoned Martinique in favor of the 'disputed' islands were free people of color. A 1730 survey of St. Lucia indicated a total population of just 463 people in the island, including one hundred free men, 37 Caribs, and 137 slaves. In the same year Dominica was slightly more populated, boasting 395 slaves and 381 settlers, along with a reported 419 Caribs. By 1745—the next year for which enumerations of both islands are available—Dominica and St. Lucia had each experienced considerable growth. St. Lucia's settler population of 882 was outnumbered by some 2,573 slaves, while Dominica counted 1,152 free people and 1,880 slaves. Caribs were no longer enumerated in either island.

⁶⁷ Map of Martinique sourced from www.frenchcaribbean.com, accessed December 2, 2012.

Table 1.4: Increase in Reported Populations of Dominica & St. Lucia, 1730-1745⁶⁸

	Dominica 1730	St. Lucia 1730	Dominica 1745	St. Lucia 1745
Settlers	381	289	1,152	882
Slaves	395	137	1,880	2,573
TOTAL	776	426	3032	3455

In addition to supporting Elisabeth’s theory of inter-island migration, population figures for Dominica and St. Lucia attest to the development of creolized communities on the colonial frontier. As of 1745, Dominica’s free population included almost 200 boys and 184 girls under the age of twelve and 109 ‘filles à marier,’ or girls over twelve deemed eligible for marriage, along with 435 adult men and 207 adult women. St. Lucia’s slightly smaller free population counted 339 adult men and 145 women, along with 132 girls, 175 boys, and 91 ‘filles à marier.’⁶⁹ This means that by the middle of the eighteenth century, 43% of the free population of Dominica and 45% of that of St. Lucia was composed of children and adolescents.⁷⁰ While some of these children may have travelled with their parents across the Atlantic, most were Creoles—that is, born in the Americas. As free residents of the archipelago developed a self-reproducing population, they also elaborated a society that was socially, economically, and racially distinct from that of European colonists.

In St. Lucia, free children of African descent initially outnumbered their white counterparts; in 1730, the island counted just seventeen white children compared to seventy-four ‘enfants sortis de mulatresses, métisses, ou negresses libres.’ By 1745, the census enumerated 243 white children and 155 free children of color, indicating that both whites and free people of color

⁶⁸ ANOM DPPC G1 506 Recensement St. Lucia 1745; ANOM DPPC G1 498 Dominica 1745. Unfortunately no population counts for St. Vincent at mid-century are extant.

⁶⁹ ANOM DPPC G1/506 Recensement St. Lucia 1745; ANOM DPPC G1/498 Recensement Dominica 1745. Population counts for both islands also listed ‘elderly and infirm’ settlers.

⁷⁰ As a point of comparison, Boucher writes that children as a percentage of the free population of Martinique reached their highest point in 1694, at 40.9%. Boucher, *France and the American Tropics*, 258.

quit Martinique during the economically trying times of the 1730s. It is more difficult to ascertain the number of free-colored children in Dominica. Although enumerations taken in the island in 1730 and 1731 distinguished between whites and free people of color, subsequent population counts for Dominica grouped all free people together without noting race.

More than simple administrative oversights, this and comparable absences of distinction with regard to color provide important insight on the legal and social implications of race in the Creole Archipelago. Local census takers who declined to note the race of spouses and children implicitly afforded legitimacy to all free families. Although the race of women and children in St. Lucia was noted, free adult men were grouped as “married men and bachelors bearing arms, whites as well as free blacks and mulattoes;” suggesting that the ability to participate in defending the island was a more important marker than was race.⁷¹ The reluctance to privilege race as a primary category of social belonging in the Creole Archipelago becomes even more striking in light of the fact that free people of color began to be systematically enumerated separately from their white peers in Martinique by the end of the seventeenth century.⁷²

A close examination of a militia muster roll taken in 1745 in St. Lucia further suggests the ways in which race as a category of socio-economic belonging changed within and beyond the boundaries of colonial society. The detailed muster roll, which is distinct from the year’s nominative census, lists the respective heads of household in the island’s parishes, along with their marital status, number of children, and number of adult male, adult female, and child slaves. Among the households listed was that of Jean Baptiste Leveillé. Although no Caribs were counted

⁷¹ ‘hommes mariés et garçons portant armes, tant blancs que mulâtres et negres libres’ ANOM DPPC G1/506 Recensement St. Lucie 1756.

⁷² Elisabeth, *La société martiniquaise*, 300. The same was not true for French colonial New Orleans, where census-takers grouped all free people without regard to race together in the enumeration for 1721; parenthetical references to race were made in a household census of 1732. See Dawdy, *Building the Devil’s Empire*, 153-157.

in the island's nominative census of the same year, Leveillé was described in the muster roll as 'Carib.' This description suggests that while many Amerindians deliberately lived apart from settlers and thus avoided being counted, others assimilated into the society of the Creole Archipelago. Leveillé and his wife, whose name and race are not noted, lived with their eight children, along with two enslaved women and one enslaved child. Not far from the Leveillé family, in Petit Carénage, northwest St. Lucia, Charlotte and Claire Grandval, both described as 'free mulattoes,' lived with two children, five adult male, five adult female, and six child slaves. Households like those of the Leveillé and Grandval families may have been remarkable in neighboring colonies, but in St. Lucia they were far from unusual. In regions of the Atlantic World where restrictive colonial legislation did not apply, men and women were able to retain greater control over their familial, social, and economic lives.

Some of these men and women also succeeded in attaining positions of considerable economic and social importance. Of 2,573 total slaves in St. Lucia in 1745, 91 were owned by Alexandre Nouet, identified in the militia muster roll as *mulâtre*. The number of slaves owned by Nouet was second only to that of a white planter named Dubuq Letang, who laid claim to 109. Although the enumerator's qualification of Nouet as *mulâtre* suggests that his position as a member of St. Lucia's economic elite was not accepted without comment, the number of slaves to which Nouet laid claim testifies to a level of wealth that would have been much more difficult to achieve as a free-colored resident of a plantation colony elsewhere in the eighteenth-century Atlantic World. While it is difficult to know for certain, it is possible that Nouet and his family elected to establish themselves in St. Lucia for this very reason: as of 1736, Alexandre and his wife were in Anses d'Arlet, southwest Martinique, serving as godparents to the illegitimate daughter of

Pierre Caffard and Jeanne Guist, a mulatto woman.⁷³ The Nouets, like many residents of St. Lucia, may have made the short journey to nearby Martinique to celebrate the occasion, or they may have been residents of Martinique as of 1736 and subsequently decided to seek new opportunities in the colonial periphery. A muster roll taken in 1747 may suggest why: Nouet is listed as the owner of 87 slaves, the largest number of any proprietor in the island.⁷⁴ Rather than being identified as *mulâtre*, he is described as *capre*, a term used to identify the offspring of one black and one mulatto parent. His wife, Marie Anne Caffard, is listed as *blanche*.

Though not entirely unheard of, marriage between white women and free men of African descent in the French empire grew increasingly rare as the eighteenth century progressed.⁷⁵ Such unions were especially uncommon in the slave societies of the Caribbean; while Leo Elisabeth's thorough review of parish records for Martinique notes several instances of marriage between white men and women of African descent, he makes no mention of any white women marrying black men.⁷⁶ The census-taker's decision to explicitly note the race of Nouet's wife, Marie-Anne Caffard, in the 1747 enumeration also warrants consideration. Although people of African descent made up the majority of the population throughout the colonial Caribbean, in French colonies whiteness remained the norm. Administrators would therefore not explicitly note in official documents that an individual was white: if his or her name was not followed by a descriptor such as '*mulâtre*' or '*negre*' the implication was that the person in question was of exclusively European

⁷³ ADM Cote 2E2/1 pg. 207, Baptism of Rosalie, 1736.

⁷⁴ Dubuq Letang is not listed in the 1747 enumeration. The proprietors with the second-largest number of slaves in St. Lucia as of 1747 were Jean Mederic Moreau and Augustin Ollivier, who together owned 79 slaves. ANOM DPPC G1 506, État des Compagnies, 1747.

⁷⁵ For instances of marriage between white women and black men in pre-revolutionary France, see Jennifer Palmer, "What's in a name? Mixed race families and resistance to racial codification in Eighteenth-Century France," *French Historical Studies* 33, No. 3 (June 2010): 357-385.

⁷⁶ Elisabeth, *La société martiniquaise*, 315-316.

ancestry.⁷⁷ By writing that the wife of a *capre* man was *blanche*, the census-taker deliberated highlighted what he saw as an unusually noteworthy—and perhaps unusually objectionable—union.

While the individual who transmitted information about St. Lucia's population to France's Ministry of the Marine and Colonies apparently could not allow Nouet's interracial marriage to pass unremarked, the fact remains that the couple was able to legally marry, form a family, and attain a position of economic and perhaps concomitant social prestige in the Creole Archipelago. Nouet's situation would have been much more difficult—if not impossible—to attain in neighboring colonies in which the boundaries between black and white, slave and free were increasingly policed. His visible role as a prosperous free-colored planter, the legitimate husband of a white woman, and the owner of almost one hundred slaves undermined the racial hierarchy on which plantation colonies were built. The challenge that Nouet and others like him were seen to pose to neighboring colonial societies would only increase as the population of the Creole Archipelago, as well as their economic and social connections with colonial subjects, strengthened in the middle decades of the eighteenth century.

'Toute la force d'un habitant': Slavery in the Creole Archipelago

Like Nouet and his children, many of Nouet's slaves were born in the Creole Archipelago. It is estimated that throughout the late-seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, children accounted for between 12% and 22% of all people forcibly transported as slaves from Africa.⁷⁸ Surviving enumerations for Dominica and St. Lucia indicate significantly higher proportions of enslaved

⁷⁷ For more on the "normalcy of whiteness" in the French Caribbean, see Laurent Dubois, "Inscribing Race in the Revolutionary French Antilles," in Sue Peabody and Tyler Stovall, eds. *The Color of Liberty: Histories of Race in France* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2003), 95-107.

⁷⁸ David Eltis & Stanley L. Engerman, "Fluctuations in Sex and Age Ratios in the Transatlantic Slave Trade, 1663-1864," *The Economic History Review* 46, N. 2 (May 1993), 310.

children. As of 1745, children accounted for 707 out of 2,573 total slaves in St. Lucia, or approximately 28% of the enslaved population. The percentage of child slaves was even higher in Dominica, at 32%, or 606 children out of 1,880 total slaves. While some of these children were purchased from slavers, limited access to transatlantic trade also motivated planters in the Creole Archipelago to encourage natural increase among their laborforce.

In his discussion of the rise of slavery in France's Caribbean colonies, Philip Boucher argues that "the staggering superiority of mortality over birth rates of the 'mature' plantation era did not characterize the frontier era;" before the advent of sugar monoculture prompted regular trade between Europe, Africa, and the Americas, planters needed to keep slaves alive and healthy in order to maintain an adequate number of laborers.⁷⁹ Only when planters had ready access to the transatlantic slave trade did they find it more economically viable to purchase adult slaves from Africa rather than raise creole slaves to maturity. Boucher's thesis finds support in the work of Arlette Gautier, who argues that in the seventeenth century French planters actively encouraged reproduction among the enslaved by promoting slave marriages, treating slaves less harshly than indentured servants, and offering incentives to slave mothers.⁸⁰ Planters in the Creole Archipelago similarly attempted to compensate for their location in islands that remained outside formal circuits of transatlantic trade. By the mid-eighteenth century, many of the slaves in the Creole Archipelago—like their masters—had been born or at least grown up in the region. Most labored on relatively small plantations: as of 1760, the 3,812 slaves in St. Lucia were dispersed across 327 households, with the majority of proprietors on the island laying claim to fewer than 10 slaves

⁷⁹ Philip Boucher, "The Frontier Era of the French Caribbean, 1620s-1690s," in Daniels & Kennedy, eds. *Negotiated Empires*, 224. Elsewhere, Boucher posits that during the frontier era "relations among masters and slaves may have been relatively relaxed," but emphasizes that his "conclusions are very tentative." Boucher, *France and the American Tropics*, 158-160.

⁸⁰ Arlette Gautier, "Traite et politiques démographiques esclavagistes," *Population* 6 (November 1986: 1005-1024)

each.⁸¹ These conditions had important consequences in the daily lives of the enslaved, who developed a shared language and culture, and who were better able to form and maintain social and familial ties in the Americas than were slaves brought from Africa.

With almost twice the number of slaves as St. Lucia and more than ten times that of Dominica as of 1730, Grenada's status as a colony of France afforded planters in the island a degree of access to the transatlantic slave trade not enjoyed by their counterparts in the neutral islands. Despite this access, the scarcity of laborers in the colony remained a constant source of complaint for planters and colonial officials alike. Describing a visit to Grenada in 1717, the Marquis de Feuquières, Bochart's predecessor as Governor General of France's Windward Island colonies, bemoaned the island's lack of slaves. "Slaves constitute all the power of the planter, and by extension of all the colonies" explained the Governor, "they are very expensive in Grenada because slave ships never go there, so [planters] are obliged to buy slaves secondhand or in Martinique, and these are most often nothing more than the scraps of a cargo."⁸²

Geography alone fails to account for the relative dearth of transatlantic slave ships destined for the southernmost French colony in the Caribbean. Due to the influence of the South Equatorial current, vessels coming from Africa normally entered the Caribbean from the southeast and would therefore have passed Grenada, St. Vincent, and St. Lucia en route to Martinique, where captains typically unloaded the majority of their human cargo before continuing on to Guadeloupe. As a peripheral part of the French empire, Grenada was simply a much less attractive destination to transatlantic slave ships than were richer colonies like Martinique or Barbados. As Laurent Dubois

⁸¹ ANOM DPPC G1/506 St. Lucia household enumeration 1760. Of 327 proprietors, 210 owned 10 slaves or fewer. A further 44 households enumerated in the census reported owning no slaves. The three largest slaveowners in the island owned 129, 87, and 67 slaves respectively.

⁸² "Les negres sont toute la force d'un habitant, et par consequent de toutes les colonies; ils sont très chers à la Grenade parce qu'il n'y va jamais de négrier: de sorte qu'on est obligé de les faire acheter a la Martinique, ou de la seconde main de ceux qui y en portent, et qui ne sont le plus souvent que le rebut d'une cargaison." Beinecke Collection MS 220, Hamilton College Library, 4.

explains, the same problem affected planters in Guadeloupe; because transatlantic slave traders knew that they would find a ready market for their human cargos in Saint-Domingue or Martinique, they often bypassed more peripheral French colonies.⁸³

For the period prior to 1763, the database of transatlantic slave voyages lists only ten slave ships whose primary place of landing was Grenada; in total, these ships disembarked 2,634 slaves in the island, the vast majority during the 1750s. Two slave ships collectively disembarked just 272 slaves at St. Lucia during the same period, while 1,688 slaves on six separate ships were landed at Tobago, all of them by Dutch traders during their failed bid to colonize the island in the mid-seventeenth century.⁸⁴ The database lists no voyages calling at Dominica or St. Vincent prior to 1763. In contrast, Barbados received an estimated 350,504 slaves during the same period; Martinique 142,582; and Guadeloupe 32,109.

Table 1.5
Enslaved Africans Reported as Disembarking in the Lesser Antilles, 1626-1762⁸⁵

	St. Lucia (Neutral)	Tobago (Neutral)	Grenada (Fr.)	Guadeloupe (Fr.)	Martinique (Fr.)	Barbados (Br.)
1626-1650						5,723
1651-1675		1,688	230	3,110	7,386	32,207
1676-1700				566	8,041	93,782
1701-1725	204		692	1,298	35,593	100,039
1726-1750			282	923	64,964	75,477
1751-1762	68		1,430	26,212	26,598	43,276
Totals	272	1,688	2,634	32,109	142,582	350,504

⁸³ Dubois argues that “Guadeloupe’s economic marginality...[also] had important demographic effects on its slave population,” including a natural increase of 3 percent between 1770 and 1789. Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens*, 51.

⁸⁴ Dutch planters ventured out from their colony on the island of St. Maarten in order to stake a claim to Tobago in the 1650s, but were quickly repelled by Caribs as well as by English forces dispatched from Barbados. The failed Dutch settlement is briefly described in John Campbell, *Candid and Impartial Considerations on the nature of the sugar trade; the Comparative Importance of the British and French Islands in the West-Indies: with the value and consequence of St. Lucia and Granada, truly stated*. (London: R. Baldwin, 1763), 121.

⁸⁵ Data sourced from *Voyages: The Transatlantic Slave Database* at <http://www.slavevoyages.org>, accessed October 3, 2012.

The difference in the scale of the transatlantic slave trade was even more pronounced in the considerably larger Caribbean islands to the north. Although the development of Saint-Domingue did not begin until decades after France had established colonies in the Lesser Antilles, in the first twenty-five years of the eighteenth century almost 50,000 Africans disembarked as slaves in the colony that would later become Haiti. In the mid-eighteenth century that figure grew further still; between 1726 and 1750, more than 140,000 slaves were trafficked from Africa to Saint-Domingue. Almost 205,000 slaves disembarked in the British colony of Jamaica during the same twenty-five year period.

Table 1.6
Enslaved Africans Reported as Disembarking in Jamaica & Saint-Domingue, 1626-1762⁸⁶

YEAR	Jamaica	Saint-Domingue
1626-1658		
1659-1675	11,915	
1676-1700	73,291	4,033
1701-1725	139,769	46,645
1726-1750	204,788	140,527
1751-1762	107,944	63,643
Totals	537,707	254,848

Despite the relative scarcity of transatlantic slave ships calling at Grenada and the neutral islands in the seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, the archipelago's enslaved population continued to grow: by 1745, St. Lucia counted some 2,573 slaves, or more than ten times the number reported to have disembarked in the island by that time. Grenada, which by 1745 had received less than 1,200 slaves from legal transatlantic slaving vessels, reported an enslaved

⁸⁶ Data sourced from *Voyages: The Transatlantic Slave Database* at <http://www.slavevoyages.org>, accessed July 14, 2015.

population of 8,748, and Dominica 1,880.⁸⁷ While still small when compared to the more than 55,000 slaves estimated to be in Martinique by this time, these figures, along with the proportion of child slaves in the respective islands, testify to the importance of natural increase. They also point to an active regional commerce in slaves carried out throughout the southern Caribbean.⁸⁸

“It is absolutely impossible to prevent this commerce,” complained the Marquis de Feuquières, “unless we have an armed frigate that constantly patrols the neighboring islands.” Reporting on the sale of some 300 slaves illegally disembarked at Dominica by Dutch traders in 1721, the Governor General of France’s Windward Islands explained:

The illegal ship arrives laden with slaves, sails in full view of St. Pierre under a Dutch flag, but close enough so as to be noticed and recognized by the merchants of the town, and then goes to Dominica where it lays anchor. The following night, all the merchants who are in the habit of conducting this business send their boats, some with money, others with cacao and indigo to barter, according to their means, for the slaves that they wish to buy, and they then disembark the slaves in their usual bays.⁸⁹

De Feuquières’ description sheds light on what was likely a very common practice.⁹⁰ The thinly-coded communication between buyer and seller is telling: sailing under a foreign flag, smugglers signalled their presence to potential purchasers both in the French colony of Martinique and in the

⁸⁷ ANOM DPPC G1/498 N. 50, Grenada census 1745; N.85, Dominica census 1745; ANOM DPPC G1/506 N. 4, St. Lucia census 1745. Unfortunately, no data is available for St. Vincent for the year 1745. In 1732 St. Vincent had a reported population of 467 slaves; by 1763 there were a reported 3,430 slaves in the island. ANOM DPPC G1/498 N. 92 St: Vincent 1732; BNA CO 101/9 N. 1 Etat présent de St. Vincent 1763

⁸⁸ As of 1736, Martinique had a population of 55,700 slaves. James A. Rawley and Stephen D. Behrendt, *The Transatlantic Slave Trade: A History, Revised Edition* (Dexter, MI: Thomson-Shore, 2005), 114. Philip Curtin also suspects that many slaves were re-exported from Barbados to the neutral islands. See Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 67

⁸⁹ “[I]l est absolument impossible d’empescher ce commerce... à moins d’avoir une frégate armée qui roule perpetuellement dans les isles voisines... L’interlope qui arrive avec les negres, passe au large devant St. Pierre avec pavillon holandois, et cependant assés près pour pouvoir estre distingué et aperçu par les negocians du bourg, et fait ensuite sa route pour la Dominique où il va mouiller. La nuit suivante tous les negocians qui ont coustume de faire ce commerce, envoient avec leurs batteaux les uns de l’argent, les autres du sucre du cacao, et indigo pour traiter chacun suivant leurs forces les negres qu’ils ont envie d’acheter, et les vont ensuite débarquer dans des ances ou ils ont leurs habitudes.” ANOM FM C8A28 f. 15, Francois De Pas de Mazancourt, Marquis de Feuquières, February 3 1721.

⁹⁰ A similar account of a ship from Nantes disembarking more than 200 slaves in St. Lucia can be found in ANOM C8A42 F.182, Correspondence of Jacques Pannier d’Orgeville, Intendant of the Windward Islands, March 15 1731.

islands of St. Vincent and St. Lucia, which vessels coming from Africa could not help but pass en route to Dominica. Although De Feuquières was most concerned about French subjects in Martinique obtaining slaves without paying customary duties, planters in any of the surrounding islands—including those outside the sphere of imperial rule—would have been able to engage in this illicit commerce. After amassing specie or goods to exchange for new laborers, planters would transport slaves back to their plantations in the *pirogues* they used to navigate around and between islands. A language of contraband developed over the course of several decades allowed planters in the Creole Archipelago to increase their laborforce and expand their production, all while bypassing the mercantilist restrictions imposed by European imperialism.

Cabotage and Contraband: Trade in the Southern Caribbean

The regional trade practices that allowed planters to obtain hundreds of slaves also provided them with a ready market for the goods produced by their slaves' labor. Although the produce of the Creole Archipelago is difficult to trace in colonial records, it was vital to the development of the French Atlantic economy. Caribbean islands in which the production of export crops did not monopolize the majority of available land served as breadbaskets for neighboring plantation colonies, as planters and small merchants regularly transported provisions such as plantains, root vegetables, and meat in small watercraft to secluded bays.⁹¹ By raising food and livestock that could be discreetly sold in Guadeloupe and especially Martinique, planters in surrounding islands contributed to the sustenance of slaves and settlers throughout the southern Caribbean, while also increasing the amount of land that French colonists could devote to the production of export crops.

⁹¹ Intra-island *cabotage*, particularly from surrounding islands to the port city of St. Pierre, Martinique, is discussed in Sainton, *Histoire et Civilisation de la Caraïbe*, 112-119.

Problems of food scarcity plagued settlers and slaves in Barbados, Martinique, and Guadeloupe as early as the mid-seventeenth century.⁹² Eager to make a profit exporting tobacco, sugar, and other commodities to the metropole, planters neglected to allocate provision plots; throughout the colonial Caribbean, the availability of land on which to grow food decreased in inverse proportion to the cultivation of export crops. The problem was less pronounced in larger colonies such as 4,240-square mile Jamaica, where slaves could find space to cultivate small gardens. In smaller colonies such as Martinique, at 425 square miles, or Barbados, just 166 square miles, arable land was scarce. Although by law estates in Martinique were required to have three acres planted in provisions such as yams or manioc for every thirty slaves on the plantation, these ordinances proved difficult to enforce.⁹³ Permitting slaves to fish or to grow small gardens, a common practice in French colonies, failed to make up for the deficit: as of 1733, officials in Guadeloupe estimated that the island needed some 2,000,000 additional *pieds*, or about fifty acres, of provisions in order just to keep the slave population alive.⁹⁴

By the mid-eighteenth century, officials in Guadeloupe and Martinique reported to their superiors in France that a considerable proportion of the food necessary to sustain the populations of the respective colonies came not from the colonies themselves or from elsewhere in the French empire, but from surrounding islands.⁹⁵ Land surveys archived by French officials confirm that

⁹² A discussion of the “starving time” caused by a lack of food crops in mid-seventeenth century Barbados can be found in Carl & Roberta Bridenbaugh, *No Peace Beyond the Line: The English in the Caribbean, 1624-1690* (New York: Oxford, 1972), 43-51. Similar food shortages plagued early French settlers, particularly in Guadeloupe; see Butel, *Histoire de Antilles françaises*, 29.

⁹³ Sainton, *Histoire et Civilisation*, 140.

⁹⁴ Sainton, *Histoire et Civilisation*, 141. The French *pied* was equal to approximately 1.065 English feet, while the *quarré* was a unit of measure equal to 100 surveyor’s paces on each side of a square. In Guadeloupe and Saint-Domingue, where the surveyor’s pace was just under one meter, the *quarré* equalled approximately 2.34 acres. In Martinique the pace was slightly longer; each Martiniquan *quarré* translates into approximately 3.19 acres. Because both Grenada and St. Lucia were for a time administered as dependencies of Martinique, I have elected to use the Martiniquan *quarré* as the unit of measure for the neutral islands. For more on French colonial measures, see Pritchard, *In Search of Empire*, xxiii-xxiv.

⁹⁵ ANOM C8A59 f.158, November 14 1751, M. de Bompar.

planters throughout the Creole Archipelago devoted increasing amounts of land to the cultivation of provisions as the eighteenth century progressed. Growing provisions was an attractive option for small planters, who could afford few slaves; contemporaries reported that a single slave could cultivate a *quarré* of manioc, which would usually yield twenty *barriques* of flour.⁹⁶ In St. Lucia, an island with a total area of just 240 square miles, the amount of land planted in manioc expanded from 321 *quarrés* in 1744 to 530 *quarrés* in 1759, or from 1,023 to 1,690 acres.⁹⁷ Planters in Dominica also increased their production of provisions in the mid-eighteenth century. As of 1730, the island had 30,000 *pieds*, or less than one acre planted in plantains, and 18 *quarrés* (57 acres) in yams and root vegetables. Fifteen years later, production of plantains in Dominica had surpassed that of St. Lucia, with approximately nine acres—416,000 *pieds*—planted, while land devoted to provisions such as yams, sweet potato, and taro totalled 62 *quarrés*, or almost 200 acres. As of 1749, Dominica also boasted 320 *quarrés*, or 1,020 acres, planted in manioc; by 1759, that quantity had increased to 547 *quarrés*, or 1,745 acres.⁹⁸ Although surviving enumerations do not permit an analysis of changes in food production in St. Vincent, the sole census taken of the island, which dates to 1732, reports that the 133-square mile territory had some 210,850 *pieds* (a little more than five acres) devoted to plantains. The mountainous island also counted 249 *quarrés*—almost 800 acres—planted in ‘patate,’ a catchall term for root vegetables such as yams and manioc.⁹⁹

Taken together, these figures indicate that as early as 1730—just prior to the moment at which substantial migration to Dominica, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent occurred—the amount of land dedicated to food production in the islands closest to Martinique and Guadeloupe totalled more

⁹⁶ Gabriel Debien, “Les cultures à Sainte-Lucie à la fin du XVIIIe siècle,” *Annales des Antilles* 13 (1966: 49-84), 62.

⁹⁷ ANOM DPPC G1/506 Recensements Ste. Lucie 1732, 1759. Total crop production in St. Lucia declined slightly from 1758 to 1759 and numbers fell further still in the enumeration of 1760, likely due to the effects of the Seven Years’ War in the region.

⁹⁸ ANOM DPPC G1 498, Recensement Dominica 1730, 1745, 1753.

⁹⁹ ANOM DPPC G1 498, Recensement St. Vincent 1732. Unfortunately no further censuses are extant for the island.

than 2,000 acres and counting. Given that Dominica counted only 1,195 slaves and settlers at this time, while St. Lucia's total population was just under 500 individuals, it is clear that estates produced a surplus of provisions. Along with livestock—by 1745, Dominica counted some 500 pigs, 1,021 goats, and almost 700 sheep, while St. Lucia boasted almost 1,000 pigs, along with more than 1,600 goats and sheep—these food crops sustained planters and slaves in the Creole Archipelago as well as in nearby French colonies.¹⁰⁰

With routes for secreting slaves and provisions between French colonies and surrounding islands already well established, it was not long before planters in the Creole Archipelago also began to invest in the production of export commodities. Increased demand for coffee in both Europe and North America in the second quarter of the eighteenth century likely motivated planters to experiment with the crop. Coffee holds the double attraction of requiring neither the initial investment nor the flat expanses of land necessary to grow sugar, and planters throughout the Caribbean were pleased to discover that the bushes flourished with the cooler temperatures and heavier rainfall of the tropical highlands.¹⁰¹ Contemporaries reported that two *quarrés* of coffee required the labor of three slaves to yield approximately one *livre* per *ped*.¹⁰² As of 1744, settlers in St. Lucia had planted over 105,220 *pedes*, or 2.57 acres, in coffee; by 1760, that number had increased to 1,419,000 *pedes*, or 34 acres.¹⁰³ The exceptionally rainy climate of the Dominica, coupled with the island's mountainous topography, favored the cultivation of coffee: by 1753, the last year for which French figures are available, some 1,185,000 *pedes* of the 290-square mile island were planted in coffee, along with 953,000 *pedes* in cacao and 261,000 *pedes* in cotton.¹⁰⁴

¹⁰⁰ ANOM DPPC G1 506 Recensement Ste. Lucie 1745; ANOM DPPC G1 498 Recensement Dominica 1745.

¹⁰¹ On the consumption and cultivation of coffee in the eighteenth century Caribbean see Michel-Rolph Trouillot, "Motion in the System: Coffee, Color, and Slavery in eighteenth-century Saint-Domingue," *Review (Fernand Braudel Center)* 5, N. 3 (Winter 1982): 331-388

¹⁰² Debien, "Les cultures à Sainte Lucie," 69.

¹⁰³ The French *ped* was equal to approximately 1.065 English feet. Pritchard, *In Search of Empire*, xxiii

¹⁰⁴ ANOM DPPC G1 498 Recensement Dominica 1753.

The expansion of cotton cultivation in the northern part of St. Lucia was especially dramatic: not enumerated in the 1744 census of the island, by 1759 planters reported 333 *quarrés*, or approximately 1,062 acres, planted in the crop.¹⁰⁵ Given that each *quarré* was reported to yield approximately 1,200 French *livres* of cotton, the amount of cotton grown in St. Lucia represented a significant return for planters in the island.¹⁰⁶

The nature of the export commodities grown in the Creole Archipelago further lent itself to trade between islands. Unlike sugarcane, a highly labor-intensive crop which must be harvested, crushed, and boiled by skilled workers as quickly as possible so that the cane does not rot, the crops enumerated in surviving censuses of the neutral islands could be processed and stored according to a relatively more flexible timeline.¹⁰⁷ After being passed through a mill and soaked in water in order to loosen the skin and pulp of the cherry, coffee beans can be husked and then laid out in the sun to dry.¹⁰⁸ Tobacco and cotton can be similarly harvested, dried, bundled and stored until ready for transport and refining. Planters who waited for an opportune moment to secret their crops by boat to the bays of neighboring colonies could then simply add their produce to that of French colonists.

Notably absent from surviving enumerations taken in the Creole Archipelago is sugar. While planters in St. Lucia briefly attempted to grow the crop, their experiment was unsuccessful: settlers reported 46 *quarrés* (146 acres) planted in cane in a 1747 enumeration of the island, but that number fell to 31 *quarrés* (99 acres) the following year, and no sugarcane was reported in the

¹⁰⁵ ANOM DPPC G1/506 Recensement St. Lucia 1744 & 1759.

¹⁰⁶ Debien, "Les cultures à la Sainte Lucie," 73.

¹⁰⁷ A detailed description of sugarcane cultivation and processing in the colonial Caribbean can be found in Jean Baptiste Labat, *Nouveau Voyage aux Isles de l'Amérique...* Vol. III (Paris: Pierre-Francois Giffart, 1722), 131-415.

¹⁰⁸ A detailed description of eighteenth-century methods for processing coffee can be found in John Ellis, *An historical account of coffee. With an engraving, and Botanical description of the Tree. To which are added sundry papers relative to its culture and use, as an article of diet and of commerce.* (London: Printed for Edward and Charles Dilly, 1774) 48-49.

enumeration of 1756, the next year for which data is available.¹⁰⁹ Only in the French colony of Grenada did planters possess the enslaved workforce, machinery, and perhaps most crucially the access to European markets necessary to produce the notoriously capital- and labor-intensive crop. The last French census of Grenada, created in 1755, noted 87 sugar plantations in the island. While this is considerably fewer than the 350 counted in Martinique the same year, it confirms that the population and productivity of Grenada, like that of Dominica, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent, increased markedly in the middle decades of the eighteenth century.¹¹⁰

Given the volume of exports involved—British officials jealous of the inter-island trade estimated that by the 1760s almost three million pounds of coffee and one million pounds of cacao annually left Dominica, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent for France—it seems likely that systems of inter-island contraband grew more sophisticated as the eighteenth century wore on.¹¹¹ The correspondence of officials in Martinique and Guadeloupe with their superiors in France reveals that French merchants eager to export commodities to the metropole under the protections afforded by the *exclusif* regularly sent small vessels to surrounding islands in order to “load them up with exclusively foreign goods that they then deposit either into their ships or into their stores.”¹¹² The logic of mercantilism that governed both French and British imperialism in the eighteenth century privileged trade with the respective Crown’s own colonies; foreign imports were to be avoided. Planters who transported secondary crops from Dominica, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent to the nearby

¹⁰⁹ ANOM DPPC G1/506 Recensement St. Lucia 1747, 1748, & 1756.

¹¹⁰ ANOM G1 498, Recensement Grenade 1755. Figures for Martinique sourced from Sainton, *Histoire et Civilisation de la Caraïbe*, 128.

¹¹¹ As a point of comparison, the French colony of Grenada exported 1,482,000 pounds of coffee; 51,919 pounds of cotton; and 84,932 pounds of cacao; along with 4,795 hogshead of sugar; 721 hogshead of molasses; and 17 hogshead of rum. BNA T1 423 N. 279, The amount of the produce of Grenada exported in 1762.

¹¹² “les charger entièrement de marchandises estrangeres qu’ils renversent ensuite ou dans leurs navires ou dans leurs magasins...” ANOM C8A26 F.149, François de Pas de Mazencourt, Marquis de Feuquières, to the Secretary of the Marine and Colonies, March 18, 1719. For a more detailed discussion of the French colonial *exclusif*, see Jean Tarrade, *Le commerce colonial de la France à la fin de l’Ancien Régime: l’évolution du régime de l’Exclusif de 1763-1789*, 2 vols. (Paris: Université de Paris, 1972).

colonies of Martinique and Guadeloupe not only enriched themselves, they also discreetly added to the balance of transatlantic commerce between France and her colonies.

The price these commodities could fetch in metropolitan France likely served as a strong incentive to engage in illicit commerce.¹¹³ By 1760 one French *quintal* (approximately 108 pounds) of cacao was evaluated at 50 *livres tournois*, up from 31.5 *livres tournois* before the outbreak of the Seven Years' War. A *quintal* of coffee continued to fetch around 50 *livres tournois* throughout the 1750s and early 1760s, while the same weight of cotton was worth between 100 and 120 *livres tournois* during the same period.¹¹⁴ As was the case elsewhere in the colonial Caribbean, those who stood to profit from this commerce remained tight-lipped about the illegal activities of themselves and their neighbors. "Regardless of the inquiries and the expenditures that we make, a lack of informants means we cannot discover the source of the contraband," complained the Governor of Guadeloupe in 1720, identifying the complicity of colonists as a key part of the problem. "Without one or two armed ships commanded by naval officers *who are not creole* it is impossible to prevent [this] commerce."¹¹⁵ The governor's complaint is telling: long-standing ties between French subjects in Martinique and Guadeloupe and their former neighbors or business associates who left the colonies for surrounding islands facilitated continued economic relationships. Metropolitan officials found it especially difficult to control the behavior of creole

¹¹³ Christian Koot's examination of illicit trade between English and Dutch colonists in the Caribbean points to a significant increase in inter-imperial trade during periods of conflict. See Christian Koot, *Empire at the Periphery: British Colonists, Anglo-Dutch Trade, and the Development of the British Atlantic, 1621-1713* (New York: New York University Press, 2011), 182.

¹¹⁴ The French *quintal* was equal to 100 *livres*, with each French *livre* weighing approximately 1.08 pounds. See Pritchard, *In Search of Empire*, xxiii.

A list of prices that colonial commodities fetched in France from 1749-1790 can be found in Tarrade, *Le Commerce colonial, 771-772*.

¹¹⁵ "[Q]uelques recherches et quelques frais qu'on fasse on ne peut découvrir la contrebande faite de denonciateurs... sans un ou deux bateaux armez et commandez par des officiers de la Marine qui ne soient point Creole il est impossible d'empescher [ce] commerce." ANOM C8B6 N. 38, Vaultier de Moyencourt, Governor of Guadeloupe, to Marquis de Feuquières, June 4 1720. Emphasis added.

residents, who raised crops and conducted trade in ways that met their own needs, without particular regard for official approval.

Merchants from other empires also absorbed a portion of the produce of the neutral islands. Although it would have been much more difficult for small planters to reach Spanish or English colonies in their customary *pirogues*, some of the Spanish, Dutch, and British vessels that were widely known to bring livestock, timber, and other provisions to the Lesser Antilles left laden with some of the produce of the neutral islands.¹¹⁶ Regardless of the port in which their commodities ultimately landed, it is clear that as the eighteenth century progressed settlers who had elected to live beyond the reach of European empire grew inextricably entangled in imperial commercial processes. As the fruits of the settlers' labor grew, so too did the level of attention they attracted. It would not be long before ambitious European monarchs recognized the value of incorporating the Caribbean frontier into their respective empires.

The Seven Years' War and the End of Neutrality

As residents of the Creole Archipelago became increasingly entangled in the economic and political fabric of the French Atlantic, British colonial officials began to protest the growing number of people residing in the purportedly neutral islands. As had happened on several occasions throughout the seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, imperial disputes over the status of the islands resulted in a mutual pledge to evacuate.¹¹⁷ Yet attempts to dislodge the islands' settlers—many of whom had by this time resided there for decades and some of whom had never lived anywhere else—were met with consternation. “What rights do [the English] have to Dominica and

¹¹⁶ English merchants maintained a particularly active commerce with planters in St. Lucia; see ANOM C8A35 F.143, *Mésures à prendre pour reprimer le commerce clandestin à la Sainte Lucie*, September 17, 1726.

¹¹⁷ The evacuation of one or more of the neutral islands (most often St. Lucia) was ordered in 1660, 1721, 1723, 1735, and 1748, but was never followed through. See Richard Pares, *War and Trade in the West Indies* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1936), 179-256.

St. Vincent? Did they not recognize by the treaties [of 1660] that these islands belong to the Caribs indigenous to the land?” wrote the Marquis de Caylus, Bochart’s successor as Governor General of the French Windward Islands, in 1750. Protesting the proposed removal of settlers residing in Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, & Tobago, the Governor appealed to his superiors’ sense of humanity, imploring them to consider “what will happen to the families established in the four islands where they live in comfort, and where the fortune of their children is assured? What will happen to them if they lose the basis of their subsistence, as well as their slaves?” Invoking the scarcity of land that had driven many small planters from French colonies earlier in the century, Caylus averred that it would be impossible to find land in Martinique or Guadeloupe on which to settle evacuees. “These poor people will therefore die of misery,” the Governor wrote dramatically.¹¹⁸

The logistics of evacuating the neutral islands continued to be debated throughout the 1750s, but by the end of the decade both French and British imperial administrators had far more serious concerns to occupy them. The extension of yet another European war to an American theater disrupted the fragile entente developed between colonial officials and residents of the Creole Archipelago over the course of several decades of peace in the region. While the Lesser Antilles did not witness combat during the first two years of the Seven Years’ War, battles elsewhere in the Atlantic severely disrupted established shipping routes and caused food shortages

¹¹⁸“[Q]uel droit ont [les Anglais] sur la Dominique et sur St. Vincent ? N’ont-ils pas reconnu par les traités que ces isles appartiennent aux Caraïbes naturels du pais[?]...Mais si ces évacuations devaient absolument avoir lieu, que deviendraient tous de familles etablies dans les quatre isles ou elles vivent dans l’aisance, et où elles ont la fortune de leurs enfants assurée? Que deviendraient elles si elles se perdaient les fonds qui les font subsister, ainsi que leurs esclaves? Il ne faudrait pas chercher à leur procurer des établissements dans les isles concédées, déjà trop petites pour les familles qui y résident. Ces pauvres gens périssaient donc de misère.” ANOM F3 27 f. 553, Charles de Thubières, Marquis de Caylus, Governor General of the Iles du Vent, March 17 1750

in several colonies.¹¹⁹ Trade between France and her colonies fell precipitously; by 1759, transatlantic commerce almost entirely ceased.¹²⁰

As both the economic and the military value of the neutral islands became increasingly obvious—located between Martinique and Guadeloupe, Dominica was essential to ensuring communication between the two French colonies, while forces in St. Lucia could be assembled and deployed to Martinique in just a few hours' time—Great Britain moved into action. Following British conquest of Guadeloupe in 1759, troops set their sights on other islands in the region, occupying Dominica in June 1761, Martinique in February 1762, and Grenada, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent over the course of the following month.¹²¹ Owing chiefly to superior naval forces, Great Britain's resounding victory in the Seven Years' War allowed the empire to significantly expand its reach. At the 1763 Peace of Paris, King George III returned the islands of Guadeloupe, Martinique, and St. Lucia to France; in exchange, France ceded all North American territory and relinquished claims to Grenada and the remaining neutral islands.¹²²

With the signing of a treaty thousands of miles away, more than 30,000 individuals who for decades had carved out an existence at the edge of empire suddenly found themselves subject to direct colonial control. Unlike the '100 French settlers' evicted from St. Lucia by Colonel Stede in 1689, the settlers whose plantations now dotted the southern Caribbean archipelago proved difficult to dislodge. As the following chapter explains, British and French officials had ambitious plans for their newly-acquired territories, and the decade immediately following the Treaty of Paris

¹¹⁹A discussion of the consequences of the war in France's Windward island colonies can be found in Banks, *Chasing Empire*, 202-208.

¹²⁰ Daniel Baugh, *The Global Seven Year's War, 1754-1763: Britain and France in a Great Power Contest* (New York: Pearson Longman, 2011), 321.

¹²¹ English conquest and occupation of Guadeloupe is discussed in Lucien-René Abenon, *Petite histoire de la Guadeloupe* (Paris: Éditions L'Harmattan, 1992) 66-72.

¹²² The terms of the Treaty of Paris will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter; they are cited in Clive Parry, ed. *The Consolidated Treaty Series*, Vol. 42. (New York: Oceana Publication, Inc., 1969).

wrought unprecedented political, demographic, environmental, economic, and social changes in Grenada and the formerly neutral islands. Despite momentous transformations, however, deeply-rooted day-to-day practices developed by residents of the Creole Archipelago would not be easily undone by imperial policies. In the relatively stable decades of the mid-eighteenth century, individuals and families pushed to the margins of Caribbean plantation society by their race, socio-economic status, or hunger for opportunity carved out a unique society that regularly interacted with while remaining just outside the sphere of Atlantic empires. In the face of considerable pressures to reform, important elements of that society would endure.

PART II

Chapter 2: Colonizing the Caribbean Frontier, 1763-1773

[W]hat should prevent adventurers from succeeding in establishing estates here, as well as our old planters have done in the infancy of former colonies?

-William Young, 1764¹

William Young likely gave little thought to the tens of thousands of residents of the Creole Archipelago who were made colonial subjects by virtue of the 1763 Treaty of Paris. In his 1764 pamphlet *Considerations which may tend to promote the settlement of our new West-India Colonies, by Encouraging Individuals to embark in the Undertaking*, Young focused instead on the boundless possibilities awaiting settlers who decided to establish themselves in the newest European colonies in the Americas. An experienced sugar planter born in the island of Antigua, Young added his voice to a chorus of pamphleteers debating how best to extend colonial governance and sugar monoculture to Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Tobago in the wake of the Seven Years' War. Keenly aware of the great fortunes awaiting new planters who could be enticed to venture to the southernmost islands of the Lesser Antilles, Young and other like-minded pamphleteers lobbied for land grants, liberal trade regulations, and easy access to the credit and slaves they claimed would rapidly transform the Caribbean frontier into a profitable plantation economy. Recognizing that the new territories, which contemporaries collectively referred to as 'the Ceded Islands,' were still in their infancy compared to established colonies like Barbados, Young also cautioned against repeating the mistakes of the past: settlement should be carefully regulated, he warned, and great care be taken to avoid the "many inconveniences [that] are found to have occurred in [other] new colonies."²

¹ William Young, *Considerations which may tend to promote the settlement of our new West-India Colonies, by Encouraging Individuals to embark in the Undertaking* (London: James Robson, 1764), 33.

² Young, *Considerations*, 23.

The vision of prosperity, order, and the opportunity to improve upon existing practices of plantation production and colonial rule championed by Young and many of his fellow British subjects proved persuasive. In the ten years immediately following the 1763 Treaty of Paris, which brought to an end the Seven Years' War and saw the former French colony of Grenada and the formerly neutral islands of Dominica, St. Vincent, and Tobago become part of the British Empire while St. Lucia became a colony of France, hundreds of free settlers from Europe and the Americas crowded onto a chain of islands with a total area of approximately 900 square miles—some 300 square miles smaller than Rhode Island. In the same decade more than 80,000 men, women, and children were trafficked from Africa to the newest colonies in the Caribbean, dwarfing the population of 23,000 predominantly Caribbean-born slaves scattered across the islands prior to the treaty and creating a labor force that would generate the greatest prosperity the region had yet known. Between 1763 and 1773 the amount of sugar produced in the islands ceded to Great Britain increased fivefold: just ten years after they became part of the British Empire, the Ceded Islands had surpassed Barbados in order to become second only to the much larger colony of Jamaica in terms of collective sugar exports to Great Britain.³ Informed by decades of amassed experience in the creation and management of plantation colonies, officials both in Europe and in the islands sought to incorporate the Caribbean frontier into existing empires as rapidly and as rationally as possible. William Young was among the many British and French subjects who capitalized on imperial attempts to transform some of last available West Indian sugar islands. By the time of his death in 1788, Young owned almost 900 slaves whose forced labor sustained his four Caribbean

³ Prior to the Treaty of Paris Grenada was the only one of the Ceded Islands to export sugar; in 1763 British officials in the island reported 71,600 cwt [hundredweight, with one cwt equal to 112 lbs] in exports. By 1773 the islands collectively exported 297,800 cwt of sugar. In the same year Jamaica exported 1,017,100 cwt; the Leeward Islands 248,500 cwt; and Barbados just 110,900 cwt. Richard B. Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery: An Economic History of the British West Indies, 1623-1775* (Barbados: Caribbean Universities Press, 1974), 489. The British Ceded Islands of Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent, and Tobago have a collective total area of approximately 700 square miles; Jamaica measures more than 4,200 square miles.

plantations: one in Antigua, one in Tobago, and two in St. Vincent. He had served as the Chief Commissioner for the Sale of Lands in the Ceded Islands, been appointed first Governor of Dominica, and been made a Baron.⁴

Historians of the Seven Years' War often focus on the conflict's impact on colonists in mainland North America; as Lawrence Henry Gipson argues, it was this 'first war for empire,' not the American War of Independence, which led to the birth of an American Republic, as British subjects freed from the threat of an invasion by their French neighbors to the north and west began to agitate for greater autonomy from Great Britain.⁵ Subsequent works that sought to expand historical understanding of the ramifications of the 1763 Treaty of Paris by privileging a non-British perspective nonetheless retained a primarily North American focus.⁶ More recently, scholars have begun to emphasize the global impacts of the Seven Years' War as a Franco-British conflict. The 1763 Treaty of Paris was indeed a turning point, they argue, but not in mainland North America alone.⁷ For the respective Crowns of France and Great Britain, groaning under the weight of debts incurred fighting a costly war on four continents, the promise of new sources of plantation commodities, new colonial subjects to consume the manufactures of the metropole, and new military posts in the Americas provided ample motivation to incorporate new territories into their existing empires. The extension of colonial rule to the Caribbean frontier meant that nearly

⁴ E. I. Carlyle, 'Young, Sir William, second baronet (1749–1815)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004. <http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/30284> accessed 11 Oct 2013.

⁵ Lawrence Henry Gipson, *The Coming of the Revolution, 1763-1775* (New York: Harper & Row, 1954). Recent work has expanded on Gipson's thesis to examine the role of the war in the creation of American identity; see Fred Anderson, *The Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Knopf, 2000). Gipson's thesis has also been the subject of much debate; see Woody Holton, "How the Seven Years' War Turned Americans into (British) Patriots," in Warren R. Hofstra, ed. *Cultures in Conflict: The Seven Years' War in North America* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2007), 127-144.

⁶ Recent studies of consequences of the Seven Years' War in continental North America include Colin Calloway, *The Scratch of a Pen: 1763 and the Transformation of North America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006), and the collected essays in Hofstra, *Cultures in Conflict*.

⁷ For recent examples of a global approach to the Seven Years' War, see Baugh, *The Global Seven Year's War*; Mark Danky & Patrick J. Speelman, eds. *The Seven Years' War: Global Views* (Leiden: Brill, 2012).

all available land in the southern Caribbean had been assimilated into existing European empires; for aspiring sugar barons in other West Indian colonies and in Europe, the Ceded Islands offered one last opportunity to make a fortune. Motivated by a shared desire to maximize profits and promote military defense, imperial administrators and would-be settlers alike sought to extend several idealized features of the plantation complex—namely, the ready availability of slave labor, the consolidation of efficient estates, and the production of a single export commodity—to the colonial frontier as quickly and as rationally as possible.⁸

Distinguishing between what he terms ‘first’ and ‘second phase’ West Indian colonies, Barry Higman argues that Caribbean islands settled decades after sugar monoculture had taken root elsewhere in the Americas were able to borrow from existing patterns of plantation production, thereby developing much more rapidly and efficiently than their predecessors.⁹ As this chapter makes clear, ideas about what to do and what not to do in the Ceded Islands were a direct reflection of what had been learned by planters and administrators in first-phase colonies such as Barbados; as one pamphleteer opined in 1763, “[t]here will be room in these new islands, for attempting many things, *and improving more.*”¹⁰ Focusing on the unprecedentedly rapid surveying, allocation, and settlement of lands, the extension of the transatlantic slave trade, and the introduction of sugar monoculture, this chapter argues that French and British imperial administrators imagined the Ceded Islands as a site in which they could improve or even perfect existing practices of colonial rule. Chapter three complements this chapter by highlighting the extent to which officials in Europe were forced to experiment with or abandon these idealized

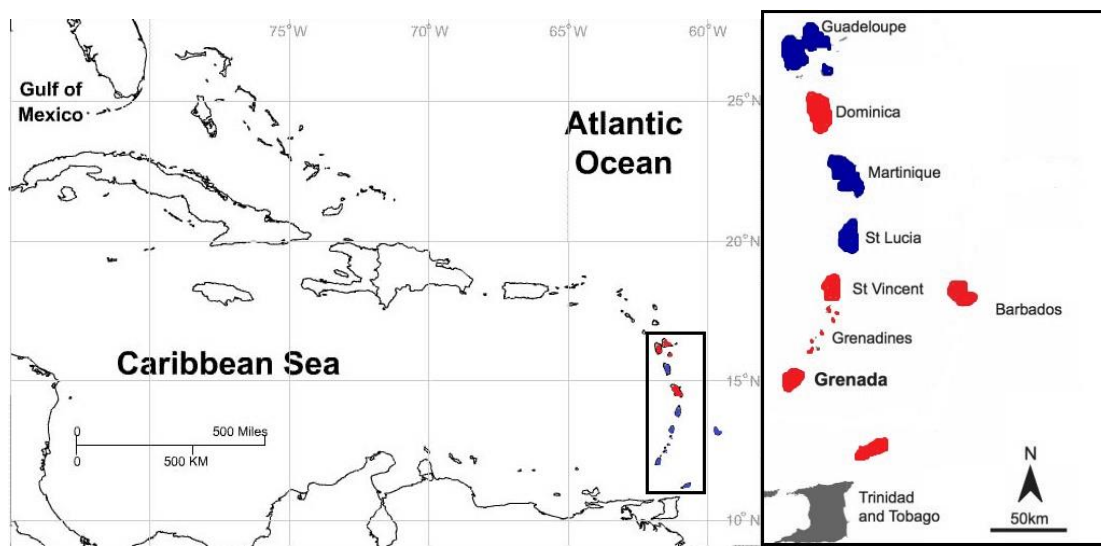
⁸ The specific features of the plantation system are discussed in Philip Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex: Essays in Atlantic History* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990), 10-13.

⁹ Barry Higman, *Slave Populations of the British Caribbean, 1807–1834*. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), 40-71.

¹⁰ John Campbell, *Candid & Impartial Considerations on the Nature of the Sugar Trade, the Comparative Importance of the British and French Islands in the W.I. with the Value & Consequence of St. Lucia & Grenada, truly stated*. (London: R. Baldwin, 1763), 222. Emphasis added.

plans in order to accommodate economic, social, and political practices that new colonial subjects and officials in the islands insisted were better suited to local conditions, while chapter four exposes the limits of these accommodations by exploring how people who did not share the vision of empire advocated by pamphleteers like William Young—the Caribs, free people of color, small planters, and slaves who had constructed and maintained the Creole Archipelago—mounted opposition to or removed themselves beyond the reach of newly-introduced colonial rule. Taken together, these chapters reveal that with the signing of a treaty thousands of miles away, the Creole Archipelago—a region that for decades had developed just beyond the reach of colonial rule—became a key site of agricultural, legal, economic, political, and social reforms, negotiations, and experiments in the respective French and British Empires. Despite the islands’ small size, in the last decades of the eighteenth century they were host to immense contests over how best to create and administer plantation colonies, rule over colonial subjects of different languages and religions, and determine and police the boundaries of race in the Americas.

Map 2.1 Respective British and French Possessions in the Southern Caribbean, 1763¹¹



¹¹ Map sourced from Wikimedia commons; edited to show French colonies in blue and British colonies in red. As of 1763 the island of Trinidad (shown in grey) was a Spanish colony.

The Shape of Empire: Debates Surrounding the 1763 Treaty of Paris

Young's *Considerations* was not the only pamphlet to address the question of what to do with the last available lands in the Caribbean; lengthy negotiations about the fate of France and Great Britain's respective possessions in the Americas took place both in the Royal Courts and in the court of public opinion.¹² The British Navy conquered many of France's colonial possessions during the Seven Years' War, including Canada, Senegal, and the Caribbean islands of Guadeloupe, Martinique, and Grenada, and the decision of which territories to restore to France therefore rested with the recently-crowned King George III (1738-1820). The debate over whether to return the profitable sugar colonies of Martinique and Guadeloupe to France in exchange for title to all French territory in mainland North America was a lengthy one, and the islands of Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and the Grenadian dependency of Tobago remained a much lesser concern; initially, it was thought that they might simply remain unassigned to any imperial power.¹³ Once it was clear that this would not be the case, French officials became determined to gain dominion over St. Lucia. The island was deemed crucial to the defence of neighboring Martinique; if St. Lucia should fall into British hands, the most profitable of France's Lesser Antillean colonies would be constantly vulnerable to attack.¹⁴ In exchange for French title to St. Lucia, King Louis XV (1710-1774) agreed to abandon all claims to the islands of St. Vincent, Dominica, and Tobago, and to cede the former French colony of Grenada to Great Britain. "The

¹² A discussion of the growth of the British press and its role in popular expression and debate in the mid-eighteenth century can be found in Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People: Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1986), 29-53.

¹³ For insight into the debate over whether to exchange Guadeloupe for Canada, see Anonymous, *Reasons for keeping Guadeloupe at a peace, preferable to Canada, explained in five letters from a gentleman in Guadeloupe, to his friend in London* (London: M. Cooper, 1761).

¹⁴ Etienne-François de Stainville, duc de Choiseul, *Mémoire Historique sur la négociation de la France et de l'Angleterre, depuis le 26 mars 1761 jusqu'au 20 septembre de la même année, avec les pièces justificatives*. (Paris: Imprimerie Royale, 1761), 85.

benefits that may be justly expected from...an island so happily situated as this, and producing such a variety of valuable commodities, are so obvious, that there is no need to enter into a detail of them,” crowed a 1763 text in celebration of the trade.¹⁵

Such strong endorsements about the potential benefits of the new colonies were necessary, as plans to develop the Ceded Islands also met with vocal criticism. Wealthy planters in existing British West Indian colonies, fearful that a greater supply of sugar would lead to a global decrease in market price, were inherently suspicious of new competitors. Administrators and elites in existing colonies also expressed concern that the emigration of small planters to the new territories would deplete their militias, leaving a tiny white minority more vulnerable to slave uprisings.¹⁶ Then there was the question of whether King George III’s ‘new adopted subjects,’ as they were called by contemporaries, would prove loyal to the British Crown. As indicated in table 2.1 below, at the time of their conquest by British forces during the Seven Years’ War, Dominica, Grenada, and St. Vincent were collectively populated by approximately 6,500 free settlers—most of them Francophone Catholics—and their 19,000 slaves. The new French colony of St. Lucia counted more than 1,200 free inhabitants and 5,000 slaves; only Tobago was reported (probably incorrectly) to be uninhabited.¹⁷ Existing inhabitants of the islands spoke little English, were perceived to be unfamiliar with the customs, laws, and religion of Great Britain, and maintained

¹⁵ Campbell, *Candid and Impartial Considerations*, 179.

¹⁶ For examples of some the myriad complaints presented by planters in Barbados, Jamaica, and the Leeward Islands, see “A planter at Barbados,” *Reflections on the true interest of Great Britain with respect to the Caribbee islands, as well the old settlements as the neutral islands and the conquests. To which the importance of Martinique is particularly consider’d* (London: 1762); Young, *Considerations*, 35; D.L. Niddrie, “Eighteenth-century settlement in the British Caribbean,” *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, vol. 40 (1966), 78.

¹⁷ A British Captain who travelled to Tobago in 1757 noted that “...there are about three hundred families of Indians...[who] seem to live in great union with the French, who are settled on Tobago to the number of not above eight or nine families...” Quoted in Jean-Claude Nardin, *La mise en valeur de l’île de Tobago (1763-1783)* (Paris: Mouton & Co., 1969), 291. While it is possible that the people observed in 1757 vacated the island in the intervening six years, it seems more likely that British colonial officials failed or chose not to acknowledge their presence and therefore their possible claims to the island when they assumed control in 1763.

considerable personal and commercial relationships with French subjects in Martinique and Guadeloupe. Worse still were the more than 1,100 Caribs who occupied the Windward or eastern side of St. Vincent, a “worthless...set of savages” who seemed to possess no discernible religion or form of government and who spoke only a pidgin French.¹⁸ How were these new British subjects to be governed? And more importantly, could they be trusted?

Table 2.1: Reported Populations of the Ceded Islands c. 1763¹⁹

	Grenada (Br.)	Dominica (Br.)	St. Vincent (Br.)	Tobago (Br.)	St. Lucia (Fr.)	TOTAL
Free people	3,500	1,718	1,300	Unknown	1,267	6,485
Slaves	10,000	5,872	3,430	Unknown	5,069	24,371
Caribs	None reported	“50-60 families”	1,138	Unknown	None reported	>1,138

A desire for expansion, profit, and security shared by colonial officials and colonists alike ultimately succeeded in drowning out the doubts of many pamphleteers. Much of the land suitable for sugar production in first-phase British West Indian colonies such as Barbados and Antigua was already under cultivation, and would-be planters were eager to extend plantation agriculture to virgin soil in the Caribbean. By adding Dominica, St. Vincent, Grenada, and Tobago to what was already the largest empire in the world, Great Britain gained almost 700 square miles of new territory in which to cultivate staple crops, as well as new markets in which to sell the manufactures of the metropole. The islands’ existing inhabitants might not be the most trustworthy of British

¹⁸ The estimated number of Caribs in St. Vincent in 1763 varied; a census taken at the time records 1,138 Caribs possessed of 28 slaves, while Young estimated the Caribs to number approximately 2,000. BNA CO 101/1 N.9; Young, *Considerations*, 9. These figures would seem to underestimate the total number of Caribs in St. Vincent, as more than 5,000 were exiled from the island in 1797. See chapter 5.

The characterization of Caribs as “worthless savages” can be found in BNA CO 263/1 Speech from the President in Council of St. Vincent Harry Alexander Esq. May 10 1769.

¹⁹ Population figures for St. Lucia sourced from ANOM DPPC G1506, 1764. St. Vincent figures sourced from the BNA CO 101/1 N.9. For Grenada BNA CO 101/1 N.5; for Dominica BNA CO 101/1 N. 91. The population of Tobago prior to 1763 is difficult to ascertain, as there are no extant enumerations of the island for this period.

subjects, but as will be explored in greater detail in the following chapter, administrators in England were convinced that with proper time and attention they could be reconciled to British colonial rule.

Like their British counterparts, French imperial officials entertained high hopes about the development of France's newest Caribbean colony, St. Lucia. Following the loss of Canada in the Seven Years' War, the *Ministère de la Marine et des Colonies* devoted most of its attention and resources to the establishment of a mainland American colony in Guiana.²⁰ Although St. Lucia admittedly remained a much lesser concern, administrators actively sought to develop the small island as both a strategic site of maritime defence and as a trading entrepôt. The creation of a free port and subsequent introduction of unrestricted trade throughout the island encouraged both French and international merchants to privilege St. Lucia as a site of regional and transatlantic commerce. The abolition of the *droit d'aubaine*, a law that confiscated the property of any foreign subject who died within the French realm, provided an incentive for English, Spanish, and other subjects of foreign Crowns who had settled in St. Lucia prior to its cession to France to remain there, thereby maintaining the island's existing force of planters, slaveowners, and members of the militia.

The Lay of the Land: Surveyors and *Ingénieurs Géographes* in the Ceded Islands

Even before the Treaty of Paris was signed, British and French officials began to take stock of what their respective Crowns had gained in the Caribbean. Naval officers present in the islands following their conquest played a key role in assessing the present situation and future potential of

²⁰ For a discussion of French planning of and failure to develop a mainland colony in Guiana, see Marion Godfroy-Tayart de Borms, "La guerre de Sept ans et ses conséquences atlantiques: Kourou ou l'apparition d'un nouveau système colonial," *French Historical Studies* 32, N. 2 (Spring 2009: 167-191); Marion Godfroy, *Kourou 1763, le dernier rêve de l'Amérique française* (Paris: Editions Vendémiaire, 2012); François Regourd, *Sciences et colonisation sous l'Ancien Régime: le cas de la Guayne et des Antilles françaises, XVIIe-XVIIIe siècles* (Bordeaux: Presses Universitaires de France, 2000); Emma Rothschild, "A Horrible Tragedy in the French Atlantic" *Past and Present* 192 (August 2006: 67-108).

the new colonies by reporting on the islands' respective size, climate, topography, and economy. The British Treasury, Privy Council, and Board of Trade wasted no time in convening committees to review the officers' reports. How many free people currently inhabited each territory? How many slaves did they own? What crops did they grow, and in what quantity? Perhaps most importantly, what *could* they grow? Implicit throughout the detailed and lengthy questionnaires is a desire for expansion, improvement, and above all enrichment. Imperial officials sought to maximize the economic potential of the islands while avoiding many of the problems that had impeded or caused detriment to earlier settlements in the Americas.

As the content of these questionnaires suggests, the practice of French and British imperialism in the Ceded Islands was greatly informed by prior experiences of Caribbean colonization in profitable sugar islands such as Martinique, Barbados, and the Leeward Islands. By exerting stricter control and exercising greater vigilance than their predecessors, imperial officials hoped to avoid many of the problems that now plagued these colonies, which they deemed to have been settled too quickly and haphazardly. While productivity was desirable, land exhaustion, soil erosion, absenteeism, and the engrossment of large plantations and subsequent emigration of small planters were not. Fears of slave insurgency abounded, and administrators hoped to avoid replicating a situation in which slaves vastly outnumbered free people by populating the new colonies with loyal settlers who would remain in the colonies rather than with absentee planters. Leaving little to chance, the British Privy Council, the Board of Trade, and particularly the Treasury offered detailed recommendations on how to settle the islands quickly, efficiently, and with as little cost to the British taxpayer as possible.

In late 1764, after extensive debate and revisions, a detailed plan for the settlement of the four islands ceded to Great Britain—Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent, and Tobago—was put into

action.²¹ A small team of experienced land surveyors, headed by Chief Surveyor James Simpson, was dispatched to Great Britain's newest West Indian Colonies. The Commissioners for the Sale and Disposal of Lands in the Ceded Islands were each afforded a generous annual salary of £400 sterling, as well as an additional £200 sterling to cover expenses.²² William Young, author of the 1764 pamphlet *Considerations which may tend to promote the settlement of our new West-India Colonies*, acted as receiver of monies arising from the sales; he later rose to the rank of President of the Commission. As an experienced planter, Young was no doubt aware of the opportunities that awaited those who were able to establish holdings in the new colonies, and he actively lobbied for his position. Young was not alone in recognizing the enormous potential for profit in the Ceded Islands: he and his fellow Commissioners were among the most eager purchasers of available lands throughout the Lesser Antilles.

The minutely-detailed instructions provided to the Commissioners for the Sale and Disposal of Lands reflect a conscious desire on the part of British imperial administrators to improve on the haphazard nature of seventeenth-century settlement. The Commissioners were instructed to divide the respective islands into parishes of between 6,000 and 10,000 acres each and to determine the best placement and layout of a town in each parish.²³ In an effort to eradicate the troublesome dugout canoes, or *pirogues*, long used by Caribs and subsequently adopted by settlers throughout the Lesser Antilles, roads were to be forged for ease of travel and communication between towns. In addition to designating plots of land for sale, surveyors were

²¹ For a discussion of some of the ways in which land policy in the Ceded Islands differed from that elsewhere in the British empire, see David H. Murdoch, "Land Policy in the Eighteenth-Century British Empire: The Sale of Crown Lands in the Ceded Islands, 1763–1783," *Historical Journal*, 27, No.3 (September, 1984): 549–574.

²² In addition to Simpson and Young, the commissioners dispatched to the islands included Alexander Graeme, John Hunt, Robert Stewart and Robert Wynne. Graeme died and was replaced by William Hewitt in 1766, while John Byres also joined the team after the death of draftsman John Charlton. See Niddrie, 79.

²³ BNA 106/9 N. 166, Instructions to the Commissioners for disposing by sale or otherwise of certain lands in Grenada, the Grenadines, Tobago, St. Vincent and Dominica, July 26 1764.

instructed to reserve sufficient acreage for the construction of a school, a Protestant Church, and a glebe for the support of a Minister in each town. Small allotments were also to be set aside for poor settlers, who could apply for a grant of uncleared land provided that they demonstrated their lack of means to purchase a plot. In a further testament to the desire of British officials to introduce loyal settlers into their new colonies, Roman Catholics, regardless of income, were deemed ineligible to apply for poor settlers' plots.²⁴

Concern about human influence on the environment was also manifest in British plans for the Ceded Islands. While eighteenth-century scientists continued to debate the exact influence of forest cover on local climatic conditions, planters and colonial administrators could not deny the devastating ecological and economic effects of near-total deforestation in Barbados. Many contemporaries, including Young, were convinced that "large tracts of wood...contribute to insure rains and fertility, and to produce rivers,"²⁵ and the fifth instruction to the commissioners accordingly required that they reserve sufficient woodland "for producing those refreshing showers which are so essential to the fertility of the country."²⁶ Demonstrating their desire not to repeat past mistakes, colonial officials harnessed scientific expertise in a deliberate attempt to prevent the drought and soil exhaustion that plagued planters elsewhere in the Caribbean.²⁷

In laying claim to both the scientific expertise and the political authority to survey and subdivide the islands of Dominica, Grenada, Tobago, and St. Vincent, surveyors employed by the British Crown publicly signalled King George III's newfound right to impose order and rule in spaces that previously lay beyond the reach of imperial power. The transformation of Grenada and

²⁴ BNA CO101/1 N. 279, Melvill to Higginson, October 22 1765.

²⁵ Young, *Considerations*, 31.

²⁶ BNA CO 106/9 N. 166, Instruction 5. Instructions to the Commissioners for disposing by sale or otherwise of certain lands in Grenada, the Grenadines, Tobago, St. Vincent and Dominica, July 26 1764.

²⁷ For more on the preservation of woodlands in the Ceded Islands, see Richard Grove, *Green Imperialism: Colonial Expansion, Tropical Island Edens, and the Origins of Environmentalism, 1600-1800* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 264-308.

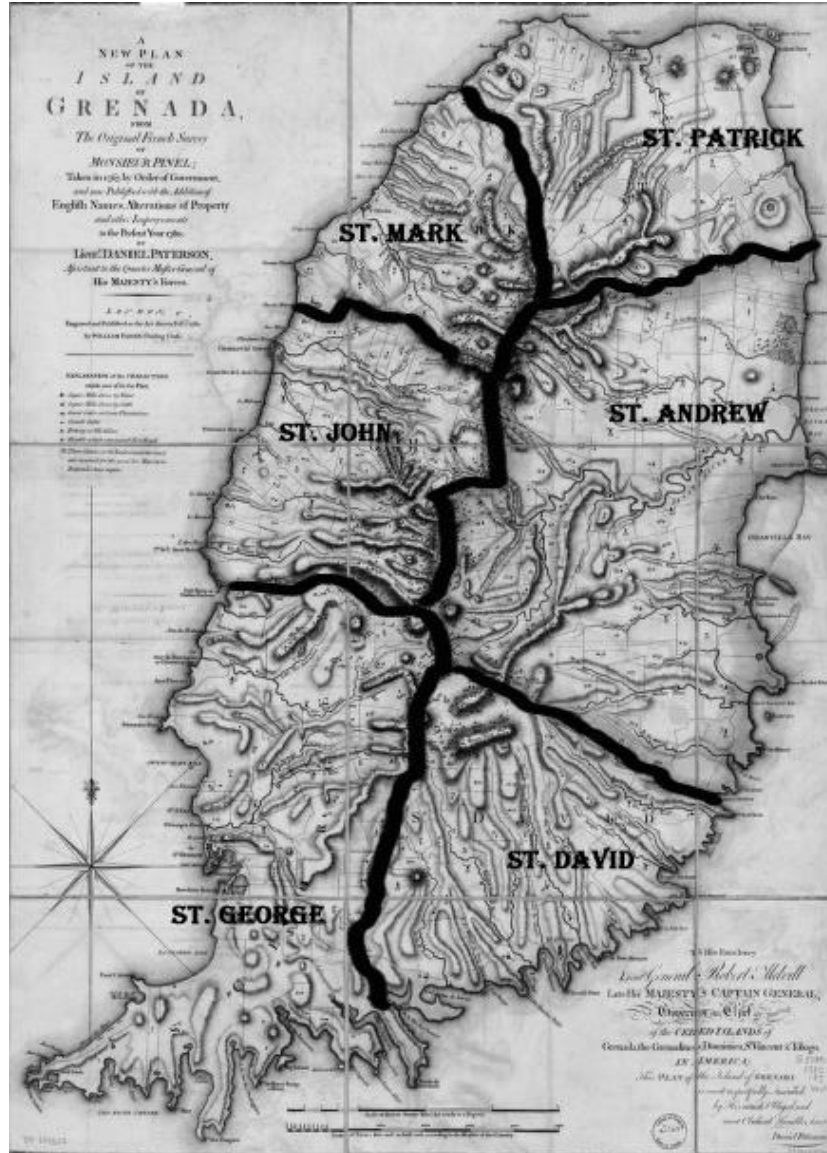
the formerly-neutral islands into plantation colonies of Great Britain operated at both a practical and an ideological level. As the commissioners surveyed the islands, so too did they lay claim to them, bestowing familiar English names on an exotic landscape: the port of Ouassigany became Kingstown, St. Vincent, while the French origins of La Baye, Grenada, were subject to a pointed symbolic erasure when the port town was renamed in honor of then-Prime Minister George Grenville. The map of Grenada below provides a vivid illustration of the ways in which British authority was imposed in a space that had belonged to the French Crown for more than one hundred years. Surveyors maintained parish boundaries established when the island was under French rule, but bestowed new English names on each parish: Basse Terre, or ‘low land,’ was redubbed St. George, while Sauteurs, the northernmost point of the island from which Grenada’s last Carib inhabitants were fabled to have jumped—*sauté*—to their deaths became St. Patrick.²⁸ In mapping land, surveyors also participated in what would prove to be a highly contested process of symbolically mapping sovereignty.²⁹ As chapter four explores in detail, colonial officials soon learned that their attempts to impose British names and British rule would not be readily accepted by those who had settled the land long before their arrival.³⁰

²⁸ Under French colonial rule, St. Mark was known as Grand Pauvre; St. John was Gouyave; St. George was Basse Terre; St. David was Maigrin/Mégrin and St. Andrew was formerly known as Marquis.

²⁹ For more on the symbolic role of mapping, see J.B. Harley, *The New Nature of Maps: Essays in the History of Cartography*. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001).

³⁰ A declaration issued by Governor General Melvill in March 1771 is revealing: Melvill states that “the old French and Indian names of several Quarters, Parishes, Towns, Harbours, Bays, Roads, and Rivers, in this island of *Dominica*, are still made use of, which may in the End occasion great Confusion, and be of Detriment to the Inhabitants, I do therefore, by and with the Advice and Consent of HM’s Council hereby direct, enjoin and require, That the new Names of the said Quarters...shall at all Times and upon all Occasions be made Use of, and particularly in all Deeds, Records, Conveyances, and Public Instruments of Writing.” British Library, *Dominica: A Proclamation* (Kingstown, St. Vincent: William Smith, 1771).

Map 2.2: Parishes Created by British Colonial Officials in Grenada c. 1763³¹



At a minimum price of £5 sterling per acre for cleared land and £1 sterling per acre for uncleared land, the Commissioners for the Sale and Disposal of Lands proceeded to sell lots of between one hundred and five hundred acres at public auction in Grenada, St. Vincent, and Tobago. Purchasers were required to pay 20% of the total purchase price at the time of sale, as

³¹ Map edited to show the new names given to parishes in Grenada after its cession to Great Britain in 1763. Original in BNA CO 700 Grenada, "Plan of the island of Grenada laid down by actual survey under the direction of the Honorable the Commissioners for the Sale of Lands in the Ceded Islands, by John Byres, Chief Surveyor" (London: H. Hooper, 1776).

well as sixpence per acre to help defray the cost of surveying. The remaining balance could be cleared at a rate of 10% the following year, and then 20% per year until the balance was fully paid. The mountainous topography of Dominica persuaded the Commissioners that the island lacked the broad, flat expanses of land necessary for the establishment of large sugar plantations; they therefore deemed that lots in the colony should be smaller, consisting of between fifty and 300 acres. To avoid the engrossment of large plantations as had occurred in Barbados and Jamaica, an individual was permitted to own no more than 500 acres of land in a single island.³² This limit did not prohibit wealthy and ambitious planters from purchasing land the maximum amount of land allowable in several different islands, as Young and several of his fellow Commissioners chose to do.

In a deliberate effort to avoid the purchase of lands by individuals who had no intention of actually settling the islands, administrators devised strict penalties. Purchasers were required to clear their plots at an annual rate of five acres per hundred; a penalty of £5 sterling per uncleared acre was imposed for those who failed to do so. Fines were even higher for planters who neglected to maintain an appropriate workforce. Any proprietor who failed to keep one white man or two white women for every thirty slaves on his plantation was required to pay a penalty of £40 sterling for every white man and £20 sterling for every white woman deficient from his estate.³³ Similar fines had long been in place in other British West Indian colonies, but the penalties were considerably lower, with planters in the Leeward Islands initially paying a ‘deficiency tax’ of just

³² BNA CO 106/9 N.166, Instructions to the Commissioners for disposing by sale of otherwise of certain lands in Grenada, the Grenadines, Tobago, St. Vincent and Dominica, July 26 1764. As a point of comparison, when Barbados was first settled the island’s early Governors, Gov. Tufton and Gov. Hawley, claimed 15,872 and 14,235 acres for themselves, respectively. See Richard Pares “Merchants and Planters,” *Economic History Review Supplement* 4 (Cambridge: Economic History Review at the University Press, 1960) pg. 57 footnote 15.

³³ BNA CO 262/1 N.87, “An Act for compelling owners and possessors of slaves, to keep proportionable numbers of white Protestant servants,” October 7 1767.

three shillings per annum.³⁴ As Young reasoned, the obligation to foster a white population in the Ceded Islands “can never be seriously complained of... when we reflect that the want of [white] people in our West India islands, arises in a great measure from the paucity of [white] women.”³⁵ By penalizing planters who failed to maintain white settlers on their estates, British colonial administrators as well as pamphleteers like Young consciously sought to avoid planter absenteeism, a problem that contemporaries widely blamed for depriving existing colonies such as Jamaica of financial resources and of educated men who preferred to return to Great Britain, resulting in a transient and disorderly colonial society.³⁶

French administrators were equally eager to correct past mistakes in their practice of colonization. As previously mentioned, the establishment of a mainland American colony in Guiana monopolized much of the attention of the *Ministère de la Marine et des Colonies*. Under the direction of the ministry’s Secretary Etienne-François, duc de Choiseul, who was appointed to the position in 1761, more than 12,000 would-be settlers were recruited from across France. Although the expedition proved disastrous—the colonists who survived the lengthy voyage to South America perished from disease soon after their arrival, and most survivors abandoned the colony—the undertaking is suggestive of the kind of investment that the French colonial ministry was willing to make in its remaining colonies. St. Lucia admittedly remained a much lesser

³⁴ “An Act for increasing the Number of White Inhabitants on this Island” N. 194, Passed February 11, 1741. *The Laws of the Island of Antigua: Consisting of the Acts of the Leeward Islands, commencing 10th April 1668, ending 21st April 1798, and the Acts of Antigua, Commencing 10th April 1668, ending 7th May 1804* (London: Samuel Bagster, 1805), 271-280. The considerably higher fines imposed in the Ceded Islands also served to help offset some of the cost involved in surveying, settling, and defending the expanding British Empire.

³⁵ Young, *Considerations*, 26.

³⁶ For an example of eighteenth-century attitudes towards absenteeism see Edward Long, *History of Jamaica, Vol. I* (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1970 [First published 1774]), esp. 385-90. The idea that absenteeism was detrimental to colonial life continues to be espoused by historians; see, for example, Andrew Jackson O’Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 7-9; Lowell Ragatz, *The Fall of the Planter Class in the British Caribbean, 1763–1833* (New York: Century, 1928), 5. Trevor Burnard disputes this prevailing view, arguing that absentee planters provided important political and economic links between colony and metropole. Trevor Burnard, “Passengers Only: The extent and significance of absenteeism in eighteenth century Jamaica,” *Atlantic Studies: Global Currents* vol. 1 n. 2 (2004: 178-195).

concern, but French administrators were nonetheless aware of the new colony's value as both a strategic site of maritime defence and as a trading entrepôt, and they sought to buttress the population of some 1,200 Francophone Catholics already resident in the island as a means of achieving both ends.

While the idealized surveying and settlement plans espoused by British and French administrators after the Treaty of Paris may have worked in theory, they proved difficult to implement in practice. As was the case when the Lesser Antilles were first settled by Europeans in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries, the physical environment posed considerable obstacles. The hills in the islands were no less steep than they had been before the Treaty of Paris, the tropical woodlands no less dense. A group of workers attempting to forge a path across the interior of St. Lucia reported killing 80 poisonous snakes in a single day, and scorpions in the island were said to be longer than a man's finger.³⁷ A simple glance at the list of items requested by Chief Surveyor James Simpson is suggestive of the kind of physical challenges the surveyors faced: in addition to the tools the Commissioners brought with them on their transatlantic voyage, Simpson signalled a pressing need for a further "4 dozen best felling axes; 2 dozen common hatchets; [and] One dozen clan hammers."³⁸ Worse than the lack of adequate tools, the surveyors themselves proved ill-prepared for the rigors of the tropical environment. Arriving in Tobago at the height of rainy season, which lasts from June through December, Simpson reported that he and his surveyors "daily (and sometimes oftener) returned home wet, which soon threw all my assistants into intermitting fevers, and anguished complaints so that they were rendered totally unfit for all manner of duty." After experienced English draftsman John Charlton

³⁷ ANOM FM C10C 2, Chardon, August 1 1764.

³⁸ BNA CO 106/9 N. 11, James Simpson Esq., Chief Surveyor, to the Honourable the Commissioners for Selling or Otherwise Disposing of His Majesty's Land in Grenada, the Grenadines, &c. Dec. 11 1764.

died of yellow fever “without having ever done an hours duty,” Simpson recommended that future surveyors be selected from among the ranks of the Navy, as “their profession...naturally qualifies them to encounter the Difficulties of this Service without Apprehension of Danger.”³⁹

Simpson was perhaps taking a cue from French colonial officials, who in October 1763 dispatched a total of eight *ingénieurs-géographes* to the Lesser Antillean colonies of Guadeloupe, Martinique, and St. Lucia, and an additional thirteen to the much larger French colony of Saint-Domingue. Employees of the *Service Hydrographique de la Marine* (a branch of the French Navy), the corps of surveyors had swelled considerably during the Seven Years’ War, and the end of the conflict found forty such men with little to occupy their time and expertise.⁴⁰ Well-versed in triangulation techniques developed in the first half of the eighteenth century, which culminated in the publication of César-François Cassini de Thury’s first national map of metropolitan France in 1744, the surveyors were tasked with generating detailed topographic and coastal surveys of the islands.⁴¹ Unlike their British counterparts, however, French cartographers sent to the Caribbean after the Treaty of Paris were not focused on allocating plantations in the Crown’s new territory. France’s resounding defeat in the Seven Years’ War convinced Louis XV of the inherent vulnerability of his Lesser Antillean possessions, and French surveyors were primarily charged with gaining an accurate account of the islands so as to better defend them in future. Three surveyors each were sent to Guadeloupe and Martinique, where by the end of the decade they

³⁹ BNA CO 106/9 N. 11, James Simpson Esq. to the Honourable the Commissioners for Selling or Otherwise Disposing of His Majesty’s Land in Grenada, the Grenadines, &c., Dec. 11 1764. Charlton was succeeded in his post by John Byres, who went on to draft the detailed maps of the Ceded Islands now archived at the British Library and British National Archives.

⁴⁰ A brief discussion of the surveying of France’s Lesser Antillean colonies can be found in Monique Pelletier, “La Martinique et la Guadeloupe au lendemain du Traité de Paris (10 février 1763) : L’œuvre des ingénieurs géographes,” *Chronique d’Histoire Maritime* 9 (1984: 23-30). See also McClellan and Regourd, *The Colonial Machine*, 215-216.

⁴¹ The genesis of the first national map of France is discussed in Josef Konvitz, *Cartography in France, 1660-1848: Science, Engineering, and Statecraft* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987).

managed to produce large-scale maps of the respective islands.⁴² The surveyors dispatched to the new French colony of St. Lucia were not so successful. Landing in the island in November 1763, Nicolas Morancy fell ill soon after his arrival, and he proved unable to complete the ambitious task of surveying St. Lucia during his two-and-a-half year stay.⁴³ Requests on the part of the island's Governor, Pierre Lucien de la Chapelle, that at least four more surveyors be sent to assist Morancy apparently fell on deaf ears, and a map of St. Lucia comparable to those archived for Guadeloupe and Martinique during this period was not created.⁴⁴

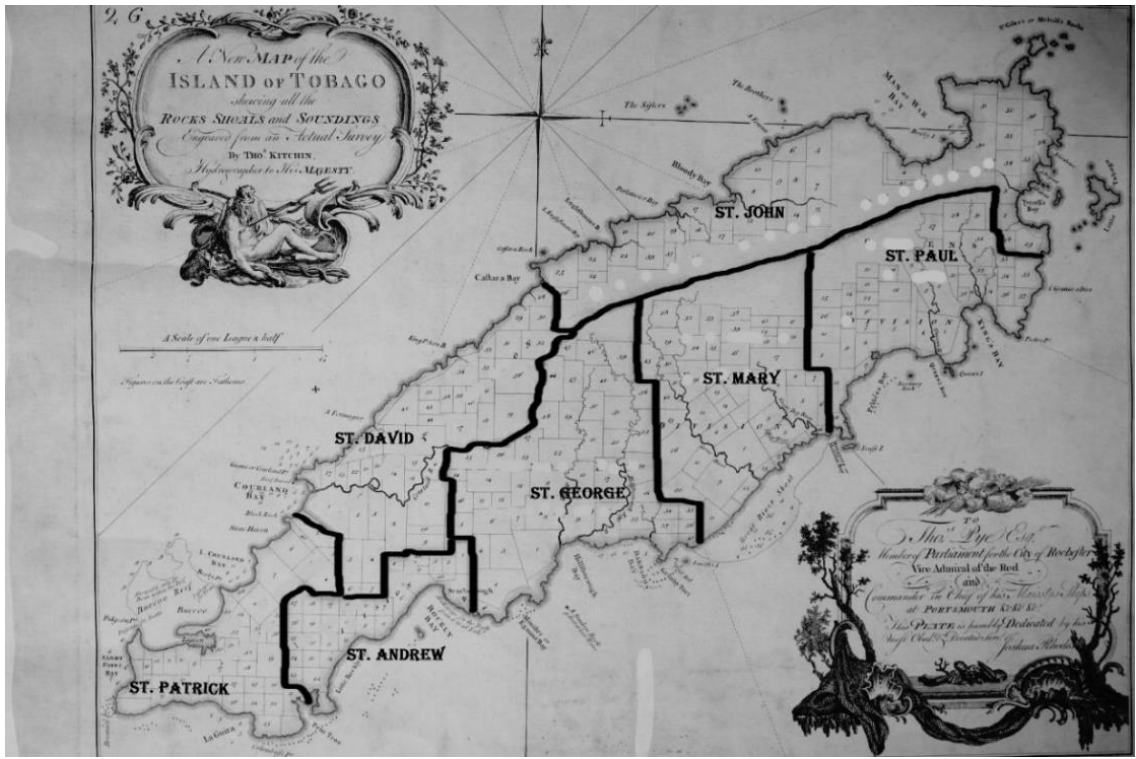
Map or no map, colonial officials wasted little time in disposing of land throughout the Ceded Islands. With no reported inhabitants laying claim to plots of land, the surveying and subdivision of the smallest island ceded to Great Britain, Tobago, which was administered as a dependency of Grenada, provoked little controversy. As illustrated by the map below, the island's relatively flat topography—Tobago's highest point is 1,800 feet, as compared to Dominica's high point of more than 4,700 feet—also contributed to ease of surveying, and the Commissioners for the Sale and Disposal of lands succeeded in allocating plantations of regular size and distribution in each of the island's seven newly-created parishes.

⁴²These maps are archived in the French Bibliothèque Nationale, Cartes et Plans, Section Hydrographique, portfolio 156 div. 2.

⁴³ Following his service, Morancy lodged a formal complaint stating that he had not received a single one of his four daily rations during more than two years in St. Lucia. See ANOM E316. The other surveyor appointed to St. Lucia, Sieur Lefort de Latour, finally succeeded in creating a survey and description of the island in 1787. A copy can be found in the St. Lucia National Archives. On Lefort de Latour's appointment, see Archives Départementales de la Martinique [ADM], Conseil Souverain [CS] B13 Fol. 96, September 6 1774.

⁴⁴ ANOM FM C10C 2 de Jumilhac, January 8 1764.

Map 2.3: Parishes Created by British Colonial Officials in Tobago c. 1763⁴⁵



The British Commissioners for the Sale and Disposal of Lands held the first public auction of plantation allotments in the Ceded Islands on May 20, 1765, in Barbados Bay, in the newly-created parish of St. George, Tobago. Disproving early fears that few settlers could be enticed to Tobago due to “an universal dread and dislike of that island, occasioned by the sudden death, of almost every white person, who had lately gone thither,” land sales proved quite successful in the infant colony.⁴⁶ Along with his fellow commissioners Robert Stewart, Robert Wynne, and John Hunt, William Young was among the first to purchase plots of up to 500 acres in the island at a price of just £1 sterling per acre; in total, £3,530 sterling worth of land was auctioned on the

⁴⁵ Map edited to show parishes created in Tobago after its cession to Great Britain in 1763. Original from BNA CO 700 Tobago 5.

⁴⁶BNA CO 101/9 N.291, Melvill to Halifax, November 13 1764.

opening day of sales.⁴⁷ By the end of the following year, a total of 11,000 acres had been sold in Tobago. Reaching a high point in 1770, the price of land in the island rose from the prescribed minimum of £1 sterling per acre to an average of £6 sterling per acre, or six times what the commissioners paid for their plots.⁴⁸

After completing initial sales in Tobago the commissioners sailed to St. Vincent, where public auctions were held daily between May 29 and June 1, 1765. Although a few plots in the island sold for the minimum required price of one pound sterling per acre, on average prices for land in St. Vincent were considerably higher than in Tobago, with cleared plots suitable for planting sugar fetching as much as £59 sterling per acre.⁴⁹ Although the high price of land in St. Vincent suggests that purchasers did not initially anticipate that the island's Carib inhabitants would pose a problem to the creation and maintenance of sugar plantations in the island, the surveyor's map below hints at a different reality. In accordance with the instructions to the Commissioners for the Sale and Disposal of Lands, much of the island was not subject to formal survey; as will be explored in greater detail in chapter four, all lands on the Windward or eastern side of St. Vincent remained for the time being under the control of the island's Carib inhabitants, and surveyors were prevented from venturing into Carib territory. Lands abutting the sharply-demarcated boundaries between settler and Carib territory north of the parishes of St. George and St. David, respectively, remained unallocated, suggesting that colonists could not be enticed to settle in the contested border region. Impassable mountains blurred territorial boundaries in the

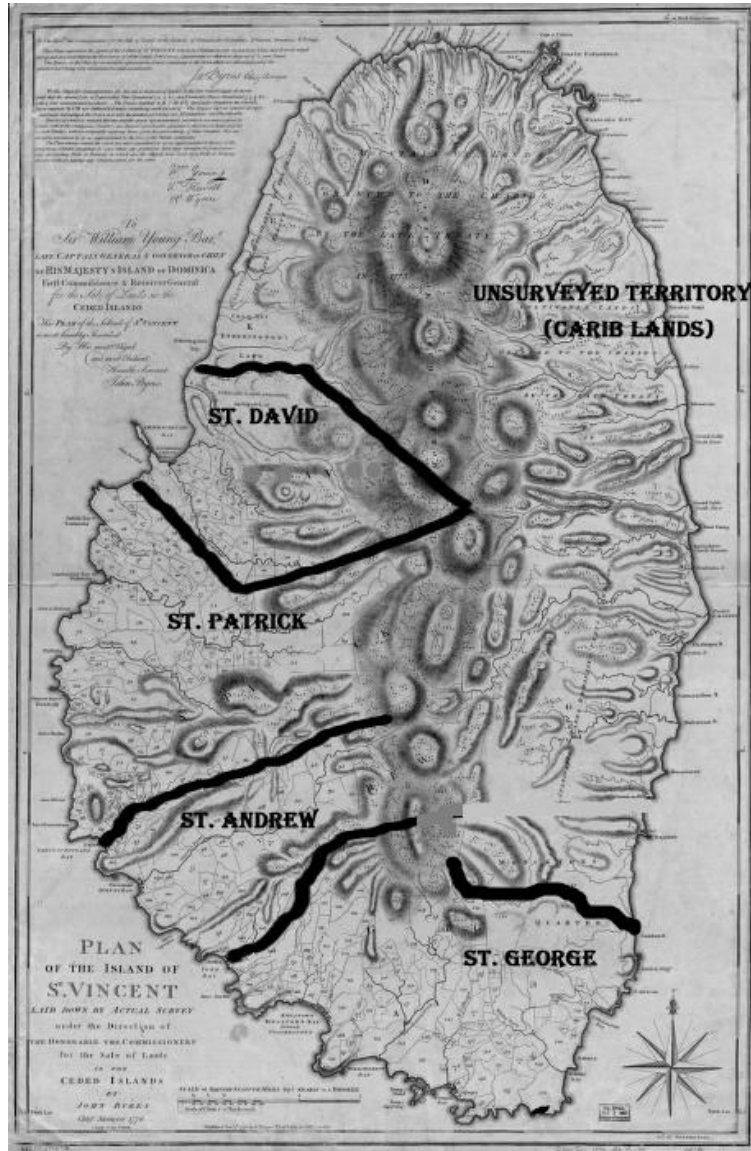
⁴⁷BNA CO 106/9 N.30, An account of the first sale of land in the island of Tobago, May 20 1765.

⁴⁸ Murdoch, "Land Policy," 561.

⁴⁹ Jeremiah Penniston purchased 197 cleared acres in Boucamont, formerly occupied by one La Chaussée, at a price of £59 10 shillings per acre. Along with six uncleared acres at a price of £11 18 shillings per acre, Penniston paid a total of £11,792 sterling for his acquisitions in St. Vincent. BNA CO 106/9 N. 33.

center of the island, where peaks rising to heights of more than 4,000 feet prevented surveyors from completing their map.

Map 2.4: Parishes Created by British Officials in St. Vincent c. 1763⁵⁰



Despite the fact that approximately half of St. Vincent was not subject to formal survey, some 7,340 acres of land in the island were auctioned for a total of £88,084 sterling over the course

⁵⁰ Map edited to show parishes created in St. Vincent after its cession to Great Britain in 1763. Original in BNA CO 700 St. Vincent, "Plan of the island of St. Vincent laid down by actual survey under the direction of the Honorable the Commissioners for the Sale of Lands in the Ceded Islands, by John Byres, Chief Surveyor (London: H. Hooper, 1776).

of the initial four-day auction in St. Vincent's new capital of Kingstown, in the parish of St. George. Foreshadowing what would become a common practice among planters throughout the islands ceded to Great Britain, several of the commissioners who had already claimed their maximum of 500 acres in Tobago purchased further holdings in St. Vincent. In addition to the purchase of several town lots in Kingstown, William Young acquired a total of 427 cleared and 77 uncleared acres in Boucamont, St. Patrick's parish, at a total cost of almost £10,000 sterling, slightly exceeding the maximum of 500 acres allowed per purchaser per island.⁵¹

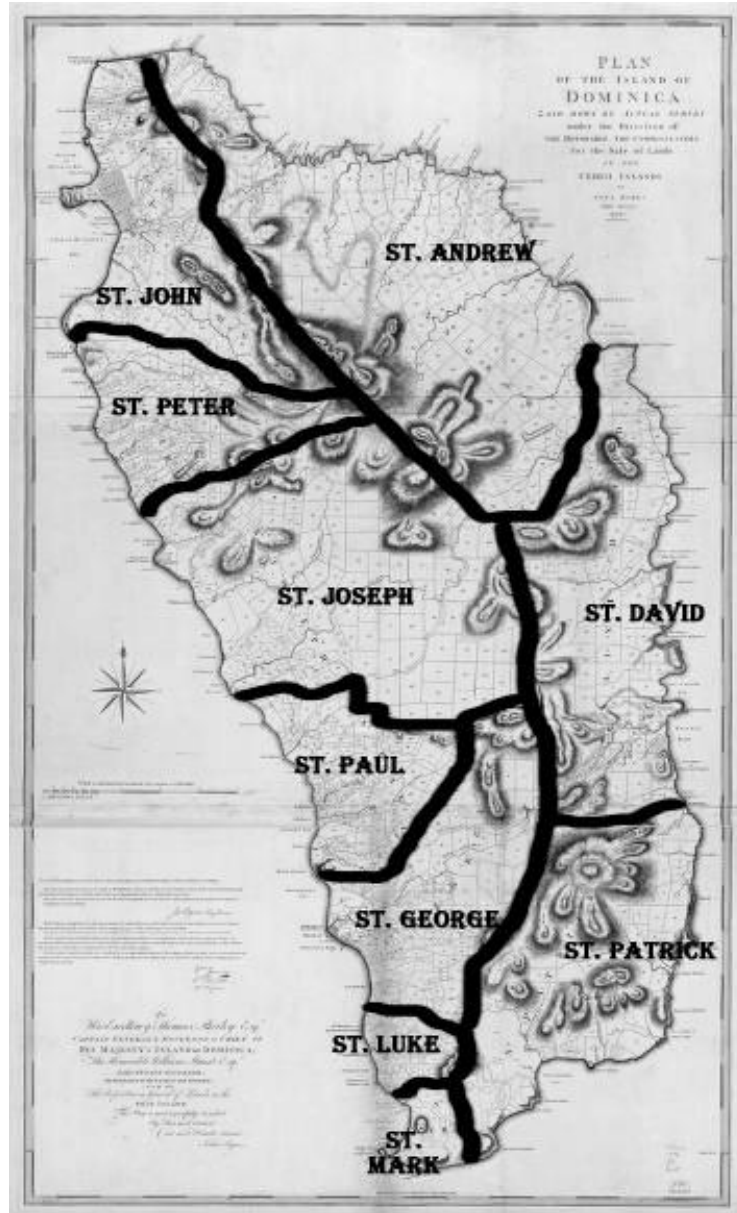
Continuing on to Dominica, between June 25 and 27, 1765, the commissioners auctioned a total of 3,730 acres of land in the island, only one-third of which was ready for planting. The considerable cost of clearing the dense forest that covered much of the mountainous island reduced the overall price of land, and on average uncleared lands in Dominica were auctioned for just over one pound sterling per acre, with lands cleared by the island's previous inhabitants fetching £6 to £7 sterling per acre.⁵² An important exception to this was the former Jesuit estate at Grand Bay, southern Dominica. Divided in two so as not to exceed the 300-acre limit imposed on holdings in the island, the large estate sold for as much 46 pounds sterling per acre to Archibald Stewart and 40 pounds sterling per acre to John Nelson, respectively; in all, the 600 acres of land confiscated from the Jesuits in Dominica fetched 20,247 pounds sterling at auction.⁵³

⁵¹ Details of Young's purchase in Boucamont can be found in BNA CO 106/9 N. 33, An account of the first sale of land in the island of St. Vincent, June 1, 1765.

⁵² Murdoch, "Land Policy," 560.

⁵³ BNA CO 106/9 N. 35, An account of the first sale of land in the island of Dominica, June 25-27 1765

Map 2.5: Parishes Created by British Officials in Dominica, c. 1763⁵⁴



Peopling the Periphery: Promoting and Regulating European Settlement of the Ceded Islands

Aware that their claims to the new colonies might prove tenuous if not anchored with loyal subjects, in the decade immediately following the Treaty of Paris both British and French colonial

⁵⁴ Map edited to show parishes created in Dominica after its cession to Great Britain in 1763. Original in BNA CO 700 Dominica, "Plan of the island of Dominica laid down by actual survey under the direction of the Honorable the Commissioners for the Sale of Lands in the Ceded Islands, by John Byres, Chief Surveyor (London: H. Hooper, 1776).

officials actively encouraged emigration from their respective countries to the Lesser Antilles. As mentioned above, the French Ministry of the Marine and Colonies, under the direction of the duc de Choiseul, initially envisioned the settlement of St. Lucia as a primarily state-directed affair. During the same period in which more than 12,000 colonists were dispatched to French Guiana, several hundred would-be settlers also left France's western ports for St. Lucia.⁵⁵ While they did not meet the same disastrous end as their counterparts on the South American main, settlers from metropolitan France were quickly deemed by officials in St. Lucia to be ill-suited to the rigors of life in the tropics. While some colonists arrived with their families, Marc Antoine Chardon, Intendant of St. Lucia, alleged that others were no more than convicts dispatched from overcrowded prisons in the metropole.⁵⁶ "A spirit of laziness and idleness is their lot," he complained, "and of 250 who have arrived thus far, there are no more than thirty who can be of any use to us."⁵⁷ The frustrated Intendant repeatedly suggested that the Ministry of the Marine and Colonies abandon the system of sending settlers to the islands altogether, condemning the project as "homicide in and of itself."⁵⁸ Chardon instead urged Choiseul to privilege colonists from neighboring islands, as the Intendant was already in the habit of doing. "In addition to already

⁵⁵ For an example of settlers destined for the colony, see ANOM FM C10C 2, Liste des familles Françaises et étrangères venues avec passeports pour passer aux colonies...destinées pour la Sainte Lucie. October 24 1763.

⁵⁶ ANOM FM C10C 2, Mémoire du 30 juin 1763. Created under the administration of Richelieu in 1635, *Intendants* had a primarily economic role as tax collectors and were intended to complement colonial Governors by serving as "loyal reporter, tax supervisor, and social leader." Banks, *Chasing Empire Across the Sea*, 17.

⁵⁷ "[L]'esprit de paresse et de fainéantise est leur partage...de 250 qui sont arrivés il n'y en a pas trente qui puissent nous être utiles" ANOM FM C10C 2, Chardon, August 1 1763. The letter is worth quoting in greater detail: "n'étant point marier ils sont aussy point utiles à la population et leur faiblesse les rend peu prophètes à cultiver la terre; d'ailleurs cette colonie n'avait pas besoin, d'ébénistes, de tailleurs, de perruquiers, de doreurs, de selliers, et de gens d'autres arts qui n'ont pas lieu icy et qui sont dependant la profession des deux tiers des ouvriers qui sont venus dans cette colonies...Je n'ay préservé que les menuisiers, charons, taillandiers, charpentiers, maçons, serruriers et boulangers, et a l'égard des autres je leur ay signifié ou de se répandre dans l'isle pour y travailler chez l'habitant, ou de cultiver la terre qui leur serait concédée...beaucoup ont mieux aimé se répandre dans l'isle, et quant aux autres il y en est quelques uns qui ont demandé a passer a la Martinique, et comme ils avaient des professions très inutiles à la colonie, et que c'était aussy de mauvais sujets, M. le Gouverneur a jugé apropos de leur en accorder la permission..."

⁵⁸ "Le système d'envoyer des passagers aux isles, était homicide en lui-même, privait la metropole de bras qui lui sont necessaire, et n'enrichissait pas la colonie." ANOM C10C 2, Chardon, Novembre 16 1764.

being acclimated (which is a great advantage), they are more familiar with the cultivation of the earth and the workings of a plantation,” Chardon reasoned.⁵⁹ As will be explored in greater detail in the following chapter, the Intendant’s stated preference for settlers already familiar with local conditions and practices speaks to a significant gap between imperial designs and local realities. Although officials in metropolitan France attempted to deploy general ideas and techniques of settlement acquired in earlier ventures elsewhere in the colonial world, settlers and officials dispatched to the colonies repeatedly insisted that their locally-constructed knowledge, acquired through the firsthand experience of actually living in the Lesser Antilles, was of greater value.

Although British colonial administrators did not direct colonization to the same extent as their counterparts in Versailles, plans for the settlement of Dominica, Grenada, Tobago, and St. Vincent evidence a similar desire to foster a population of loyal settlers in Great Britain’s newest Caribbean colonies. As Trevor Burnard has shown in the case of Jamaica, planter absenteeism, small numbers of marriageable white women, and high mortality rates combined to prevent the successful implantation of a permanent British settler society in West Indian islands colonized in the seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries.⁶⁰ Concerned that a tiny white minority would be unable to prevent slave uprisings, British imperial administrators pursued several means to promote white settlement in the second-phase colonies of the Ceded Islands. The high deficiency taxes discussed above aimed to increase the population of white men who could serve in the militia and of white women who could serve as wives, mothers, and sources of stable family life.⁶¹ Other legislation also sought to promote the creation of white families who would permanently reside in

⁵⁹ “Outre qu’ils sont déjà acclimatés (ce qui est un grand avantage) c’est qu’ils connaissent mieux la culture des terres et l’exploitation d’une habitation,” ANOM C10C 2 Chardon, March 22 1764.

⁶⁰ Trevor Burnard, “A Failed Settler Society: Marriage and Demographic Failure in Early Jamaica,” *Journal of Social History* Vol. 28, N. 1 (Autumn 1994: 63-82).

⁶¹ BNA CO 262/1 N.87, “An Act for compelling owners and possessors of slaves, to keep proportionable numbers of white Protestant servants,” October 7, 1767.

the colonies, thereby creating a more stable multi-generational society less marked by the issues of orphanhood, fragile kinship ties, and disputes over the transmission of property that marred first-phase colonies.⁶² Recall that in their original instructions to the Commissioners for the Sale and Disposal of Lands, British officials required that plots be designated for a Protestant Church and a school in each new parish in the Ceded Islands.⁶³ Official efforts to create institutions of education, religious and family life in the new colonies evidence a desire to avoid the problems associated with absenteeism by promoting a stable, self-reproducing settler society.⁶⁴

Despite such efforts, the example of planters who had made their fortunes in first-phase colonies and subsequently returned to the British Isles proved alluring to many would-be settlers. Although imperial administrators deliberately designed legislation to encourage families to set down roots in the islands, most of the people who disembarked in Great Britain's newest Caribbean colonies in the period following the Seven Years' War were young single men who had paid their own passage and had little intention of permanently remaining in the tropics; they might therefore be termed 'sojourners' rather than settlers.⁶⁵ Printed advertisements played an important role in enticing British subjects to the Lesser Antilles: in addition to pamphlets published in London, the settlement of the islands was also promoted in the Scottish press.⁶⁶ Like thousands of migrants

⁶² Burnard argues that family instability "must have heightened already strong impulses towards anarchic individualism manifest in the early Caribbean." Burnard, "A Failed Settler Society," 72.

⁶³ BNA CO 106/9 N.166, Instructions to the Commissioners for disposing by sale of otherwise of certain lands in Grenada, the Grenadines, Tobago, St. Vincent and Dominica, July 26 1764.

⁶⁴ As John Garrigus has shown, similar ideas about the importance of attracting "male, and especially female, settlers who would remain in the colony" were advocated in Saint-Domingue in the same period. See John Garrigus, *Before Haiti: Race and citizenship in French Saint Domingue* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2011 [First published 2006]), 112-13.

⁶⁵ For more on Scottish sojourners in the Americas, see Alan L. Karras, *Sojourners in the Sun: Scottish Migrants in Jamaica and the Chesapeake, 1740-1800* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1992). Trevor Burnard offers another potential characterization, defining sojourners as "people who spend a relatively short time in a place before moving on" and absentees as "people not resident in a place... *who have a central economic interest in that place* and who depend upon that place for a significant part of their income." Burnard, "Passengers Only," 181, emphasis added.

⁶⁶ Douglas Hamilton, "Robert Melville and the Frontiers of Empire in the British West Indies, 1763-1771," in Andrew MacKillop & Steve Murdoch, eds. *Military Governors and the Imperial Frontiers, c. 1600-1800*, (Leiden: Brill, 2003), pg.187

who took advantage of the post-war peace in order to settle mainland North America in the period immediately following the Seven Years' War, many new colonists in the Ceded Islands came from Scotland.⁶⁷

The 4,500 mile journey from the British Isles to the islands of the Caribbean could take upwards of two months. In the journal she kept aboard the *Jamaica Packet* as she and her brother Alexander journeyed from the Scottish lowlands to the West Indies in the late autumn of 1774, Janet Schaw bemoaned the damp sea air, bitter cold, and frequent storms that marked her passage to the new world. Accompanied by servants throughout their two-year sojourn in the Americas, the Schaws' sufferings paled in comparison with those of their shipmates, many of whom were poor farmers from the Orkney Islands who sought to emigrate permanently.⁶⁸ In contrast to the Schaws, whose servant Robert cooked for them throughout the crossing, these emigrants from northern Scotland subsisted on weekly rations of two pounds of oatmeal and one pound of beef or pork apiece. Children received only half a ration.⁶⁹ Ascending from her cabin shortly after the *Jamaica Packet* departed the port of Burntisland, County Fife, Janet Schaw was greeted by "a deck covered with people of all ages, from three weeks old to three score." "Never," Schaw averred, "did my eyes behold so wretched, so disgusting a sight." "Sickness works more ways than one," she later wrote, and "the smell which came from the hold, where [the emigrants] had been

⁶⁷ Bernard Bailyn estimates that some 40,000 Scots sailed to the Americas between the end of the Seven Years' War and the outbreak of the American War of Independence, the vast majority of them to the thirteen colonies. See Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West*, 45-49. Regrettably for the purposes of my study, Bailyn's work relies on a register of emigrants taken between 1773 and 1775 and is therefore slightly too late to be of use here. Emigration registers also excluded passengers who intended to return to Great Britain, as many sojourners to the Caribbean did.

⁶⁸ Janet Schaw, *Journal of a Lady of Quality, Being the Narrative of a Journey from Scotland to the West Indies, North Carolina, and Portugal, in the years 1774-1776*. Evangeline Walker Andrews, ed. (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921), 33.

⁶⁹ Schaw, *Journal of a Lady*, 53. While poor, it is unlikely that these emigrants were indentured servants: of approximately 3,000 Scots who emigrated in 1774-1775, Bailyn counts only 150 indentures. Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West*, 165.

confined, was sufficient to raise a plague aboard.”⁷⁰ Although Schaw ultimately characterized her seven-week journey as “no bad passage,” her journal suggests that not all of her fellow passengers would agree with this sunny description: Schaw recounts how one young woman nearly died after suffering a miscarriage in the ship’s crowded hold, while on another day an elderly man’s life was ransomed by sailors in exchange for drink.⁷¹

What motivated these men and women to undertake such a potentially arduous journey? In addition to the advertisements mentioned above, many Scots were continuing a long tradition of migrations both within Europe and across the Atlantic. The West Indies had historically been a particularly attractive destination for Scots: out of approximately 7,000 Scottish migrants to the Americas in the second half of the seventeenth century, an estimated two-thirds went to the Caribbean.⁷² By the eighteenth century the primary destination of emigrant Scots changed somewhat, and the Schaws’ shipmates likely formed part of a considerable exodus from the Scottish Highlands to mainland North America in the years preceding the American War of Independence. The increased rate of highland emigration in the 1760s and 1770s was prompted by several factors. The Scottish population, which already numbered 1.3 million by 1755, continued to grow in the latter decades of the eighteenth century.⁷³ Rising rents for tenant farmers provided further incentive for many individuals and families to abandon the increasingly crowded Scottish

⁷⁰ Schaw, *Journal of a Lady*, 28-30. Schaw soon amended her low opinion of the emigrants, describing them as “most respectable sufferers, whom it is both my duty and my inclination to comfort.” 36

⁷¹ Schaw, *Journal of a Lady*, 50, 72

⁷² T. C. Smout, N.C. Landsmen, and T.M. Devine, “Scottish Emigration in the Seventeenth and Eighteenth Centuries” in Nicholas Canny, ed, *Europeans on the Move: Studies on European Migration, 1500-1800*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994), 87.

⁷³ Douglas Hamilton, “Patronage and Profit: Scottish Networks in the British West Indies c. 1763-1807” PhD Thesis, University of Aberdeen, 1999, 33.

countryside.⁷⁴ While many relocated to the expanding industrial centers of Edinburgh, Glasgow, or London, others chose to venture overseas.

Although poor tenant farmers were the most affected by these changes in the fabric of Scottish society, the consolidation of large estates also decreased access to landholding and its attendant privileges for members of the middle class. It is from this latter group that many of the Scottish sojourners in the Ceded Islands were drawn. Men who had an expectation of owning land may have preferred to live as proprietors elsewhere in the British Empire rather than as tenants in Scotland.⁷⁵ With thousands of acres of virgin land available for purchase at prices much lower than elsewhere in the Caribbean, many migrants to the Ceded Islands in the period immediately after the Treaty of Paris were younger sons of middle-class families who hoped to establish plantations, quickly amass a fortune, and return home to Scotland as men of wealth and power. Unlike the poorer Highland emigrants, these men largely issued from landowning and merchant families in Lowland Scotland. Drawing on the knowledge and connections of members of established planter and mercantile networks that stretched from the new colonies across the Atlantic to Glasgow, Edinburgh, and sometimes as far as Aberdeen, these entrepreneurial young Scots quickly came to constitute an important economic and political force in the Ceded Islands.⁷⁶

Although the precise volume of Scottish emigration to the Ceded Islands is difficult to determine, its character and impact is less so.⁷⁷ In the decades following the Treaty of Paris,

⁷⁴ J.M. Bumstead, *The People's Clearance: Highland Emigration to North America, 1770-1815*. (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1982), 10.

⁷⁵ Karras, *Sojourners*, 13-22.

⁷⁶ For more on Scottish mercantile networks in the Ceded Islands, see Mark Quintanilla, "The World of Alexander Campbell: An Eighteenth-Century Grenadian Planter," *Albion*, 35, 2 (Summer 2003: 229–256).

⁷⁷ Douglas Hamilton estimates that as many as 20,000 Scots journeyed to the West Indies (i.e. the Ceded Islands, Jamaica, Barbados, and the Leeward Islands) between 1750 and 1800, though he is careful to state that not all of them remained there. Douglas Hamilton, "Transatlantic ties: Scottish migrant networks in the Caribbean, 1750-1800," in Angela Macarthy, ed. *A Global Clan: Scottish Migrant Networks and Identities since the Eighteenth Century* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006), 52

ambitious Scots purchased at least thirty percent of all available land in the islands ceded to Great Britain.⁷⁸ The Scottish presence in Tobago was particularly pronounced: Douglas Hamilton estimates that of seventy-seven total plantations established in the 116-square mile island by 1770, thirty-one were owned by Scots.⁷⁹ Many of the names bestowed upon plantations in Tobago—‘Glamorgan’ and ‘Invergordon’ in the parish of St. Mary; ‘Argyle’ and ‘Lockerby’ in the parish of St. Paul—suggest that planters maintained a fondness for, and perhaps hoped to return to, their place of origin.⁸⁰ The fact that very few Scottish planters in Tobago were accompanied by or formed legitimate families in the island further attests to the temporary nature of their sojourn. Despite concerted official attempts to promote the permanent settlement of the Ceded Islands by white families, as of 1770 Tobago counted only twenty-nine white women for 209 white men. Outnumbered by their 3,146 slaves by a ratio of more than thirteen to one, these sojourners closed ranks, developing close business and social ties with fellow Scots both in Tobago and across the Ceded Islands.⁸¹ As will be discussed in the following chapter, the small ratio of free settlers to slaves prompted colonial officials to experiment in their attempts to direct the settlement of the new colonies, electing to accommodate settlers who were willing to permanently remain in the islands regardless of whether they were Anglophone, Protestant, or even white.

Peopling the Periphery II: Forced Migrations to the Ceded Islands

While hundreds of free men and women chose to settle in the newest European colonies in the Caribbean, many thousands more came against their will. The volume of respective British and French slave exports from Africa increased in the period after the Seven Years’ War, rising from

⁷⁸ Hamilton, “Transatlantic ties,” 52.

⁷⁹ Hamilton, “Patronage and Profit,” 69.

⁸⁰ BNA CO 101/14 N. 126-128, Present State of Plantations now Settling in Tobago, 1770.

⁸¹ *Idem*. Unfortunately, the number of children and of free people of color is not listed, which may suggest that none were present, or may indicate that the categories were seen as unimportant by the creator of the census.

an estimated 255,350 people trafficked from Africa in British ships and 99,127 in French ships between 1751 and 1760 to 385,928 African slaves embarked in British ships and 164,756 in French ships between 1761 and 1770.⁸² More significant than this overall increase was the fact that in the wake of the Treaty of Paris a significant portion of the slave trade was rapidly redirected towards the Ceded Islands. Making use of well-established transatlantic routes and trading practices, British and French slavers trafficked more than 80,000 enslaved persons from the African continent to the Ceded Islands during the first ten years after the Treaty of Paris. Between 1763 and 1773 more than 41,000 individuals from Africa disembarked as slaves in Grenada, along with almost 29,000 in Dominica; 10,000 in St. Vincent; and 1,400 in Tobago. In contrast, 5,400 enslaved Africans were landed at the established French colony of Guadeloupe during the same period, while just 3,600 disembarked in Martinique.⁸³

While the increase in transatlantic slave trade traffic to the new colonies is staggering in sheer numbers alone, it would be difficult to overestimate its impact on the demography, economy, and infrastructure of the southern Caribbean, not to mention its effect on daily life on the plantations and in the burgeoning towns of the small islands. At the close of the Seven Years' War in 1763, British officials estimated that a total of 13,846 slaves resided in Grenada; 5,872 in Dominica; 5,069 in St. Lucia; and 3,430 in St. Vincent. No slaves were recorded in the sparsely-populated island of Tobago.⁸⁴ By the end of the first year of peace, fifteen voyages originating on

⁸² Estimates from *Voyages: The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database* at www.slavevoyages.org. These statistics revise earlier figures by Philip Curtin, who estimated that slave exports from Africa carried by the English between 1751-1760 and 1761-1770 remained roughly the same, amounting to approximately 250,000 slaves in each period. Philip Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), 136.

⁸³ *Voyages: The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database* and

<http://slavevoyages.org/tast/database/search.faces?yearFrom=1763&yearTo=1773&mjstimp=30000>

The database lists no vessels whose primary place of disembarkation during this period was St. Lucia, though it is possible that some ships continued on to St. Lucia after first calling at another port. The smaller number of slaves transported to Martinique and Guadeloupe during this time may be explained in part by demand, as planters in more established colonies had already amassed large numbers of laborers to work their estates.

⁸⁴ BNA CO 101/1 N.5, N.9, N.91.

the west coast of Africa had collectively disembarked a total of 2,673 slaves in Grenada, an island that had reportedly been visited by just eleven transatlantic slaving vessels in the previous 150 years.

Table 2.2: African Slaves Disembarked in the Lesser Antilles, 1763-1773⁸⁵

Year	Slaves Disembarked in British Ceded Islands				Slaves Disembarked in Existing Southern Caribbean Colonies		
	Dominica	St. Vincent	Grenada	Tobago	Martinique (Fr.)	Guadeloupe (Fr.)	Barbados (Br.)
1763			1,034		170	705	3,439
1764	779	167	1,639		885	670	7,969
1765	266		2,255		1,188	1,253	4,763
1766	1,090	393	7,090		629	717	4,420
1767	3,045	200	4,172		82	445	5,008
1768	2,681	577	2,657		504	347	4,282
1769	3,929	545	3,725			244	8,573
1770	3,620	794	6,643		52	423	9,119
1771	6,956	2,363	4,739	300	51	130	5,625
1772	4,809	2,544	4,371	770	120	225	4,603
1773	1,701	2,358	2,732	340		209	1,173
TOTAL	28,876	9,941	41,057	1,410	3,681	5,368	58,974
	Total: 81,284				Total: 68,023		

Official correspondence betrays little sense of the chaos that must have accompanied this unprecedented traffic. Newly-appointed officials eager to highlight their own contributions to the imperial venture did not dwell on the mud, odor, and illness that must have permeated the sweltering port towns of the southern Caribbean as thousands of individuals, exhausted and sickly from weeks or months spent shackled together in cramped holds, spilled onto the unpaved streets. A cacophony of different languages rang out across crowded marketplaces as Scottish, English,

⁸⁵Data sourced from *Voyages: The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database* at <http://slavevoyages.org/tast/database/search.faces?yearFrom=1763&yearTo=1764&mjstimp=30000>, accessed Nov. 14, 2013.

French, and creole planters jostled to purchase human beings whose long forced journey from the African interior ended in the cane fields and coffee groves of the Caribbean. The captives may have lacked a common language with which to articulate the sense of terror, outrage, or despair that they experienced upon landing in the islands: although the majority of Africans trafficked to the southern Caribbean in the years following the Treaty of Paris embarked at the British trading posts of Bonny and Calabar, in present-day Nigeria, and were therefore usually termed ‘Igbo’ by European traders, the Biafran region from which they hailed was characterized by considerable linguistic diversity.⁸⁶ Most were very young, as traders were advised to reject male slaves who appeared to be over the age of 28 and women over 22 or those “whose breasts hang low.”⁸⁷

The end of hurricane season and the drier winter months of November through March typically brought a marked increase in the number of vessels arriving in the Caribbean. On December 11, 1766, the *Edgar*, a 6-gun, 272-ton vessel out of Liverpool, landed in Grenada. The ship probably laid anchor in the natural harbor in the capital of St. George’s, which at half a mile long, 500 yards wide, and as much as 7 fathoms deep could easily accommodate vessels of her size.⁸⁸ Captains Thomas Chaffers and Edward Williams and their 40-man crew had purchased 377 men and women at Bonny, in the eastern Niger delta, and they disembarked 364 survivors of the middle passage in Grenada.⁸⁹ The following day, these captives were joined by a further 165 slaves carried aboard the *Nelly and Nancy*. Also out of Liverpool, the vessel had not fared as well as the *Edgar*: of the 265 slaves Captain James Briggs and his 32-man crew brought on board at Calabar,

⁸⁶ Alexander X. Byrd, *Captives and Voyagers: Black Migrants Across the Eighteenth Century British Atlantic World*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2010), 17-19.

⁸⁷ “Le capitaine aura attention de rebuter les negres au dessus de 28 et les femmes au dessus de 20 ou 22 ans, et de meme il peut n’en traiter aucune de jardins c’est-à-dire femmes qui ont le sein bas ” Quoted in ANOM FP5 APC Papiers Hulot de Collart, Instructions pour la conduite d’un navire expédié avec une cargaison propre à faire une traite de nègres à la cote d’or

⁸⁸ A brief description of the harbor of St. George’s (formerly called Fort Royal) can be found in BNA CO101/1 N. 5, Enquiry on Grenada, May 15 1763.

⁸⁹ Voyage 91289, *Voyages: The Transatlantic Slave Trade database*.

just east of Bonny in the bight of Biafra, 100 died over the course of the journey.⁹⁰ Just one week later, on December 19, 1766, the *Latham*, captained by George Colley and manned by 30 men, sailed into port with 308 slaves from Bonny and Calabar aboard. Seventy of their shipmates had died along the way.⁹¹

What awaited the 837 men, women, and children who arrived on the shores of this 120-square mile island in the space of a single week? While slaves may have been disembarked after a customary weeklong quarantine and lodged in port to await public auction, it is also possible that sales occurred on board the respective ships.⁹² In the period immediately following the Seven Years' War, most of the towns in the Ceded Islands lacked the infrastructure necessary to accommodate such large influxes of people; as of 1763 Carénage, the principal port of St. Lucia, was "composed of just one street, more of a rocky trail...on each side of which there [were] 10 or 12 houses made of boards, all in a terrible state."⁹³ In 1767 London merchants John Henderson and William Ebell applied for a grant of land in Roseau, Dominica, on which to establish a 'factory' to house slaves awaiting purchase, but it is unclear whether they succeeded in building such a structure at that time.⁹⁴ Instead, slaves may have been brought to the ship's upper decks and

⁹⁰ Voyage 91146, *Voyages: The Transatlantic Slave Trade database*. The death of more than 1/3 of slaves aboard the *Nelly and Nancy* is unusually high; historians estimate that on average, 14.7% of slaves did not survive the Middle Passage during the eighteenth century. David Eltis & Paul Lachance, "The Demographic Decline of Caribbean Slave Populations," in David Eltis & David Richardson, eds. *Extending the Frontiers: Essays on the new transatlantic slave trade database*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008), 341.

⁹¹ Voyage 91292, *Voyages: The Transatlantic Slave Trade database*. Another ship, the *Henry*, disembarked 117 slaves in Grenada on December 3, while the *London* disembarked 350 slaves on November 26. Voyages 91081 and 77826. This means that in the space of just three weeks, 1,304 African captives disembarked in Grenada.

⁹² The practice of individual merchants and colonial officials being rowed out to a slave ship, where they could examine slaves and make purchases, is described in Robert Harms, *The Diligent*, 333-339. The practice was outlawed in Saint-Domingue in 1764, but may have persisted in other French colonies despite such legislation. See Lucien Peyraud, *L'esclavage aux Antilles françaises avant 1789, d'après des documents inédits des Archives coloniales* (Paris : Hachette, 1897),119.

⁹³"Le bourg est composé d'une seule rue, ou plutôt d'un sentier fort pierreux, et d'un accès assez difficile, il y a de chaque coté environ 10 ou 12 maisons d'habitants ou cases batis en plancher et toutes en fort mauvais état..."ANOM C10C 2, Chardon to the Ministry of the Marine and Colonies, June 30 1763.

⁹⁴ BNA CO 101/1 N. 83, Memorial of John Henderson and William Ebell of London, merchants.

prepared for sale by the crew, who would have tended any visible wounds or sores as best they could, bathed them, and rubbed their skin with palm oil.⁹⁵ Merchants would then have been invited to row out and board the vessel, where they could inspect the slaves and negotiate prices with the ship's captain.⁹⁶ This process could be completed in a matter of days, but it often took much longer: the *Nelly and Nancy* remained anchored off Grenada for more than two months, finally departing on February 23, 1767.⁹⁷ The fact that more than one-third of the ship's human cargo perished en route is suggestive of the poor conditions that likely existed on board, and surviving slaves may have been too weak or sickly to attract buyers, especially with hundreds of other newly-enslaved Africans competing for purchasers' attention.

As indicated by the table below, the formal extension of the transatlantic slave trade to the Ceded Islands resulted in a rate of demographic transformation largely unprecedented in Caribbean colonies settled earlier in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Only Barbados, whose population of enslaved people rose from fifty in 1629 to approximately 6,000 fourteen years later, and reaching some 20,000 slaves by 1655, could come close to matching the rate at which Tobago's enslaved population increased in the colony's earliest years.⁹⁸

⁹⁵ Byrd, *Captives and Voyagers*, 59, Robert Harms, *The Diligent: Worlds of the Slave Trade* (New York: Basic Books, 2003), 333.

⁹⁶ Harms, *The Diligent*, 333-339.

⁹⁷ Voyage 91146, *Voyages: The Transatlantic Slave Trade database*. The *Edgar* departed Grenada on January 20, 1767. The date the *Latham* left is not recorded.

⁹⁸ Richard Sheridan, *The Development of the Plantations to 1750 [and] an Era of West Indian Prosperity, 1750-1775* (Barbados: Caribbean Universities Press, 1970), 27. The French colony of Martinique developed considerably more slowly in its infancy, with the island's enslaved population rising from approximately 9,300 in 1683 to 14,500 seventeen years later and 23,000 seventeen years after that. Sheridan, *The Development of the Plantations*, 35.

Table 2.3: Evolution of Free and Enslaved Populations in the Ceded Islands,
1763-1773⁹⁹

	ST. LUCIA		GRENADA		TOBAGO		DOMINICA	
	1763	1773	1763	1773	1763	1773	1763	1773
Free People	1,267	2,643	3,500	2,076	0	416	1,718	1,633
Slaves	5,069	13,982	10,000	26,211	0	7,342	3,430	14,281

Whereas in 1763 no slaves had been reported in Tobago, by 1773 the new colony counted more than 7,000 enslaved laborers. Ten years after Tobago was formally integrated into the transatlantic trade system, slaves outnumbered free people in the island by a ratio of almost 18 to 1—a ratio greater than that found in Saint-Domingue on the eve of the Haitian Revolution.¹⁰⁰ While the total number of free people in the newly-British colony of Grenada decreased as former French subjects quit the island and incoming British subjects, many of them men unaccompanied by wives or children, consolidated former French holdings into larger plantations, the island’s enslaved population almost tripled in the space of a decade. A similar trend occurred in Dominica, where the free population declined from 1,718 to 1,638 while the number of slaves increased from approximately 5,800 to more than 14,000 in the first decade after the island became a British colony. With St. Lucia a favored destination of many of the people who quit the newly-British colonies, the free population of the only island ceded to France in 1763 more than doubled, rising from just under 1,300 in 1763 to slightly more than 2,600 in 1773. The number of enslaved people in St. Lucia almost tripled in the same period, increasing from slightly more than 5,000 to almost

⁹⁹ Population figures for 1763 as follows: for St. Lucia, ANOM DPPC G1506 Recensement 1764; St. Vincent BNA CO 101/1 N.9. For Grenada BNA CO 101/1 N.5; for Dominica BNA CO 101/1 N. 91. Figures for 1773 sourced as follows: for St. Lucia ANOM DPPC G1 506 Recensement 1773; for Dominica BNA CO 71/4 N.274; for Tobago BNA CO 101/1 N. 181. For Grenada, the number of slaves is listed in BNA CO 101/18 Part II N.81 but for free people only the number of property owners (not including their families) is given; the number of free people in Grenada listed here is for 1771 and is sourced from BNA CO 101/28 N. 123. Unfortunately population figures for St. Vincent in this period are not extant.

¹⁰⁰ In 1789 French colonists in Saint-Domingue were outnumbered by their slaves by a ratio of 14 to 1. Garrigus, *Before Haiti*, 2.

14,000 individuals. As a point of comparison, when the colonization of Jamaica began in earnest in the early eighteenth century, it took more than fifty years for the island's enslaved population to triple, rising from approximately 45,000 slaves in 1703 to 130,000 by 1754.¹⁰¹ While the total slave population of the much larger colony of Jamaica was always greater than that of any of the Ceded Islands, the fact remains that established transatlantic trade routes allowed the number of slaves as a percentage of the total population in the new colonies to increase at a rate much faster than that which occurred in first phase colonies.

Experience had taught colonial officials that large numbers of slaves created a strong potential for disorder; officials therefore wasted little time in introducing slave codes to the Ceded Islands. While French administrators simply extended Martinique's existing *Code Noir* to the island's new dependency of St. Lucia, individual acts "for the better government of slaves, and for the more speedy and effectual suppression of runaways" were issued for Grenada in 1766, St. Vincent in 1767, and Dominica in 1768. The first of these acts aimed to bring about the capture and execution of specific runaway slaves, and to encourage planters to help capture other runaways by offering financial incentives for doing so.¹⁰² Subsequent slave codes issued in the ceded islands were far more elaborate. Passed in 1767, the St. Vincent "[a]ct for the making slaves real estate and for the better government of slaves and free negroes" stipulated, among numerous other clauses, that "every master mistress or overseer of a family shall ...cause all his or her negroe houses to be searched every 14 days at the least for runaway negroes, clubs, wooden swords and other mischievous weapons and also for stolen goods."¹⁰³ Such detailed slave codes illustrate the

¹⁰¹ Sheridan, *The Development of the Plantations*, 41.

¹⁰² BNA CO 103/1 N. 103, "An Act for the better government of slaves, and for the more speedy and effectual suppression of runaways," December 10, 1766.

¹⁰³ BNA CO 262/1 N. 53, "An Act for the making slaves real estate and for the better government of slaves and free negroes," July 13, 1767.

extent to which colonial officials drew on precedents first developed in other British colonies in the Americas in an attempt to limit the potential for disorder caused by an unprecedentedly rapid influx of people recently enslaved in Africa. Although the following chapters will show that the resultant imbalance between the free and enslaved populations created problems of insurgency common to societies built on the institution of chattel slavery, in the first decade after the Treaty of Paris planters and colonial officials in the Ceded Islands welcomed their newfound access to existing transatlantic slave-trade routes as a means to quickly expand the enslaved laborforce in the new colonies.

Economic Transformations in the Creole Archipelago

The dramatic increase in the enslaved laborforce of the Ceded Islands produced an equally dramatic transformation in the islands' economy. As Linda Rupert notes in her discussion of the slave trade in Dutch Curacao, commerce in enslaved labor could serve a vital function in integrating fledgling colonies into broader commercial networks, as the trade in human beings "fed and, in turn, was fed by, commerce in nonhuman commodities."¹⁰⁴ The rapid growth of the transatlantic slave trade to the southern Caribbean transformed the region's role in the Atlantic economy, with the islands serving both as new markets for European manufactures and as new sites of commodity production.

Enslaved Africans transported to the new colonies faced a labor regime far different than that which existed in the Creole Archipelago prior to 1763. As explored in chapter one, prior to the Treaty of Paris small planters in islands that were not formally integrated into European mercantilist systems grew food crops that could be transported to neighboring colonies, as well as export crops such as cacao, cotton, and coffee. Only Grenada had the access to the transatlantic

¹⁰⁴ Linda Rupert, *Creolization and Contraband: Curacao in the Early Modern Atlantic World* (Athens: The University of Georgia Press, 2012), 77

slave trade and to the French market necessary to successfully cultivate and export sugar. As shown in the table below, ten years after Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent, and Tobago were incorporated into the British Empire, the islands collectively exported almost 300,000 cwt (equal to more than 33.3 million pounds) of sugar to the metropole. In the same year Jamaica—an island with a total area more than four times larger than that of the British Ceded Islands—exported 1,017,100 cwt of sugar to Great Britain; the Leeward Islands 248,500 cwt; and Barbados just 110,900 cwt.¹⁰⁵ The fears of pamphleteers who opposed Great Britain’s acquisition of the islands in 1763 were forgotten as planters and merchants entered what historian Richard Pares dubbed ‘the silver age of sugar;’ a period between the Treaty of Paris and the American War of Independence when the crop fetched on average 50% more than it had in the 1730s in Great Britain.¹⁰⁶

Table 2.4: Amount of Sugar (cwt) Exported from the Ceded Islands, 1769-1773¹⁰⁷

YEAR	Dominica (Br.)	Grenada (Br.)	St. Vincent (Br.)	Tobago (Br.)	St. Lucia (Fr.)	ANNUAL TOTAL
1769	1,560	126,228	21,174	0	2,287	151,249
1770	13,940	196,131	38,395	1,686	3,293	250,152
1771	10,258	157,762	44,359	4,450	7,347	224,176
1772	10,371	194,452	53,551	13,625	8,826	280,825
1773	26,705	198,159	58,691	14,153	No data	297,708

As shown in the table above, while the majority of sugar exports from the Ceded Islands came from Grenada—the only island where sugar plantations and mills pre-dated the establishment of British rule—sugar exports from the other Ceded Islands increased at a rapid

¹⁰⁵ Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery*, 489.

¹⁰⁶ Pares, “Merchants and planters,” 40.

¹⁰⁷ Figures for the British colonies quoted in Selwyn H.H. Carrington, *The Sugar Industry*, 18. All figures are given in cwt, which in the British imperial system was equal to 112 lbs. Figures for St. Lucia from ANOM FM C10C 8 N. 23, Relevé du produit de l’Isle Ste. Lucie pendant les années 1769, 1770, 1771 et 1772. Figures for St. Lucia are given in *livres*, which I divided by 112 to convert to cwt.

rate.¹⁰⁸ In the five years between 1769 and 1773, the amount of sugar exported from St. Vincent almost tripled. Exports from the French colony of St. Lucia increased at an even more rapid rate, and by 1773 amounted to almost four times what they had been in 1769. Dominica's exports of sugar during the same period increased an astonishing seventeen fold, from just over 1,500 cwt in 1769 to more than 26,000 cwt by 1773. By 1772, the annual value of trade from Tobago—an island that reported no crops planted as of 1763—was estimated at more than £200,000 sterling.¹⁰⁹ Equipped with the expertise, the technology, the capital, and the laborforce to transform parts of the forested, mountainous Ceded Islands into profitable sugar estates, planters did so at a rapid rate.

These exports had a significant impact on the balance of trade between Great Britain and her West Indian colonies. Between 1763 and 1773 the collective value of produce imported to Great Britain from the islands of Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent, and Tobago more than tripled, increasing from £261,552 sterling in the wake of the Seven Years' War to almost £860,000 a decade later. As a point of comparison, Richard Pares estimates that between 1764 and 1770 the value of imports into Great Britain from Jamaica averaged £1,185,979 sterling, while average annual imports from Barbados during the same period amounted to £280,335 sterling.¹¹⁰ The value of the Ceded Islands as a site for the export of manufactures and other goods from Great Britain increased as the wealth of the planters grew: in 1772, residents of the new colonies consumed more than £325,000 sterling in exports from the metropole, while average annual exports to Jamaica during the same period amounted to £463,426 sterling and those to Barbados just £181,749

¹⁰⁸ By the spring of 1772, Grenada already had more than 32,000 acres planted in sugarcane. BNA CO 101/18 Part II N. 57, State of the island of Grenada, 1772.

¹⁰⁹ BNA CO 101/18 Part II

¹¹⁰ Richard Pares, *War and Trade in the West Indies, 1739-1763* (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1963 [First published 1936]), 474.

sterling.¹¹¹ As the next chapter explores in more detail, the importance of planters in the Ceded Islands as both exporters and consumers allowed them to exercise a great deal of influence in determining the shape of colonial affairs.

Table 2.5: Value of Total Trade between Great Britain & the Ceded Islands, 1763-1773¹¹²

YEAR	IMPORTS (£ Sterling)	EXPORTS (£ Sterling)
1763	261,552	57,382
1764	238,783	83,321
1765	277,865	88,121
1766	406,871	116,094
1767	386,878	135,465
1768	616,530	163,868
1769	536,877	184,756
1770	653,861	232,945
1771	663,472	257,853
1772	883,541	327,458
1773	859,981	214,933

Conclusion

By drawing on and attempting to improve strategies of economic development and colonial rule originally developed in first phase colonies such as Barbados and Martinique, officials in the employ of the respective British and French Crowns succeeded in quickly surveying and allocating estates in the Ceded Islands, facilitating the settlement of large numbers of free and enslaved people, and encouraging the production and export of hundreds of thousands of pounds of plantation commodities, particularly sugar. Viewed from the perspective of British and French imperial administrators, the decade immediately following the Treaty of Paris was one of innumerable rapid successes in their newest Caribbean colonies. Ships crisscrossed the Atlantic

¹¹¹ Pares, *War and Trade*, 475.

¹¹² Values calculated from data provided in Charles Whitworth, *State of Trade of Great Britain in its Imports and Exports, Progressively from the Year 1697; Also of the Trade to each particular Country, during the above period, distinguishing each year* (London, 1776), 86-89.

from Africa and Europe, transporting tens of thousands of people to the shores of a tropical archipelago smaller than Rhode Island. Planters wasted no time in ordering newly-acquired slaves to cut down forests, build houses and mills, and plant sugarcane, cotton, cacao, and coffee, altering the landscape and ecology of the Caribbean frontier. Just ten short years after Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent, and Tobago became colonies of Great Britain, they collectively constituted one of the most important sources of wealth in the British Empire. This wealth was all the more valuable since older West Indian colonies such as Barbados were increasingly suffering the effects of soil exhaustion, resulting in decreased exports of sugar.

As will be discussed in the following chapters, however, the unprecedentedly rapid economic, demographic, and environmental transformation of the Creole Archipelago came at considerable cost. The arrival of colonial officials and of new settlers from France, England, Scotland, and the Americas undermined local agricultural and economic practices as well as structures of authority that longtime residents of the islands proved reluctant to abandon. The ensuing contests between ‘old’ and ‘new adopted’ subjects led the respective British and French Crowns to extend considerable political, economic, and legal concessions to their colonial subjects, as officials attempted to accommodate practices derived from the experience of daily life in the islands. The conversion of tropical forests to sugarcane fields was seen as a threat by Caribs, who did not hesitate to use force to retain sovereignty over their lands. While colonial records unfortunately offer little insight into the thoughts of enslaved people who had long labored on small plantations alongside other island-born slaves with whom they shared a language, a culture, and in some cases kinship ties, the trafficking of tens of thousands of people from Africa to the new colonies, speaking different languages and practicing different religions, did not fail to provoke a reaction; in the decades after 1763, both Creole and African-born slaves deserted their

plantations and organized numerous revolts. Although British and French officials could claim considerable success in the initial implementation of well-researched settlement, agricultural, and economic reforms in some of the last Caribbean islands to be formally incorporated into European empires, they soon discovered that even the best-informed attempts to transform the Creole Archipelago into a center of plantation production would not be readily accepted by people who had settled in the islands precisely to avoid such transformations.

Chapter 3: Accommodating Local Knowledge: Experimentations and Concessions in the Southern Caribbean

“[T]hey are there; they have Property; they have Wealth; they are People, and People will be very much wanted.”¹
-Thomas Whately, 1765

Thomas Whately made little effort to hide his reluctance to accept the thousands of people who were made subjects of King George III by virtue of the 1763 Treaty of Paris. One of two Secretaries to the Treasury under British Prime Minister George Grenville, Whately remains primarily familiar to historians for his continued defence of Parliament’s right to impose taxes on British colonies in the years preceding the American War of Independence. Yet in his frequently-cited 1765 pamphlet *The regulations lately made concerning the colonies, and the taxes imposed upon them, considered*, Whately also devotes considerable space to a discussion of how best to develop Great Britain’s newest Caribbean colonies of Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent, and Tobago. Advocating the need for internal defence in small, remote islands populated by approximately 6,500 French-speaking Catholics, their 19,000 slaves, and several thousand Caribs—all individuals whose sympathies might lie with a rival sovereign—Whately called for the settlement of the new colonies by loyal English and Scottish Protestants. Although the Secretary was largely pessimistic about the prospect of integrating “[s]trangers to our Manners, our Government, and our Religion” into the British Empire, he conceded that “the Experiment should at least be made.” After all, Whately noted rather curtly, “they are there; they have Property; they have Wealth; they are People, and People will be very much wanted.”²

The previous chapter examined the process by which British and French imperial officials drew on decades of amassed experience in the administration of plantation colonies in order to

¹ Thomas Whately, *The regulations lately made concerning the colonies, and the taxes imposed upon them, considered* (London: J. Wilkie, 1765), 32.

² Whately, *The Regulations*, 31-32.

rapidly extend established modes of surveying and settlement, sugar monoculture, and transatlantic trade to a region of the Americas that had evolved beyond the reach of direct imperial control. As several scholars have noted, however, even the most heavily-researched theories of how best to create and administer colonies were rarely implemented smoothly in practice; processes of negotiation between agents of empire in the metropole and in the colonies, and between officials and subjects, were integral to the expansion and day-to-day operations of empires.³ Such negotiations were particularly important in the period after the Seven Years' War, when the large-scale reorganization of territory in Africa, India, North America, and the Caribbean meant that thousands of “strangers”—people speaking different languages, practicing different religions, and accustomed to different political and economic practices—became subjects of the British Crown.

Vincent T. Harlow's argument that the Seven Years' War marked a break between discrete 'first' and 'second' British Empires—the first built on white settler colonialism, plantation slavery, and mercantilist restrictions; the second elaborated in Great Britain's new territorial acquisitions in Asia, Africa, and America and centered on free trade and British rule over non-white, non-Christian subjects—provoked a great deal of subsequent research and debate.⁴ While some historians fruitfully explore the myriad effects both in the colonies and in Great Britain of the empire's transformation from what they describe as a relatively small, linguistically and religiously homogeneous entity into a vast territory containing a multitude of languages, religions, cultures, and values, others argue that no such transformation occurred; to characterize eighteenth-century

³ See especially Greene, *Negotiated Authorities*; Elizabeth Mancke, “Negotiating an Empire: Britain and its Overseas Peripheries, c. 1550-1780,” in Christine Daniels & Michael V. Kennedy, eds. *Negotiated Empires*, 235-266.

⁴ Vincent T. Harlow, *The Founding of the Second British Empire, 1763-1793* (New York: Longmans & Green, 2 volumes, 1952-1964). David Armitage argues that Great Britain's “swing to the east” occurred after the loss of the Thirteen Colonies; see David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 2.

British rule in Asia as fundamentally different from that pursued in the Americas is to ignore features common to both colonial endeavors.⁵

This chapter concurs with the work of historians who argue that imperial rule was shaped by the actions and opinions of subjects and authorities in the colonies.⁶ An insistence on the value of ‘local knowledge’—information and practices derived from first-hand experience of life in the islands—allowed longtime residents of the Creole Archipelago who were made colonial subjects by virtue of the 1763 Treaty of Paris to continue to shape the economic, political, and social conditions under which they lived. Although most studies of empire in the wake of the Seven Years’ War focus on the evolving nature of British colonial rule, a discussion of British and French responses to the peoples and practices of the Creole Archipelago allows for an appreciation of the extent to which both Crowns experimented with new imperial practices during this period of global imperial and territorial reorganization.⁷ By highlighting unprecedented political and economic concessions in the Ceded Islands—specifically, the extension of unparalleled political privileges to Francophone Catholics in the British Empire, the loosening or abandonment of mercantilist restrictions on the part of both the British and French Crowns, and the lax or uneven enforcement of legislation intended to identify and police free people of color—this chapter emphasizes the extent to which colonial officials proved willing to accommodate existing practices in order to

⁵ On the effects of an evolving British Empire both in England and abroad see Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992); Paul Mapp, “British Culture and the Changing Character of the Mid-Eighteenth-Century British Empire,” in Hofstra, ed. *Cultures in Conflict*. On the commonalities between colonial rule in the British Atlantic and in British India, see Philip J. Stern, “British Asia and the British Atlantic: Comparisons and Connections,” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Third Series Vol. 63, N. 4 (Oct. 2006: 693-712); H.V. Bowen, “British Conceptions of Global Empire, 1756-83,” *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* 26, n.3 (1998: 1-27).

⁶ This argument is persuasively expressed in P.J. Marshall’s examination of the ways in which British rule was shaped by colonial subjects in India and the Americas. P.J. Marshall, *The Making and Unmaking of Empires: Britain, India, and America c. 1750-1783* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

⁷ As Helen Dewar argues, purported distinctions between British and French imperial strategies in the wake of the Seven Years’ War fail to acknowledge the extent to which both empires sought to promote mercantilist trade and military defense. Helen Dewar, “Canada or Guadeloupe?: French and British Perceptions of Empire, 1760-1763,” *The Canadian Historical Review* 91 n.4 (December 2010: 637-660).

convince individuals already adapted to daily life in the southern Caribbean to lend their knowledge and their experience to the development of new colonies. After exploring what motivated thousands of residents of the Creole Archipelago to accept their new status as colonial subjects and discussing the accommodations and concessions they managed to secure, the next chapter will turn to the men and women who elected to evade or oppose the creation of plantation colonies in the southern Caribbean. Taken together, these chapters survey a range of responses to the extension of imperial designs to a region of the Americas that had long served as an outlet for people seeking to escape direct colonial rule.

The “Yeomanry of the West Indies:” Leases to existing residents of the Creole Archipelago

Whately’s observation that “people will be very much wanted” reflects an attitude common among British and French officials dispatched to the southern Caribbean in the period after the Seven Years’ War. Wary of new settlers who might seek to emulate planters in Jamaica and Barbados by making their fortune in the islands and retiring to England, thereby replicating the problems of absenteeism common to first-phase colonies, administrators present in the islands vaunted the value of any inhabitant who evidenced a willingness to remain there permanently. With “their ideas...confined to the spot they have fixed themselves on, their wishes circumscribed to attaining absolute necessities with a very few comforts for themselves and family,” this “yeomanry of the West Indies,” as a Governor of St. Vincent would later dub the Francophone Catholic small planters whose residence in the island predated the assertion of colonial rule “are by far the most useful and giving the greatest strength to infant colonies.”⁸ A yeomanry content with relatively small estates, possessed of families who would form subsequent generations of resident planters, and familiar with the climate, topography, and agricultural conditions of the

⁸ BNA CO 260/2, Morris to Germain, October 4, 1777.

southern Caribbean could only hasten the development of ideal plantation colonies. Noting that the small planters who had settled in Grenada, Dominica, and St. Vincent prior to the Treaty of Paris were “accustomed to the climate,” William Young warned that if these “useful inhabitants” could not be convinced to remain in the new British colonies, “their property in negroes to a great amount, together with the produce and revenue arising from their labour, would [be] lost to Great Britain, and acquired by France.”⁹

The notion that one empire’s loss would be another’s gain helps explain the generous concessions afforded to people already resident in the Ceded Islands at the end of the Seven Years’ War. Under the terms of the Treaty of Paris, subjects of the French King residing in newly-British territories and British subjects residing in newly-French territories were reciprocally afforded eighteen months from the date of the treaty to “bring away their effects as well as their persons... without being restrained on account of their religion, or under any other pretence whatsoever, except that of debts or of criminal prosecutions.”¹⁰ Grenada was ceded according to the same terms as Canada, another newly-British territory primarily peopled by former subjects of the French King. In accordance with Article IV of the Treaty of Paris:

His Britannick Majesty... agrees to grant the liberty of the Catholick religion to the inhabitants of Canada [and Grenada]... His Britannick Majesty farther agrees, that the French inhabitants, or others who had been subjects of the Most Christian King in Canada [or Grenada], may retire with all safety and freedom wherever they shall think proper, and may sell their estates, provided it be to the subjects of his Britannick Majesty...¹¹

No such grace was extended to existing inhabitants of St. Vincent and Dominica, who were deemed to have illegally settled the islands in contravention of the treaties of neutrality outlined in

⁹ William Young, *Considerations*, 27.

¹⁰ Article VIII of the Treaty of Paris, quoted in Clive Parry, *The Consolidated Treaty Series*, Vol. 42 (New York: Oceana, 1969).

¹¹ Article IV of the Treaty of Paris, quoted in Parry, *The Consolidated Treaty Series*, Vol. 42. That Grenada be ceded on the same terms as Canada is stipulated in Article IX of the treaty.

chapter one. While existing residents were free to emigrate, they had no legal title to the lands they cultivated and were therefore forbidden to sell or otherwise alienate their holdings. Those who chose to remain on their plantations could do so only if they publicly demonstrated their new fealty by swearing an oath of allegiance to the Crown of Great Britain and making a Declaration of Abjuration.¹² Leases of up to forty years were available to those who took the required oaths, on condition that lessees pay a fine of between £1 and £20 sterling per acre. Fines varied depending on the size of land holdings and desired length of lease, and were assessed in addition to a quit rent of at least £1 six pence sterling per acre per annum.¹³ For the time being, Caribs were “permitted to remain undisturbed in their cottages and grounds” and surveyors were instructed not to assess Carib territory in St. Vincent until all other lands in the island had been allocated.¹⁴

Like much of the legislation discussed in the previous chapter, the British Crown’s decision to allow Francophone Catholic planters to retain their lands provided they fulfil certain conditions was a direct product of lessons learned through prior colonial endeavors. Although British forces conquered Acadia in 1710, the predominantly French Catholic residents of the new territory were initially denied legal title to land. People without title to land did not pay taxes to the Crown; lacking tax revenue and a representative Assembly to allocate the proceeds of that revenue, Acadia languished for decades after its cession to the British Crown.¹⁵ By immediately establishing the

¹² The Declaration of Abjuration required people living under British rule to “swear that I do from my heart abhor detest and abjure, as impious and heretical, that damnable doctrine and position that princes excommunicated or deprived by the Pope or any authority of the See of Rome may be deposed or murdered by their subjects or any other whatsoever, and I do declare that no foreign Prince, person, prelate state or potentate hath or ought to have any jurisdiction, power, superiority, preheminance or authority ecclesiastical or civil within the Kingdom of Great Britain or any other of His Majesty’s Dominions whatsoever, so help me God.” Hamilton College Library, Beinecke Collection MS 166, Ceded Islands. Oath of Allegiance. 1765.

¹³ BNA CO 106/9 N.166, Ninth Instruction of Instructions to the Commissioners for disposing by sale of otherwise of certain lands in Grenada, the Grenadines, Tobago, St. Vincent and Dominica, July 26 1764.

¹⁴ BNA CO 106/9 N.22, Abstract of the Terms and Conditions, Contained in His Majesty’s Instructions, Relative to the French Inhabitants of the Islands of St. Vincent and Dominica.

¹⁵ Mancke, “Negotiating an Empire,” 256.

terms according to which existing residents of the Ceded Islands might be incorporated into the British Empire, imperial administrators consciously sought to generate revenue, regulate the settlement of land, and secure the allegiance of new colonial subjects.

By the middle of 1766, the Commissioners for the Sale of Lands had assembled a list of approximately 300 heads of household in Dominica and more than 130 in St. Vincent who had chosen to retain their lands in the respective islands as leaseholds and had paid the associated fine.¹⁶ Given the limited terms of such leases, as well as the relatively high rents and fines they carried, it is worth contemplating why hundreds of families who had established themselves in the Creole Archipelago elected to stay put. Certainly a longing for the familiar played a role; in a petition addressed to the Lords of the Treasury in Great Britain, a number of “His Majesty’s New Adopted Subjects” declared that “your petitioners were born and brought up on the lands they now possess, and consequently have a particular affection for the spot of their nativity and the home of their youth.”¹⁷ Established planters may also have been reluctant to abandon productive lands for less desirable concessions made available by French colonial officials in St. Lucia, or to undertake the considerable task of transporting their families, slaves, and possessions to the neighboring island. It is also possible that longtime residents of the Creole Archipelago, accustomed to evacuation orders issued but not executed, simply did not believe that formal colonial rule would last. For still others, the prospect of being assimilated as subjects of the British Crown may have

¹⁶A full list of existing inhabitants of Dominica and of St. Vincent who elected to lease lands when the islands came under British rule can be found in appendix A and B. To determine the total number of former inhabitants who remained in each island I counted all names listed on the manifest, including joint owners. Such a count obviously fails to include unpropertied people resident in the islands at the time of their cession who subsequently remained, including women and children. BNA CO 106/10 N. 67, An account of the French inhabitants of Dominica whose claims have been allowed by the Commissioners and who paid their fines accordingly, February 1766, and BNA CO 106/10 N. 79, An account of the French inhabitants of St. Vincent whose claims have been allowed by the Commissioners and who paid their fines accordingly, May 1766.

¹⁷ BNA T1/499 N.93, The humble petition of His Majesty’s New Adopted Subjects possessors of Land in Dominica. No date.

been appealing; people accustomed to living just beyond the reach of colonial rule may have been interested to see what rights or privileges they might obtain by assenting to it.

In order to publicly demonstrate their new allegiance to the British Crown, in 1765 all former French subjects who wished to continue residing in the new British colony of Grenada were required to take an oath in which they “sincerely promise and swear that I will be faithful and bear true allegiance to His Majesty King George the Third, so help me God.” Hundreds of residents throughout the island travelled to their local parishes in order to sign the oath in 1765 and 1766. A small number did not sign the oath until several years later, which may hint at a reluctance to pledge allegiance to the British monarch or suggest that some former French subjects left the new British colony and subsequently elected to return.¹⁸

The list of existing inhabitants who elected to remain in Dominica and St. Vincent when the islands became British colonies reveals considerable variation in the size, value, and location of the lands to which inhabitants laid claim, suggesting that there was no single factor that motivated some individuals to accept British colonial rule while others abandoned the new colonies. Some planters, like Nicolas Croquet Belligny, who owned 282 cleared acres in Dominica, had made a considerable investment in estates they were eager to maintain, regardless of the sovereign in whose empire the lands now lay. But of the ninety-seven individual leases granted in St. Vincent, twenty-seven—almost one-third—were for ten acres or fewer of cleared land. The proportion of small leaseholds was even higher in Dominica, with 141 out of 248 total leases for ten acres or fewer of cleared land. In contrast to wealthy planters like Belligny, individuals like Claude Auffray and his son may have remained in the islands not because they feared losing their

¹⁸ MS166, Beinecke Lesser Antilles Special Collection, Hamilton College Library, NY. For example, Pierre Grandsault is listed as a resident of Sauteurs in 1763, but he did not sign the oath until 1773 and his name does not appear in the list of property holders in Grenada in 1772, which suggests he may have only taken the oath after returning to the island after an absence.

investment, but because they lacked the means to relocate; a fine of £1 sterling was a considerably smaller financial burden than the cost of moving to another island.

Table 3.1: Sample of Leaseholds in Dominica¹⁹

Name	Parish	Acres Cleared	Acres in Wood	Term	Fines (£)
Auffray, Claude senior	ST. JOHN	10		40a	1
Auffray, Claude Jr.	ST. JOHN	10		40a	1
Antheaume, Thomas David	ST. PATRICK	35	32	14	84
Belligny, Nicholas Croquet	ST. GEORGE	282	18	14r	582
Bartouil, Dominique	ST. GEORGE	9	32	14r	50
Baillie, Jean	ST. GEORGE	13		14r	26
Garcon, Antoine & Joachim	ST. PETER	16	28	14 a	52
Grenier, Alexandre	ST. PETER	10		40	1
Grenier, Jean Baptiste	ST. PETER	10		40	1
Grenier, Baptiste	ST. PETER	19		14 a	28
Houelche, Nicholas	ST. PETER	6	13	14	25
Houelche, Laurence	ST. PETER	10		40	1
Le Grand Marie Ann Widow Picard	ST. GEORGE	10		40	1
Veyrier, Michel Nathaniel	ST. DAVID	32	96	14r	160
Veyrier, Michel	ST. DAVID	10		40a	1

The above table is intended to represent the diversity of leaseholds granted to existing inhabitants of Dominica, while also alluding to some possible reasons why longtime inhabitants of the Creole Archipelago may have been willing to accept British colonial rule as a condition of being able to remain on the lands they or their ancestors had settled. As illustrated in the above table, the acreage, length of lease, and associated fine paid by lessees varied considerably, from as little as £1 for a forty-year non-renewable (absolute) lease of ten acres or fewer to individuals like

¹⁹ BNA CO 106/10 N. 67, Account of the French inhabitants of Dominica whose claims were allowed by the Commissioners and who paid their fines accordingly. February 1766. All spellings from the original. ‘a’ is used to indicate that a lease term was absolute (i.e. non-renewable), while ‘r’ means that the lease is renewable. Where no letter follows the number in the ‘Term’ column, the original document failed to specify whether the lease was absolute or renewable, but one can safely assume that all leases for 40 years were absolute as this was the maximum term allowed by the Commissioners. A full list of lessees is included as Appendix A.

Michel Veyrier in St. David's parish or Laurence Houelche in St. Peter, to the £582 fine paid by Nicolas Croquet Belligny for a fourteen-year renewable lease on 282 cleared and eighteen wooded acres in Dominica's principal parish of St. George; the average total fine paid by a lessee in the island was just over £32 sterling. The location of leaseholds also varied considerably, with the four parishes not occupied by Caribs in St. Vincent and all ten parishes in Dominica represented in the complete lists of individuals who elected to retain their lands on lease in the new British colonies.²⁰ Although a similar list of leaseholds in Grenada is not extant in the records of the Commissioners for the Sale and Disposal of Lands, a 1772 list of landholders in the island indicates that former French subjects also elected to retain lands in each of Grenada's six parishes.

Table 3.2: State of Grenada, 1772²¹

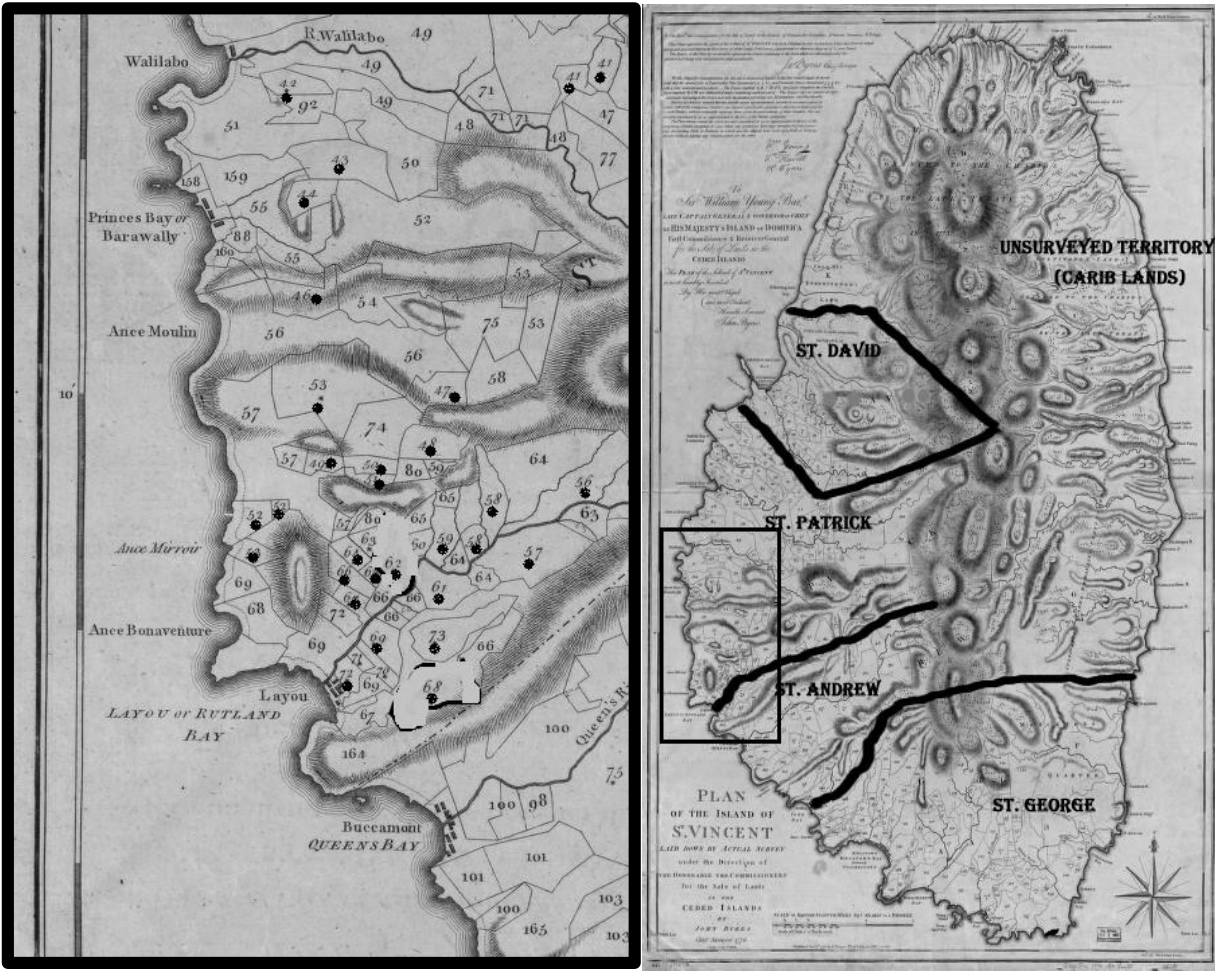
Parish	Number of British Planters	Number of French Planters	Number of Slaves	Acres of Sugarcane, Pasture, & Provisions	Acres of Coffee, Pasture, & Provisions	Acres of Cacao, Pasture, & Provisions
ST. GEORGE	23	39	5717	6440	2061	60
ST. JOHN	16	14	2773	3139	1247	335
ST. MARK	13	21	2331	1716	1714	92
ST. PATRICK	27	21	4765	7723	1614	185
ST. ANDREW	43	44	7234	8761	4160	40
ST. DAVID	17	27	3371	4232	2000	0
TOTAL	139	166	26,211	32,011	12,796	712

²⁰ The ten parishes created by British administrators in Dominica (which continue to exist today) are St. George; St. Patrick; St. Mark; St. Paul; St. Luke; St. David; St. Peter; St. Joseph; and St. John. In St. Vincent, the parish of Charlotte, initially designated as Carib territory, was added to the initial four parishes of St. George; St. Andrew; St. David; and St. Patrick.

²¹ BNA CO 101/18 Part II N. 81, Abstract of the State of the Island of Grenada, taken April 1772. In the original document French planters are listed as 'new subjects' while British planters are called 'old subjects;' I have renamed them here for the sake of clarity.

As indicated by the table above, as of 1772 existing planters outnumbered new British colonists in the parishes of St. David and St. Mark, in Grenada's southeast and northwest, respectively, and in the island's principal parish of St. George, where the new capital of St. George's Town was erected on the former French site of Fort Royal. The parishes of St. John and St. Patrick counted more British than French planters, while the parish of St. Andrew on the island's eastern coast, which boasted the greatest number of planters and the largest amount of land planted in sugarcane and in coffee—though not in cacao, which was primarily grown in the western parish of St. John—counted almost equal numbers of British and French planters, with forty-three of the former and forty-four of the latter. Although these figures fail to indicate what quantity of land belonged to French and what quantity to British planters, they do confirm that in Grenada, as in Dominica and St. Vincent, residents of the Creole Archipelago elected to live amongst British subjects in every parish. They further suggest the persistence of Francophone Catholic culture in the new British colony: although the list only enumerates landholders, chapter two revealed that existing planters often had families, while new planters usually came alone. Even in the two Grenada parishes where 'old subjects'—that is, British-born planters—outnumbered their 'new adopted' counterparts, language, religion, and daily life in the British colony continued to reflect many of its inhabitants' French roots.

Map 3.1: Lands Leased by New Adopted Subjects in St. Patrick’s Parish, St. Vincent²²



A close examination of lands leased by existing inhabitants of St. Vincent and Dominica suggests that the culture of the Creole Archipelago also continued to exert an influence in the formerly neutral islands. Each plot leased by existing inhabitants of St. Patrick’s parish, on St. Vincent’s western or Leeward coast, is indicated by a black dot in the map above. As the enlarged portion of the map shows, plots leased by ‘new subjects’ tended to be considerably smaller than the lots purchased by British settlers, whose estates often consolidated holdings formerly claimed by several individual planters. The position of leaseholds also suggests that residents of Creole

²² A black dot indicates each plot of land leased by new adopted subjects in St. Patrick’s parish, St. Vincent. Original in BNA CO 700 St. Vincent.

Archipelago generally favored lands closer to the coast, where they could more easily access *pirogues* for the transportation of people and goods around and between islands; as the map shows, roads had not yet been forged in the parish. Lands leased by existing inhabitants in St. Patrick's also tended to be clustered fairly close together. Although a small number of planters retained lands farther inland, most lessees in the parish lived in close proximity to Rutland Bay—which they probably continued to call by its former name of Layou—or the smaller bays of Anse Bonaventure and Anse Miroir to the north of Layou.

In addition to maintaining proximity to fellow Francophone Catholics, individuals who elected to lease land in a given parish may have done so in an effort to remain close to members of their extended family. Of the forty different surnames in the full list of lands leased in St. Patrick's parish, shown in the table below, seven are shared by more than one individual. While it is impossible to ascertain the nature of the relationship between lessees who shared the same surname—Gilbert, Francois, James, and Marie Greaux may have been siblings, parents and children, cousins, or no relation at all—it is fair to speculate that Dennell and Gosselin Duplessis, who held eighty-one cleared acres in the parish jointly with Jean Baptiste Chamois, were related by both economic and kinship ties. Marianne Devizein La Roche and Charles Devizein La Roche, who may have used two surnames as a means of evoking an ancestor of high status, were also likely members of the same family.²³

²³ As discussed in chapter one, many social practices in the Creole Archipelago closely resembled those in the contemporaneous French Antilles; legitimate children usually took the surname of their father but not of their mother (i.e they did not use the double surnames common in the Iberian world). Married women were usually referred to by their maiden names in official documents, meaning that joint lessees like Susan Rose and Jean Baptiste Roderique or Francis and Hippolite Devizein in the list below were more likely to have been siblings than a married couple.

Table 3.3: Leases Granted to Existing Inhabitants of St. Patrick's Parish, St. Vincent²⁴

NAME OF LESSEE	ACRES CLEARED	ACRES IN WOOD	TERM	PRICE PAID (£)
Antoine, Louis	10	0	40 a	1
Bugros, Francois	22		14 r	41
Bugros, Francois	14	23	14 r	55
Blee, Claude	12	2	14 r	25
Bonet, Anne Rose	10		40 a	1
Braad, Jean Baptiste	8			1
Castillion, Jean Baptiste	19		14 r	36
Des Colval, Robert	22	20	14 r	67
Cherpy, Gabriel and La Caze, Guillaume	148		14 r	281
Dumay, Claude Duval	19	30	14 r	36
Dumay, Claude Duval	11		14 r	20
Delatour Beguy and Paul D'Aubermony	18	10	14 r	47
Devizein, Francis and Hippolite	16		14 r	30
Duthrone, David	15		14 r	28
Duthrone, David	21	16	14 r	60
Desbat, John and Louis	38		14 r	72
Denell Duplessis, Goslin Duplessis and Jean Baptiste Chamois jointly	81		14 r	154
Greaux, Gilbert	10		40 a	1
Greaux, Francois	10		40 a	1
Greaux, James	8	12	14 r	30
Guileau, Marie Louise Boule	10		40 a	1
Greaux, Marie Questall	37		14 r	70
Geffrier, Nicolas Francois	80	20	40 a	257
Godrean, Jean	82	2	14 r	158
D'Huett, Rene (2 parcels)	10		40 a	1
Heude, Jacques	18		14 r	34
Heude, Pierre (2 plantations)	69		14 r	131
Imbert, Marie Colombier	3		40 a	1
Marchand, Antoine (2 parcels)	43	50	14 r	144
Marque, Jean Pierre	22	40	14 r	92
Michel, Nicholas Augustus	48	87	14 r	59
Papin, Claudine Sermec (widow)	26		14 r	
Papin, Mark	65	30	14 r	161

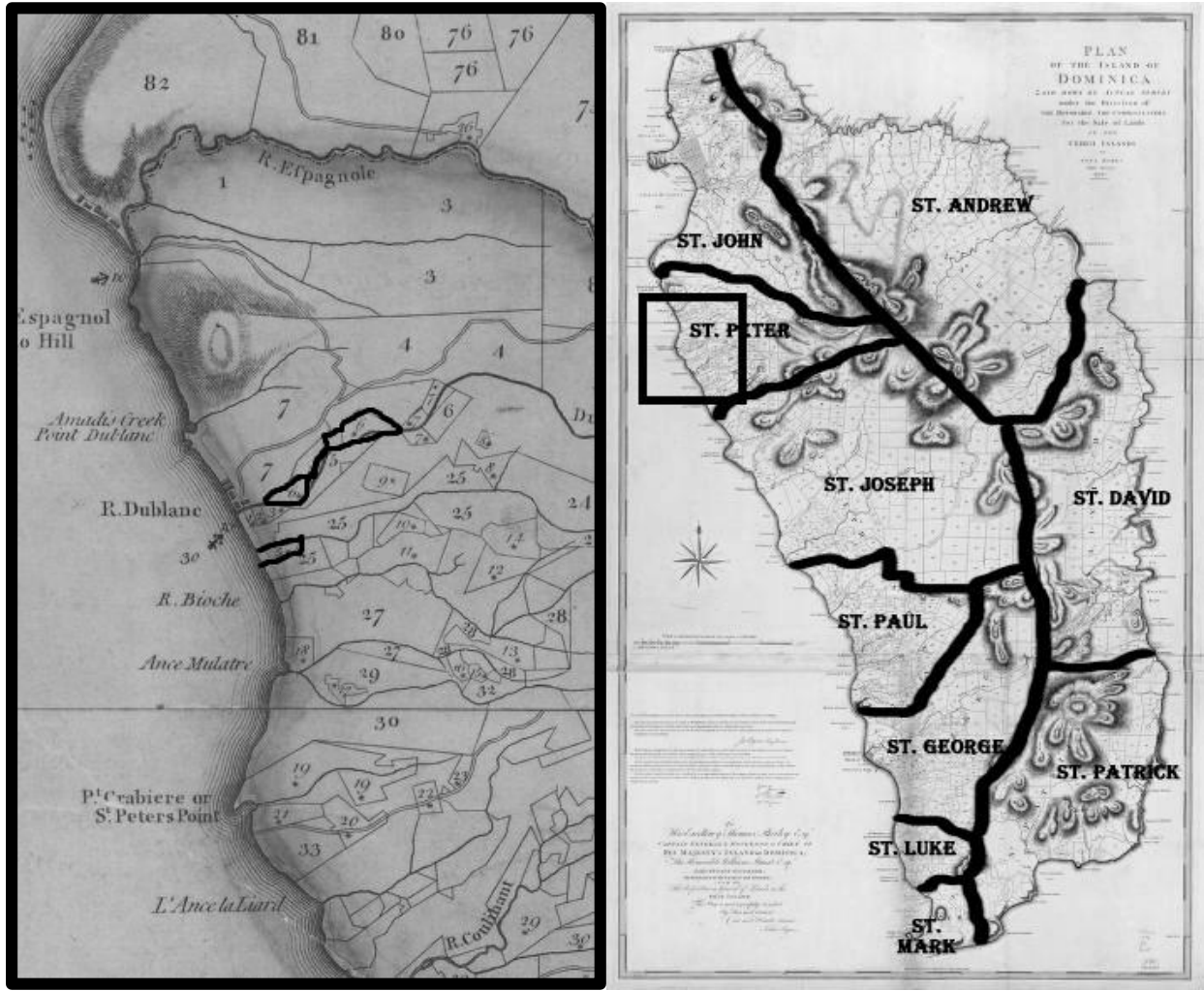
²⁴ BNA CO 106/10 N. 79, Account of the French inhabitants of St. Vincent whose claims were allowed by the Commissioners and who paid their fines accordingly in May 1766. All spellings from the original. The complete list is included as Appendix B.

Table 3.3, Continued

NAME OF LESSEE	ACRES CLEARED	ACRES IN WOOD	TERM	PRICE PAID (£)
Prevot, Joseph (2 parcels)	87		14 r	165
Poiriere, Feleron	10		40 a	1
Riviere, Andre	52	3	14 r	102
La Roche, Marianne Devizein	10		40 a	1
La Roche, Charles Devizein	19	10	14 r	48
La Roche, Catherine	54	16	14 r	122
Raquet, Pierre	41		14 r	78
Roderique Susan Rose and Jean Baptiste	21	10	14 r	52
La Roche, Greaux Devezin	9		40 a	1
Setre, Jean	10		40 a	1
Setre, Antoine	10		40 a	1
Texie, Jacques	40	3	14 r	80
Tetrong, Jean (2 parcels)	54	20	14 r	127
Temple, Madam	10		40 a	1
Valle, Lewis (2 parcels)	69	2	14 a	103
Vitet, Jean Baptiste	10		40 a	1

The prevalence of shared surnames among leaseholders in St. Patrick's parish, St. Vincent, suggests that the decision to remain in a given island was a collective one; members of extended families may have agreed to continue to live in the community in order to draw on economic, familial, and social networks established before the island was incorporated into the British Empire. As indicated in the map of St. Peter's parish below, the same phenomenon occurred in Dominica. The respective holdings of Nicholas Houelche and of Laurence Houelche are traced within the solid lines.

Map 3.2: Lands Leased by Laurence & Nicholas Houelche, St. Peter, Dominica²⁵



Once again, it is difficult to ascertain the precise relationship between the two lessees—perhaps Laurence and Nicholas Houelche were brothers, or father and son. What is clear is that by living close in close proximity to one another, the two Houelches could maintain personal or economic relationships established prior to the 1763 Treaty of Paris. Laurence, whose four-acre leasehold lay on the coast, may have provided Nicholas with access to nearby Ance Mulatre, or

²⁵ Map edited to show the respective lands of Laurence and Nicholas Houelche in St. Peter's parish, northern Dominica. From the original in BNA CO 700 Dominica, *Plan of the island of Dominica laid down by actual survey under the direction of the Honorable the Commissioners for the Sale of Lands in the Ceded Islands*, (London: H. Hooper, 1776). The corresponding names of landholders can be found in *References to the plan of the island of Dominica, as surveyed from the year 1765 to 1773; by John Byres, Chief Surveyor* (London: S. Hooper, 1777), 29.

Mulatto Bay; produce from the twenty-four acre estate farther inland could be transported by boat from the smaller coastal leasehold. Although records in which residents of the Creole Archipelago articulated their responses to the assertion of colonial rule are not extant, the map of the Houelche leaseholds illustrates that the decision to remain in a given parish was likely a collective one, influenced by the possibility of maintaining economic, familial, and social connections and influence. As will be shown in the following chapter, the decision to leave was often the same.

Accommodating New Subjects: Political Participation in the British Ceded Islands

As the lists of people who elected to remain in Dominica, Grenada, and St. Vincent when they were ceded to Great Britain suggest, individuals accustomed to exercising power and autonomy in the islands sought to keep doing so. In the decades after the Creole Archipelago was assimilated into the British Empire, King George III's 'new adopted subjects' agitated for continued influence in determining political and economic affairs in the islands. Through their efforts, residents of the new colonies secured some of the most liberal political concessions in the contemporaneous British Empire, including the right to vote, to be elected to the legislative Assembly, and to be appointed to positions of considerable importance in colonial government, including as judges and members of colonial Council, all without renouncing the Catholic religion that prevented British subjects from exercising similar privileges elsewhere in the empire.

In April of 1764, eighteen of the most prominent British subjects in the Ceded Islands—including the respective Lieutenant-Governors of St. Vincent, Dominica, Grenada, and Tobago, as well as William Young, Commissioner for the Sale of Lands—were appointed members of a Colonial Council for the 'Southern Caribbee Islands.'²⁶ This new administrative entity united the

²⁶ The members of the first Colonial Council for the Southern Caribbee Islands were as follows: Francis Gore, Lieutenant Governor of Grenada; George Scott, Lieutenant Governor of Dominica; Joseph Higginson, Lieutenant governor of St. Vincent; Alexander Brown, Lieutenant Governor of Tobago; James Brebner, Chief Justice for the Southern Caribbee Islands; William Young, Commissioner for the Sale of Lands; Edward Horn, Attorney General

islands of Grenada, Tobago, Dominica, and St. Vincent into a single government, headquartered in the Grenadian capital of St. Georges and placed under the authority of royal Governor Robert Melvill. As was customary elsewhere in the British Empire, members of the colonial Council were all wealthy white Protestant men who were nominated by the Governor, officially recommended by the Board of Trade, and appointed for life. While they were not paid for their services—which included advising the Governor, serving as a court of appeal, and acting as a legislative upper house—they benefited from considerable government patronage, and typically used their position on Council in order to advance their own economic and political agenda.²⁷

With a Council for the Southern Caribbee Islands firmly established, it was not long before interested parties both in the colonies and in the metropole began to agitate for the creation of a complementary legislative lower house in the form of a colonial Assembly. On February 10, 1766, Governor Melvill assented, creating an Assembly not for the Southern Caribbee Islands but for Grenada alone, on the basis that it was “indispensably necessary to call together the Representatives for Grenada and the Grenadines, before the other islands have a sufficient number of freeholders to enable them to elect and send representatives to the General-Assembly.”²⁸

for the Southern Caribbee Islands, Edmund Griffith, Solicitor General; Richard Burke, Receiver of Revenues; Richard Ottley; Walter Pringle; Robert Turner; John Graham; Patrick Maxwell; Oliver Nugent; Anthony Malcolm; Thomas Proudfoot; and J. Jones, all Esquires. BNA CO 102/1 N. 238. Following the deaths of Malcolm and Griffiths, Valentine Morris and Frederick Corsar were appointed as replacement members of Council. BNA CO 102/1 N. 257, December 13, 1765.

²⁷ More information on the constitution and functioning of British colonial Councils and Assemblies in the Americas can be found in Ian K. Steele, “The Anointed, the Appointed, and the Elected: Governance of the British Empire, 1689-1784,” in P.J. Marshall, ed., *The Oxford History of the British Empire v. 2: The Eighteenth Century* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998), 105-127. See also Frederick G. Spurdle, *Early West Indian Government: Showing the Progress of Government in Barbados, Jamaica and the Leeward Islands, 1660-1783* (Christchurch, New Zealand: Whitcombe & Tombs, 1962); Peverill Squire, “The Evolution of American Colonial Assemblies as Legislative Organizations,” *Congress & the Presidency* 32, N.2 (2010): 109-131.

²⁸ BNA CO101/10 N.292, Ordinance for regulating the elections for the General Assembly of Grenada, the Grenadines, Dominica, St. Vincent, and Tobago; and for limiting the powers of that part of the said General Assembly, presently to be called for Grenada and the Grenadines. February 10, 1766.

Melvill's decision, which was approved by the Committee for Plantation Affairs in Great Britain, meant that the power of elected officials would be exercised locally rather than across islands.²⁹

With the Grenada Assembly scheduled to hold its first meeting on April 15, 1766, the question of the participation of Catholic former subjects of the King of France came to the fore. Arguing that elsewhere in the British West Indies "it has been a long adopted maxim to permit Roman Catholics and other dissenters from the Church of England, to give their votes in the choice of representatives," a number of French planters resident in Grenada who identified themselves as 'His Majesty's Adopted Subjects' petitioned Governor Melvill for the right to cast their votes for properly-qualified Protestant representatives.³⁰ Despite the petitioners' assertion that it was customary for Catholic subjects to enjoy electoral privileges, elsewhere in the British Empire men who professed the Catholic faith were in fact generally excluded from voting.³¹ An important exception to this rule was the British Leeward island of Montserrat, which was predominately settled by Catholics from Ireland. Owing to the small number of Protestant white men in the island, Catholics were permitted to vote for the Montserrat Assembly provided that they swore oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy to the King of Great Britain.³²

Perhaps taking a cue from practices in Montserrat, Melvill's ordinance stipulated that any of "His Majesty's New-adopted Subjects" aged twenty-one or older who owned at least ten acres of land in the island could vote, provided that he produce a certificate testifying that he had taken the Oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy required of all former French subjects who elected to stay in Grenada. As was the custom elsewhere in the British West Indies, two representatives were to

²⁹ BNA CO102/1 N.265, Dartmouth to Melvill, March 25, 1766.

³⁰ BNA CO101/11 N.106, Memorial of His Majesty's Adopted Subjects to Robert Melvill, February 14, 1766.

³¹ In England, Catholics had been excluded from Parliament and denied the right to vote since the late-seventeenth century. See Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation*, 326.

³² Donald Akenson, *If the Irish Ran the World: Montserrat, 1630-1730* (Kingston: McGill-Queen's University Press, 1997), 161. In 1703, an attempt to exempt voters in the heavily-Catholic parish of St. Patrick, Montserrat from taking the oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy was declared void. See Spurdle, 73.

be elected for each parish, with larger parishes such as St. Andrew and St. Patrick electing three representatives each, and the capital of St. George's town sending four representatives to the Assembly. Although Catholics were granted the right to vote, the possibility that they might be elected to the Assembly was effectively foreclosed by the stipulation that any candidate for public office be a "[male] *Protestant* Natural Born, or Naturalized Subject, who hath attained the Age of Twenty-One Years," and who possessed at least fifty acres of land in the parish in which he sought election.³³

Despite these restrictions on Catholic participation in the electoral process, the mere prospect that Catholics—let alone Catholic former subjects of the King of France—might have a voice in determining the composition of a British colonial Assembly greatly alarmed English and Scottish colonists who had relocated to Grenada in the wake of the Treaty of Paris. On February 14, 1766, a group of eighteen British planters resident in the colony presented Governor Melvill with a memorial alerting him to the inherent danger of allowing the island's "French inhabitants" to participate in the upcoming elections. Arguing that extending the right to vote to these new subjects might also inspire them to nominate men drawn from their own ranks as candidates, the petitioners ominously warned that "by the vast superiority of the French Inhabitants in point of numbers...it is easy to conceive of what sett of men the Assembly must be composed."³⁴ The lead signatories of the tract, Ninian Home and Alexander Campbell, were both Scottish-born planters possessed of considerable estates in Grenada.³⁵ Like their fellow signatories, neither Campbell nor

³³ BNA CO101/10 N.292. Emphasis added.

³⁴ BNA CO101/11 N. 100. Those who signed the tract were Ninian Home, Peter Gordon, Alexander Campbell, Thomas Baillie, Mungo Campbell, Walter Robertson, John Nelson, John Harvey, Thomas Shephard, Alexander Cockburn, John Nethercott, James McIntosh, Charles Wilson, Thomas Townsend, James Falconer, Theodore Alexander, Thomas Lucas, James Lucas, and John Forbes.

³⁵ Home was the eldest son of Alexander Home and Isabell Hume, the second daughter of Sir George Hume of Wedderburn. Alexander Home had been disinherited by his father, Reverend Ninian Home, for refusing to marry Isabell's older sister in order to secure her family's considerable estate. No author. *Genealogies of Virginia Families from Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine*. (Baltimore: Clearfield Company, 2007), 360-361.

Home had been appointed to Council. Serving on the colonial Assembly therefore represented their primary opportunity to exercise political influence, and—as chapter six makes clear—they were determined to maintain this influence at great cost.

Not all of Home and Campbell’s fellow subjects shared their fears. In a memorial submitted the same day, twenty-six other British planters counselled Melvill against “placing the power of election in too few hands” and urged him to permit Catholic freeholders in the islands to freely exercise their “natural right” to vote.³⁶ Francophone Catholic planters in Grenada also countered with their own memorial, in which they reassured Melvill that while they sought the right to vote, they remained “conscious of the impropriety of exercising their own persons the functions of representative.”³⁷ Displaying a mastery of the English language which strongly suggests that they had cultivated political relationships with at least a few British planters sympathetic to their cause, the thirty-five signatories to the petition argued that it was especially important that all freeholders be granted electoral privileges

...in a colony, whose members gather’d from different quarters, demand to be united by common interests and common rights; in a colony, whose cultivation, depending on the number, labour and submission of negroes, calls for such absolute influence in the hands of every freeholder, in order to maintain them in proper discipline and respect; and **renders an un-natural or unnecessary subordination and inequality among whites, that approaches them to the level of their slaves, as dangerous as it is odious**; in a colony,

Campbell was born in 1739 in Islay, Scotland, to a middle-class mercantilist family. Mark Quintanilla, “The World of Alexander Campbell: An Eighteenth-Century Grenadian Planter,” *Albion*, 35, N. 2 (Summer 2003: 229–256), 233.

³⁶ BNA CO101/11 N. 102, Memorial of Several of His Majesty’s Natural Born Subjects, Possessors of Property and Actually Residing in the Island of Grenada. February 14 1766. The signatories were: Frederick Corsar, Andrew Irwin, Dennis Sullivan, John Bodkin, William Arnold, Nicholas Atkinson, Elisha Franks, John and Henry Peschier, Henry Edwards, Francis Flude, Robert Hazard, Lemuel Baker, William Davis, Michael Scott, Alexander Winniett, William Macintosh, Torquill McVicar, Samuel Sandback, Thales Craddock, Henry Clifton, John Colby, George Leonard Staunton, Alexander Williams, Paul Harrison, and Thomas Bernall, who noted that he assented “provided [the French inhabitants] are not aliens by the Constitution.” Note that Frederick Corsar was a member of Council.

³⁷ BNA CO101/11 N.106, Memorial of His Majesty’s Adopted Subjects to Robert Melvill. As was French custom, those who signed used only their surnames. They were as follows: Rochard de Lepine; Robert Cassé; Besson Beaumanoir; Delpeche; Latouche frères; Castaing; Bourne de St. Laurent; Bachelie; P.A. Dufour; Champion; Olivier; Chaupin Fezant signing for Butin; Lamolie; La Bleenerie; Rechout; La Housaye Decipre; Achallé; Fournillier; Roubin de Vougarède; Augier; Devoconnu; Correye; Houe; Rochard; Houe Ducoin; Labulmondier; Chaupin; Laurent; Bardinet; Le Boure; Serres; Lamarque; Marotte; Bouquet.

whose future Welfare and Prosperity may require some Taxes to be raised upon the Subjects, which no man can ever pay with chearfulness & Content, unless he has his share in granting and in regulating them...³⁸

The rhetoric of the petitioners testifies to their considerable political savvy. Emphasizing the importance of uniting all free residents of the colony against an enslaved majority, the former subjects of the King of France argued that although the people residing in King George III's new colony were "gather'd from different quarters," the sovereign would be wise to entrust every freeholder with the "absolute influence" necessary to check the threat of slave revolt. Asserting that creating any inequalities between whites risked "approach[ing] them to the level of their slaves," the petitioners emphasized the importance of policing racial boundaries in small islands that depended on the forced labor of black bodies. In clear, forceful language, the newest subjects of King George III referenced the "dangerous" and "odious" consequences that could result if officials failed to elevate all whites above all non-whites—a reference that no doubt evoked earlier colonial upheavals in the minds of some officials.³⁹ Another threat—that new adopted subjects would not pay taxes "with chearfulness and Content" unless they were granted a voice in determining how such taxes would be assessed—hinted at future conflicts that might await colonial officials if Francophone Catholics continued to be excluded from colonial politics.

Despite the persuasive tactics of old and new subjects alike, Governor Melvill did little to assuage the growing factionalism under his government. Although he allowed elections to proceed as outlined in his ordinance of February 10, 1766, Melvill promptly dissolved the Grenada Assembly at its inaugural meeting on April 15, 1766, citing the members' desire to obtain

³⁸ BNA CO 101/11 N. 106, Memorial of His Majesty's Adopted Subjects to Robert Melvill. Emphasis added.

³⁹ The argument that colonial officials elevated all whites above all non-whites in order to secure the smoother functioning of slave societies in the Americas is most commonly associated with Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom*, who cites Bacon's Rebellion of 1676 as an event illustrating the danger of alliances between unpropertied or lower-class whites, Amerindians, and slaves.

privileges “as largely and favourably as possible from those of every British colony of which they had any knowledge.”⁴⁰ Having publicly demonstrated his power over the Assembly, the Governor allowed new elections to be called and regular meetings to resume beginning on October 5, 1766. Of the twenty-one white Protestant men elected to this second Grenada Assembly, five had signed the original memorial protesting the participation of new Catholic subjects, while four others had signed the petition defending Francophone Catholics’ right to vote. Ninian Home, a lead signatory of the memorial against French participation, was made Speaker of the Assembly; William Macintosh, who had publicly defended the New Adopted Subjects, was named Chairman.⁴¹ Despite the obviously factious composition of the lower house, the elected representatives succeeded in passing a number of bills before the scheduled expiration of the Assembly’s tenure on April 15, 1767.⁴²

No doubt encouraged by events in Grenada, leading planters in other islands then united under the ‘Southern Caribbee’ government also began to agitate for the creation of local governing bodies through which they might exercise greater control over economic and local political affairs. Citing “many great inconveniencies...from the want of a separate legislature *composed of Residents thoroughly acquainted with [the island’s] condition and circumstances,*” in December 1766 a group of British settlers in St. Vincent petitioned Governor Melvill for their own colonial

⁴⁰ BNA CO 101/11 N. 132, Melvill to Board of Trade, May 28, 1766. Conflicts as the privileges of elected officials also raged in Jamaica during the same period. See Jack P. Greene, “The Jamaica Privilege Controversy, 1764-66,” in *Negotiated Authorities: Essays in Colonial Political and Constitutional History* (University of Virginia Press, 1994), 350-394.

⁴¹ BNA CO101/11 N.325, Votes of the Honorable General Assembly of Grenada and the Grenadines. Those elected were Ninian Home; Alexander Campbell; John Piggott; James Mackintosh; John Melvill; Torquil McVicar; William Young; James Pomier; Peter Gordon; John Harvey; Andrew Irwin; James Taylor; Walter Robertson; Robert Young; John Dumaresq; William Mackintosh; John Nelson; Samuel Sandbach; Robert Glasford; William Reid; and Gilbert Robertson.

⁴² Among the bills passed by the Assembly during this period were those “for the better government of slaves, and the speedy suppression of runaway slaves;” “for settling the rate of interest;” “for the more speedy recovery of small debts;” and “to secure and confirm the possessors of land in Grenada in their titles.” BNA CO101/11, N.325-392.

Assembly.⁴³ The petitioners' insistence that St. Vincent's particular "condition and circumstances" necessitated the creation of an island Assembly illustrates the importance that colonial residents placed on local knowledge in determining the shape of colonial rule. Although Grenada could be reached in less than a day's sail from St. Vincent, legislators in the capital of the Southern Caribbee Islands could not possibly grasp the particular problems posed by St. Vincent's mountainous topography, its proximity to the French colony of St. Lucia, or—most significantly, as will be shown in the following chapter—its restive Carib population. Vincentian planters invoked their familiarity with the colony's geography, economy, population—a familiarity that they argued could only be gained by residing in the island—in order to secure greater control over their day-to-day affairs. Although Melvill was reluctant to see his position as Governor of the Southern Caribbee Islands diminished, he was forced to respond to popular pressure, granting the settlers' request in February 1767. Just a few months later, in May 1767, Melvill also appointed twelve prominent residents of St. Vincent to the island's newly-constituted Council.⁴⁴

Planters as well as metropolitan merchants with interests in Dominica similarly sought to exercise greater control over affairs in the island, and in December 1767 the Board of Trade and Plantations agreed that the "peculiar situation and commerce" of the island warranted the creation of a separate Council and Assembly in Dominica.⁴⁵ As was the case in Grenada, Francophone Catholic men resident in St. Vincent or Dominica who had taken the oaths of Allegiance and Supremacy were permitted to vote for properly-qualified Protestant representatives, but were not eligible for election to the Assembly.⁴⁶

⁴³ BNA CO101/11 N.230, December 19 1766, emphasis added.

⁴⁴ BNA CO101/12 N.148, An Ordinance, for the Establishing an Assembly in the Island of St. Vincent's, February 25 1767.

⁴⁵ BNA CO101/11 N.423, Opinion of the Board of Trade, December 21 1767.

⁴⁶ BNA CO101/12 N.148, An Ordinance for the Establishing an Assembly in the Island of St. Vincent's, February 25 1767.

The longstanding prohibition against Catholic subjects being elected members of British colonial legislatures was soon tested in Grenada. During the island's November 1767 elections for the Assembly, Jean Baptiste Domonchy, a "professed French Roman Catholic, not understanding one syllable of English," presented himself at a polling station in St. George's town not as a voter but as a candidate.⁴⁷ Although the polling officer refused the man's candidacy, voter returns illustrate the deep division between King George III's "natural born" and "new adopted" subjects in the island. Despite receiving only four of ninety-two possible votes from new adopted subjects in St. Georges, William Normandy was returned as a representative for the town on the basis of overwhelming support from St. Georges' British settler population. In St. Andrew's parish, William Macintosh was elected on the basis of forty-six votes from new adopted subjects and just four from the twenty-one of his fellow British subjects eligible to vote in the parish.⁴⁸ Unsurprisingly, relations in such a divided house proved highly acrimonious, and Governor Melvill prorogued the Assembly several times. Lamenting "the excessive terms of difference, and reproach," that characterized relations in Grenada's colonial Assembly, Melvill averred that no bills would successfully be passed until a new, less factious Assembly could be elected.⁴⁹ The Governor was quite clear about the possible consequences of failing to broker peace with the existing residents of Great Britain's most promising new colony: unless Francophone Catholic planters could be reconciled to British rule, Melvill warned, the British Empire stood "a very great risk of losing the colony in the first War."⁵⁰

⁴⁷ BNA CO101/12 N. 53, Melvill to Shelburne, December 27, 1767. A discussion of printed debates surrounding Catholic voting rights in Grenada can be found in Aaron Willis, "The Standing of New Subjects: Grenada and the Protestant Constitution after the Treaty of Paris (1763)" *The Journal of Imperial and Commonwealth History* Vol. 42, N. 1 (September 2013): 1-21.

⁴⁸ BNA CO101/12 N.141, A list of polls taken for the Assembly to be convened December 15, 1767.

⁴⁹ BNA CO101/12 N. 120, Melvill to Hillsborough, May 1, 1768. The minutes of the Council and Assembly during this period can be found in BNA CO 101/12 N.120-140.

⁵⁰ BNA CO101/12 N.121, Melvill to Hillsborough, May 1, 1768.

The very real fear that new subjects in Grenada would ally with their former sovereign in the likely event of a future war was enough to spur officials in Great Britain to action. Eager to diminish the internal threat posed by a potentially hostile body of resident planters, administrators in England took unprecedented measures to win the allegiance of residents of the Creole Archipelago. The practice of granting certain concessions in order to accommodate and appease newly-incorporated colonial subjects was not unknown in the British Empire during this period. Emphasizing “the practical and utilitarian nature of the mutual adaptation” that he argues characterized the transition from French to British rule in contemporaneous Quebec, Donald Fyson notes that former French subjects in the new British colony were permitted to serve as notaries, lawyers, bailiffs, and even as judges of the Prerogative Court.⁵¹ Yet the privileges extended to new British subjects in Grenada were generous even relative to those granted to their counterparts in Quebec. Bowing to the protests of Francophone Catholic planters and their allies in Grenada, on September 7, 1768, the Court of King’s Bench in England issued a ruling stating that Catholic subjects of the King of France who were resident in Grenada at the time of the island’s cession to Great Britain would henceforth be eligible for a certain number of key positions within the island’s government. Unlike in Quebec, where administrators were explicitly forbidden to appoint former subjects of the King of France to Council or to serve as superior court justices, in Grenada the Governor was empowered to name two new adopted subjects to Council and to appoint one Francophone Catholic Justice of the Peace in each of the island’s parishes.⁵² It was further decreed that as many as three former subjects of the King of France could be elected to the Grenada

⁵¹ Donald Fyson, “The Conquered and the Conqueror: The Mutual Adaptation of the *Canadiens* and the British in Quebec, 1759-1775,” in Phillip Buckner and John G. Reid, eds. *Revisiting 1759: The Conquest of Canada in Historical Perspective*. (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2012), 190-217, pg. 190.

⁵² Fyson, “The Conquered and the Conqueror,” 197. As there was no Assembly in Quebec, the question of Francophone Catholic participation did not arise.

Assembly. While French Catholics had to take the oaths of allegiance and supremacy in order to accede to these highly-coveted positions, they were not required to swear an oath against transubstantiation. Significantly, these concessions applied only to Catholic former subjects of the King of France; English and Scottish Catholics continued to be barred from participation in colonial politics unless they publicly renounced their faith.⁵³

The extent and impact of these concessions underlines the enduring power of prominent planters who established themselves in Grenada while the island was still under French rule. British colonial rule in the Ceded Islands was not necessarily more inclusive or more liberal than elsewhere in the empire—British-born Catholics were still barred from participating in local politics—but administrators in Great Britain, swayed by the rhetoric of planters and officials in their newest plantation colonies, recognized that it would be dangerous to deny power to those used to exercising it. As shown in chapter two, the economic importance of the Ceded Islands increased rapidly in the years after the Treaty of Paris; as the economic influence of planters in the new colonies grew, so too did their political clout. A desire to maintain the economic allegiance of planters and to unite all free people against the threat of slave revolt prompted British officials in the Ceded Islands to grant political concessions unparalleled in the British Empire.

Governor Melvill having temporarily returned to England due to illness, Ulysses Fitzmaurice, Lieutenant Governor of St. Vincent and acting Governor of the Southern Caribbean Islands during Melvill's absence, was tasked with implementing the legislation affording new positions of power to Francophone Catholics subjects. Careful to select “persons of the most unexceptionable conduct and character as well as of considerable property” in the island, in August

⁵³ BNA CO101/3 N.1, September 7, 1768.

1769 Fitzmaurice appointed planters Paul Mignot Devoconnu and Charles Nicolas Chanteloupe to the Grenada Council.⁵⁴

Fitzmaurice's decision to appoint Devoconnu and Chanteloupe rather than Jean Baptiste Domonchy to Council affirms the importance of local power and influence in making such decisions. As of 1772 Devoconnu was possessed of the largest sugar estate in St. Andrew's parish, consisting of 576 acres worked by 170 slaves, while Chanteloupe, jointly with Le Quoy, owned a 375-acre estate with 188 acres planted in cane in St. George's, worked by 83 slaves.⁵⁵ As their respective financial positions suggest, both men were used to exercising power and influence, and they proved eager to accept Fitzmaurice's nomination. Devoconnu and Chanteloupe presented themselves at the Council Chambers in St. Georges on August 24, 1769. When the time came for new Councillors to be sworn in, however, six of the eight Council members present—John Graham, William Lindow, Frederick Corsar, John Melvill, Thomas Townsend, and Thomas William—walked out in protest. Only Councillors Patrick Maxwell and William Lucas remained seated, thereby signalling their consent to serve in an upper house that included the new French Catholic members.⁵⁶

Justifying their actions on the grounds that as acting Governor of the Ceded Islands, Fitzmaurice lacked the power to appoint new members to Council, the eight existing members of the Grenada Council privately convened themselves one month later. On September 25, 1769, the dissenting Councillors drafted a resolution publicly denouncing Fitzmaurice's appointment of Devoconnu and Chanteloupe.⁵⁷ The acting Governor, who was technically supposed to preside

⁵⁴ BNA CO 101/13 N. 157, Fitzmaurice to Hillsborough, August 26 1769. Melvill sailed for England in late July 1768 in order to cure his "West India disorder;" see BNA CO101/12 N.187-190.

⁵⁵ BNA CO 101/18 Part II N. 57, State of the Parish of St. Andrew in the island of Grenada, taken April 1772.

⁵⁶ BNA CO103/1 N.114, Fitzmaurice to Hillsborough, August 26 1769.

⁵⁷ BNA CO103/1 N. 84, Minutes of the Grenada Council, September 25 1769.

over all Council sessions, only found out about the September 25 meeting when the Council published their resolution in the *Grenada Gazette*. Incensed, Fitzmaurice formally suspended the six Councillors who had initially withdrawn from Council, accusing them of attempting to “throw a contempt upon His Majesty’s representative, and to subvert his authority.”⁵⁸

With tensions between the acting Governor and some of the most prominent planters under his government growing ever more heated, the matter was referred to Fitzmaurice’s superiors in England. Hoping to “quiet the animosities which have so long disturbed [the] peace” in Grenada, in April of 1770 the Board of Trade ruled that the suspended Councillors should be restored and Devoconnu sworn in to replace former Councillor James Brebner Gordon, who had previously resigned.⁵⁹ Returning to the islands after his lengthy furlong in England, Governor Melvill restored all suspended members and confirmed Devoconnu’s seat in Council on June 22, 1770.⁶⁰ Although new adopted subjects in Great Britain’s newest Caribbean colonies would continue to enjoy positions of political authority denied to fellow Catholics anywhere else in the contemporaneous British Empire, British planters in the Ceded Islands remained alert to “how dangerous it might prove to the colony in the event of a war, that men connected by blood, affections and education with our usual enemies...should be in actual possession of offices of power and trust.”⁶¹ Chapters five and six, which turn to the impacts of the Age of Revolutions in the southern Caribbean, will demonstrate the prescience of the planters’ fears.

⁵⁸ BNA CO1031 N.104, Reasons for suspending and removing John Graham, William Lindow, Frederick Corsar, Thomas Townsend, John Melvill, and Thomas Williams from sitting, voting or assisting in His Majesty’s Council of Grenada, September 28, 1769.

⁵⁹ BNA CO101/14 N.93, Hillsborough to Melvill, April 21, 1770.

⁶⁰ BNA CO 101/3 N.140, Melvill to Hillsborough, July 5, 1770.

⁶¹ BNA CO 101/18 N.105, Thomas Townsend, “A plain narrative of sundry facts and consequences which have happened in the island of Grenada since its submission to the British arms in 1762...” July 22, 1772.

Accommodating Authority: Race and Reputation in the Creole Archipelago

Although new settlers and colonial officials expressed a degree of distrust towards all new adopted subjects, they were particularly wary of free people of color. Colonial administrators had little means to verify the legal status of these new colonial subjects: might they in fact be slaves who had taken advantage of this moment of administrative disorganization in order to seek freedom? In an attempt to verify the legal status of people of African descent, in 1767 a law “to prevent the further sudden increase of free negroes and mulattoes” was passed in the British Ceded Islands requiring that

...all negroes and mulattoes, pretending to be free, and who now reside in these islands, shall (if not already done) bring their several and respective acts of freedom or manumission, to the Register’s Office of these islands, there to be recorded: and any person or persons not having such Act or Acts of freedom or Manumission, by reason of his, her, or their being born of a free woman...such person or persons shall bring two credible freeholders within these islands, before any two Justices of the Peace in the island where such Freeholders do actually reside, to declare solemnly upon Oath, That they and each of them have known the Person or Persons, so pretending to be Free, for the Space of Five Years, at least, and that during such Space of Five Years, such Person or Persons was, or were reputed and regarded to be, to all Intents and Purposes whatsoever, Free from Slavery, and did behave and demean Him, her, or Themselves, decently and as becoming Free Persons of his, her, or their Complexion...⁶²

Placing the onus of proving liberty on free people of color was not a new practice; as recent work by Rebecca Scott and Jean Hébrard shows, people of African descent throughout the Atlantic World were acutely aware of the importance of being able to provide official documents attesting to their freedom.⁶³ But the 1767 law introduced in the islands ceded to Great Britain was novel in that it depended on the participation of fellow subjects to testifying to an individual’s juridical status: persons “pretending to be Free” who lacked corroborating documentation could bring “two credible freeholders” before two Justices of the Peace to attest to they “were reputed and regarded

⁶² BNA CO 103/1 N. 43, Act to prevent the further sudden increase of free negroes and mulattoes, April 21, 1767.

⁶³ Rebecca Scott and Jean Hébrard, *Freedom Papers: An Atlantic Odyssey in the Age of Emancipation* (Cambridge, Mass: Harvard University Press, 2012).

to be, to all Intents and purposes whatsoever, free from slavery, and did behave and demean...Themselves, decently and as becoming Free Persons.” Once again, local knowledge—in this case, knowledge not only of the ancestry, but also of the socio-economic position and concomitant reputation enjoyed by an individual—influenced the practice of colonial rule in the Creole Archipelago.

Historians of the Atlantic World emphasize the importance of written records in establishing the genealogy and therefore the racial ancestry of colonial subjects; officials in Spanish America frequently drew on the voluminous archives generated by the Inquisition in order to trace the lineage of an individual back at least four generations.⁶⁴ As spaces that lay outside the sphere of imperial rule prior to 1763, however, Dominica, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent lacked the formal judiciaries, colonial assemblies, and other administrative bodies typically found in legal colonies. Affairs in Grenada, previously a peripheral colony of France, were little better, as administrative issues were often referred to the seat of the Government of the *Iles du Vent* in Martinique. With documents that might prove an individual’s free birth or manumission in the Creole Archipelago, such as parish registers detailing baptisms or marriages, notary, or court records few and far between, administrators recently arrived in the colonies were obliged to ask existing residents of the islands to attest to the legal status of their neighbors, friends, and relations.

With no such attestations extant in records archived by British colonial officials, it is difficult to determine how often (if ever) landowners in the Ceded Islands complied with the 1767 law by testifying before two Justices of the Peace that individuals known to them were “reputed

⁶⁴ Maria Elena Martinez, *Genealogical Fictions: Limpieza de sangre, religion, and gender in colonial Mexico* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008), 65. On the role of documentation in tracing genealogy and race in the French Atlantic see Scott and Hébrard, *Freedom Papers*; for the British West Indies see Jerome S. Handler, *The Unappropriated People: Freedmen in the Slave Society of Barbados* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974).

and regarded to be free from slavery.”⁶⁵ Nor is it clear whether this legislation required free people of color to ask people considered to be white to corroborate their freedom: the law specified that “two credible freeholders” were required to confirm that a person deemed to be ‘of color’ was not in fact a slave, but failed to note whether such freeholders could themselves be free people of color. The legislation does reveal, however, the extent to which the legitimation of an individual’s status as free relied on social networks and reputations established before the introduction of direct colonial rule in the Creole Archipelago. The 1767 stipulation that a freeholder attesting to the freedom of an individual residing “in the island where such Freeholders do actually reside” must “have known the Person or Persons, so pretending to be Free, for the Space of Five Years, at least” meant that the two must have first met in 1762 or earlier—a relationship or acquaintanceship that predated the incorporation of the islands into the British Empire.

The specification that an individual be “reputed and regarded to be” free, and that he or she “behave and demean Him, her, or Themselves, decently and as becoming Free Persons of his, her, or their Complexion” is even more revealing of the importance of locally-cultivated positions of legitimacy and authority in determining the possibilities open to new colonial subjects.⁶⁶ In the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries many small planters, free people of color, and emancipated slaves from Guadeloupe or Martinique migrated to the surrounding neutral islands precisely to avail themselves of opportunities increasingly difficult to obtain in the racially-stratified French plantation colonies; recall that in the 1730s, the planter possessed of the second-largest number of slaves in St. Lucia was Alexandre Nouet, identified as mulatto. A wealthy man,

⁶⁵ I have been unable to locate records of colonial Justices of the Peace in the British National Archives, nor have I seen reference to cases complying with the 1767 law in the correspondence of Governors.

⁶⁶ The importance of behavior and reputation in shaping perceptions of an individual’s race in the United States is discussed in Ariela J. Gross, *What Blood Won’t Tell: A History of Race on Trial in America* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008), especially pages 48-72.

married to a white woman and the father of several legitimate children, Nouet and others like him enjoyed positions of authority and influence in the Creole Archipelago. By asking longtime residents of the Creole Archipelago to confirm the status of people of color not only as free but as reputable members of the community, colonial officials sanctioned understandings of social authority that predated their attempts to create plantation colonies. In contrast to regions of the Atlantic World where colonial institutions and authorities with the power to determine “the parameters of the categories that were possible and legitimate” accompanied settlers on their journey from Europe to the Americas, in the borderlands of the southern Caribbean officials and new settlers were forced to recognize and to accommodate an elaborate social world often at odds with familiar colonial institutions.⁶⁷

People of color who succeeded in substantiating their free status in a way that met with the approval of colonial authorities soon discovered that this freedom had limits. As in other British colonies, comprehensive slave codes introduced in the Ceded Islands also extended to the governance of free people of color. As of 1767, all “free negroes and mulattoes” were forbidden to own more than eight acres of land; those who failed to alienate any “overplus” within six months of the passing of the act would forfeit their land to the King. Even those who retained small parcels of land were not permitted to fully benefit from the privileges of landownership: “in no case” could a free person of color “be deemed and accounted a freeholder,” meaning, essentially, that people of African descent were denied the electoral privileges that normally accompanied landholding.⁶⁸ Echoing a 1702 law passed in Antigua, the 1767 code introduced in the Southern Caribbee Islands further required that any free person of color not possessed of land “choose some master or

⁶⁷ Martinez, *Genealogical Fictions*, 225.

⁶⁸ BNA CO 262/1 N. 53, “An Act or the making slaves real estate and for the better government of slaves and free negroes,” July 13, 1767.

mistress...with whom they shall live and take their abode, to the intent that their lives and conversations may be known and observed.”⁶⁹ The introduction of these laws, not to mention their injurious nature—the need to know and observe the lives and conversations of free people of color implies that their most quotidian activities were somehow suspect—is revealing of the new kinds of surveillance and discrimination some longtime residents of the Creole Archipelago faced after the introduction of direct colonial rule. Yet there is little to suggest that the specific provisions of the 1767 code were routinely enforced: a brief glance at property records for the parish of St. George, Grenada, in 1772 reveals that Jean St. Bernard, described as a ‘free mulatto’ owned sixty-four acres planted in coffee, while Philibert Fouchier, also a ‘free mulatto’ had a 100-acre coffee estate worked by thirty slaves. Both estates were many times larger than the maximum of eight acres allowed by law.⁷⁰

While it is impossible to know on what basis a planter like Philibert Fouchier succeeded in evading legislation explicitly intended to limit his economic position as a free person of color, the response of free people of color in Dominica to attempts to diminish their legal status provides insight into the lengthy contest between colonial law and local understandings of legitimate authority developed and maintained in the Creole Archipelago. Objecting to legislation that “abstracted, particularized, and distinguished them from the rest of their fellow subjects with an inequality totally unmerited,” in 1777 free people of color in Dominica petitioned King George III for the abolition of a 1774 act respecting the manumission of slaves and governance of free people of color.⁷¹ In addition to requiring any person who manumitted a slave to pay the considerable sum

⁶⁹ For more on the regulation of free people of color in Antigua, see David Barry Gaspar, “A Mockery of Freedom: The status of freedmen in Antigua slave society before 1760,” *New West Indian Guide* 59, N. 3 (1985): 135-148.

⁷⁰ BNA CO 101/18 Part II N. 57, State of the parish of St. George in the island of Grenada, taken April 1772.

⁷¹ BNA Privy Council [PC]1/60/10 N. 30, Petition of the free negros, mulatto’s and masters in Dominica against an act passed there for regulating the manumission of slaves, July 20, 1777.

of £50 into the public treasury “for the support of such slaves,” the act included clauses that allowed Justices of the Peace to order summary punishments for free people of color, including whipping, at their discretion; that prevented any free person of color from giving evidence against any white person in capital cases; and that disqualified free people of color from voting for the election of a representatives to serve in the island’s Colonial Assembly.⁷²

The introduction of and vehement opposition to racially-discriminatory legislation more than ten years after British colonial rule was first introduced in Dominica testifies to a lengthy contest between norms of colonial governance and practices of local authority. Throughout the southern Caribbean, people accustomed to enjoying freedom, respect, and in some cases influence sought to have the positions they enjoyed in the Creole Archipelago recognized in the new colonies. The more than 110 “free negro’s, mulattos, and masters” who signed their names or made their marks on a formal petition to King George III stated that they “humbly expect[ed] to partake (*in common with the rest of their fellows subjects and without any discriminating regard had to complexion*) of the common constitutional blessings which they, as Your Majesty's dutiful loyal subjects most humbly apprehend themselves to be justly intitled.”⁷³ Like the memorial of new adopted subjects who sought to participate in British colonial government in Grenada, the petition supporting the rights of free people of color in Dominica evidences considerable political savvy and a strong grasp of the English language. No mention is made of the race of any of the signatories, and it is possible that some were white Anglophones allied with Francophone free people of color. The names of some of the petitioners, such as William Henry Lanaham and Samuel

⁷² BNA CO 73/1 N. 53, Act for regulation the manumission of slaves, for the better preventing slaves so manumitted becoming burthensome to the colony and for punishing free negroes, free mulattoes, and mustees, in a more summary and speedy manner than heretofore for any offences by them committed not being capital and for invalidating their evidence in capital prosecutions against white persons, September 7, 1774.

⁷³ BNA PC1/60/10 N. 30, Emphasis added.

Buckley, certainly hint at origins in the English Atlantic, even if they confirm nothing about the race of the signatories. But the majority of those who lent their names to the petition indicated their support with a simple cross, suggesting that although as individuals they lacked the literacy to mount such an eloquent protest against discriminatory legislation, as a community they affirmed the importance and influence of free people of color in the southern Caribbean.

The specific clauses to which the petitioners objected are also revealing of the status they were accustomed to enjoying. Among the clauses the petitioners found most injurious were those which vested Justices of the Peace with “a discretionary power of whipping” free people of color; which disqualified them from giving testimony against whites; and which “in like manner disqualified [them] from voting for persons to represent them in [Dominica’s] House of Assembly.” The preamble to the original act specified that “whereas free Negroes Mulattos and Mustees *have been admitted to give evidence* in the courts of Justice of this Islands in Capital Cases against White people,” their testimony would no longer be allowed.⁷⁴ That free people of color in Dominica were permitted to testify against whites as late as 1774 suggests the extent to which they continued to benefit from rights and privileges denied to their counterparts in first-phase British West Indian colonies. As Jerome Handler argues in the case of Barbados, where free people of color were in 1721 prohibited from giving evidence in *any* court trial, the inability to testify rendered free people of color less able to protect themselves “against assault, theft, and similar offenses against property and person.”⁷⁵ By defending their right to participate in the judicial system—even when it involved testifying against people the colonial state considered to

⁷⁴ BNA CO 73/1 N. 53, preamble to clause 5. Emphasis added.

⁷⁵ Handler, *The Unappropriated People*, 67-68. See also Melanie Newton, *The Children of Africa in the Colonies: Free People of Color in Barbados in the Age of Emancipation* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008), 59.

be of inherently higher status—free people of color in Dominica asserted the continued legitimacy of their claims to property, status, and respect.

The petitioners' objection to not being allowed to vote for members of the Assembly is even more intriguing. Might free people of color in the Ceded Islands have participated in colonial elections in the 1760s and 1770s—a participation long denied to their counterparts in other British colonies that depended on the institution of slavery?⁷⁶ The clause respecting voting rights in the original act has no preamble; the text simply states that “no free Negro Mulatto or Mustee shall be entitled to vote at the Election of a Representative to serve in the General Assembly of this Island.”⁷⁷ Unfortunately, surviving voter returns for the colonies only indicate how many votes by ‘old’ and ‘new adopted’ subjects were cast for each candidate; because the names of individual voters are not indicated, the race of voters cannot be identified.⁷⁸ If people recognized to be of African descent were legally allowed to participate in colonial elections in Dominica until the passage of the 1774 act, they would have exercised rights and privileges unparalleled in the contemporaneous British West Indies. While it cannot be definitively shown whether or not they did so, the fact that people who identified as and were reputed by others to be ‘of color’ felt justified in openly petitioning for electoral privileges testifies to the extent to which ideas of respectability, authority, and inclusion developed in the Creole Archipelago continued to compete with those introduced by colonial administrators.

As will be shown in the following chapter, people of African descent who decided to remain in islands ceded to Great Britain probably enjoyed fewer rights and privileges than their counterparts who elected to leave the new colonies. Yet the extent to which free people of color

⁷⁶ A 1721 law in Barbados restricted the vote to white, propertied men. See Newton, *The Children of Africa*, 59.

⁷⁷ BNA CO 73/1 N. 53, Clause 8.

⁷⁸ For an example of voter returns, see BNA CO101/12 N.141, A list of polls taken for the Assembly to be convened December 15, 1767.

believed they could or should be accommodated as equal subjects within the British Empire—“in common with the rest of their fellows subjects and without any discriminating regard had to complexion”—testifies to the continued importance of concepts of inclusion and authority developed by residents of the Creole Archipelago.

Accommodating Trade Practices: Free Ports in the Ceded Islands

In addition to accommodating existing understandings of political authority and social legitimacy, colonial officials dispatched to the Ceded Islands found themselves forced to accommodate longstanding economic practices. The practice of authorities negotiating with colonists regarding the extent to which illegal trade practices would be tolerated was by no means restricted to the Caribbean, nor was it specific to the French or British empires.⁷⁹ The situation in the Ceded Islands was particularly pressing, however, as the inter-island trade in foodstuffs as well as plantation commodities such as coffee and cacao that had formed the basis of the Creole Archipelago’s economy was rendered illegal by the 1763 Treaty of Paris. With the creation of political borders where none previously existed, small planters accustomed to ferrying their crops from Dominica to Guadeloupe or from St. Vincent to Martinique would now be guilty of smuggling if they continued to do so.

Long accustomed to engaging in trade with the subjects of various empires in the Americas, as well as people living outside the sphere of colonial rule, residents of the Creole Archipelago were loath to conform to the restrictions of eighteenth-century mercantilism. Yet the respective Crowns of France and Great Britain, burdened by debts incurred fighting the Seven Years’ War,

⁷⁹ Alan L. Karras, “Custom has the Force of Law: Local Officials and Contraband in the Bahamas and the Floridas, 1748-1779,” *Florida Historical Quarterly* Vol. 80, N. 2 (Winter 2002: 281-311); Jean Tarrade, *Le commerce colonial de la France à la fin de l'Ancien Régime: l'évolution du régime de l'Exclusif de 1763-1789*, 2 vols. (Paris: Université de Paris, 1972)

were determined to exploit new sources of revenue in the region.⁸⁰ In the years following the Treaty of Paris, imperial administrators introduced wide-ranging tax and navigation acts that sought to end illicit trade, privilege commerce between colony and metropole, and enforce the payment of duties.⁸¹ While the revolutionary consequences of these policies in North America are well known, comparatively little attention has been paid to the response of new British subjects in the southern Caribbean.⁸² This is due in no small part to the fact that residents of Britain's newest West Indian colonies remained largely unaffected by several of the more onerous terms to which their North American counterparts were subjected. Despite imperial administrators' initial attempts at reform, longstanding regional trade practices in the region persisted across newly-constituted imperial borders. The volume and value of this inter-colonial commerce, weighed against the considerable expense involved in policing persistent inter-island trade—now deemed smuggling—ultimately persuaded both French and British colonial officials to sanction the creation of free ports through which the islands' trade could be more effectively channelled.

Administrators in Great Britain considered the strict enforcement of trade regulations to be not only an economic but also a political concern. Invoking the widely-held mercantilist wisdom that “it is the Policy of every Nation to prohibit all foreign Trade with their Plantations,” Thomas Whately argued in his 1765 pamphlet that if colonists “were allowed to transfer the Benefits of their Commerce to any other Country than that from which they came, they would destroy the very Purposes of their Establishment.” Much more serious than the increases of population and territory that some of his contemporaries feared would ultimately cause the American colonies to sever

⁸⁰ For more on these acts, see Thomas C. Barrow, “Background to the Grenville Program, 1757-1763,” *The William & Mary Quarterly* Vol. 22, N.1 (Jan. 1965): 93-104.

⁸¹ More on attempts to end smuggling can be found in Allen S. Johnson, “The Passage of the Sugar Act,” *The William & Mary Quarterly* Vol. 16, N.4 (Oct. 1959: 507-514).

⁸² An important exception is Andrew Jackson O’Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), which examines why British Caribbean colonists did not rebel alongside their counterparts in North America.

their connections with the mother country, Whately averred that such a “Connection is actually broken already, wherever the Acts of Navigation are disregarded.”⁸³ In their attempts to abolish long-established trade links between Caribbean islands and between the West Indies and the American main, Whately and his fellow administrators sought to not only control trade but also to control the new subjects who continued to engage in such trade. This would prove to be a difficult task, and one which ultimately resulted once again in the granting of unprecedented concessions to residents of the Ceded Islands.

Trade between the respective subjects of France and Great Britain in the Americas had intensified during the Seven Years’ War, as British occupation of the French colonies of Guadeloupe and Martinique opened new commercial avenues between West Indian planters and British settlers in the thirteen colonies.⁸⁴ As British Brigadier General of Guadeloupe during the island’s transition back to French rule, Campbell Dalrymple could not fail to notice that planters’ newfound freedom to export molasses to North American distilleries gave them increased financial resources with which to purchase slaves and provisions from British markets, leading to the rapid development of the island.⁸⁵ Firsthand observation of the benefits of this freer trade likely influenced Dalrymple’s decision to adopt more liberal economic policies; upon taking temporary military command of Dominica following the island’s cession to Great Britain in 1763, Dalrymple elected to open the principal port of Roseau to foreign commerce. Acknowledging to his superiors in Great Britain that Roseau’s port was decidedly “more open than the laws of trade permit,” Dalrymple justified his decision by citing comparable actions on the part of French officials in St.

⁸³ Whately, *Considerations*, 88-92.

⁸⁴ Dorothy Burne Goebel, “The ‘New England Trade’ and the French West Indies, 1763-1774: A Study in Trade Policies,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 20, N.3 (July 1963: 331-372).

⁸⁵ Dalrymple’s tenure as acting Governor of Guadeloupe during the British occupation is discussed in Richard Pares, *War and Trade in the West Indies*, 189-192.

Lucia, where the “opening [of] a trade that heretofore sent a man to the gallies confirms my plan” to loosen trade restrictions.⁸⁶ Dalrymple’s initial experiment in free trade was short-lived: in December of the same year British naval vessels were dispatched to the new colony to put a stop to foreign commerce, and a decree enforcing the payment of customary duties was issued in January 1764.⁸⁷

Despite initial resistance on the part of metropolitan officials, Dalrymple and other like-minded administrators whose first-hand experiences in the colonies led them to liberalize trade were soon vindicated.⁸⁸ In 1766, British Parliament sanctioned the temporary opening of free ports in Roseau and Prince Rupert’s Bay, Dominica, as well as four more ports in Jamaica.⁸⁹ While historians generally agree that the British Free Port Act was modelled primarily on the Dutch free port of St. Eustatius, in operation since 1737, the act also enshrined in law a significant regional trade in plantation commodities that had long existed in practice. In recognition of the considerable economic differences between Jamaica and the Lesser Antilles, the Free Port Act of 1766 carried stipulations specific to the respective Caribbean colonies. Regulations pertaining to Dominica allowed for the unrestricted importation of the produce of any foreign colony in the Americas, but stipulated that any goods subsequently shipped to Great Britain from Dominica, with the exception of sugar and rum, were to be classified as ‘foreign’ and subject to the higher duties associated with

⁸⁶ BNA CO101/1 N.87, Dalrymple to the Lords of Trade and Plantations, August 1763, emphasis in original. Ulysses Fitzmaurice also drew on the example of St. Lucia to promote unrestricted trade in British colonies, noting that “[S]ince the peace, great encouragement has been given for the settlement of St. Lucia, and the freedom of trade which has been allow’d there has contributed considerably to that end.” BNA CO 101/13 N. 147, Fitzmaurice to Hillsborough, July 26 1769.

⁸⁷ Correspondence relating to the seizure of foreign sugars by commanding officer Josiah Partridge and the return to normal trade duties in Dominica can be found in BNA CO 101/1 N.136-150.

⁸⁸ In her discussion of the Free Port Act, Frances Armytage argues that the first proposal for a free port system can be found in Dalrymple’s correspondence. See Armytage, 36

⁸⁹ A detailed discussion of the creation of these free ports can be found in Allan Christelow, “Contraband Trade between Jamaica and the Spanish Main, and the Free Port Act of 1766,” *The Hispanic American Historical Review* 22, N.2 (May 1942: 309-343), and in Ragatz, *The Fall of the Planter Class*, 137-141.

foreign produce. Although this stipulation was intended to encourage a transition to sugar monoculture in the new British colony, it unintentionally provided an incentive for sugar planters in neighboring French colonies to export their produce to Dominica so that it could be re-exported under the generous protections afforded to British sugar.⁹⁰ Plantation commodities long cultivated in Dominica but not covered under the terms of the act, such as coffee and cacao, were in turn smuggled from Dominica to other islands where they could be exported as domestic produce not subject to additional tax. As was the case prior to the Treaty of Paris, small planters who produced these crops on their estates were among the most active participants in this inter-island trade.⁹¹ Bowing to the protests of planters who complained that duties on the export of any produce other than sugar or rum were so high that they were “nearly an equivalent of their being deprived of the British market,”⁹² in 1773 administrators in Great Britain revoked the stipulation that cacao and coffee exported from Dominica be taxed as ‘foreign.’⁹³

In addition to unintentionally solidifying Dominica’s role as a key site of contraband trade in plantation commodities, the sanctioning of free ports in the island also augmented a longstanding regional trade in slaves. As discussed in the previous chapter, the extension of established transatlantic slaving routes to islands that had formerly been legally excluded from the trade resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of enslaved Africans trafficked to the Lesser Antilles; in the first decade after the Treaty of Paris, almost 29,000 slaves disembarked in Dominica. Yet as surviving population figures suggest—the number of slaves in Dominica rose

⁹⁰ For a short discussion of this smuggling, see BNA CO101/10 N.227, Melvill, April 7, 1766.

⁹¹ BNA CO71/4 N.2, Memorial of the Commander in Chief and the Council and Assembly of Dominica to Lord North, March 6, 1773.

⁹² BNA T1/470 N.80 July 27, 1769, Memorial of Sir George Colebrooke, Sir James Cockburn, and John Nelson on behalf of themselves and the other proprietors of the island of Dominica.

⁹³ Ragatz, *Fall of the Planter Class*, 141.

from approximately 3,400 in 1763 to just over 14,000 ten years later—not all of the slaves listed as landing in Dominica remained there.⁹⁴

Table 3.4: Number of Slaves Annually Disembarked at Dominica, 1764-1773⁹⁵

Year	Dominica
1764	779
1765	266
1766	1,090
1767	3,045
1768	2,681
1769	3,929
1770	3,620
1771	6,956
1772	4,809
1773	1,701
TOTALS	28,876

Although yearly totals are not extant, Customs records indicate that almost 1,000 slaves were exported from Dominica in 1768 alone. Greg O'Malley's study of the inter-colonial slave trade posits that at least 600 slaves were exported from the island annually in the 1760s and 1770s, climbing to at least 1,000 per year by the end of the 1780s.⁹⁶ The increase in the enslaved population of St. Lucia further testifies to the importance of this inter-colonial traffic in slaves: although the Dubois database does not record a single transatlantic slave voyage with a primary port of disembarkation in the French colony between 1763 and 1773, the number of slaves in the island increased from 5,069 in 1763 to 13,982 by 1773.⁹⁷ Although the creation of free ports likely

⁹⁴ BNA CO 71/4 N.274.

⁹⁵ Data sourced from *Voyages: The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database* at <http://www.slavevoyages.org>

⁹⁶ BNA CO76/4 N.49, Vessels entered outward, Roseau. This regional slave trade is discussed by Greg O'Malley, "Final Passages: The British Inter-colonial Slave Trade, 1618-1807" (PhD Dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 2006), 398-402.

⁹⁷ ANOM DPPC G1506 Recensement Sainte-Lucie 1763; 1773. While it is possible to attribute a small part of this growth to natural increase, an almost threefold increase in the population of enslaved people in the island in just 10 years strongly suggests a regional traffic in slaves.

increased the facility with which enslaved laborers could be imported and exported from Dominica, the island was not the only new colony to participate in this little-studied inter- and intra-colonial trade: surviving records of vessels leaving Grenada in the mid- to late 1760s suggest that several hundred slaves departed the new British colony each year, primarily destined for Spanish America.⁹⁸

The regional trade in slaves also operated in the other direction, with new laborers arriving in the Ceded Islands from more established colonies elsewhere in the Caribbean. Out of a total of 139 ships collectively listed as landing 7,774 slaves in Grenada between November 1764 and October 1766, sixty-seven came from Africa, but a further twenty-six sloops came from Antigua; fifteen from Barbados; seventeen from St. Kitt's; and nine from St. Vincent.⁹⁹ Slave ships arriving from other British colonies tended to be much smaller than those originating in Africa, with cargoes ranging from as few as four to a maximum of forty slaves.¹⁰⁰ The relatively small size of these cargoes testifies to the practice of relocating experienced or 'seasoned' slaves from existing plantations elsewhere in the Caribbean to new holdings in the Ceded Islands, where they could instruct slaves newly arrived from Africa in the workings of a sugar estate. Planters and officials in the colonies advocated this practice, noting that "master worksmen" were frequently transported between colonies, where they were essential in helping to "erect works and other buildings."¹⁰¹

⁹⁸ BNA CO106/1 N. 2, List of ships which have entered outwards, Nov. 13 1764- Jan. 5 1765; N. 5, Ships entered outward, Jan. 5-Apr. 5 1765; N. 7, Ships entered outward, Apr. 5 –July 5 1765. Daniel Usner notes that many of the 12,000 slaves who arrived in Louisiana during the Spanish period were trans-shipped via Caribbean colonies, including Dominica. Daniel H. Usner Jr., "Colonial Projects and Frontier Practices: The First Century of New Orleans History," in Jay Gitlin, Barbara Berglund, and Adam Arenson, eds. *Frontier Cities: Encounters at the Crossroads of Empire* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2013), 38.

⁹⁹ BNA CO 106/1 N. 244, "List of all ships which have entered inwards with slaves in the island of Grenada between the 13 day of November 1764 and the 10 day of October 1766." A further 2 ships disembarked slaves from Dominica, along with 3 ships from the Spanish main.

¹⁰⁰ BNA CO 106/1 N. 24. In contrast, ships coming from Africa disembarked as many as 300 slaves in a single cargo.

¹⁰¹ BNA CO71/4 N.2, Memorial of the Commander in Chief and the Council and Assembly of Dominica to Lord North, March 6 1773. William Young also advocated the practice of transporting experienced slaves to new colonies. See *Considerations*, 45.

Despite British imperial attempts to regulate commerce, a number of regional trade practices first developed by residents of the Creole Archipelago further expanded and were given legal sanction after the introduction of colonial rule.

Longstanding regional trade practices were also enshrined in law in the new French colony of St. Lucia. Soon after his arrival in the colony, Intendant Marc Antoine Chardon noted that “the location of the island and the ease of disembarkation along several of its coasts will oblige us to be vigilant so that contraband is not carried out in several other places where *pirogues* can be landed easily.”¹⁰² Claiming ignorance of an April 1763 communiqué temporarily allowing foreign vessels to bring a limited number of articles—namely livestock, lumber, and a specific set of provisions not cultivated by farmers in continental France—to French admiralty ports in Guadeloupe, Martinique, and St. Lucia, Chardon attempted to exercise a degree of control over persistent regional commerce by establishing what were essentially free ports in St. Lucia’s principal town of Carénage and in Legros, three leagues’ distant.¹⁰³ As was the case in British Dominica, the privileging of trade in St. Lucia was explicitly intended to favor the development of the young colony by attracting a greater diversity of merchants and traders—and thus greater sums of money—to its principal ports. A return for the month of April, 1764, shows foreign ships arriving in the small French colony from as far afield as London, Liverpool, and Boston, in addition to the Caribbean islands of St. Vincent, Antigua, St. Eustatius and Trinidad.¹⁰⁴ Carrying meat and lard, butter, salt fish, flour, beer, and candles, the vessels would not have been allowed under Louis XV’s initial decree, which aimed to provision France’s Caribbean colonies with basic essentials

¹⁰² “la situation naturelle de l’isle et la facilité de débarquer dans plusieurs de ces costes obligeront à veiller pour qu’on ne fasse la contreband [dans] nombres d’autre endroits, ou des pirogues peuvent mettre à terre facilement...” ANOM FM C10C2 Chardon, December 31, 1763.

¹⁰³ ANOM FM C10C2 Chardon to Accaron, January 1 1764.

¹⁰⁴ ANOM FM C10C 2, “Etat des Batiments arrivés à Sainte Lucie venants de l’Etranger pendant le mois d’avril de la presente année 1764 et des Marchandises qu’ils ont apportées.”

necessary to feed and shelter the islands' rapidly expanding population while maintaining the privileged status of exports from France.¹⁰⁵

Administrators in France wasted little time in putting a stop to this trade, relieving Intendant Chardon and Governor de Jumilhac of their respective posts and assimilating St. Lucia to the government of Martinique in February 1764. Yet metropolitan officials soon saw the wisdom of Chardon's decision. Residents of St. Lucia were incensed both by the dissolution of the island's government and by the restrictions placed on trade. In an open letter to the Duc de Choiseul, Secretary of the Marine and Colonies, planters in the new French colony outlined two means by which to achieve "the perfect establishment of St. Lucia:" Governor de Jumilhac, who "has earned himself great esteem in the islands," should be restored to his post, and foreign commerce should be permitted "for two or three years" so that planters might be able to "procure themselves slaves and form sugar plantations."¹⁰⁶

Although officials in France declined to restore de Jumilhac to his former post in St. Lucia, they soon recognized the wisdom of permitting the island to continue in "the same liberty and tax exemption which it currently enjoys."¹⁰⁷ Confirming the principle—though not the covert implementation—of Chardon's earlier attempt to develop the port of Carénage, a 1767 decree established a free port in the town as well as in Mole St. Nicolas, Saint-Domingue. Building on a longstanding practice that had further flourished during the Seven Years' War, the decree allowed foreign ships to export rum and molasses from the colonies, and to bring in a few specific

¹⁰⁵ A full list of commodities allowed into the admiralty ports can be found in Goebel, "The New England Trade," 336.

¹⁰⁶ ANOM FM C10C de Jumilhac to Choiseul, July 10 1764. "...deux moyens faciles pour le parfait établissement de Sainte Lucie. Le premier en lui permettant, Monseigneur, le commerce étranger pendant 2 ou 3 ans. Les ressources infinies que l'habitant trouvera dans cet commerce...le mettront a même de se procurer des negres et de former des sucreries...Le second moyen, Monseigneur, en nous conservant pour Gouverneur General, Monsieur le Chevalier de Jumilhac qui par l'équité de son gouvernement s'est acquis une si grande estime dans les isles..."

¹⁰⁷ "...jouir de la même liberté et franchise dont elle jouit a présent." C8B 12, Ennery and Peinier to Praslin, October 1767.

necessaries such as lumber, provided that the ship's captain paid a nominal fee of 1% of the value of imports and exports.¹⁰⁸ A subsequent relaxation of the decree expanded the list of 'necessaries' to include rice and corn, as well as colonial commodities such as sugar, cotton, and cacao, a measure which another historian judged to be "a liberty patently intended to encourage smuggling of these products from the foreign West Indies."¹⁰⁹ Even these concessions did not satisfy residents of St. Lucia, however. In April 1768, in an echo of Chardon's initial directive, all ports in the island were opened to foreign trade without restriction, effectively sanctioning St. Lucia's longtime status as a key site of regional trade in the Lesser Antilles.¹¹⁰

The decision to allow unfettered trade in St. Lucia was in keeping with other administrative and economic concessions intended to convince existing planters to remain in the island and to encourage further settlement. In notable contrast to contemporaneous practice elsewhere in the French empire, foreign subjects residing in St. Lucia obtained an exemption from the *droit d'aubaine*, a law that confiscated the property of foreigners who died within the French realm.¹¹¹ Recognizing that British, Spanish, and other subjects who settled in St. Lucia prior to the island becoming a colony of France might be enticed to remain if they were assured that their property in the island could legally be transferred to their heirs, officials present in St. Lucia petitioned their superiors in France to abolish the *droit d'aubaine*. "Experience shows that it was

¹⁰⁸ ANOM Fonds Privés (FP) 5APC, Papiers Hulot de Collart, Arrest du Conseil d'État du Roi qui ordonne l'établissement de deux entrepôts, July 29, 1767

¹⁰⁹ Goebel, "The New England Trade," 364.

¹¹⁰ Goebel, "The New England Trade," 367. The act notably excluded Carénage, which was thus rendered unattractive to foreign commerce.

¹¹¹ In addition to St. Lucia, exemption from the *droit d'aubaine* was also extended to foreigners residing in Tobago when France gained control of the island during the American War of Independence, and to French Guyana in 1783. See ADM CS B15 Fol. 89v, January 2 1784. These abolitions further attest to French officials' desire to maintain existing residents in new colonies. For more on the implementation and operation of the *droit d'aubaine* in metropolitan France, see Peter Sahlins, *Unnaturally French: Foreign Citizens in the Old Regime and After* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2004). Because Sahlins limits his discussion of the *droit d'aubaine* to metropolitan France and French Saint-Domingue, Sahlins considers the first revocation of the law to have occurred during the French Revolution.

due to the abolition of this law that the most recent Danish and Dutch colonies owe their prompt growth,” reasoned the island’s commander, who reasoned that St. Lucia’s status as a new colony rendered its condition “different from of the other [French] Windward Islands.”¹¹² Like their counterparts in islands ceded to Great Britain, officials in St. Lucia were aware of the economic and military importance of developing some of the last available Caribbean islands; as the following chapter explores, they were willing to make considerable concessions in order to maintain existing residents in the island and to attract residents of the Creole Archipelago from Dominica, Grenada, and St. Vincent to the new French colony.

Conclusion

As British and French imperial administrators worked to reconcile residents of the Creole Archipelago to direct colonial rule in order to retain their knowledge, productive, and reproductive capacities in the new colonies, officials repeatedly found themselves forced to modify or abandon established features of eighteenth-century European colonialism. In the quotidian contest between local practices and imperial projects, new colonial subjects were well aware that they were ‘very much wanted,’ and they exploited this want in order to extract significant concessions from colonial officials. Emphasizing the value of knowledge and authority that they derived from first-hand experience of life in the Creole Archipelago, residents of the newest plantation colonies in the southern Caribbean used diplomatic means to agitate for increased political participation, the relaxation of trade and tax laws, and the abolition of legislation that threatened to diminish the rights and privileges formerly enjoyed by free people of color. As the following chapter will show,

¹¹² “L’expérience demontre cependant que c’est a l’anéantissement de cette Loy que les derniers etablissement danois et hollandais ont du leur prompt accroissement. . . Les circonstances particulieres de Ste. Lucie, qui est une colonie naissante, la placant dans une condition differente de celle des autres islaes du vent ” [sic throughout] ANOM C7A 31 N. 65, Comte de Nozieres, 1771. In addition to St. Lucia, exemption from the *droit d’aubaine* was also extended to foreigners residing in Tobago when France gained control of the island in 1783, which further attests to French officials’ desire to maintain existing residents in new colonies.

however, even these concession were not enough for many Caribs, slaves, and free people, who elected to violently oppose or to remove themselves beyond the reach of direct colonial rule in an effort to remake the Creole Archipelago.

Chapter 4: Recreating the Creole Archipelago

“Quel Roi?”

- Chief Chatoyer, June 1768¹

In the first week of June 1768, a meeting took place at Grand Sable, on St. Vincent’s eastern coast. The Abbé Valladares, a French missionary whose considerable estate in the south of the island included 63 cleared and 192 wooded acres, journeyed north past the Jambou River, crossing a natural barrier long recognized as the boundary between settler and Carib lands in the island. The Abbé sought an audience with the Carib Chief Chatoyer, to whom he explained British plans for the surveying and settlement of King George III’s newest Caribbean colonies. Although Great Britain’s Commissioners for the Sale and Disposal of Lands in the Ceded Islands had not ventured into Carib territory in the five years since St. Vincent had been formally incorporated into the British Empire, all lands suitable for the establishment of plantations south and west of those on which the Caribs lived had now been purchased by eager new colonists. The Commissioners therefore turned their attention to the project of converting the wooded lands on which the Caribs lived into profitable sugar estates, relocating Chatoyer and his fellow Caribs to suitable plots in some other part of the island in the process. In a gesture intended to “communicate the gracious disposition of His Majesty towards them,” the Abbé assured Chatoyer that once resettled, Caribs would not be expected to pay rents or other fines to the King who since 1763 had held sovereignty over the island of St. Vincent.² The Carib chief listened as the Catholic Priest, acting as an emissary of the British Empire, informed him in French of King George III’s plans for the Ceded Islands. As Valladares later reported to the Commissioners for the Sale and Disposal of Lands, Chatoyer had only one question: “Quel roi?” What King?

¹ Quoted in William Young, *An Account of the Black Charaibs in the Island of St. Vincent’s; with the Charaib Treaty of 1773, and other Original Documents* (London: J. Sewell, 1795), 38.

² BNA CO 106/9 N. 263, Minutes of the Board for the Sale and Disposal of Lands, St. Vincent.

As the above anecdote suggests, the project of drawing on decades of amassed experience in the administration of plantation colonies in order to rapidly and rationally extend imperial rule to the Caribbean frontier proved more difficult to accomplish than imperial officials initially imagined. As the Caribbean islands of St. Lucia and of Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent, and Tobago were brought under the direct colonial control of the respective French and British Crowns, the arrival of imperial administrators, institutions, and legislation rapidly transformed the physical, social, and economic landscape that residents of the Creole Archipelago had constructed and maintained over the course of several generations. The previous chapter explored how the actions and rhetoric of these men and women, whose ideas about how the new colonies should be administered were largely informed by their firsthand experiences in the islands, compelled imperial administrators to experiment with well-established practices of colonial rule in an effort to accommodate economic, political, and social practices that residents insisted were better suited to local realities. This chapter highlights the limits of these experiments and accommodations by focusing on how and why people who did not share the vision of colonial plantation society promoted by imperial administrators—the Caribs, small planters, free people of color, and slaves who had constructed and maintained the Creole Archipelago described in chapter one, as well as enslaved people trafficked from Africa to the Ceded Islands in the wake of the Treaty of Paris—mounted opposition to or removed themselves beyond the reach of newly-implemented direct colonial rule. Caribs whose ancestors had forfeited claims to Martinique and Guadeloupe in exchange for French and British recognition of their rights to territory in St. Vincent and Dominica responded with violence as new settlers encroached on their remaining lands. Small planters whose families had ventured to the colonial periphery in the late-seventeenth and early-eighteenth centuries migrated again—this time from Dominica, Grenada, and St. Vincent to St. Lucia—in a

conscious attempt to maintain the French language, Catholic religion, agricultural and economic practices, and social and familial ties around which they had constructed their lives in the Creole Archipelago. Enslaved people fought to maintain a degree of control over their labor and familial relations in the face of a harsh new plantation regime and the arrival of tens of thousands of newly-enslaved people from Africa. Despite attempts on the part of the respective British and French Crowns to devise well-researched plans for the creation and administration of ideal plantation colonies, and the willingness of colonial officials to revise or abandon these plans if they proved ill-suited in practice, many residents of the Creole Archipelago were demonstrably unwilling to accept the extension of European rule to a region of the Americas that had previously served as an outlet for people actively seeking to evade such rule.

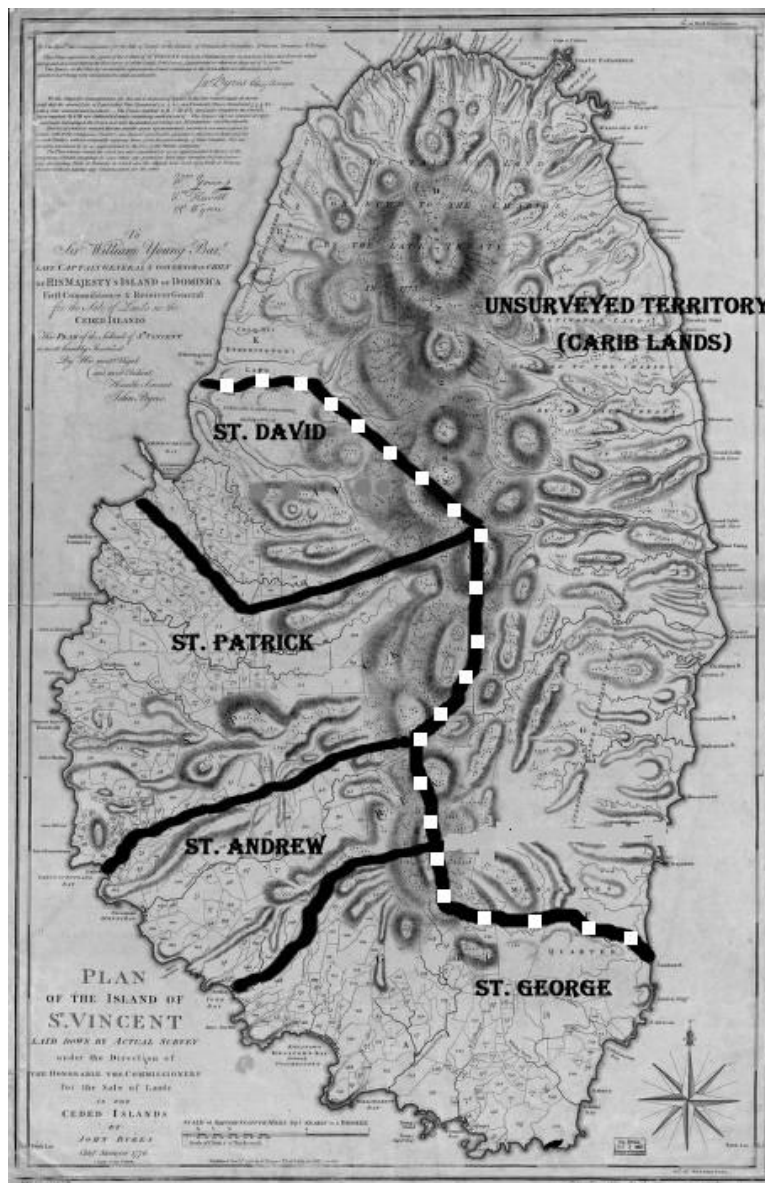
Confronting Colonization: The Caribs of St. Vincent, 1763-1773

As the exchange between Chatoyer and the Abbé Valladares suggests, the Caribs of St. Vincent were reluctant to recognize British colonial rule or to accept the accompanying expansion of the plantation complex. Estimates as to the number of Caribs living on St. Vincent at the time of its cession to Great Britain in 1763 varied considerably, with officials in the island reporting a total population of 1,138, while observers in neighboring French colonies and in England speculated that the number was closer to five thousand.³ As discussed in chapter one, although Caribs had long tolerated the presence of settlers from nearby French islands who established small tobacco, cotton, and cacao plantations on St. Vincent's Leeward or western side, they were unwilling to allow colonists to settle on the fertile Windward or eastern half of the island. With the

³ The figure of 1,138 was reported in a 1763 census of St. Vincent, BNA CO 101/1 N.9. Thomas Whately stated that the "Caribbee Indians" numbered "about four or five thousand:" Whately, *Considerations*, 31. The French Governor of St. Lucia reported that the "General of the Caribs" requested to relocate to his government with 5,000 of his people. ANOM C10C 2, de Jumilhac, August 20 1763. The fact that more than 5,000 Caribs were exiled from St. Vincent in 1796 would seem to suggest that census figures of 1,138 significantly underestimated the population; whether this was a deliberate omission on the part of administrators who sought to minimize the problems Caribs were seen to pose or whether Caribs sought not to be counted is difficult to determine.

arrival of British colonial officials and settlers who prized the Windward coast as “the most extensive and finest part of the island,” Caribs quickly began to look for a place where they might continue to exercise the sovereignty and autonomy established by the treaty of 1660 and confirmed as recently as 1748 by the Treaty of Aix-la-Chapelle.⁴

Map 4.1: Boundary between Carib and Settler lands in St. Vincent c. 1763⁵



⁴ BNA CO 101/11 N.428-432. For more on the abovementioned treaties, see chapter 1.

⁵ Edited version of an original map by John Byres. Original in BNA CO 700 St. Vincent. The boundary between settler and Carib lands is indicated by the broken line.

In August of 1763, just a few months after the Treaty of Paris was signed, the governor of St. Lucia, the Comte de Jumilhac, was approached by an individual he identified as “Troujas, General of the Caribs.” Troujas sought to relocate to St. Lucia with his fellow Caribs, whom de Jumilhac estimated to number some 5,000 individuals. Privately fearful of the danger the Caribs might pose, the governor refused Troujas’ request, informing him that the number of French subjects streaming into St. Lucia from neighboring islands would render it impossible for such a large number of Caribs to find a suitable plot of land on which to establish themselves.⁶

This brief exchange between de Jumilhac and Troujas reveals a tension that would characterize relations between Caribs, colonists and officials present in St. Vincent, and legislators in England in the decades after the Seven Years’ War. The Carib chief and the French governor engaged not as client and patron, but as representatives of their respective polities. Troujas did not display the behavior of a “noble savage” living in simple harmony with nature, as many members of the literate public in England believe the indigenous peoples of the Americas to be.⁷ Nor did his actions match the view of Caribs espoused by British officials and settlers in St. Vincent, who tended to regard Caribs with suspicion. British subjects who moved to St. Vincent after the 1763 Treaty of Paris alleged that the inhabitants of the island’s Windward side were not the survivors of the Caribbean’s pre-Columbian inhabitants but were descended from a cargo of slaves whose ship, en route from Africa to Barbados, wrecked off the coast of St. Vincent in the late seventeenth century. Delivered from slavery, the shipwrecked Africans imposed themselves on the island’s

⁶ ANOM C10C 2, de Jumilhac, August 20 1763. “ Troujas général des Caraïbes de St. Vincent m’a présenté il y a peu de jours, Monseigneur, une requête pour le recevoir dans cette isle avec tout son monde qui est de cinq mille personnes, comme il serait tres dangereux de les y introduire je luy ai répondu que je ne pouvais les recevoir que par un ordre de sa Majesté très Chrétienne, qu’il y avait une si grande quantité de Français établis dans les isles concédées aux Anglais qui demandaient a former des établissements à Ste. Lucie qu’il serait impossible qu’ils puissent trouver à s’y placer, mais qu’en tout ce qui dependrait de moy pour leur rendre service je le ferais avec plaisir. ” [Sic throughout]

⁷ Michael Craton, “The Black Caribs of St. Vincent: A Reevaluation,” in Robert L. Pacquette & Stanley Engerman, eds. *The Lesser Antilles in the Age of European Expansion* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), 78.

true indigenous inhabitants, “whom they...gradually extirpated, or reduced to their obedience.”⁸ Neil Whitehead has traced the gradual process by which ‘Black Caribs’ came to be seen as a group separate from—and often in opposition to—the supposedly peaceable ‘red’ or ‘yellow’ Caribs.⁹ By propagating a narrative in which ‘Black Caribs’ colonized the lands of ‘true’ indigenous people, colonists succeeded in changing the nature of the debate from whether Caribs had a primordial right to the territory on which they lived to whether they could even be termed ‘indigenous.’¹⁰ The depiction of Caribs not as people native to St. Vincent who could claim legitimate title to the island but as would-be slaves guilty of killing Amerindians and usurping their territory gained in popularity as hunger for the lands on which they resided increased: by 1769, members of St. Vincent’s colonial Council and Assembly would complain of “the *fugitive Negroes distinguished by the name of black Charribbs*.”¹¹ The rhetorical transformation of ‘Caribs’—people indigenous to the Caribbean—into ‘Black Caribs’—the descendants of slaves who should themselves be rightfully be reduced to slavery, would have serious consequences for the Caribs, ultimately resulting in their mass exile from St. Vincent in 1796. In the period immediately following the Seven Years’ War, however, legislators in St. Vincent safeguarded Carib lands: any settler who “purchased lands from the Charibs or...treated for the same or...used any means to persuade [the Caribs] that they have a right to dispose of any lands in St. Vincent” was guilty of a misdemeanour.¹²

⁸ William Young, *Considerations which may tend to promote the settlement of our new West-India Colonies, by Encouraging Individuals to embark in the Undertaking* (London: James Robson, 1764), 10.

⁹ Neil L. Whitehead, “Black Read as Red: Ethnic Transgression and Hybridity in Northeastern South America and the Caribbean,” in Matthew Restall, Ed. *Beyond Black and Red: African-Native Relations in Colonial Latin America* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2005), 223-243.

¹⁰ A detailed discussion of the debate over Carib land rights can be found in BNA T1/483 N. 126, Notes on hearing of Counsel on Mr. Burke’s Second Memorial, May 5 1774.

¹¹ BNA CO 263/1, Minutes of the St. Vincent Council and Assembly, May 31 1769, emphasis added.

¹² BNA CO 101/14 N. 190, Opinion of Charles Payne Sharpe Esq. as King’s Counsel at Saint Vincent on the subject of lands purchased or pretended to be purchased in St. Vincent, September 11, 1770.

The 1796 exile of the Caribs is discussed in more detail in the conclusion of this dissertation.

As the auction of all viable plantation allotments on St. Vincent's Leeward side described in chapter two proceeded, would-be planters grew increasingly vocal about their desire to remove the Caribs from any lands suitable for the cultivation of sugar. Eager to acquire Carib lands "without endangering the peace of the colony," William Young, a member of St. Vincent's Colonial Council who since 1764 had acted as Commissioner and Receiver of Monies for the Sale and Disposal of Lands in the Ceded Islands, proposed a plan.¹³ After the Governor of St. Lucia denied their 1763 request to relocate to the French colony, in 1766 a number of Caribs approached Young and his fellow Commissioners in order to indicate their desire to be considered as British subjects and to have their existing tracts of land confirmed in their possession.¹⁴ As these lands were of great potential value as sugar plantations, Young instead proposed that Caribs be relocated to plots suitable for subsistence agriculture elsewhere on St. Vincent. Caribs would be afforded a grace period of up to five years in which to establish dwellings and plant crops on their newly-conceded lands before being required to permanently quit their existing homes. Once settled on their new allotments, Caribs would be legally prohibited from alienating land "to any white person." As further compensation for having to abandon the fertile Windward side of St. Vincent, Young proposed that Caribs be awarded four Johannes, or 13 pounds 4 shillings local currency, per acre of cleared land. Wooded land, which accounted for the overwhelming majority of Carib holdings, would not be subject to compensation. The proposed terms seem less than generous given that lands suitable for planting sugar in St. Vincent had already fetched as much as 59 pounds sterling per acre at auction.¹⁵ Adding insult to injury, in order to avail themselves of Young's terms

¹³ No author, *Authentic Papers Relative to the Expedition against the Charibbs, and the Sale of Lands in the Island of St. Vincent* (London: J. Almon, 1773), 6.

¹⁴ BNA CO106/10 N.45, Minutes of the Board for Surveying and Disposing of Lands in St. Vincent, April 16, 1766.

¹⁵ BNA CO 106/9 N. 33, An account of the first sale of land in the island of St. Vincent, May 31 1765. The process by which land was surveyed and auctioned to new settlers is discussed in chapter 2.

Caribs would be required to swear an oath of fidelity to the King of Great Britain.¹⁶ In May 1768, Young's proposal was approved by King George III.¹⁷

The stipulation that Caribs profess their fidelity to the King of Great Britain further highlights the confusion surrounding their legal status in the wake of the Treaty of Paris. Although they were being asked to take an oath similar to that administered to former French subjects who wished to remain in the new British colony of Grenada, Caribs were not technically the subjects of a sovereign conquered in a just war. Nor were they squatters with no legal title to the land on which they lived, like the small planters who had settled in Dominica and on St. Vincent's Leeward side prior to 1763. A third possibility, that Caribs might be afforded a status akin to that of runaway slaves or maroons, was for the Caribs a frightening and all-too-plausible prospect. The increasingly important role of African slavery in the Lesser Antilles had not escaped the notice of the inhabitants of St. Vincent's Windward side, who were already in the habit of "flattening the foreheads of their infants in order that their race may be kept distinct."¹⁸ As eyewitnesses to the disembarkation of thousands of African captives by British slavers in St. Vincent in the years immediately following the Treaty of Paris, it is little wonder that Caribs grew "apprehensive that there was a design not only of depriving them of their grounds, but also of reducing them into slavery."¹⁹ Requiring the Caribs to make an oath of fidelity to King George III brought them under the protection of the

¹⁶ The terms of Young's proposal are outlined in *Authentic Papers*, p.5-11.

¹⁷ BNA CO106/9 N.265, "Order of His Majesty the King of Great Britain for the more Effectual Establishing the Charibees of the Island of Saint Vincent, and for Surveying and disposing of by Sale, the Vacant Lands lying to Windward of the said Island," contained in the minutes of the Board for Surveying and Disposing of Lands in St. Vincent, May 21, 1768.

¹⁸ CO 101/11 N. 430, William Young to the Lords Commissioners of His Majesty's Treasury, April 11, 1767. This practice was first described by the Dominican missionary Jean-Baptiste Du Tertre, who lived in the Lesser Antilles from 1640-1658. Jean-Baptiste Du Tertre, *Histoire générale des isles de Saint Christophe...*, 398.

¹⁹ BNA CO101/13 N. 107, Fitzmaurice to Lord Hillsborough, June 10 1769. Fitzmaurice blamed French inhabitants of St. Vincent and St. Lucia for propagating a rumor that "the heirs of the owner of the [slave] ship [that supposedly wrecked off St. Vincent in the seventeenth century] and slaves has lately apply'd to have the Caribs sold as his property, and for his benefit, the Caribs cannot but be alarm'd at these reports, and are led by their apprehensions to attribute every measure of government to a fix'd design of bringing about the purpose of enslaving them."

British monarch—they would not be made slaves—but it also implicitly acknowledged that their fidelity was not something which had been earned simply by virtue of St. Vincent’s cession to Great Britain. Young’s proposal, which aimed to bring the Caribs under British obeisance and to transfer the land on which they lived to British settlers, inadvertently raised the question of whether the Caribs might in fact be a sovereign people.

Correctly anticipating that the Caribs would be reluctant to accept Young’s terms, the Commissioners for the Sale and Disposal of Lands in the Ceded Islands decided to send “some Indians, Mulatto’s and Free Negroes, well acquainted with the Charibees” to explain their proposal. Those tasked with this communication included the Abbé Valladares (spelled Valledairis in the Commissioners’ notes), and several “French Gentlemen.”²⁰ Returning to Kingstown one week later, the envoys sent by the Board signalled that those effected “seemed much pleased” with the proposed plans.²¹

In a spirited defence of his father’s plan published more than twenty years later, Sir William Young Jr., who served as agent for St. Vincent from 1795 until 1802, offered a different version of events. According to Young Jr., upon reaching the main Carib settlement at Grand Sable, the Abbé was confronted by a group of Caribs headed by Chief Chatoyer. When the Abbé attempted to explain the purpose of his visit, Chatoyer allegedly responded “Quel roi?” Chatoyer and his followers, Valladares testified, “would listen to the governor of Martinique, and no other.”²² Although Young Jr. likely intended for this rather striking anecdote to serve as an illustration of the Caribs’ inherently bellicose nature—to deny allegiance to the King was treason—the exchange between Chatoyer and Valladares can also be read as an illustration of the Carib chief’s

²⁰ BNA CO106/9 N. 266, Minutes of the Board for Surveying and Disposing of Lands in St. Vincent, May 25, 1768.

²¹ BNA CO106/9 N. 269, Minutes of the Board for Surveying and Disposing of Lands in St. Vincent, May 31, 1768.

²² Young, *An Account of the Black Charaibs*, 38.

understanding of eighteenth-century European politics. No doubt aware of several earlier treaties guaranteeing the neutrality of St. Vincent, St. Lucia, and Dominica, Chatoyer refused to recognize the legitimacy of King George III's claim to the island. Demonstrating his command of European diplomacy, Chatoyer instead called on a representative of Great Britain's enemy in the recent war, France, to protect his interests. Rather than the savage warrior depicted throughout Young's account, this passage provides a glimpse of Chatoyer the diplomat, determined to engage in negotiations as a legitimate representative of his people.

Any semblance of diplomacy in the dispute over Carib lands was soon abandoned by all parties involved. With Young Sr.'s plan officially approved, administrators ordered that a road be forged through the previously inaccessible Windward side of St. Vincent. The road was explicitly intended not only to facilitate future surveys, but to enable military forces to more easily march on Carib territory should the need arise. Under the direction of Robert Wynne, the only commissioner for the Sale and Disposal of Lands present in St. Vincent at the time, the construction of a road running northeast from the capital of Kingstown toward the Windward coast was undertaken at the beginning of the dry season in autumn 1768. Workers got as far as the River Jambou, long recognized as a natural boundary between Carib and settler lands, before being stopped in their tracks by Chatoyer and his fellow Caribs. Electing not to proceed further without military assistance, the surveyors abandoned the task of road building until the following spring.²³ Returning in April 1769 with a military escort of some forty men, the surveyors were again rebuffed by approximately 200 Caribs. Finding themselves "sixteen miles advanced in the Heart of the Charibb Country...cut off from every supply of water and provisions [and] surrounded by a

²³ Young, *Account of the Black Charaibs*, 45.

numerous Body of vile Savages,” the party had little choice but to retreat.²⁴ The Caribs then set fire to the surveyors’ tools and burned their cabins to the ground, destroying both the instruments and the symbols of British colonization. “For God’s sake endeavour to get the regiment up here as soon as possible,” surveyor John Byres implored his superiors, explaining that he had been forced to abandon his maps in some bushes while beating a hasty retreat. “I fancy if the Inhabitants don’t put themselves in Arms, [the Caribs will] overrun the Island.”²⁵ Although a militia composed of planters and slaves returned to confront the Caribs the following day, the President of St. Vincent’s Colonial Council, Harry Alexander, decided it would be prudent to honor “His Majesty’s boundless Humanity and tender Disposition” towards the Caribs, “and for a time, I hope it will be short, quit that fine cream part of this island with a regret I cannot express.”²⁶

Despite their decision not to engage in open confrontation without further military reinforcements, Alexander and his fellow Councillors were unwilling to abandon their goal of obtaining Carib lands. At a May 10, 1769, meeting of the St. Vincent Council, the assembled members declared it “their duty most humbly to represent to His Majesty, how much his lenity to so worthless a set of savages will hurt his faithful, loyal and obedient subjects,” explicitly counterposing the fate of loyal British settlers against that of ‘savage’ Caribs. The Councilors also addressed members of the elected Colonial Assembly, urging them to draft a militia bill and to consider under what circumstances martial law might be implemented so as to “guard against any future insult or attack from these wretches.”²⁷ The Assembly’s response illustrates the gap between metropolitan and local attitudes towards the Caribs in the late 1760s. Agreeing that military force

²⁴ BNA CO101/13 N.69, Copy of a letter from Harry Alexander Esq. President of the island of St. Vincent to Lieutenant Governor Fitzmaurice Commander in Chief, May 3, 1769.

²⁵ BNA CO106/11 N.11, Byres to Simpson.

²⁶ BNA CO101/13 N.69

²⁷ BNA CO263/1, Minutes of the St. Vincent Council and Assembly, May 10 1769.

would likely be necessary, the Assembly proposed to procure any available arms, ammunition, and troops from neighboring islands in order to protect colonists in St. Vincent “from the late rebellions & Conduct of the fugitive Negroes distinguished by the name of black Charribbs.”²⁸ By characterizing Caribs as ‘fugitive negroes’ rather than indigenes, members of the St. Vincent Assembly simultaneously delegitimized Carib claims to land and cast Caribs not as political opponents but as a group of outlaws whose very existence threatened the foundation of colonial plantation society. Although the British press, as well as members of the parliamentary opposition, continued to depict Caribs as a people justly “fighting for their liberty,” the rhetoric of colonists and officials present in the colony grew increasingly persuasive.²⁹

Upon hearing of the latest confrontation, acting Governor Fitzmaurice immediately repaired to St. Vincent from Grenada. Although Fitzmaurice assured the Caribs of King George III’s continued good intentions towards them, a firsthand familiarity with the geography of the Lesser Antilles inspired a sense of unease in the colonial official; Fitzmaurice worried that the Caribs’ location on the eastern side of St. Vincent would facilitate “short and easy...intercourse in open canoes between them and the French Inhabitants of St. Lucia.”³⁰ Fearing that the Caribs might seek French assistance against British settlers, in June 1769 Fitzmaurice ordered that a sloop be deployed to patrol the channel between St. Vincent and St. Lucia. It was not long before the sloop encountered four Carib *pirogues*, each manned by an estimated 19 men, apparently bound for the French colony. Claiming to fear for his safety and that of his nine-member crew, the sloop’s captain, John Quinland, began to fire on the Caribs, sinking two of their vessels. Undeterred, the Caribs “took to swimming with cutlasses in their mouths, and made directly towards the sloop.”

²⁸ BNA CO263/1, Minutes of the St. Vincent Council and Assembly, May 31 1769, emphasis added.

²⁹ Craton, quoting a December 9, 1772 speech by Isaac Barré, in “The Black Caribs of St. Vincent,” 78.

³⁰ BNA CO101/13 N.113, Fitzmaurice to Hillsborough, June 10, 1769

Quinland then sunk the remaining *pirogues*, and when the shipwrecked Caribs attempted to board his vessel, his crew “prevented by opposing them as they endeavoured to go up the sides, by destroying them with bayonets.” In this savage manner the English captain and his crew “killed most of [the Caribs], and the wind springing up... left those that remained to shift for themselves.”³¹

The tale of British-Carib combat at sea is so dramatic as to seem almost apocryphal, perhaps invented as a means to illustrate the inherently savage nature of warriors who would continue their attack even when shipwrecked, or to justify the necessity of destroying all people who would resist British rule. Yet Quinland’s testimony, corroborated by his fellow sailors, inadvertently lends credence to the notion that initial reports seriously underestimated both the size and the strength of the Carib population. If the total Carib population amounted to just 1,138 individuals, as British officials in St. Vincent claimed in 1763, the loss of seventy-five men—particularly seventy-five men fit to travel to St. Lucia—would represent a serious blow to the population. Quinland’s account suggests that both in their numbers and in their determination not to acquiesce to the seemingly relentless advance of plantation society, the Caribs posed a much greater problem than British colonial officials initially anticipated.

Reflecting on the deadly encounter some twenty years later, William Young Jr. noted with dramatic flourish that “the dark spirit of revenge stalked abroad, and was ready to aggravate hostilities, when occasion should offer.”³² Yet the confrontation between Caribs and British sailors did not spark immediate reprisals, and with warfare averted for the time being, enterprising colonists in St. Vincent endeavored to obtain individual plots of Carib land by purchase. This solution, too, was soon deemed impracticable. Giving his opinion as King’s Counsel in St. Vincent,

³¹ BNA CO101/13 N.167, Testimony of John Quinland, master of the sloop *Ranger*, taken August 29, 1769, and enclosed in Young to Hillsborough, November 17, 1769.

³² Young, *Account of the Black Charaibs*, 56.

Charles Payne Sharpe determined that upon the cession of the island in 1763 King George III had asserted “an absolute Right to every part of the Island.” As the King had “never Relinquished any part of that Right in the wood or other Lands to the Charibs,” Sharpe was of the opinion that “the *Native negroes* of St. Vincent can make no Legal sale and Conveyance...of any such Lands in any part of the Island to any person whatever.” Sharpe’s use of the term ‘native negro’ further evidences evolving attitudes towards the Caribs. Could a ‘negro’ be native—that is, indigenous to—a place outside of Africa? Despite his own use of the term, Sharpe thought not: according to the King’s Counsel, the four Johannes per acre of cleared land offered to the Caribs in Young’s original plan did not constitute an attempt to purchase plots to which the Caribs had any sort of legal title, but was merely a “compensation or allowance for their labour.” In order to further discourage colonists from attempting to illegally purchase Carib lands, Sharpe ordered that in future any settlers found beyond the River Jambou be punished for trespassing on Crown—not Carib—lands.³³

Upon learning that their purchases of Carib land were legally void, members of St. Vincent’s planter elite renewed their rhetorical assault against the Caribs. Claiming that the acquisition of more land on which to establish sugar plantations was “only a secondary, and very inferior object,” resident planters insisted that the “more important and natural consideration [was] the security of our property, and the safety of our persons” against the “most dangerous and insolent rebels.” In a collective address to King George III, members of St. Vincent’s Council and Assembly again invoked the prospect of a Carib alliance with French colonists in nearby Martinique or St. Lucia, owing to the formers’ “strong attachment...to that nation with whose subjects and language they have been so long conversant, and whose interests they are at any time

³³ BNA CO101/14 N.190, Opinion of Charles Payne Sharpe Esq. as King’s Counsel at St. Vincent on the subject of lands purchased or pretended to be purchased in St. Vincent, September 11 1770. Emphasis added.

ready to espouse to the Prejudice of those of your Majesty and to the sacrifice of our lives and fortunes.” Even if the French refused to ally with the Caribs, colonists argued, “suffering such a separate empire as these Indians claim within your Majesty’s dominion is not only incompatible with the safety of your subjects, but highly derogatory from the Honor and Dignity of the British Crown.”³⁴

As the notion that the Caribs were not potential new British subjects but instead claimed to constitute “a separate empire” whose members were liable to ally with Britain’s enemies gained traction among colonists and administrators in St. Vincent, the prospect that Caribs might be accommodated within the boundaries of the island began to seem increasingly implausible.³⁵ Insisting once again that the Caribs were not indigenous to St. Vincent but were instead descended from the survivors of shipwrecked slaving vessel bound for Barbados, members of the island’s Court suggested that the Caribs be “removed to the part of the world from whence their ancestors came.” “[A]ny unoccupied tract of 10,000 acres of woodland upon any part of the coast of Africa having one or more rivers running through it would afford them all the necessaries of life which they have been accustomed to,” they proposed.³⁶

Yielding to colonists’ increasingly desperate entreaties, in April 1772 Secretary of State for the Colonies Lord Hillsborough ordered that troops be dispatched to St. Vincent in order to “take effectual measures for the reduction of [the Caribs] as the only means of giving security to the settlements of His Majesty’s Subjects in that island.”³⁷ Diplomacy appearing to have definitively failed, imperial officials resolved to secure the safety of the colony and its resident

³⁴ BNA CO101/16 N.9, Address from the Council of St. Vincent to His Majesty on the subject of the Charaibbs in that island, November 20 1771. Also published in *Authentic Papers*, 49-52.

³⁵ BNA CO101/16 N.11, Governor William Leyborne to Lord Hillsborough, November 30, 1771.

³⁶ BNA CO101/16 N.53, Memorial of the court in St. Vincent to Lord Hillsborough touching the Charibbs, April 4 1772.

³⁷ BNA CO101/16 N.63, Hillsborough to Leyborne, April 18, 1772, labelled ‘separate and secret.’

British subjects by force. Evoking the third notion of the Caribs' status proposed after the Treaty of Paris—that Caribs were akin to runaway slaves—Hillsborough enclosed in a “separate and secret” communiqué to St. Vincent’s new Governor, William Leyborne, a copy of the 1739 Treaty reached with the Jamaica Maroons. Hillsborough expressed the hope the earlier treaty might “possibly furnish [Leyborne] with some useful hints” as to how to reconcile the Caribs to British rule.³⁸ In keeping with the 1739 treaty, which stipulated that the maroons would “all live together...in a perfect state of Freedom and Liberty” on a settlement of some 1,500 acres within Jamaica, Hillsborough expressed a preference for resettling the Caribs in some other part of St. Vincent. Recognizing that such a solution might not be acceptable to officials and colonists in St. Vincent, the Secretary of State for the Colonies took the additional precaution of ordering that ships be obtained that could transport the Caribs “to some unfrequented part of the coast of Africa or to some desert island adjacent thereto,” specifying that the longtime inhabitants of St. Vincent should “be treated upon the voyage with every degree of humanity their situation will admit of, and that when put on shore they [should] be supplied with provisions and whatever may be judged necessary to subsist them for a reasonable time.”³⁹

Hillsborough’s instructions illustrate the extent to which the attitude of metropolitan officials towards the Caribs—strongly influenced by settlers and administrators in St. Vincent—began to evolve by the early 1770s. Carib determination not to accept the extension of colonial rule and sugar monoculture to the lands which their ancestors had repeatedly secured by means of formal treaties led imperial administrators to adopt new tactics. Equating Caribs not with the indigenous inhabitants of other British colonies but with runaway slaves, the Secretary of State for

³⁸ BNA CO101/16 N.63, Hillsborough to Leyborne, April 18, 1772.

³⁹ BNA CO101/16 N.67, Copy of a Treaty with the Jamaica Maroons enclosed in Hillsborough to Leyborne, April 18 1772.

the Colonies implied that Caribs were simply too dangerous to be tolerated within the small borders of a colony dependent on plantation slavery. Like the Jamaica Maroons some decades earlier, the Caribs were seen to pose a threat to British rule and to the safety and prosperity of British subjects that could no longer be ignored.

As British military forces dispatched from North America and the West Indies gathered in St. Vincent, Governor Leyborne made a final heavy-handed attempt at diplomacy, issuing a proclamation on September 7, 1772:

that all such Charaibbes as shall within the space of 14 days from the date hereof, peaceably and without arms, come into the town of Kingstown and there in my presence submit themselves implicitly to His Majesty's pleasure, may be assured of a perfect security as to their persons, the enjoyment of their freedom and a reasonable portion of land...but on the other hand, such Charibbes as shall not come in and submit themselves as aforesaid...will be treated as enemies and ...shall experience the utmost rigour of His [Majesty's] displeasure.⁴⁰

The Caribs declined to accept Leyborne's offer, and over the course of the coming months, British Marines and eight ground Regiments from the Caribbean and North America—amounting to more than 2,200 men in total—mounted a military campaign against the people their sovereign had until recently entertained hopes of transforming into loyal subjects.⁴¹ Long accustomed to living in St. Vincent's forested, mountainous interior, the Caribs proved elusive enemies, and no decisive battles were fought during what came to be dubbed 'the First Carib War'. Nonetheless, between September 1772 and February 1773, seventy-two members of the British military were killed in the process of driving the Caribs from their settlements and cutting them off from St. Vincent's Windward coast. A further eighty-three British soldiers were wounded, 110 died of

⁴⁰ BNA CO101/16 N.201, Proclamation by His Excellency William Leyborne Esq. Captain General and Governor in Chief in and over His Majesty's Islands of Grenada, the Grenadines, St. Vincent and Tobago, September 7 1772.

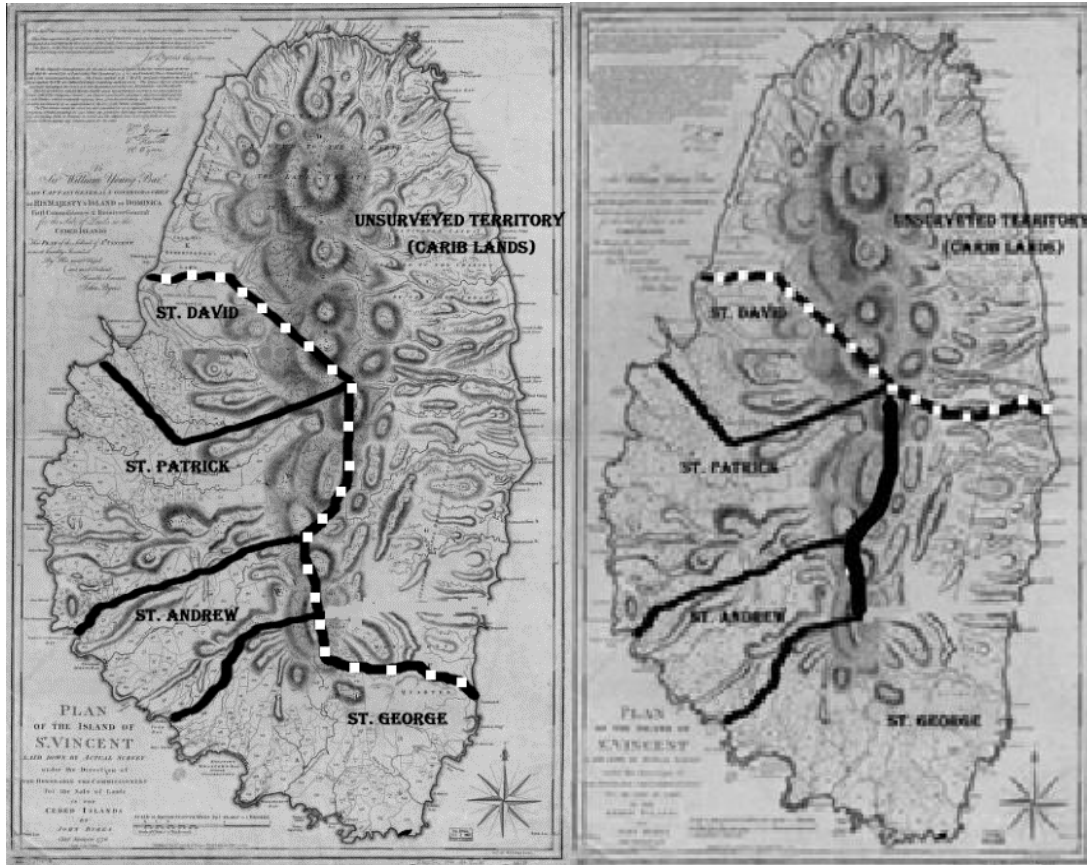
⁴¹ A narrative of the first Carib war can be found in Christopher Taylor, *The Black Carib Wars: Freedom, Survival, and the Making of the Garifuna* (Jackson: University of Mississippi Press, 2012), 51-78. Bernard Marshall also provides a brief account in "The Black Caribs: Native Resistance to British Penetration into the Windward Side of St. Vincent, 1763-1773," *Caribbean Quarterly* Vol. 19, No. 4 (Dec. 1973: 4-20).

illness, and four deserted.⁴² The number of Caribs who lost their lives in the conflict is unknown, but casualties were high enough to persuade Carib leaders to approach General Dalrymple in order to negotiate terms of surrender. On February 17, 1773, Dalrymple and 29 Carib chiefs signed “a treaty of peace and friendship.” In accordance with Hillsborough’s suggestion, the terms of peace were similar to those reached with the Jamaica Maroons more than thirty years earlier. In exchange for laying down their arms, swearing an oath of fidelity to King George III, and allowing roads to be forged through their territory, the Caribs were permitted to retain a portion of their ancestral lands, were granted entire liberty of fishing, and were to receive assistance if they decided to leave the island. Although the Caribs would not be relocated elsewhere in St. Vincent, the treaty specified that the existing boundary between settler and Carib territory be moved from its existing boundary at the Jambou River north to the Byera River, netting British settlers some 4,000 acres of new land on which to cultivate sugar.⁴³

⁴² BNA CO101/17 N. 72, Return of the Casualties of the several Regiments of St. Vincents from the time of their taking the Field against the Charibbee Indians in September 72 to the Conclusion of the Campaign the 20th of February 73. The Regiments dispatched were the 6, 14, 31, 32, 50, 60, 68, and 70th.

⁴³ BNA CO101/17 N.68, A Treaty of Peace and Friendship, concluded by His Excellency Major General Dalrymple on the part of His British Majesty, and the Chiefs of the Charibbs in St. Vincent here mentioned, for themselves and the rest of their people, February 17 1773.

Map 4.2: Carib-Settler Boundaries before and after the First Carib War⁴⁴



After years of conflict and the loss of many lives, the Caribs and the British managed to reach an agreement that ultimately proved satisfactory to neither side; although peace had been reached on paper, both parties remained tense. The twenty-nine Carib representatives who made peace on behalf of their people appear to have lacked the authority to do so: some months after the treaty, a flustered Governor Leyborne reported that “the inferior Charibbs seem very much incensed at their Chiefs for making peace, declaring that they have been sold.”⁴⁵ Those sent to forge a road through the territory corroborated Dalrymple’s sense that many Caribs were disaffected, requesting that “a sufficient Force to overaw the Charibbs” be provided so that the

⁴⁴ Maps edited to show settler–Carib boundaries c. 1763 and c. 1773, before and after the First Carib War. From the original map by John Byres, archives in BNA CO 700 St. Vincent.

⁴⁵ BNA CO101/17 N.149, Leyborne to Dartmouth, May 10 1773.

surveyors might complete their work without being menaced.⁴⁶ Although the Caribs succeeded in maintaining a large swath of land on St. Vincent's Windward side and in living their day-to-day lives without direct interference from the British colonial state, it was clear that holding on to the world they had established prior to the Seven Years' War would not be easy. As the following chapters explore in detail, the encounter between residents of the Creole Archipelago and agents of colonial rule would soon produce more bloodshed.

Peopling the Periphery III: Regional Migrations in the Southern Caribbean

Like the Caribs of St. Vincent, many of the settlers who had established themselves in the French colony of Grenada or in the neutral islands of Dominica and St. Vincent prior to the Seven Years' War were unwilling to accept the changes that accompanied the introduction of British colonial rule. Declaring that the prospect of swearing the required oaths of abjuration and fidelity to the King of Great Britain described in the previous chapter "revolted them," in the months and years after the Treaty of Paris dozens of Francophone Catholics residing in Dominica, Grenada, and St. Vincent sought to relocate to the new French colony of St. Lucia.⁴⁷ In addition to not having to profess loyalty to King George III, moving to St. Lucia allowed residents of the Creole Archipelago to maintain the French language, Catholic religion, and extended familial and social relations around which they had constructed communities on the Caribbean frontier. Although historians have studied European emigration to the Caribbean, the demographic, economic, and political impacts of intra-regional migrations has yet to be evaluated.⁴⁸ An exploration of what

⁴⁶ BNA CO101/17 N.154, William Young, John Hunt, Robert Stewart & Robert Wynne, May 13 1773.

⁴⁷ ANOM FM C8A67 F.221, Emigration des français des isles contentieuses dans les isles françaises du vent. February 21, 1765.

⁴⁸ Among the many historians who have studied the impact of European migration to the Americas are Bernard Bailyn, *Voyagers to the West: A Passage in the Peopling of America on the Eve of the Revolution* (New York: Knopf, 1986); Leslie Choquette, *Frenchmen into Peasants: Modernity & Tradition in the Peopling of French Canada* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1997); and Gabriel Debien, *Les Engagés pour les Antilles (1634-1715)* (Paris: Société de l'Histoire des Colonies Françaises, 1952). Richard Dunn and Peter Wood have both commented on the influence of West Indian planters in the establishment of colonies in North America,

motivated individuals and families to move from the new British colonies of Dominica, Grenada, and St. Vincent to the new French colony of St. Lucia suggests that they, like the Caribs, were reluctant to become subjects of the British Crown. While they did not immediately join the Caribs in taking up arms against British colonial rule, longtime residents of the Creole Archipelago announced their unwillingness to participate in Great Britain's new colonial experiment by abandoning the empire in significant numbers.

Testifying to the strength of their desire not to live under British colonial rule, many of the men and women who elected to leave the new British colonies did so despite considerable financial constraints. While planters in Grenada—who had settled the island as subjects of the French Crown—were legally entitled to sell their estates to new British settlers, those who had settled in the formerly neutral islands of Dominica and St. Vincent were deemed squatters without legal title to the lands on which they lived. Planters who left Dominica and St. Vincent therefore received no compensation for the lands they abandoned.⁴⁹ Many planters were also denied the profits of their estates: although the Treaty of Paris stipulated that individuals be permitted to quit the islands with their moveable property within eighteen months of the treaty, confusion arose as to the definition of 'moveable' property. While permitting French planters to quit Grenada with their slaves, Colonel George Scott, lieutenant-governor of the island in the period immediately following its conquest, declined to allow them to take the produce of the latter's labor, as he "never looked upon the word effects, to mean sugars, coffee, cotton, cacao, or syrops."⁵⁰ Not surprisingly, many longtime residents of the Creole Archipelago deeply resented being deprived of the financial

but to my knowledge no historian has yet undertaken a comparable study of the influence of planters from one Caribbean island migrating to another. See Richard Dunn, "The English Sugar Islands and the Founding of South Carolina," *The South Carolina Historical Magazine* Vol. 72, No. 2 (April 1971: 81-93) and Peter Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1974).

⁴⁹ BNA CO 102/1 N. 7, Shelburne to Scott, August 5, 1763.

⁵⁰ BNA CO 101/10 N.1, Scott to Halifax, November 8, 1763. Emphasis in original.

resources, labor, and time they had invested in establishing themselves in the neutral islands. In April 1765 Henry Sharp, King's Counsel in St. Vincent, issued a warrant for any French inhabitants found to be destroying their houses or plantations.⁵¹ Sharp's reference to the purposeful destruction of property hints at some of the violence that likely accompanied waves of regional migration from Dominica, Grenada, and St. Vincent to St. Lucia. Having established homes, plantations, social and familial networks, and livelihoods on the colonial frontier, residents of the Creole Archipelago must have been loath to leave one island for another.

Despite considerable financial sacrifices, the logistical difficulties of moving family members, slaves, belongings, and perhaps livestock and produce as much as 130 miles by boat, and the fact that many of "these unfortunate people are...obliged to leave furtively," in order to avoid having their 'effects' confiscated, hundreds of former residents of Dominica, St. Vincent, and Grenada migrated to St. Lucia during and after the eighteen-month window afforded them by the Treaty of Paris.⁵² Registers of land sales in Dominica and St. Vincent record the decidedly Francophone names of former possessors whose relatively small plots of land were consolidated with those of their neighbors and purchased by entrepreneurial British subjects.⁵³ The promise of permanent title to land likely convinced many small planters to brave the considerable challenges relocation entailed; as discussed in the previous chapter, former French subjects and 'squatters' who elected to stay in the new British colonies could obtain, at most, a forty-year lease, and were required to pay fines in order to do so. In the new French colony of St. Lucia, plots of land were initially granted on a provisional basis "according to the number and strength of each family."⁵⁴

⁵¹ BNA CO 106/9 N. 53, Minutes of the Commissioners for the Sale and Disposal of Lands in the Ceded Islands, April 2, 1765.

⁵² "[C]es malheureux sont [donc] obligés de passer furtivement avec leurs effets, et leurs negres pour venir prendre des établissements à Sainte Lucie," ANOM FM C101C, Chardon, Dec. 31 1763.

⁵³ BNA CO106/9 N. 32-35.

⁵⁴ "suivant le nombre des familles et les forces de chacun," presumably a reference to the number of children and of slaves held by a given planter. ANOM FM C101C, Chardon to the Ministry of the Marine, December 31, 1763.

Planters from nearby Martinique and Guadeloupe clamored for additional concessions in the new French colony, but Intendant Marc Antoine Chardon afforded priority to the more than 1,200 settlers who had established themselves in St. Lucia prior to the Treaty of Paris and to Francophone Catholic inhabitants of territories recently ceded to Great Britain who sought the protection of the French King. Chardon's decision to offer lands to existing residents of the Creole Archipelago reflects the desire of colonial officials to bolster the population of settlers loyal to the new sovereign, but it also provides another example of the privileging of local knowledge discussed in the previous chapter. "In addition to the fact that they are already acclimated," Intendant Chardon explained in a letter to his superiors in France, "residents of the island itself or those of neighboring islands...are more familiar with the cultivation of the lands and the running of a plantation."⁵⁵ By encouraging planters familiar with the climate and topography, plantation agriculture, and regional trade patterns of the Lesser Antilles to settle in St. Lucia, Chardon acknowledged the utility of drawing on knowledge acquired through the experiences of daily life on the colonial frontier in establishing the new French colony.

Arriving relatively impoverished, with few possessions and little funds, former residents of Grenada, St. Vincent, and Dominica who settled in St. Lucia in the wake of the Seven Years' War were often willing to take any land made available to them. The initial wave of regional migrants "advanced the colony by 10 years," officials in Martinique reported excitedly after a visit to St. Lucia in 1765, noting that several new towns had already been established in the island.⁵⁶ Census figures support this observation: as indicated in table 1 below, as of 1764, the island

⁵⁵ ANOM FM C10C 2, Chardon to the Ministry of Marine and Colonies, March 22 1764. "C'est donc des habitants de l'isle meme ou de ceux des isles voisines qu'il faut tirer les plus grandes ressources. Outre qu'il sont déjà acclimatés (ce qui est un grand avantage) c'est qu'ils connaissent mieux la culture des terres et l'exploitation d'une habitation."

⁵⁶ "...a avancé cette colonie de 10 ans," ANOM F3/57 N.38, D'Ennery to the Duc de Choiseul, May 27, 1765.

counted 5,069 slaves and 1,267 free people. Just one year later, the slave population had increased by almost 1,500, to 6,496 total slaves. The growth of the free population was even more astounding: the number of whites and free people of color in St. Lucia almost doubled in a single year, reaching 2,391 residents as of 1765. The respective increase in the slave and free populations of St. Lucia hints at the economic position of new colonists in the island, who seem to have brought relatively few slaves with them to their new settlements. Whether this is because planters owned few slaves in their previous place of residence or because they were actively prevented from bringing their slaves with them when they left remains unknown, but a ratio of approximately 1.25 slaves for every free person arriving in St. Lucia is considerably lower than censuses taken in Grenada and the neutral islands prior to the Seven Years' War indicate was average.

Table 4.1: Evolution of the Population of St. Lucia, 1756-1765⁵⁷

Year	1756	1764	1765
Free people	1,019	1,267	2,391
Slaves	4,020	5,069	6,496

In certain areas of St. Lucia population growth was even more dramatic. The parish of Anse la Raye first appears in the 1764 census of the island. Adjacent to St. Lucia's main port of Carénage, the parish was likely created in order to accommodate the growing number of people who chose to settle near the commercial center of the island. For 1764, census records indicate a total of 156 free people and 469 slaves living in the parish: 39 white men; 39 free men of color; 62 women and girls and 16 boys undifferentiated by racial descriptors. Just one year later the population of the parish had grown to 1,048 slaves and 228 free people.⁵⁸ A survey of surviving

⁵⁷ ANOM Depot des Papiers Publics des Colonies [DPPC] G1/506 Recensement Sainte Lucie 1764 and ANOM DPPC G1/506 Recensement 1765. Unfortunately no census is available for 1763. Prior to the Seven Years' War, St. Lucia counted 4,020 slaves and 1,019 free people. ANOM DPPC G1/506 Recensement Sainte Lucie 1756.

⁵⁸ ANOM DPPC G1/506 Recensement Sainte Lucie 1765

marriage records suggests that many of these new residents came from the neighboring islands of Martinique and St. Vincent. Of the thirty one marriages recorded in Anse la Raye between 1765 (the first year such records are available) and 1775, fifteen included at least one spouse from St. Vincent and thirteen involved at least one partner from Martinique. Of those who came from St. Vincent, nine listed their parish of origin as Ouassigany (renamed Kingstown by the British). A further nine marriages involved a partner born in France, and five included a spouse born in Grenada.⁵⁹ Of course, not every person who settled in Anse la Raye married or had children there, and such individuals are therefore much more difficult to locate in extant parish records. Further complicating the use of such records as a means of measuring migration is the fact that priests did not always indicate how long a given person had resided in the parish when indicating that he or she was born elsewhere; some individuals may have migrated from Martinique, St. Vincent, or Grenada to St. Lucia prior to the Treaty of Paris rather than in response to its effects. Nonetheless, surviving parish registers strongly suggest that many (perhaps the majority) of the individuals who contracted marriage or baptized their children in St. Lucia in the years immediately following the Treaty of Paris had only recently arrived in the island, often after a period of residence in other islands that made up the Creole Archipelago.

⁵⁹ ANOM DPPC Registres Anse la Raye, 1765-1775. Anse la Raye was selected for this discussion because the parish records are among the most complete for St. Lucia, dating back as far as 1765.

Map 4.3: Parishes in St. Lucia c. 1764⁶⁰



Among the people who relocated to St. Lucia in the wake of the Treaty of Paris were Sieur Jean Baptiste Fournier, a native of Ouassigany, St. Vincent, described in his marriage record as the legitimate son of Sieur Jean Fournier and of Marie Marthe, and Demoiselle Françoise Verger, also of Ouassigany, the legitimate daughter of Sieur Jacques Verger and of Victoire Auvray. The couple celebrated their marriage in Anse la Raye on July 14, 1767, under the direction of the Abbé Devalladares [Valladares], the same priest sent to broker peace with the Caribs in St. Vincent the following May. Like Jean Baptiste and Françoise, the Abbé had close ties to St. Vincent, having established himself as one of the most prominent landholders in Calliaqua, on the island's southern

⁶⁰ Map sourced from wikimedia commons at http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Atlas_of_Saint_Lucia, accessed July 25, 2014.

coast; it is likely that the priest knew the young couple when they were still resident in St. Vincent.⁶¹

Although Jean Baptiste and Françoise did not articulate their reasons for leaving St. Vincent for St. Lucia, surviving documents hint at some of the economic, legal, and social benefits that may have motivated the couple and their extended families to decline to live under British colonial rule. By moving to the new French colony of St. Lucia, Jean Baptiste obtained legal title to land that he could choose to sell or bequeath to his children, something he could not have done had he chosen to accept the British offer of a forty-year leasehold in St. Vincent described in chapter two. In a land survey conducted in St. Lucia in 1771, a Mr. Fournier *fils* is listed as the proprietor of twenty *quarrés*, or approximately sixty-four acres, of land in Anse la Raye, while Françoise's father, Mr. Verger *père* is credited with forty *quarrés*, or 128 acres.⁶² Although neither family appears to have become especially prosperous—in a land survey taken thirteen years later Jean Baptiste is listed as owning just twelve-and-a-half *quarrés*, or 40 acres, of land planted in coffee and cacao, while the 'widow of Jacques Verger' had 32 *quarrés* (102 acres) of 'abandoned' or uncultivated land—members of the extended Fournier and Verger families likely improved their respective economic positions by migrating to St. Lucia.⁶³ A list of lands "abandoned by the former French possessors" and consolidated into larger estates by new British colonists in St. Vincent

⁶¹ ANOM DPPC État Civil, Mariage Fournier Jean Baptiste et Verger Françoise, July 14 1767. Following St. Vincent's cession to Great Britain, the land to which Abbé Valladares laid claim in Calliaqua (renamed Tyrell's Bay by the British) was purchased by William Hindman and Stair [possibly Alastair] Boyle. BNA CO 106/9 N. 32, An account of the first sale of lands in the island of St. Vincent, which were abandoned by the former French possessors and sold subject to a future survey, May 30, 1765. The Abbé is also listed as one of five "creditable planters" in Kariaqua [Calliaqua], a region that British officials estimated to contain some 800 slaves producing 200,000 pounds of coffee and 140,000 pounds of cocoa at the time of St. Vincent's cession. BNA CO 106/9 N.20, "Names of the different quarters actually possessed by the French in St. Vincent, the names of the most considerable people, number of men, negroes, and the annual produce in coffee and cocoa."

⁶² One *carré* is equal to approximately 3.2 acres. James Pritchard, *In Search of Empire: The French in the Americas, 1670-1730* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), xxiv.

⁶³ Cited in Eugene and Raymond Bruneau-Latouche, *Sainte-Lucie fille de la Martinique*. (Paris, 1989), 171.

reveals that the lands to which Jean Fournier, Jean Baptiste's father, formerly laid claim in Ouassigany (rendered by the English as 'Ouissiagunny') were purchased by Harry Alexander, a prominent planter who was appointed President of the island's colonial Council. Alexander's 150-acre purchase also included the lands next to Fournier's former estate, listed as belonging to one Tapison, and the adjoining woodlands, for a total purchase of forty-nine cleared and 101 uncleared or wooded acres.⁶⁴ The private papers of William Hewitt, one of the Commissioners for the Sale and Disposal of Lands, reveal that Jean Fournier's holdings in Ouassigany were considerably more developed than those of his neighbor Tapison: Fournier's estate included forty-one cleared acres, one 'boarded' house, and one storehouse, for which Alexander was charged £17 sterling per acre by the Commissioners for the Sale and Disposal of Lands.⁶⁵ Even when Jean Baptiste's holdings in St. Lucia decreased from sixty-four cleared acres to forty acres planted in coffee and cacao as of 1784, his holdings in the new French colony were likely more considerable than those which he would have stood to inherit from his father in St. Vincent. Lands belonging to Francoise's father, Jacques Verger, were consolidated with those of his neighbors Pierre Questall, Jacques Christophell, and the widows Coditeau and Ducos in order to constitute the seventy-three cleared and seventy-three uncleared acres purchased by John Hunt, Esquire, in St. Vincent.⁶⁶ Of the total, Francoise's father laid claim to just thirteen cleared acres; the 128 acres belonging to Jacques Verger in Anse la Raye, St. Lucia, in 1771 therefore represented a far greater quantity of land than that to which he had been able to lay claim in St. Vincent.⁶⁷

⁶⁴ BNA CO 106/9 N. 32, An account of the first sale of lands, in the island of Saint Vincent, which were abandoned by the former French Possessors and sold subject to a future survey, 30th May 1765, in the quarter of Ouissiagunny.

⁶⁵ University of London Library [ULL] MS 522, William Hewitt papers, "Sales of land in St. Vincent on the 30th of May 1765 consists of plantation allotments in Ouassigany quarter." The term 'boarded' likely refers to a house built of wood, as distinct from 'Roseau' houses thatched with reeds.

⁶⁶ BNA CO 106/9 N. 33, An account of the first sale of lands, in the island of Saint Vincent, which were abandoned by the former French Possessors and sold subject to a future survey, 31st May 1765, in the quarter of Rothia.

⁶⁷ ULL MS 522, William Hewitt papers, "Sales of land in St. Vincent on the 31st of May 1765 consists of plantation allotments in Rothia Quarter."

In addition to preserving or improving their status as landholders, moving from St. Vincent to St. Lucia allowed the Fournier and Verger families to preserve familial and broader social connections. Surviving marriage, baptismal, and burial records confirm that Francoise moved to Anse la Raye in the company of her entire family: in the late 1760s and early 1770s three more Verger siblings celebrated marriages in the parish church, and her father was interred in the village cemetery when he died in 1771.⁶⁸ Francoise's parents, Jacques Verger and Victoire Auvray, were both born in the village of Anses d'Arlets, southwest Martinique, and wed in the parish in 1736.⁶⁹ The couple subsequently moved to St. Vincent at some point before the island was formally colonized. Like Francoise, Jacques' son Pierre Verger married a fellow native of Ouassigany, St. Vincent, in the church of Anse la Raye, St. Lucia, suggesting that relationships forged in one island were maintained and even deepened in diaspora.⁷⁰

Migrants to St. Lucia also drew on professional relationships they likely forged prior to relocating to the French colony. In June 1787, Jean Baptiste Fournier purchased the twenty-eight year-old slave Bibianne—described as 'creole,' or born in the Americas—and her three children from Louis Tiffaigne, a fellow resident of St. Lucia.⁷¹ Bibianne would have been only four years old when St. Vincent became a colony of Great Britain, but it is possible that she, like Louis Tiffaigne, was known to Jean Baptiste Fournier in the island before moving to the new French colony of St. Lucia. As the map below indicates, the Fournier and Tiffaigne families were

⁶⁸ ANOM DPPC État Civil, Enterrement Verger Jacques, November 6 1771.

⁶⁹ Verger's baptismal record can be found in the departmental archives of Martinique [ADM] Cote 2E 2, November 2 1710, Baptême de Jacques Verger; the baptismal record for his wife, Victoire Auvray, is ADM Cote 2E 2, May 28 1719. The couple's marriage record can be found in ADM Cote 2E 2, May 22 1736, and the baptism of their first child, a daughter whom they named Victoire, also took place in Anses d'Arlets; see ADM Cote 2E 2 October 2 1736, Baptême Victoire Verger.

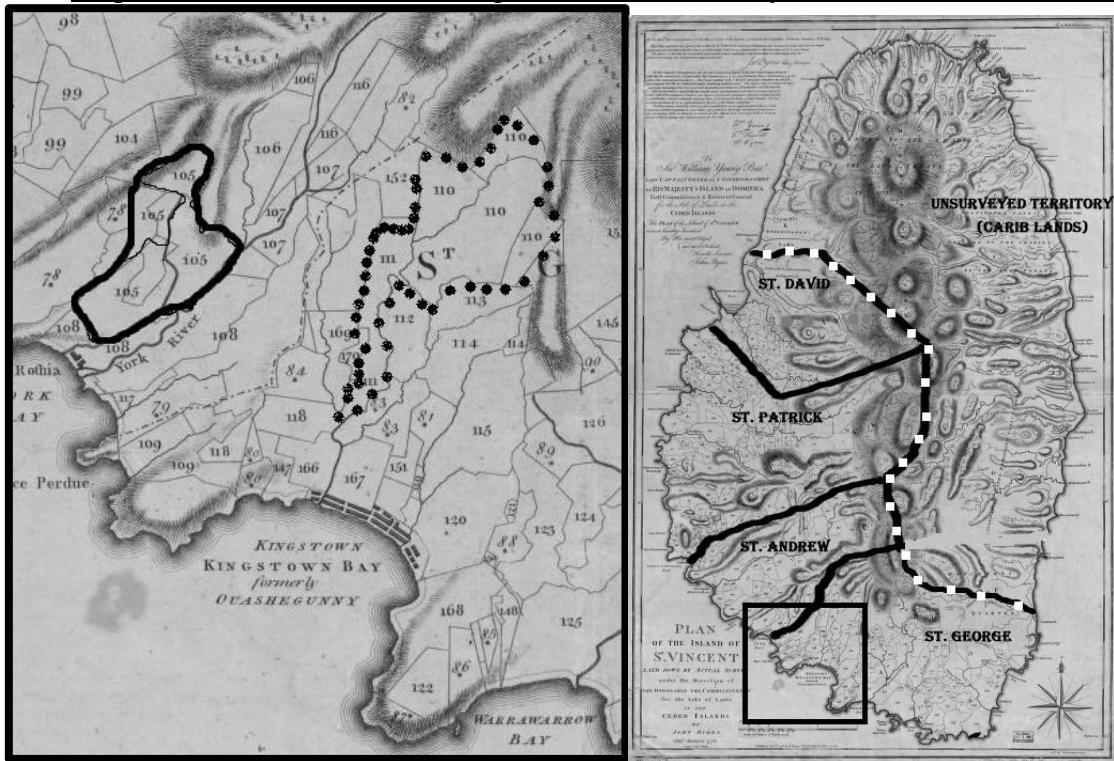
It is likely that the Fournier patriarch was also born in Anses d'Arlets: a Jean Fournier and Jeanne Peltier, described as a free *mestive*, baptized an unnamed child in the parish in 1707. See ADM Cote 2E 2, March 16 1707, Baptême Fournier.

⁷⁰ ANOM DPPC État Civil, Marriage Verger Pierre and Caumond Marianne, October 12 1772.

⁷¹ ANOM DPPC NOT LCA 1 Boze, Vente d'esclaves par Louis Tiffaigne a Jean Baptiste Fournier, 28 June 1787.

neighbors in Ouassigany: like the Fourniers, the Tiffaigne family saw the land to which they laid claim consolidated into one of two adjoining 150-acre estates purchased by Harry Alexander. Lands belonging to Alexander are contained within the dotted line in the map below.⁷² Lands consolidated by John Hunt, contained within the unbroken line, include those on which the Verger family lived. Despite living in different quarters or parishes—Ouassigany or Kingstown in the parish of St. George in the case of the Fournier and Tiffaigne families and Rothia or St. Andrew’s parish in the case of the Vergers—the three families resided in close proximity to one another in St. Vincent, allowing them to form personal and professional ties which they maintained when they elected to relocate beyond the reach of British rule.

Map 4.4: Lands to which Existing Inhabitants Formerly Laid Claim in St. Vincent⁷³



⁷² BNA CO 106/9 N. 32, An account of the first sale of lands, in the island of Saint Vincent, which were abandoned by the former French Possessors and sold subject to a future survey, 30th May 1765, in the quarter of Ouassigunny.

⁷³ Edited and excerpted version of original map by John Byres, BNA CO 700 St. Vincent. Reference to the location of lands purchased by John Hunt Esq. and William Alexander can be found in *References to the Plan of the Island of St. Vincent, As Surveyed from 1765 to 1773; by John Byres, Chief Surveyor*. (London: S. Hooper, 1777). Lands belonging to Harry Alexander, to which the Fournier, Tiffaigne, and Tapison families formerly laid claim, are

As the maintenance of personal and professional ties across islands and empires suggests, some of the factors that motivated individuals and families to remove themselves beyond the reach of British colonial rule were less tangible but no less important than those of finances or title to land. As discussed in the previous chapter, in the wake of Treaty of Paris officials worked to identify and police free people of color resident in Great Britain's newest colonies. Historians of the British, French, and Iberian Americas have analyzed the emergence, implementation, and ramifications of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century legislation that privileged 'whiteness' as a social and legal category endowed with rights rendered increasingly inaccessible to people of non-white ancestry.⁷⁴ Some argue that such legal codes were created in direct response to the growing economic and demographic importance of free people of color, whereas others assert that they evolved out of a new definition of race as a biological rather than a social category.⁷⁵ Regardless of reason, historians of the French Atlantic generally agree that, as in the British Empire, the decades following the Seven Years' War witnessed the introduction of increasingly restrictive legislation against people of African descent both in the metropole and in the colonies.⁷⁶ In 1764,

indicated by the dotted line. Those belonging to John Hunt, Esq., formerly occupied by the Verger, Questall, Christophell, Coditeau, and Ducos families are contained within the solid line.

⁷⁴ For an examination of such legal codes, see Sue Peabody & Keila Krinberg, *Slavery, Freedom, and the Law in the Atlantic World: A brief history with documents*. (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2007); Christiane Duval née Mezin, "La condition juridique des hommes de couleur libres à la Martinique au temps de l'esclavage." Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Université de droit d'économie et de sciences sociales de Paris, Paris II, 1975.

⁷⁵ There are numerous monographs on the subject of free people of color in the colonial Americas. In the case of Saint-Domingue, see John Garrigus, *Before Haiti: Race and Citizenship in French Saint-Domingue* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2006); Stewart King, *Blue Coat or Powdered Wig: Free People of Color in Pre-Revolutionary Saint Domingue*. (Athens, Georgia: University of Georgia Press, 2001).

For the British West Indies, see Jerome S. Handler, *The Unappropriated People: Freedmen in the Slave Society of Barbados* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974); Gad Heuman. *Between Black and White: Race, politics, and the free coloreds in Jamaica, 1792-1865*. (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1981).

For the United States, see Ira Berlin, *Slaves Without Masters: The Free Negro in the Antebellum South*. (New York: Pantheon, 1974).

For a comparative perspective, see David W. Cohen, and Jack P. Green, eds. *Neither Slave Nor Free: The Freedman of African Descent in the Slave Societies of the New World*. (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972).

⁷⁶ On restrictive legislation imposed on free people of color in metropolitan France, see Sue Peabody, *There Are No Slaves in France: The Political Culture of Race and Slavery in the Ancien Régime* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996).

free people of color were banned from certain professions, including medicine; nine years later they were formally forbidden to employ the same surnames as whites; and as of 1781 public officials were prohibited from affording people of African ancestry respectful titles such as ‘Monsieur’ or ‘Madame’ in official documents.⁷⁷ Individuals and families who hoped to avoid such restrictions may have attempted to use the relative anonymity afforded by migration to their advantage by concealing or neglecting to mention their African ancestry when they relocated from one island to another. It is also possible that in the new French colony of St. Lucia, which remained at the periphery of the French Empire as a dependency of Martinique rather than an independently-administered colony, such legislation was only loosely enforced.⁷⁸ As John Garrigus argues in the case of Saint-Domingue’s South Province, “geographic isolation, shared economic interests, and the threats of slave revolt and foreign invasion” could provide powerful motivations for members of colonial society to ignore or neglect to mention the African ancestry of prominent families of mixed race.⁷⁹ Finally, men and women who left the new British colonies of Dominica, Grenada, and St. Vincent for the French colony of St. Lucia may have done so in an effort to maintain or recreate a community in which their social and familial ties, as well as their status as land- and slave owners, carried far greater weight than did their race.

As mentioned above, at the time of his marriage to Françoise in 1768 Jean Baptiste Fournier was afforded the title of ‘Sieur,’ an honor customarily reserved for white men in France’s Caribbean colonies. Considering the reported increase in the number of white men living in Anse la Raye between 1764 and 1765—as discussed above, the number of men listed as ‘white’ in the parish census jumped from thirty-nine to sixty-nine in one year, while the number of free men of

⁷⁷ Legislation cited in Léo Elisabeth, “The French Antilles,” in Cohen & Green, eds. *Neither Slave Nor Free*, 168.

⁷⁸ Henry H. Breen, *St. Lucia: Historical, Statistical, and Descriptive* (London: Longman, Brown, and Green, 1844), 56.

⁷⁹ Garrigus, *Before Haiti*, 311.

color reported remained unchanged—it seems plausible that Jean Baptiste as well as Françoise’s father and brothers, Jacques Jr. and Pierre, were among those counted as white. In fact, the Fournier and Verger families, like many residents of the Creole Archipelago discussed in chapter one, had both European and African ancestors. When Françoise and Jean Baptiste Fournier welcomed their son, Baptiste, on June 3, 1768, the baby was described in his baptismal record as ‘*carteron*,’ indicating an African ancestor.⁸⁰ Françoise’s thirty-three year-old brother, Jacques, received the same racial ascription when he married Brigitte Bernege, described as a ‘free mulatto,’ in Anse la Raye in June 1772. Jacques Verger Jr.’s mother, Victoire Auvray, to whose name no racial designator was attached in the record of Françoise’s marriage in 1767 or in the 1769 record of the marriage of Françoise’s sister, twenty year-old Marie Catherine Verger, to forty year-old Louis Caumont, was by the time of Jacques Jr.’s 1772 marriage described as a “free *mestive*.”⁸¹ Four months later, when Jacques Jr.’s twenty-six year-old brother Pierre Verger married the eighteen year-old *mulatresse* Marianne Caumont, Victoire Auvray had also morphed into a *mulatresse*. The race of her son Pierre was not noted.⁸²

By the early eighteenth century, French colonial officials had elaborated a complex vocabulary to indicate the number of respective European, African, and indigenous American ancestors of people of mixed race.⁸³ In his late-eighteenth-century description of the French colony of Saint-Domingue, the Martinique-born Moreau de Saint Méry provides a detailed list of the racial

⁸⁰ ANOM DPPC État Civil, Anse la Raye, Baptême Fournier Baptiste, June 18, 1768.

⁸¹ ANOM DPPC État Civil, Anse la Raye, Mariage Caumont Louis and Verger Marie Catherine, October 3 1769; ANOM DPPC État Civil Anse la Raye, Mariage Verger Jacques and Bernege Brigitte, June 6 1772.

⁸² ANOM DPPC État Civil, Anse la Raye, Mariage Verger Pierre and Caumont Marianne, October 12 1772. While it is possible that Marianne Caumont and Louis Caumont were related, I have not found documents that confirm this.

⁸³ Emile Hayot, *Les Gens de couleur libres du Fort-Royal 1679-1823* (Paris: Publications de la Société Française d’Histoire d’Outre-Mer Société d’Histoire de la Martinique, 2005). For a discussion of the emergence of the language of race in France, see Guillaume Aubert, “The Blood of France”: Race and Purity of Blood in the French Atlantic World,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* Vol. 61, No. 3 (July 2004: 439-478).

designations of people resulting from the union of people of African and European descent. According to Saint-Méry, in Martinique a *métif* or *mestive* was commonly classified as the offspring of a white person and a mulatto; the child of a *mestive* and a white person was called a *quateron(ne)*, sometimes spelled *carteron(ne)*. In a further testament to the variable nature of racial descriptors, Saint-Méry wrote that in Saint-Domingue the opposite was true: a *métif* was thought to be the child of a white man and a *quateronne*.⁸⁴

As the complicated and confusing nature of such terms suggests, their use in colonial documents varied considerably across time and space. The decision of whether to describe an individual as ‘mulatto’ instead of ‘quarterton’—or to refrain from attaching any racial descriptor to a person’s name, thereby indicating that the individual was free from the taint of African ancestry—depended to a large extent on the colonial official drafting the document and on the context in which the document was created. Although the 1772 record of her daughter’s marriage is the first instance in which Victoire Auvray’s race is explicitly stated, it is hinted at in the 1719 record of her birth, which occurred in Anses d’Arlets, Martinique. The Capuchin priest who baptized Victoire, Father Antoine, afforded the title of ‘Sieur’ to the baby’s godfather, Sieur du Baugremont, but failed to do the same for Victoire’s parents, Jean Auvray and Marie Acquay.⁸⁵ In the early eighteenth century, such omissions were often used to subtly indicate that a person was of African or Afro-European ancestry. Yet in failing or choosing not to explicitly note the race of the new baby, Father Antoine unintentionally provided a brief glimpse of the social world into which Victoire Auvray was born. For the first fifty years of her life, Victoire Auvray’s position in

⁸⁴ Moreau de Saint-Méry, *Description topographique, physique, civile, politique et historique de la partie française de l’isle Saint-Domingue* (1797) ed. Blanche Maurel and Étienne Taillemite, new edition (Paris: Larose, 1958), 86. See also Bernard David, “La population d’un quartier de la Martinique au début du XIXe siècle d’après les registres paroissiaux: Rivière-Pilote 1802-1829,” *Française d’Histoire d’Outre-Mer* LX, No. 220, (1973), 345.

⁸⁵ ADM Cote 2E 2, May 28 1719, Baptême Victoire Auvray.

the creolized community in which she lived—first as a legitimate daughter and later the legitimate wife of a planter—was a more significant distinction than was her race. By not explicitly distinguishing this woman of color from her white peers, colonial officials such as Father Antoine hinted at the position that people of mixed race were able to occupy in the Creole Archipelago:

Auvray's changing racial status provides a vivid illustration of how the transition to imperial rule affected the daily lives and circumstances of residents of the Creole Archipelago. When Victoire Auvray's son Pierre married a woman described as mulatto, Victoire received the same racial assignation, an assignation perhaps intended to indicate that the groom had selected a marital partner of similar—and therefore appropriate—racial status.⁸⁶ When Pierre's sister Marie Catherine married a man whose race was not noted, the bride's mother received the more courteous title of 'mestive,' a term that did not often correspond to the degree of African ancestry described by Saint-Méry but was instead used by colonial officials in the Lesser Antilles to somewhat politely indicate that an individual was not of uniquely European ancestry.⁸⁷

Similar inconsistencies in the application of racial descriptors to Jean Baptiste and Françoise testify to the persistence of racial fluidity in the peripheral French colony of St. Lucia. In the baptismal record for Jean Baptiste and Françoise's son Baptiste, who was described as *carteron*, as well as in subsequent baptismal records for children later born to the couple, the honorific title of 'Sieur' was dropped from Jean Baptiste's name, and by the time of 1784 survey of St. Lucia both the Fournier and Verger families were explicitly categorized as '*gens de couleur*'

⁸⁶ ANOM DPPC État Civil, Anse la Raye, Marriage Verger Pierre and Caumont Marianne, October 12, 1772.

⁸⁷ ANOM DPPC État Civil, Anse la Raye, Marriage Caumont Louis and Verger Marie Catherine, October 3, 1769. Although I have unfortunately been unable to locate any additional records for Jean Baptiste's mother Marie Marthe, it is likely that she would have experienced a similar fluidity of racial ascription. Like Victoire Auvray, Marie Marthe was not afforded the title of 'Madame' or 'Demoiselle' in the record of her son's marriage, a subtle implication that as a woman of color, she was not entitled to the same honorific as a woman of exclusively white ancestry. Marie's second name, Marthe (Martha), was probably not a surname but a second given name, suggesting that she did not descend from a white family possessed of a surname.

and listed separately from their white neighbors.⁸⁸ Yet when the couple baptized their daughter Marie Françoise in February 1772, neither the parents nor the child had a racial descriptor attached to their name, suggesting that Anse La Raye's new priest, Père Lacombe, either did not know or did not care to note that the family was of mixed race.⁸⁹ The same was true when Jean Baptiste purchased the slave Bibianne and her children from Louis Tiffaigne in 1787: although other records clearly indicate that both men were of mixed race, neither was described as such in the bill of sale drafted by Royal Notary Boze.⁹⁰ Fournier and Tiffaigne transacted business as members of St. Lucia's planter class, and it was their status as planters and as slave owners, not as free people of color, that mattered to the notary who created a record of their dealings.

Several additional factors confirm that the discriminatory measures increasingly applied to people of African descent in the British and French Atlantic in the latter half of the eighteenth century were not enforced as strictly in peripheral colonies like St. Lucia, further hinting at reasons why people like Françoise and Jean Baptiste might choose to go there. Free people of color were among those who received land grants in St. Lucia in the years immediately following the Treaty of Paris, which suggests that French colonial officials did not discriminate when it came to enticing experienced planters to settle the new colony.⁹¹ By 1771, individuals explicitly identified as people of color were recorded as owning as much as 32 carrés (102 acres) of land in St. Lucia, more than twelve times the eight-acre limit imposed on free people of color in the British Ceded Islands by

⁸⁸ Bruneau-Latouche, *Sainte-Lucie Fille de la Martinique*, 171-2.

⁸⁹ ANOM DPPC État Civil, Anse la Raye, Baptême Fournier Marie Françoise, February 2, 1772.

⁹⁰ DPPC NOT LCA 1 Boze, Vente d'esclaves par Louis Tiffaigne à Jean Baptiste Fournier, 28 June 1787.

⁹¹ Although a lack of extant notary records from the period immediately after the Seven Years' War make it impossible to locate any land grants drafted in the 1760s, surviving notary records from the 1770s and 1780s reference grants made in the 1760s, including to free people of color. For examples, see DPPC NOT LCA 8 Marquis, October 7 1778; DPPC NOT LCA 6 Foucard, February 18 1784.

virtue of the 1767 slave code.⁹² In defiance of the abovementioned 1782 law prohibiting free people of color in French colonies from using the same surnames as whites, families like the Fourniers and Vergers continued to employ their surnames in official parish and notary records, such as in the 1787 bill of sale for the slave Bibianne. The reluctance of the locally-based *capitaines de quartier* who conducted St. Lucia's censuses to distinguish between white and free-colored women and children—women and children were not consistently enumerated separately according to race until 1773—suggests that people of authority within the community considered interracial families to be socially legitimate, or at least not an appropriate subject of commentary. This sense of legitimacy was further bolstered by the connections such families repeatedly and publicly celebrated and reaffirmed: rather than choosing powerful patrons to serve as godparents to their son Baptiste, a practice common amongst free people of color in other slave societies in the Americas, Francoise and Jean Baptiste appointed Francoise's mother, Victoire Auvray, to the important role.⁹³

Francoise and Jean Baptiste's decision to repeatedly and publicly draw upon extended networks of mixed-race family and friends as marital partners, business associates, and spiritual kin suggests that they and their fellow migrants were not attempting to actively conceal their racial ancestry in order to pass as white. The African ancestry of some 'quarterons' or 'mestifs' may not

⁹² Jolien Harmsen, Guy Ellis, and Robert Devaux, *A History of St. Lucia* (Vieux Fort, St. Lucia: Lighthouse Road, 2012), 42. The 1767 slave code is discussed in the previous chapter; see BNA CO 262/1 N. 53, "An Act for the making slaves real estate and for the better government of slaves and free negroes," July 13, 1767.

⁹³ ANOM DPPC État Civil, Anse la Raye, Baptême Fournier Baptiste, June 18, 1768. The baby's godfather was identified as Jean Baptiste Fournier *fils*—perhaps Jean Baptiste Sr.'s son from a prior relationship, or a son born to Jean Baptiste and Francoise prior to their marriage. The practice of free people of color choosing more powerful (usually white) patrons to serve as godfather to their children is discussed in Kimberley S. Hanger, *Bounded Lives, Bounded Places: Free Black Society in Colonial New Orleans, 1769-1803* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 105-108. Historians of Europe also argue that vertical godparent relations were common, see Jean-Louis Flandrin, *Families in Former Times: Kinship, Household and Sexuality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979), 21. For a counterargument see Julie Hardwick, *The Practice of Patriarchy: Gender and the Politics of Household Authority in Early Modern France* (University Park, Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania State University Press, 1998), 169-171.

have expressed itself in their physical features. In his study of Saint-Domingue's Southern province, John Garrigus relates an instance in which a white soldier from metropolitan France successfully posed as the long-lost *quarteron* son of a wealthy mixed-race family, an example which Garrigus uses to argue that such families "probably bore little resemblance to most...slaves."⁹⁴ Yet to residents of the Creole Archipelago like the Fournier and Verger families, not bearing or not being seen to bear a physical resemblance to most slaves was probably less important than not being seen to occupy a socio-economic position resembling that of an enslaved person. As shown in chapter one, the generations of interracial relationships that produced 'carterons' like the son of Jean Baptiste and Françoise also produced a society in which skin color was a much less reliable indicator of status than one's role as a land- and slave-owner, a member of a legitimate family, a business associate, or an honored godparent. By removing themselves beyond the boundaries of British colonial rule to a peripheral region of the French Empire where they might continue to exercise these roles, Jean Baptiste, Françoise, and hundreds of others actively endeavored to preserve and perpetuate the society they and their families had built as residents of the Creole Archipelago.

Confronting Colonization II: Slave Rebellion

While free residents of the Creole Archipelago could elect to remove themselves beyond the boundaries of formal colonial rule, the thousands of enslaved people who constituted the majority of the region's population had no such opportunity. Instead, in the years after St. Lucia and Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent, and Tobago were formally incorporated into the respective empires of France and of Great Britain, slaves both born in and recently-trafficked to the Lesser Antilles resisted colonial rule and plantation slavery by deserting the estates on which they labored,

⁹⁴ Garrigus, *Before Haiti*, 147.

absconding to the islands' mountainous interiors or to neighboring islands, or engaging in open rebellion. Although historians often emphasize the role of African-born slaves in inciting insurrection in the Americas, a close examination of events in the Ceded Islands in the years after the 1763 Treaty of Paris reveals that like their free counterparts, enslaved residents of the Creole Archipelago sought opportunities to demonstrate their opposition to the extension of direct rule and the expansion of the plantation complex to the colonial periphery.⁹⁵

As discussed in chapter two, the extension of a well-established transatlantic trade in enslaved Africans to a region of the Americas that had previously relied on smuggling and on natural increase to obtain slave labor spurred a rapid transformation in the demography of the Lesser Antilles. The table below illustrates that in the first decade after the Treaty of Paris the ratio of slaves to free people rose markedly in each of the Ceded Islands. The increase was least dramatic in St. Lucia, which counted approximately four slaves for every free inhabitant prior to the island's cession and slightly more than five slaves for every free person ten years thereafter. Although St. Lucia's enslaved population expanded by more than 10,000 individuals in just a decade, a simultaneous increase of more than 1,000 free people as families like the Fourniers and Vergers migrated to the new French colony meant that the growth of the enslaved population did not outstrip that of the free population to the same extent as in other colonies. The same was not true in Grenada, where the rapid expansion of sugar cultivation increased the ratio of slaves to free people from just under 3:1 prior to the island's cession to Great Britain to more than 12.5: 1 just one decade later.

⁹⁵ On the role of African-born slaves in American insurgencies, see John Thornton, "I Am the Subject of the King of Congo: African Political Ideology and the Haitian Revolution." *Journal of World History* 4 (1993): 181-214; Michael Craton *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 99-105. Importantly, Craton also acknowledges the resistance of creole slaves in the Ceded Islands. Craton, *Testing the Chains*, 140-160.

Table 4.2: Ratio of Slaves to Free People in the Ceded Islands, 1763 & 1773⁹⁶

	ST. LUCIA		GRENADA		TOBAGO		DOMINICA	
	1763	1773	1763	1773	1763	1773	1763	1773
Free People	1,267	2,643	3,500	2,076	0	416	1,718	1,633
Slaves	5,069	13,982	10,000	26,211	0	7,342	3,430	14,281
Ratio of Slaves to Free people	4:1	5.3:1	2.85:1	12.6: 1	0	17.6:1	1.9:1	8.75:1

The ratio of enslaved to free people was greatest in the formerly-unoccupied colony of Tobago, where by 1773 the island's 416 planters were outnumbered by their 7,300 slaves by a ratio of almost eighteen to one. As a point of comparison, immediately prior to the outbreak of the revolution that birthed the Haitian republic, the colony of Saint-Domingue counted fourteen slaves for every French colonist.⁹⁷ Unsurprisingly, Tobago also experienced some of the most serious problems of slave rebellion in the newly-created colonies. In November 1770, under the leadership of an enslaved man known as Sandy, "the most daring and dangerous villain,"⁹⁸ an uprising in Tobago caused considerable "publick expences...as well as...losses to individuals in negroes, and...interruption of labour, [which] will not fail to be sensibly felt in so young a colony."⁹⁹

Of all the newly-enslaved Africans to be trafficked to the Lesser Antilles in the wake of the 1763 Treaty of Paris, planters and colonial officials in Tobago were particularly distrustful of those they termed 'Coromantee.' Richard Hart speculates that the term, which was used throughout the Atlantic World, derived from the slave-trading post of Kromantine, on Africa's Gold Coast;

⁹⁶ 1763 population figures for St. Lucia sourced from Archives Nationales d'Outre Mer [ANOM] Depot des Papiers Publics des Colonies [DPPC] G1506, 1764. St. Vincent figures sourced from the British National Archives [BNA] Colonial Office [CO] 101/1 N.9. For Grenada BNA CO 101/1 N.5; for Dominica BNA CO 101/1 N. 91. Figures for 1773 sourced as follows: for St. Lucia ANOM DPPC G1 506 Recensement 1773; for Dominica BNA CO 71/4 N.274; for Tobago BNA CO 101/1 N. 181. For Grenada, the number of slaves is listed in BNA CO 101/18 Part II N.81 but for free people only the number of property owners (not including their families) is given; the number of free people in Grenada listed here is for 1771 and is sourced from BNA CO 101/28 N. 123. Unfortunately population figures for St. Vincent in this period are not extant.

⁹⁷ Garrigus, *Before Haiti*, 2.

⁹⁸ BNA CO 101/4 N. 103, Stuart to Melvill, November 29, 1770.

⁹⁹ BNA CO101/4 N.99, Melvill to Hillsborough, December 3, 1770.

individuals dubbed Coromantee (also spelled Cromantee and Cromanty) may have been Fante, Ashante, or members of one of several other groups collectively known as the Akan, or they may have simply been assigned the label by virtue of being embarked for the Americas from the specific West African port.¹⁰⁰ The tendency to associate a supposed African ‘tribe’ or nation with a greater risk of revolt was by no means unique to planters in Tobago; historians have shown that people termed Coromantee were frequently implicated in slave uprisings.¹⁰¹ Likely influenced by the attitudes and experiences of earlier planters, new colonists in Tobago developed a siege mentality with respect to slaves newly-arrived from Africa, going so far as to enumerate ‘Coromantee men’ separately in a census of the island taken after the 1770 rebellion. Confirming that the threat of a war with their slaves was ever-present in the minds of planters, the same census listed the number of firearms, the amount of ammunition, and the number of white men in each parish.¹⁰² Citing “the burthen of the heavy debt we have already incurred in quelling the late insurrection,” planters in Tobago also requested external reinforcements to guard against the laborforce on which they depended for their prosperity.¹⁰³

The planters’ plea illustrates the extent to which the actions of enslaved people complicated the process of transforming the Ceded Islands into the ideal plantation colonies initially envisioned by imperial administrators. The extension of the transatlantic slave trade to the colonial periphery

¹⁰⁰ Richard Hart, *Slaves who Abolished Slavery: Blacks in Rebellion* (Mona, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2002), 9.

¹⁰¹ Monica Schuler, “Ethnic Slave Rebellions in the Caribbean and the Guianas” *Journal of Social History* Vol. 3, N. 4 (Summer 1970: 374-385); David Barry Gaspar, *Bondmen and Rebels: A Study of Master-Slave Relations in Antigua, with Implications for Colonial British America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 234-238.

¹⁰² BNA CO 101/16 N. 40, State of the island of Tobago, as had been sent in Returns to the Lieutenant Governor 25th June 1771. The same census has a category for ‘runaways,’ in which a distinction is made between those deemed ‘dangerous’ and those judged ‘not dangerous;’ there were apparently 19 of the former and 106 of the latter as of 1771.

¹⁰³ BNA CO 101/4 N. 159, Address of Tobago inhabitants, January 23 1771. A copy of the address from the inhabitants of Grenada to King George III can be found in BNA CO 101/4 N.157.

gave planters welcome access to labor, but it also created a situation in which thousands of enslaved people, most of whom had known freedom in Africa before being captured, sold, and trafficked to the Americas, found themselves on unfamiliar shores. As Robert Melvill, Governor-General of the Ceded Islands in the period immediately after they were made colonies of Great Britain, explained to his superiors, repeated reports of insurrection in the new colonies were “naturally to be expected after such a change of properties, and *from such a jarring mixture of slaves.*”¹⁰⁴ Although Melvill was likely attempting to convey how difficult it was to exert control over newly-enslaved people from different regions of Africa speaking different languages, his comment also hints at how the rapid influx of large numbers of new slaves disrupted or overwhelmed the institution of slavery as it had formerly operated in the Creole Archipelago. As explained in chapter one, prior to the islands’ incorporation into existing European empires many slaves, like their owners, were born and brought up in the region. Although they were denied their freedom and subject to the harsh labor regime and cruel punishments visited on enslaved people throughout the colonial world, in the Creole Archipelago slaves generally shared a language, religious and cultural practices, and were able to develop and maintain kinship ties to a greater extent than was common in colonies where slaves could more readily be bought and sold. The arrival of thousands of newly-enslaved people, foreign to the language and practices of the islands and usually deprived of familial or social bonds, threatened both the security of planters and—less obviously but no less importantly—the society created and maintained by Creole slaves.

As discussed in chapter two, the extension of sugar monoculture to the Caribbean frontier prompted significant changes in the organization of slave labor; planters who sought to establish sugar plantations “attempted to alter the mode of living among their slaves,” explained French

¹⁰⁴ BNA CO 101/1 N. 315, Melvill, September 13, 1765. Emphasis added.

philosopher Abbé Guillaume Thomas Francois Raynal. These creolized slaves, “who from their very ignorance are more attached to their customs than other men...revolted,” creating instability in the new colonies.¹⁰⁵ Writing in 1791, Thomas Atwood, a planter and judge in Dominica, made a similar observation about the response of creole slaves sold by their former masters to new planters in the island after its cession to Great Britain. “[E]ither from their attachment to [their former owners] or dislike of their new masters,” these slaves “soon after betook themselves to the woods with their wives and children, where they were joined, from time to time, by others from different estates.”¹⁰⁶ These brief observations reveal a great deal about how enslaved residents of the Creole Archipelago responded to the introduction of direct colonial rule. Creole slaves, at least some of whom had spouses and children with whom they lived or at least maintained regular contact, were reluctant to abandon the customs they had established or to alter their mode of living. Rather than accept the changes that accompanied the transition to sugar monoculture in the new colonies, enslaved residents of the Creole Archipelago elected to remove themselves beyond the reach of direct colonial rule, much as some of their masters did in migrating to St. Lucia.

Additional evidence suggests that people who had spent their lives as slaves in the Creole Archipelago, not just individuals recently trafficked from Africa, contributed to the disorders that complicated the establishment of plantation colonies in the Ceded Islands. In 1769, administrators in the islands ceded to Great Britain prohibited the importation of any slave thought to be guilty of capital offences, citing “many evils [that] have already happened and still continue to happen...by gangs of runaway negroes, headed and encouraged *by other slaves imported from*

¹⁰⁵ Quoted in Craton, *Testing the Chains*, 141.

¹⁰⁶ Thomas Atwood, *The History of the Island of Dominica...* (London: Printed for J. Johnson, 1791), 226.

neighbouring colonies.”¹⁰⁷ This legislation suggests that the regional slave trade described in the previous chapter, which was explicitly designed to allow masters to dispatch experienced skilled workers from existing estates to new colonies where they could instruct slaves newly-arrived from Africa in the workings of a plantation, had two unintended consequences. First, it provided slaveowners with an opportunity to rid themselves of unruly or disruptive slaves by sending them off the estates. Second, the continued circulation of enslaved people—and any information or ideologies they may have brought with them—throughout the Lesser Antilles sowed seeds of dissension and resistance that transcended geographic and imperial boundaries. As we will see in the following chapters, the continued circulation of people and ideas along routes established well before the introduction of colonial rule would have serious consequences for officials’ ability to control the former Caribbean frontier.

In December 1770—just two weeks after slaves in Tobago rose up under Sandy—a small group of maroons who had long inhabited the forested interior of Grenada grew increasingly emboldened. Communities of runaway or maroon slaves, which Richard Price argues flourished in every colony in which slaves could take refuge in “inhospitable, out-of-the-way areas,” had long existed in the interior of the mountainous islands of Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, and St. Vincent; as my earlier discussion of the alleged genesis of ‘Black Caribs’ suggests, runaway slaves may also have built lives amongst the islands’ indigenous inhabitants. Finding themselves under siege as plantation agriculture was extended into formerly inaccessible or uncultivated parts of the newly-ceded islands, members of these Creolized communities fought back.¹⁰⁸ In a deposition

¹⁰⁷ BNA CO 73/1 N. 19. Act to prevent the importation of slaves who have been convicted, or known to have been guilty of murder or attempt to murder or poison, insurrection or other capital offences, June 26 1769. Emphasis added.

¹⁰⁸ Richard Price, ed. *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), 5.

hurriedly taken at eleven o'clock on the night of December 3, 1770, one planter who had been menaced by a band of runaways reported that the maroons declared themselves "ready to meet and fight the detachment in the King's high roads." The frightened planter further stated that the maroons vowed "that they would not do it in a dark clandestine manner but with day light with drums beating and shells blowing;" in no time, the maroons allegedly threatened, "Grenada would be overturned."¹⁰⁹ Fearful that the actions of the maroons would incite "no less than a general insurrection if very speedy methods are not taken to suppress it," planters in Grenada, like their fellow colonists in Tobago, requested that imperial administrators dispatch military forces to quell the uprising.¹¹⁰

It is difficult to know whether the uprisings in Tobago and Grenada in autumn 1770 constituted a coordinated attempt at revolt. It is certainly possible that maroons, accustomed to traveling around and between the islands by *pirogue*, could have facilitated communications between the neighboring islands: in the same year administrators in Grenada complained about slaves absconding to the island of Margarita, on the northern coast of Venezuela, where they sought the protection of the Spanish Crown.¹¹¹ The assertion of maroons in Grenada that the island would be "overturned" may also point to a larger plot: rather than making demands common to slave insurgents in the Americas, such as a shorter work week or reprieve from harsh punishment, the maroons seemed to suggest that they envisioned a re-ordering of colonial society.¹¹² Regardless

¹⁰⁹ BNA CO 101/4 N. 120, Deposition of Valentine Joseph Piquery, December 11, 1770. On the role of drums and shells in announcing slave rebellion see Jerome S. Handler, "Slave Revolts and Conspiracies in Seventeenth-Century Barbados." *New West Indian Guide* 56 (1986): 5-42, especially pages 17-18.

¹¹⁰ BNA CO 101/4 N. 119, William Mackintosh to Melvill, December 11, 1770.

¹¹¹ BNA CO 101/4 N. 8, Melvill to Hillsborough, September 1, 1770.

¹¹² The argument that rebelling slaves did not seek to overturn slavery as an institution is made by John Thornton, "Africa and Abolitionism," in Seymour Drescher and Pieter C. Emmer, eds. *Who Abolished Slavery: Slave Revolts and Abolitionism: A Debate with João Pedro Marques* (New York: Berghan Books, 2010), 93–102. More recently, Wim Klooster argued that while many rebelling slaves did not seek to overthrow the system of slavery, they sought more than customary rights. See Wim Klooster, "Slave Revolts, Royal Justice, and a Ubiquitous Rumor in the Age of Revolutions." *The William and Mary Quarterly* Vol. 71, N. 3 (July 2014: 401-424), 404.

of whether creole maroons in Grenada conspired with African-born slaves in Tobago, running away or engaging in outright rebellion were strategies common to people who opposed the changes wrought by the extension of direct colonial rule and expansion of the plantation complex to the colonial periphery, whether they were Carib, enslaved, or free.

Conclusion

Despite imperial attempts to implement well-researched plans for the development of some of the last available islands in the Caribbean, and the willingness of colonial officials to revise or abandon these plans if they proved ill-suited to local circumstances, many people, both free and enslaved, rejected attempts to transform the Creole Archipelago they had created and maintained into a center of plantation production. The contests between Caribs and surveyors, new colonists and existing settlers, and slaves and planters described in this chapter would only intensify as the conflicts that shook the Atlantic World during the Age of Revolutions reached the southern Caribbean. As the following chapters will show, residents of the Creole archipelago were willing to engage in violence in order to ally with people or ideologies they deemed better adapted to their own purposes, including French troops who shared a language and religion with many of the archipelago's residents; Americans interested in free trade; and revolutionaries willing to support the rights of Caribs and of free people of color and to emancipate slaves. As the following examination of the events of the American War of Independence and of the French Revolution in the Lesser Antilles demonstrates, imperial attempts to incorporate a region of the Americas that had previously served as an outlet for people marginalized by colonial plantation society produced tensions that would not fail to explode into war when the spark of revolution was lit.

PART III

Chapter 5: The American Revolution and the Resurgence of the Creole Archipelago, 1774-1785

...[I]f in the womb of time, either from accidents impossible to be foreseen, or the natural vicissitude of human events, an unhappy separation should ever chance to arrive, between the mother country and this gigantic offspring, the whole chain of American islands, from Florida to Trinidad, would look back on Europe with regret, but must necessarily accompany that continent, of which it seems to have once constituted a part.

-Sir William Young, 1764 ¹

Many residents of the Creole Archipelago would have agreed with the notion that in the event of a rift between metropolis and colony, British subjects in the West Indies would naturally join their fellow Americans in separating from the mother country. Yet William Young's prediction, written little more than a decade before the outbreak of civil war between Great Britain and thirteen of her twenty-six colonies, would likely surprise many historians of the American War of Independence. Although scholars of the American Revolution typically focus on events in the Thirteen Colonies, those who have examined the first anti-colonial rebellion in broader Atlantic perspective often do so by contrasting the open revolt of colonists on the North American main with the continued loyalty of British subjects in established Caribbean colonies such as Barbados and Jamaica, emphasizing the myriad mercantilist, military, social, and cultural ties that bound the West Indies to Great Britain. As an experienced planter with estates in Antigua, Dominica, and Tobago, Young was no doubt aware of these ties. How then to explain his belief that the future of the Caribbean lay not with Great Britain but with North America?

This chapter examines the American War of Independence as one of several intra- and inter-imperial conflicts that provided residents of the Creole Archipelago, whether free, enslaved, or Amerindian, with a welcome opportunity to regain greater influence over specific features of quotidian social, economic, and political life. Chapters two through four demonstrated that

¹ Sir William Young, *Considerations which may tend to promote the settlement of our new West-India Colonies, by Encouraging Individuals to embark in the Undertaking* (London: James Robson, 1764), 30.

although British and French imperial administrators drew on prior experiences of colonial rule to devise sweeping economic, political, and land reforms for territories acquired as a result of the 1763 Treaty of Paris, the project of remaking the Creole Archipelago into ideal plantation colonies encountered considerable obstacles. This chapter, as well as chapter six, argues that events in the islands during the Age of Revolutions provided a dramatic illustration of the extent to which imperial policies adopted in the wake of the Seven Years' War failed to reform longstanding regional trade practices, win the loyalty of new colonial subjects, and eradicate the threat that enslaved and indigenous peoples were seen to pose to the smooth functioning of the plantation complex. The actions of colonial subjects not only in the Thirteen Colonies but also in the Ceded Islands during this period of transatlantic upheaval convinced imperial officials that if they wanted to maintain control over their remaining colonies, it would be necessary to abandon earlier policies of conciliation and accommodation in favor of surveillance and force, and to introduce colonial subjects on whom the Crown could depend.

Moving beyond the thirteen mainland North American British colonies that rebelled in order to study the American Revolution in hemispheric perspective promises to expand present understandings of the causes and consequences of American independence in several ways. In addition to prompting a re-characterization of the anti-colonial rebellion as one of several intra- and inter-imperial conflicts to shape the early modern Atlantic World, a focus on the southern Caribbean allows for a consideration of the war's ramifications beyond the borders of continental North America. Just as it had earlier in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, during the American Revolution the Caribbean served as an important theater in the longstanding rivalry between France and Great Britain. Seeking to compensate for territorial losses sustained as a result of the Seven Years' War, the French Crown capitalized on events on the North American main in

order to wrest control of one of the most economically and strategically important regions of the Caribbean from Great Britain; by June 1781, the islands of Grenada, Dominica, St. Vincent, and Tobago—British colonies since 1763—were under French rule, while the island of St. Lucia, ceded to France at the treaty, was a strategic site for British naval forces. The economic consequences of foreign conquest and occupation confirmed the importance of these small islands in the broader economies of the respective French and British Empires, and convinced imperial officials of the need to strengthen mercantilist and tax policies that had previously been only loosely enforced in the Ceded Islands.² Finally, a comparison of British and French practices of governance in the wake of the 1783 Treaty of Paris demonstrates how not only the loss of the Thirteen Colonies but also the seemingly treasonous conduct of colonial subjects elsewhere in the Americas influenced subsequent British and French strategies of colonial rule.

Colonial officials dispatched to the Ceded Islands in the wake of the Seven Years' War repeatedly warned their superiors in the metropole that the 9,000 free people who were made colonial subjects in the wake of the Seven Years' War were "incapable of any sincere attachment" to distant European Crowns.³ Yet no amount of bureaucratic handwringing could more clearly demonstrate the failure of policies of reconciliation and assimilation implemented in the new colonies than the response of King George III's 'new adopted subjects' to French invasion and occupation during the American War. The thousands of small planters who created and maintained

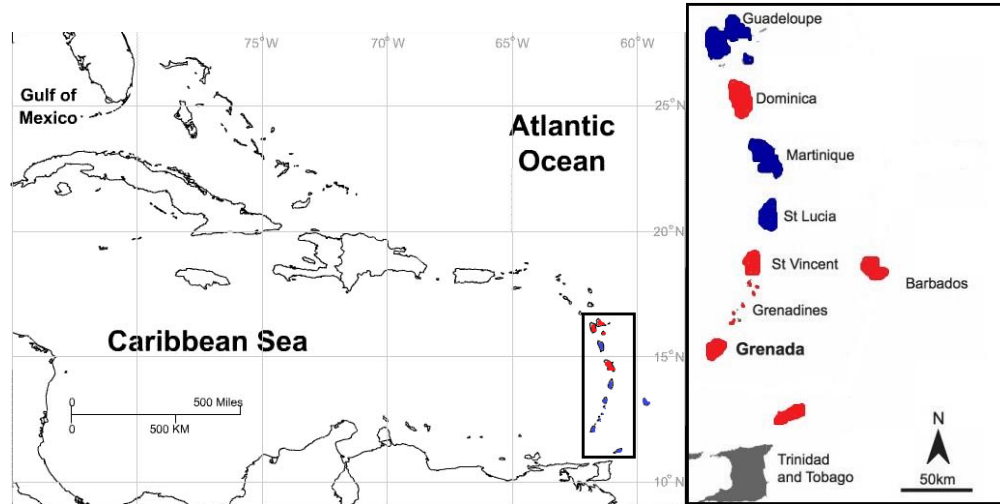
² As discussed in chapter two, just ten years after they became colonies of Great Britain, the Ceded Islands were second only to Jamaica in terms of total sugar exports: as of 1773, the Ceded Islands collectively exported 297,800 cwt [hundredweight, equal to 113 lbs.] of sugar. In the same year Jamaica—an island with a total area more than six times greater than that of the Ceded Islands, at 4,200 square miles vs. the Ceded Islands' 700 square miles—exported 1,017,100 cwt; the Leeward Islands 248,500 cwt; and Barbados just 110,900 cwt. Richard B. Sheridan, *Sugar and Slavery: An Economic History of the British West Indies, 1623-1775* (Barbados: Caribbean Universities Press, 1974), 489.

³ BNA CO101/23 N.58, Macartney to Germain, January 10, 1779. When Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent and Tobago were ceded to Great Britain in 1763, they were collectively inhabited by approximately 9,000 free people and 23,000 slaves. See chapter 2.

the Creole Archipelago, most of them Francophone Catholics accustomed to engaging in trade with merchants of many different nations, were eager for any relaxation of the mercantilist restrictions of formal colonialism. Free people of African descent who had settled outside the sphere of imperial rule in order to evade the discriminatory legislation imposed on people of color welcomed the opportunity to reassert the authority they had cultivated in their communities. Debates over the prerogatives of Parliament were of little interest to enslaved men and women who glimpsed in the chaos of civil and inter-imperial war a chance for freedom, or to Caribs who recognized that French invasion of British colonies might afford an opportunity to regain lands lost to the seemingly relentless advance of the plantation complex. Departing from historians' usual focus on the loyalty of elite white planters in established British colonies such as Barbados and Jamaica, this chapter highlights how the small planters, free people of color, enslaved and indigenous peoples who constituted the overwhelming majority of the Caribbean population throughout the colonial period responded to the events and ideologies of the American War of Independence.⁴ After a decade and a half of colonial rule, many residents of the southern Caribbean welcomed revolutionary upheavals as a chance to re-establish economic and social practices and structures of authority they had created before the Creole Archipelago was incorporated into European empire.

⁴ Historians who privilege the perspective of the planter elite when considering the events and effects of the American Revolution in the Caribbean lag behind historians of the Revolution in North America, who have produced a number of works on the role of African Americans and Amerindians as Loyalists and as Revolutionaries. See, for example, Ira Berlin and Ronald Hoffman, eds. *Slavery and Freedom in the Age of the American Revolution* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983); Colin Calloway, *The American Revolution in Indian Country: Crisis and Diversity in Native American Communities* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995); Sylvia R. Frey, *Water from the Rock: Black Resistance in a Revolutionary Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); Alan Gilbert, *Black Patriots and Loyalists: Fighting for emancipation in the war for independence* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012).

Map 5.1: Respective British & French possessions in the Southern Caribbean c. 1775⁵



Historians seeking to contrast the loyalty of West Indian planters with the rebellion of American patriots often point to demographic factors as a means of explaining this divergence. In colonies where enslaved people constituted an overwhelming majority of the population, the free minority depended on military support from Great Britain to provide protection against the ever-present threat of slave insurgency.⁶ Unlike on the North American main, where white artisans and small farmers could be persuaded to provide mass support for the initiatives of a small group of powerful colonial subjects, Caribbean colonies lacked a free population that might make common cause with the elite.⁷ Historians argue that planter absenteeism, the resultant lack of family life, and colonists' regular travel between the West Indies and Great Britain further acted to reinforce social and cultural ties with the metropole, preventing the consolidation of distinctly creole or

⁵ Blank map of the Caribbean sourced from http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Map_of_the_Caribbean_-_Lesser_Antilles.png, accessed April, 14 2014, edited to show the French colonies of Guadeloupe, Martinique, and St. Lucia in blue and the British colonies of Dominica, St. Vincent, Grenada, and Tobago in red.

⁶ The 'garrison mentality' of white planters is discussed in Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 9, 34.

⁷ The importance of mass participation in supporting anti-colonial rebellion is discussed in T.R. Clayton, "Sophistry, Security, and Socio-Political Structures in the American Revolution; or, Why Jamaica did not Rebel," *The Historical Journal* Vol. 29, N. 2 (June 1986: 319-344).

‘American’ institutions and identities comparable to those which developed in the Thirteen Colonies.⁸

In addition to the role of demographics, historians often explain West Indian loyalty to Great Britain with reference to the mercantilist system. With the majority of arable land in colonies such as Barbados and the Leeward Islands devoted to the production of tropical commodities, particularly sugar, planters relied heavily on imports of North American provisions and of British manufactures. These historians argue that the economic protections offered by the mercantilist system further ensured the loyalty of West Indian planters: unable to compete with the lower price and higher quality of sugar produced in the French Caribbean, in the decades preceding the American Revolution planters lobbied for and succeeded in securing privileged access to the British market.⁹

To date, only two book-length studies have examined the British West Indies during the American Revolution; both ably tackle the considerable task of focusing not on a single colony but on the British Caribbean as a whole. In *An Empire Divided*, Andrew Jackson O’Shaughnessy argues that the loyalty of Caribbean planters “reflected the fundamental differences between the island and mainland colonies;” West Indians simply had greater economic and socio-cultural ties to Great Britain than did North Americans.¹⁰ In O’Shaughnessy’s interpretation, West Indian planters’ lack of opposition to British imperial policy manifested itself not only in their decision

⁸ The development of distinctly American institutions in the Thirteen Colonies in the century preceding the American Revolution is traced in Jon Butler, *Becoming America: The Revolution Before 1776* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000). On the role of absenteeism in preventing the consolidation of comparable institutions and American identity in the British West Indies, see Gordon K. Lewis, *Main Currents in Caribbean Thought: The Historical Evolution of Caribbean Society in its Ideological Aspects, 1492-1900* (Omaha: University of Nebraska Press, 1983), 322. Edward Brathwaite argues that Creole nationalism did exist in colonial Jamaica, but that loyalties to Great Britain ultimately proved more important. Edward Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica, 1770-1800* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).

⁹ O’Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided*, 62-69.

¹⁰ O’Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided*, xvi.

not to revolt, but in their failure to adopt *any* oppositional tactics, including “lobbying, pamphleteering, framing petitions, and forming associations” until after the American War.¹¹ In this respect O’Shaughnessy largely ignores Selwyn H.H. Carrington’s *The British West Indies during the American Revolution*, in which Carrington shows that while Caribbean planters did not participate in open rebellion against the Crown, they “waged their own political and constitutional struggle in order to control all matters affecting their internal affairs, without interference from London.”¹² Despite this difference of opinion, the authors agree that the military, economic, and cultural ties uniting Great Britain and her Caribbean colonies—*islands* which Carrington describes as “essentially sub-societies of Britain”—made disloyalty an unthinkable prospect for the planters on whom both authors focus.¹³

Yet the colonies of Grenada, Dominica, St. Vincent, and Tobago differed from older British West Indian settlements in significant ways. The islands were not peopled exclusively by British colonists and their slaves but by indigenous Caribs, Francophone Catholics—many of them free people of color—whose ancestors had left Martinique and Guadeloupe in the early decades of the eighteenth century, and predominantly island-born slaves whose labor sustained small, mixed-agriculture plantations. In the decade immediately following 1763, these 9,000 free people and 23,000 slaves were joined by English and Scottish settlers who migrated to the islands following

¹¹ O’Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided*, xi.

¹² Selwyn H.H. Carrington, *The British West Indies during the American Revolution* (Providence: Foris Publications, 1988), 181. Carrington further expands on this argument in Selwyn H.H. Carrington, *The Sugar Industry and the Abolition of the Slave Trade, 1775-1810* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2002). Published a little more than a decade after Seymour Drescher challenged Eric Williams’s influential argument that slavery was abolished in the British Empire only after it became unprofitable, the primary goal of Carrington’s work is to reaffirm that the ruin of the West Indian economy was precipitated by the American Revolution. In contrast, O’Shaughnessy’s work explores the politics of West Indian planters. On the decline thesis, see Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*; Lowell J. Ragatz, *The Fall of the Planter Class in the British Caribbean, 1763–1833* (New York: Century, 1928). For a counterargument, see Seymour Drescher, *Econocide: British Slavery in the Era of Abolition* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977).

¹³ Carrington, *The British West Indies*, 181.

their cession to Great Britain, along with more than 80,000 Africans forcibly transported to the islands in the same period. When civil war between Great Britain and the Thirteen Colonies broke out in 1775, islands such as Barbados had been under British rule for more than 150 years; the Ceded Islands had become formal colonies just twelve years before. Despite British attempts to convert the new territories into profitable sugar colonies, practices of diversified agriculture and regional trade, as well as significant social, familial, and informal political connections between islands, persisted long after 1763. Significant differences between the demography, economy, and society of the Creole Archipelago and that of older British West Indian colonies produced very different responses to the anti-British rebellion of subjects in the Thirteen Colonies.

Disputes over Taxation in the Ceded Islands

Like their counterparts in the Thirteen Colonies, in the 1760s and 1770s British subjects in the Caribbean contested the Crown's right to collect certain taxes; unlike the American Patriots, residents of the Creole Archipelago won their contest without resorting to armed rebellion. Instead, in an instance that has received little attention from historians, in 1774 British subjects in the Ceded Islands successfully invoked the refrain of 'no taxation without representation' in order to become the only planters in the British West Indies legally exempt from the payment of a customary 4 ½ percent duty on exports.

Although opposition to the 1765 Stamp Act was general throughout the British Empire, British subjects in the West Indies largely acquiesced in paying the tax. Only in the Leeward Islands, where colonists were acutely aware of the need to support the American merchants on whom they depended for provisions, did planters join their fellow subjects in the Thirteen Colonies in open riots.¹⁴ Historians typically attribute West Indians' relatively passive response to the Stamp

¹⁴ O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided*, 98.

Act to planters' desire to maintain good relations with the Crown, but an additional factor may have been at play in the southern Caribbean. With formal settlement just beginning following the islands' cession to the British Crown in 1763, the enforcement of the Stamp Act in 1765-66 was erratic at best.¹⁵ It would be another decade before British subjects in the new colonies successfully applied the logic underlying North American opposition to the Stamp Act to their own ends.

In 1774, Grenada planter Alexander Campbell filed suit against William Hall, a collector of Customs in the island. Campbell's lawsuit alleged that Hall and his fellow Customs officers lacked the authority to impose a 4 ½ percent duty on exports, customarily collected throughout the British West Indies and first introduced in the Ceded Islands in July 1764, because the tax had been levied without the explicit consent of the islands' representative assembly. In finding for Campbell, Justice Lord Mansfield cited King George III's 1763 instructions to the islands' first Governor, George Melvill, who was tasked with creating an elected assembly for the Ceded Islands.¹⁶ Although the Assembly did not actually meet until 1765, Mansfield ruled that by his original instructions "the King had *immediately and irrevocably granted*...that the subordinate Legislation over the Island should be exercised by the Assembly, with the Consent of the Governor and Council, in like Manner as in other Provinces under the King."¹⁷ In short, any act introduced subsequent to the King's 1763 instructions legally required the assent of the Assembly, Council, and Governor in order to enter into force. The Assembly had not been consulted about the imposition of a 4 ½ percent tax on exports, and the duty could therefore not be collected.

¹⁵ Adolph Koeppel, *The Stamps that Caused the American Revolution: The Stamps of the 1765 British Stamp Act for America* (New York, 1976), 11.

¹⁶ William Murray Mansfield, *The Genuine speech of Lord Mansfield, in giving the judgement of the Court of King's Bench, on Monday, November 28, 1774, in the cause of Campbell against Hall, respecting the King's Letters Patents, of the 20th of July 1774; for raising a duty of four and a half per cent on all the exports from the island of Grenada.* (London: G. Kearly, 1774), 24.

¹⁷ Mansfield, *The Genuine speech*, 23. Emphasis added.

While both Carrington and O'Shaughnessy acknowledge that the Mansfield decision "was a milestone in British legal history," their respective focus on the British West Indies as a whole lead them to devote scant attention to a ruling that only applied in Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent, and Tobago.¹⁸ Yet freedom from additional taxation was immensely important for planters in the colonies, who by the mid-1770s found themselves weighted down with the debts associated with establishing sugar estates. Although colonial officials repeatedly attempted to introduce the 4 ½ percent tax in the years after the Mansfield decision, the respective colonial Assemblies of the Ceded Islands simply refused to assent to the duty. As British subjects in North America increasingly challenged Parliament's authority to levy taxes, planters in the Ceded Islands could take comfort in the knowledge that they benefited from exemptions that even their fellow West Indians did not enjoy.¹⁹ With the coming of war, even these concessions provide insufficient to win the loyalty of new colonial subjects, who recognized that inter-imperial conflict provided opportunities for even greater economic and political freedom.

Initial Responses to Civil War in the British Empire, 1775-1778

During the first half of the 1770s, British West Indians trained a close eye on the evolving contest over Parliamentary prerogatives. Like their counterparts in other Caribbean colonies, planters in the Ceded Islands were eager to avoid any conflict that might disrupt political or commercial relations. In a June 25, 1775, address to King George III, members of the Grenada Council and Assembly "deplore[d] the horror of a civil war already manifested in the effusion of

¹⁸ Carrington, *The British West Indies*, 142. O'Shaughnessy agrees, stating that the "judgment had far-reaching constitutional implications because it suggested that the Crown could not alter the constitution of a colony retrospectively." O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided*, 132. O'Shaughnessy's only other reference to the ruling is found on page 195, when he notes that planters in Barbados resented the exemption of colonists in the Ceded Islands from a duty they had been paying since 1663; Carrington makes a total of three references to the ruling in his book.

¹⁹ As discussed in chapter 3, planters in the Ceded Islands also benefited from the existence of a free port in Dominica, which may have further reconciled them to British rule while their counterparts in North America chafed under increasing trade restrictions.

the blood of our countrymen and friends on both sides.²⁰ Planters expressed two paramount concerns about the possible consequences of this civil war: first, that the mercantilist system on which they depended both for supplies and for markets for their produce would be disrupted or destroyed, and second that the circulation of revolutionary ideas would incite enslaved and indigenous people to action. Both sets of concerns proved well-founded.

The first effects of the American Revolution in the Caribbean were economic in nature; the disruption of trade between the West Indies, Great Britain, and North America threatened not only the prosperity but also the very survival of island residents. Unlike their counterparts in the Thirteen Colonies, British subjects in the Caribbean consumed very little of what they and their slaves produced, instead relying on North American provisions such as corn and salt fish to feed themselves and their slaves.²¹ These provisions all but disappeared following the September 1775 resolution of the Continental Congress to end all exports to England, Ireland, and the West Indies. The resulting food shortages were most acute in the small, densely-populated Leeward Islands, where hundreds of slaves died of starvation or malnutrition.²² While the situation was not as dire in the Ceded Islands, where planters who had settled the islands prior to their integration into transatlantic trade networks continued to devote a portion of their estates to the cultivation of provisions, by the latter half of the 1770s administrators regularly complained of a scarcity of necessities and of a lack of specie with which to buy what few provisions were available.²³ A

²⁰ BNA CO 101/18 N. 179, Address of the Council and Assembly of Grenada to His Majesty, June 25, 1775. Emphasis in original.

²¹ In 1772 alone, the British colonies of Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent, and Tobago collectively imported some 15,777 barrels of salt fish; 43,880 bushels of peas and corn; 5,372 barrels of rice; 479 horses; and 2,215 sheep and hogs from the mainland colonies. However, not all of these items were consumed in the islands, as an unspecified portion of those imported to Dominica was re-exported through the islands' two free ports of Roseau and Prince Rupert's Bay. Carrington, *The British West Indies during the American Revolution*, 40.

²² O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided*, 161.

²³ On the lack of provisions and specie in the Ceded Islands, see BNA CO 101/22 N. 139, Macartney to Germain, October 10 1778.

longstanding trade with neighboring French colonies “carried out in small French vessels, Petit Augres, and canoes,” was blamed for the lack of hard currency, as planters traded coin for French “wine, oil, soap, silks, stockings, millinery and other articles of dress.”²⁴

The outbreak of war between Great Britain and the Thirteen Colonies in 1775 initially promised to provide some relief to West Indians, as British ships endeavored to intercept American vessels laden with corn, flour, and other provisions destined for French colonies in the Caribbean.²⁵ Initial optimism was soon replaced by complaints about the “robberies and depredations” committed by American privateers, whose maritime raids regularly disrupted trade between Great Britain and its Caribbean colonies as well as intercourse between individual islands.²⁶ Maritime insecurity further increased as a result of France’s alliance with the United States in February 1778; one month later, France and Great Britain were at war, and naval forces patrolled Caribbean waters. The geography of the Lesser Antilles left the British colonies of Dominica—located twenty-five miles between the French colonies of Guadeloupe and Martinique—and St. Vincent, situated approximately three hours’ sail south of the French colony of St. Lucia, particularly vulnerable. “[T]he Americans, or rather of a Banditti of all Nations, chiefly French,” plagued the more sheltered Windward Coasts of the islands, where they regularly intercepted British vessels and sometimes carried off slaves working on coastal plantations.²⁷

As the activities of American and French sailors in the Lesser Antilles intensified, so too did their interactions with island residents. American privateers frequently made landfall and “stayed several hours on shore in conference with” people willing to trade or otherwise engage

²⁴ BNA CO 101/22 N. 155, Macartney to Germain, October 25 1778. The French word *pirogue* was often rendered by English speakers as Petit Auger or Pettiaugre.

²⁵ BNA CO 71/6 N. 22, Shirley to Germain, February 17 1776.

²⁶ BNA CO 71/6 N. 99, Petition of the merchants and other inhabitants of Roseau, Dominica, February 11 1777.

²⁷ BNA CO 260/5 N. 203, Morris to Germain, June 30 1778.

with them.²⁸ Some did more than converse: in one instance privateers on the coast of Grenada “stripped quite naked all the white Inhabitants who fell into their hands,” in a display that no doubt served to visibly undermine the authority of the colony’s white minority.²⁹ The actions and ideology of this maritime ‘banditti’ aroused the ire of planters and officials, who feared that a loss of control could mean the end of their profits or even their lives. As early as March 1777, the concerned Governor of St. Vincent, Valentine Morris, reported that the number of runaway slaves in the island had recently grown to an estimated 1,100. The “more than uncommonly insolent talk” of the runaways was reportedly spurred by their belief that an imminent war with France would “be the time for them to emancipate themselves.”³⁰

Although the predicted war did not break out for another year, the fact that enslaved residents of the Creole Archipelago were aware of a mounting conflict between rival European empires and were conscious of the possibilities such a conflict might create in their own lives testifies to the continued circulation of information across geographic and newly-imposed political boundaries. Tracing vast Afro-American communication networks that linked port cities on the North American main with those in the Caribbean, Julius Scott argues that the rapid dissemination of information through maritime channels proved “absolutely central in shaping the political climate in New World slave societies.”³¹ In the southern Caribbean archipelago, a reliance on small watercraft such as *pirogues* lent itself to frequent travel between islands, further assisting in the

²⁸ BNA CO 260/4 n. 98, Morris to Germain, March 5 1777. Carrington also describes American privateers making landfall throughout the Ceded Islands; “because of these repeated attacks, few merchant ships went to Tobago.” Carrington, *The British West Indies*, 95. Other mentions of privateers in the Ceded Islands before and during the American war can be found in BNA CO 101/20 N. 211, CO 101/20 N. 242; CO 101/21 N. 150, CO 101/23 N. 76.

²⁹ BNA CO 101/20 N. 239, Macartney to Germain, July 23 1777.

³⁰ BNA CO 260/4 n. 98, Morris to Germain, March 5 1777

³¹ Julius Scott, “The Common Wind: Currents of Afro-American Communication in the Era of the Haitian Revolution,” (PhD Dissertation, University of Michigan, 1986), iii.

spread of information through informal channels.³² Recognizing that a conflict between France and Great Britain might prevent planters and colonial officials from exercising vigilance, enslaved people actively facilitated the circulation of information between islands and thus between rival empires.

Slaves were not alone in their attempts to turn the outbreak of the American Revolution to their own ends: the mounting hostilities between France and Great Britain also provided the Caribs of St. Vincent with an opportunity to reassert sovereignty over lands claimed by the British just a few years before. After repeated land disputes escalated to an all-out war between Caribs and British forces in the early 1770s, a 1773 treaty between representatives of the Caribs and of the Crown did little to calm tensions. St. Vincent's Governor, Valentine Morris, repeatedly expressed his fear that runaway slaves and Caribs would make common cause against British rule. Unable to prevent "the intercourse of these people in their canoes and pettiaugers with the French" in nearby St. Lucia and Martinique, British planters and administrators in St. Vincent watched with concern as their internal enemies traded firearms, ammunition, and information with rival imperial subjects in neighboring islands.³³

Naval Conquests of the Southern Caribbean, 1778-1781

As conflict between Great Britain and the Franco-American alliance mounted, naval forces set their sights on the Caribbean. In 1776, the Continental Congress appointed William Bingham Consul to the French colony of Martinique; joining Bingham in the island was a French squadron tasked with securing the newly-sanctioned and already-flourishing trade between the French West Indies and the Thirteen Colonies. In addition to opening its ports to prizes seized by American

³² Julius Scott, "Crisscrossing Empires: Ships, Sailors, and Resistance in the Lesser Antilles in the Eighteenth Century," in Robert L. Paquette and Stanley L. Engerman, eds. *The Lesser Antilles in the Age of European Expansion*, 134.

³³ BNA CO 260/2, Morris to Germain, January 1, 1779.

vessels and providing a place to fit out privateers, Martinique served as a key channel through which French arms and ammunition were funnelled to the North American main.³⁴ When war was declared between France and Great Britain in March 1778, French officials identified Martinique as an ideal place from which to launch naval attacks on nearby British West Indian colonies.

Located approximately 25 miles between the French colonies of Martinique and Guadeloupe, respectively, the British colony of Dominica was a logical strategic target for French forces. Some 2,800 soldiers and volunteers dispatched from Martinique landed in Dominica at dawn on September 7, 1778; the island was under French control by five o'clock the same evening. A surviving firsthand account of the attack, published more than a decade later by British planter and Assistant Judge of the Supreme Court of Dominica Thomas Atwood, vividly describes "the most poignant distress" of the island's inhabitants. Atwood particularly lamented "the situation of the white women and their children" who fled "shrieking and crying through the streets...to wade through rapid rivers, exposed to the inclemency of the weather;" Atwood claimed that several civilians later died as a result of the stresses they experienced during the invasion.³⁵ The account of Dominica's British Governor, William Stuart, is decidedly less dramatic: aware that the island's forty-six regular troops and approximately 150 militiamen stood little chance against the invading force, Stuart signed a treaty he deemed "honourable to His Majesty and beneficial to his subjects."³⁶

The terms of capitulation extended to Dominica, which subsequently served as a model throughout the Lesser Antilles, aimed to buttress the island as a key site of communication and defense while also encouraging commercial relations that would benefit the French Crown. In his

³⁴ Margaret L. Brown, "William Bingham, Agent of the Continental Congress at Martinique," *The Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 61, N. 1 (January 1937: 54-87).

³⁵ Thomas Atwood, *History of the Island of Dominica*, 115.

³⁶ BNA CO 71/7 N. 76, Stuart to Germain, September 9 1778.

speech to the island's Colonial Council, which convened as usual the following Monday, September 14, 1778, French Commandant Duchilleau assured the six British Councillors present that his occupation government would "always endeavour... to merit the approbation of the two nations that inhabit" the island, and would strive "to lighten the trouble which you feel by a change of Government."³⁷ Provided they paid the customary duties imposed in other French colonies, merchants in Dominica were permitted to trade with any nation except Great Britain. Duchilleau's occupation government agreed to allow both Catholic and Protestant inhabitants of Dominica to maintain the practice of their religion, and to preserve the English civil government and laws then in place. Colonists who occupied administrative or judicial roles at the time of surrender, such as members of the Privy Council, were permitted to continue exercising office. Residents of Dominica were not required to take up arms in support of French troops, although they could do so if they wished. Most generous was article five of the capitulation, which stipulated that should Dominica be ceded to France after the war, "inhabitants shall have their choice either to keep their own Political Government, or accept that which is established at Martinico and the other French Islands."³⁸ The prospect of being able to choose the type of government under which they would live likely helped reconcile both English and French planters to temporary military occupation, diminishing the possibility of revolt and ensuring the continued operation of estates.

The relatively generous terms extended to residents of Dominica had the desired effect of minimizing resistance to French conquest of other British West Indian colonies; regardless of linguistic, religious, or political allegiance, planters were eager to preserve their property in land and slaves. In St. Vincent, Governor Morris reported that planters openly admitted their reluctance

³⁷ Translation of a Speech by the Marquis Duchilleau to the Privy Council of Dominica, Sept. 14 1778. Minutes of the Privy Council, Dominica National Archives [DNA].

³⁸ Articles of Capitulation, Minutes of the Privy Council, Sept. 14 1778, DNA.

to “make a vigorous, if any defence,” with several planters expressing the opinion “that such would be to no other purpose, than to prevent this Island receiving such good terms as were granted to Dominica.”³⁹ Little surprise, then, that French forces secured the surrender of St. Vincent in June 1779 without firing a single shot.⁴⁰

French forces did not accomplish this conquest alone; an often-overlooked third political power was at play in the contest over St. Vincent. From the point of view of planters and colonial officials, the peaceful surrender of St. Vincent had the additional benefit of denying the island’s Carib population the opportunity to attack from within. Still reeling from the Carib War of 1772-73, planters in St. Vincent evidenced a siege mentality born of “living nearly connected to a Lawless Savage Tribe, who can commit murder or any Offence against the Society without being under the control of Civil Power.”⁴¹ At the outbreak of hostilities with Great Britain, Caribs wasted no time in offering their support to the French. In September 1778 “between 5 and 600 stout, able bodied different Charibs” reportedly traveled to the French colony of St. Lucia by pirogue in order to offer their services in the impending war. Openly displaying their allegiance by sporting French colors, Caribs demonstrated their knowledge of European imperial rivalries and their desire to align themselves with a Crown that they judged more likely to support their claims to territory on which British settlers increasingly encroached.⁴² In the wake of the French conquest of Dominica, a number of Carib chiefs travelled to Martinique to formally reiterate their readiness to participate in a French invasion of St. Vincent. Eager to preserve their lives and possessions, as well as their

³⁹ Valentine Morris, *A Narrative of the Official Conduct of Valentine Morris, Esq.* (London: J. Walker, 1787), 117.

⁴⁰ O’Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided*, 169.

⁴¹ BNA CO 260/6 N. 99, Address of the St. Vincent Council, April 30 1779.

⁴² BNA CO 260/5 N. 292, Morris to Germain, September 17 1778.

claims to land, Vincentian planters readily surrendered to French forces in order to prevent their internal enemies—Chatoyer and his followers—from assisting in an enemy attack on the island.⁴³

Following the capture of St. Vincent in June 1779, a French fleet consisting of twelve frigates and twenty-five battleships proceeded to Grenada, where Governor Macartney succeeded in mobilizing just 125 regular troops and fewer than 400 militiamen against an estimated 6,500 French troops. With the island's meager defense further diminished by "the desertion of almost all the colored people and the greatest part of the new subjects," Grenada surrendered to French forces on July 4, 1779.⁴⁴

The demonstrable reluctance of 'colored people and new subjects' to mount a defense against French forces was not confined to Grenada. Planters in St. Vincent openly voiced their unwillingness to defend the island against a French invasion.⁴⁵ In Dominica, French conquest was likely actively facilitated by residents of the Creole Archipelago. According to Atwood, a group of "His Majesty's new adopted subjects" visited the island's main fort on the evening of September 6, 1778, where they "contrived to make the few soldiers there on duty intoxicated with liquor, and afterwards filled up the touch-holes of the cannon with sand," thereby ruining the soldiers' ability to fire on invading French forces the following day.⁴⁶ Although Atwood's report of deliberate sabotage is difficult to verify, it is not hard to imagine why the predominantly Francophone Catholic small planters who settled in the islands prior to the introduction of British rule may have welcomed the prospect of becoming legal subjects of the French Crown. Despite the concessions

⁴³ For more on the diplomatic and military activity of Caribs, see Sir William Young Jr., *An Account of the Black Charaibs in the Island of St. Vincent's; with the Charaib Treaty of 1773, and other Original Documents* (London: J. Sewell, 1795).

⁴⁴ CO 101/23 N. 218, Macartney to Germain, July 5 1779.

⁴⁵ Morris, *A Narrative of the Official Conduct of Valentine Morris*, 117.

⁴⁶ Thomas Atwood, *The History of the Island of Dominica*, 112. The incident is also related by Patrick Baker, *Centering the Periphery: Chaos, Order, and the Ethnohistory of Dominica* (Kingston, Ontario: McGill-Queens University Press, 1994), 69.

extended them by the British Crown between the time when the islands became British colonies in 1763 and when they were conquered by the French in the late 1770s—including electoral privileges, participation in colonial Councils and Assemblies, and the freedom to practice Catholicism—the men and women who continued to be identified as ‘French inhabitants’ sought to improve their position under a monarch who shared their language and religion.

The French Crown was equally eager to return to a state of affairs more closely resembling that which existed in the region prior to the Seven Years’ War. This desire was evidenced by the course of action taken by the Ministry of the Marine and Colonies with respect to the former French colony of Grenada, where the terms of capitulation differed in several significant ways from those of Dominica and St. Vincent. Whereas existing British laws and personnel were allowed to remain in place at the respective surrenders of Dominica and St. Vincent, conquering French forces in Grenada decreed that the island would be governed by the same laws as those then in force in the French colonies of Guadeloupe and Martinique. All contrary laws introduced during British rule of Grenada were abolished, and British colonists who had settled in Grenada during the sixteen years that the island was under their Crown were declared subjects of the French King.⁴⁷

The decision to declare all free residents of a given island the subjects of the conquering monarch was not anomalous; the terms of capitulation when the French colony of St. Lucia surrendered to British troops on December 30, 1778, similarly stipulated that residents of the island would be treated as subjects of the British Crown.⁴⁸ Yet a comparison of terms for Dominica and St. Vincent versus those for Grenada suggests that French imperial administrators conceived of their presence in the latter island not as a temporary military occupation but as a reassertion of

⁴⁷ *Arret du Conseil d’État du Roi, qui fixe les règles, les époques et la forme de la distribution de la Justice en l’île de la Grenade et dépendances* (Paris, 1779) Beinecke MS 328, pg. 2.

⁴⁸ BNA CO 253/1 N. 349, Article 3, Articles of Capitulation between Major General Grant and the Honorable Rear Admiral Barrington... and the Chevalier de Micoud, December 30 1778.

French sovereignty over the island. From the perspective of the French, the conquest of 1779 was merely a continuation of an earlier conflict that had not been resolved to their satisfaction; French invasion aimed to end a lengthy British occupation of what was rightfully a French colony. King Louis XVI's proclamation on the matter was unambiguous: "From and after the 4th of July, 1779, being the Day on which the Island of Grenada *returned under the Sovereignty of his Majesty*, the Persons and Estates of all the Inhabitants of the said Island...shall be ruled and governed by the Laws, Customs, and Usages, observed in the French Windward American Islands."⁴⁹

The restoration of French laws was accompanied by significant changes in personnel. Unlike in Dominica or St. Vincent, where the terms of capitulation stipulated that active Councillors, Assemblymen, and judges (whether of British or French extraction) could continue to sit, in Grenada existing colonial bodies were dissolved in favor of a newly-constituted Sovereign Council. In contrast to the situation under British rule, in which both Anglophone Protestants and a limited number of Francophone Catholics were eligible for colonial appointments, only men who professed the Roman Catholic religion could be appointed to Sovereign Council in the French-occupied island.⁵⁰ As the following chapter makes clear, these changes succeeded in alienating large numbers of British planters while doing little to calm long-simmering tensions between French and British residents of Grenada.

Although the British Crown administered the small island of Tobago as a dependency of Grenada, the island's status as neutral prior to the Seven Year's War ensured that the terms of capitulation when French forces conquered Tobago resembled those extended to Dominica and St.

⁴⁹ BNA CO 101/24 N. 5, Arret of the King's Council of State, Establishing the Rules, Terms and Forms, for the Administration of Justice, in the Island of Grenada, and its dependencies, Dec. 12 1779. Emphasis added.

⁵⁰ ANOM FM C10A 3 N. 47, July 20 1779.

Vincent rather than Grenada.⁵¹ Located to the southeast of the Lesser Antillean archipelago, Tobago was the last British West Indian colony to be conquered by the French during the American War. Appearing off the Windward coast of Tobago on May 22 with a reported 3,000 troops, French forces spent several days in pursuit of the estimated 400 British soldiers and 500 militiamen who had retreated to the Leeward side of the island on foot.⁵² Invading troops received no quarter from the island's predominantly Scottish planters, who later estimated that the French destroyed £19,600 sterling during their conquest.⁵³ A British squadron belatedly dispatched to defend Tobago was captured by the French fleet, and on June 5, 1781, Lieutenant Governor Ferguson formally agreed to terms of surrender that the island's principal planters judged to be "upon the whole better than the Dominica articles."⁵⁴

Daily life under occupation, 1778-1783

Despite the considerable disruptions wrought by intra- and inter-imperial war, in the early 1780s many elements of day-to-day life in Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Tobago, and even Grenada remained much the same as they had been prior to foreign occupation. As suggested by the terms of capitulation, British and French officials alike sought above all to ensure the continued productivity of the newest West Indian colonies in their respective empires. Throughout the American War, the small islands of the southern Caribbean continued to produce millions of pounds sugar, coffee, cacao, and other export commodities. In islands occupied by the French, legal documents such as deeds and leases, acts of manumission, wills and powers of attorney were registered in either French or English, seemingly according to the preference of the individuals

⁵¹ ANOM FM C10E 1 Dossier 9, Capitulation de l'île de Tobago entre Le Comte de Grasse...et l'Honorable George Ferguson Écuyer, June 2 1781.

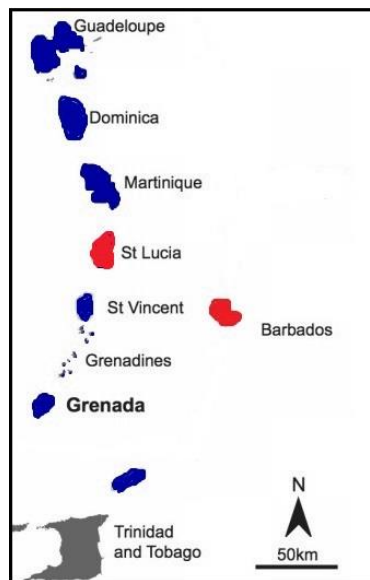
⁵² ANOM FM C10E 1 Dossier 9, Projet d'attaque de l'île Tabago et sa prise.

⁵³ BNA CO 101/24 N. 125, Ferguson to Ellis, March 11 1782.

⁵⁴ BNA CO 101/24. N. 99, Ferguson to Germain, June 5 1781. Carrington disputes this figure, estimating that as few as 900 French soldiers were able to conquer the island while British naval forces were occupied at St. Eustatius. Carrington, *The British West Indies*, 99.

drafting the act. Monetary values associated with such acts were given in either British pounds sterling or the corresponding amount of French *livres*.⁵⁵ Government proclamations were typically issued in both English and French, and surviving newspapers for the period contain advertisements and official announcements printed in both languages. Dominica's Colonial Assembly and Council, which were composed almost exclusively of Anglophone Protestant planters, continued to exercise the same functions as they had under British rule.⁵⁶ In British-occupied St. Lucia, the overwhelmingly Francophone Catholic population continued to marry, baptize their children, and bury their dead under the care of the same priests who tended to the parishes when the island was under French control. Despite exchanging one distant European Crown for another, residents of the islands retained many existing features of community life, local political culture, agricultural and economic practice.

Map 5.2: Respective British & French possessions in the Southern Caribbean c. 1781⁵⁷



⁵⁵ Examples of these acts can be found in the Deed Books of the Dominica National Archives.

⁵⁶ Because the Assembly of St. Vincent had been dissolved by a proclamation by Governor Morris several months prior to French conquest of the island, it did not meet during French occupation. See BNA CO 260/6 N. 59, January 20 1779, Proclamation by Governor Morris dissolving Assembly of St. Vincent.

⁵⁷ Map edited to show the British colonies of Barbados and St. Lucia in red and the French colonies of Guadeloupe, Dominica, Martinique, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Grenada, and Tobago in blue.

But the American War also wrought significant changes in the Lesser Antilles. The presence of British and French troops in the islands exacerbated the scarcity of provisions that originated with the Continental Congress' 1775 ban on exports, as colonists were now required to furnish soldiers with cattle.⁵⁸ With planters already complaining about the difficulty of obtaining provisions for themselves and their slaves, the additional strain of having to house and feed troops provoked resentment. The conduct of occupation troops failed to ease tensions. In Dominica, Atwood alleged that the behavior of French soldiers drove many British settlers to leave the island; the embittered planter cited the soldiers' regular insults to English planters, their practice of "throwing showers of stones on their houses in the night-time," and of "saluting the English white women with indecent expression as they passed by" as evidence of the soldiers' abuses.⁵⁹

Although Atwood's account is likely clouded by a degree of resentment, there is little doubt that the presence of French occupying forces provided not only soldiers but also creole planters with a unique opportunity to exercise power recently denied to them under British rule. Despite the British Crown's attempts to populate the new colonies with planters loyal to Great Britain, as of 1779 Francophone Catholic 'new adopted subjects' still outnumbered their Anglophone Protestant counterparts as a percentage of the free population of Dominica, Grenada, and St. Vincent. Only in Tobago, which was virtually unpopulated as of 1763, did Anglophone Protestants constitute the majority of the planter class.⁶⁰ Judging the behavior of these planters to be just as reprehensible as that of French occupying troops, Atwood singled out two individuals whose conduct he found particularly offensive: one "insolently drew his sword on a respectable English

⁵⁸ Carrington, *The Sugar Industry*, 46.

⁵⁹ Atwood, *The History of the Island of Dominica*, 146-151.

⁶⁰ The settlement of Tobago by primarily Scottish planters is discussed in chapter 2. As of April 1780 (one year prior to French conquest) Tobago counted 417 white men, 57 white women, and 10,613 slaves. BNA CO 285/1 N. 13, A state of the island of Tobago.

merchant in a public tavern,” while the other, “a Frenchman of colour, of the name Blanchdelablong...had the audacity to strike the English Chief Justice.”⁶¹

The public nature of these incidents suggests that they involved the settling of personal grievances. Emboldened by the presence of occupying troops who spoke their language and practised their religion, individuals who might otherwise have avoided confrontation openly and sometimes violently challenged men appointed to positions of authority by the British. Although comparable firsthand accounts do not survive for other British West Indian colonies occupied by the French during the American War, official correspondence betrays hints that longtime residents of the Creole Archipelago seized the opportunity to settle both personal scores and perceived administrative injustices.⁶² French subjects resident in Grenada during the island’s conquest by Great Britain in 1763 capitalized on the return of their former Crown in order to re-establish title to plantations they claimed had been forcibly appropriated during British rule.⁶³ In St. Vincent, planters who had been forced by the British to rent the lands they had settled prior to 1763 took advantage of French occupation to convert their limited leases to freeholds, thereby attempting to retain permanent title to lands regardless of the empire to which the island belonged.⁶⁴

Other residents of the Creole Archipelago also used the period of foreign occupation to their advantage. As demonstrated by their decision to wear French colors and to court an alliance with French forces, during the American War Caribs organized as a broader military and political force. While some Caribs also used the conflict as an opportunity to exact revenge on individual planters, “mark[ing] their antipathy to the English, on every occasion of insult and cruelty,” Carib

⁶¹ Atwood, *The History of the Island of Dominica*, 152.

⁶² See for example BNA CO 101/24 N. 423, Byam et al. to Spooner, March 1 1786; Byam noted that “...the French subjects seemed impressed with a consciousness [of] their gross misconduct during the war...”

⁶³ ANOM C10A 4 N. 53, May 21 1781.

⁶⁴ ANOM FM C10D 2 N.6, October 10 1779.

attempts to engage in diplomacy with representative of the French Crown evidences their belief that France was more likely to respect their sovereignty, or at least to treat them better than the British.⁶⁵ Given that many Caribs could directly compare the experience of living alongside French planters who had settled on the western side of St. Vincent prior to the Seven Years' War with the later encroachment of British sugar planters and recent armed conflict with British troops, it is little wonder that Caribs chose to ally with the European power that seemed to least threaten their sovereignty and their freedom.

During the four-year French occupation of St. Vincent, Caribs seized the opportunity presented by British settlers' abandonment of their estates to move back into territory they had been forced to relinquish as part of the 1773 British-Carib treaty. With the number of Carib men capable of bearing arms estimated by British officials at more than 1,200 (out of a total Carib population of approximately 4,000),⁶⁶ people who identified as indigenous to the Lesser Antilles used inter-imperial conflict as an opportunity to arm themselves against future incursions by importing arms and gunpowder from their French allies in Martinique.⁶⁷ Carib actions during the American War contributed to British convictions that "the temper of these people is too well known, to depend upon their faith, where fear does not operate;" as will be explored in the following chapter, the consequences of this conviction proved disastrous.⁶⁸

Enslaved people also used the period of French occupation to their advantage; according to Atwood, during the American War runaway slaves in Dominica increased both in number and in audacity. Allegedly encouraged by French troops, maroons "often came...with conk shells

⁶⁵ William Young Jr., *An Account of the Black Charaibs*, 106.

⁶⁶ BNA CO260/9 'An account of the Island Caribs and their mode of living,' enclosed in Seton to Sydney, January 1789.

⁶⁷ BNA CO 101/25 N. 118, Mathew to Sydney, May 31 1784.

⁶⁸ BNA CO 101/25 N. 156, Lincoln to Mathew, May 31 1784.

blowing and French colours flying, close to the town of Roseau in the day-time.”⁶⁹ The display of French colors suggests that enslaved people in Dominica, like Caribs in St. Vincent, were aware of the enmity between the British and French and consciously sought to court the support of the latter. Further adding to the sense that enslaved people consciously sought to align with the French, members of Dominica’s Privy Council complained that the depredations of runaway slaves were specifically directed at English planters. Alleging that runaway slaves had little fear of being brought to justice by French occupation forces, the Councillors complained that the maroons “have sent and are daily sending to the English planters, menaces against their lives, and their property, some of whom have been reduced to the necessity of abandoning their estates and quitting the Island after having been plundered.”⁷⁰ The geography of the Lesser Antilles allowed maroons to entice slaves from other islands to join them; on at least one occasion, officials seized canoes of runaways attempting to make their way from Monserrat and Marie-Galante to the camp of the Dominica maroons.⁷¹

Similar concerns plagued planters in Tobago, where fewer than 500 free residents of the island were outnumbered by their 10,000 slaves by a ratio of more than 22 to 1.⁷² Desertion and rebellion on the part of slaves occurred frequently in the decade after Tobago first became a British colony in 1763, and problems persisted during French occupation of the island. Nor was the problem of slave insurgency during the American War confined to islands occupied by the French. In British-occupied St. Lucia, French planters complained that they only earned respite from the incursions of maroons after engaging in “highly deadly hunts which necessarily diminished the

⁶⁹ Atwood, *The History of the Island of Dominica*, 230.

⁷⁰ DNA Minutes of the Privy Council, June 1 1781.

⁷¹ BNA CO 71/10 N. 21, Orde to Sydney, April 16 1786.

⁷² In April 1780 (one year prior to French conquest) Tobago counted 417 white men, 57 white women, and 10,613 slaves. BNA CO 285/1 N. 13, A state of the island of Tobago, taken in April 1780.

number of workers.”⁷³ War between France and Great Britain provided slaves in the Ceded Islands, the overwhelming majority of whom had known freedom in Africa before being trafficked to the new colonies in the years after 1763, with a welcome opportunity to regain their freedom. Throughout the archipelago, thousands of people took to the islands’ forested, mountainous interiors, where they continued to be “exceedingly troublesome” both during and immediately after the American War.⁷⁴

Concerns about the desertion or insurgency of the enslaved laborforce were all the more pressing because warfare between Great Britain and France interrupted the transatlantic trade in enslaved labor. In the first ten years after the 1763 Treaty of Paris, more than 80,000 Africans disembarked as slaves in a chain of islands whose combined area totals just over 900 square miles. Between 1775 and 1783, the number of African slaves imported into the islands fell to 34,000 individuals. While still staggering, this figure represents a significant decrease in the number of laborers available in the southern Caribbean during the American War. Between 1777 and 1778, the number of enslaved people trafficked from Africa to the Ceded Islands fell by more than 40%. French conquest of the islands of Dominica in September 1778 and of Grenada and St. Vincent in the early summer of 1779 essentially suspended all commerce in slaves from Africa to the islands—formerly key sites for the disembarkation of slaves—until the coming of peace in 1783. Although British conquest of St. Lucia in December 1778 redirected some of the British traffic in slaves towards the former French colony, during the most active years of naval activity in the

⁷³ “...les incursions des negres marons, n’a recouré un peu de tranquillité qu’en leur faisant des chasses tres meurtriers qui ont necessairement diminué le nombre des bras dont la culture avait si grand besoin...” ANOM FC C10C 3, no pagination, Januay 9 1784.

⁷⁴ BNA CO 101/25 N. 153, Mathew to Sydney, June 22 1784.

Caribbean in 1781 and 1782 transatlantic traffic in slaves to the Ceded Islands amounted to only a tiny fraction of what it had been prior to the American War.⁷⁵

Table 5.1: Number of African Slaves Disembarked in the Ceded Islands, 1775-1783⁷⁶

YEAR	Dominica	St. Vincent	Grenada	Tobago	St. Lucia	Annual Total
1775	5,036	748	3,198			8,982
1776	3,190	387	3,124	825		7,526
1777	2,360	130	2,913	892	90	6,385
1778	417		1,619	636		2,672
1779			917	150	195	1,262
1780					197	197
1781	195				377	572
1782					3,070	3,070
1783	1,323	451	328		1,251	3,353
Totals	12,521	1,716	12,099	2,503	5,180	34,019

Although enslaved laborers in the southern Caribbean continued to produce millions of pounds of sugar, coffee, cacao, and cotton annually, foreign occupation significantly disrupted exports on which the British Empire depended. According to Carrington, between 1779 and 1780—the first year after French forces captured Dominica, St. Vincent, and Grenada—the amount of cacao shipped from the West Indies to Great Britain declined by more than 1,000 cwt, or 112,000 lbs. In the same year, exports of coffee declined by 16,727 cwt, or 1,873,000 lbs. From a pre-war high of 1,525,833 cwt in 1779, exports of sugar from the West Indies to Great Britain declined to 1,080,848 cwt in 1781—a decrease of almost fifty million pounds.⁷⁷ Although these decreases can be attributed in part to disruptions in transatlantic shipping routes, French occupation

⁷⁵ Although active warfare between the British and the American patriots essentially came to an end following the 1781 Battle of Yorktown, naval activity between British and French forces subsequently increased as the French conquered St. Martin, Saba, and St. Kitts before being defeated at the Battle of the Saintes (a group of islands off Dominica) in April 1782. See O’Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided*, 231-237.

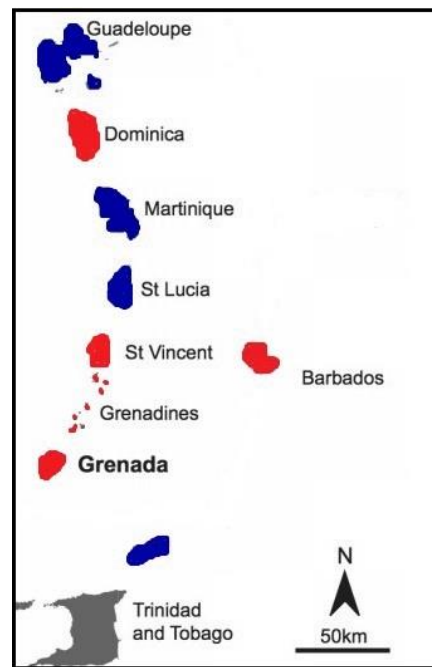
⁷⁶ Data sourced from *Voyages: The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database* at www.slavevoyages.org, accessed February 27, 2014.

⁷⁷ On the decline of British trade with the West Indies, see Carrington, *The British West Indies*, 59.

also diverted a considerable quantity of the produce of the Lesser Antilles to the neighboring free ports of St. Eustatius, as well as to French refiners. With the coming of peace in 1783, the British Crown was particularly determined to increase the productivity of her remaining colonies in an effort to offset the considerable costs of the second inter-imperial war in fewer than fifteen years.

The Ceded Islands after American Independence, 1784-1790

Map 5.3: Respective British & French possessions in the Southern Caribbean c. 1783



The 1783 Peace of Paris essentially reaffirmed the terms of the 1763 Treaty of Paris as they pertained to the Ceded Islands. Dominica, Grenada, and St. Vincent were restored to Great Britain, while St. Lucia returned to the possession of the French. Only Tobago, a British colony from 1763 until its surrender to France in 1781, was retained by the conquering nation; the island remained a colony of France until it was reconquered by British forces in 1789.

Officials who assumed control of the islands of Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Tobago in January 1784 confronted colonies mired by debt, destruction, and generalized disorder. Resentment over the conduct of soldiers and civilians during foreign occupation of the

islands heightened longstanding tensions between French and English inhabitants.⁷⁸ The depredations of Caribs in St. Vincent and of runaway slaves throughout the islands, coupled with the destruction caused by several hurricanes, resulted in considerable damage to plantations and towns.⁷⁹ Many planters, unable or unwilling to honor debts whose repayment had been suspended during foreign occupation, chose instead to abscond. As individuals abandoned their estates or took up new holdings elsewhere, the movement of planters and their slaves generated newfound confusion regarding the ownership of people and land, as well as the legal status of colonial subjects. In the wake of American independence, policies of conciliation and accommodation that characterized colonial rule in the Ceded Islands between the Seven Years' War and the outbreak of the American War were largely abandoned. Reeling from the loss of fourteen out of twenty-six colonies, British administrators pursued a variety of measures that aimed to ensure the profitability of remaining colonial possessions and the loyalty of subjects who had proven themselves worthy of suspicion.

In a deliberate attempt to diminish the threat that free people of color, Caribs, and other adopted subjects were seen to pose, in the wake of American independence British administrators took steps to attract to the Ceded Islands subjects on whom they felt they could depend. In the wake of the American Revolution, the British Crown facilitated the relocation of some 60,000 Loyalists throughout the Empire, including to the island of Dominica.⁸⁰ Most of the Loyalists who

⁷⁸ BNA CO 71/8 N. 9, Orde to North, February 3, 1784.

⁷⁹ A description of some of the damage caused by a hurricane in Grenada and St. Vincent in 1779 can be found in ANOM FM C10A 3 N. 289, November 20 1780; complaints about a hurricane that "uprooted most of the crops" in St. Lucia in 1780 can be found in ANOM FM C10C 3 January 8 1784.

⁸⁰ With the free population of the new French colony of Tobago composed primarily of Scottish planters, the island's governor, Arthur Dillon, similarly sought to encourage the settlement of subjects who would prove loyal to the French. Arguing that as many as 4,000 French free people of color, many of them artisans, had been enticed to go to Trinidad because the Spanish Crown offered generous land grants to Catholics, regardless of nationality, Dillon suggested that free people of color might be persuaded to relocate to Tobago if they were offered greater privileges than those enjoyed by their counterparts in other French colonies. Although Dillon's plan was not realized, his proposal is suggestive of prevailing imperial attitudes regarding the utility of relocating colonial

arrived in Dominica in 1784-85 were double exiles: former residents of Georgia or South Carolina, they first relocated to East Florida when the colony was declared a Loyalist asylum in January 1782. Motivated by the proclamation of East Florida's British Governor, Patrick Tonyn, that his fellow governors in the British West Indies had been instructed to provide Loyalists with tracts of land and 12 months' provisions, approximately 3,400 whites and more than 6,500 slaves quit East Florida when the former British colony was returned to Spain in 1783.⁸¹ Although many of these refugees sailed for the Bahamas and a smaller number for Jamaica, a number of Loyalists took their slaves and attempted to establish plantations in Dominica.

Arriving on the shores of Dominica after a journey of more than 1,600 miles from St. Augustine, the beleaguered Loyalists elicited the sympathy of British planters and of their representatives in the metropole.⁸² As early as November 1783, a committee of Dominica proprietors assembled in London proposed generous terms for providing "a comfortable asylum for these unhappy sufferers." Estimating that more than 20,000 acres of land in Dominica had yet to be settled, the committee recommended that grants be made to Loyalists "in proportion to the[ir] number of negroes quantity of stock etc." The committee further suggested that Loyalists who elected to come to the island be transported and temporarily housed at the expense of the British government, which would also provide the refugees with nine months' provisions and with the tools and timber necessary to clear their newly-granted lands and establish plantations.⁸³

populations in order to people the colonies with subjects who could be relied upon in the event of future wars. ANOM FM C10E 4, no pagination, Comte de Dillon and Roume de St. Laurent, Sept. 25 1787. Spanish attempts to entice Catholics from Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia and St. Vincent to settle in Trinidad are discussed in A. Meredith John, *The Plantation Slaves of Trinidad, 1783-1816: A mathematical and demographic inquiry* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 12-14.

⁸¹ Frey, *Water from the rock*, 182.

⁸² BNA CO 71/8 N. 203, Orde to Sydney, July 6 1784.

⁸³ BNA CO 71/8 N. 317, Committee of Dominica Proprietors Assembled in London, November 25 1783.

While the terms proposed by the Committee of Dominica proprietors resident in London explicitly sought to increase the “strength of the colony as well as its prosperity,” local planters were especially interested in using Loyalists to protect against the internal threat posed by planters hostile to Great Britain.⁸⁴ French planters in Dominica outnumbered their British counterparts, and their actions during the American War—particularly the aid they allegedly offered to invading forces in 1778—convinced many of the island’s British planters that they could ill-afford to remain a minority in the colony. Less than two months after his arrival in Dominica, Governor Orde wrote his superiors in London to inquire about the possibilities for lessening the French planters’ influence in the island. Might they be persuaded to quit the island if they were denied a renewal of their leases, most of which were soon to expire? In addition to removing an internal threat, Orde’s proposal to prompt a mass exodus of French planters promised to vacate lands so that Loyalists “particularly such as have Negroes, might be here...advantageously settled, and *would prove subjects I should think well to be depended upon.*”⁸⁵

The desire to populate Dominica with white slaveowners loyal to the British Crown is further evidenced by a September 1785 Act of the Dominica Assembly. Despite their frequent complaints of economic hardship engendered by warfare, hurricanes, a fire that destroyed much of Dominica’s capital, and the depredations of runaway slaves, members of the Assembly advocated generous terms for the settlement of suitable Loyalists in Dominica. In addition to allocating a sum of £1,650 sterling from the Public Treasury to help the new arrivals establish themselves in the island, the Dominica Assembly voted to exempt any Loyalist who arrived in the colony before April 20, 1786, from all public taxes for a period of fifteen years. In an attempt to provide particular encouragement to settlers possessed of slaves, the act further exempted Loyalists

⁸⁴ BNA CO 71/8 N. 317, Committee of Dominica Proprietors Assembled in London, November 25 1783.

⁸⁵ BNA CO 71/8 N. 106, Orde to North, Feb. 27 1784. Emphasis added.

from the customary head tax on slaves for the same fifteen-year period. All that was asked in return was that Loyalists swear before a Magistrate that they intended to settle in Dominica permanently.⁸⁶

The proposed measures soon confronted the reality of scarcity caused by the recent war. In June 1785, 150 refugees from East Florida joined the estimated 110 Loyalists who had arrived in Dominica the previous year; the new arrivals reported that another 400-500 individuals (both planters and slaves) were already en route. With rainy season fast approaching, Governor Orde despaired of finding a place to lodge the mushrooming population of Loyalists: “there is not a house or shed to be got here to cover them,” he complained to his superiors.⁸⁷ In addition to the immediate challenges of sheltering and provisioning the Loyalists, there was the problem of where to settle them long-term. The thousands of unclaimed acres to which the Committee of Dominica Proprietors resident in London referred in their proposal were unclaimed for a reason: located in swampy mangroves, on the side of 4,500 foot peaks, or deep in the island’s densely-forested interior, the proposed plots were ill-suited to the establishment of plantations.

Despite the problems attendant in settling Loyalists in Dominica, the island’s British elite persevered in the task. In the years after American Independence, the Governor, Colonial Council and Assembly repeatedly attempted to satisfy Loyalist petitions for further aid.⁸⁸ The measures taken to accommodate Loyalists in Dominica can be contrasted with the situation in Jamaica, where Loyalists were initially welcomed but soon aroused the ire of established planters, who

⁸⁶ BNA CO 73/1 N. 107-112, An Act to exempt for the term of fifteen years from the payment of public taxes all such of His Majesty’s Loyal subjects as are arrived at this island from East Florida... September 30, 1785. In contrast residents of Kingston, Jamaica, raised just £1,000 for the support of the estimated 3,000 Loyalists who poured into the town in the wake of the revolution. Jasanoff, *Liberty’s Exiles*, 255.

⁸⁷ BNA CO 71/9 N. 178, Orde to Sydney, June 20 1785.

⁸⁸ BNA CO 71/13, No pagination, Orde to Sydney, Sept. 23 1787. For an example of such petitions, see BNA CO 71/10 N. 29, Petition of His Majesty’s Faithfull American Subjects, who have taken refuge in this island, to Governor Orde, April 5 1786.

resented any measures of relief afforded their would-be competitors. The only effort to grant lands to Loyalists in Jamaica failed after the mangrove-ridden swamp designated for that purpose was deemed unsuitable as a habitat for any non-amphibious creature.⁸⁹ With a landed elite already long established in Jamaica, Loyalists were seen not as a means to bolster the population faithful to Great Britain but as a challenge to the vested interests of Creole planters. News that Jamaican planters had extended only a lackluster welcome to earlier waves of Loyalists from Savannah and Charleston likely influenced the actions of the East Florida refugees; despite Jamaica's much larger size and greater wealth, more Loyalists left East Florida for Dominica than for Jamaica.⁹⁰

The accommodation of Loyalists in Dominica evidences the newfound emphasis that British administrators placed on the allegiance and dependability of colonial subjects in the wake of American Independence. Although it is impossible to confirm how many Loyalists attempted to settle in Dominica in the wake of the American Revolution, the total number has been estimated at approximately 450 free persons and as many as 2,000 slaves.⁹¹ Given that the free population of the island in 1784 numbered approximately 1,400 whites and 520 free people of color, the Loyalist presence was significant. Even more significant is the fact that of the free population resident in Dominica in the wake of the American War, 340 'new adopted subjects'—that is, residents of the Creole Archipelago—were listed as capable of bearing arms, compared with just 260 British subjects.⁹² Settling Loyalists in Dominica promised to provide both a political and a military buffer against the internal threat of a population that had repeatedly shown itself hostile

⁸⁹ Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles*, 245-277.

⁹⁰ Jasanoff, *Liberty's Exiles*, 261.

⁹¹ Wallace Brown, "The Governorship of John Orde, 1783-1793: The Loyalist Period in Dominica," *The Journal of Caribbean History* 24, N. 2 (Jan. 1990), 160. Alan Gilbert offers a figure of just 444 'blacks' arriving in Dominica from East Florida but does not specify how many of these were free or enslaved. Gilbert, *Black Patriots and Loyalists*, 206.

⁹² BNA T1 610 N. 197, A sketch of the state of this island, with respect to lands, inhabitants, slaves &c. April 10 1784. Population figures in the report were sourced from an April 1782; "consequently there is no certainty in the foregoing numbers."

to British rule. The governor of St. Vincent openly expressed his regret that a similar settlement could not be undertaken in the island, where the presence of Loyalists might guard against the Caribs, “an enemy hostile to us, and blindly attached to the French.”⁹³ Loyalists who received encouragement to settle in the southern Caribbean quite literally embodied the Crown’s desire to populate its colonies with faithful subjects in a newly-reoriented British Empire.

Loyalist settlement also promised to improve the economy of the British Empire. The loss of Tobago and the Thirteen Colonies made the resumption of economic profitability in Britain’s remaining West Indian colonies all the more pressing. Eager to re-establish plantations damaged by war, natural disasters, and the death or desertion of a portion of the enslaved labor force, both planters and colonial officials welcomed the Ceded Islands’ return to their former role as an entrepôt in the transatlantic slave trade. As illustrated by table 5.1 above, during the conflict slightly more than 34,000 people were trafficked from Africa to the Ceded Islands. Table 5.2 below shows that in the first six years after the peace this figure more than doubled, to 77,200 total individuals. Between 1784 and 1789, more than 12,000 enslaved Africans were trafficked to St. Vincent and a further 25,000 to Grenada. The figures for the free port of Dominica are even higher: more than 36,000 slaves disembarked in the island in the first six years following the Peace of Paris. As was the case prior to the American Revolution, many of these slaves were subsequently trafficked to other parts of the Americas.⁹⁴ Customs House records for St. Vincent record 3,926 slaves exported out of the island between January 1784 and July 1789, but British officials

⁹³ BNA CO 260/7 Lincoln to Sydney, May 2 1784. The fact that this ‘hostile enemy’ constituted the majority of the island’s free population, with an estimated 4,000 Caribs outnumbering St. Vincent’s 1,276 whites and 214 free people of color, may have inadvertently deterred Loyalists who might have elected to settle the island. ANOM FM C10D 2 Recensement general 1782.

⁹⁴ Greg O’Malley estimates that 1,706 slaves were re-exported from Grenada and 1,536 from Dominica between 1786 and 1790, but these figures seem somewhat low in light of the figures for St. Vincent cited above. Greg O’Malley, “Final Passages: The British Inter-colonial Slave Trade, 1619-1817,” (PhD Dissertation, Johns Hopkins University, 2006), 340.

estimated that the actual number re-exported was closer to 8,000, as traders often bypassed the Customs House to avoid paying duties on slaves.⁹⁵

Table 5.2: Number of African slaves disembarked in the Ceded Islands, 1784-1789⁹⁶

YEAR	Dominica	St. Lucia	St. Vincent	Grenada	Tobago	Annual Total
1784	5,521	660	2,145	1,714	328	10,368
1785	7,599	277	1,297	3,266	195	12,634
1786	7,053		1,934	1,910	526	11,423
1787	6,138		2,988	4,130	656	13,912
1788	6,411		3,155	7,775	358	17,699
1789	3,294		903	6,491	500	11,188
Totals	36,016	937	12,422	25,286	2,563	77,224

While many of enslaved people trafficked from Africa to the Ceded Islands after the American Revolution were subsequently transported to other colonies, the majority were forced to labor on the sugar, coffee, cacao, and cotton plantations of the southern Caribbean. Planters who complained of a scarcity of slaves during foreign occupation welcomed the opportunity to purchase new laborers who could help restore the profitability of plantations damaged or abandoned during war.

Colonial officials also sought to increase profitability by diminishing the possibility of future disruptions to the plantation regime. Justifiably concerned about the loyalties of people who had welcomed or even facilitated foreign occupation, the new British Governors of Dominica, Grenada, and St. Vincent sought to confirm the allegiance of the islands' Francophone Catholic planters by requiring all men over the age of fourteen and all women who held property to publicly take Oaths of Allegiance, Supremacy and Abjuration within thirty days of the islands' restoration

⁹⁵ BNA CO 260/9, Slaves imported into and exported from St. Vincent, January 1784-July 1789.

⁹⁶ Sourced from *Voyages: The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database* at www.slavevoyages.org; accessed February 27 2014. This table does not indicate the number of slaves subsequently re-exported from the respective islands.

to Great Britain.⁹⁷ Although these oaths mirrored those administered to new adopted subjects resident in the islands following their initial cession to Great Britain in 1763, they essentially negated important gains made during the succeeding decade and a half of British rule. Prior to the outbreak of the American War, new adopted subjects in the Ceded Islands had successfully lobbied to be eligible for nomination to Colonial Council; for election to Colonial Assembly; and to serve as Justices of the Peace, all without taking the Oath of Abjuration. These concessions meant that unlike in Great Britain, Catholics in the Ceded Islands did not have to deny the doctrine of transubstantiation in order to participate in colonial politics. The measures introduced in the wake of the islands' restoration to Great Britain invalidated prior concessions by requiring all Catholics, regardless of political aspiration, to take the Oath of Abjuration.⁹⁸ The purpose of the 1784 legislation was clear: men who had demonstrated their continued attachment to the French Crown would no longer be permitted to participate in British colonial politics. While the same principle was already in effect everywhere else in the British Empire, the new restrictions on electoral participation represented a significant step backward for residents of the Creole Archipelago.

Although residents of the Creole Archipelago did not immediately protest the revocation of electoral privileges, they soon grew restive. Despite Francophone Catholic planters' repeated appeals to local administrators and to officials in London, along with declarations that they would oppose any candidate who did not pledge to "restore to the new subjects, the priviledges of citizens of which they have been unjustly deprived,"⁹⁹ colonial officials held fast to a new conviction that "principles of Liberality towards the New Subjects...proved to be destructive of the

⁹⁷ BNA CO 71/8 N. 65, Proclamation by Governor John Orde of Dominica, January 28, 1784. The act was published in both English and French. Members of the Catholic clergy were exempt from the oath of abjuration, which was essentially a denial of the doctrine of transubstantiation.

⁹⁸ BNA CO 102/3 Instructions to Governor Mathew of Grenada, March 2 1784.

⁹⁹ BNA CO 101/30 N. 6, Petition of freeholders enclosed in Mathew to Grenville, February 27, 1790.

Constitution.”¹⁰⁰ Eschewing policies of accommodation and reconciliation that characterized British rule in the islands prior to American independence, officials present in the islands trained a watchful eye on Great Britain’s remaining subjects.¹⁰¹

Imperial administrators also focused greater attention on free people of color in the wake of the American War. When Grenada was restored to Great Britain, free people of color were reported to account for more than 50% of the free population for the first time; colonial administrators noted with concern that the overwhelming majority of free people of color were ‘French.’ Yet such counts could be misleading, as government officials often politely declined to note the race of individuals who occupied positions of socio-economic importance, allowing people of African ancestry to be counted as white. Rather than reflecting a sudden increase in the number of individuals of African descent, population counts taken in the wake of the American War manifest officials’ newfound fears about the trustworthiness of people of color. As of 1783, Grenada reported 996 white inhabitants, of whom 440 were British and 556 were former French subjects, along with 185 free people of color counted as ‘English’ and 940 free people of color listed as ‘French.’¹⁰² In Tobago, no free people of color were recorded by British administrators prior to the American Revolution; by 1782 the newly-French colony counted 136 free people of color and 405 whites.¹⁰³ Although the 520 free people of color in Dominica were outnumbered by some 1,400 whites, colonial officials were careful to note that among those capable of bearing

¹⁰⁰ BNA CO 101/26 N. 423, Byam et al. to Spooner, March 1, 1786.

¹⁰¹ As in the wake of the Seven Years’ War, legislation introduced by officials in the colonies later received the sanction of imperial officials in the metropole; a 1792 Act of the Privy Council formalized the disenfranchisement of new adopted subjects in Grenada. See Caitlin Anderson, “Old Subjects, New Subjects and Non-Subjects: Silences and Subjecthood in Fédon’s Rebellion, Grenada, 1795-96,” in Richard Bessel, Nicholas Guyatt, and Jane Rendall, eds. *War, Empire and Slavery, 1770-1830* (New York: Palgrave MacMillan, 2010): 201-217.

¹⁰² BNA CO 101/28 N. 123, State of Grenada.

¹⁰³ ANOM FM C10E 7, Recensement general 1782. As will be discussed in more detail below, St. Vincent represented something of a different case, as the island’s 1,276 whites and 214 free people of color were outnumbered by an estimated 4,000 Caribs. ANOM FM C10D 2 Recensement general 1782.

arms were 200 free colored men, 260 British and 340 adopted subjects.¹⁰⁴ With “the desertion of almost all the colored people and the greatest part of the new subjects” during the American War still fresh in the minds of administrators, verifying both the loyalty and the legal status of the colonies’ growing free colored population became a priority.¹⁰⁵

Table 5.3: Free & Enslaved Populations of the Ceded Islands c. 1783

	Dominica (British) ¹⁰⁶	Grenada (British) ¹⁰⁷	St. Lucia (French) ¹⁰⁸	St. Vincent (British) ¹⁰⁹	Tobago (French) ¹¹⁰
Whites	1,400	996	2,114	1,276	405
Free people of color	520	1,125	1,024	214	136
Slaves	13,265	17,792	15,163	12,380	11,053
Caribs	-	-	-	4,000	-
Total free	1,920	2,121	3,138	5,490	541
Total population	15,185	19,913	18,301	21,870	11,594

Acutely aware of the precarious position they occupied in a society dominated by the institution of chattel slavery, people of African descent took particular care to have documents attesting to their free status registered with the relevant British authorities in the wake of the American War. In Dominica, free people of color produced certificates of manumission, wills, and baptismal records dating back as far as the 1740s. Perhaps anticipating that European rule would one day infringe on the freedoms they sought to secure for themselves and their descendants, men and women who had settled in the island long before it became a formal colony carried with them proofs of their free status obtained during their prior residence in British, Dutch, French, and

¹⁰⁴ BNA CO 71/8 N. 190.

¹⁰⁵ BNA CO 101/23 N. 218, Macartney to Germain, July 5 1779.

¹⁰⁶ BNA CO 71/8 N. 190.

¹⁰⁷ BNA CO 101/28 N. 123, State of Grenada.

¹⁰⁸ ANOM DPPC G1506 Recensement Sainte-Lucie 1784.

¹⁰⁹ ANOM FM C10D 2 Recensement general 1782

¹¹⁰ ANOM FM C10E 7, Recensement general 1782.

Spanish colonies throughout the Americas. In one particularly tantalizing testament to the circulation of individuals in the eighteenth-century Atlantic World, a sworn affidavit served as proof that “a certain mulatto, or tawny woman...known by the name of Catherine Gibbes, was born free, being an Indian woman belonging to the Nation of Indians called the Appulatchee.”¹¹¹ As the British Crown tightened its hold on its remaining colonial subjects in the wake of American independence, some of the individuals who had established themselves on the colonial periphery found their claims to residence and even to freedom under threat. Men and women who had elected to settle outside the sphere of imperial rule in the decades preceding the Seven Years’ War now found themselves forced to engage directly with mechanisms of state control.

Conclusion

Despite imperial attempts to draw on prior experiences of colonial rule in order to devise idealized plans for the settlement and development of colonies acquired in the wake of the Seven Years’ War, the actions of new colonial subjects, Caribs, and slaves during yet another inter-imperial conflict gave British officials good reason to fear that “the whole chain of American islands...would...accompany that continent, of which it seems to have once constituted a part.”¹¹² New strategies of British imperial rule adopted in the 1780s were a response not only to the anti-colonial rebellion of subjects in the Thirteen Colonies, but to the perceived treason of planters, Caribs, and slaves in Great Britain’s newest American colonies. Yet as this chapter has shown, longtime residents of the Creole Archipelago who welcomed the French occupation of 1779-1783 were not engaging in treason. Instead, their actions and rhetoric manifested a desire to return to a state of economic, social, and informal political affairs more closely resembling that which they

¹¹¹ DNA Deed Book H N.55, Certificate of freedom Catherine Gibbes.

¹¹² Young, *Considerations*, 30.

had created and maintained in the region prior to the assertion of direct colonial rule—a return they had first sought through diplomatic means in the period preceding the American War.

Although the 1783 Treaty of Paris brought peace between European powers, for most residents of the southern Caribbean the promise of revolution remained unfulfilled. The events of the American War of Independence suggested that the state of affairs during the brief period of peace from 1763 to 1775 was not necessarily permanent. As will be discussed in greater detail in the following chapter, the spark of yet another inter-imperial war provided residents of the Creole Archipelago with a fresh opportunity to break their fragile entente with colonial rule.

Chapter 6: The French Revolution and the Demise of the Creole Archipelago

[T]hat ill-fated island may be said to have cherished a viper in her bosom, that has at length stung her to the heart.¹
-Gordon Turnbull, 1795

Residents of the Creole Archipelago did not have to wait long to once again break their fragile entente with British colonial rule. The peace of 1783 came to an abrupt end just six years later, with the outbreak of the French Revolution in 1789. In February 1793, the declaration of war between France and Great Britain ignited a new episode in the longstanding conflict between the two nations.² By 1795 much of the southern Caribbean was again embroiled in intra- and inter-imperial war, with British forces occupying the French colonies of Martinique and Tobago, and French revolutionary forces struggling to maintain control of Guadeloupe and St. Lucia.³

Although the British colonies of Dominica, Grenada, and St. Vincent were not subject to foreign occupation during the 1790s, the islands did not escape the considerable upheavals that marked the decade. Slaves in Dominica capitalized on regional and transatlantic unrest in order to launch two uprisings, the first in 1791 and the second in 1795. Although both insurrections were quickly suppressed by British forces, they caused considerable financial damage to the colony.⁴

¹ Gordon Turnbull, *A Narrative of the Revolt and Insurrection of the French Inhabitants in the Island of Grenada. By an eye-witness.* (Edinburgh: Arch. Constable, 1795), 13.

² The relationship between the European and American dimensions of the conflict are discussed in Michael Duffy, "War, Revolution and the crisis of the British Empire," in Mark Philip, ed. *The French Revolution and British Popular Politics* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), 118-145.

³ St. Lucia would be successfully invaded by British forces one year later, in 1796, and later ceded to Great Britain. See David Barry Gaspar, "La Guerre des Bois: Revolution, War, and Slavery in Saint Lucia, 1793-1838," in David Barry Gaspar and David Patrick Geggus, eds. *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997), 102-130.

For excellent analyses of the French Revolution in Guadeloupe see Laurent Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens: Revolution and Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787-1804* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), and Frédéric Régent, *Esclavage, métissage, liberté. La Révolution française en Guadeloupe, 1789-1802* (Paris: Grasset, 2004).

Martinique was under British control from 1793 until 1800 before being restored to France, while Tobago was conquered by British forces in 1793 and, like St. Lucia, was ceded to Great Britain after the Napoleonic Wars. On events in Tobago during this period, see K. O. Laurence, *Tobago in Wartime 1793-1815* (Kingston, Jamaica: The Press University of the West Indies, 1995).

⁴ Michael Craton, *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 224-228. The slave rebellion launched in Dominica in January 1791—some eight months before the outbreak of the Haitian Revolution—has received surprisingly little attention from historians. Stephan Lenik alleges

Insurgents in Grenada and St. Vincent were even more successful in their attempts to disrupt or discard British colonial rule. Between March 1795 and June 1796 broad coalitions of indigenous, enslaved, free-colored, and Francophone Catholic insurgents succeeded in gaining control over all but the capital cities of the respective colonies. During more than a year and half of armed conflict, thousands of British troops were deployed to restore order in two Caribbean islands whose combined area amounts to just 265 square miles.⁵ Reported damages totalled well over £3,000,000 sterling, and officials in Grenada estimated that half of the colony's 25,000 slaves were lost to combat, desertion, or execution.⁶

Despite their duration and impact, neither struggle receives much attention in scholarly discussions of the Age of Revolutions; if they are mentioned at all, both are usually explained as natural manifestations of the broader currents that originated in metropolitan France and swept through the rest of the Atlantic World during the era. Yet a close examination of events in the southern Caribbean during the 1790s suggests that the seeds of these conflict were sown not in Europe but in America, and that they originated decades earlier, in the wake of the widespread imperial reforms introduced in the wake of the Seven Years' War. Beginning in the 1760s, British officials in the southern Caribbean experimented with two distinct strategies for incorporating new colonial subjects who had lived for generations outside the sphere of imperial rule: the full

that the leader of the rebellion, Jean Louis Polinaire, a free-colored man from Martinique, was inspired by the ideals of the French Revolution. See Stephan Lenik, "Plantation Labourer Rebellions, Material Culture and Events: Historical Archaeology at Geneva Estate, Grand Bay, Commonwealth of Dominica," *Slavery & Abolition* 35, N. 3 (2014): 508-526. British colonial correspondence and court records relating to the trial and execution of participants in the rebellion can be found in BNA CO 71/20.

⁵ In addition to troops already present in the islands, 17,000 men sailed under General Abercromby to pacify the Windward Islands in June 1796. Craton, *Testing the Chains*, 195.

⁶ Damages in Grenada were estimated at 2 to 2.5 million pounds, while in St. Vincent colonial officials reported more than £815,000 in lost crops, buildings, and slaves. See Michael Duffy, *Soldiers, Sugar and Seapower: The British expeditions to the West Indies and the War against Revolutionary France* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 156, and BNA CO 260/14, no pagination, Report of the Committee of the Legislature appointed by both Houses in November last to investigate and ascertain losses suffered in consequence of the rebellion and invasion of the Charaibs and French.

assimilation of people who practiced a different religion, spoke a different language, and in many cases were of a different race; and the toleration of an *'imperium in imperio'* for people who asserted their indigeneity to the southern Caribbean. Both strategies failed. Through their actions during the French occupation that accompanied the American War of Independence, and again during the 1790s, King George III's newest colonial subjects violently demonstrated their unwillingness to accept British colonial rule. In the wake of the insurgencies of 1795-96 in Grenada and St. Vincent, Great Britain's experiment in adopting new subjects—Amerindians, Francophone Catholics, free people of color, and other 'strangers' who composed the Creole Archipelago—would come to an abrupt and violent end.

Beginning with the 1938 publication of C.L.R. James' *The Black Jacobins*, historians examining the Caribbean during the era of the French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars have explored how insurgents in France's colonies, many of whom were enslaved, reinterpreted and gave new meaning to the Rights of Man.⁷ In perhaps the most influential recent account, Laurent Dubois persuasively argues that French Republican leaders both in the metropole and in the colonies succeeded in encouraging individuals "to think of themselves as active citizens and virtuous defenders of the nation."⁸ Dubois eloquently illustrates how in fighting for their freedom, enslaved people also participated in a transatlantic contest over the basis and the limits of modern citizenship.⁹

⁷ C.L.R. James, *The Black Jacobins: Toussaint L'Ouverture and the San Domingo Revolution* (New York: Vintage, 1989 [First published 1938]).

⁸ Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens*, 235.

⁹ In addition to *A Colony of Citizens*, Dubois further elaborates on the importance of examining French political ideology in a transatlantic context in a number of other works. See especially Laurent Dubois, "Republican Antiracism and Racism: A Caribbean Genealogy," *French Politics, Culture & Society*, Vol. 18, N. 3 (Fall 2000: 5-17); Laurent Dubois, *Avengers of the New World: The Story of the Haitian Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004).

Works that similarly emphasize the transatlantic dimensions of the French Revolution increasingly dominate historical analyses of the Caribbean during the 1790s. Events in each island should not be treated as “localised act[s] of rebellion,” historians argue, “but within the wider context of ideology and political activity during...the ‘age of revolution.’”¹⁰ Emphasizing the impact of Republican leader Victor Hugues, a number of historians contend that both the rhetorical and the material support of French revolutionaries in Guadeloupe incited revolution elsewhere in the Caribbean. In Michael Duffy’s analysis of the effects of the French Revolution in the British West Indies, it was “the inspiration of...Guadeloupe,” that prompted “revolt...in the British colonies of Grenada and St. Vincent.”¹¹ In his analysis of events in St. Lucia, David Barry Gaspar similarly argues that enslaved people “associated themselves with French Republicans...to win the colony for revolutionary France.”¹²

Such interpretations are invaluable for a number of reasons. First, they succeed in highlighting the interconnected nature of the Atlantic World, showing that American colonies were in no way peripheral to or removed from late-eighteenth-century contests over the meanings of subjecthood and citizenship. Second, they demonstrate the myriad ways in which slaves and free people of color actively participated in these contests, thereby helping to combat popular and academic prejudices that portray non-European or non-white peoples as incapable of contributing to the Enlightenment and the birth of modernity.¹³ Yet by restricting their temporal focus to the years surrounding the French Revolution and by privileging Caribbean insurgencies whose

¹⁰ Edward L. Cox, *Free Coloreds in the slave societies of St. Kitts and Grenada, 1763-1833* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1984), 17. There are of course important exceptions to this argument: for a pointed postcolonial critique of the idea that the Haitian Revolution was directly inspired by Enlightenment ideas emanating from metropolitan France, see Louis Sala-Molins, *Les Misères des Lumières: Sous la raison, l’outrage* (Paris: Robert Laffont, 1992).

¹¹ Duffy, *Soldiers, Sugar, and Seapower*, 136.

¹² Gaspar, “La Guerre des Bois,” 102.

¹³ For more on the transatlantic nature of Enlightenment thought, see Laurent Dubois, “An Enslaved Enlightenment: Rethinking the Intellectual History of the French Atlantic,” *Social History* 31, N. 1 (Feb. 2006: 1-14).

consequences were deeply felt in Europe, existing interpretations risk obscuring the importance of conflicts, actors, and ideologies that originated in the Americas and did not cross the sea: in short, they privilege the transatlantic at the expense of the archipelagic.

By examining both the transnational and the deep local and regional roots of the insurgencies that broke out in Grenada and St. Vincent in March 1795, this chapter offers a new chronology and new interpretations of the scope, causes, and consequences of revolution in the eighteenth-century Atlantic World. Insurgency was not confined to the French and later the Iberian Atlantic; armed rebellion in some of Great Britain's most promising plantation colonies also threatened the economic and naval strength of the expanding British Empire. Free and enslaved people in the southern Caribbean were undoubtedly influenced by revolutionary ideologies and events emanating from metropolitan France, but their struggle against British colonial rule was not a product of these metropolitan currents alone, nor was it confined to the 1790s. The importance of Republican Guadeloupe in determining the course of events in Grenada and St. Vincent has also been overstated. Although Victor Hugues provided ideological and rhetorical support to insurgents in neighboring islands, much-needed material support in the form of troops and ammunition was not often forthcoming. Instead, the coordinated insurgencies of Caribs, slaves, and free people in the southern Caribbean in the latter half of the eighteenth century can be better appreciated as the product of long-simmering tensions brought about by attempts to transform the Creole Archipelago into an orderly center of plantation production. Rather than a uniquely indigenous and a primarily free-colored insurgency inspired by and benefitting from the concrete support of French Revolutionary forces, the conflicts that respectively came to be known as 'the Second Carib War' and 'Fedon's Rebellion' were but two of the many cross-racial, cross-class reactions against British colonial rule to animate the southern Caribbean in the long eighteenth century. Subsequent

narratives that depicted the insurgencies as composed of and driven by disaffected non-whites deliberately sought to minimize the broader stakes of the conflicts. As a Grenada planter dramatically wrote in 1795, the colony “may be said to have cherished a viper in her bosom;” British attempts to incorporate indigenous, free-colored, and Francophone Catholic people who had actively sought to live outside the sphere of colonial rule proved to be a dangerous endeavor. Just as they had during the Carib War of 1772-1773 and the American War of Independence, in 1795-1796 new adopted subjects in the southern Caribbean would once again sting the British Empire “to her heart.”¹⁴ Their determination to reject many features of colonial rule through diplomatic and violent means revealed the limits of imperialism in this Atlantic borderland.

An Uneasy Peace: The Southern Caribbean after the American War of Independence

As the previous chapter explained in detail, the 1780s witnessed the revocation of many of the political and economic gains that residents of the Creole Archipelago successfully fought to secure between the 1763 Treaty of Paris and the outbreak of the American War of Independence. In the years after 1783, the British Crown’s ‘new adopted subjects’—both white and free-colored—were formally denied the right to vote, to sit on Colonial Councils or Assemblies, or to hold commissions in the militia. Prominent British planters who had unsuccessfully opposed the admission of Francophone Catholics to Council and Assembly in the 1760s, including Ninian Home and Alexander Campbell, were adamant that the “gross misconduct” of French subjects during the recent American war warranted the immediate “abolition of the indiscreet and improper privilege which had been formerly granted to them.”¹⁵ In addition to refusing to grant Francophone Catholic subjects a return to the status they had enjoyed between the assertion of British rule in

¹⁴ Gordon Turnbull, *A Narrative of the Revolt and Insurrection of the French Inhabitants in the Island of Grenada. By an eye-witness.* (Edinburgh: Arch. Constable, 1795), 13.

¹⁵ BNA CO 101/26 N. 423, Byam et al. to Charles Spooner, March 1, 1786.

1763 and the outbreak of the American War of Independence, British officials confiscated Catholic Church property and imposed stricter controls on free people of African descent.¹⁶

Punitive measures failed to promote harmony in Great Britain's remaining American colonies. In the years after American independence, tensions between British Crown officials and their subjects in the southern Caribbean mounted. Among the individuals affected by the regressive legislation of the 1780s was Julien Fedon, a Francophone Catholic free-colored planter who would lend his name to the rebellion that consumed Grenada for almost two years.

Although a number of historians speculate that Fedon and many of his fellow insurrectionists first migrated to Grenada from the French colonies of Martinique or Guadeloupe while Grenada was occupied by French forces during the American Revolutionary period, surviving government and parish records retained in the Caribbean suggest otherwise.¹⁷ At the time of Grenada's cession to Great Britain in 1763, the Fedon family was living in the northwestern parish of Grand Pauvre, which the British renamed St. Mark's. A capitation roll taken in 1763 indicates that Julien's father, Pierre Fedon, owned a small coffee plantation in Grande Pauvre worked by just three slaves.¹⁸ By 1779, Julien Fedon had settled in the nearby town of Gouyave, which the British called Charlotte Town, on Grenada's west coast. He lived with his wife, Marie Rose Cavelan, whom he had probably known for much of his life: on a list of former subjects of the King of France who signed the oath of allegiance required of anyone who wished to remain in Grenada after the island was ceded to Great Britain in 1763, the name of Michel Cavelan, Marie Rose's father, appears just a few lines below an entry listing "Fedon her mark"—probably Julien's

¹⁶ Anonymous, *A Brief Enquiry*, 4-6. These heightened restrictions are also discussed in Cox, *Free Coloreds*, 81.

¹⁷ Edward Cox asserts that "[t]here is a strong likelihood that none was born on Grenada and that all immigrated to the island either during the period of French occupancy between 1779 and 1784 or thereafter." Cox, "Fedon's Rebellion," 14. Drawing on Cox, Dubois echoes this assertion in *A Colony of Citizens*, 228.

¹⁸ BNA CO 101/1 N. 18.

mother, a former slave named Brigitte. Rather than signing their names, both Fedon and Cavelan marked their allegiance with an ‘x,’ betraying that they were illiterate.¹⁹

Like most residents of the Creole Archipelago, the Cavelan and Fedon families were Catholics who publicly affirmed their personal and familial connections through rites such as marriage and baptism. According to historian Curtis Jacobs, two of Julien’s brothers, Étienne and Jean, married two of Marie Rose’s sisters, Elizabeth and Marguerite.²⁰ The families further strengthened their ties by means of spiritual kinship: surviving Catholic baptismal records for the parish of Gouyave reveal that Julien’s mother Brigitte was chosen to act as godmother to a daughter born to her son Étienne Fedon, while Julien and Étienne’s sister, Marie Fedon, acted as godmother to Julien and Marie Rose’s daughter.²¹ The real and symbolic connections forged by marriage and godparentage would have important consequences in the years to come, as Julien Fedon’s siblings, in-laws, friends, and neighbors became active participants in the struggle against British colonial rule in Grenada.²²

Although members of the Fedon and Cavelan families continued to celebrate familiar rites as British colonial subjects, surviving documentation also hints at some of the ways in which their

¹⁹ Beinecke MS 166, Oaths of Allegiance, Grand Pauvre. A census of the island taken in 1772 lists a “Cavelan, FM,” or ‘free mulatto,’ as the owner of a twenty-eight acre coffee plantation worked by ten slaves in Gouyave, suggesting that members of the Cavelan family also moved to the parish. BNA CO 101/18 Part II N. 58, State of the Parish of St. Mark in the island of Grenada, 1772.

²⁰ Curtis Jacobs, “The Fédons of Grenada, 1763-1814,” online at <http://www.open.uwi.edu/sites/default/files/bnccde/grenada/conference/papers/Jacobsc.html>, accessed December 22, 2014.

²¹ EAP295/2/3/1 Gouyave Register of Baptisms, marriages and burials, pg. 21. In the record of his marriage Etienne Fedon’s wife is identified as ‘Marie Elisabeth La Vallon,’ which may be an alternative rendering of ‘Cavelan.’ Marie Elisabeth’s surname is also sometimes spelled as ‘Cablant,’ while Fedon is rendered as ‘Foedon,’ ‘Fédon,’ and ‘Fidon.’ It is also possible that Etienne remarried subsequent to the marriage documented by Curtis Jacobs. Marie Rose’s baptism can be found in EAP 295/2/3/1: Gouyave Register of Baptisms, marriages and burials, page 12, March 12 1780.

²² Julien’s sister Marie Louise was married to Charles Nogues, Julien’s second-in-command during the insurrection. GRO Grenada Supreme Court, French Deeds, December 9 1788, cited in Curtis Jacobs, “The Fédons of Grenada, 1763-1814,” no pagination. Kit Candlin also cites the importance of family ties in drawing adherents to Fedon. Candlin, *The Last Caribbean Frontier*, 13-14.

daily lives were affected by the inter-imperial conflicts of the late eighteenth century. Parish and property records also shed light on some of the practical and ideological reasons that likely motivated Fedon and his followers to reject British rule. When Julien and Marie Rose baptized their daughter, also named Marie Rose, on December 25, 1779, the baby was considered illegitimate; the baptismal record notes that her parents had wed “according to the English custom,” without observing Catholic rites of marriage. Only after French conquest of the island during the American War of Independence did Julien Fedon and Marie Rose Cavelan affirm their union according to Roman Catholic rites, thereby legitimating Marie Rose and any siblings she may have had.²³ Although the record is silent on the couple’s reason for first marrying ‘according to the English custom,’ it is possible that a Catholic marriage, or a priest to perform the ceremony, was unavailable to Julien and Marie Rose while they were living under British rule. French occupation of Grenada in 1779-83 may have provided the Fedons, along with other residents of the Creole Archipelago, with a welcome respite from the restrictions they faced under British colonial rule, and reminded them of the religious, juridical, and social opportunities they might enjoy under a different regime.

The restoration of British rule in 1783 brought fresh challenges for people like the Fedons. Wary of the allegiances of free people of color who were widely reputed to have welcomed French occupation of Dominica, Grenada, and St. Vincent, British officials enforced a 1767 law that required people of African descent to furnish documents attesting to their status as free people.²⁴

²³ EAP 295/2/3/1: Gouyave Register of Baptisms, marriages and burials, page 12, March 12 1780. The baptismal record reads: “Nous soussigné Miss. Apost. De l’ordre de St. Dominique et curé de la paroisse St. Pierre de l’ance la Gouyave certifion avoir baptisé le 25 decembre dernier une petite fille, née de Marie Rose Cablant [Cavelan], épouse de Julien Fedon selon la coutume Angloise au tems du baptême de la dite enfant mais à présent épouse légitime, ayant revalidé le mariage, selon les rites de l’église Catholique Romaine le 7 février dernier et légitimé la dite fille elle a été nommée Marie Rose par Michel Aubrang et Marie Fedon les parrain et marraine. ”

²⁴ “The desertion of almost all the colored people” is referenced in CO 101/23 N. 218, Macartney to Germain, July 5 1779, and discussed in detail in chapter 5.

Those who lacked adequate documentation were required to find two fellow subjects who would agree to swear before two Justices of the Peace that the individual in question was “reputed and regarded to be, to all Intents and Purposes whatsoever, Free from Slavery;” anyone who failed to produce “two credible freeholders” to confirm his or her freedom was subject to imprisonment.²⁵ While it is unclear how strictly this legislation was enforced when it was first introduced in 1767, in the wake of American independence British colonial officials trained a more watchful eye on their free-colored subjects in the southern Caribbean. Understanding how these and other changes in colonial rule were experienced by individuals sheds light on some of the concrete factors that motivated millions of people to participate in anti-colonial rebellions in the last decades of the eighteenth century. For the Fedons and others like them, such reforms were more than abstract pieces of legislation: they were real threats to the existence they had created for themselves and their descendants. In 1787 Marie Rose Cavelan, a legitimately-married woman born to a free, property-owning family, was among those required to find individuals who would corroborate her status as a free woman- a status that she had enjoyed her entire life.²⁶

Although both Curtis Jacobs and Kit Candlin speculate that Marie Rose was imprisoned until two suitable corroborators could be located, the certificate of freedom created March 4, 1787, does not indicate whether Julien Fedon’s wife was ever jailed. Regardless of whether Marie Rose’s freedom was physically denied to her during a period of imprisonment, however, her juridical and symbolic status as a freeborn person were inarguably threatened under British colonial rule. These were threats not likely to be forgotten by Marie Rose, her husband, or members of their tightknit extended free-colored family. Expanding the chronological analysis of Fedon’s Rebellion to

²⁵ BNA CO 103/1 N. 43, Act to prevent the further sudden increase of free negroes and mulattoes, April 21, 1767. The initial implementation of this law is discussed in chapter three.

²⁶ GRO Grenada Supreme Court, Deed Book W.I. 1787, pgs. 166-7, cited in Candlin, *The Last Caribbean Frontier*, 12, and in Curtis, “The Fedons of Grenada,” no pagination.

include the conflicts of the American Revolutionary and interwar periods belies any simple explanation of the insurgency as “clearly linked with the French Revolutionary cause.”²⁷ Despite being born free to legitimately-married parents, working to accumulate property in land and slaves, and forging familial, social, and business ties, in the wake of the American War of Independence residents of the Creole Archipelago like Julien Fedon and Marie Rose Cavelan were repeatedly and publicly reminded that the position they occupied under British colonial rule was a precarious one. When presented with the opportunity to rid themselves of the insults they endured as British subjects, Fedon and his followers did not hesitate.

The period between the end of the American War of Independence and the outbreak of the French Revolution was also characterized by rising tensions between British officials and colonial subjects elsewhere in the southern Caribbean. In Dominica, slaves who had deserted the plantations during the French occupation of 1778-1783 continued to attract new maroons to their ranks, leading planters to complain that the British Crown was failing to protect them from attack.²⁸ British subjects in St. Vincent also expressed unease about the strength of colonial rule in the colony, advocating for the necessity of “removing the Charaibbs within their proper limits, and of establishing a post for the protection of the country.”²⁹ Instead of a welcome respite from war, the end of the American War of Independence ushered in a period of uncertainty and unease for many residents of the southern Caribbean.

The French Revolution in the Southern Caribbean?

After six short years of peace, unrest returned once again to the southern Caribbean on Sunday, August 30, 1789. Yet the disruption did not emerge in response to revolutionary agitation

²⁷ This explanation is offered in Cox, *Free Coloreds*, 77.

²⁸ BNA CO 71/9 N. 324, Orde to Sydney, Dec. 15 1785.

²⁹ BNA CO 260/9, N. 55, “An account of the Island Caribs and their mode of living,” enclosed in Governor Seton to Sydney, Jan. 1789.

in metropolitan France. A full two weeks before news of the French Revolution reached the region's shores, several hundred slaves massed near St. Pierre, Martinique, to demand the full and immediate emancipation they claimed had been granted them by the King of France.³⁰ Although the insurgents' methods were relatively traditional—they appealed to God and to the monarchy to deliver them from slavery—their aims and the language they employed to achieve them were decidedly revolutionary.³¹ Identifying themselves as an “entire nation of black slaves united together...with one unanimous voice,” the insurgents proclaimed that “suffering has enlightened [them] and has determined [them] to spill to [their] last drop of blood rather than support the yoke of slavery, a horrible yoke attacked by the laws, by humanity, and by all of nature...”³²

As Léo Elisabeth argues, the events of August 30, 1789, are particularly significant because they challenge predominant narratives about the circulation of revolutionary ideology in the Atlantic World.³³ Rather than originating with whites before spreading to free people of color and then to slaves, the revolutionary spark in late-eighteenth century Martinique was first lit by enslaved people.³⁴ Attributing the slaves' demands to the “seditious insinuations” of a Capuchin priest and to anti-slavery rhetoric emanating from France, the interim Governor of Martinique wasted no time in suppressing the attempted insurrection, publicly executing the principal conspirators on September 3, 1789.³⁵ Yet officials both in the French colony and in nearby islands

³⁰ The uprising of August 1789 is discussed in David Patrick Geggus, “The Slaves and Free Coloreds of Martinique during the Age of the French and Haitian Revolutions: Three Moments of Resistance” in Paquette and Engerman, eds. *The Lesser Antilles in the Age of European Expansion*, 280-301. See also Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens*, 85-89.

³¹ The importance of rumors that monarchs had issued decrees regarding the better treatment of slaves or the abolition of slaves in prompting slave revolts is explored in Wim Klooster, “Slave Revolts, Royal Justice, and a Ubiquitous Rumor in the Age of Revolutions,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* Vol. 71, N. 3 (July 2014): 401-424). Klooster argues that such rumors usually emerged locally rather than circulating from abroad; see pages 417-19.

³² Letter from slaves in Martinique, August 29, 1789, cited in Dubois, *A Colony of Citizens*, 87.

³³ On the circulation of information regarding events in revolutionary France, see William S. Cormack, “Communications, the State, and Revolution in the French Caribbean,” *French Colonial History* Vol. 6 (2005): 45-53.

³⁴ Léo Elisabeth, “Gens de couleur et révolution dans les îles du Vent (1789-janvier 1793),” *Revue française d'histoire d'outre-mer* 76, N. 282 (1989: 75-95).

³⁵ ANOM FM C8A 89 f. 57, Du Houx de Vioménil, September 14, 1789.

remained on edge, and the first news of the French Revolution—which arrived in the form of tricolor *cocardes* worn by several ship passengers who disembarked in St. Pierre on September 15, 1789—did little to calm their fears.³⁶ The subsequent contest between Royalist and Revolutionary factions in Martinique plunged the colony into a state of civil war, and in the ensuing years officials in neighboring British and French colonies were quick to blame any attempted uprisings not on the influence of France or of Saint-Domingue on the “dangerous, execrable example” of Martinique.³⁷

Armed conflict between supporters of the French Revolution who flocked to St. Pierre and self-styled ‘aristocratic’ planters who remained loyal to the Crown in Martinique had important consequences throughout the southern Caribbean.³⁸ British colonial officials endeavored to keep the conflict from spilling into neighboring islands by forbidding foreign subjects, particularly free people of color, from setting foot in territories under their command.³⁹ Eager to allay any fears that Caribs, free people of color, or former French subjects might revolt, in the early 1790s British officials also obtained written and verbal promises of allegiance from their new adopted subjects. While some of these promises were unsolicited, such as the written pledge by a group of self-

³⁶ The first arrival in Martinique of people from France wearing the revolutionary *cocarde* is announced in ANOM FM C8A 89 f. 81, de Vioménil, October 17, 1789.

³⁷ “Le dangereux, l’execrable exemple...” *Gazette de Sainte-Lucie, Nationale et Politique*, Vol. IV N. 11, January 11 1791, pg. 10. The author of the article blamed Martinique for an attempted slave uprising in St. Lucia in January 1791. A copy of the *Gazette* is archived in BNA CO 71/20. Subsequent slave uprisings in the southern Caribbean are traced in Yves Benot, “La Chaine des Insurrections d’esclaves dans les Caraïbes de 1789 à 1791,” in Marcel Dorigny, ed. *Les Abolitions de l’esclavage: De L.F. Sonthonax a V. Schoelcher* (Paris: Presses Universitaires de Vincennes), 179-186.

³⁸ A firsthand account of the contest between Royalists and Revolutionaries in Martinique is *Révolution de la Martinique, Depuis le premier septembre 1790 jusqu’au 10 mars 1791* (Fort-de-France: Société d’Histoire de la Martinique, 1982). For an historical analysis of the conflict, see Liliane Chauleau, “La Ville de Saint-Pierre sous la Révolution Française,” in Roger Toumson and Charles Porset, eds. *La période révolutionnaire aux Antilles: Images et Résonances* (Paris: Groupe de Recherche et d’Etude des Litteratures et Civilisations de la Caraïbes et des Ameriques Noires, 1986), 115-135.

³⁹ See for example BNA CO 101/33 N. 63, Mathews to Dundas, Mar. 11 1793; Dominica National Archives [DNA], Privy Council [PC] 1 Vol.3 Mar. 7 1793 “Proclamation restraining the admission of French mulattoes and free negroes from entering the island.”

identified free people of color in Grenada who declared themselves “fully sensible of the peculiar advantages, [they] enjoy under the most Excellent Constitution of England,” others required some prompting.⁴⁰ Following the declaration of war between France and Great Britain in February 1793, the St. Vincent Council and Assembly requested that Carib representatives attend their meeting. After explicitly reiterating the terms of the 1773 Treaty that brought an end to the Carib War, the Council extracted a promise from the representatives that all Caribs would remain neutral in the event of a war, and would “not suffer any French person or persons to stay amongst them.”⁴¹

As was the case in 1773, however, the Carib representatives who attended Council did not necessarily speak on behalf of all Caribs.⁴² Nor did the free people of color who pledged their loyalty to the British Crown in Grenada represent all of King George III’s new adopted subjects. Yet these professions of loyalty, however coerced or unrepresentative, greatly influenced subsequent responses to the insurgencies of 1795-96. When British planters and colonial officials reflected on the actions of ‘new adopted subjects’ in Grenada and in St. Vincent, what emerges most clearly is a sense of betrayal. Caribs, free people of color, and especially white Francophone Catholics who rose up against the British Crown were perceived to have abandoned the very principles of civility that motivated King George III to assimilate them as his ‘new adopted subjects’ after the Seven Years’ War. In light of their earlier professions of loyalty, their actions were more than rebellious: they were treasonous. Narratives that propagated the widespread perception of treason would have consequences not only for the insurgents and their families, but for the very survival of the Creole Archipelago.

⁴⁰ BNA CO 101/32 N. 95, Enclosed in Mathew to Dundas, Jan. 10 1792.

⁴¹ BNA CO 260/12, Minutes of the Privy Council, March 23, 1793.

⁴² Just four days after Carib representatives made their pledge to the St. Vincent Council, another Chief identified as Dirand came before the Council in order to inform the members that two of his fellow Chiefs had left for Martinique in order to seek the support of the French. BNA CO 260/12, Minutes of the Privy Council, March 27, 1793.

Although archival documents testify to considerable heterogeneity in the juridical, racial, and socioeconomic backgrounds of the men and women who participated in the Grenada insurrection of March 1795 through July 1796, surviving accounts of what came to be called Fedon's Rebellion largely espouse a singular narrative. In this version of events, "a most cruel and desperate insurrection of many of [King George III]'s subjects, consisting of the free coloured people, descendants of French capitulants, instigated by several of [the King]'s new adopted white subjects, and acting under commissions from the French Commissioners at Guadeloupe," wreaked havoc in the island.⁴³ Yet there is little to suggest that the 'rebels' consisted mainly of free colored people, nor that they or their counterparts in St. Vincent acted solely or even primarily on the basis of commissions they received from the French Revolutionary commander Victor Hugues, who was stationed at Guadeloupe.⁴⁴ A review of Hugues' surviving correspondence yields no direct communication between the Republican commissioner and the respective leaders of the insurgencies in Grenada and St. Vincent and few mentions of events in either island.⁴⁵ A lone memoir, written by a political opponent of Hugues in 1797, laments the commander's decision to give commissions to "three mulattoes chased out of Grenada by debts" and claims that Hugues then "abandoned this attempt to its own devices for the space of eight months without doing anything to support it."⁴⁶ Although the French Republican commissions produced by two of

⁴³ BNA CO 101/34 N. 330, "Humble petition of Your Majesty's most dutiful and loyal Subjects, the Members of Your Majesty's Council of the Island of Grenada..." July 3, 1795.

⁴⁴ For more on Hugues and his role in Guadeloupe, see Laurent Dubois, "The Price of Liberty: Victor Hugues and the Administration of Freedom in Guadeloupe, 1794-1798." *The William and Mary Quarterly* Vol. 56, N. 2 (Apr. 1999: 363-392).

⁴⁵ In a detailed inventory of surviving correspondence for revolutionary Guadeloupe (ANOM FM C7A N. 46-59), Grenada and St. Vincent are mentioned only a handful of times: in ANOM FM C7A 48 N. 22 Hugues reports on Republican successes at St. Lucia and says that Grenada and St. Vincent will be next, while in ANOM FM C7A 48 N. 39, he mentions that the islands are still in the hands of the English.

⁴⁶ "Trois mulâtres chassés de cette île pour dettes... Il avait abandonné cette tentative à elle-même pendant l'espace de huit mois sans rien faire pour la soutenir." ANOM FM C7A 49 N. 138, "Coup d'oeil sur la Guadeloupe et dépendances en 1797, l'an 5 de la République."

Fedon's followers undoubtedly lent them a degree of legitimacy in the eyes of Grenada's colonial government, the men should not be mistaken for French Revolutionary "agents [sent] to stir up the francophone free coloreds and slaves."⁴⁷ Rather than acting on behalf of Hugues, insurgents in Grenada and St. Vincent capitalized on the intra- and inter-imperial war created by the French Revolution in order to pursue their own initiatives. As was the case during the American War of Independence, conflict in the southern Caribbean during the 1790s was the product of a decades-long contest over the contours of political, religious, and economic participation in Great Britain's newest American colonies.

Fedon's Rebellion

Several accounts of Fedon's Rebellion survive in published form. Two self-proclaimed eyewitnesses, one a planter named Gordon Turnbull and the other "a sincere wellwisher to the colony" later identified as Grenada lawyer Thomas Turner Wise, published their narratives while the conflict was still underway.⁴⁸ John Hay, a doctor who was one of only three men to survive captivity under Fedon, published his recollections in 1823, while D.G. Garraway, a descendant of one of the British militiamen who opposed the insurgents, synthesized the earlier accounts in a book published in 1877.⁴⁹ All four narratives share a number of commonalities, the most significant being their authorship by white English-speaking Protestants openly hostile to Fedon and his followers. None of the thousands of men and women who participated in the insurrection left an account of their actions, nor were they given an opportunity to detail their motivations in

⁴⁷ Craton, *Testing the Chains*, 183.

⁴⁸ Gordon Turnbull, *Revolt in Grenada: A Narrative of the Revolt and Insurrection of the French Inhabitants in the Island of Grenada. By an eye-witness* (London: Vernor and Hood, 1795); Anonymous [Thomas Turner Wise], *A Review of the Events which have happened in Grenada, from the commencement of the insurrection to the 1st of May: By a sincere wellwisher to the colony* (Grenada: Printed for the author in St. George's, 1795).

⁴⁹ John Hay, *Narrative of the Insurrection in the Island of Grenada, which took place in 1795* (London: J. Ridgway, 1823); D.G. Garraway, *A Short Account of the Insurrection of 1795-96* (London: Wells, 1877).

court: as will be explored in more detail below, those who sided with Fedon were not charged with a crime but were named in a Bill of Attainder, thereby denying them the benefit of a trial.⁵⁰

Despite the biased nature of surviving sources, available accounts can be mined for details about the events of 1795-96, and can also shed light on the composition and motivations of participants on both sides of the conflict. Although both eyewitnesses and colonial officials repeatedly referred to “a general insurrection of the French free colored people,” a closer examination of the estimated 7,200 participants Fedon’s Rebellion suggests a broader alliance across juridical, racial, and class lines.⁵¹ Out of more than 460 insurgents publicly charged subsequent to the rebellion, British officials explicitly identified more than 100—almost one-quarter of those named—as white. By listing white insurgents separately, officials betrayed deep concern about the involvement of white subjects, particularly those with considerable property in the colony, in what they repeatedly sought to characterize as a ‘free colored’ rebellion.⁵²

The economic position of insurgents was also far from homogeneous. Three of the approximately 160 individuals who were forced to forfeit property in land and slaves as a result of their participation in Fedon’s Rebellion owned more than one hundred slaves each, while a further nine participants forfeited more than fifty slaves. The majority of insurgents—119 of the 160 individuals identified—forfeited slaves described as “unattached to estates,” suggesting that they did not live on plantations but in one of Grenada’s port towns. Of these urban insurgents, almost three-quarters—88 out of 119 owners—possessed five or fewer slaves. Thirty-two owned only one slave.⁵³ This simple list of property forfeited as a result of Fedon’s Rebellion testifies to a

⁵⁰ For a discussion of the extraordinary legal nature of an Act of Attainder, see Anderson, “Old Subjects, New Subjects, and Non-Subjects,” especially pages 209-10.

⁵¹ BNA CO 101/34 N. 22, Mackenzie to Portland, March 22 1795. The estimate of 7,200 insurgents is provided in Wise and echoed by historians. See Cox, “Fedon’s Rebellion,” 8.

⁵² BNA CO 101/34 N. 39, Mar. 28, List of the several white inhabitants of landed property who have joined in the insurrection.

⁵³ BNA CO 106/12 N. 70, Return of the estates slaves &c forfeited by persons attainted by an Act of this Island...

considerable disconnect between narratives of the rebellion and the character of the rebellion itself. The list shows that insurgents came from many different geographic and social milieus, from large sugar estates to urban centers. It illustrates the range of economic and racial backgrounds from which insurgents were drawn, belying the notion of an uprising of disaffected middling free-colored planters and artisans. More than a slave insurgency, a free-colored rebellion, or an extension of the French Revolution, events in Grenada in 1795-96 evidenced complex and widely-shared anti-British and anti-colonial sentiments that had been developing for decades.

Colonial correspondence and surviving accounts of Fedon's Rebellion largely agree on the general course of events.⁵⁴ Distracted by combat elsewhere in the Caribbean, British forces lacked the means to properly police the small West Indian colony; when insurrection broke out in March 1795, fewer than 300 regular troops were present in Grenada.⁵⁵ Just after midnight on the night of March 2-3, 1795, a group of insurgents under the command of Julien Fedon stormed the homes of the English inhabitants of Grenville, a port town on the colony's east coast then better known by its former French name, La Baye. In his narrative of the attack, 'well wisher' Thomas Turner Wise writes that the insurgents "not only murdered in cold Blood every Man they could find, but cut and mangled their unhappy Victims with all the wanton Cruelty, which Savage Ferocity could devise;" accounts agree that only four British men resident in the town escaped the massacre.⁵⁶ A simultaneous attack on Charlotte Town or Gouyave, Julien Fedon's home parish on Grenada's west coast, was considerably less violent. Instead, the insurgents, led by free-colored planters

⁵⁴ In addition to contemporary narratives of the insurrection, historical analyses can be found in Craton, *Testing the Chains*, 180-210; Candlin, *The Last Caribbean Frontier*, 1-23; Cox, "Fedon's Rebellion."

⁵⁵ Many of Grenada's regular forces had been called away to participate in the Grey expedition to attack French colonies. Duffy, "War, revolution and the crisis of the British Empire," 130. Duffy further notes that defense of Grenada therefore depended on the island's militia, which was composed of 40% free colored and 11% former French subjects; "over half were thus potentially disaffected." Duffy, "War," 131.

⁵⁶ Wise, *A Review of the Events*, 4. Turnbull corroborates the figure of four survivors, and alleges that after the inhabitants were shot, "their bodies were shockingly mangled by the most inhuman of the banditti, who were armed with cutlasses." Turnbull, *Revolt in Grenada*, 18.

Etienne Ventour and Joachim Philip, took the town's British planters hostage. Among the hostages was doctor John Hay, who would later author an account of his experiences.

As Hay relates, the number of captives further swelled later on March 3, when a group of insurgents led by Julien's brother, Jean Pierre Fedon, captured a sloop attempting to make its way from the north of the island to the southern capital of St. Georges. Among those captured were the colony's lieutenant governor, Ninian Home, and Alexander Campbell, both wealthy planters who had actively and vocally opposed the extension of political rights to Francophone Catholic subjects since the 1763 Treaty of Paris. The hostages, now numbering forty-three, were marched to Fedon's estate of Belvidere, in Grenada's mountainous interior. Despite Hay's later claim that "we all considered our lives in imminent danger," the doctor was permitted to return under guard to his plundered estate in Gouyave to collect supplies, and he and his fellow hostages "were twice served with boiled beef and plantains" on the first day of their captivity.⁵⁷

How Belvidere Estate came to be the stronghold of the insurgents is a mystery that may further point to some of the locally- and regionally-rooted motivations for Fedon's Rebellion. Deeds retained in the Grenada Registry Office indicate that in April 1786 the 220 square-acre estate, along with two others Grenada plantations, were sold by a planter named Michael Scott for a total price of £24,813. The purchaser was not Fedon but Ninian Home, along with his associates James Stewart and Thomas Alexander Vanderdussen. Included in the sale of Belvidere were 133 slaves, suggesting that the estate was fairly developed and productive.⁵⁸ Five years later, in 1791, Belvidere was again sold, this time to Julien Fedon. The sellers were not Home and his associates

⁵⁷ Hay, *Narrative of the Insurrection*, 34-5.

⁵⁸ Grenada Registry Office, Book L3, no pagination, April 26 1786.

but James Campbell. According to Curtis Jacobs, the estate, now worked by eighty slaves, sold for £15,000, to be paid by Fedon in installments.⁵⁹

Where would Fedon, the son of a former slave and of a small French planter, obtain the money to make such a large purchase? When and why did Belvidere estate pass from Home and his associates to Campbell, and why would Campbell choose to quickly sell the estate to a French man of color? Surviving records offer a few clues. Campbell's selling price of £15,000 amounts to more than half the sum that Home and his associates paid for three estates and more than 400 slaves just five years earlier, suggesting that Fedon was significantly overcharged. Curtis Jacobs also finds no evidence that Campbell ever produced legal title to Belvidere Estate, indicating that Fedon may have been defrauded. Lending further credence to the theory of fraudulent sale are the observations later made by the Commissioners responsible for confiscating the property of individuals convicted of participating in the rebellion. The Commissioners noted that Belvidere Estate, which was said to produce 5,000 pounds of coffee and 20,000 pounds of cacao, "is at present in possession of the mortgagee who... never received any part of the purchase money *which was much more than the real value of the estate.*"⁶⁰ Fedon's purchase of Belvidere may have represented one more insult he endured under British rule: with opportunities for a free-colored French man to enter Grenada's planter elite few and far between, Fedon may have been forced to accept the rather suspect terms of sale as his only opportunity to enjoy the privileges of the planter class. However Fedon came to be master of Belvidere, the estate served him well: located in Grenada's mountainous interior, not far from the island's west coast, the plantation furnished Fedon and his followers with provisions while also providing natural protection from attack.

⁵⁹ The sale is listed in an index of deeds held in the Grenada Registry Office and is described in greater detail in Jacobs, "The Fedons," no pagination. Jacobs does not mention that the estate was previously owned by Home.

⁶⁰ BNA CO 106/12 N. 73, Return of the estates slaves &c forfeited by persons attainted by an Act of this Island..., emphasis added.

Lieutenant Governor Home's captivity in the Belvidere camp had the effect of transferring control of Grenada to Kenneth Francis MacKenzie, then President of the island's Council. On the morning of March 4, MacKenzie and his fellow Council members were visited by two free-colored emissaries, Joachim Philip and Charles Nogues, the latter man a brother-in-law of Julien Fedon. Nogues and Philip presented the Council with two declarations. The first, signed by Fedon and Besson, who identified themselves as officers of the French Republic, ordered "all individuals to...surrender within two hours to the forces of the [French] Republic under our orders."⁶¹ Those who gave themselves up within the time allotted would be assured of the safety of their persons and property; anyone who failed to surrender would soon experience "all the scourges of a disastrous war."⁶² Nogues and Philip also furnished a copy of Victor Hugues' February 1795 Declaration, which informed British commanders that the "assassination of each and every individual Republican (of whatever colour he is, and in whatever Island it may happen) shall be expiated by the death of two English officers our prisoners," and that "any Frenchman [who] shall not join against our common enemy is outlawed, and his property forfeited to the Republic."⁶³

Despite these ultimatums, as well as a desperate entreaty sent to the colonial Council by Ninian Home on March 6, MacKenzie and his fellow councillors declined to negotiate with Fedon's emissaries. Asserting that "we are all equally willing to spill the last drop of our blood rather than disgrace eternally ourselves and our country by a concession to men capable of such a proposition," members of the colonial Council decided instead to order troops against the

⁶¹ Turnbull identifies Stanislaus Besson as "a mulatto silver-smith [from] Grenville" *Revolt in Grenada*, 16.

⁶² "tous individus de...vous soumettre dans le delai de deux heures aux forces de la Republique sous nos Ordres..." "eprouverez tous les Fleaux d'une Guerre Desastreuse." BNA CO 101/34 N. 29, Fedon to Council, March 4 1795. Emphasis in original.

⁶³ BNA CO 101/34 N. 31, Declaration of the Commissioners delegated by the National Convention of France, to the Commanders in chief of the British forces Vaughn, Caldwell, Thompson, Stewart, and Lindsay, the 3rd day of ventose (the 21st february stile of the slaves) in the 3rd year of the French Republic one and indivisible.

Belvidere camp.⁶⁴ Unfortunately for the Council, Grenada's militia proved reluctant to act. Soldiers transported by boat from St. Georges to Gouyave in order to besiege Belvidere Estate "got extremely wet in landing," and elected to dry out by "indulging themselves a little too freely" with the "great Quantity of Rum" to be found in the port; their excesses were such that "only about six or eight and twenty Regulars were able to turn out when the Alarm was given."⁶⁵ Weeks of poor weather, coupled with the subsequent desertion of "upwards of one Half of the Militia" who left Gouyave to take refuge in Grenada's fortified capital, and the suicide of the force's injured Brigadier General prevented British forces from coordinating an attack on Fedon's camp during the month of March.⁶⁶ Although insurgents frequently plundered British estates throughout the island, they did not attempt to enter St. Georges during the month-long stalemate. Reinforcements from Barbados who reached Grenada on March 29 1795 were also of little help. Reporting that the Regiments "are composed of men unaccustomed to service and unseasoned to the climate," acting Governor MacKenzie expressed his concern that the delayed attack had simply "given to the insurgents strength, numbers and confidence."⁶⁷

The British attack that eventually took place did little to buoy the spirits of British planters and officials. Attempting to storm Fedon's stronghold at Belvidere on the morning of April 8, 1795, regular troops and militia found that "the heavy rains which had fallen made it scarce possible for [them] to keep their feet in climbing the hill, and making their way through the fallen trees and underwood their arms were of no service to them." Although British forces succeeded in killing a number of insurgents, including Julien's brother Jean Pierre Fedon, the troops soon found

⁶⁴ BNA CO 101/34 N. 36, Joseph Beete, Secretary of the Council, to Fedon, March 6 1795.

⁶⁵ Wise, *A Review of the Events*, 14.

⁶⁶ Brigadier General Colin Lindsay to Kenneth MacKenzie, March 21, 1795, quoted in Wise, *A Review of the Events*, 43-4.

⁶⁷ BNA CO 10/34 N. 45, MacKenzie to Portland, April 24 1795.

themselves “exposed to a very heavy and galling fire from the enemy” and were forced to retreat.⁶⁸ Keeping his earlier promise to execute his captives if any attack on the camp was attempted, a bereaved Julien Fedon ordered that all but three of his fifty-one prisoners be shot. Only Hay, along with Francis McMahon and William Kerr, were spared.⁶⁹

In his account of the execution, which he did not witness, Wise alleged that the captives “received every Mark of Insult, which could be shewn them;” Home, Campbell, and their fellow captives “were pushed along with brutal Violence to the Spot fixed upon for their Butchery.” After all forty were “deliberately put to Death by the infernal Monsters,” they were buried in “Pits...so superficially dug, That the Hogs about the Place rooted them up.”⁷⁰ Wise’s vivid account, published while battles between British forces and Fedon’s insurgents were still raging, was no doubt intended to rouse the indignation of his readers. The merciless conduct of Fedon’s free colored followers, who declined to afford any respect or humanity to their hostages even in death, stands in marked contrast to the dread and sense of dejection experienced by their white captives. Governor Home, the first to be executed, was reported to have come “forward to meet his Fate with a melancholy, pensive Air of Dejection,” while Campbell allegedly experienced “the most exquisite Anguish both in Body and Mind...from the Sight of his much valued Friend, who then lay lifeless near his Feet.”⁷¹

Turnbull’s decidedly less dramatic account of the events of April 8 similarly sought to contrast the dignity of the victims with the inhumanity of their executors. Noting that “the manner of their being put to death has been variously related,” Turnbull wrote simply that Home and his

⁶⁸ BNA CO 101/34 N. 45, MacKenzie to Portland, April 24 1795. Hay speculates that 67-100 British troops were killed in the attack. Fedon’s camp also suffered casualties, including Julien’s brother Jean Pierre. Hay, *Narrative of the Insurrection*, 78-80.

⁶⁹ A list of the 48 hostages killed can be found in Hay, *Narrative of the Insurrection*, 83.

⁷⁰ Wise, *A Review of the Events*, 100-101.

⁷¹ Wise, *A Review of the Events*, 101.

fellow captives “met their fate, for which they were prepared by uncommon sufferings, with fortitude, with calm and pious resignation.”⁷² The only writer to actually witness the executions, John Hay, confirmed that the victims “all bore their fate like men and Christians,” while the insurgents “showed not the least surprise at so shocking a spectacle.”⁷³

The respective accounts of Wise and Turnbull end here. In mid-May 1795, with British forces and insurgents locked in a stalemate that was to last more than a year, both writers defended the leadership of acting Governor MacKenzie, condemned the insurgents, and expressed their hope that the conflict would soon be over.⁷⁴ Although both works were undoubtedly intended to rally British subjects to the defense of Grenada, the ensuing months failed to bring any relief to the colony. Preoccupied by ongoing conflicts with revolutionary France and Saint-Domingue, as well as with Carib insurgents in St. Vincent, British officials were unable to send sufficient troops to engage Fedon. Nor did Fedon and his followers receive the reinforcements from French Revolutionary troops under Victor Hugues that they initially claimed would be forthcoming; despite issuing Republican Commissions for Grenada, Hugues appears to have offered little material support to his alleged agents. The insurgents’ hold on Grenada was to last a total of sixteen months, as thousands of British troops struggled to regain control over reluctant colonial subjects in both Grenada and neighboring St. Vincent.

The Second Carib War

Although relations in St. Vincent, like those in Grenada, remained relatively calm during the first years of the French Revolutionary war, news of the uprising in Grenada spurred Francophone Catholic and indigenous inhabitants of the colony to action. One week after the

⁷² Turnbull, *Revolt in Grenada*, 103.

⁷³ Hay, *Narrative of the Insurrection*, 76-7.

⁷⁴ Wise *A Review of the Events*, 108; Turnbull, *Revolt in Grenada*, 133.

outbreak of Fedon's Rebellion, on March 9, 1795, a group of Carib insurgents headed by Joseph Chatoyer—the same Chief who led confrontations with British troops during the Carib War of 1772-73—launched an attack on Chateaubelair.⁷⁵ A militia force sent to subdue the insurgents was defeated the following day, and by March 12 insurgents had conquered the British fort at Dorsetshire Hill, just outside the capital of Kingstown, where they replaced the Union Jack with the tricolor flag of the French Republic.⁷⁶ The same day—a day that Chatoyer declared to be “the first day of our liberty”—the island's French planters received a strongly-worded ultimatum bearing the mark of the Carib chief. “What Frenchman would not join with his brothers at a time when liberty cries out in our hearts?” the missive asked, warning that “if some men are still...restrained by [their] fear, we say to them in the name of the Law, that those who do not join with us today, will be regarded as Traitors to the Nation, and treated as Enemies.” The declaration vowed that “the Iron and the Fire will be used against” anyone who failed to join the cause, as the revolutionaries would “burn their goods and slit the throats of their wives and their children to wipe out their race.”⁷⁷

Chatoyer's role in composing this violent missive is unclear. The Carib Chief was not literate, and the declaration is therefore written in the hand of another, unnamed individual, with Chatoyer's distinctive ‘ordinary mark’ scrawled at the bottom of the page. Although the wording of the declaration is not perfect—simple words such as ‘citoiens’ [citizens] and ‘encor’ [still] are

⁷⁵ A narrative of “Caraībes et Révolution Francaise” can be found in Gerard Lafleur, *Les Caraībes des Petites Antilles*, 201-222.

⁷⁶ BNA CO 260/13 N. 13, Seton to Portland, March 16 1795.

⁷⁷ “ Quel est le Francais qui ne se reunisse à ses frères dans un moment où le cri de la Liberté se fait entendre à Coeur rassemblons nous donc Citoiens nos freres a l'entour du Drapeau qui flotte dans cette Isle, et empressons nous de cooperer au grand [illegible] déjà si glorieusement commencé. Mais s'il existait encor des hommes timides, des Francais retenus par la crainte, nous leur declarons au nom de la Loi, que ceux qui ne seront pas rassemblés dans la journées a l'entour de nous, seront regardés comme Traitre a la Patrie, et traités comme Ennemis. Nous leur jurons que le Fer et le Feu vont etre employés contre eux, que nous allons incendier leurs biens et que nous egorgerons leur femmes et leur enfants pour anéantir leur Race. ” BNA CO 260/13 N. 16, Declaration de Joseph Chatoyer General.

misspelled, and several accent marks are missing—the tract’s style and rhetoric evidences a strong grasp of the French language. Accounts of Chatoyer’s exchanges with colonial officials during the Carib War of 1772-73 indicate that he, like most Caribs, was capable of communicating in French, but it is unclear whether he had the ability to express himself in the vivid terms used in the tract.⁷⁸ It seems likely that the declaration attributed to Chatoyer was also shaped by allies with a strong grasp both of the French language and of the rhetoric that would best incite a reaction on the part of French readers; the threat to eradicate the French race by slitting the throats of women and children no doubt succeeded in striking fear in the hearts of readers who thought of the Caribs not as political actors but as a people for whom “it was a principle of their religion to wage inexorable war.”⁷⁹ Yet as was the case in Fedon’s Rebellion, subsequent narratives of the Second Carib War usually sought to place blame on a single racialized group, ignoring examples of collaboration between Amerindians, free-colored and white Francophone Catholics, and French Republican troops.

Collaboration should not be confused for instigation. Although historians credit Victor Hugues with “pushing the Caribs” by capitalizing on their hatred of the English, the Caribs needed no such pushing when they launched their first war against representatives of the British Crown in 1772.⁸⁰ Combatants in St. Vincent did receive greater reinforcements from French Republican forces in Guadeloupe than did their fellow insurgents in Grenada, but in neither island were such reinforcements indispensable in provoking or pursuing insurgency. Regardless of Chatoyer’s role

⁷⁸ In his memoir of the Second Carib War, French soldier Alexandre Moreau de Jonnès also noted that “the Caribs understand French and even speak it with a great deal of ease” (“les Caraïbes entendent le français et même le parlent avec beaucoup de facilité,”), 128.

⁷⁹ This explanation of Carib actions is found in Charles Shepherd, *An Historical Account of St. Vincent*, 160.

⁸⁰ “Afin de pousser les Caraïbes, Victor Hugues martelait la haine des Anglais.” Lafleur, *Les Caraïbes*, 210.

in dictating the ultimatum, the conflict would go on without him: on March 14, 1795, British forces reported killing the Carib chief in combat.⁸¹

Aware of the state of civil war into which Grenada had just plunged, St. Vincent's governor, James Seton, wasted no time in trying to counter the internal threat his government faced. Declaring himself "ready and anxious to make allowances for those who have been seduced from their Duty, or who may have been reluctantly compelled to join a desperate and cruel Enemy," on March 20, 1795, Governor Seton issued a proclamation promising mercy for any insurgent who surrendered within five days.⁸² Seton's promise failed to sway the combatants, and over the course of the ensuing months British forces engaged in battle with Caribs and their allies throughout St. Vincent.

The extent of support for and participation in the insurgency on the part of French Republicans and colonists in St. Vincent is difficult to ascertain. British officials certainly worried about the complicity of Francophone Catholic planters in St. Vincent: in correspondence with his superiors in England, the colony's governor, James Seton, expressed his concern that "all the French Inhabitants within this Government were more or less concerned in fomenting and supporting the Insurrection of the Charaibs." In the wake of a second battle over Dorsetshire Hill in May 1795, the Governor accordingly ordered all French inhabitants detained on ships in Kingstown harbor to await examination by "some of the most respectable English inhabitants." Of those detained, seventy-four deemed "most inimical to the safety of the colony" were sent to

⁸¹ BNA CO 260/13 N. 13, Seton to Portland, March 16 1795. "[T]wenty over Charaibs and some French men were killed, about twenty five were wounded and near fifty made prisoner" in the same attack, with officials at the time reporting that "the enemy consisted of about 120 whites and 250 Charaibs."

⁸² BNA CO 260/13 N. 20, A Proclamation by His Excellency James Seton, March 20, 1795.

British-occupied Martinique to await transfer to England; the others were “ordered to quit this colony without delay.”⁸³

Although Governor Seton was concerned about the role of the French in initiating the insurgency, a close reading of surviving government correspondence suggests that French participants were more likely to play a supporting role in the second Carib War. In a letter subsequently forwarded by Seton to Portland, Dubois, “a native of this island, of French extraction, and a man of some property” in St. Vincent, pleaded with Chatoyer to spare his family in the conflict.⁸⁴ Dubois promised the chief that he “would be infinitely obliged” if he would ask his troops “to have the bounty not to do any harm to my father and my whole family” who had taken refuge in Kingstown only out of fear. In exchange, Dubois declared that he was “ready to render any services that depend on me.”⁸⁵ Rather than ‘fomenting’ Caribs insurgency, Francophone Catholics like Dubois participated in the Second Carib War for a variety of reasons, including simple self-preservation, coercion, or their own reluctance to accept British colonial rule.

As was the case in Grenada, Victor Hugues offered words of encouragement to anyone willing to oppose British or French monarchical rule in St. Vincent, but troops and ammunition to support his eloquent communiqués were not always forthcoming. In a public address to Chatoyer as “chief of a free nation” sent immediately after the initial Carib attack on Dorsetshire Hill, Hugues averred that “the French nation, in fighting despotism, has allied itself with all free peoples.” Proudly proclaiming that France “has always supported its brothers the Caribs,” Hugues

⁸³ BNA CO 260/13 N. 64, Seton to Portland, May 14 1795.

⁸⁴ BNA CO 260/13 N. 64, Seton to Portland, May 14 1795. The excerpted letter predated Chatoyer’s death at the hands of British troops.

⁸⁵ “je vous serez infiniment obligez de parler à tout vos Troupes d’avoir la bonté de ne pas faire aucun mal à mon pere et toute la famille qui est chez le Citoyen Masset à Kingstown c’est la peur qui la fait descendre...Je suis tranquille chez moi pret a vous rendre les services qui dependront de moi...” BNA CO 260/13 N. 66, Copy of a letter from Dubois to Chatoyer.

urged Chatoyer and his fellow Caribs to “attack [and] exterminate... all that is English, but give the French the means to support you.” Hugues further informed Chatoyer that he had named two Francophone Catholic planters living in St. Vincent, Citizen Toraille and Citizen Michel Mathieu, to the respective roles of Captain and Lieutenant.⁸⁶

Despite Hugues’ enthusiastic verbal show of support, the only European to leave an account of the Second Carib War would later recall the Republican Commissioner’s role quite differently. The memoirs of Alexandre Moreau de Jonnès, a French soldier who was eighteen years old when he was sent to the Lesser Antilles to participate in Hugues’ Republican campaign, provide insight into the culture, politics, and day-to-day lives of the Caribs in the last years of the eighteenth century. Moreau de Jonnès is far from an impartial observer; in his book, which was not published until much later in his life, the former revolutionary reminisces on St. Vincent’s Carib territory as an “Eden” and makes no effort to hide the romantic feelings he developed for Eliama, the young daughter of a Carib chief he met during his stay in the island. Despite Jonnès’ sentimentality for a time in his life when his “days were woven of silk and gold,” his writing provides invaluable insight on how the events of 1795-96 were experienced by some of the Carib participants.⁸⁷

Unlike British colonial authorities, de Jonnès does not focus on Chatoyer or the Chief commonly identified as his successor, Duvallé, as the principal leaders of Carib insurgency. Instead, de Jonnès primarily cooperated with Eliama’s father, a chief named Pakiri. The young soldier’s identification of Pakiri as the “Grand Chef” hints at the diverse and perhaps competing

⁸⁶ “ chef d’un nation libre... la nation Française en combattant le Despotisme, s’est allié à tous les Peuples Libres... attaquez exterminiez... tout ce qui est Anglais, mais donnez les moyens aux Français de vous seconder. ” BNA CO 260/13 N. 55, Victor Hugues to General Chaoullé [sic] Chef d’un Nation Libre, 25 Ventose l’an 3 de la République Française.

⁸⁷ “ ...mes jours furent tissus de soie et d’or. C’était bien là l’Eden...rien n’y manquait. ” Moreau de Jonnès, 176.

motivations among insurgents often collapsed into the monolithic category of 'the Caribs.' Gerard Lafleur's argument that Hugues sent a gift of a sabre and hat for Chatoyer and his brother in order to lend them an air of authority further supports the notion that European officials assumed or sought to create a unified Carib leadership that may not have existed in practice.⁸⁸ Rather than coordinating and cooperating with Chatoyer and Duvallé, Pakiri and his followers may have acted according to their own agenda.⁸⁹ Competing or incoherent agendas would have important consequences in the ensuing sixteen-month conflict, as different groups of Carib, free-colored, and white insurgents attacked, negotiated with, and capitulated to British forces at different moments.

Cooperation between Caribs and French Revolutionary forces also suffered from a lack of cohesion. Alleging that Hugues "used the Caribs' national hatred of the English to his benefit," de Jonnès complained that the French republican officer was slow to provide the Caribs with concrete encouragement in form of troops or ammunition.⁹⁰ The few corsairs who arrived in time to aid the Caribs were in Jonnès' opinion nothing more than "rejects," a motley assortment of runaway slaves and sailors who had fallen in with pirates. Jonnès judged that few of the French combatants were worthy of supporting the Caribs, a group he deemed to be "the most civilized men in the army... [with] the least penchant for pillage, arson, and devastation."⁹¹

The correspondence of British officials tends to contradict de Jonnès' judgement about the role played by French troops, suggesting that Hugues played a greater role in St. Vincent than he

⁸⁸ Lafleur, *Les Caraïbes des Petites Antilles*, 207.

⁸⁹ De Jonnès 134.

⁹⁰ Hugues "mit a profit la haine nationale que les Caraïbes portaient aux Anglais ", De Jonnès 136. De Jonnès also cited British reconnaissance of Carib territory and a corps of slave troops raised in Martinique as key to British victory over the St. Vincent insurgency.

⁹¹ "cet assemblage de réfractaires des dépôts coloniaux, de marin déserteurs recueillis par des pirates, de negres marrons enrégimentés, et d'une levée en masse de sauvages, dont les rangs étaient grossis... par leurs femmes et leurs filles transformées en guerriers belliqueux. Ces sauvages, il faut bien l'avouer, étaient les hommes les plus civilisés de l'armée, et ceux qui avaient le moindre penchant pour le pillage, l'incendie et la dévastation. " Jonnès 180.

did in Grenada. In his correspondence with metropolitan officials, Governor Seton repeatedly expressed concern about the threat posed by French Republican reinforcements from Guadeloupe.⁹² In his account of a second decisive battle over possession of Dorsetshire Hill, which occurred on May 7, 1795, the governor attributed the Caribs' initial success to the efforts of approximately 150 French troops "dressed in new uniforms" recently arrived from Guadeloupe. As Seton reported, a force of approximately 300 French and Carib combatants, armed with one hundred pikes, one hundred muskets, and ten barrels of gunpowder, initially succeeded in overpowering the 115 British soldiers and militiamen sent to defend the hill. Determined to keep control of Dorsetshire Hill, which was crucial to the defense of St. Vincent's capital of Kingstown, the governor deployed a further 200 troops and succeeded in routing the insurgents the following morning.⁹³

British forces' successful dispersal of the St. Vincent insurgents on May 8, 1795, resulted in Jonnès being recalled to Guadeloupe by a "furious" Victor Hugues.⁹⁴ The young soldier was therefore not witness to subsequent battles between his Carib allies and British troops, which continued throughout the summer of 1795. Although British reinforcements who arrived in June reported killing more than 200 insurgents—forty-five of them white—in a single battle, victory was far from assured.⁹⁵ The two sides continued to trade attacks into the month of August 1795, with British officials reporting thirteen troops killed in action.⁹⁶

⁹² See especially BNA CO 260/13 N. 59, Seton to Portland, May 8 1795.

⁹³ British forces initially consisted of "thirty rank and file of 46th Regiment, forty militia, forty of the Corps of Rangers, and five of the Royal Artillery with a Field Piece;" these were later reinforced by "sixty rank and file of the 40th...100 of the corps of Rangers and 40 of the militia." BNA CO 260/13 N. 59, Governor Seton to the Duke of Portland, May 8 1795.

⁹⁴ De Jonnès 192.

⁹⁵ BNA CO 260/13 N. 70, Seton to Portland, June 23, 1795. Twelve British soldiers were reported killed in the same battle.

⁹⁶ BNA CO 260/13 N. 82, Seton to Portland, August 7, 1795.

During the remaining months of 1795 and into 1796, British forces remained locked in a stalemate with indigenous, free-colored, white and enslaved insurgents in Grenada and St. Vincent. British troops were only able to maintain control of the islands' respective capitals of St. Georges and Kingstown, and officials openly worried that insurgents would take full control of both colonies. The British strategy of burning provisions and *pirogues* to prevent insurgents from obtaining supplies from neighboring islands had the unfortunate consequence of causing significant damage to crops and buildings in the colonies, and to further disrupting trade. As early as July 1795, Governor Seton reported that St. Vincent's western or Leeward side "is the only part of the island that remains undestroyed." The Governor worried that although Caribs were suffering from the effects of a lack of provisions, "should they possess themselves of this tract [of land] they will be plentifully supplied." The need to protect St. Vincent's Leeward side was especially great because the coast offered "several excellent Bays nearly opposite to St. Lucia," from which the insurgents could potentially receive both information and reinforcements.⁹⁷

British capture of St. Lucia in March 1796, followed by the arrival of some 17,000 British troops sent to the West Indies under Sir Ralph Abercromby in June 1796, finally brought an end to the lengthy stalemate in both Grenada and St. Vincent.⁹⁸ On June 10, 1796, an attack by Abercromby and 4,000 of his men on insurgents in St. Vincent produced the immediate surrender of French troops in the colony, who numbered approximately 460 combatants.⁹⁹ In a further testament to the divergent nature of French Republican and Carib goals in St. Vincent, the colony's Carib inhabitants continued to fight. Although Hugues repeatedly promised that arms,

⁹⁷ Governor Seton reported that British troops had destroyed at least 120 Carib *pirogues*. BNA CO 260/13 N. 80, Seton to Portland, July 10, 1795.

⁹⁸ An account of Abercromby's campaigns in the southern Caribbean can be found in Duffy, *Soldiers, Sugar and Seapower*, 160-198.

⁹⁹ The French articles of capitulation can be found in BNA 260/13 N. 153, Articles of Capitulation which Lieutenant General Sir Ralph Abercromby Commander in Chief of His Majesty's Forces in the West Indies, grants to the Troops of the French Government in St. Vincent, June 11, 1796.

ammunition, and reinforcements would soon arrive in St. Vincent, a successful British blockade of the island ensured that French Republican aid to the Carib insurgents remained ideological rather than practical in nature.¹⁰⁰ Despite the fact that Hugues' own troops were the first to surrender in St. Vincent, the frustrated Republican Commissioner grew increasingly incensed at what he perceived as the "weakness" of the Caribs, who struggled to continue the fight they had started against the British unaided.¹⁰¹

Continued assaults by British troops under General Abercromby slowly began to undermine Carib resolves. On July 18, 1796, the first group of Caribs surrendered to British forces. Although Carib surrender was far from unified—the day after the initial surrender, on July 19, a group of Caribs confronted British troops at Chatoyer's former stronghold of Grand Sable and declared that "they never would submit to the English, and they did not revolt so much from the prospect of death, as from the idea of submission"—in the coming months the first group of capitulants would be joined by many more, until more than 5,000 Caribs admitted defeat at the hands of British forces.¹⁰²

Moreau de Jonnès provides a vivid account of the consequences of Abercromby's campaign. Upon hearing that British forces were planning to attack St. Vincent with a reported 6,000 troops, the French soldier immediately sailed for St. Vincent. Arriving too late to alert his Carib allies to the planned attack, Jonnès made his way toward the village of which he had such fond memories, taking time to examine "all of the bodies that lay strewn on the ground." Upon his arrival, Jonnès was dismayed to discover that "nothing remained of the Carib village but ashes."¹⁰³

¹⁰⁰ For Hugues' promises of reinforcements, see ANOM FM C10D 2, 12 prairial an III; ANOM FM C10D 2 18 brumaire an IV; ANOM FM C10D 2 23 prairial an IV.

¹⁰¹ ANOM C10D 2, Hugues to Audibert, 12 prairial An III.

¹⁰² Shepherd, *An Historical Account*, 166-167.

¹⁰³ "J'eus le courage d'examiner tous ces corps dont la terre était jonchées ... Il ne restait plus de ce carbet que des cendres." Jonnès, 212.

Despite the French soldier's faith that "if ever Providence protected the weak against iniquity, it must assuredly give victory to...the last aboriginal people of this vast archipelago," the Caribs would soon lose their centuries-long battle against the advance of colonial rule in the southern Caribbean.¹⁰⁴

British victory in Grenada was more decisive. Reinforced by Abercromby's troops, British forces captured Fedon's Belvidere stronghold on June 19, 1796, effectively bringing the conflict in Grenada to an end. Although many insurgents were reported killed in the attack, Fedon disappeared, his alleged escape by sea only adding to his allure. By early July Grenada's governor was pleased to report that approximately eighty white men found in the camp, along with roughly the same number of free men of color, had surrendered or been captured alive. Thus ended almost a year and half of combat between British troops and British subjects in what had once promised to be two of Great Britain's most prosperous colonies. As the governor of Grenada reported, "[t]he excessive cruelties committed by the enemy, their devastations for 16 months past, and the consequent ruin of the inhabitants have naturally raised a strong spirit of resentment against the whole body of the insurgents."¹⁰⁵ Feelings of anger and mistrust shared by British planters and officials would motivate them to pursue a harsh and definitive response to the insurgencies of new colonial subjects.

Conclusion: Retribution and the demise of the Creole Archipelago

Court records provide frustratingly little insight into what motivated more than 7,000 white, free colored, and enslaved men and women to participate in Fedon's Rebellion. Because those accused of participating in the insurgency were not afforded a trial, no testimonies were ever

¹⁰⁴ "...si jamais la Providence a protégé le faible contre l'iniquité, elle doit assurément donner la victoire aux Caraïbes et garantir d'une subversion fatale le dernier peuple aborigène de ce vaste archipel." De Jonnés, 212.

¹⁰⁵ BNA CO 101/34 N. 230, Houston to Portland, July 4 1796.

taken. Instead, more than 460 insurgents were named in an Act of Attainder, a legal document that by the end of the eighteenth century was widely “regarded as antiquated and morally dubious.”¹⁰⁶ Individuals named in an Act of Attainder are declared guilty without the benefit of trial, leaving them with only two options: a person can either argue that he or she is not, in fact, one of the individual named in the act, or he or she can confirm that they are one of the individuals named, thereby acknowledging their guilt and accepting the sentence of the court.

Such was the case when more than 460 individuals named as participants in Fedon’s Rebellion were brought before a special Court of Oyer and Terminer established in St. Georges in the summer of 1796.¹⁰⁷ By July 30, just eleven days after the insurgents surrendered, the colony’s governor was pleased to report to his superiors in England that the court had already judged fifty-nine of those named in the Act of Attainder. Of those brought before the court, thirty-eight had already been executed. The governor justified the court’s actions on the grounds that it was necessary to use “the severest examples” in order “to check, if possible, the restless and vindictive spirit of this worthless class of people, who began the war here with murder and devastation,” but acknowledged that the rest would be “respited until His Majesty’s pleasure shall be known.” Insurgents who escaped immediate execution spent the humid summer months of 1796 confined on boats in St. George’s harbor, “their numbers not admitting of their being confined in the common gaol.” The Governor was adamant that those who escaped execution “ought not to be

¹⁰⁶ Anderson, “Old Subjects,” 209. An Act of Attainder was last used in the United Kingdom to punish participants in the 1798 United Irishmen Rebellion; its use was expressly banned in the Constitution of the United States. See Thomas Bartlett, “Clemency and Compensation: The Treatment of Defeated Rebels and Suffering Loyalists After the 1798 Rebellion,” in Jim Smyth, ed. *Revolution, Counter-Revolution and Union: Ireland in the 1790s* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 99-127.

¹⁰⁷ A further twenty-three men were not listed in the act but were tried by the Court. A transcript of court proceedings, including the names of all accused, has been archived by the British Library’s Endangered Archives Project [EAP] 295, online at http://eap.bl.uk/downloads/eap295_2_6_1_transcription.pdf.

suffered to remain in the colony,” proposing instead that they “should be sent to England, there to undergo transportation or banishment according to their different degrees of guilt.”¹⁰⁸

Despite the fact that as many as 6,000 of the estimated 7,200 participants in Fedon’s Rebellion were slaves, those who appeared before the Court of Oyer and Terminer were all free men. This does not mean that enslaved participants in the rebellion escaped punishment. Instead, in the wake of the rebellion slaves found within Fedon’s camp were summarily sentenced—to corporal punishment, sale, or execution—by largely untrained Justices of the Peace.¹⁰⁹

Analyzing Fedon's Rebellion as an “episode of slave resistance,” Caitlin Anderson argues that in denying slaves the benefit of appearing before the court, British colonial officials “suppressed... the possibility of their political personhood and independent agency.”¹¹⁰ Anderson’s characterization of Fedon’s Rebellion as a slave insurgency silenced in the colonial archive provides an important counterpoint to prevailing interpretations of the insurrection as an extension of the French Revolution to the southern Caribbean. Yet Anderson’s analysis largely fails to acknowledge other important factors that kept slaves from being brought before the Court of Oyer and Terminer. Because slaves were considered property rather than subjects of the British Crown, they were deemed legally incapable of bearing allegiance to a monarch and could therefore not be judged guilty of treason. The decision to confiscate slaves as property and sell them off the island was also motivated by financial concerns. By virtue of the twentieth instruction relative to the Sale of Attainted Lands, the Commissioners were empowered to sell any slaves belonging to individuals named in the Act of Attainder, thereby raising funds to help compensate for the

¹⁰⁸ BNA CO 101/34 N. 245, Houston to Portland, July 30, 1796.

¹⁰⁹ For the act ordering that slaves be tried by Justices of the Peace, see BNA CO 103/19 N. 42, ‘An act to secure and detain such persons as shall be suspected of conspiring against His Majesty and His Government within these Islands...and for the more speedy trial and punishment of slaves charged with the said offences.’

¹¹⁰ Anderson, “Old Subjects,” 202.

colony's estimated £2.5 million sterling in losses.¹¹¹ The death or desertion of an estimated 50% of Grenada's 25,000 slaves provided further incentive to retain the labor of those who could be returned to the plantations. Finally, contemporary portrayals of Fedon's Rebellion as the work of Francophone free people of color sought to avoid laying blame on enslaved insurgents; in Gordon Turnbull's account, slaves who joined the insurrection did so only because of their connections with free people of color. In a passage likely intended to argue for the continuation of the transatlantic slave trade, Turnbull stressed that "the *African* negroes who had not been long in the island...were the last to join the insurgents."¹¹²

Ultimately, almost one hundred of the more than 460 individuals named in the Act of Attainder were sentenced to execution. In a decision calculated to inspire fear in colonial subjects, mass public executions were held on July 9, September 26 and 27, and October 12, 1796.¹¹³ Arguing that "we cannot surely be accused of harshness or illiberality of sentiment," prominent British colonists who composed the Court of Oyer and Terminer made a number of additional recommendations intended "to prevent a return of those evils under which we have so long and so severely suffered."¹¹⁴ Alleging that 'new adopted subjects' had definitively proven that they could not be trusted, members of the Court first recommended "the removal, from all public trust and confidence of every Foreigner of whatever description whether capitulant or naturalized." They further suggested that no foreigner be granted permission to land in Grenada for the duration of the ongoing Franco-British war. Most significantly, the court advised that "every Female white, black, or coloured, who by any ties of blood or marriage are or have been attached in any manner

¹¹¹ BNA CO 101/35 N. 107, Statement of some circumstances, relative to the forfeited estates in the island of Grenada.

¹¹² Turnbull, *Revolt in Grenada*, 11-12, emphasis in original.

¹¹³ According to Michael Craton, the July 30, 1796 issue of the *St. George's Chronicle and Grenada Gazette* reported that three white and five free-colored insurgents were executed on the capital's parade. Craton, *Testing the Chains*, 208.

¹¹⁴ EAP295/2/6/1, Court of Oyer and Terminer for trial of attainted traitors record book, 69-70.

to any person who has been concerned in the late dreadful insurrection” be immediately removed from the colony.¹¹⁵

The recommendation that ever foreigner ‘whether capitulant or naturalized,’ as well as all women with any connection to Fedon’s Rebellion be permanently removed from Grenada hints at the broader stakes of the contest between British colonial officials and the subjects they once sought to accommodate. Although not a single woman was officially named by the Court of Oyer and Terminer as a participant in Fedon’s Rebellion, surviving accounts suggests that women’s support for the insurgency did not pass unnoticed.¹¹⁶ Regardless of whether new adopted subjects took up arms in support of the insurgencies, by the end of the eighteenth century their very presence was seen as an inherent threat by British colonial officials. As members of extended Francophone Catholic and free-colored families knit together by religious, economic, and social ties, residents of the Creole Archipelago could no longer be tolerated within the borders of some of the most promising plantation colonies in the British Empire.

The judgements of the Court of Oyer and Terminer reveal the extent to which revolutionary-era conflicts in the southern Caribbean were both produced by and experienced through the lens of deep-rooted local and regional contests. If British colonial officials were reluctant to pardon the conduct of new adopted subjects during the American War of Independence, they were adamant about not forgiving their trespasses during the turbulent time of the 1790s. British colonists and colonial officials who had long regarded Caribs, free people of color, and Francophone Catholic subjects with suspicion once again saw their fears violently confirmed. The events of the late 1770s through 1790s provided a vivid illustration of the extent to which attempts to reconcile a variety of new adopted subjects to British colonial rule in the wake

¹¹⁵ EAP295/2/6/1, Court of Oyer and Terminer for trial of attainted traitors record book, 71.

¹¹⁶ Hay, *Narrative of the Insurrection*, 24.

of the Seven Years' War had failed. No longer willing to tolerate a demonstrated threat to the prosperity of what they once imagined could be their most productive Caribbean colonies, in the last years of the eighteenth century British colonial officials took steps to physically remove all traces of the Creole Archipelago beyond the borders of the British Empire.

Epilogue

The first ship made landfall on the only strip of flat land in the Grenadine island of Baliceaux on July 21, 1796, discharging 276 Caribs onto the rocky beach.¹ Over the course of the following six months these sixty-five men, eighty-nine women, and 122 children were joined by thousands of fellow Caribs, as successive groups of insurgents surrendered to British forces and were exiled from St. Vincent.² By February 1797, 4,336 Caribs had disembarked on the 1 ¼-by-½ mile island.³ Although Baliceaux is located just 10 miles from the southern tip of St. Vincent, the now-uninhabited 320-acre rock is a world apart from the densely-forested territory the Caribs called home. Baliceaux lacks any source of water, so all provisions for the transportees had to be imported at the expense of St. Vincent's colonial government.⁴ With the only beach suitable for landing watercraft located in the center of the hilly island, Caribs were unable to rely on their customary *pirogues* for fishing or for transportation.⁵ Exhausted from more than sixteen months of combat against thousands of British troops, kept crowded together in close quarters, and exposed to typhus, yellow fever, and other illnesses, the exiles began to succumb to "a malignant, pestilential disease."⁶ By March 1797, when the HMS *Experiment* arrived to carry the surviving

¹ In much eighteenth-century correspondence the island is spelled 'Baliseau;' I have elected to use the modern spelling.

² A more detailed narrative of British troops' pursuit of the Caribs and the latter's surrender in groups over the course of several months in 1796-7 can be found in Charles Shephard, *An Historical Account of the Island of St. Vincent* (London: W. Nichol, 1831), 164-174.

³ BNA War Office [WO] 1/82, cited in Christopher Taylor, *The Black Carib Wars: Freedom, Survival, and the Making of the Garifuna*. (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2012), 165-66. In total 1,002 men; 1,779 women; and 1,555 children described as 'black Carib' were landed at Baliceaux, as well as 102 individuals described as 'Yellow Caribs' and 41 'Negroes the property of the Black Caribs.'

⁴ Taylor, *The Black Carib Wars*, 141-2; Shephard, *An Historical Account*, 172.

⁵ A guide to navigating the islands can be found in *West Indies Pilot Vol. II: The Lesser Antilles and the Seacoast of Venezuela*. (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1921), 186-7. For a description of Baliceaux's topography see Taylor, 141-42.

⁶ A discussion of the epidemic can be found in Dickinson, "History of the Causes of a Malignant Pestilential Disease, Introduced into the Island of Baliseau, by the Black Charaibs from Saint Vincent," BNA WO 1/769, cited in Taylor, *The Black Carib Wars*, 143. A witness to the deportation of the Caribs from St. Vincent, Alexandre Moreau de Jonnès alleged that the vessels used to transport the Caribs were infected with yellow fever. Alexandre

Caribs to the Spanish island of Roatán, in the Bay of Honduras, only half of those originally transported from St. Vincent—just 2,248 individuals—remained alive.⁷ Less than thirty-five years after formal colonial rule was extended to the Creole Archipelago, the last people to assert that they were indigenous to the southern Caribbean were forcibly removed more than 1,800 miles beyond the region’s borders.⁸

Map 7.1: St. Vincent and the Grenadines⁹



Moreau de Jonnés, *Aventures de guerre aux temps de la République et du consulat* (Paris: Pagnerre, 1852). Nancie Solien-Gonzalez speculates that the disease was either typhus or yellow fever but concludes that “we shall probably never know for sure” which it was. Nancie Solien-Gonzalez, *Sojourners of the Caribbean: Ethnogenesis and Ethnohistory of the Garifuna* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 22.

⁷ Built in 1784 and used for combat throughout the Lesser Antilles during the 1790 Franco-British wars, the *Experiment* was a 44-gun frigate, part of the penultimate class of British warships of the era.

⁸ An account of the Caribs’ landing at Roatán and subsequent migrations along the Central American coast can be found in Solien-Gonzalez, *Sojourners*, 39-50. Officials in St. Vincent continued to offer rewards for the capture or killing of any Caribs found to be in the island into the early nineteenth century; the last mention of Caribs in the colony dates to 1812, when several were reported to have left the island after the eruption of the Soufrière volcano. See Charles J. M. R. Gullick, “The Black Caribs in St. Vincent: The Carib War and Aftermath,” *Actes du XLIIIe Congrès International des Américanistes* (Paris: Société des Américanistes, 1975): 451-465.

⁹ Map sourced from <http://www.state.gov/p/wha/ci/vc/> accessed April 12, 2015.

British imperial strategies of forcible relocation adopted in the wake of the revolutionary era were not reserved for the Caribs alone.¹⁰ In the last years of the eighteenth century, British officials orchestrated the forcible relocation of hundreds of indigenous, white, and free-colored men and women from St. Vincent, Grenada, Dominica, and Tobago.¹¹ Others left of their own accord, secreting themselves off the islands under cover of night in the same *pirogues* they and their forebears had long used to navigate the archipelago.¹² Following a 1783 Cedula that permitted Roman Catholic subjects of Spain's allies to settle in the infant Spanish colony of Trinidad, many Francophone Catholic residents of Grenada and St. Vincent chose to migrate to the nearby island.¹³ Between 1788 and 1798 the free population of Trinidad—which was conquered by Great Britain in 1797 and became a British colony in 1801—rose from approximately 3,000 to 12,000 individuals as free settlers, many of them free people of color, flocked to take up land grants in the southernmost island in the Caribbean.¹⁴ With the men and women who had most violently opposed

¹⁰ I have elected not to use the term 'deportation' as it connotes repatriation to a land of origin; because Caribs identify as indigenous to St. Vincent I argue that they could not technically be 'deported.'

¹¹ In addition to banishing participants in Fedon's Rebellion and the Second Carib War and their female relatives, British authorities ordered the deportation of more than 600 individuals who had supported a failed French invasion of Dominica under Victor Hugues. On the banishment of insurgents and their relatives from Grenada and from St. Vincent, see Grenada National Archives, Court of Oyer and Terminer for trial of attained traitors record book, n.69-70, Sept. 20 1796; BNA CO 260/13 N. 64, Seton to the Duke of Portland, May 1795.

On deportations from Dominica, see Robert Brown, *A Diary of the Defence of the Island of Dominica, against the Invasion of the French Republicans, & the Revolt of the Dominicans of the Quarter of Colyhaut, in June 1795* (No publication information, item held in the John Carter Brown Library). A comparison of those named in Brown's account with the existing inhabitants of Dominica to whom lands were leased after the 1763 Treaty of Paris (Appendix A) reveals many common surnames, suggesting that many white and free-colored residents of the Creole Archipelago, like the Caribs, were banished after three decades of British rule. The figure of 600 total individuals deported is given in Patrick Baker, *Centring the Periphery: Chaos, Order, and the Ethnohistory of Dominica* (Kingston, On.: Queen's-McGill University Press, 1994), 72.

¹² BNA CO 101/34 N. 264, September 16, 1796, Houston to Portland.

¹³ James Epstein, *Scandal of Colonial Rule: Power and Subversion in the British Atlantic during the Age of Revolution*. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 96-102.

¹⁴ Kit Candlin & Cassandra Pybus, *Enterprising Women: Gender, Race, and Power in the Revolutionary Atlantic* (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2015), 7. For a general history of Trinidad, see Bridget Brereton, *A History of Modern Trinidad, 1783-1962* (London: Heineman, 1985).

formal colonial rule dead or in exile, the porous boundaries of the Caribbean frontier shifted southward, toward Trinidad and the South American main.¹⁵

The migration or removal of many small planters finally provided an opportunity for the expansion of the plantation complex that British colonial officials first envisioned decades before. By the turn of the nineteenth century, the southern Caribbean was in many ways starkly different than it had been just forty years earlier. After being conquered by British forces in 1796 and formally ceded to Great Britain in 1814, St. Lucia joined Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent, Trinidad and Tobago as British colonies, further cementing Great Britain's territorial and economic dominance in the region. Although the Ceded Islands never achieved the level of prosperity promised by pamphleteers in the wake of the Seven Years' War, British planters and officials persevered in their attempts to restore the region's war-torn economy.¹⁶ In the period between the end of the insurgencies in 1796 and the passage of Slave Trade Act of 1807, an additional 42,000 enslaved Africans were trafficked to Great Britain's southern Caribbean colonies.¹⁷ Expansive sugar estates, each worked by hundreds of slaves born not in the Americas but in Africa, replaced many of the mixed-agriculture plantations established by white and free-colored small planters in the middle decades of the eighteenth century. When legislation for the gradual abolition of slavery was introduced in the British West Indies in 1833, the single largest estate at Grand Sable, St. Vincent—the site where thirty-seven years earlier Caribs determined to retain control of their

¹⁵ These shifting boundaries and their consequences are explored in Kit Candlin, *The Last Caribbean Frontier, 1795-1815* (London: Palgrave MacMillan, 2012).

¹⁶ Michael Craton argues that “the effects of Fedon’s rebellion were never fully mended... Grenada became ‘the spice island’ of predominantly small plantations and peasant agriculture rather than a sugar monoculture.” Michael Craton, *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 209.

¹⁷Data sources from *Voyages: The Transatlantic Slave Trade Database*, online at <http://slavevoyages.org/tast/database/search.faces?yearFrom=1797&yearTo=1808&mjstimp=33800.34100.34300.34400.34600>, accessed August 6, 2015.

territory declared that “they did not revolt so much from the prospect of death, as from the idea of submission”—counted almost 700 slaves.¹⁸

Despite this expansion of the plantation complex, the process by which colonial rule and sugar monoculture was extended to the southern Caribbean was much lengthier, more contentious, and less successful than officials such as William Young initially imagined it would be. Decades of diplomatic and violent contestation taught colonial administrators the harsh lesson that attempts to accommodate the inhabitants and the practices of this American borderland within an expanding empire would end in failure; “unless an entire deliverance from French connexion takes place,” officials in Grenada warned, “the tranquility of this colony and its dependence upon the crown of Great Britain will ever be precarious.”¹⁹ It took decades of firsthand experience before imperial officials brought the era of accommodation and experimentation that initially characterized colonial rule in the Ceded Islands to an end. In sponsoring the migration or forcible relocation of hundreds of inhabitants of the southern Caribbean at the end of the eighteenth century, British colonial officials signalled a newfound resolve to remove both the physical presence and the ideological influence of any would-be subject who demonstrated a desire to live outside the sphere of imperial rule.²⁰ Owing in part to experiences in the southern Caribbean, by the beginning of the nineteenth century the British Crown roundly rejected accommodation in favor of securing submission.

Attempts to secure “an entire deliverance from French connexion” proved difficult, however. Long after the 1790s, the distinctive society forged and maintained by residents of the

¹⁸ Joseph Spinelli, “Land Use and Population in St. Vincent, 1763-1960,” (Doctoral Dissertation, University of Florida, 1973), 76-77.

¹⁹ BNA CO 101/34 N. 193, Mitchell to Portland, January 22 1796.

²⁰ Great Britain’s shift towards a more authoritarian style of rule both at home and abroad in the nineteenth century is discussed in C. A. Bayly, *Imperial Meridian: The British Empire and the World 1780-1830* (New York: Longman, 1989); Bayly argues that between 1783 and 1815 “...the colonial state began serious to discipline and control marginal groups and to create wider spheres for the exercise of state power.” Bayly, 6.

Creole Archipelago left its mark on the geography, language, and culture of the southern Caribbean. On their 1837 mission to report on the effects of gradual emancipation in the British West Indies, Joseph Sturge and Thomas Harvey employed a familiar means of transportation to navigate between the small islands, traveling throughout the Lesser Antilles by *piroque*. The visitors noted that since the few roads were “impassable except on mules or horses,” the ocean continued to serve as the “high-way” in and around the islands. Although Caribs were no longer present in large numbers, their technology survived in the “long narrow boats, cut out of a single tree, [which] cut through the water at a rate of five or six miles an hour.”²¹ On both Dominica and St. Lucia, Sturge and Harvey observed that the overwhelming majority of the population spoke French and continued to practice Catholicism; the latter island boasted a single Protestant minister and the court session the visitors attended was conducted entirely in French.²² Islands now grouped alongside Barbados and Antigua as ‘British West Indies’ betray their deeper entangled history in the Carib and French place names that continue to grace natural landmarks and settlements, such as the Jambou River in St. Vincent and the towns of Sauteurs and Gouyave—never Charlotte Town—in Grenada.

In tracing the rise, persistence, and violent demise of the Creole Archipelago over the course of one hundred years, this project reveals a different picture of early America than that often provided by historians, and points to other possible areas of research. Instead of charting the process by which the laws, customs, and institutions of a single European Crown were transferred to and adapted in a specific colony, my research reveals significant overlap and interconnections between spaces often studied along imperial lines. Capturing historical commonalities that

²¹ Joseph Sturge & Thomas Harvey, *The West Indies in 1837: Being the Journal of a Visit to Antigua, Montserrat, Dominica, St. Lucia, Barbados, and Jamaica; undertaken for the purpose of ascertaining the actual condition of the Negro population of those islands*. (London: Frank Cass & Co., 1968), 94.

²² Sturge & Harvey, *The West Indies in 1837*, 116-7

transcend such divides highlights the regular and sustained interactions that shaped what is often thought of as ‘British,’ ‘French,’ or ‘Latin’ America. These inter-imperial interactions are particularly important with respect to a French colonial historiography that lags behind that of its Anglo- and Latin American counterparts; although historians are devoting increasing attention to the earliest French colonizations of the Americas, this project suggests that it would be fruitful to look beyond the boundaries of New France, Martinique, and Saint-Domingue in order to appreciate how French influence permeated past spaces over which the French Crown held official title.

By highlighting movement and circulation within the relatively small space of the southern Caribbean, this project concretely demonstrates how the everyday practices of individuals—rather than the abstract policies of empires—shaped economic, social, informal political, and race relations. Despite the concerted attempts of Enlightenment-era officials to introduce heavily-researched plans for surveying and settlement, economic development, and agricultural and political reforms in some of their last American colonies, a close study of the lengthy struggles to implement these designs reveals that local knowledge often trumped imperial planning. While an exploration of how these lessons shaped subsequent strategies of imperial rule is beyond the scope of the present work, other historians have suggested that experiments in assimilating Amerindians and former French subjects in mainland North America after the Seven Years’ War predisposed nineteenth-century British officials to attempt to assimilate new colonial subjects in India; an examination that includes the southern Caribbean may point to the limits of this assimilationist impulse.²³

²³ In his study of British North America and India after the Seven Years’ War, P.J. Marshall argues that British “willingness to accept a degree of responsibility for French, native Americans and even, by as yet a small minority, for African slaves no doubt helped to break down inhibitions about bringing within an imperial framework Indians, people who were thought to be completely alien to all previous traditions of British imperial rule.” P.J. Marshall, *The Making and Unmaking of Empire*, 196.

Finally, the present project contributes to the historiography of race in the Atlantic World. Works that examine the struggle for equal rights in the emancipation era may have unintentionally led some scholars to assume that free people of color only began to exercise economic and political influence in the late-eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, or that their impact was only significant when it reverberated across the Atlantic.²⁴ My research challenges such conclusions by demonstrating that although colonial officials became increasingly preoccupied with policing colonial subjects according to racial ancestry in the latter half of the eighteenth century, free people of African descent were exercising considerable economic, social, and political authority long before officials began to focus on or even regularly take note of their color.²⁵

In his examination of the rise of slavery in North America, Ira Berlin argues that the consolidation of the plantation complex and the associated transition from ‘society with slaves’ to ‘slave society’ greatly restricted the possibilities available to people of African descent; Berlin shows that people of African ancestry enjoyed greater freedom and influence in the early colonial era.²⁶ The example of individuals like Alexandre Nouet, the mixed-race husband of a white woman and one of the wealthiest slaveowners in St. Lucia in the period before the island became a formal colony, suggests that this influence was especially considerable in borderland regions such as the

²⁴ Kit Candlin argues that “while free people of color had been a factor in the Atlantic world since the beginnings of the slave trade, it is only by the last years of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the next that they finally came into their own and became a major part of Atlantic history.” Candlin, *The Last Caribbean Frontier*, 22-23. On free people of color in the emancipation era, see Gad Heuman, *Between Black and White: Race, politics, and the free coloreds in Jamaica, 1792-1865* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1981); Melanie Newton, *The Children of Africa in the Colonies: Free People of Color in Barbados in the Age of Emancipation* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2008).

²⁵ Several historians examining the case of Jamaica have observed that attempts to limit the influence of free people of color intensified in the latter half of the eighteenth century. See Daniel Livesay, “The decline of Jamaica’s interracial households and the fall of the planter class, 1733-1823” *Atlantic Studies* 9, N. 1 (Mar. 2012: 107-123); Brooke N. Newman, “Contesting ‘Black’ Liberty and Subjecthood in the Anglophone Caribbean, 1730s-1780s,” *Slavery & Abolition* 32, N. 2 (June 2011: 169-183).

²⁶ On the declining possibilities open to free people of color as the plantation complex expanded in mainland North America, see Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1998).

southern Caribbean. In seeking spaces where their racial ancestry would not limit the economic and concomitant social opportunities available to them, people like Nouet consciously attempted to forge and preserve a society distinct from the colonies that surrounded it.

Reconstructing the particular features of this society challenges existing literature on free people of color in the Atlantic World in a number of ways. Rather than constituting a largely urban “discrete, marginalized subset” of the free population in Caribbean colonies, free people of color in the Creole Archipelago often lived on rural estates and were connected by ties of kinship and commerce to whites as well as to other free people of color and to slaves.²⁷ Unlike their counterparts in Jamaica, there is no evidence that free people of color in the southern Caribbean sought to be legally recognized as white; instead, this project provides a number of examples in which individuals and groups openly identified themselves as ‘free negroes and mulattoes’ in statements and petitions that sought to secure them equal rights with their white counterparts. Existing studies of free people of color also suggest that individual gains failed to advance the position of the community as a whole.²⁸ Yet by continuing to publicly legitimate their inter-racial families through marriage, baptism, and inheritance practices, free-colored residents of the southern Caribbean actively sought to maintain their connections and their influence even after the region underwent a transition from society with slaves to slave society.²⁹

Despite the violent dislocations and forcible relocations of the late-eighteenth century, some residents of the southern Caribbean continued to serve as a living reminder that the Creole

²⁷ This characterization comes from Newman, “Contesting ‘Black’ Liberty,” 173.

²⁸ On private bills that sought to advance the position of free-colored individuals, see Samuel J. Hurwitz and Edith F. Hurwitz, “A Token of Freedom: Private Bill Legislation for Free Negroes in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica,” *The William and Mary Quarterly* 24, N. 3 (July 1967: 423-431).

²⁹ Ann Laura Stoler argues that it was not inter-racial relationships themselves but attempts to legitimate such relationships that was seen to pose a threat to colonial societies. See Ann Laura Stoler, “Rethinking colonial categories: European communities and the boundaries of rule,” *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 13, N. 1 (1989: 134-161).

Archipelago was not completely erased by the authoritarian turn of British imperial rule. On their visit to Dominica in 1837, Sturge and Harvey were introduced to a French proprietor who, at eighty-five years old, was reputed to be the oldest white resident of the island. “He is very infirm but retains his mental powers, and much of his French vivacity,” the visitors remarked, noting that the elderly planter’s “reminiscences extended over nearly three quarters of a century.”³⁰ Sturge and Harvey’s visit with the unnamed man and his family alludes to the persistence of a society that the most powerful early modern European empires repeatedly tried—and ultimately failed—to assimilate or erase. “Little of Dominica,” Sturge and Harvey observed, “has been brought into cultivation;” the island seemed to possess a “wild character and unsophisticated nature.”³¹ Despite their obvious discomfort with the state of the island, the visitors depicted the planter’s small coffee estate as an idyll amidst the wilderness. “This benevolent old gentleman seemed to live in patriarchal style in the midst of his people,” playing and eating meals with “the young [black] children [who] almost lived in his house.” Given their role as observers of the apprenticeship system then in place in the British West Indies, Sturge and Harvey likely intended for their anecdote to illustrate the benefits of treating former slaves well.³² Yet their sentimental portrait of domestic life also suggests that both tangible and intangible features of the Creole Archipelago persisted well into the nineteenth century. In his language, religion, customs, and values, the elderly Francophone Catholic proprietor of a small coffee estate resembled many of the thousands of individuals who forged and maintained the Creole Archipelago throughout the long eighteenth century. Nor was his family so different from those of the Nouets, Fourniers, and Vergers, who in

³⁰ Sturge & Harvey, *The West Indies in 1837*, 106.

³¹ Sturge & Harvey, *The West Indies in 1837*, 97.

³² Emancipation-era debates over how best to motivate people to work are discussed in James Epstein, *Scandal of Colonial Rule: Power and Subversion in the British Atlantic during the Age of Revolution* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2012), 184-221.

their business dealings, religious rituals, and migrations throughout the southern Caribbean sought to reaffirm bonds of family and community in the face of an increasingly restrictive colonial world: the planter's wife, whom Sturge and Harvey judged to be "still older than himself," was "slightly coloured."

APPENDIX A: Lands Leased to Existing Inhabitants of Dominica after the Treaty of Paris¹

Name	Parish	Acres Cleared	Acres in Wood	Term ²	Fines (£) ³
Auchamp Collard	ST. GEORGE	20	5	14	45
Auchamp widow St. Aromaint	ST. GEORGE	17	23	14	57
Anglois Louis	ST. GEORGE	19		14	38
D'Aubuison Lasouche	ST. GEORGE	13	3	14	29
D'Auberminey Jean Pierre	ST. GEORGE	10		40	1
Aubert Pierre	ST. PETER	10		40	1
Anglois Julien widow Carelle	ST. PETER	10		40	1
Antheaume, Thomas David	ST. PATRICK	35	32	14	84
d'Aurmont, Guillaume	ST. ANDREW	19	6	14r	34
Avril, Rose and Reine	ST. JOHN	38		14r	57
Aubert, Andre	ST. PAUL	10		40a	1
d'Adhemar Joseph Emanuel	ST. DAVID	10		40a	1
Auffray Claude senior	ST. JOHN	10		40a	1
Auffray Claude Jr.	ST. JOHN	10		40a	1
Auffray Joseph and Pierre de Jardin	ST. JOHN	10		40a	1
Angelique Marie and daughter	ST. GEORGE	13		14	26
Belligny Nicholas Croquet	ST. GEORGE	282	18	14r	582
Bartouil Dominique	ST. GEORGE	9	32	14r	50
Baillie Jean	ST. GEORGE	13		14r	26
de Beauchamp Pierre Gabriel Louis Burke	ST. GEORGE	50	6	14 a	81
Le Baron Louis Antoine	ST. GEORGE	2		40a	1
Blanc Balthazar	ST. GEORGE	10		40a	1
Bausset Joseph Hyacinthe	ST. GEORGE	13		14r	26

¹ BNA CO 106/10 N. 67, Account of the French inhabitants of Dominica whose claims were allowed by the Commissioners and who paid their fines accordingly. February 1766. All spellings from the original.

² Explanation of terms: r=renewable, a=absolute (i.e. non-renewable)

³ All amounts rounded to the nearest pound.

Baillie Robert Jr	ST. GEORGE	10		40a	1
Le Baron Claude	ST. GEORGE	10		40a	1
Brulay Dulongchamp	ST. LUKE	130	48	14r	308
Bellair Roger	ST. LUKE	13	10	14	36
Balsons Catherine Elizabeth Flora Marie Lucie JB and Pierre Nicholas the children of Nicholas Balson dec. by Sorhaindo Jason, their guardian	ST. LUKE	9	7	14	25
Brien Fanchon	ST. LUKE	3		40a	1
Bunel Jean Baptiste	ST. PETER	9	7	14r	25
Blondel Guillaume	ST. PETER	25	32	14r	82
Batour Jean Francois Hercule et Gilbert	ST. PETER	10	6	14r	26
Bontif Andre	ST. PETER	9	7	14r	25
Blanchet Francois	ST. PETER	10		40a	1
Blanchet Pierre	ST. PETER	10		40a	1
Bouchet Charles	ST. PETER	10		40a	1
Blanchard Marie Jeanne widow	ST. PETER	10		40a	1
Bausset Joseph Hyacinthe	ST. MARK	30		14r	60
Beauquet Jean Baptiste Free Negroe	ST. MARK	10		40a	1
Bringham Jeanne Francoise	Ouayanari	19	25	14r	53
Branden Phillip Vanden	Ouayanari	32	19	14r	67
Babin Marie Anne Jeanne	ST. JOHN	10		40a	1
Babin Jean	ST. JOHN	10		40a	1
Blanchard Jacques	ST. JOHN	13	95	14r	114
Bunel Jean Baptiste	ST. JOHN	3	13	14r	17
Bruman George	ST. ANDREW	10		40a	1
Beauplan Henrietta and Jean Baptiste Berthelot	ST. JOSEPH	22		14r	44
Beauplan Barthelot	ST. JOSEPH	28		14a	42
Blanchet Guillaume	ST. JOSEPH	10		40	1
Brehme Michel and Jean Baptiste	ST. JOSEPH	25	32	14r	82
Brouse Gabriel	ST. JOSEPH	63	16	14r	142
Brouse Jean	ST. PAUL	11	3	14r	25

Chaviteau Joseph and Louis	ST. GEORGE	13	19	14r	45
Chopien Pierre	ST. GEORGE	13	13	14r	39
de Casseaux Marie Jeanne Goddard	ST. GEORGE	63		14r	126
de Casseaux Marie Jeanne Goddard	ST. GEORGE	9	106	14r	124
La Corne Nicolas	ST. GEORGE	28	32	14r	88
Clermont Andre Chabrol Lasouche	ST. GEORGE	30	9	14r	69
La Coudere Mathew	ST. GEORGE	30		14r	60
Coulouma, Pierre	ST. PETER	13	3	14a	22
Carell Marianne widow of Laurent Corque and her 3 children Jean Baptiste Charles and Marianne jointly	ST. PETER	15	10	14 a	32
Constance Louis and Adrien	ST. MARK	70		14	140
Catherine Jean	ST. PATRICK	10		40	1
Collee Joseph	ST. ANDREW	79		14	118
Champ Marie widow	ST. ANDREW	10		40	1
Chrtiene Claude	ST. JOSEPH	10		40	1
Carell Michel	ST. JOSEPH	19	6	14	34
La Coudere Mathew	ST. JOSEPH	40		14	60
Caneston Adrien	ST. JOSEPH	10		40	1
Carell Maria Catherine widow Hote	ST. JOSEPH	10		40	1
La Cointre Jean Baptiste	ST. JOSEPH	19		14	28
Coudere Leonard	Colebrooke Bay	10		40	1
Cocque Catherine widow of John Foye	ST. PETER	10		40	1
Chavaroché George	ST. PETER	16		14	32
Chavaroché Mathew, John, Moses, George and Gabriel jointly	ST. PETER	10		40	1
Delamare, Francois Anthony	ST. GEORGE	41	19	14r	101
David, Claude	ST. PETER	10		40a	1
Dubuc, Peter	ST. PETER	10		40a	1
Dusausay, Sorhaindo	ST. MARK	25	19	14r	69
Dubois, Paul free negroe	ST. MARK	10		40a	1

Dubucque, Louis Joseph	ST. PATRICK	17		14r	25
Dubaye, Edme	ST. PATRICK	63	13	14r	107
Dubocque, Pierre	ST. PATRICK	29	9	14r	52
Duchene, Jean Francois Adrien	ST. JOHN	10		40a	1
Dubois, Charles	ST. ANDREW	19	13	14r	41
Dubreuil, Rose widow Payard and her 4 children Peter, Jean Baptiste, Rose, Julie and Ellinor Payard	ST. JOSEPH	22	6	14r	50
Damouval, George	ST. JOSEPH	29	3	14a	46
Duhamel, Elie Maren, Jacques Mondesir, Margarite, Constance & Adelayde Duhamel, jointly	ST. PAUL	13		14r	26
De Lomiere, Jeanne, widow	ST. PAUL	35	47	14r	117
Duhamel, Rose (the widow Marie), Jean Baptiste, Jacques, Thelespar and Francois Aigneau Marie jointly	ST. PAUL	20	10	14r	50
Dumonlin, Louis Corneuve	ST. JOHN	8	8	14r	24
Dupuy, Antoine	ST. JOHN	10		40a	1
Dubois, widow		10		40a	1
David, Widow Elizabeth Marianne	ST. PETER	10		40a	1
Dumoulin, Pierre Alexander Picadeau	ST. GEORGE	100	12	14r	212
Drascon, Auger and Pierre Regal	ST. JOSEPH	32	19	14a	51
Degageu, Bartholemew	ST. GEORGE	25	10	14r	60
Etang Jacques	ST. JOSEPH	10		40	1
Faille Marie Rose Claire	ST. GEORGE	32	12	14r	16
Faille Jean Baptiste	ST. GEORGE	12		14r	24
Fond Leonard	ST. GEORGE	10		40a	1
Fond Marie Ann Rose	ST. GEORGE	10		40a	1
Foureau Felise	ST. PATRICK	9	13	14r	26
Fourenaux Marie Jeanne, Olivier,	ST. GEORGE	32		14r	64

Francois, Nicholas, Michel Gille Jean Fourneau, Louise, Catharine Marie Jeanne, Joseph and Regise the widow and children of Jean Baptiste Fourneau deceased jointly					
Fontaine Jean Louis Paulin	ST. GEORGE	19	32	14r	70
Fosse Jean Charles Francois	ST. GEORGE	10		40a	1
Forget Francois Jr.	ST. GEORGE	10	22	14r	42
Fouchard Marianne Malton	ST. GEORGE	10		40a	1
Fauconnier Francoise widow	ST. PETER	10		40a	1
Foye Pierre	ST. PETER	9	19	14a	32
Fournet Jean Baptiste	ST. ANDREW	10		40	1
Facheur Francois Auffray	ST. JOHN	10		40	1
Fauconnier Charles	ST. PETER	10		40	1
Feuille Marie Claire	ST. GEORGE		60	40	60
Febure Jean Baptiste	ST. LUKE	8	13	14	29
Le Guay Joseph	ST. GEORGE	38	19	14	95
Le Grand Marie Ann Widow Picard	ST. GEORGE	10		40	1
Gautier Marianne widow	ST. GEORGE	10		40	1
Le Garde Alexander	ST. LUKE	10		40	1
Gailliard Pierre	ST. LUKE	10		40	1
Le Garde Marie Marthe	ST. LUKE	10		40	1
Gardie Jacques	ST. PETER	16		14 a	24
Garcon Antoine and Joachim	ST. PETER	16	28	14 a	52
Grenier Alexandre	ST. PETER	10		40	1
Grenier JB	ST. PETER	10		40	1
Grenier Baptiste	ST. PETER	19		14 a	28
Glass Martha	ST. PETER	10		40	1
Guichard Nicholas	ST. PATRICK	10		40	1
Gardie Jean Charles	ST. JOHN	10		40	1
Goulain Jean Maren	ST. ANDREW	10		40	1
Grenier Nicholas	ST. JOSEPH	16		14	24

Garcon Legere St. Croix and Emele children of Antoine Garcon	ST. JOSEPH	19	13	14	41
Le Grand Jean Baptiste	ST. JOHN	10		40	1
Giot Jean	ST. JOHN	10		40	1
Le Grand Catherine Duval	ST. GEORGE	35		14 a	52
Gautier Louis ad Jean Price Mason jointly	ST. LUKE	10		40	1
Garcon Antoine sr.	ST. PETER	19	13	14 a	41
Grosselier Marie Magdelaine	ST. PAUL	10		40	1
Houelche Nicholas	ST. PETER	6	13	14	25
Houelche Laurence	ST. PETER	10		40	1
Herriart Pierre	ST. PATRICK	19		14	19
Herriart Pierre	ST. PATRICK	9	10	14	23
Houelche JB	ST. PAUL	35	35	14	105
Hote Joseph	ST. PAUL	10		40	1
Lamarthe Paul Maceron	ST. PETER	16		14 a	24
Lage Jean Michel	ST. JOSEPH	6		40	1
Lasser Antoine	ST. JOSEPH	57	19	14	133
Lapile Pierre	ST. JOHN	19	3	14	41
Loyer Marie Jeanne wife of Pierre Valet		10		40	1
Laurent Francois	Fond Cany	10		40	1
Louis Martin	ST. GEORGE	13	13	14 a	32
Laval Auge	ST. GEORGE	13		14	26
Loyer Charles	ST. PETER	10		40	1
Massy Joachim	ST. GEORGE	16	17	14	49
Milne Theodore, wife to James Milne	ST. LUKE	10		40	1
Manaire Victor	Colebrook Bay	8	13	14	25
Motard JB Jr	ST. PETER	10		40	1
Motard JB Sr	ST. PETER	10	6	14	26
Motard Tibault	ST. PETER	10		40	1
Mesle Dorothe	ST. PETER	10		40	1
La Marc, Marie Rose widow St. Onge		10		40	1
Mirbeaux Ruffle ML	Colebrook Bay	10		40	1
Mile Victoire Madam	ST. JOHN	10		40	1
Mare Pierre	ST. ANDREW	10		40	1

Moycon, Francois	ST. ANDREW	12	32	14r	56
Magdalane, Marie Widow Baye	ST. ANDREW	10		40a	1
Moura, Paul	ST. JOSEPH	38	13	14r	70
Moura, Paul Nicholas	ST. JOSEPH	13	3	14a	22
Morandais, Catharine Rose Widow Larieu	ST. JOSEPH	25	38	14r	88
Manet, Madam Widow Duhamel	ST. JOSEPH	10		40a	1
Moutet, Jean and Antoine	ST. PAUL	43		14a	64
Marle, Louis	ST. PAUL	10		40a	1
Morandais, Louis Lambert and Gailiard Claude Honore	ST. GEORGE	25	16	14r	66
Mareschal, Louis Jean Baptiste	ST. ANDREW	13	25	14r	44
Nicholas, Jean Baptiste	ST. PETER	10		40a	1
Nicholas, Joseph junior	ST. PETER	10		40a	1
St. Onge, Henry (mullato)	ST. LUKE	16	12	14r	44
St. Onge, Henry (mullato)	Colebrook Bay	16		14r	24
Petit, Marie widow	ST. GEORGE	19	19	14r	57
Personier, Jean Jacques	ST. GEORGE	10		40a	1
Pichot, Pierre	ST. PETER	10		40a	1
Philippe, Honore	ST. PETER	10		40a	1
Peysson, Nicholas	ST. PETER	9	4	14r	22
Pinet, Jean	Colebrook Bay	10		40a	1
Picadeau, Gabriel	Colebrook Bay	32	19	14r	67
Pitaul, Alexis	ST. JOHN	10		40a	1
Pezier, Rene	ST. JOHN	10		40a	1
Pecourd, Antoine	ST. ANDREW	10		40a	1
Pantier Pierre	ST. PAUL	7		40	1
Parise Therese	ST. JOHN	10		40	1
Perie JB and Marie Catherine jointly	ST. JOHN	13	6	14	25
Proce Julien	ST. GEORGE	26	2	14	54
Pacquette Esther	ST. MARK	10		40	1
Pacquette Joseph	ST. PETER	10		40	1

Payard Peter	ST. JOSEPH	6	7	14	19
Ruart Catherine widow Porquier	ST. GEORGE	55		14	110
de Ravinier Fournier	ST. GEORGE	28	32	14	88
Roux Jean	ST. GEORGE	10		40	1
Roger Theotiste	ST. LUKE	10		40	1
Rioland Renault	ST. LUKE	44	7	14	95
La Rond Adonet	ST. LUKE	11		14	22
Riviere Gabriel	ST. PETER	10		40	1
Rozie Eustache	ST. PETER	10		40	1
Regnault JB	Colebrook Bay	10		40	1
Roger Francois	ST. JOSEPH	19		14	28
La Roche William and JB	ST. JOSEPH	13	6	14	32
Robien Lorend	ST. JOSEPH	13	9	14 a	28
Rose Catherine the widow Larien and her 5 children Catherine, Mary Rose, Marie Catherine, JB and Elinor Larien jointly	Colebrook Bay	25	13	14	63
Rousseau Bartholomew	ST. DAVID	10		40	1
Roche John	ST. PETER	10		40	1
Roye Claude and JB jointly	ST. ANDREW	29		14	43
La Roche Jacques	ST. JOSEPH	19	13	14	51
Servant, Jean Baptiste	ST. GEORGE	32	32	14r	96
Sorhaindo, Louis Michel	ST. GEORGE	28	20	14r	76
Scipion, Jean Baptiste	ST. GEORGE	9	10	14r	28
Songuy, Jean Baptiste	ST. MARK	7		40a	1
Superveil, Michel	ST. JOSEPH	10		40a	1
La Serre, Jean Baptiste	ST. PAUL	10		40a	1
La Sueur, Toussaints	ST. JOHN	10		40a	1
Sueur, Leonard	ST. JOHN	10		40a	1
Tregante, Elizabeth, wife of Louis Raquement, Marie and Claude Tregante	ST. GEORGE	10	20	14r	40
Tallandier, Louis junior	ST. PETER	10		40a	1
Titre, Guillaume	ST. PETER	10		40a	1

Tallandier, Pierre Alexis	ST. PETER	10		40a	1
Tallandier, Francois Denet	ST. PETER	10		40a	1
Tallandier, Antoine	ST. PETER	10		40a	1
Tallandier, Luis	ST. PETER	10		40a	1
Titres, George and Louis	ST. MARK	22		14r	44
Thuilbrie, Jean Baptiste Mirleaux	Colebrook Bay	63	63	14r	157
Trocart, Philip	ST. JOHN	9	3	14r	21
Toure, Charles Cleret	ST. JOHN	10		40a	1
Tapau, Louis	ST. ANDREW	10		40a	1
Tessonneau, Ann Francoise	ST. JOSEPH	3		40a	1
Tareau, Gabriel	ST. JOHN	10		40a	1
Turk, Marianne Dubocque	Colebrook Bay	89	38	14r	171
Travestier, Michel	ST. GEORGE	11	4	14r	26
Le Villoux, Nicholas and Joseph jointly	ST. GEORGE	60	16	14r	136
Vrege, Margaret, Widow Robien	ST. PETER	10		40a	1
Vacher, Louis	ST. PETER	16		14r	32
Vozel, Elizabeth Marlia	ST. PETER	10		40a	1
Vozel, Marie Rose	ST. PETER	10		40a	1
Vozel, Elizabeth	ST. PETER	10		40a	1
Vozel, Charles Louis	ST. PETER	10		40a	1
Verned, Henry Francois	ST. JOSEPH	13	67	14r	93
Veyrier, Michael Nathaniel	ST. DAVID	32	96	14r	160
Veyrier, Michel	ST. DAVID	10		40a	1
Vozel, Marianne	ST. PETER	10		40a	1
Welsh, Michel	ST. JOSEPH	12		14r	12

Total amount of acres granted: 6,428 at 6 shillings per acre paid towards survey: 160£

Total number of leases: 248

Total amount of fines: £8,333

All the leases granted to the before mentioned inhabitants bear date the 4th day of March 1766.

APPENDIX B: Lands Leased to Existing Inhabitants of St. Vincent after the Treaty of Paris¹

Name	Parish	Acres Cleared	Acres in Wood	Term	Fines (£)
Arsonneau, Pierre	ST. DAVID	102	10	14 r	206
Audibert, Jean Baptiste	ST. DAVID	32	10	14 r	73
Aulemon Rose Fournier and her sister Luce, Felicite, Ufrazine, Ugenie and Henrietta and her brother Jacques, Benjamin and Francois Fournier Aulemon jointly	ST. ANDREW	35	17	14 r	87
Antoine, Louis	ST. PATRICK	10	0	40 a	1
Arnaud, Antoine	ST. GEORGE		15	14 r	in lieu of lands taken for public use
Bugros, Francois	ST. PATRICK	22		14 r	41
Bugros, Francois	ST. PATRICK	14	23	14 r	55
Bonamy, C. (widow)	ST. ANDREW	42		40 a	147
Blee, Claude	ST. PATRICK	12	2	14 r	25
Bertege, Marianne	ST. GEORGE	22		14 r	42
Bonet, Anne Rose	ST. PATRICK	10		40 a	1
Le Brune Pierre, Marie Bonenfant Le Brune, Charles Heude, Jacques Heude, Girard Heude, Elizabeth Heude and Marie Heude jointly	ST. DAVID	2	15		23
Braad, Jean Baptiste	ST. PATRICK	8			1

¹ BNA CO 106/10 N. 79, Account of the French inhabitants of St. Vincent whose claims were allowed by the Commissioners and who paid their fines accordingly in May 1766. All spellings from the original.

Castillion, Jean Baptiste	ST. PATRICK	19		14 r	36
Le Croix, Philip	ST. DAVID	10	12	14 r	34
Des Colval, Robert	ST. PATRICK	22	20	14 r	67
Campouse, John	ST. GEORGE	21	14	14 r	40
Le Croix, Pierre	ST. GEORGE	14	7	14 r	44
Le Cavalerie, Jean	ST. ANDREW	15	23	40 a	72
Cherpy, Gabriel and La Caze, Guillaume	ST. PATRICK	148		14 r	281
Constan, John	ST. GEORGE	45		14 r	85
Clouet, Elizabeth	ST. GEORGE	29	6	14 r	63
Constantine, Jean Baptiste	ST. GEORGE	10	3	14 r	29
Dubois, Jean Pierre	ST. ANDREW	50	19	14 r	125P
Discord, Antoine	ST. DAVID	29	20	14 r	80
Dumay, Claude Duval	ST. PATRICK	19	30	14 r	36
Dumay, Claude Duval	ST. PATRICK	11		14 r	20
Delatour Beguy and Paul D'Aubermony	ST. PATRICK	18	10	14 r	47
Dubois, Raymond	ST. GEORGE	17	1	14 r	44
Devizein, Francis and Hippolite	ST. PATRICK	16		14 r	30
Duthrone, David	ST. PATRICK	15		14 r	28
Duthrone, David	ST. PATRICK	21	16	14 r	60
Desbat, John and Louis	ST. PATRICK	38		14 r	72
Denell Duplessis, Goslin Duplessis and JB Chamois jointly	ST. PATRICK	81		14 r	154
Darais, Dominique	ST. GEORGE	32	12	14 r	76

Flandrin, Pierre	ST. GEORGE	5	3	40a	1
Le Fort, Marin	ST. GEORGE	12	7	14 r	39
Flandrin, Jean Charles	ST. GEORGE	7		40 a	1
Le Fort, Margaritta (widow)	ST. GEORGE	9		40 a	1
Greaux, Gilbert	ST. PATRICK	10		40 a	1
Greaux, Francois	ST. PATRICK	10		40 a	1
Greaux, James	ST. PATRICK	8	12	14 r	30
Guileau, Marie Louise Boule	ST. PATRICK	10		40 a	1
Gayrin Pierre, Alexis Gayri, Jacques Greaux, Francois, Charles, Philip, Poline, Jean and Marie Beaune jointly	ST. DAVID	21		14 r	40
Gressier, Antoine and Jacques jointly	ST. DAVID	11	6	14 r	28
Godin, Francois	ST. DAVID	9	6	14 r	24
Greaux, Marie Questall	ST. PATRICK	37		14 r	70
Geffrier, Nicolas Francois	ST. GEORGE	80	20	40 a	257
Godrean, Jean	ST. PATRICK	82	2	14 r	158
Galle, Claude	ST. DAVID	21		14 r	40
D'Huett, Rene (2 parcels)	ST. PATRICK	10		40 a	1
Heude, Jacques	ST. PATRICK	18		14 r	34
Heude, Jean Baptiste Junior	ST. DAVID	6	9	14 r	23
Heude, Pierre (2 plantations)	ST. PATRICK	69		14 r	131
Heude Catherine, Pierre Le Brune, Marie Bonfont Le Bressin,	ST. DAVID	39		14 r	74

Charles Heudge, Jacques Heudge, Girard Heude, Elizabeth Verrier Heude					
Imbert, Marie Colombier	ST. PATRICK	3		40 a	1
Imbert, Pierre	ST. GEORGE	66	8	14 r	135
Legas, Nicolas	ST. GEORGE	21	7	14 r	49
Laborde, William	ST. GEORGE	38		14 r	95
LeMaitre, John	ST. GEORGE	6		40 a	1
Lassen, Jean, Francois Aien, Magdelaine and Angelique jointly	ST. GEORGE	26	3	14 r	69
Marin, Michael Vincent, TousSt. Andrewint, Rosette, Francoise, Marie jointly	ST. GEORGE	27	1	14 r	69
Marchand, Antoine (2 parcels)	ST. PATRICK	43	50	14 r	144
Marque, Jean Pierre	ST. PATRICK	22	40	14 r	92
Mondesir, Thuret	ST. ANDREW	170	9	40 a	606
Mallong, Jeremiah	ST. ANDREW	27	20	14 r	92
Moquet, Francois (2 parcels)	ST. DAVID	31		14 r	59
Mercier, Elizabeth, widow Girard Heude	ST. DAVID	49	12	14 r	108
Michel, Nicholas Augustus	ST. PATRICK	48	87	14 r	59
Miquel, Francois et Marie Angelique Godin jointly	ST. DAVID	31		14 r	59
Marginiere, Jean and Blaze Lafarge and Madelonet Riviere jointly	ST. GEORGE	43		14 r	82
Marginiere, Jean (2 parcels)	ST. GEORGE	29	18	14 r	78

Papin, Claudine Sermec (widow)	ST. PATRICK	26		14 r	In lieu of lands relinquished
Papin, Mark	ST. PATRICK	65	30	14 r	161
Pereau, Antoine	ST. DAVID	3	7	40 a	1
Prevot, Joseph (2 parcels)	ST. PATRICK	87		14 r	165
Pradie, Lewis (senior, 2 parcels)	ST. GEORGE	164		14 r	341
Pradie, Lewis junior	ST. GEORGE	60	12	14 r	165
Poiriere, Feleron	ST. PATRICK	10		40 a	1
Questell, Charles Julien	ST. ANDREW	155	22	14 r	322
Rambert, Madam	ST. GEORGE	4	1	40 a	1
Riviere, Andre	ST. PATRICK	52	3	14 r	102
La Roche, Marianne Devizein	ST. PATRICK	10		40 a	1
La Roche, Charles Devizein	ST. PATRICK	19	10	14 r	48
La Roche, Catherine	ST. PATRICK	54	16	14 r	122
Raquet, Pierre	ST. GEORGE	41		14 r	78
Roderique Susan Rose and Jean Baptiste	ST. PATRICK	21	10	14 r	52
La Roche, Greaux Devezin	ST. PATRICK	9		40 a	1
Riviere, Nicholas	ST. GEORGE	16		14 r	40
Rigaud, Cyprion	ST. GEORGE	25	7	14 r	71
Setre, Jean	ST. PATRICK	10		40 a	1
Setre, Antoine	ST. PATRICK	10		40 a	1

Texie, Jacques	ST. PATRICK	40	3	14 r	80
Tetrong, Jean (2 parcels)	ST. PATRICK	54	20	14 r	127
Tona, Francois et Madam Honzale	ST. GEORGE	37		14 r	70
La Taste, Augustine	ST. GEORGE	42	24	14 r	135
Temple, Madam	ST. PATRICK	10		40 a	1
Valle, Lewis (2 parcels)	ST. PATRICK	69	2	14 a	103
Vitet, Jean Baptiste	ST. PATRICK	10		40 a	1
Zweerts, Constantine Christian	ST. DAVID	11	25	14 r	52

Total acres granted: 4,096 at 6 shillings per acre paid towards surveying: £402 8 shillings
97 leases

Total amount of fines: £7,532 10 shillings

The commissioners in compassion to the extreme poverty of a few people have suffered a small part of the above account to remain unpaid until next year.

A Note on Sources

This project is based on more than fifteen months of research in the Caribbean, France, the United Kingdom and the United States. In adopting a framework for the study of early America that does not focus exclusively on a single European empire, I found it necessary to draw on traveler and missionary accounts, parish registers, maps, censuses, and government correspondence written in English, French, and Spanish and held in public archives and private libraries in a number of countries.

Despite sometimes difficult working conditions caused by a lack of adequate funding, archives and registry offices in the Caribbean can be particularly rewarding for scholars seeking to understand the realities of daily life in early America. For instance, the Dominica National Archives in Roseau retain dozens of well-preserved deed books that testify to evolving practices of land- and slaveholding, marital and inheritance patterns, and economic relations in the decades after the island became a British colony, as well as a small number of fragile records for the period preceding 1763. While most of the Minutes of Dominica's Colonial Council and Assembly are also available in the British National Archives, the only extant copies for the period of French occupation during the American War of Independence can be found in Roseau.

The destruction wrought by hurricane Ivan in 2004 seriously compromised the organization and material preservation of Grenada's National Archives. As of my last research trip to the island in 2014, surviving records were housed in the basement of the island's Registry Office, where staff went to considerable lengths to make historical documents available while also coping with the demands of the present. Although the absence of a catalogue or index makes it difficult to work through the hundreds of volumes of French and English deeds, marriage records, and government minutes retained in Grenada, careful work can yield important insights into how the change from

French to British colonial rule was experienced at the administrative, political, and personal level. Projects to protect and digitize key documents, sponsored by the British Library's Endangered Archives Programme, promise to make more of Grenada's little-studied colonial documents available to historians and to the public.

As an overseas department of France, the archives of Martinique benefit from the preservation, cataloguing, and staff that accompany increased government funding. Although many of the archive's holdings are replicated in metropolitan France, documents in Martinique are often originals rather than handwritten or microfilmed copies. Particularly important for the present project are original parish records for the colony's north and southwest, which attest to continued familial and social connections between French subjects in Martinique and others who migrated to Dominica, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and even as far as Tobago. Finally, although St. Lucia's National Archives did not yield a great deal of material relevant to the present project, favorable cataloguing and working conditions should make the site attractive for researchers interested in the island's history from the nineteenth century onward.

Concern about the migration of French subjects from the colonies of Martinique and Guadeloupe to surrounding neutral islands helps explain the surprising wealth of material that survives in France's *Archives Nationales d'Outre Mer* in Aix-en-Provence. Classified in the *Fonds Ministériel* are several boxes of government correspondence pertaining to the settlement of Dominica, Grenada, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, and Tobago beginning in the mid-seventeenth century, while the *Dépôt des Papiers Public des Colonies* series yields census materials for several of the same islands.

In Great Britain, the National Archives at Kew boast a wealth of sources for the history of the island after the Seven Years' War. Treasury Papers reveal plans for the settlement and

development of the new colonies, while Colonial Office correspondence, Colonial Council and Assembly Minutes evidence the challenges these projects encountered on the ground. Both at Kew and in the collections of the U.S. Library of Congress, detailed maps provide visualizations of British designs for the islands.

Printed and manuscript materials at the John Carter Brown Library and in the Beinecke Lesser Antilles Collection at Hamilton College Library provided an important complement to available archival sources. Both libraries boast a wealth of travelogues, missionary accounts, and pamphlets pertaining to events in the southern Caribbean from the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries, while the John Carter Brown collection also includes a number of nineteenth-century histories of the islands. The Beinecke Collection is particularly notable for its assorted deeds and personal correspondence, including the only list of which I am aware of all former French subjects who consented to the introduction of British rule.

Archivists, librarians, and staff at all of the above repositories repeatedly went out of their way to help me access the history of places too often left out of histories of early America and the Atlantic World. It is my hope that this brief note will encourage others in a similar undertaking, as much remains to be found.

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