PORT ROYAL, JAMAICA, AND THE SLAVE TRADE

A Thesis

by

DAVID A. JOHNSON

Submitted to the Office of Graduate Studies of Texas A&M University in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

December 2000

Major Subject: Anthropology
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December 2000

Major Subject: Anthropology
ABSTRACT

Port Royal, Jamaica, and the Slave Trade. (December 2000)

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In the eighteenth century, the British Empire rose to an eminent role in transatlantic slave trade. British ships are thought to have transported more individuals into bondage during this century than in any other period in the history of human existence. Arguably the wealthiest city in the British colonies of the New World, Port Royal, Jamaica, was an important center of the maritime slave trade. This thesis concerns the role of the slave trade in the maritime community of Port Royal during the later half of the seventeenth century and the early eighteenth century, a time when Port Royal was at its commercial peak and the British slave trade was undergoing its greatest development.

Primary and secondary sources provide a basis for understanding the conduct of the slave trade in Port Royal. Primary documents, which include official records, personal accounts, correspondence, probate inventories, wills and records of deeds and grants, reveal information beyond census and volume of the trade. These documents afford the opportunity to study Port Royal’s slave trade on an individual level. The documents record the various participants in the trade, such as slaves,
traders and purchasers, agencies and agents, and investors, so that relationships and roles can be assessed and the nature and conduct of the trade can be interpreted.

Underwater excavation of the ship *Henrietta Marie* has yielded a significant representative collection of the slave trade's material culture. Wrecked at the turn of the eighteenth century in the Florida Keys, *Henrietta Marie* had just quit Port Royal after off-loading her human cargo. The artifact collection of shackles, ship's equipment and trade goods represents the trappings of the maritime slave trade. Particularly, the shackles are a grim reminder of the trade's more brutal aspects. Comparative analysis of this collection with shackles recovered from other sites reveals the role of these devices in the slave trade.
DEDICATION

This thesis is respectfully and lovingly dedicated to my father, Claude, who never complained when I hung my feet over the side of the boat to feel the rushing water. He simply told me we could sail faster if I kept them inboard. Without his seemingly endless interest, support and encouragement, I'd probably still be dragging my feet today.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Of course, this work would not have been possible without the generous assistance and support of many individuals. Mentors, colleagues, contributors and friends were all invaluable. I regret that I can only show some meager appreciation here, for they are all due great thanks.

I have had the benefit of learning from great professors and studying with brilliant peers while at the Nautical Archaeology Program at Texas A&M University. I extend my thanks and gratitude to them all, and especially the members of my committee. In the classroom, the library, the laboratory and under the water, all have left an indelible mark. Some are due special mention.

As a teacher, Donny L. Hamilton not only introduced me to Port Royal but opened doors for me that I did not know existed. He guided me through them as a thoughtful advisor and even now when I hear opportunity knock, I wonder if it is his hand. I was privileged to be his assistant for a year at the Conservation Research Laboratory.

Kevin Crisman, the chairman of my thesis committee and graduate advisor, has been an honest and constructive critic, encouraged ideas, and shown tremendous patience. His attention to detail, enthusiasm for learning and the ability to not only recognize huge issues and concepts, but grasp them and share them with others make him one of the finest teachers and scholars in my experience. His honesty, sincerity and generosity make him one of the finest men I have ever met.
Fred Hocker is to blame that I am a nautical archaeologist. Under his tutelage, the ‘need to know’ developed within me, and archaeology became more than just dealing with the past, but dealing with the past for specific reasons and increasingly sophisticated questions. Regarding students with dignity and respect, he instilled confidence and inspired excellence.

We advance knowledge through unrestricted exchange of thoughts and ideas as well as open communication of information and data. The individuals who contributed material or portions of their own research to this thesis have provided me with wonderful material for study and analysis. My whole-hearted thanks go to David Moore, who excavated *Henrietta Marie*, and the others who have worked to share her with the public and the academic community, including Madeline Burnside and Corey Malcom of the Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Society in Key West, Florida. Special thanks are due to Dylan Kybbler for his assistance in supplying excellent photographs of the slaver’s shackles. I also wish to thank Kieran Orr and Marty Quinn at the Museum of Florida History in Tallahassee for accommodating my work with the shackles while the travelling exhibition was being prepared for transport. James Leavy also provided some insight into the records of the excavation of *Henrietta Marie*.

There are no existing archaeological studies or serious reference works concerning wrought iron restraining devices. A number of individuals contributed to this study with material for comparative purposes. Thanks to Bill Scheer, blacksmith and historian, for his observations and contributions; I am looking forward to future collaboration with Bill on the topic of shackles themselves. Comparative specimens and research material were submitted by Don Keith of Ships of Discovery in Corpus Cristi, Texas, Kenneth Kvame
at Northern Arizona University, Silas Hurry of Historic St. Mary's City, William E. Pittman, Curator of Archaeological Collections at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation. Edwina Ehrman from the London Museum also contributed research. Special thanks are due to Helen DeWolfe at Texas A&M University. Her assistance with records from Port Royal was the most invaluable of any; and she's cute, too.

Deepest thanks are extended to Angie Shafer and Monica Peña at the Nautical Archaeology Program offices at Texas A&M University. Because of their assistance, I will graduate. Fields of flowers could not show my gratitude.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Transatlantic slave trade was a web of ponderous magnitude and dazzling complexity. In recent years, revision of its highly biased and compromised history has only begun the process of unraveling its tangled threads. Enduring for four centuries, the trade was the vehicle for the greatest forced migration in human history. More than ten million Africans were displaced from their native continent and distributed throughout the Western Hemisphere in a protracted event that modern scholars refer to as the African Diaspora.¹ In hindsight, it is viewed as an abhorrent crime against humanity and the shame associated with its avaricious cruelty continues to haunt the societies that it helped to create. While study of the trade may not mend the wounds left by its existence, some pains may be eased through attempts to explain acts which are seen today as completely inhumane.

In its context, the Transatlantic slave trade was a cornerstone upon which commerce and prosperity was built as the nations of Western Europe explored and subsequently exploited the ‘New World.’ Servile and slave labor were the engines that drove production first in colonial mining and later in agricultural industries in an

¹ This thesis adheres to the style of the Mariner’s Mirror.
era that saw trade expand to an increasingly complex global network. Superceding financial interactions, supplying slave labor to the colonies of Western European nations was a crucial issue in international relations. During certain periods of the trade's existence, its importance led to warfare on a global scale.

In 1807, the British government forbade its subjects from engaging in the trade in African slaves, officially ending the largest and most profitable legal slave trade in human history. In the preceding century, the mariners, merchants and government of the British Empire brought the trade in slaves to its historical peak, overshadowing international competitors in both overall profitability and volume. The trade reached its greatest volume under a nearly free-market system that contributed to, and followed the failure of, joint stock companies that had been endorsed by the crown and claimed complete monopolies on the African trade.

Britain was a relative latecomer to the Transatlantic slave trade. A handful of English adventurers, such as John Hawkins, skirted the line between legitimate commerce and piracy in the sixteenth century by conducting daring trading voyages that carried slaves from the Portuguese controlled Guinea Coast to the Spanish New World. These sporadic, high-risk ventures were the exception rather than the norm, and can not be considered as "paving the way" for the massive trade system of the eighteenth century. The catholic monarchies of the Iberian peninsula maintained their collective grip on the wealth of the New World and Africa nearly two centuries
before feeling the effects of their challenging neighbors. For various reasons, including internal conflict within England itself, the English colonial empire with its famous maritime trade did not begin to take shape until well into the seventeenth century.

In 1655, English forces took the sparsely populated and underdeveloped island of Jamaica from the Spanish. Within a few short weeks of the conquest, settlers began to congregate in the shadow of a fort being built on the sandspit that shelters the harbor of present day Kingston. This settlement rapidly grew into the “wickedest city on earth,” Port Royal. Port Royal has a notorious reputation as a haven for buccaneers and pirates, but the same advantageous location that allowed pillaging of the Spanish Main made the port city a hub of trade and legitimate commerce. The uncultivated island attracted planters from the previously settled Barbados and elsewhere, and massive plantations were cut out of the dense tropical landscape where the profitable monoculture of sugar cane was established.

Amid a volatile political arena that was expanding to a global scale, English merchants were able to capitalize upon opportunities created as a result of conflicts between the Portuguese and Dutch on the African coast and in Latin America. England’s naval and military strength supported her merchant marine and overseas interest throughout centuries of nearly continuous warfare. By the later eighteenth century, the English mercantilist empire covered thirty percent of the world’s land
area. Based largely upon plantations that were dependent on slavery, the British economy had a vested interest in a guaranteed supply of slaves to its own colonies. Through treaties, trade agreements and outright smuggling, British merchants also conducted a thriving trade in slaves to colonies of other nations, especially those of the Spanish. Over the two centuries preceding the declaration of the slave trade’s illegality, British ships accounted for more than fifty percent of the total trade in African slaves, by far eclipsing the closest international competitors, who were the Dutch, French and Iberian nations. Profitably transporting more than 1.5 million slaves from Africa in the final decades of the eighteenth century, the British had clearly become the greatest slavers in all of recorded history.\(^2\)

This thesis is concerned with Port Royal, Jamaica, during the formative period of the English Transatlantic slave trade, roughly from the middle of the sixteenth century to the middle of the eighteenth century. Port Royal was not only one of the three largest entrepôts of slaves in the New World, it was for a time the wealthiest city of all. African slaves were poured into Jamaica. The demand for labor in the plantation complexes of the island was seemingly endless, but this was not the only market for traders in Port Royal.

The principal port of the King’s “fairest isle” was a thriving commercial center for an international community of slave traders. Agents of other nations resided in or near Port Royal, purchasing slaves for the mining and agricultural industries of their
colonies and arranging for their transport. English ships and sloops redistributed slaves to English colonies and other islands in the Caribbean as well as the mainland. Alongside pirates, merchants and ships of all flags, slavers of many nations weighed anchor at Port Royal and departed rich with holds full of sugar, rum and molasses.

The demand for sugar in Europe was insatiable and the planters of Jamaica increased in power and influence over the latter half of the seventeenth century. Eventually, they succeeded in quelling the tide of buccaneers that flowed in and out of Port Royal. Although the looting of the Spanish treasure fleets had passed, wealth continued to pour into the ‘wickedest city on earth’ through legitimate commerce, including the trade in African slaves.

When a cataclysmic earthquake shook Port Royal in 1692, the city was at its zenith. Within a matter of moments, the majority of the city sank into the sea as seismic activity liquefied the sand beneath it. Contemporaries claimed that the wrath of God had claimed the modern Sodom. The disaster was the beginning of the end for the town, as survivors moved off the vulnerable sandspit and Kingston began to take over as the commercial center of the island. Today, Kingston is metropolitan city, while across the harbor, Port Royal is a sleepy little fishing town. The submerged portion of Port Royal was preserved beneath the waters of Kingstown Harbor as a time capsule of seventeenth-century life. Underwater excavations of this spectacular
archaeological site have produced a wealth of information concerning the culture history of the city that was the brightest in England’s colonial crown.

Even as Port Royal was starting its decline, Jamaica’s slave trade was on the rise. During the first half of the eighteenth century, Port Royal remained a vital hub that supplied the slaves for the Caribbean sugar industry. With the trade of the joint stock companies as well as that of smugglers and separate traders (independent merchants who operated under company-granted licenses), the traffic in slaves in Port Royal was a major component of the maritime mercantile community. A cursory examination of the historical documents that survive seventeenth-century Port Royal reveals the pervasive nature of slavery and the slave trade within the colony’s society in the lengthy lists of chattel property detailed in many probate inventories. Focusing research upon the more subtle elements of the documents provides insight into the slave trade from the perspective of those who carried it out.

At the turn of the eighteenth century, a West Indian man named Henrietta Marie delivered a cargo of slaves to Port Royal. On her return journey to England, she wrecked in the Keys while trying to beat out of the Florida Channel. The artifacts recovered from the excavation of the shipwreck offer an unparalleled image of the maritime slave trade as it was carried out in Africa, on the high seas, and at Port Royal. The most chilling artifacts recovered were the wrought iron shackles used in restraining the cargo of slaves. Just as a scholar of Byzantine maritime history would
study amphorae to learn more about the commercial trade in wine, the shackles of *Henrietta Marie* represent a direct link to the trade in human cargo for students of the slave trade. A sample of these shackles, and specimens recovered from excavations at Port Royal have been recorded in detail, cataloged and compared against other wrought iron restraining devices from other contexts.

This thesis follows a single thread into the tangled web of the slave trade, touching upon many tangents. From the British colonial and maritime empire to Jamaica to Port Royal to *Henrietta Marie*, it is a journey of nearly a century. So much more remains to be done with these topics and others. We have much to learn regarding this fundamental portion of our history. For all of us, it is the foundation upon which our society is built, but for some, it is a testament of endurance, perseverance and survival.
CHAPTER II
FOUNDATIONS OF THE SLAVE TRADE

What a glorious and advantageous trade this is. Put a stop to the slave trade and all others will cease. - A factor of the Royal Africa Company, Guinea, 1725

In 1690, Sir Thomas Dalby observed that the leading staples of the West Indies were sugar and its by-products of molasses and rum, indigo, logwood, cotton and ginger; “not to speak of the many Druggs, Woods, Cocoa, Pimento, and Spices, besides Raw-Hides, etc. which comes from those parts, nor the great quantity of Gold and Silver we have of the Spaniards for Negroes, and English Manufactory carrièd by our sloopes from our Collonies to Them.” The entirety of agricultural industry of the West Indies in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries was based upon the labor of slaves. Not since the times of the Roman Empire had slavery been such a major factor in production and never in human history had the trade system that provided slaves been so extensive.

The transatlantic slave trade was a valuable portion of a growing world trade network during the Age of Expansionism. Religious, political and economic factors that were conditions in its development were muddled together in a complex mélange of intrigue, duplicity and avarice. Every major nation in Europe engaged in the African slave trade at some point after its foundation. In most cases, those countries that abstained from it or participated in minor roles were forced out of competition
by stronger powers with more commanding maritime presences. For the two centuries following the discovery of the New World, the Iberian catholic monarchies would dominate the trade in both Africa and the Americas; however, the emergence of French, Dutch and British colonial interests would expand the trade in slaves to its greatest extent.

The English slave trade began in daring private ventures and was sustained in its emergent years through a succession of joint stock companies that had been granted monopolies by the state. Each of these monopolies proved to be unsustainable and the companies that held them were subject to challenges from slavers of other nations as well as the trespasses of their own countrymen. The British slave trade would reach its zenith in the later portion of the eighteenth century as monopolies crumbled, the joint stock companies failed, and the trade reverted to an open system, which thrived in a large-scale, competitive market.

The Origins of the Transatlantic Slave Trade

The transatlantic slave trade emerged from a complicated social and political environment and existed in a milieu that reflected its genesis. The balance of power shifted and corrected itself a number of times during the rise of nationalism and the emergence of the market economy in Europe during the end of the Renaissance. Advances in technology contributed to the development of new philosophies and
aesthetics that characterize the period. The massive slave systems of the Roman Empire had faded away centuries earlier, yet slavery was still an acceptable institution. The breakthroughs in navigation and naval architecture that allowed the voyages of discovery also assisted the re-emergence of an economy that embraced large-scale slavery as major factor of production in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries.

African slavery was not unknown to Europeans when Portuguese navigators first rounded Cape Bojador on Africa’s West Coast in 1433. Since the medieval era, Muslim caravans had brought gold and slaves from West Africa across the Sahara to the Southern shores of the Mediterranean. Galleys from Venice and ships of other maritime trading powers of the Mediterranean carried slaves further north. By the time that Columbus reached the West Indies in the late fifteenth century, black slaves were being imported into Europe at rate that was greater than 1,000 a year.³

Two major slave systems were in place in Europe as the Renaissance was coming to a close. In one system, slaves were traded as luxury goods and employed in domestic servitude. The other system was the reciprocal slave raiding between Islamic groups in Northern Africa and Christian groups in the Mediterranean. Each of these systems was a lucrative and sustaining enterprise. Since they differed so radically from the major agricultural slave systems that bracket the period, the common perception of the middle ages is that slavery was replaced by serfdom, which is not necessarily the case.
Muslims had already established the precedent of employing slave labor to cultivate sugar cane in the Mediterranean world in the eighth century. Muslims also controlled the limited supply of West African slaves that trickled into the maritime community of the Mediterranean. Trans-Saharan caravans employed routes that had been established by the Berbers and other indigenous African tribes from before the birth of Christ. These routes were heavily traveled from the tenth century onward as the demand for gold and slaves developed in Mediterranean nations. The overland journey was brutal, and mortality of the slaves that were driven in the caravans parallels, and perhaps surpasses, the horrors of the middle passage of the later Atlantic trade. Byzantium and Western Europe were first exposed to sugar through the Muslims.

The first recorded importation of cane sugar into Venice occurred in 996 C.E.⁴ One might say that the crusaders returned to Northern Europe from the Levant with a sweet tooth as well as contempt for Islam. After the first Crusade, at the end of the eleventh century, Christian estates in Palestine began to cultivate sugar cane with a labor force that included slaves, villeins (a feudal class of persons who were serfs to their lords but had rights and privileges with respect to others), and free men.⁵ With the shifting tides of power and influence throughout the Crusades, these and other sugar producing areas would change hands more than once and others would develop as sugar continued its westward spread.
Generally speaking, the commercial slave trades that existed prior to the arrival of Portuguese caravels on Africa’s western coast were minimal systems. Except for some markets within the borders of the Islamic world, large quantities of slaves could not be bought and sold, nor was there a need for them. Europe’s slowly developing market economy did not have room for costly slave labor as long as the peasant population met the need. The more advanced Islamic culture utilized the institution of slavery as a factor of production in the centuries prior to the Renaissance, but European nations simply had no such need.

The voyages of discovery made by the Portuguese under the guidance and sponsorship of Prince Henry the Navigator permitted that nation to shake the Islamic grip on central African trade in the fifteenth century. Africa’s wealth had been the object of covetous European envy since the time of the Roman Empire. In 1324, the Dark Continent’s legendary bounty became fact when the Moslem ruler of Mali, Mansa Musa made his celebratory pilgrimage to Mecca, dispensing lavish gifts of gold on his way. The lure of gold, ivory, and the lucrative spice trade of the Orient spurred Henry’s explorations; however, the trade in slaves would bring his nation the greatest fortunes. Ironically, Henry himself was inclined against the institution, forbidding his mariners to kidnap Africans in 1455. That point became moot with his death in 1460.

Portuguese sailors captured their first Africans as slaves in 1441 in the vicinity of Rio del Oro, present day Western Sahara, which set them on a path of African
slaving and trade that would remain largely unchallenged for two centuries. In 1444, Portuguese slavers delivered the first African slaves to the sugar plantations of Maderia, where they worked alongside slaves from Eastern Europe and the Canary Islands. Still, the majority of Portugal’s slave traffic to Europe was limited to supplying domestic servants, replacing the overland Islamic trade with seaborne routes. Primarily motivated by gold, Portuguese slavers conducted a sizeable trade on the coast of Africa, supplying its internal slave market but doing little to expand upon the Moslem system. Even with the establishment of their fort at Elmina on the Gold Coast in 1481, the trade did not grow significantly.

Events at the cusp of the sixteenth century would drastically change the scope of the European slave trade. The establishment of an island depot and trading center at São Tomé in the Gulf of Guinea and the opening of trade relations with the Kingdom of Kongo pushed Portuguese interests beyond the previously established Muslim trading zones. Concurrent with the Spanish conquest of the Caribbean and Portuguese settlement of Brazil, the African expansion stimulated immediate growth in the slave trade. By 1500, the number of slaves being exported from the African coast passed 2,000 per annum.

Less than two decades after the initial European landfall Spanish colonists noted the rapid rate at which the indigenous population of the Caribbean islands was dwindling. Exposure to foreign contagia carried by the colonists, primarily smallpox and measles, devastated the Native Americans. This proved to be a major hindrance
to the Spanish *conquistadores*, who were intent on utilizing the system of *repartiamiento*, or forced labor, to achieve their colonial designs.

Bartoleme Las Casas, a catholic bishop, suggested to Emperor Charles V that the condition of the aboriginal population might be improved, and the interests of the colony and parent nation might be further advanced, if a more durable labor substitute was employed: African slaves. The first African slaves had arrived in Española in 1502, a year after King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella had sanctioned slavery in the New World. Following a visit from Las Casas in 1537, Charles granted the right to ship 4,000 Africans a year to Española, Cuba, Jamaica and Puerto Rico to ease the labor troubles in his colonies. This first *Asiento* eventually ended up in the hands of a Genoese syndicate, who began to conduct a lucrative trade with the Portuguese slavers on the Guinea Coast. In the 1530's ships began departing directly from Sao Tome to the New World, and the flow of slaves continued to increase over the course of the sixteenth century as the Iberian toe-hold in the New World became more secure.

Early English Forays into the Slave Trade

Over the course of the sixteenth century, Spain and Portugal developed their interests in the Americas and Africa and began to glean copious profits from them. The infusion of gold and silver from mines in Central America and Africa eased the
ailing coffers of the Iberian monarchies. This prosperity did not escape the notice of other European nations, and the collective monopoly on the riches and resources of the New World and Africa could not go unchallenged.

The English debut in the Africa trade in the sixteenth century was no more than a cameo in comparison to their later, greater role in the eighteenth century. In 1530, just as the slave trade to the New World was developing, William Hawkins put out of Plymouth for the Guinea Coast. Hawkins’ voyage took him across the Atlantic to Brazil, and on his return from the New World, he sold his cargo of dyewood for a small fortune. Hawkins made three voyages, pioneering England’s trade in gold dust and ivory with Upper Guinea, modern Liberia, between 1530 and 1532. Coincidentally, as his trading career on the African coast was ending, he was borne a son, John, who would follow in his footsteps.

John Hawkins was the first English slaver. By the time he came of age, the Guinea trade was a prosperous prospect for nations and traders willing to embark upon it, and it took little effort to attract eager investors and raise enough capital to secure three ships for his first voyage. In 1562, he obtained 300 slaves, “partly by the sword and partly by other means,” and sold them for tremendous profit in the Caribbean at Hispaniola. Hawkins showed complete disregard for the grandiose claims of Spain and Portugal regarding their monopolies on trade and possession of the resources of Africa and New World. While off the Guinea Coast, Hawkins was so
bold as to seize a Portuguese slave ship. His customers in Isabella, Puerta Plata and Monte Cristi were eager to purchase slaves from him.

Returning to England in 1563, Hawkins quickly set about obtaining backing for another voyage. Riding on the success of his first venture, he was attracted the support of some very powerful backers including Queen herself. Elizabeth lent Hawkins the use of the 700 ton *Jesus de Lubeck*, which had been purchased by Henry VIII from Hanse traders when he was developing his Royal Navy. Hawkins cleared Plymouth in October with 170 men aboard a fleet of four ships bound for Tenerife and then West Africa. The Spanish Ambassador closely monitored his preparations and departure.

Although Portuguese traders were willing to assist Hawkins in obtaining his cargo, his second voyage did not proceed as smoothly as the first. An expedition on the river Callowsa to sack the village of Bimba for gold and captives turned sour as Hawkins’ raiding party was ambushed by two hundred Africans who were less than willing to allow their women and children to be enslaved by the Englishmen and their Portuguese guides. Despite these and other difficulties, Hawkins departed for the West Indies in January of 1565 with 400 slaves.

Hawkins’ arduous middle passage may have been a portent of difficulties to come. After storms, severe winds and even tornadoes, his ships were becalmed for 28 days during the voyage. With precious little fresh water, he finally arrived off the coast of Venezuela in March. After all this, Hawkins was in no temper to deal
diplomatically with the colonial governors, who had become reluctant to do business with him for fear of retribution from Spain. Hawkins, exercising his creative entrepreneurial ability, managed to vend his cargo by arming his men and closing his sales at gunpoint.

Regardless of the challenges presented him, Hawkins’ backers enjoyed a 45 to 60 percent return on their investments when he returned to England later in the year. Undaunted, he again began preparations for another voyage. *Jesus de Lubeck* led five vessels from Plymouth in 1567, beginning Hawkins third and final slaving voyage, a venture that would have serious repercussions for Spanish and English maritime relations in the coming years.\(^{11}\)

Hawkins had pushed his luck as far as he could. Portuguese barracoons in Africa were now unwilling to provide him with slaves. Hawkins turned to outright piracy, increasing his fleet to 10 ships through capture. After months of prowling the coast, he had only been able to obtain 150 slaves. Always an opportunist, Hawkins formed an alliance with a native tribe where he provided military assistance in the siege of a neighboring village. For his timely assistance, he received 260 captives as slaves.

Hawkins reception on the Spanish Main was even colder than before, and Hawkins essentially ransomed the towns where he ‘sold’ his slaves with his sizable fleet riding at anchor behind him. Hawkins still had about 50 slaves in his holds when he decided to return to England, but the storm season had already arrived and
his ships were badly battered in fierce gales as they tried to beat out of the Florida Channel. Off his course and in hostile waters with the aged Jesus leaking badly, Hawkins put into San Juan de Ulúa for repairs in September 1568. His timing could not have been worse, the Spanish flota, heavily armed treasure fleet, paid its annual call at the port a few days after his arrival.

The ensuing battle could not be avoided. The Englishmen suffered greatly, losing a number of ships including the Jesus. Hawkins was able to escape with most of his money and arrived in England on January of 1569. His losses were significant: only 15 men survived from his crew and the money that they had gleaned and held with such desperation could not even cover the costs of the expedition.

Still, it was the Spanish who would suffer the most from the battle of San Juan de Ulúa. Hawkins’ cousin, Francis Drake, who had been in command of one of the ships that day, would blame the Spaniards for their treachery for the rest of his days. The Spanish Main would feel the fury of El Dragón for years to come. Hawkins had proven that the vast claims of Spain and Portugal were facetious. Rather than continue in a relatively peaceful but illegal trade, Drake and the Elizabethan privateers that followed in his wake would openly raid Spain’s commerce in the New World, at times substantially weakening the nation’s credit and financial standing.

The political theater in Europe was in turmoil by the final quarter of the sixteenth century. Religious tension added fuel to the jealous fires between the monarchies, which were already fanned by intrigue, rivalry and intermarriage. Spain
was in its Golden Age, and Phillip II threatened to upset the tenuous balance of power that had existed since the abdication of Charles V divided the Habsburg Empire. Phillip faced and confronted challenges on many fronts including France, the Ottoman Turks and Protestantism. The Netherlands resisted Phillip’s attempts to limit their autonomy in 1568 and after he attempted to introduce the Inquisition in their homeland, the northern provinces openly revolted in 1572. In 1585 the Dutch received assistance from Elizabeth I. This and Drake’s attacks in the New World motivated Phillip to send the Armada to invade England in 1588. Its defeat by the English navy would signal the beginning of Spain’s decline and the rise of the maritime power of England.

Dutch Competition

Phillip II died in 1598, leaving his war-weary Spain a vast empire but little means to maintain it. Throughout the seventeenth century, the nations of Europe steadily chipped away at the vast Iberian claim on the New World and Africa. In the first half of the century, the English, French and Dutch would all establish colonies in the Caribbean. As these plantation-based colonies developed, their demand for African slaves grew intensely.

The Portuguese prerogative on the trade in the east met its end at the hands of the aggressive maritime expansion of Dutch trade. With their crown joined to Spain,
the Portuguese were dragged into the Eighty Years War as the Netherlands fought bitterly to retain their independence from Spanish rule. Portugal, a small nation with few resources, had been able to capitalize upon the initiatives of Henry the Navigator as long it was not presented with serious competition. The wealth of Portugal’s overseas trading empire had been funneled into the monarchy, nobility and church. Not many of the profits were reinvested into the economy, and subsequently, with only a tiny mercantile class, the overtaxed Iberian nation was unable to oppose the onslaught of Dutch merchant shipping. By 1610, Portugal’s trading posts in the East were falling in rapid succession. Next, Brazil slipped from her control, however only briefly, and then Africa’s Gold Coast. With the seizure of Elmina in 1637 and Fort St. Anthony at Axim in 1642, the Dutch held the commanding position in the Africa trade.

Holland, although a small nation, had built a massive fishing and merchant fleet that monopolized most of the trade in the North and Baltic seas while they were under Spanish rule. It has been estimated that the Dutch merchant fleet by 1610 consisted of some 16,000 vessels, which employed over 100,000 seamen. When Spanish ports were closed to Dutch shipping, low country merchants unleashed their considerable maritime resources, dismantling the Iberian monopoly on world trade. The independent Dutch government actively encouraged colonial growth and development, sea trade, banking and investment, and backed its merchant class, which continually reinvested into the development of their trading enterprises.
The Dutch revolutionized overseas trade and expansion by introducing joint stock companies. These well organized, private interests formed on government capital quickly outstripped the increasingly archaic financial systems employed by the monarchies in the race for world trade. The United (Dutch) East India Company (VOC), established in 1602, and the West Indies Company which followed in 1621, provided the exemplary models upon which competing companies of England, France and other nations were built. The Dutch furthered maritime trade through innovation in naval architecture and shipbuilding techniques, introducing specialized ships that were purpose-built for specific types of commercial enterprise.

The death of Phillip II, who had been obsessed with the conquest of England, lightened some of the burden upon England's naval and maritime resources. Furthermore, the hostile climate that existed between Spain and the Netherlands provided a distraction to two of England's major maritime competitors. English merchants were close on the heels of the Dutch in establishing trade companies. They realized at the turn of the century that they had to become organized to become an effective presence in the new arena of world trade. Elizabeth encouraged the formation of the London East India Company (EIC) when Dutch merchants, who had already established a formidable presence in the Spice Islands, doubled the price of pepper in 1600.13

Tension between the competing Dutch and English companies erupted into open warfare in the East between 1618 and 1620. Three Anglo-Dutch wars during the
third quarter of the seventeenth century would severely test the abilities of Holland's maritime power. The rivalry was brought to a head by Cromwell's passage of the Navigation Acts in 1650 and 1651, which stipulated that goods for Britain and her possessions had to be carried in English ships. Producing few exports of their own, the strength of the Dutch was vested in their maritime commerce and their role as carriers of other nations' cargoes. The first Anglo-Dutch war ended in 1654 with no clear victor; however, the Dutch were forced to compensate for the torture and execution of 10 Englishmen who were accused of attempting to murder Dutch residents of Amboyna in 1623. The English claimed over 1000 prize vessels, mostly fluyts, or unarmed merchantmen, creating a significant shift in commercial maritime power.14

In contrast to the East, there was initially a cooperative spirit between Dutch and English enterprises in the West Indies where they were united against the common enemy of Spain. A joint Anglo-Dutch effort established the colony at St. Croix in 1625. Barbados, settled at about the same time, would receive sugar cane transplanted from Brazil by the Dutchman Pieter Brower in 1637. Dutch privateers joined the English in their attacks on Spanish shipping with devastating effects. With Piet Heyn's capture of the Spanish treasure fleet at Cuba in 1627, Spain plummeted into dire financial straits. The Dutch West India Company capitalized on the opportunity to further dominate the Caribbean trade.
The Dutch West India Company engaged in the slave trade almost immediately after the company was chartered in 1621. Within two years of its establishment, the company's ships had already transported 15,430 slaves to Brazil. With the capture of Brazil from the Portuguese in 1624, the Dutch developed the model upon which the sugar plantations of the West Indies would be built. Portuguese dominance of the sugar market in Europe was broken, paving the way for the future wealth of English and French Caribbean colonies in the eighteenth century.

The European colonies that were settled in the Leeward Islands between 1620 and 1640 at first tried to exist with the labor of indentured servants. Whilst fending off the attacks of the few remaining Carib Indians that Spain had overlooked in their quest of gold and silver, the colonists first planted tobacco and indigo, which were to be the main exports of the islands at mid-century. Sugar, the commercial crop with the highest production costs, did not catch on until Dutch ships began to supply the islands with the necessary machinery and slaves after the 1640's.

From that period on, the character of the Caribbean would change dramatically. The economic growth of the island colonies would overtake the mainland colonies to the north as large-scale sugar production replaced tobacco farming. In 1645, when the main crop of English-owned Barbados was tobacco, the island was populated with 18,300 white males, of whom over 60 percent owned land, while the slave population was only 5,680. Fifteen years later, the number of
individual farms had dropped by 75%, the total white population had fallen from 37,000 to 17,000, and Africans far outnumbered Europeans. By 1680, the slave population had further escalated to 37,000. Where the average plot for tobacco farming had been only 10 acres, the median sugar plantation employed 100 slaves on 220 acres. The rapidly disappearing community of white indentured servants numbered fewer than 2000.  

Within twenty years of the introduction of sugar, the once overlooked, tiny island of Barbados had become the wealthiest and most populous English Colony in the Americas. African slaves poured into the island at an average rate that exceeded 1,300 per year.  

The example of Barbados, "the mother of all the British sugar-colonies," illustrates how quickly sugar cultivation grew into a major industry for England. Control of the slave trade, upon which sugar production depended, was the next step in building England's Atlantic trade empire.

English Joint Stock Companies

England's entrance into the slave trade was somewhat protracted by European distractions, not the least of which included its own civil war. However, England's diminutive role in the Africa trade is easily explained in the fact that, prior to the development of sugar production in the West Indies, there was simply no great need for slaves. Aside from the occasional African employed in domestic servitude, African
slavery was almost non-existent within England itself. The impoverished masses provided ample labor for the elite and the lower classes continued to grow in size as England underwent the transformation from an agrarian society to a mercantile economy.

Incredibly destitute, the poor of England gravitated towards its cities, chiefly London, where the slums filled to bursting. In desperation, many of the impoverished turned to crime. Of those who were caught and convicted, criminals faced the death penalty for nearly 300 offenses, which ranged from murder to theft of anything worth more than a shilling.¹⁹ For those who escaped the gallows, there was another option. James I established the practice of transporting prisoners to newly established colonies and before the end of the seventeenth century, the stability of English society depended on it to a large degree. For the better part of two centuries, large numbers of destitute English subjects would volunteer for terms of indenture in exchange for passage to the New World, travelling and laboring alongside convicted criminals.

This is not to say that the English were completely absent from the Africa trade in the interim between Hawkins’ adventures and the sugar boom. The developing English mercantile class was not oblivious to the profits that were to be had in Africa. In 1588, a regulated partnership was formed between eight merchants of London and Exeter who were granted a patent of monopoly for all English trade to Senegambia.²⁰
The first English joint stock slaving company appeared in 1618 when James I chartered the Company of Adventurers of London, extending it a monopoly from the south of “Barbary” to the Cape of Good Hope, essentially the entire western coast of the continent. The company was to have only brief moments of intermittent success. Originally focusing on the River Gambia, the company’s chief objective in the Africa trade was gold and other exotic trade goods instead of slaves. Captain Richard Jobson, who led the company’s third voyage to the river actually spoke out against the slave trade in a frequently quoted passage:

[A Mandingo trader] showed unto me certain young black women who were standing by themselves...which he told me were slaves, brought for me to buy. I made answer, We were a people who did not deal in such commodities, neither did we buy or sell one another, or any that had our own shapes.  

However idealistic Jobson’s sentiments may have been, his noble remarks did not speak for all of his countrymen or even his business partners who quickly discovered that the largest profits to be had on the African coast were in the slave trade. The company was reorganized in 1624 and again in 1631, extending its operations to Sierra Leone, the Gold Coast, and the Bight of Benin. The company established the first English factory at Coromantine in the Gold Coast in 1631, at which time it became popularly known as “Gynney and Bynney Company.” In the 1630s, slave trading increased to supply the new colonies in the Caribbean, but the trade in gold, ivory and hides remained important. The civil war and the interregnum would bring about the end of the Gynney and Bynney Company. Already vulnerable and over extended,
the confusion and conflict left the company’s ships and settlements open to plunder by the Dutch and interlopers.

Even with all of the available sources, the demand for slaves had become insatiable in the West Indies by mid-century. Indentured servants were unsuited to the stringent demands of sugar cultivation and planters eagerly sought African slaves, who they felt were more capable of productive labor in the tropical climate. Slaves were comparable in price to purchasing indentured servants, and rather than lose the laborer when the period of indenture expired, the slave was owned for life.

With the restoration of the monarchy, the Africa trade was restructured. Charles II chartered the Company of Royal Adventurers into Africa in the same year as his coronation, 1660.22 The company’s shareholders included the King and Queen and several other members of the nobility as well as forty-nine non-titled, but extremely wealthy merchants. A second charter of the company was passed in 1663, which specifically mentioned the company’s intention to deal in the slave trade.23 What went unsaid was the intention of the company to confront Dutch merchants on the African coast and cut them out of the trade at any cost. Those sentiments were, however, most certainly the subtext of Navigation Acts passed in the same years as the new company’s charters.

The Royal Adventurers had a strong driving force behind the company, although the direction in which it was driven would lead to financial ruin. Prince Rupert, a German-born Royalist had been a governor in the Gynney and Bynney
Company prior to the outbreak of the war and had led a naval squadron to West Africa and the West Indies in 1652. Rupert, cousin to Charles II, was head-strong, impetuous and had a knack for initiating conflicts he could not win as well as making promises he could not keep. The company signed a foolhardy agreement in 1663 with the Genoese *asientistas* Grillo and Lomelin in which the Adventurers were contracted to deliver 3,500 slaves a year to them in Jamaica.\textsuperscript{24} The inability to meet their obligations contributed significantly to the company’s eventual financial downfall. Moreover, Rupert’s veteran captain, Robert Holmes, began capturing the forts of the Dutch and their allies in 1663.\textsuperscript{25} The unprovoked attacks stretched the company’s resources incredibly thin. The famed Dutch Admiral Michiel de Ruyter cruised the Guinea Coast in late 1664 and easily retook every post except for the stronghold at Cape Coast Castle.\textsuperscript{26}

In agitating the Dutch in Africa, Rupert and his associates had essentially laid the groundwork for a war that their company was unprepared to fight. The Royal Adventurers suffered from lack of capital and were unable to supply the demanding planters of the Caribbean colonies with slaves. Instead, private traders interloped on their monopoly, and by 1669, the company had resigned itself to selling licenses. Aside from dealing with drain of resources from the Dutch war, the company had serious organizational issues and could not collect payments from planters effectively. Having squandered what little operating money it had, it became unable to conduct trade on its own account and fulfill its contractual obligations. With its stock worth
only a tenth of its initial offering, the company had become moribund, indebted for a sum totaling £57,000.27

The Royal African Company was chartered in September of 1672 with the pledge of avoiding the mistakes of its predecessors.28 Charles II granted the third joint-stock company another exclusive monopoly on the Africa trade. The Royal African Company was to have sole rights to the trade in gold, silver, ivory and slaves from the shore between Cape Blanco in the north to the Cape of Good Hope in the south for a period of 1000 years. This was granted with the rights to build and maintain forts and factories for the trade, as well as to wage war so it could protect its trade and control all shipping in the waters around the coast. The company survived to 1752, suffering through many periods of ill fortune through mismanagement of funds and improper allocation of resources.

The company was never without significant foreign competition, which came first from the Dutch and later from the French. Unlicensed English merchants, termed interlopers, impinged heavily on the trade in slaves with the West Indian colonies, and they were consistently able to undersell the Company, which had to bear the burden of massive overhead expenses. Even more so than the companies that preceded it, the monopoly of the Royal Africa Company turned out to be no more realistic than the exorbitant term for which it was granted.

The Royal African Company sought ferociously to defend its chartered rights in England, in the West Indies, and in the 5000 miles of the African coast that they
were granted. The company faced challenges of principle that were mounted in Parliament. There were also the grievances of individual businessmen who were excluded from the Africa trade by law. The planters in the West Indies complained loudly about the company’s failure to provide them with an adequate number of satisfactory slaves.

To its advantage, the company drew its support from a broader base of shareholders than its predecessor did. Nobility held a minority of shares, which further diminished over time. Subsequently, matters of state and imperial policy did not eclipse the conduct of business as it had in the Royal Adventurers. As a result of this, a tacit agreement between the African trading powers developed and West Africa became a nearly neutral zone in future commercial wars.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century, there were more than 35 trading centers on the Gold Coast, which were held by seven different European nations, that coexisted without any significant armed conflict. In this way, the commercial community of Africa took on an aspect that resembled the _laissez faire_ attitude that was becoming apparent in the West India colonies. Planters and merchants had less regard for European regulations and policies, focusing instead on issues of cost and profit and supply and demand. Armed actions waged in the colonies had less to do with the politics of court and were more likely motivated by immediate financial gain and ambition.
The Royal Africa Company, with somewhat better organization, was able to expand upon the work of its predecessors, establishing bases of trade and forming alliances with several African states for the purposes of furthering its chartered trade. Despite increased development of the trade infrastructure in Africa and more businesslike policies, the company was unable to satisfy its customers in the West Indies. The company faced serious problems in sustaining capital. It endured tremendous overhead costs in its African bases and was forced to extend long credit to planters who bought slaves. Thus, over such extended periods of repayment, the company had to bear burdens of limited cash flow. Additionally, it had difficulties in exporting sufficient quantities of goods from England to earn profit. By 1688, the company was in an extremely vulnerable position and was openly criticized.

In 1698, the company was forced to relinquish its monopoly and accept the opening of the trade to private and separate traders, who would pay the company a ten-percent duty. The percentage was for the maintenance of its forts in Africa, which Parliament had deemed necessary to the preservation of national interest. When the Ten Percent Act expired in 1712, the trade was left open and unrestricted. The company would suffer greatly in the face of open competition.

As a spoil of victory in the War of Spanish Succession, the English crown was awarded the asiento at the signing of the Treaty of Utrecht in 1713. The asiento was the coveted prize of the international slave trade. Following the revolt of Portugal in 1640, Spain lacked adequate means of supplying slaves to their colonial installations.
With insatiable need for labor, Spanish colonials sought their slaves from the traders of other nations, with a primary dependence on the Dutch. Spain turned a blind eye to this illicit trade, but it could not allow the unsupervised trade with heretics and rivals to continue indefinitely without establishing a formal policy to appease the Catholic monarchy. In 1662, the government initiated an *assiento* with the Genoese merchants Grillo and Lomelin, who were permitted to sub-contract the trade to any nation that was friendly with Spain.  

Grillo and Lomelin promptly solicited agreements with the Dutch West India Company and the Royal Adventurers of England, as previously mentioned. The contract with the Genoans was terminated in 1671, and over the course of the next ten years, Spain turned increasingly more towards Dutch conduits of supply, which were strengthened by the outcome of the second Dutch War. England continued to jockey for an increasingly more favorable position in the *asiento* trade as the seventeenth century wore on. The French also sought the valuable contract and was awarded the *asiento* in 1701.  

The 1713 contract, which Queen Anne signed over to the South Seas Company almost immediately, gave England the sole rights to supply slaves to Spain’s colonies for a period of thirty years. Chartered in 1711, the South Seas Company had been granted a Royal monopoly to trade with South America “forever.” The Royal Africa Company subcontracted the *asiento* trade, but was
unable to profit from it. After 1723, the re-export trade to the Spanish colonies was handled almost completely by private traders.

From 1730 to 1745, the Royal African Company would require an annual government subsidy of £10,000 pounds to maintain its forts, which by that time was its only function in the trade that it once monopolized. In 1752, while manageable private ventures were pushing the slave trade towards its greatest volume and success, the Royal African Company was bankrupt. The loosely regulated Company of African Merchants, created by an Act of Parliament in 1750, took over the management of the trade and forts.

The South Seas Company was to supply the Spanish colonies with at least 144,000 slaves under the terms of the 1713 asiento, delivering them at a rate of 4,800 per year. Opposition against the new monopoly appeared even before the company was able to set up the framework for its commerce. Jamaica in particular was vehemently opposed. The now well-entrenched planters saw the new monopoly as a clear threat to their labor supply, but merchants at the island also balked at the Queen's decision. While the asiento was in the hands of foreign slave traders, Jamaican merchants had established a lucrative clandestine trade with the Spanish Colonies. With the crown-imposed monopoly, the free-booting trade of these independent capitalists was severely curtailed. The pinch was felt in more than just the slave trade, for it was clear that the South Seas Company capitalized on their contract and used it to shield an extensive illicit trade in other goods.
The South Seas Company grew well beyond its conceived role as a trading company as the economic community matured in England. The company was drawn into political maneuvering between the Tories and Whigs. The Whigs had established the Bank of England in 1694 to attract the nation's surplus money, offering seven percent interest, which it then lent in turn to governments at a rate of eight percent. The bank was able to satisfy public fears for their financial security that had previously prevented governments from directly borrowing from the public. Subsequently, the Bank of England afforded the Whigs great political advantages as governments who borrowed from the bank were inclined to favor their party. The Tories were unsuccessful in establishing a rival bank and had to counter the political challenge.

Robert Harley, leader of the New Tories, approached the South Seas Company in 1711 upon the suggestion of Daniel Defoe, who had formulated a plan to undermine the Bank of England through the company.34 It was Harley who secured the asiento for the company, and in exchange, The South Seas Company assumed £9 million of the national debt. The lines of battle had been drawn for a political and economic showdown.

The company beat out the Bank of England after fierce competition and took over the whole national debt of roughly £30 million in 1720.35 Investors flocked to buy shares, and were even further enticed by the company's policy of selling shares on hire-purchase terms. Unfortunately for all involved, the new concept of credit was
not well understood by either the company or its shareholders, who were able to immediately acquire shares for small deposits. In a very short time, the company was owed £60 million in share installments. The price of its stock swelled a hundred-fold in less than six months and companies sprung up in a share boom that enveloped the nation.

In September of 1720, the "South Sea Bubble" popped as the company undermined its own integrity as it sought to discredit the rivals that had followed in their share boom. Ruin came to thousands as the value of stock crashed. Politicians were expelled from office and suicides followed. Despite the crash, the South Sea Company endured and continued its business in the slave trade. Separate traders from Liverpool and Bristol as well as London flourished in the increasingly open market, driving the trade higher and higher.

In the Caribbean, the island of Jamaica was the center of the British slave trade because of its large plantation economy and its convenient geographic location for trade with foreign markets. In the late eighteenth century, the trade reached incredible volume and many thousands of slaves were imported to and re-exported from the markets in Kingston. Joint stock companies, interlopers, foreign parites and separate traders all traded in slaves at Jamaica.

With a fundamental grasp of the sphere in which the British slave trade developed and existed, the conditions of its Caribbean center can be appreciated in context. Jamaica played a pivotal role in the success of the British slave trade, and its
original principal port of entry, Port Royal, was the market where that trade was developed. The following chapter introduces Port Royal and establishes its historical and archaeological importance.
CHAPTER III
PORT ROYAL AND JAMAICA

Its subsequent rise and extensive prosperity, its deplorable wickedness and fatal catastrophe, are circumstances too well known to be repeated. -Bryan Edwards, London, 1793

Jamaica was captured from Spain as an afterthought by a disorderly band of British soldiers and sailors in 1655. Its location, centered in the Caribbean Sea, made it a perfect strategic base for preying upon Spanish shipping and colonial possessions. Buccaneers, privateers and pirates used Jamaica as their base for strikes against flotas, or Spanish treasure fleets, at sea, as well as for the raiding of the colonies on the Spanish Main: Cuba, Hispaniola, and Central America.

Established on the point of a sandy peninsula enclosing Kingston Harbor, Port Royal, Jamaica was founded promptly after the island was secured. It developed initially as a haven for sea dogs like Henry Morgan and their crews who frequented the taverns and brothels of the town while refitting their ships in the harbor’s spacious confines. In its day, Jamaica was considered the most lawless colony in the possession of the Crown. Its principal port was referred to as the “Sodom of the Indies,” or “the Dunghill of the Universe,” with its denizens primarily made up of prostitutes, convicts, and drunkards.

While Jamaica’s location attracted a predatory element, its rich terrain beckoned agriculturists. Jamaica’s 4,411 square mile area dwarfed the smaller British possessions in the Leeward Islands and Barbados, presenting seemingly endless opportunities to would-be
planters of the lower classes as well as successful planters whose ambitions had outgrown their holdings in other colonies. By the 1670’s, the easy peace that had existed between the planters and pirates had worn thin. Those voices that once cheered the return of the treasure-laden ships now complained loudly about the reticence of merchant vessels to approach the thorny waters around Jamaica, blaming the buccaneers for high freight rates aboard hesitant ships. Eyeing the lucrative prize of legitimate trade with Spain’s colonies, the planters and merchant community of Jamaica waged a bitter political and social struggle against the buccaneers for control of the island. Their interests finally achieved complete supremacy after the Glorious Revolution of 1688.

Although large-scale plantation society triumphed in Jamaica at the end of the seventeenth century, the island was still not quite the picture of order. In addition to the constant threat posed by natural disasters, the Caribbean was a volatile theater of almost continuous international conflict. In the second half of the seventeenth century, Britain found itself pitted against first the Spanish, then the Dutch and finally faced France in a seemingly endless series of wars that were waged on a global scale. The colonial mindset generally put personal and regional interests ahead of national interests. Combining these considerations with other factors, the common conception of “no peace beyond the line” holds true for the theater in which Jamaica had center stage.

Amidst this chaos, Port Royal continued to grow. The ‘Wickedest City on Earth’ seemed to thrive on the turmoil around it. Although two thirds of the town was destroyed when an earthquake struck in 1692, Port Royal staged a dramatic revival that was curbed by a ravaging fire in 1703. In 1722, the city suffered a severe storm, a hurricane and two earthquakes in rapid succession. Although the point at the end of the sandspit remained
tactically important in defending the harbor, its vulnerability to the elements had finally shaken the confidence of the merchants who had been in residence there. During the first quarter of the eighteenth century, Kingston began to grow and would surpass Port Royal as Jamaica’s merchant center.

The disasters that afflicted Port Royal did not halt the cultivation of sugar cane elsewhere on the island, and the demand for labor continued to increase. African slaves poured into Jamaica in an astonishing deluge that increased as the seventeenth century progressed, with the floodgates opening wide in the eighteenth century. Port Royal, as the island’s de facto capital, cosmopolitan center, and its only legal point of entry until 1692, was the major point of embarkation for arriving slaves and the center of trading activity.

The Capture of Jamaica

When English forces arrived at Jamaica in 1655, they found a sparsely populated and uncultivated island. Columbus had first explored the north shore of the island in 1494 during his second voyage. In the 150 years the Spanish had occupied the island, they had done little to capitalize on its resources, instead focusing their attention upon the treasure producing colonies on the mainland. In 1655, the population of the island consisted of roughly fifteen hundred Spaniards, Portuguese Jews, African slaves and a scant few native Arawaks.3 Aside from the one town on the island, Villa de la Vega (St. Jago de la Vega, or Spanish Town to the English), colonists lived widely scattered on small cattle ranches that were so shorthanded that livestock was not penned, but roamed freely about.
The original intention of the force that took Jamaica was the conquest of the Spanish center of the Caribbean: Hispánola. Some 8,200 men under the command of General Robert Venables and Admiral William Penn set out in April of 1655 as part of Lord Protector Oliver Cromwell's "Western Design." The imposing force was composed of 3,500 men from England and Barbados each with the remaining coming from colonial possessions in the Leeward Islands. Penn and Venables proved to be inept leaders, skirmishing and marching for three weeks in the jungles of Hispánola without nearing their objective of Santo Domingo. Having suffered the losses of 1000 men, the commanders ordered a disorderly tactical withdrawal of their disheartened men.

Not wishing to return to England with nothing to show for their efforts, Penn and Venables decided to set course for Jamaica. They knew that the island was almost completely defenseless, and on May 10, came ashore without facing any serious resistance and quickly occupied Villa de la Vega, which was already almost completely deserted. The governor, who was stricken with smallpox and feeble, surrendered to Venables, and on May 11, the consolation prize for Lord Cromwell was secure.

For several years after the conquest, a few hundred Spanish guerillas under the command of Don Cristoval Arnaldo Ysassi continued to strike at the English from the mountainous interior of the island and its north shore. This annoyance took on a more serious aspect when reinforcements arrived from Mexico and Cuba in 1658 and attempted to invade the north shore of the island. The English had caught wind of the scheme, however, and a force of 600 men commanded by Commodore Christopher Mings dispatched the threat. In 1660, the last Spanish forces were driven from Ocho Rios, although it would be another ten years before Spain would officially cede possession of the
island to the English. All that remained to oppose the British were the Maroons, fugitive African slaves who lived in the mountains. Their guerrilla attacks would pose a small but permanent threat to white society into the eighteenth century.

The Development of Port Royal: Buccaneers, Planters and Merchants

Had the Spanish the resources to secure or fortify the tactically advantageous cabo de carena, as they referred to the point of the sandy peninsula enclosing Kinston Harbor, they surely would have. Penn and Venables ventured into Kingstown Harbor without meeting any resistance and easily brushed the Spanish militia aside at Passage Fort, landing with an immediate approach to Spanish Town. They followed in the footsteps of Sir Anthony Shirley (1596), Christopher Newport (1603) and William Jackson (1643), who were able to ransom the island with skeleton forces of just a few hundred men. The seasoned mariners of the Penn and Venables expedition recognized the tactical advantage of the 'Cagaway,' as they called the sandspit in a corruption of the Spanish word Cagaway, and sought to fortify it immediately. Less than a month had passed since the conquest of Jamaica when the settlement that would become Port Royal was conceived.5

The first years of the English occupation of Jamaica were not entirely pleasant. The professional soldiers had no ability in tropical farming, and having come for plunder, were not easily persuaded into planting corn and casava for bread. In a few short months following the conquest, the cattle in the vicinity of Spanish Town had been butchered and the soldiers were subsisting on the meat of dogs and snakes. To hunt in the surrounding countryside would have made the men vulnerable to the guerillas and was forbidden.
Tropical diseases ravaged the occupying army. Reinforcements and provisions were slow in coming. Through starvation and sickness, the garrison dwindled to 3,700 men within the first eight months of occupation, with the contingents from Barbados and the Leewards faring no better than the English troops. Out of an estimated 12,000 Englishmen that immigrated to Jamaica in the first six years after its capture, there were only 3,740 in residence on the island in 1661.⁶

Despite these hardships, construction of a stone and lime fort on the Cagway was initiated two months after the capture of the island. Work continued slowly under the supervision of Captain Hughes from July through December, with some ten cannon being mounted on the point in November.⁷ In January, 1656, the regiment of Colonel Humphrey was ordered to march from Spanish Town, where it had been in residence since its arrival in October, and take up residency at the fort. In March, construction of a round tower within the confines of the square fort was proposed, and it was reported in April that the ‘grand’ Fort Cromwell was nearing completion.⁸

Before a year was out, the settlement around the fort had already begun to take shape. Spying upon the English, Ysassi noted eighteen vessels in the harbor and that as many houses had been constructed on the point of capo de arena in early April of 1656.⁹ In 1660, with the restoration of Charles II, Jamaica became a royal colony and the settlement at the point was christened Port Royal. Fort Cromwell, was renamed Fort Charles.

Although it was initially developed as a defensive fortification guarding the entrance to harbor, Port Royal had access to deep water close to shore that made it an attractive location for the servicing of large ships. In 1657, Governor Edward D'Oyly, anxious to receive any help that he could in his campaigns against the Spaniards, used the lure of Port
Royal's harbor to entice the English buccaneers into transferring their headquarters from Tortuga. This event was the genesis of Port Royal's notorious reputation and the period of officially sanctioned privateering.

During its first decade, the flow of Spanish treasure into Port Royal made the city grow faster than any other English town in the New World. According to a contemporary account, there was "more plenty of running cash than in London" on the streets of Port Royal. The Treaty of Madrid in 1670 was supposed to end the raiding of Spanish commerce and her colonies on the mainland; however, privateering and piracy continued in Port Royal, with disreputable seaman frequenting the port well into the eighteenth century. In 1689, it is estimated that more than a quarter of the white population of the city was still engaged in privateering or piracy in one way or another.

At the same time the Caribbean piratical element was using Port Royal as its base, D'Oyley's successor as governor, Thomas Modyford, was promoting the agricultural settlement of the colony. With twenty years of experience in sugar plantations in Barbados, Modyford fully appreciated the potential of Jamaica for the monoculture of sugar. Under Modyford's governorship, an elite class of planters took shape. Rather than conflict with the unmanageable privateers, Modyford entered into partnership with them and Spanish plunder provided the basis for Jamaica's burgeoning agricultural industry.

Modyford maintained a bilateral policy that promoted attacks upon the Spaniards while lobbying for land grants and tax concessions to attract immigrants from Barbados' planter class. Modyford laid the groundwork for the large-scale plantation system during his seven years as Royal Governor, issuing as many as 1,800 land patents which amounted to nearly 300,000 acres of the finest farmland in the parishes on the south central coast.
Modyford’s landgranting policies heavily favored slave owners, granting 30 acres for each planter, 30 for each member of his family, and 30 for each slave or servant he owned. African slaves began to be imported into the colony with greater zeal, and by 1673, the planters in Jamaica possessed more slaves than those in the well-established Leeward Islands.

Following the end of sanctioned privateering, the importance of Port Royal was increasingly based on mercantile traffic through the port, primarily that which was associated with plantation development: slaves and sugar, finished goods and raw materials. In addition to these people and commodities, a variety of other goods flowed in and out of Port Royal in an expansive trade network that served both English colonies and foreign markets. Port Royal was, by virtue of its situation, incredibly diverse in ethnic composition and more tolerant than homogenous colonies like the religiously-based towns of New England or even the tobacco-based colonies of the Chesapeake.

In the final decade of the seventeenth century, the metamorphosis of Jamaica was nearing completion. The economy of the island had shifted from small and diverse agriculture to a larger system based on the monoculture of sugar and the associated products of molasses, muscovado and rum. The policies and practices initiated by Modyford had been furthered by successors like Thomas Lynch and Hender Molesworth, large-scale planters who worked ardently to expand the island’s agricultural output.

Following the Glorious Revolution in 1688, the last vestiges of the buccaneers had all but faded, and the merchant community managed a thriving trade. Port Royal was the only recognized port of entry for the island during this period. All goods that were legally traded passed through its bustling wharves and warehouses. Port Royal was a pivotal station
in triangular and direct trades between the New World and the Old World. Imported trade
goods arrived there from nations and colonies and trading posts on both sides of the
Atlantic Ocean."

The bustling population of Port Royal as the last decade of the seventeenth century
began has been estimated to number between 6,500 and 10,000 individuals. The town’s
narrow streets and alleys were crowded with simple homes and wealthier houses, markets,
taverns, and guesthouses. Along the waterfront, merchants’ warehouses lined busy wharves.
Multistoried brick structures housed a diversity of occupants, including shops and
storefronts of local craftsmen and artisans.

Port Royal had become the preeminent urban center of English holdings in the
New World less than forty years after its establishment. It had grown faster than any other
town the English had founded and was the most economically important port within
England’s empire. With merchants investing their profits into continued development of
the island’s plantation industry, the future of Jamaica and Port Royal was even more
promising. Riding a wave of such prosperity, there was no way for the residents of Port
Royal to have an inkling the tragedy that was to befall them.

Earthquake and Decline

On June 7, 1692, a devastating earthquake swiftly struck Port Royal shortly before
midday. The city was reduced in size by two-thirds when 33 acres dropped straight into the
sea as the sand beneath it became liquefied from seismic waves. Port Royal now was an
island, separated from the sand spit by a channel that was created by the disaster.
About two thousand individuals died in the earthquake itself, and two thousand of the survivors perished in the harsh conditions of the disaster's aftermath. Casualties in Port Royal's crowded and heavily built-up urban setting far eclipsed those of the rest of the island, where only fifty or so people were killed. Port Royallers were swallowed by shifting sand, crushed by falling buildings and swept off in the tidal wave that ensued with the quake.

The town's population was cut in half by the tremor and the casualties that ensued from it. Already beset by looting and pillaging, the survivors feared invasion or a slave uprising, but neither ever came to pass. The defensive installations that had not been wiped out by the disaster were not adequately manned. A component of the remaining population had completely lost confidence in the future and stability of the Palisadoes location and suggested a town be developed at a site called the Rock (present day Rockfort), which was closer to the main island than Port Royal.

While this faction was able to persuade the island's council that the location closer to the island's planting areas would become a suitable harbor with proper development, the settlement never prospered. Instead, people tenaciously clung to the sea-swept remains of Port Royal and trade revived. With the energies of a new governor, Sir William Beeston, new defensive fortifications were developed to protect the changed geographical disposition of the town.

The superstitious could argue that the fates were against Port Royal. In 1703, a fire swept through and nearly consumed the entire town. The small area that survived the earthquake was not large enough to accommodate all of the merchants that desired to do
business through the Queen’s port, or the supporting community. Houses and people were crammed closely together, allowing the fire to spread with deadly speed.

Immediately after the 1703 fire, there was a call to shift the trade center to the mainland site of Ligania, which had been renamed Kingston and was growing at a considerable rate. Merchants favored the location, which provided both security and room for growth for warehouses, while the community of mariners preferred the harbor at Port Royal. A heated debate ensued, and at one point, the governor brought forth a law that prohibited the resettlement of Port Royal. Eventually, the law was disallowed, and the two towns developed concurrently.

Port Royal was able to maintain a modest level of trade as Kingston was developing, and was becoming an important naval base. Jamaica itself became a garrison colony at the turn of the eighteenth century. Throughout Queen Anne’s War, a regiment of troops was stationed there. From 1702 to 1711, the island was governed by an Army Brigadier, Thomas Handasyd, who was succeeded by Lord Archibald Hamilton, a naval captain. In the bellicose environment, Port Royal’s tactical value outweighed its value for merchant shipping.

The vulnerable location continued to meet with natural disasters. Powerful hurricanes struck in 1712 and in 1722. The hurricane of 1722 came in a year that also saw two earthquakes and a severe storm. On the heels of such successive disasters, the decline of the town began and never ceased.²² Merchants were insecure about the investment required to rebuild at Port Royal, and sought locations that would better protect their offices, warehouses and wharves.
Kingston developed rapidly, while troubles continued to plague the Cagway. Port Royal was hit by yet another hurricane in 1724, which was no more than the coup de grace for the city whose heyday had come and gone so rapidly. Port Royal’s defensive position at the end of the Palisadoes spit still made it an attractive location as a naval installation, but its commercial zenith had passed.

As the mercantile establishment was fading in 1715, a royal dockyard had already developed where His Majesty’s ships were refitted without a pause given to the needs of commercial vessels. From 1715 until the Peace of Paris in 1763, there was “constant and considerable” growth of the number and size of military vessels that made use of the dockyard and its growing facilities. Around 1740, when Vice Admiral Vernon had taken charge of the West Indies Squadron, considerable physical development clearly indicated that Port Royal’s value was no longer as the “storehouse and treasury” of the West Indies. Britain came to rely on it as a base from which it could defend its merchant shipping and blockade the ports of its rivals.

Port Royal in the Present: Archaeological and Historical Research

Today, Port Royal is a shadow of its former self. The houses and buildings that crowd the narrow streets give testament to the numerous disasters that have struck the vulnerable location. Styles of building from decades and even centuries past are juxtaposed with modern cinderblock as well as some edifices that were never rebuilt after being gutted by storms. The town endures as a quiet fishing village, relatively isolated from the urban unrest and violence of Kingston. The residents proudly associate themselves with their
town before they claim any national identity: They are “Port Royallists” first, Jamaicans second.

As a source of archaeological information, Port Royal is spectacular. The submerged remains belong to an exclusive membership among archaeological sites. Like the classical sites Pompeii and Herculaneum, Port Royal’s archaeological deposition occurred almost instantaneously through an unforeseen disaster, which preserved the cultural remains and their context in situ. When undisturbed, these sites, which have been termed as “catastrophic sites,” differ from other archaeological sites where continued periods of occupation create stratigraphic layers of deposited material. The submerged site is a captured moment from seventeenth century life in the thriving center of trade for the colonial British West Indies.

There has been extensive recovery of items from the submerged remains of Port Royal. Looting of houses that could be reached began almost immediately in the lawless confusion that followed the earthquake. Items were salvaged as the sea encroached upon the remains, and divers continued to seek and recover objects from the sunken city for hundreds of years. As diving technology increased, it became possible to impose archaeological control in the underwater recovery of artifacts and record features among the submerged remains. Five different archaeological investigations were conducted on land and under water at Port Royal from 1966 to 1990 (Figure 1).
Figure 1: Plan of INA/TAMU and other excavations at the submerged site of Port Royal, Jamaica (After Hamilton, "Simon Benning", 43).
In cooperation with the Institute of Nautical Archaeology and the Jamaica National Heritage Trust, Texas A&M University (TAMU/INA) excavated areas of Port Royal's submerged remains for the first time in 1981. The project focused on an area in the commercial center of the town. Five buildings were excavated over the course of ten years, producing a prodigious body of archaeological information about the town, its structures, and the way its inhabitants lived. The extensive archaeological value of Port Royal is further enhanced by the enormous amount of historical documentation that can be related to the site. Focused study of historical documents permits a high level of personalization of collected archaeological information. Considering the breadth and depth of information regarding Port Royal in both the historical and archaeological record, one can reconstruct life on several levels of complexity.

In the final years of the TAMU/INA excavation project at Port Royal, thorough searches were conducted in Jamaica Archives as well as in the Island Record Office in Spanish Town. Relevant documents, including land patents, wills, and probate inventories from the period of 1660 – 1720, were microfilmed by the project. While the paper trail is far from complete, this information has personalized the excavations conducted and added to the understanding of Port Royal's citizens. Correlating archaeological and historical research with contemporaneous sites allowed the investigation of common patterns and the material culture characteristic of life in the seventeenth century.

The documents recorded by TAMU/INA are only part of the historical documentation available for the study of Port Royal and Jamaica. Comprehensive and contemporary histories have been written. Among narrative sources, there are accounts
from visitors to the island and survivors of the earthquake. Letters and correspondence, as well as journals and mariners logs contain insights into the history of Port Royal. Documents and records preserved in Great Britain’s archives that pertain to Jamaica and Port Royal add extensively to the documents preserved in the archives at Jamaica.27

In 1994, under an L.T. Jordan Fellowship from Texas A&M University, the writer traveled to Jamaica in search of shipping records and documents that might have survived from the Customs House at Port Royal. These records were sought primarily for correlation with the outbound records of the Royal Africa Company (T 70 series), which are archived in England’s Public Records Office. Among the T70 records are 24 manuscript volumes of homeward bound invoice accounts. These records contain invoices of all the cargoes held in the company’s ships on the final leg of the triangular voyage, from the West Indies to England, but also contained therein are cargoes taken from Africa to the West Indies, most of which comprised slaves. Also in these volumes are some of the records of the sales of slaves held by the Company’s factors in the Americas. The 1994 trip to Jamaica ended in disappointment: the records could not be located in either the Customs House, Jamaica Archives or the Island Records Office.

It appears that the records were lost en masse, as there are only rare and singular instances of customs documents to be found among the various repositories. Most likely, the records were lost sometime between 1907 and 1911, when records were relocated and tropical weather threatened the island. An anecdotal story of a horse-drawn cart carrying a number of documents that flipped over while crossing a bridge may describe the demise of these records. It is a regrettable loss of invaluable information for the study of Port Royal’s diverse and, at times, questionable trade environment.
When all of the information concerning Port Royal is considered against the wealth of primary sources that just pertain to the slave trade, the pool of data can appear daunting. Still, the record is far from compete and some gaps, such as the customs records mentioned above, are quite significant. With such a complicated set of data, the study of the slave trade is a challenging endeavor. The complete picture of the trade may continue to elude archaeologists and historians for some time to come.

The following chapter draws upon the historical documents that relate to the conduct of the slave trade in Jamaica. Focusing research on manageable sets of data contributes to our understanding of the slave trade and how the English conducted the business of slave trading at Port Royal. Rather than extrapolate gross generalizations of volume and relative importance, this thesis seeks to identify trends through the examination of the personal aspects of the trade and those who engaged in it.
CHAPTER IV
PORT ROYAL, JAMAICA, AND THE SLAVE TRADE

It seems to me probable that if we were supplied with negroes, much of this trade would come to this Island, to the advantage alike of the King, the Company, and the nation.¹

-Thomas Lynch, Jamaica, 1684

In Jamaica, maritime trade was the cornerstone of economic development, preceding agricultural enterprise which grew more slowly and later acted in some ways to counter shipping ventures.² In a period of just twenty-five years, a vast global trade, supplemented with contraband trade and privateering rather than export of the island’s products, allowed Port Royal to grow into one of the largest and wealthiest English towns in the Americas. The merchants of Port Royal did not possess the wealth or influence of European businessmen whom they either represented or were in competition against, but they enjoyed economic prosperity as they built the short-lived wealth of the town.

Port Royal’s slave trade developed significance as the lands of island allocated in a design that enabled the large plantation’s success.³ The geographic location of the island itself made it ideal for the English redistribution of slaves, as well as other trade goods, by the English to other colonial holdings in the West Indies.⁴ The Jamaican slave trade, as it was conducted from Port Royal, represents a fulcrum upon which the interests of maritime trade and agriculture were balanced.

In the decades that immediately followed the capture of the island and the establishment of Port Royal, the activities of buccaneers kept merchants from effectively capitalizing on the potential gains of the slave trade. Slaves were imported to the island to
supply the agricultural needs of the island, which were not initially very demanding. The lucrative Spanish market was largely unreachable as long as commerce raiders vexed Spanish shipping and buccaneers ransomed cities in the Spanish colonies.

The slave trade was a fundamental source of the Spanish wealth that had first motivated the predatory buccaneers. This need for slaves was met initially by the Portuguese, and later Dutch traders became a principal conduit of supply as other nations vied for the lucrative trade. As the English struggled to fortify their vulnerable new colony, fear of Spanish invasion had prompted the commissioning of buccaneers as privateers. Once that fear subsided and sufficient wealth had been brought into the colony to establish agriculture and trade, the pirates had outlasted their usefulness and stood in the way of legitimate and profitable commercial progress that offered significant long-term profitability.

When the Company of Royal Adventurers was reorganized into the Royal Africa Company in 1672, there was optimism that the English could supply slaves to Spanish holdings from a trade center at Port Royal. Slave traders, the English government, and the colony’s administrators all recognized the potential revenue in this trade, and sought to secure it for England amid the competitive international market. Jamaica’s windward location, a short sail from the principal Spanish trade centers at Vera Cruz and Panama, offered English traders an advantage over their Dutch and later French rivals, who lacked such a proximal base of operations.

Island planters naturally found this initiative to be a threat to their labor supply and opposed it vocally in the Jamaican Assembly and in correspondence to England. Complaints against the Royal Africa Company were frequent. When Colonial Spanish
merchants increased its consumer presence in the slave markets at Port Royal in the 1680s, Jamaican slave buyers were quick to point out that best slaves went to Spain's colonies and the remaining supply was inadequate for their needs. Some interpretations of the record have depicted the planters as a pulling faction, it is apparent that the lure of specie fostered policies that favored international trade over internal supply.¹

Logic dictates that it was sound business for the English slave trade to favor the Spanish market, which was far larger than the captive colonial market. Trading slaves with Spain brought much needed cash into the economy, whereas trading for sugar within England's colonial structure served to reallocate internal resources in a mercantilist pattern. A more grim hypothesis is that by allocating the lesser quality of slaves to the Jamaica, mortality under the brutal working conditions would perpetuate continued demand in the smaller market.

The commercial community that supported this bilateral slave trade at Port Royal was extensive. Aside from the merchants, agents, factors and the consumers they supplied, the trade depended upon the maritime community to provide the ships that carried the cargoes. There was also a segment of the population that saw the potential profits in the trade and invested money and capital in slaving ventures. Merchants in Jamaica and England provided the materials necessary to conduct the trade. Individuals in governing and legislative roles formed policy to facilitate the trade, and the armed forces that were assigned to the island protected it along with other merchant shipping. As product in this particular commerce, the slaves themselves were clearly the people of the Jamaican population who were most affected.
Just as it was integrally linked to trade and industry in the mercantilist economy, the slave trade left no walk of everyday life untouched. From 1640 until the dawn of the abolitionist movement, most colonists and Englishmen alike viewed the trade as a public utility that was vital to Britain’s economic interests. We can and should look back at the shameful and horrific trade as one of the saddest chapters in our history, but present-day morality cannot be applied to the mindset of those who had yet to develop such a compass or conscience.

Development of the Sugar Monoculture: Creation of Jamaican Demand and Conflict

While England had made sporadic ventures into the slave trade since the early sixteenth century, it was not until the middle of the seventeenth century that attempts were made to develop a systematic transatlantic trade. The motivating interest was the establishment of colonies with sugar-producing potential. Barbados was first, but the rechartering of the Company of Royal Adventurers in 1663 with the initiative of entering into the slave trade was surely influenced to a degree by the agricultural potential of the new Jamaican colony.6

Jamaicans were not insistent in their demands for slaves as they were settling the island during the first decades following its capture. The administration of Governor Edward D’Oyley, was more concerned with defending the colony from Spanish aggressors than he was with building the island’s agricultural estates. Following the Restoration, Charles II was motivated by London merchants with interests in the West India trade to develop Jamaica beyond its status as a outpost for military operations and commerce raiding
and capitalize on the island’s agricultural potential. Subsequent colonial administrations, which were often rife with bias and conflicting interests where the slave trade was concerned, created the environment that fostered the plantation economy and its immense labor demand.

Ever enterprising, Dutch merchants were quick to test the waters of the Jamaican market, no matter what the political climate may have been in Europe. The period of the most frequent Dutch deliveries was within the first twenty years of the capture of the island. In 1661, the Dutch ship *Martyn Van Russen* "did arrive at the said Island of Jamaica with severall Negroes in her, And did there send ashoar severall of the said Negroes, and seel them in the said Island, and Received severall summes of mony for them, and did trade and traffique in the said island..."8 The island’s population numbered 3,470 at that time, of which only 514 were African slaves.9

It has been noted in the preceding chapter that D'Oyley’s successor as governor, Thomas Modyford, laid the groundwork for Jamaica’s plantation economy during his term from 1664 to 1671. In league with Henry Morgan and the buccaneers, Modyford ruled Jamaica practically as a potentate with little regard for the directions of the Royal government. He controlled the island’s revenue completely and set his family up in key positions such as the chief military and judicial posts. In 1667 and again in 1670, he declared his own private war with Spain to justify raids on their shipping.

The effects of Modyford’s policies were noticeable; the population of Jamaica began to rise as the plantation economy developed. The slave population rose even more dramatically, and in little more than a decade swelled to 9,502, more than double the number of white men on the island.10
This astounding figure reflects how Modyford's vision for Jamaica involved the creation of a plantation economy on a larger scale than had been possible in Barbados or the other Leeward Islands. His administration created an elite class of planters, where a very small number possessed a large amount of Jamaica's productive land. In 1670, 44 planters owned holdings of more than 1000 acres, and 16 held more than 2,000 acres. The latter tracts dwarfed even the largest holdings in the Lesser Antilles.¹¹

That these tracts had been laid out did not necessarily mean that massive sugar plantations simply sprung up out of Jamaica's wilderness. With the great investment required to cultivate sugar, of which thirty to forty percent could be attributed to slave labor, Jamaica's settlers were advised by Modyford to plant inexpensive but profitable crops at first. In that way, planters could acquire the necessary capital to build sugar works and amass the necessary labor force to cultivate cane. Modyford's recommendation was cacao, which required a relatively small investment and did not have a large labor need. By the time blight struck in 1670 and rapidly destroyed the trees, Modyford himself was only just beginning to enter into sugar cultivation with the money he had made from cacao.¹²

As a former factor of the Royal Company of Adventurers, Modyford's appreciation and understanding of the slave trade's importance and profitability was acute. His appointment in 1664 was strongly influenced by his successes in selling slaves to the Spanish while he was at Barbados.¹³ When his relationship with the Royal Company ended, he was able to represent Jamaica's interests in the slave trade without bias and apparently did so with a shrewd sense of business and policy. In 1670, Modyford requested that company licenses for the African trade be granted free of charge or at more reasonable rates, and that bonds be issued to insure that those ships carried their slaves only to
Regardless of difficulties imposed by the Dutch war, Modyford claimed that the lack of a steady labor supply since 1664 had hindered the colony's growth.

Indicative of his key role in the precipitous formation of Jamaica's monoculture economy, Modyford was involved in the slave trade on many levels. As governor, he influenced and mandated policy concerning the trade. As a planter, he was a purchaser and owner of slaves. As an agent of a joint-stock company, he conducted and facilitated the business of the trade.

Modyford also invested in the trade privately apart from his personal interests. As the patron of a young man of business, Cary Helyar, Modyford provided the necessary capital to establish him. Helyar also received additional financing from his elder brother, Squire William Helyar of Somerset. For several years, Helyar plied the merchant trade at Port Royal, dealing a variety of goods which included wine, cacao, sugar, logwood, and elephant's teeth. His most principal commodity, however, was slaves: in the course of two years, he sold 258 of them.

Helyar, like many of Port Royal's merchants, used the profits from his trading ventures to develop a plantation. In 1669, he began to acquire slaves and the equipment needed to plant cacao on a large tract of land adjacent to Modyford's own plantation in St. Catherine's parish. Indentured tradesmen supplied by his elder brother, Squire Helyar, after 1671 augmented the slaves that Helyar used at his plantation. By the time of Cary Helyar's unexpected death in 1672, the farm that had come to be known as 'Bybrook' was well on its way to becoming a functional sugar-producing plantation. Like many other contemporary plantations, the supplies and tradesmen provided from a specific region in England by a partner, such as Helyar's brother, gave the farm the ethnographic character of a unique
mercantile colony. With interests and investors in the home country as well as the colony, the capital-intensive plantations of Jamaica developed along very complicated models of credit and reimbursement.

Lieutenant Governor Thomas Lynch assumed governorship of Jamaica in 1671 after Modyford was recalled by Charles II for sending Henry Morgan to sack Panama. Lynch, a large landholder himself, took sides with the planters against the buccaneers and sought to increase Jamaica's agricultural output. During his term, Lynch dispensed patents which staked out most of Jamaica's remaining choice agricultural land and dispersed settlers to the uncultivated areas of the island. Of the twelve hundred patents issued by his administration, more than half were in unsettled areas of the north coast of the island and in the southwestern parish of St. Elizabeth, which was completely uninhabited when he took office.

The increase in Jamaica's population during Lynch's term was significantly enhanced by migrations from the Lesser Antilles and Surinam. Between 1671 and 1679, 11,816 slaves arrived in Jamaica, at an average rate of 1,500 per year. It is interesting to note that as the Royal Africa Company was being established, Jamaica's slave population was increased by roughly a quarter due to migrations from older and more established sugar-producing colonies. It appears that a colonial redistribution network was more crucial to meeting Jamaica's early labor needs than direct importation.

Barbados supplied between one-third and one-twentith of the slaves imported into Jamaica from 1655 to 1701. Barbados, which offered slavers an early landfall after the arduous middle passage, was both a consumer market and an entrepot for redistribution of slaves. It is apparent that in the latter role, it did not have Jamaica's advantages for trade
with Spanish colonies; however, the French island plantations were able to take advantage of the Leeward location. Still, the re-export of slaves delivered by the Royal African Company to Jamaica and other British sugar-producing islands was quite profitable.

Indebted planters, who sold their slaves prior to quitting the islands, offered yet another source of supply for redistribution along sanctioned and unsanctioned trade channels. Rather than the popular conception of a triangular trade, which was centrally orchestrated from England, Jamaica’s early slave population was created by ad hoc network that had a highly significant component of redistribution and international supply. The Company of Royal Adventurers into Africa did little to supply Jamaica with labor: the last of its sparse and sporadic deliveries was in 1665.  

As the plantation economy established a toe hold, Jamaica’s aim was for free trade in slaves, for planters balked at Crown-imposed monopolies on the trade. The Royal African Company withheld shipments while bitter arguments continued over debts owed the company by planters. While the demand for slaves at Jamaica seemed to have limitless potential, the ability to pay for them in a mutually profitable arrangement was severely limited.  

When confronted by administration that did not champion their interests, the planters joined the government themselves. Lord John Vaughn, an outsider who replaced Lynch as governor, was contemptuous of Jamaica and its freebooting population. He complained that the merchants of Port Royal worked in league with the pirates and that the planters connived with interloping traders to undermine the monopoly granted by the Crown to the Royal African Company.  

The chief sugar planters took charge of the Jamaica Assembly and challenged him, claiming the legislative and taxing powers of the legislature
back in England. The Assembly defied England at nearly every turn by revising laws. They authorized the purchase of slaves from interlopers and mired unpopular crown officials in impeachment proceedings. After Vaughn's successor, Charles Howard, earl of Carlisle, failed to control the planters with laws set forth by the Plantation Office, the Lords of Trade re-appointed Lynch, who they hoped could bring about a profitable peace between all parties.

Hender Molesworth became governor after Thomas Lynch's second term as governor ended with his death in 1684. Molesworth was a large-scale planter, whose 7,500 acres included ten working farms, two of which were massive sugar plantations. Most importantly, Molesworth was an agent of the Royal Africa Company and used his office to manipulate the supply of slaves to the island. The planters did not appreciate his efforts to suppress the interloping trade and protect the company's monopoly, and they appreciated his policies to develop Spanish export trade even less. The Assembly's complaints to the Crown fell on hard ears: James II was the majority stockholder in the Royal African Company.

James made a move that would be contrary to the best interests of the company. The Duke of Albemarle, Christopher Monck, was appointed governor in 1687, possibly only because the King sought to get rid of him. Albemarle was a reckless and irresponsible man who had squandered his fortune in England. Success in a privateering voyage that he financed whet his appetite for treasure, and his gubernatorial term saw a brief return to the freewheeling days of Port Royal's raucous buccaneering era.

The duke's death in the winter of 1688-9, which was shortly followed by the news of the Glorious Revolution, ended up becoming a turning point in Jamaican history. Sir
William Beeston, who was also a factor of the Royal African Company, governed Jamaica from 1692 to 1702, during which time he contended with the devastating earthquake, subsequent outbreaks of malaria, hurricanes, and a French invasion in 1694. Regardless of these challenges, many of which had negative effects upon Port Royal, Beeston governed the island as it came into its own. The policies enacted by the earlier planter-governors had created the massive plantation monoculture economy, which subsequently created a large demand for slaves at Jamaica. This need would be met by a diverse community of slavers, at the forefront of which was the Royal African Company.

The Royal African Company

The history, importance, and difficulties of the Royal African Company, which were overviewed earlier, have been dealt with extensively by K. G. Davies. During its crucial formative years from 1672 - 1698, the Company established its forts and factories over a wide area of the West African coast and formed alliances with several African states for the purpose of protecting and furthering trade. The concerted efforts of private traders, termed by the company as “interlopers,” impinged heavily on their monopoly of slave trading in the West Indian colonies until the company went out of business in 1752.

The effectiveness of the Royal Company's maintenance of its monopoly was challenged by at least five major issues. The first was shipments of slaves from possessions under the control of the East India Company, namely the island of Madagascar, which were not included in the charter of the Royal Company. Secondly, intense international competition from Portuguese, Dutch and French traders, which made the
monopoly effective only in the final markets of the West Indies. Three other sources impinged on the West Indian advantage. The company compensated its captains with slaves, often amounting to two-thirds of a given captain’s pay, which captains would then sell independently. The amount of these “payments” could be as substantial as two-thirds of a given captain’s promised payment. Captains and crews were also known to overload ships, carrying extra slaves to sell on their own account, or falsely report that slaves had died on the passage. In truth, there was corruption of records in nearly every aspect of the industry, with captains, factors and agents all skimming profits from the company. “Interlopers” who engaged in the trade made up the final source of competition.

Interlopers enjoyed a great advantage over the Royal Company in that they had lower overhead costs and could therefore operate on a much lower profit margin, underselling the company. The risk of capture by the company was no deterrent, especially in the West Indies where the planters, who favored the lower prices of the independents, controlled the colonial courts. The company had the burden of maintaining the forts and factories on the African Coast to defend the interests of the English trade from foreign powers. With the long coastline and the corrupt nature of the agents stationed at the forts, it was not possible to exclude foreign traders. Operating costs were a serious burden to the company, which eventually needed to be subsidized by the crown in order to maintain the forts. In 1689, judged to be the peak of the company’s control in Africa, the service included 330 Englishmen allocated between its four major forts and about twenty other settlements.  

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The Company made its first deliveries to Jamaica in 1674. In 1675, Governor Lynch recommended the development of trade with Spanish colonies, suggesting a contract for the slave trade would not only offer great wealth, but would do much to ease the tensions between England and Spain. Despite the inability of its predecessor, the Company of Royal Adventurers into Africa, to meet its contractual obligations, the Royal African Company successfully negotiated a contract with Spain's Casa de Contratación. The asiento agreed to deliver 2,000 slaves to the Spaniards in Jamaica over a period of twenty months, and enabled Spain to send her own factors to supervise the trade. The Spanish had already been buying slaves from the English at markets in Barbados and Jamaica on a limited scale. Increasing competition among buyers led to higher prices, which the Spaniards were willing to pay, and this caused more strife among island planters. Controversy also was found in the Lords of Trade, who feared violations of the Navigation Acts, although the Solicitor General offered the opinion that slaves and associated goods were not under the auspices of the Acts of Trade.

The conflict that enveloped the founding of the company and its trade with the planters and Spain never truly abated throughout the duration of its operations at Port Royal. The company overestimated its ability to supply both markets, and was never able to satisfy the demand of either and complaints about supply, price and quality of the deliveries were constant. Compounding the issues were problems in remuneration and credit. The company limited its supply to the planters, because it felt that the £60,000 debt owed it by Jamaica was too extreme. This punitive measure apparently had a backlash on the export trade to Spain, as it was reported that Spanish ships waited for cargoes at Port Royal for many months as there were no slaves to supply them. Eventually, Lynch began to allow...
interlopers to supply the Spaniards and the Jamaicans, stating his confidence in the planters of his colony to pay for any slaves that the Company could deliver. He concluded that it was "the failure of the Company to provide negroes that is the ruin of all."\textsuperscript{32}

The planters asked for 3,000 to 4,000 slaves per year, at a price no higher than £16 or £17 per head with six months credit and no 'refuse' slaves, and further claimed they could stand 'every year more and more.'\textsuperscript{33} With the demands of the asiento calling for about two thousand slaves per year, the company had to fulfil a rather large obligation of roughly 6,000 slaves a year to satisfy both parties. Davies' figures of company deliveries from 1674 to 1711 depict that the only time there was a surplus to this figure was from 1686 to 1687, when the Company supplied Jamaica with 6,223 slaves.\textsuperscript{34} Usually, the company was only able to deliver a little more than a thousand slaves per year to Jamaica, and frequently the number was significantly less. Davies claims that the company sold some 90,000 slaves by auction in the West Indies from 1672 – 1711, of which more than a third were at Jamaica and nearly half were at Barbados.\textsuperscript{35}

After 1712, deliveries to Jamaica by the Royal African Company were insignificant. From 1715 to 1721, the company was only able to deliver 1,743 slaves to the colonies. The company did enjoy some brief prosperity through its association with the South Seas Company in the postwar years, but its troubled day was quickly coming to an end. With the main operations of the South Seas Company based in Kingston, the waning of the Royal African Company also coincided with Port Royal's passing eminence in the slave trade.
The Jamaican Slave Population: Deliveries and Demand

During the final quarter of the seventeenth century, Jamaica was undergoing extensive internal change and Port Royal was at its economic zenith. This peak coincides with the years estimated to be the Royal African Company's greatest extent. During this period, the population balance shifted, reflecting the changing economic climate, and as the population of whites decreased, the slave population grew dramatically, due in part to the efforts of the Royal Company operations based in Port Royal.

In 1662, the slave population of Port Royal numbered just 50. At the birth of the Royal African Company, in 1673, the growing town had a slave population of 312 blacks and a white population of 1,669. In seven years, when the census of 1680 was taken, the parish had 2,086 whites and the population of slaves had more than doubled to 845, indicating a differential growth rate of more than 3 to 1. These figures of course do not reflect the larger portion of the slave population in rural, agricultural areas, but illustrate the increasing trend. As the 1680s progressed, fewer Europeans were coming to Jamaica to seek their fortunes, causing the white population of the island to fall from 12,000 to 10,000. By 1690, and by the end of the century, the number had fallen by 3,000 more.

The efforts of slave traders caused the black population to rise dramatically during this time: the annual average of slaves landed at Port Royal rose to 1,700. Under pressure from the planter class, and with obligations to the Spanish, the Royal Company's efforts reached their maximum extent in the closing years of the 1680s. By the end of the century the black population of Jamaica is estimated at 40,000, having risen from 15,000 in the 1680s. The accuracy of these figures will always be in question as long as there is
inadequate information about the number of slaves reshipped to other islands from the market at Port Royal under both contraband and legitimate trade.

Davies estimated the number of slaves delivered to Jamaica by the Royal African Company for the period of 1674 to 1711 by tabulating the invoice account books of the Company (P.R.O. T70) and supplementing the information with other company records to compensate for lost account books and for prearranged contract sales not listed in the accounts.39 Galenson lists the numbers of slaves included in just the account ledgers, so that a comparison can be made (see Table 1), and the accuracy of Pawson’s and Buisseret’s estimates of 40,000 slaves can be ascertained.40 From the accounts it is apparent that the Company delivered 23,343 slaves into the Port Royal market, and to this figure, Davies adds 5,418 more, reaching a figure of 28,761 individuals imported. This figure is 11,239 less than the estimated number proposed by Pawson and Buisseret, which is taken from Dunn.41 Even assuming a substantial population of slaves in 1673, and prolific trading by independent merchants, it is difficult to see this figure as being rational, especially when we consider that slave mortality is estimated to be extremely high under the severe conditions of plantation labor. A plantation owner could expect six slaves to die for every birth, and that forty to fifty percent of slaves purchased would die over a three year period.42 The extensive purchasing of slaves in the Port Royal Market by the Spanish must also be taken into account.
Table 1: Tabulation of Annual Slave Deliveries to Jamaica by the Royal African Company

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Accounts</th>
<th>Davies' estimates</th>
<th>difference</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1674</td>
<td>404</td>
<td>410</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1675</td>
<td>1,278</td>
<td>1,269</td>
<td>-9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1676</td>
<td>1,042</td>
<td>1,188</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1677</td>
<td>1,157</td>
<td>1,156</td>
<td>-1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1678</td>
<td>997</td>
<td>990</td>
<td>-7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1679</td>
<td>421</td>
<td>464</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1680</td>
<td>1,540</td>
<td>1,623</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1681</td>
<td>1,143</td>
<td>1,150</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1682-3</td>
<td>2,571</td>
<td>3,483</td>
<td>912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1684-5</td>
<td>2,006</td>
<td>3,841</td>
<td>1,835</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1686-7</td>
<td>4,061</td>
<td>6,223</td>
<td>2,162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1688</td>
<td>717</td>
<td>447</td>
<td>-270</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1689</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>682</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1690</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1691</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>579</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1692</td>
<td>583</td>
<td>583</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1693</td>
<td>977</td>
<td>1,332</td>
<td>355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1694</td>
<td>936</td>
<td>369</td>
<td>-567</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1695</td>
<td>962</td>
<td>1,129</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1696</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>113</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1697</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1698</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>313</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1699</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>161</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 23,343  28,761  5,418

In looking at the figures in the table above, the gaps in the records and the discrepancies between Davies's estimates and the accounts as transcribed by Galenson, the need for clarification by further examination of the documents is apparent. That the estimates, which should logically be larger than the accounts, are found to be less in certain instances raises questions. Although we will probably never be able to conclusively discern the true number of slaves shipped into Jamaica by the Royal African Company, we must hope that a more accurate picture can be obtained by examination of the source material and correlation with Jamaican records. Investigation of probate inventories from large
plantations in the area could offer a further indication of how many slaves remained in Jamaica to work, and how many were redistributed. However, the data set is problematic and so extensive that such research could consume years with no guarantee of comprehensive or even productive results.

The data offer the conclusion that as sugar gained eminence in the economic community, the dependence on slave labor increased, which is reflected by the population estimates and shipping records available. To account for the declining trend in the white population outside of the landed gentry, one can provide a twofold postulation. First, the decline in privateering led to fewer individuals seeking quick and easy fortune by these means. Secondly, there is reduced presence of indentured white servants as reliance on slaves increases. Justifications for the latter have been made on economic grounds by Bean and for reasons of physical endurance by Hamshere.43 The drastic drop in slave imports seen after 1688 is explained in part by the onset of the Nine Years War (King William's War).44 Also related is the abduction of James II in 1688, a major supporter and shareholder in the company.

Further clarification of these data could lie in figures given by Pawson and Buisseret concerning the tonnage of vessels arriving in the port from the years 1686 to 1691 (Table 2).45 The tonnage shows a peak of arrivals in about 1688 and a drastic fall off in the following year. The arrivals from Africa reach their peak in 1687, correlative with the data in the first table. Legislation was not enacted until 1788 that mandated a policy for the loading of slaves on ships. It allowed ships of 60 tons or less to carry one slave for every 0.6 ton and larger ships to carry one slave for every 0.66 ton.46 Assuming a figure near to but
less than this, 0.5, a gross estimate of the possible number of slaves carried in the ships from a century earlier is suggested:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Tonnage</th>
<th>African Tonnage (estimated)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1686</td>
<td>7,135</td>
<td>1,395 2,790</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1687</td>
<td>8,970</td>
<td>1,680 3,360</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1688</td>
<td>9,710</td>
<td>765   1,530</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1689</td>
<td>5,335</td>
<td>100   200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1690</td>
<td>4,165</td>
<td>250   500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1691</td>
<td>5,565</td>
<td>660   1,320</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For the most part, it is safe to assume that the ships were more crowded than the proposed figure allows, but some attempt to account for mortality on the middle passage must be made, and room for other cargoes should be taken into account. Gross correlation between many of the figures is apparent, however, and it can also be assumed that nearly all the vessels hailing from Africa on the official list were either chartered by or licensed by the Royal Company. It should be noted that the ships from England and Africa average about 120 tons, by Pawson's and Buisseret's calculations, with 240 ships accounting for this figure.

A slightly more comprehensive set of historical records have survived from the period of 1702 to 1708. These enable a look at the percentage of the slave trade that the Royal African Company was able to command in the face of continually increasing competition. The following table (Table 3) balances and compares figures from these sources. Column A represents the number of slave ships arriving in Jamaica, column B shows the total number of slaves imported into the island, and column C shows the number that were re-exported. Column D represents the Royal African Company's deliveries, and
the final column, E, is the percent of the trade that the Company commanded.

Table 3: Percentage of Slave Trade Held by the Royal African Company in Jamaica, 1702 – 1708

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E (D/B x 100)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1702</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>843</td>
<td>327</td>
<td>279*</td>
<td>33.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1703</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>2740</td>
<td>481</td>
<td>279*</td>
<td>10.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1704</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4120</td>
<td>221</td>
<td>801</td>
<td>19.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1705</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3503</td>
<td>1669</td>
<td>1384</td>
<td>39.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1706</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3804</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
<td>n.d.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1707</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3358</td>
<td>807</td>
<td>196</td>
<td>5.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1708</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>6627</td>
<td>1372</td>
<td>1709</td>
<td>25.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>24,995</td>
<td>5970</td>
<td>4648</td>
<td>22.31</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* The records of the Royal African Company provide a total for the two years, 1702 – 1703, of 558. For the purpose of this analysis, the figure has been halved, giving an approximate figure of 279 for each respective year. The label “n.d.” represents where no data was available.

Displaying the import totals from the above table graphically (Figure 2) effectively illustrates that the Royal African Company was never able to command a major portion of the slave imports.

![Graph: Royal African Company Deliveries as a Percentage of Jamaican Slave Imports]

**Figure 2:** Royal African Company deliveries as a percentage of slave imports.
trade with the increasing competition of separate traders, who entered into the trade voraciously in 1698 with the passage of the Ten Percent Act. This legislation granted slave trading licenses in exchange for a percentage payment to the company.

As complicated and confounded as the historical record is, it is clear from the available data that the Royal African Company was never able to effectively enforce its monopoly on the slave trade at Jamaica. Illicit traders, foreign competition, and later separate traders all impinged on the company's market share and more responsible for more of the overall volume of slave trading in Port Royal. The slave trade at Port Royal was far from the government-protected public utility that contemporaries sought to create. Instead, it was carried out in actuality by a widely varied community of private interests that had differing levels of association with the state's sanctioned institution.

The Community of Slave Traders in Port Royal

While general profitability for the joint stock companies was a complicated and difficult issue, engaging in the slave trade could be a phenomenally lucrative investment or enterprise for private and public individuals at Jamaica. After deducting expenses, a separate trader could generally count on a minimum profit of £2,500 from each trip, and some voyages returned at least three times that amount. English economist Malachy Postlethwait noted: "The Negro trade and the natural consequences resulting from it may be justly esteemed an inexhaustible fund of wealth and naval power to this nation."

Until a clause in the Ten Percent Act of 1698 excluded governors, deputy governors and judges from serving as agents for slave sales for either the company or separate traders,
a significant number of the Royal African Company agents were also public officials. Generally, these officials had interests in merchant shipping as well as being landholders and plantation owners. Conflicting interests and duplicitous allegiances compounded the issues that challenged the company's ability to sustain its operations and turn a profit. Both Hender Molesworth and William Beeton were agents for the company while they governed Jamaica. Other agents who held official positions included the Councillors of Jamaica John Balle, Charles Penhallow, and Walter Ruding. Rowland Powell was also an agent while he served his term as Secretary of the Jamaican Assembly.

An agency of the Royal African Company was a coveted and well-paying position. Agents for the most part shared a basic commission of seven percent on all returns sent to England. As those returns could easily approach £40,000 a year, the cut between the two or three agents employed at Jamaica could be quite a sizeable subsidy to the incomes from plantations and other investments. Agents were responsible for all credit given to planters and were obliged to remit the full payment of a cargoes' sale to the company within twelve months. In addition to arranging for the sales of slaves, agents also oversaw the company's properties at the island. They arranged for shipping slaves and forwarding remittances to England in specie, bills of exchange or in sugar, and coordinated contract deliveries for a lesser commission. They also were responsible for prosecuting debtors. Later, as the company acted to reduce the debts owed it, the rates were raised, eventually reaching ten percent.

Although these men held such impressive standing in the community and derived great wealth from their positions, the history of Royal African Company agents in West Indies generally ended in quarrel and litigation. Walter Ruding, killed in the 1692
earthquake, left his affairs in disarray and his securities were sued for reparation to the Company.\textsuperscript{52} Charles Penhallow's estate was also challenged.\textsuperscript{53} Since agents, by virtue of their occupation, operated in continual debt to the company, it is not surprising that most untimely departures would result in some litigation. Poor communication and misunderstandings led to many conflicts, but one must also assume a certain level of advantage was taken from those same circumstances. Certainly, such power and wealth were potentially corruptive influences.

Through investigation of grantor's deeds, probate inventories and wills, it is possible to look at the business community who dealt in slave trading on a personal level. Hender Molesworth, Charles Penhallow, Henry Ward, Edmund Reeves, Thomas Nuttall, and James del Castillo represent a sampling of the community responsible for the bulk of the slaves brought into Port Royal during the peak of the Royal African Company's control.

As noted earlier, Hender Molesworth served as Jamaica's governor while also acting as an agent for the Royal African Company. He was the owner of a large plantation and played an important role in the merchant shipping industry, as well as commanding a company as a colonel in the island's militia. Official correspondence, penned with fellow agent John Gauden in 1678 and later Rowland Powell in 1679, illustrates his efforts to protect the company's monopoly and interests at Jamaica.\textsuperscript{54} For instance, on the 14\textsuperscript{th} of February, 1678, Molesworth reported to the company that he had begun legal proceedings against purchasers of 44 slaves from an interloper, Coaster, and that he and Gausen had accepted their becoming indebted to the company for violating the monopoly.\textsuperscript{55}

Molesworth's name appears in several grantor's deeds and his will survives, which attests to the vast personal wealth he amassed through his work as agent and through his
other interests. In one deed, Molesworth and Samuel Bernard leased land, houses and stables to the Duke of Albermarle for a period of seven years at the rate of £120 per year. Another of the grantor’s deeds, dated September 29, 1687, contains a transaction between Molesworth and Charles Penhallow in which 204 acres of land in the Parish of St. Thomas were sold to Penahallow for the sum of £100. In another document, Molesworth sold several large parcels of land and some footage at the Old Harbour which were originally possessed of John Colebeck to Penhallow for £1000. Penhallow is also listed as a beneficiary in Molesworth’s will of a cash amount, indicating a friendship developed through their working association.

Charles Penhallow’s will also depicts a life of great social stature and wealth, which was befitting of a man who held office as a councilor, was an officer in the militia, and was also a churchwarden. Captain Penhallow was the proprietor of ‘The Three Mariners’ tavern on Honey Lane between Thames Street and High Street, just a short walk from King’s House. Penhallow is well represented in the grantor’s deeds, which depict him as a very active agent of the Royal African Company during a period when credit and debtor issues were prevalent. No fewer than twenty transactions, including eight in the years from 1686-1689, were found with him as one of the parties.

Several of the deeds are related to foreclosures or sales on small to middle-sized plantations with Penhallow acting on behalf of the Royal African Company. In one instance, on September 3, 1689, Penhallow acts as one of a rather large party of six other debtors in seizing the land of one Bouthen Clausen, which amounted to some 400 acres and an indeterminate number of slaves. Clausen was beholden to the company for a sum of £550 principle and interest.
The grantors deeds and wills of Hender Molesworth and Charles Penhallow portray a number of reoccurring relationships. Samuel Bernard, Walter Ruding and Smith Kelly all appear frequently in association with company business. Tremendous values are depicted in the deeds in certain cases. In one of the grantor's deeds, Bernard is seen repaying an indenture of £5000 to the Royal African Company through a John Bernard in London. Together, Molesworth and Penhallow represented a number of parties in dealing with the Duke of Albermarle over an impressive debt of £5000 owed the Crown.

Certainly, one need not hold public office to profit from the trade in slaves. Henry Ward was apparently a private merchant who owned a building at the intersection of Thames Street and Bird's Alley, which was left to him by another merchant, Anthony Swymmer. He was also a Churchwarden of the town's parish. The grantor's deeds reflect an active business career for the decade of 1681 to 1691 he is indexed as a first party in no less than eleven transactions. The inventory of Ward's estate, taken on February 25, 1692, and transcribed below, points clearly to his involvement as a merchant in the slave trade.

From The Inventory of Henry Ward, Port Royal merchant

1/3 part {the Hull of the sloop Providense old and decayed belonging to the said Henry Ward and others (£25) / a parcell of old rigging two anchors and cables decayed and halfe worne fore saile and main saile square saile and gibb muche decayed and rotten including the said sloopes mast boomes and bowsprit (£50)}

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a negroe boy named Jonny</td>
<td>25 00 00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one third part of the sloop Anne at Mr. Thomas Barrets in Liguancas</td>
<td>230 00 00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66 ps of holland at 25pp</td>
<td>£82.10.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40 ps of ordinary searge at 30pps</td>
<td>£95.00.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
46 ps of silke at 35ps .... £80.10.00.......................... $238 00 00
a pparf sell of plates said to be in the hands of Port Ref's}........... 22 10 00

Debts outstanding
In the hands of John Leshey Monck (?)................................... 40 00 00
Marshall Higesuer (?)....................................................... 30 00 00
In Coll. Charles Knights hands stord in the
Af siento Remaining...................................................... 700 00 00
In Maj. Smith Kellys hands stord at $upa (?).................................. 1794 18 00
In Mef Jose Dhathesf (?)................................................... 200 00 00
In Maj Langleys hands about............................................. 45 00 00
Cap George Robens sons hands about..................................... 15 00 00

3365 00 00

25 Feb 1692

Edwd Dendy
Dan Plowman

That Ward is owed £700 by the asiento immediately identifies his involvement as a dealer in slaves. His partial ownership of the two vessels makes it likely that he was re-exporting or importing them to the island. Smith Kelly, the Provost Marshall of Port Royal, is the largest debtor listed, and this poses some questions as to the circumstances of this large lending. Wills survive both Charles Knight and George Robinson, but they contain no information that sheds light on their mention in Ward’s inventory. The large amount of cloth held by Ward could point toward a diversified trade business, but he clearly was more engaged in the slave trade than in other goods. Textiles appear frequently on manifests of ships bound for Africa; it is quite possible that these are surplus goods from trading on the Guinea coast.

The documents pertaining to Thomas Nuttall also identify him as having been a merchant involved with slave trading. An interesting coincidence exists in the inventories
of Ward and Nuttall, whose inventory is listed below.

From the Inventory of Thomas Nuttall  
Jamaica February 27th 1692

An inventory of the goods and Chattels of Mr: Thomas Nuttall late of Port Royall Merch: Deceased appraised by us Wm Chapman; and Charles Sadler Esqs. as they wear shewd unto us by Smyth Kelly Esq. Administrator to Thomas Nuttall Impoimes (?)--

an invoice of sundry particulars which came from London in the Briganteen Susanna Capt Duglas Comander amount to £154/6/5 75 pcent to be addded to the Price? cost wch we value at .......... 270 10 3 ¾

8 negroes and a halfe .................................................. 30 00 00  
30 peices of striped linnen ........................................ 06 00 00  
half of the sloop Providenes ...................................... 60 00 00  
an old Tarnished scarfe taken out of the sea .................... 02 10 00  
one petty coate ......................................................... 02 10 00  
cash recd for blew linnen that was out in Capt Scroop ...... 94 19 03  
Cash that was in the assiento ................................... 269 15 06  
one silver tankard 1/4 being paid for salvage ................. 06 10 00  
the other 2/3 we value .............................................. 06 10 00  
a Debt due from Andrew Langley Esq. .......................... 78 00 00

.................................................................................997 09 11 3/4

Will Chapman  
Chas Sadler

Both are listed as having partial ownership of a sloop named Providene. Nuttall is half owner, which is valued at at £60, and Ward is listed as having a third of the vessel, valued at £25. Ward's inventory predates Nuttall's by only two days. Unfortunately, no mention of a vessel so named could be found. It is probable that the remainder of the shares were in the hands of the vessels' master, if indeed it is the same ship. The grantor's deeds do not contain any information that would further indicate a business relationship between them.
Edmund Reeves, whose probate inventory is listed below, is also owed a sizeable sum by the *asiento*, indicating his role as supplier to the Spanish slavers. While the Reeves inventory does not include the number of references to the maritime community that Nuttall’s inventory does, it does not preclude him from any such activity. It also opens the possibility that he was merely a purchaser of slaves at the market who resold them to the *asiento*.

From the Inventory of Edmund Reeves

Jamaica ye 7th of Feb~ 1692

An Inventory of the Goods and Chattells of Edmund Reeves~ late of Port Royall decesase Esq. appraised by us Charles Sadler and William Chapman as they were showne unto us by Smith Kelly Esq. Administrator to ye said Lynes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>24 old Gowns</td>
<td>006. 00. 00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 Negroes</td>
<td>100. 00. 00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash Rec’d from Cap’n Mosos for Admiralty fees</td>
<td>059. 15. 00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 horses</td>
<td>015. 00. 00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash found in his for use</td>
<td>078. 13. 00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash in the Assiento</td>
<td>363. 15. 00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A partell of Linnen</td>
<td>020. 10. 00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

643. 10. 04

The amount of thes Appraisement in Six hundred forty three punds Thirteen shillings and four pence.

Charles Sadler
Will Chapman

Although Reeves owns no shares in vessels, the entry showing a sum of £60 from a Captain Moses for admiralty fees shows maritime involvement. Either that Reeves loaned the cash to the captain to pay the fees or he assumed the cost as a operating expense. Reeves was not
as wealthy overall as Nuttall; however he was more solvent and carried a substantial sum of cash for personal use. The debt he is owed by the asiento is quite a bit higher than Nuttall’s, yet still smaller than Henry Ward’s outstanding account.

Reeves has fewer slaves in his inventory, but they were assessed to have a much higher value than those in Nuttall’s possession. This carries implications that the slaves owned by Reeves possessed marketable skills or were quite physically capable, while Nuttall’s slaves may have been either sickly, too young for sale, or too old to bring a good price. Nuttall’s inventory mentions slaves in a curious manner, “8 negroes and a halfe” which were valued at only £30. This most likely does not constitute a business supply, but it seems large for personal ownership by a merchant. Following the census of 1680, the mean number of slaves per family was just 1.67.¹⁹ It is quite possible that the slaves in Nuttall’s possession were not for personal use, but were individuals who could not be sold.

Ward, Nuttall and Reeves are thought to be examples of Port Royal’s community of slave traders who operated on a largely independent basis to supply the demands of the asiento. Nuttall’s inventory, which lists a debt of £78 owed by the planter Andrew Langley, Esq., shows that these merchants also had a customer base at Jamaica. Their business contributed to the overall volume of the market at Port Royal. Relationships with such notable figures as the Provost Marshall and the orderly record of their legal affairs at the time of their passing do not suggest that they were trading illegally in slaves.

One should note that each of the preceding inventories were taken down in February of 1692. Because of the correction of the English calendar, these documents were actually recorded in 1693. These men most probably all perished in the earthquake of 1692, and it was several months before records keepers were able to assess their estates.
A major figure in the slave trade at Port Royal, James del Castillo arrived in Port Royal in 1684 as the agent for Spanish interests and later was appointed the representative of the *asiento.* Aside from the slave trade, del Castillo was involved with the Catholic church, constructing a large chapel in his own house. His intriguing history is colored with anecdotes pertaining to his relationships with various notable figures in Port Royal, most of which, unfortunately, do not pertain to the content of this thesis beyond such mention.

He did have various successes in dealing with the chief administrators of the island. During Molesworth’s tenure, del Castillo was very well off, however Albermarle took no liking to the Spaniard and made his life and his business very difficult. Del Castillo had positive business relationships with Penhallow and Smith Kelly, and also Samuel Bernard and Simon Musgrave, all of whom he once suggested as mediators in the differences he had with Albermarle.

When Castillo first arrived at the island, he and Hender Molesworth immediately struck an amicable and mutually profitable relationship. As lieutenant-governor and agent for the Royal African Company, Molesworth was in a position to allow del Castillo his choice of the best slaves that came into Port Royal. In exchange for such favor, Molesworth personally received 10,777 pieces of eight and six reales from the *asiento.* In light of the goals of securing the lucrative trade with the Spanish colonies, it can be argued that Molesworth was acting in the best interest of Royal African Company. However, such favoritism only further outraged the already-contentious planters. Molesworth showed even more friendship to the Spaniard by granting letters of naturalization, making del Castillo an English subject.
Four mentions of del Castillo are found in volume 24 of the grantor's deeds (1693-4). Three of these are real estate transactions, the third relates to the vessel *Sea Starr* in a document addressed to Smith Kelly. In the deed, dated March 7, 1693, del Castillo claims that the vessel, "much shaken by the recent earthquake," needed to be sold as it was useless to the *asiento*, which required much smaller vessels. Del Castillo offered the 500 ton ship for £1000, including "all masts, sails, sail yards, anchors, cables, ropes, cordes, gunn, ammunition & shot & other instruments & artillery & long boat, other boats, tackle apparell & furniture."

These documents provide a unique perspective on the slave trade. It is apparent that the community of slave traders in Port Royal represented a high class of merchants, with differing levels of affluence within this income bracket. At least three of the traders, del Castillo, Penhallow and Ward, were quite involved with their respective religions, which is not surprising. A popular argument of the pro-slavery faction during the days of the Abolitionist movement was that slaves were baptized when they were taken into captivity, thus saving their heathen souls. Religion was motivating barbarous cruelty against those labeled as heretics and worse elsewhere in the contemporaneous world, the notion that slave traders considered themselves pious men is expected.

Political prowess was another common trait among those engaged in the slave trade at its highest level. While there were merchants who were not politically involved, the slave trade and island government were intertwined. The documents and deeds depict a tight circle of extremely powerful and influential men who shaped Jamaica's future and grew wealthy from their associations and mutual cooperation.
Owning shares of vessels is another commonality among the men discussed, with Molesworth, Reeves, Nuttall, Ward and del Castillo all being linked through documents to various ships. As maritime transport was a significant component of the slave trade, this too, is not surprising. The historical record indicates a preference among Port Royal's slavers for small and handy vessels, such as sloops, which were suited to the re-export trade. Merchants preferred owning shares in multiple vessels rather outright ownership of one or two. By spreading the risk in this manner, merchants could avoid catastrophic financial loss when a vessel was wrecked or captured.

The Conditions of the Market

Reconstructing the format of a sale of slaves by the Royal African Company at Port Royal is an interesting challenge. Descriptions of sales do not exist in the company's records, and other contemporary sources are not very enlightening. Through indirect evidence contained in correspondence from the Royal Company to its West Indian agents in 1690, and an account of the arrival of indentured servants at Port Royal in 1688, it is possible to reconstruct an image of how the men listed above brokered and sold slaves at Jamaica.72

Port Royal had no specific "market" for the sale of slaves and indentured servants, instead the human cargoes were either off-loaded to the wharf to be inspected by prospective buyers or the buyers came on board ship and the sale was conducted on the main deck. The captain of the vessel would have been preparing his cargo for sale as he neared port, increasing rations and otherwise attempting to make the slaves appear more
attractive to prospective buyers. The hardships endured on the passage always took some
toll on the cargo: accounts of the middle passage are rife with tales of diseases devastated
entire shiploads of slaves as well as the crews.

It was the job of the company's agent, the captain and, if present, the ship's surgeon
to decide which slaves were fit for sale. If it was decided that certain slaves were so sickly
that they could not be sold, or if they were expected to die shortly, they would not be
"brought over the side" in order to save the cost of importation taxes and not to jeopardize
the possibility of getting the highest price for the other individuals in the cargo. These sick
slaves would be concealed from buyers during the days of the sale by keeping them tucked
away on the lowest deck of ship's hold. If the captain was responsible for the sale, or the
agent or merchant in charge of the cargo was not a resident of Port Royal and had come
with the ship, they might pay a perfunctory visit to the governor before the sale
commenced.

On the morning of the sale, the ship's ensign would be raised and a gun would be
fired to announce that purchasing was to begin. Sales were conducted in individual
transactions over the course of a few days, records indicate that slaves were not put into lots
of uniform size or demographic composition, nor were prices assigned accordingly. The
average price in the Port Royal market around 1688 was £20 per slave, with stronger slaves
being more valued and those with trades or skills bringing the highest prices, although most
slaves just off the boat were not likely to be in the latter categories. Prices of slaves
decreased over the course of the sale, as the more valuable slaves would be the first sold,
usually to Spanish buyers such as del Castillo who had an under-the-table agreement with
Molesworth which allowed him the first choice of incoming slaves.
For the most part, slaves were purchased on credit by planters or paid for in barrels of sugar, although coin was more common in Jamaican transactions than in other British sugar colonies. Through this practice, the Royal Company became, not by choice, an unofficial banking institution of the West Indies. A situation soon developed where the Company's deficit was quite substantial. The Company's £60,000 estimate of the combined debt owed by the planters in Jamaica in 1680 was roughly the value of 4,000 slaves. This figure gains relevance when considered against the average delivery of slaves to the island per year, which was 1,000 during the period of 1675-9.73

In 1690, under pressure from the planters disgruntled with the seconds left by the Spanish, the company attempted to restructure the format of the sales, adopting a policy of public auction "by the candle." This meant that bidding on an individual slave or lot of slaves would last for the time it took a candle to burn one inch, and the final bidder won the right of purchase as the candle flickered out. This format was supposed to prevent an auctioneer from making a quick sale to a favored bidder. At the same time, the company also instructed its agents to stop accepting credit and sell slaves for only "money[,] Goods or Bills of Exchange."74 The company abandoned these reforms suddenly in 1692, instructing its agents to conduct sales in any way they saw fit, since the interlopers were selling their slaves more successfully in a random manner.

The Maritime Community’s Perception of the Slave Trade

The slave trade was lucrative for agents and traders and it was the life blood of the plantation economy. It was perceived rather differently, however, within the community of
seafarers and mariners that conducted it. For the captains and sailors of these ships, slaving was a desperate business with no certain guarantee of survival. The crews of the ships were subject to the same high risk of disease and mortality that affected the sustainability of the slaves. This hazard and other travails of seafaring life made sailing slave ships an unattractive prospect for many.

Like the agents in the West Indies, captains hired by the Royal African Company were paid commissions on the slaves that were delivered and sold. The company, which paid for the slaves in Africa, bore the loss of any deaths that occurred in transit. This arrangement led the captains of slavers to overcrowd their ships and gamble on the health and safety of their cargo to maximize their own personal gain. Correspondence between the company and its African agents records the company’s efforts to increase its own profitability with attempts to override these practices. This record can also be interpreted to show the character of the captains in their employ in a rather ruthless and avaricious light.

Attempting to counter issues of cash flow and problems with debt collection, the company was in the practice of compensating its captains and owners of hired ships with slaves. By company policy, this amount was a minimum of a twenty-five percent of their earnings and could be even as high as two thirds. With captains, who generally owned a share of their own vessel, and other ship owners selling these slaves for cash in the markets of the West Indies, the company’s policies of remuneration introduced a rather large source of internal competition to its monopoly.

Since captains and crews were already in possession of slaves from the cargoes, it was simple for them to carry additional slaves among the officially reported number. These
they sold for their own outright gain along with slaves that they effectively stole from the company by reporting them as having died along the middle passage. The was plagued with dishonest masters of their own and contracted vessels, and contacted their agents in the West Indies to keep closer watch for smuggling and graft, which they felt was common among them all.78

Captains and vessels were typically contracted or engaged for a voyage from England to the West Indies by way of Africa. With these rental agreements terminating in the West Indies, it was up to the captain or owner to find his own cargo of sugar or other goods for the return voyage to England. Bills of exchange were common forms of payment for slaves. Slaves were rarely paid for at the time of transaction with ready money or sugar, which kept the Company from committing to filling a hold for the final leg of a voyage. In many ways, the costs of selling and obtaining cargoes were shifted from the Company and its agents to ship owners and merchants. With this in mind, the individual debtors listed in the inventories of merchants and ship owners like Henry Ward and Thomas Nuttall gain more clarity.

Masters of slave ships were also responsible for hiring and compensating their crews, which may or may not have been an easy prospect. Due to the nature of their occupation, slave ships were more heavily manned than other merchant ships. Where a typical compliment for a 150- to 200-ton vessel on a six or nine month voyage would be eleven to fourteen men, a slaver of the same size would require as many as twenty or twenty-five men to safeguard against potential slave uprisings, defend the ship against pirates, and also allow for expected mortality over the course of the ten or eleven months that a typical passage endured.79
Seaman disliked the Africa trade more than any other for a number of reasons. Most obviously, health issues were at the forefront. Crews of slavers were subject to the same diseases that jeopardized their cargoes. Africa itself was generally regarded as — and was — an unhealthy place where malaria, yellow fever, and dysentery added to the health risks seamen faced, such as scurvy. A contemporary seaman’s saying summed up the perception:

Beware and take care
Of the Bight of Benin
For one that comes out,
There are forty go in.⁸⁰

The dire ratio depicted in the saying is extreme, but scholarship suggests that the maritime slave trade was as proportionately lethal for seaman as it was for the slaves, and perhaps even higher in some circumstances. Incidence of crew mortality could be as high as forty percent on the middle passage.⁸¹ Many seamen succumbed long before setting sail for the Caribbean during the months that it could take to obtain a cargo on the West African coast. The seamen’s last defense against cruel treatment by their employers, namely desertion, was ineffective while on the African coast, and so merchants and captains were content to free to loiter for long periods in harbor.

Compounding concerns about survival on slaving voyages was the constant threat of uprising. Unlike cargoes of finished goods or commodities, slaves could violently confront the ships’ crews and masters. Bloody slave mutinies were not very frequent, but seamen were undoubtedly well acquainted with tales of such events and were mindful of them in considering a hitch in the Guinea trade.
It was a disheartening enterprise and the most unpleasant of all the maritime trades. In 1707, the veteran slave trader Dalby Thomas informed the Royal African Company from his factory in Africa that the men it selected for the trade “must neither have dainty fingers nor dainty noses, few men are fit for those voyages but them that are bred up to it. It is a filthy voyage as well as a laborious [one].”

Obviously, the slave trade attracted a certain element from within the maritime community, which was less than kind or honorable. Captains and merchants who were successful in it stayed in the trade for some time, mastering the complicated trading practices in Africa and the means of transporting their vulnerable and potentially violent cargoes.

The common seaman’s perception of the trade and the harsh masters who conducted it are evident in tales of mutinies and of capture by pirates. The second mate of the Royal African Company’s ship Gambia Castle, George Lowther, led a mutiny against its captain, Charles Russell on the grounds that the company had criminally neglected the seamen’s health. When difficulties arose in procuring a cargo, and the men of the ship began to suffer greatly from the African climate, Lowther reacted violently to the merchant’s suggestion that the sailors remain there “till they Rotted.”

Renaming the vessel, Delivery, the men turned pirate. Such stories are not uncommon.

Pirates who captured slavers waged their own particular brand of justice upon the captains who abused their fellow seamen. One such example is found in William Snelgrave’s account of his own capture. The seizure of Snelgrave’s slave ship was initiated by a small boat manned by 12 pirates of Thomas Cocklyn’s band at the mouth of the Sierra Leone River in 1719. Snelgrave ordered his 45 men to arms to defend his ship, but they refused, and the quartermaster of the pirates, infuriated by the command, commenced to pistol whip
the captain mercilessly. Some of Snelgrave’s crew intervened to save his life, which testifies that respected captains could avoid the most brutal use at the hands of embittered seamen.

Another of Snelgrave’s tales depicts the general hatred held for the Royal African Company among sailors. While Snelgrave was still in the pirate’s hands, a Royal African Company schooner was captured by the rovers. One of Cocklyn’s crew, who had been poorly treated while in the company’s service, urged that the old and decrepit schooner be burned. Another pirate countered with the ultimately convincing argument that destroying the nearly worthless vessel would only serve the interests of the company. Furthermore, it would rob their fellow seamen of their wages, which were probably more than the total worth of the ship itself.

After the horrors of a slaving voyage, the “Publick Houses,” inns, brothels, and even jails, of colonial ports like Port Royal were a haven that sailors welcomed. In Port Royal, these were free and open places where sailors, termed as “Lewd dissolute fellows,” found strength in numbers against the King’s men and press gangs. Mariners stayed in Port Royal to spend their wages in drunken revelry, and found local employment in the short trips of inter-island trades. It was common for a sailor to spend the “dead time,” while captains lingered in port filling their holds, on two or three week shuttle voyages to other islands or North American colonies or to work at the docks as casual laborers.

There is some evidence to suggest that the trade to Spanish America was not held as choice employment by the common sailor. A seaman reported before the High Court of Admiralty in 1702 that the voyage from Jamaica to the Bay of Campeche “was and is held looked upon and esteemed to be very dangerous and such Mariners as proceed or go the said voyage run great hazard and risque of their lives or of being taken and made Slaves by
the Spaniards." Wages for such trips would be customarily higher than others of similar length and duration. Centuries of conflict on the seas between Spanish and English sailors were not soon forgotten although legitimate trade practices and routes were becoming established.

As the "wickedest city in the west," Port Royal continued to suit the sailor's tastes even after merchants began to relocate their operations to Kingston. It is possible that the unruly element was as much a factor as the natural disasters in causing merchants to dock their largest vessels in confines closer to Kingston. Merchants felt their cargoes were less subject to thievery and mischief from the rowdy maritime community with a little distance.

In Port Royal, there were ample opportunities for an able seaman to find employment. It was remarked by Captain Nathaniel Uring that "the Seamen in Jamaica, being chiefly employed in Sloops, either in Privateering or Trading on the Coast of Spain, are unwilling to sail in Ships, because there is more Work, and loath to go to Europe, for fear of being imprest into the Publick Service." With options for smuggling and relatively high wages for legitimate work, the sailor could make good money at Port Royal and spend it freely in a community tinged with lawlessness, excitement and intrigue.

Once a slaver had been swept and cleaned and laden with a return cargo, a crew could be found among those who had enough of life beyond the line to replace those that had disappeared after the middle passage. Sailors were drawn to Port Royal by the high volume of the sugar trade and the steady work in shipping and smuggling other goods. Still, mortality was high in the tropical climate and incidence of shipwrecks in the shoals of the Caribbean were a danger for the unseasoned seaman. With constant threats of hurricanes and the high potential for encounters with pirates, privateers or warships of the
many nations that co-existed in the Caribbean, the sailor's life and work from Port Royal had a dangerous side as well.
CHAPTER V
THE WRECK AND SHACKLES OF HENRIETTA MARIE

This wretched situation was again aggravated by the galling of the chains, now become unsupportable, and the filth of the necessary tubs, into which the children often fell and were almost suffocated.¹

-Olaudah Equiano, 1789

She was probably an unremarkable little ship in her day. Many ships were fitted London at the cusp of the seventeenth century to ply the Africa trade. Henrietta Marie appears to have been rather typical of these and other West Indiamen. She measured somewhere around 120 tons burden with a length of 80 feet. Her capacity allowed her crew to stow a human cargo that numbered more than 200 individuals and could have been higher than 300.

In the present day, she is a find of vast historical and cultural importance. At this writing, Henrietta Marie is the only shipwreck of a slaver that has been identified by name. Moreover, Henrietta Marie’s final cargo of slaves was delivered to none other than Port Royal, Jamaica, in 1700.

The wreck site was initially located in the summer of 1972 by Demosthenes “Mo” Molinar and a crew of treasure hunters from Armada Research, Inc., a wholly owned subsidiary of Treasure Salvors, Inc., of Key West, Florida. They were searching areas of the Florida Keys for the Spanish galleon Nuestra Senora de Atocha (1622) and its reputed fortune of silver and precious stones when they recorded a magnetometer strike on New Ground
Reef. The strike was caused by a 750 pound iron cannon, buried in the sand. The onset of severe weather hindered the initial reconnaissance of the site, but it was quickly determined that the site was not the Spanish wreck they sought and was the remains of a ship with English origins.

Molinar has dramatically recounted his tale of encountering the iron slave shackles for the first time. Molinar appreciated the significance of the iron concretions as soon as he realized what he was holding. His were the first hands to touch this instrument of human bondage in centuries. Even more significantly, his touch was most likely the first time these particular shackles were ever in the hands of a free black man. One after another, dozens of pairs of shackles in a range of sizes were revealed from what was described as neatly stacked piles.

Some seven thousand artifacts have been recovered from the wreck site of *Henrietta Marie*, comprising the single largest assemblage of artifacts that represent the seventeenth-century slave trade. In addition to the shackles, a large amount of pewterware from several manufacturers was recovered. Representative artifacts included a wide variety of glass trade beads, flat iron bars, copper cooking ware, and ivory tusks, as well as other more common shipboard items.

Due to the nature of the discovery, and subsequent recovery, archaeological control was not stringently applied to the wreck site of *Henrietta Marie*. More than a decade after the shipwreck was first discovered, David Moore was brought in as a consultant in 1983 for the purpose of conducting research regarding the wreck, which was known as the "English
Wreck” on Fischer’s charts. Moore, then a graduate student in the Maritime History Program at Eastern Carolina University, was responsible for insuring archaeological integrity at the site from that point on.

That same summer, as luck would have it, a diver stumbled across the ship’s watch bell. Inscribed with the name “HENRIETTA MARIE” and the date 1699, the bronze bell provided the focus that directed historical research. Regardless of the association with treasure hunting and commercial salvage, the significance of the find has drawn attention from notable historians and African-American scholars. A touring museum exhibition was later created that brought the artifacts to a high level of public awareness.

In certain respects, the significance of the tiny slaver in terms of its archaeological value is eclipsed by its symbolic role as a link to the past for the descendants of the displaced who were carried west in bondage. While her remains could be seen as a painful reminder, the study of them offers an unparalleled opportunity to bring meaning and understanding to a sensitive and largely misunderstood topic. In these regards, this one-time carriage of slavery and the crude, wrought iron shackles that bound her cargo offer to set us free from ignorance and heal some of the wounds created by a biased and compromised history.
Archaeological Remains of *Henrietta Marie*

The wreck of *Henrietta Marie* (designated site 8 MO 130) lies in shallow water west of the Florida Keys and east of the Dry Tortugas, approximately 22 kilometers (12 miles) northwest of the Marquesas Keys on the western end of New Ground Reef. The site, which is in a context of coarse sand among coral outcroppings, was located due to the presence of two iron cannons, some articulated remains of hull structure, anchors, and a number of associated artifacts. Cursory examination of recovered artifacts, which included English pewterware, trade beads, shackles and ivory elephant’s tusks, led to the initial tentative identification of the wreck as English and a slaver.

The permit under which Armada Research was operating when the site was initially identified allowed only for limited recovery of a few items for the purposes of identification. In 1973, the year following the discovery, two weeks of recovery operations were conducted upon the site under a salvage lease. The majority of the artifacts seen during the 1972 season were recovered along with newly-located material. Under the terms of the lease, which was a normal agreement for all shipwrecks located within state waters, twenty-five percent of the recovered material was given to the State of Florida. For the next decade, the site was undisturbed.

In April 1983, Henry Taylor’s company, Neptune Explorations, from Islamorada, Florida sub-contracted with Treasure Salvors, Inc., to continue salvage operations on the site. In June of that year, David Moore joined the project in the role of supervising
archaeologist. Moore continued to supervise operations on the site, which were carried out in the following year by yet another subcontractor, until activity ceased in 1985.

The wreck scatter has a nearly north–south aspect (Figure 3). Moore divided the site into north and south sectors. The northern sector, which was identified as the impact zone, contained such major remains as one cannon, two anchors, two copper cooking containers, an upright iron box, and a grindstone. The southern sector, which had a higher artifact concentration than the northern sector, contained the second cannon, disarticulated ship’s structures, an intact section of the ship’s stern, and a fragment of the ship’s bilge pump. Aside from the obvious stern structure and deadwood, artifacts located in the southern sector such as the ship’s compass and more valuable cargo items corroborate the belief that the bow of the ship pointed north.

Data for artifacts recovered from 1972 to 1973 was limited to quadrant positioning. Provenience of artifacts and features were established using triangulation from a north–south baseline and distance/bearing measurements beginning in the 1983 season. Following surface collection, airlifting was employed to reveal deposits of artifacts buried some 3 meters deep, at which point excavation grids were established. This material was located within a 23 meter radius of the southernmost cannon.
Figure 3: Site plan of *Henrietta Marie* (Courtesy Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Society).
Surviving structural remains included an articulated section of *Henrietta Marie*’s stern which contains the entire deadwood section, part of the stempost with two gudgeons, and portions of the keelson and other timbers, as well as six frames ("crutch" floors or rising timbers) and planking. One articulated second futtock remained, which was integrated into a starboard frame. Other timbers located were several frame components, including second and first futtocks, a lodging knee, a longitudinal structural timber that could represent a portion of the keelson, and the starboard fashion piece. Also located was 5.1 cm thick square-butted bottom planking with a fastening pattern of trunnels flanked by square iron spikes at every juncture of plank and frame. The bottom planks also display iron tacks which held 1.3 cm sacrificial planking, which had remains of a hair and pitch compound. The inboard surfaces of some of stern planks showed evidence of having been scorched, suggesting heat was used to facilitate bending to fit the stern’s curve. 

Moore has used the surviving hull elements to reconstruct the dimensions of *Henrietta Marie*, employing several historical comparisons and theoretical projections to augment the archaeological remains. Extrapolating from the dimensions of surviving stern elements and hull timbers, *Henrietta Marie* appears to have been a ship of roughly 120 tons, with a length around 80 feet. Moore advances the engaging hypothesis that by the late seventeenth-century, slave-carrying West Indianmen, such as *Henrietta Marie*, could have developed into "frigate-built" ships with Dutch *flying* design influences, such as the deeper, fuller body which is evident in French designs of the period. Historical evidence indicates that *Henrietta Marie* was foreign-built, and the ship’s name suggests a French connection.
The vessel was probably square-rigged with a spritsail, foresail, fore topsail, mainsail, maintopsail, and lateen mizzen. Other features incorporated in the reconstruction include a bow with a beakhead and cutwater arrangement; flat transom and over-hanging stern with quarter galleries; a low quarterdeck gunnel; and a galley at the forecastle. As a slaver, one would also expect that some attempts would have been made to provide adequate ventilation to the hold. Even if the ship had not been initially designed with such intentions, the modification would not be extreme.

The known collection of artifacts recovered from the wreck site of *Henrietta Marie* is thought to number around seven thousand items. This collection is widely dispersed, with items in the hands of The Mel Fischer Maritime Heritage Museum in Key West, Florida as well as the State of Florida. A number of artifacts that are attributed to the site can be found in several private treasure museums in the Florida Keys and elsewhere.

The collection includes representative cultural material from the ship's cargo, such as shackles, pewterware, beads, iron bars, lead mirror frames, ivory tusks, a copper 'manilla' bracelet, and logwood. There are also representative elements of the ship's galley (such as copper cauldrons, glass and ceramic artifacts), navigational devices, weaponry for trade and the ship's own use, tools and hardware, and some personal items among other miscellaneous artifacts and the ship's fittings and furniture. Other notable major artifacts include the two cannons and two anchors.
Historical Context of *Henrietta Marie*

The earliest known date of operation of *Henrietta Marie* is November, 1697, when she slipped her moorings on the Thames and headed for Barbados by way of New Calabar.\(^1\) She was owned by a group of investors and merchants who were separate traders in the African trade and she operated in a triangular trade route. The chief investor on the first voyage was Thomas Starke, a wealthy man who held five tobacco plantations in the Virginia colony.\(^1\) Starke had quit Virginia and returned to London in 1677 where he eventually expanded his merchant interests from shipping tobacco from the Chesapeake to include a large business in slave trading. Starke was part owner in at least four other slaving ships and counted the slave traders Micajah Perry and Gilbert Heathcoate among his business associates. Starke consigned £18 worth of beads to *Henrietta Marie*’s 1697 - 1698 venture.

Another major investor in the first known voyage was the merchant Anthony Tournay, who shipped thirty-three tons of iron aboard her for trade.\(^1\) Tournay, who may have supplied the actual finished shackles used in the conduct of *Henrietta Marie*’s voyages, lived well and was a philanthropic individual who gave generously to the poor and to children for education.\(^1\) He was a war profiteer, having supplied iron hoops for the barrels used by the Royal Navy. His other business associations included membership in Skinner’s Guild, of which he was elected master in 1700.\(^1\)
The other investors in the venture were the master pewterer Thomas Winchcombe and a merchant named Robert Wilson, who provided twelve hundred copper bars along with several cases of alcohol and some fur hats for the voyage.\textsuperscript{20} Winchcombe was new to the slave trade, but pewter was a valued trade item on the African Coast. He consigned six hundredweight of plates, bowls, basins, and bottles to Henrietta Marie's 1697 trip, and his touchmark was found on three pewterware items recovered from the wreck site. This could indicate either that he sent another cargo on her final voyage or that his wares were retained by members of the crew as personal possessions. Wilson’s interest was apparently more inclined to ivory than slaves, as he imported large numbers of tusks in addition to dyewood and pepper well into the eighteenth century. Wilson also was connected with the later and final voyage of the slaver, acting as the executor for the will of its deceased captain, John Taylor.\textsuperscript{21}

The master chosen for the 1697 voyage was a man named William Deacon.\textsuperscript{22} Deacon was a veteran of the Guinea trade, having successfully delivered more than 500 slaves to the Jamaican markets from 1695 – 1696.\textsuperscript{23} Deacon’s crew included boatswain John Scorch, who had served as such in the Royal Navy, and the able seaman Edward Humble, both of whom hailed from his hometown, Stepney on the Thames.\textsuperscript{24} Other crewmen known from surviving wills and records include Englishmen Christopher Truffino and James Kedl, as well as two Danes, Peter Christopherson and Claes Johanson.\textsuperscript{25} In all, there were probably eighteen men aboard Henrietta Marie when she departed England; upon her return from the West Indies, she carried only nine.
A ship named *Henrietta Maria* is listed as a separate trader on a list prepared by the governor of Barbados upon the request the Board of Trade in order to account for the effects of the Act of 1698. The ship, listed under the command of William Deacon, brought 188 slaves into the island on July 28, 1698. The cargo was consigned to William Shutter and was sold at the sum of roughly £19 per slave. Any additional slaves that the ship carried were probably sold by the captain or members of her crew.

*Henrietta Marie* cleared Carlisle Bay in Barbados on September 23, 1698. She was laden with 118 hogsheads of *muscovado* sugar and one hogshead of white sugar, as well as a secondary cargo of ginger and 100 elephant tusks that had been secured in Africa. It is thought that *Henrietta Marie* returned to England in December of that year, making her total time out fourteen months.

Deacon had made his last slave voyage and retired upon the return to invest the profits he had made back into the trade. Deacon contributed a cargo of sixteen hundredweight of Venetian beads and several different bundles of cloth and textiles to the next voyage of *Henrietta Marie*. The ship obtained a certificate of clearance from London on September 5, 1699, which predates a will made by John Taylor, the captain of *Henrietta Marie*'s final voyage, by eight days. An overhaul or refit of the vessel could account for the extended layover, which is corroborated by the 1699 date found on the recovered ship's bell.

Taylor was neither as adept nor as experienced a slaver as Deacon. Tastes in trade goods on the African coast were fickle and in the year that passed, they had waned from
pewterware, which had lost much of its earlier value. Taylor himself contracted an illness during the protracted stay in New Calabar, and in January gave orders to weigh anchor and make for the Caribbean with her cargo of 206 slaves. He, and many others of his crew, would not survive the middle passage.

Under the command of a seaman named Thomas Chamberlain, *Henrietta Marie* passed Barbados on May 6, 1700. Only nine of the crew remained alive; the cargo had fared better, suffering only sixteen fatalities. *Henrietta Marie*‘s final port of call was Port Royal, Jamaica, where she docked eleven days after sighting Barbadoes. Her cargo was consigned to owners of plantations who were associates of her English investors.

With the money from the sale of the slaves, Chamberlain was able to take on a return cargo that included 81 hogsheads of *muscado* sugar, fourteen bags of cotton, eleven barrels of indigo, and twenty-one tons of logwood. This was stowed along with the ivory that was obtained in Africa, and the unwanted pewter tankards, spoons and bowls that remained. Perhaps out of excitement from the more than six hundred percent profit of the slaving venture, Chamberlain ordered that *Henrietta Marie* set sail for home at the end of June, just as hurricane season was getting underway. He and his crew would not make it out of the Florida Straits alive.

At the time of this writing, there are no more details available concerning the loss of the vessel or salvage immediately following the wreck. It is presumed that she went down with all hands aboard. The excavators are currently preparing a final site report, which will hopefully shed more light on the historical record associated with this wreck site.
The Shackles of *Henrietta Marie*

Among the many artifacts recovered from the wreck site of *Henrietta Marie*, the most chilling reminder of the brutal nature of the slave trade’s conduct are the crude, wrought-iron shackles that once held fast the slaves in her hold. Time and the elements have reduced the small hold of the tiny ship, where Africans spent the cramped months of the horrific middle passage, to disarticulated timbers and fragments. The stench of filth has been long washed away. Still, when the centuries of marine encrustation have been chipped away and conservation processes have stabilized them, the cold metal shackles remain heavy with the weight of human cruelty.

162 iron loops and 82 bolts have been recovered from the site.\(^7\) This was a sufficient number of restraints to bind 160 individuals out of the possible hundreds that could be crammed below *Henrietta Marie*’s main deck. Some were found in separate pieces, and others were stowed assembled. The level of preservation varies from specimen to specimen, with some having been preserved in a nearly pristine state while others are highly eroded from corrosion in the marine environment.

No fewer than forty artifact processing forms in the files at Florida’s State Conservation Laboratory in Tallahassee record shackles from *Henrietta Marie* as individual artifacts and also as lots of various sizes. Renderings depict 57 shackle loops and 31 bolts out of which are found 21 sets of articulated shackles. While these records are useful as a partial catalog and for some general comparisons, they are not a uniformly reliable set of
data for study of the artifacts. The shackles are now dispersed between several repositories, displays and other locations and it was not logistically feasible to bring the entire collection together for complete recording and correlation against existing catalogs and artifact records.

For these reasons, it was determined that a sample set of the shackles would be recorded and examined in close detail. The examination was undertaken to determine any morphological consistencies or differences that might shed light on the origin, nature and manufacture of the wrought iron restraints used by the crew of *Henrietta Marie* in the course of conducting the slave trade. The shackles could then be compared against restraints from other archaeological and historical contexts. Such comparative study offers relevance to this particular item’s association with the trade and other types of restraint that could be associated with either slavery or punitive contexts both on land and at sea.

For the purposes of this study, the shackles on display with the Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Society travelling exhibition of *Henrietta Marie* represented a readily available and manageable set of artifacts, and was therefore chosen as the sample set for this thesis.
As display-quality artifacts, the sample set was thought to represent the entire collection of shackles as good examples in terms of both quality and character. They were examined in detail and recorded over the course of a day at the Museum of Florida History in Tallahassee, Florida, while the exhibition was being packed for transport to its next scheduled venue.

The sample set includes sixteen sets of shackles, or billboes, from the collection of the Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Society. These types of shackles are comprised of three pieces, an iron bar or bolt with a locking device at one end and a head at the other, on which two iron shackle loops can slide. The ends of the bolts are cut with an eye slot, through which the shackle loops can be secured by either a lock or a simple iron pin called a forelock, which could be welded in place or just pounded through.

Employing a longer bolt could secure several prisoners or slaves with only one locking mechanism. Restraints of this type are a simple and functional design that, as will be discussed in the following section, changed little over time and were common in maritime application from before the Spanish Armada until the nineteenth century. Henrietta Marie's shackles are cataloged by the artifact numbers assigned by the Mel Fisher Maritime Heritage Society, and will be referred to as such in their descriptions.
Shackle 86.08.1235 is made up of a 24 cm iron bolt with a round, conical head and two loops, one of which has been degraded so that one eye no longer survives (Figure 4). The loops are similar in dimension, with widths of 6.9 centimeters and lengths of 8.9 cm and 9 cm. The teardrop-shaped eyes of the shackle loops easily clear the 1.64 cm diameter of the bolt but are held fast by its conical head, which has a diameter of 2.42 cm. The eye for the locking mechanism of the bolt is 2.48 cm in length and 0.62 cm in width.
Figure 5: Shackle HM 86.08.1236 (scale in cm).

Shackle 86.08.1236 is in a worse state of preservation than the previous example (Figure 5). The curving bolt is preserved to a length of 20.4 cm but is degraded and the locking eye does not survive. The head of the bolt, with a diameter of 2.1 cm, is not a tapered cone shape as seen in HM 86.08.1235. Rather, it resembles a rounded button encircled by a ring that could have been built up by the smith who forged it. The loops associated with this set of shackles vary in dimension with preserved widths of 7 cm and 6.5 cm, and the shackle eyes are more circular than drop-shaped. The internal diameters of the eyes are 1.9 cm and loosely encircle the maximum preserved diameter of the bolt, which is 1.12 cm.
Figure 6: Shackle HM 86.08.0919 (scale in cm).

Shackle 86.08.0919 is a complete specimen (Figure 6). The bolt is 30.1 cm long, and is eroded at the locking eye, which has preserved dimensions of 1.53 cm by 0.75 cm. The head of the bolt is a simple rounded button with a 1.89 cm diameter. The shackle loops are noticeably different in dimension and shape. One shackle measures 9.5 cm by 10.5 cm while the other is narrower and longer at 8.5 cm by 11 cm. The eyes of both shackles are teardrop-shaped and vary in band width and thickness, indicating a more haphazard method of manufacture than other examples in the sample set.
Figure 7: Shackle HM 94.01.0002 (scale in cm).

Shackle 94.01.0002 is a complete set of shackles, however one shackle loop is roughly forty percent degraded and is missing an eye (Figure 7). The bolt is 26.5 cm in length and has a diameter of 2.2 cm. The head of the bolt morphologically resembles that of 86.08.1236, but is in a more poor state of preservation. The bolt’s eye is larger and more well defined than others, with a length of 2.64 cm and a 0.48 width. The intact shackle loop has dimensions of 8.5 cm by 10.5 cm with a thickness of 1.2 cm. The degraded loop is 7.5 cm by 11.0 cm and has a preserved thickness of 1.3 cm. The teardrop shaped eyes of the intact shackle loop are long and tapered.
Figure 8: Shackle HM 86.08.0761 (scale in cm)

Shackle 86.08.0761 is the most diminutive set of restraints in the sample set, and in the entire collection (Figure 8). In a degraded state of preservation, the bolt is 16.8 cm in length and has a diameter of 0.78 cm. The locking eye is not preserved, and the head is quite rounded and bulbous in shape. The loops are 4.4 cm by 6.4 cm and 5.2 cm by 7.5 cm. It has been proposed that these shackles could have been employed in restraining a child; however, this is not likely according to perceptions of the historical record. Male slaves were known to be shackled and women were also restrained at times, but children are thought to have been left unfettered. It is much more likely that the small restraints were used to cuff hands, whereas the rest of the shackles displayed were designed for ankles.
Figure 9: Shackle HM 86.08.1233 (scale in cm).

Shackle 86.08.1233 is a complete set of shackles, with one loop missing an eye and highly degraded (Figure 9). The bolt is 28.2 cm long, with a diameter of 1.55 cm and has a eye measuring 2.35 cm by 0.8 cm. The bolt end has been flattened and tapers to a blunt point. The head of bolt, which has a diameter of 2.3 cm is of the button type, with a visible ring and longer, rounded end than others in the sample set with similar morphology. The bands which make up the eyes of the intact shackle loop, which measures 9.2 cm by 9.5 cm and has a thickness of 3.0 cm, differ greatly. One eye band is 1.75 cm in diameter, whereas the other is 1.35 cm. The second, partially preserved loop is 11 cm by 7 cm.
Shackle 86.08.0635 is one of the more remarkable specimens in the sample set (Figure 10). While it is an incomplete set of shackles with a bolt and only one loop, that loop is bound with twine. This could have been done to ease abrasion, possibly protecting an injury. Another, less likely possibility is that it made the shackle fit more snugly. Given the wide variance in the internal dimensions of the shackle loops in the sample set, it is more likely that another set of shackles would have been employed before the effort was expended to bind the metal with twine. It is also unlikely that the twine would have been a reliable method of increasing the shackles' security, since it could easily be removed. The bolt is 29.5 cm long and has a diameter of 2 cm. The conical head has a diameter of 3.48 cm and the tip of the head has a clear concave impression. The bolt bulges slightly where the
eye was driven through. The wrapped shackle loop has dimensions of 9.5 cm by 13.0 cm and is 3.5 cm in diameter.

![Shackle HM 86.08.1229](image)

**Figure 11: Shackle HM 86.08.1229 (scale in cm).**

Shackle 86.08.1229 is a complete set of shackles (Figure 11). The bolt is 30.3 cm in length and has a preserved diameter of 1.79 cm. The bolt head is eroded, and its morphology is indeterminable. The bolt eye is 2.13 cm by 0.82 cm, and the end of the bolt curves slightly at the eye. The shackle loops vary significantly in shape. One is 8.5 cm by 8 cm, the other is 10 cm by 8.5 cm. The eyes of the smaller shackle loop fit the bolt snugly,
and have bands that are slightly thicker (0.5 mm) than the larger shackle loop. Given the high quality of the preservation of the loops, this slight difference is reliable. With the loops differing in both curve and dimension, it is possible that they are from separate origins and were combined to make this set of restraints.

Figure 12: Shackle HM 86.08.1230 (scale in cm).

Shackle 86.08.1230 also has shackle loops with differing dimensions and curves; however, the difference is slighter than in the previous example (Figure 12). One loop is 8.5 cm by 12 cm while the other is 7.5 by 11.5 cm. The bolt of this set of shackles has a flattened head unlike others in the sample set. The bolt is 28.7 cm long and quite thick, with
a diameter of 2.1 cm. The flattened head is 4 cm in diameter and is 0.11 cm thin. The eye of the bolt is 2.5 cm by 0.68 cm, and the end of the bolt has been hammered slightly flat where it was cut through.

![Shackle HM 86.08.1194](image)

Figure 13: Shackle HM 86.08.1194 (scale in cm).

Shackle 86.08.1194 is a complete set of shackles in a good state of preservation, with loops that differ in dimension and shape (Figure 13). One loop is straighter, has internal dimensions of 7.8 cm by 6.5 cm, and is 1.5 cm thick. The other, more rounded loop, has internal dimensions of 8 cm by 7 cm and is 1.37 cm in diameter. The bolt is 32 cm long and has a conical shaped head with a clear concave impression at the tip. The head of the bolt is 3.14 cm in diameter and the bolt shaft is 2.06 cm in diameter, tapering a diameter of 1.98 at
the eye slot. The eye of the bolt is 2.28 cm by 0.85 cm. The tip of the bolt was hammered to 
a blunt taper before it was pounded through.

Figure 14: Shackle HM 86.08.0762 (scale in cm).

Shackle 86.08.0762 was preserved with the locking pin (forelock) still wedged in the 
eye slot of bolt (Figure 14). The pin is 0.39 cm thick and tapers from a width of 1.95 cm to 
1.8 cm where it meets the eye of the bolt. There is a clear rounded button in the flat face of
the pin. The bolt itself has a cylindrical head that was hammered into a rounded end. The length of the bolt is 30.4 cm. The specimen’s loops differ visibly in dimension and shape of the bend. The loops, which are well preserved, are quite thick and robust. One of the loop’s eyes has bands that are 0.7 cm thick, whereas most loops in the sample set, which are preserved to a degree to make useful comparison, have eye bands that are 0.5 cm thick.

Figure 15: Shackle HM 86.08.0763 (scale in cm).
Shackle 86.08.0763 is a complete set of restraints (Figure 15). The bolt has a cylindrical head with a conical end that has a visible concave impression at the tip, and is 32 cm in length.

The diameter of the bolt’s head is 3.08 and the bolt shaft is 1.96 cm in diameter. The eye of the bolt is 2.06 cm by 0.5 cm, and the bolt bulges where it was cut through and has been flattened to form a slight taper. The shackle loops differ slightly in dimension and in the taper of their curve and bend. Both have internal lengths of 8 cm, but internal widths differ by nearly a full centimeter.

One loop is 7.5 cm by 5.5 cm while the other is 8 cm by 6 cm. The thickness of the shackle loops is so uniform that it is clear they were cut from the same stock. The character of the welds that created the loops’ eyes are so similar, however, that there is little room to doubt that they were fashioned at the same time by the same hand.
Figure 16: Shackle HM 86.08.764 (scale in cm).

Shackle 86.08.764 is a complete set of shackles (Figure 16). The bolt is 31 cm in length and has a cylindrical head with a conical end and a visible concave impression. The eye of the bolt is 2.35 cm by 0.6 cm and the bolt bulges slightly where it was flattened before the eye was cut through. The shaft diameter is 1.92 cm at the center of the bolt. The loops differ visibly in shape and dimension. One loop, which has rounded, curving arms, has internal dimensions of 7.3 cm by 7.0 cm and is 1.38 in diameter. The other loop is 7.5 cm by 5.9 internally and is 1.36 cm in diameter. As in the case of 86.08.763, the character and quality of the welds are so similar in the fabrication of the loops that it is clear that they were fashioned by the same hand at the same time. It is most likely, given the similar
morphology and quality between the two sets of shackles, that 86.08.763 and 86.08.764 were produced by the same smith at the same time.

Figure 17: Shackle HM 86.08.1232 (scale in cm).

86.08.1232 is a complete set of shackles; however the shackle loops are both missing one eye and the head of the bolt is absent (Figure 17). The bolt has a maximum preserved length of 28.5 cm and has a diameter of 1.65 cm at its widest point. The eye slot is 2.75 cm by 0.11 cm, and the bolt was flattened where it was cut through. The loops, which are very thin and eroded, have internal dimensions of 10 cm by 7.25 cm and 9.5 cm by 7.25 cm.
They are remarkably similar in shape and character, with well-curved bends and straight lines, suggesting a common fashioner.

![Image of a shackle](image)

**Figure 18:** Shackle HM 86.08.0634 (scale in cm).

86.08.0634 is a complete set of shackles in a decent state of preservation (Figure 18). The bolt is 30.5 cm in length and has a diameter of 1.35 cm. The rounded head has been hammered into a squashed, bulbous shape and has a diameter of 2.25 cm and a length of 1.5 cm. The rounded, tapering shackle loops both measure 10.0 cm by 12.0 cm, but differ slightly in shape with one loop having a more rounded character and other having a less even bend.

When viewed generally, the shackles from *Henrietta Marie* may seem to be unremarkable and rather common, but closer examination reveals variance suggestive of
several different fabricators. Variance in hand production of wrought iron tools and devices is to be expected, with non uniform bends and curves in the shackle loops, which could be explained even if the shackles were produced by the same smith. Variance in dimension of the round stock iron used to produce the bolts and the loops is also to be expected, as is the variance in the produced dimensions of the loops and bolts.

On average, the overall length of the bolts in the sample set of shackles is 28.08 cm. Specimens have been noted from the larger collection with fully preserved lengths that approach 45 cm. Taking the diminutive set of shackles 86.08.761 into account with this, there is a significant range of variance in bolt lengths of the shackles. Considering representatives in the sample set with fully preserved lengths; however, it appears that most shackles intended to restrain adult slaves aboard Henrietta Marie had bolts that ranged between 25 and 30 cm in length.

The average diameter of bolt shafts in the sample set was found to be 1.6 cm, and excluding the smallest set of shackles from that calculation increases that figure to 1.73 cm. There is significant variance in the dimension of bolt heads in the sample set, but the average diameter is calculated to be 27.3 cm. The discrepancy between bolt heads and some of the apertures of the eyes of the shackle loops is enough in some cases to make certain shackle components non-interchangeable. For the most part, however, the loops could be held fast by most bolt heads. 86.08.1229 and 86.08.1230 are indicative of sets of shackles that were possibly made out of random components that were of separate origins based on differences in the welds of the loops' eyes and the shape of the loops themselves.
Shackle loops vary somewhat in size and shape, which is expected from hand production. Loops in the sample set show varying degrees of curves and tapers which were not always uniformly produced or even executed by the smith with particular care. Other loops display straight and carefully produced arms with clean bends. On average, the internal dimensions of the loops recorded are 8.5 cm by 7.2 cm. The external dimensions varied more depending on the thickness of the iron stock used in production.

The presence of four distinct types of bolt heads in the small sample set of sixteen shackles is quite significant. The first type is the simple flattened head that was created with crude hammering, evident in 86.08.1230. It is probable that bolts with absent heads also had this type of simple terminal end. The second type of head was produced by rounding the end with hammering, such as the small set of shackles 86.08.0761 and possibly 86.08.0762. The third type of bolt head is described as a button type, exemplified by 94.01.0002 and seen most clearly in 86.081233. This type of head was probably produced by wrapping a ring of metal around the end of the bolt before pounding it through a heading tool, although a buttonhead set could also produce such a head. The final type of bolt head seen in the sample set is the most professional fabrication. The conical tipped cylinder bolt head was produced using a cone-shaped head set and heading tool. The identical dimensions of the bolt heads seen in 86.08.762 and 86.08.1194 are clear evidence that the same shop produced these sets of shackles. The bolt of 86.08.0762 could also even be of this type, and was blunted into a round shape by hammering or by use.
The shackles that bound the slaves aboard *Henrietta Marie* probably came from at least two or three separate sources of production. There is clear evidence that several of the shackles came from one source, since the conical head style is uniform enough to conclude that the same die created the bolts of the shackles. Similarity in the lap welds of the eyes of the shackle loops on some specimens are such that one could argue that one blacksmith at that forge created a good number of the restraints. If the iron merchant Tournay did supply shackles for the ship from one of his interests in London, perhaps these were the devices he contributed. As a supplier to the Royal Navy, one would expect a high level of professional quality and production from the forges in his possession.

Just as some of the shackles are apparently professionally fabricated, others are more crude. This is expected in a working vessel where stores and equipment would be gathered over time from several sources. Some of *Henrietta Marie*’s shackles may have been produced on the African coast and some may have been modified or repaired by members of the ship’s crew. That the bolts’ heads were hand hammered into shape rather than produced by a head set did not render them any less functional.

Comparative Material, Historical Information and Interpretation

That *Henrietta Marie* carried shackles on the homebound journey indicates that her cargo had to be bound by other devices when the slaves were sold at Port Royal. Comparison of these and other shackles recovered from marine contexts with restraining
devices found in terrestrial contexts produce interesting observations. Shackles of the bilboe type found aboard *Henrietta Marie* were common aboard all ships, whereas other types of restraining devices that permitted captives more mobility were more commonly employed on land.

![Shackle loop PR897 - 10.8 (scale in cm).](image)

The TAMU/INA excavations at Port Royal produced two examples of shackle loops, which are very similar to those recovered from the *Henrietta Marie*. Conservation records show that both of these were recovered from large encrustations that contained various other artifacts. These concretions were located at the house of a blacksmith, and
detailed examination of the context has indicated that the shackles were among a pile of scrap iron. This pile also contained several examples of locks, including some padlocks. \textsuperscript{40}

One of the loops, PR897 - 10.8, has a uniform curve and straight arms with external dimensions of 8.5 cm by 11.4 cm and is 1.2 cm diameter (Figure 19). The other shackle loop, PR889 - 21.9, is quite rounded in its curve with the arms tapering in (Figure 20). Its dimensions are 9.6 cm by 10.6 cm. No bolts or complete sets of shackles have been identified at the time of this writing.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=\textwidth]{shackle_loop}
\caption{Shackle loop PR889 - 21.9 (scale in cm).}
\end{figure}

The excavations of Robert Marx at Port Royal in the 1960s, which were located well away from the Lime Street area upon which the TAMU/INA excavations focused, produced a multitude of shackles of the \textit{bilboe} type.\textsuperscript{41} Unfortunately, these artifacts were not conserved, and presumably rusted while stored in water. It is thought that they were
discarded. Records or other forms of documentation of the artifacts are not known to exist beyond group photographs, which were unavailable at the time of this writing.

Given the well-established slave trade at Port Royal, one would certainly expect artifacts of this type to be deposited among the other remains of the sunken city. Even though Transatlantic slavers such as *Henrietta Marie* appear to have kept their shackles with them, the shuttle trade and re-export of slaves to other colonies and to Spanish holdings would have required an abundance of shackles. The recovery of shackle loops from domestic contexts such as the TAMU/INA excavations could be interpreted to illustrate the prevalence of the maritime slave trade in Port Royal’s daily life.

Shackles were most likely considered low-value hardware in the seventeenth century. Only one mention of shackles was located in the probate inventories of Port Royal’s residents. Listed in the incredibly detailed inventory of the merchant William Wyatt were “6 pr. of fetters & lockes att 3d” which had a total value of eighteen shillings.\(^42\) Out of an estate valued at more than £2524, the few shackles were a rather inconsequential inclusion. That locks were associated with them probably made them valuable enough for mention. Wyatt’s inventory only lists two debtors, and there is not much else to give evidence that suggests any major involvement in the slave trade.

Mention of shackles in the invoices of slave ships is rare, suggesting that the items were a common and unremarkable necessity in the conduct of the trade. The manifest of *Dispatch*, a slaver of Bristol that departed for the African Coast on September 30, 1725, is one of many that lists trade goods and provisions in particular detail. It makes no mention
of shackles or similar furnishings required to secure slaves for commercial transport. Its cargo of voyage iron, which numbered 914 bars, is listed, however. The shackles were most probably viewed in the same light as the rope or other furniture required to run the vessel and its commerce. Valued cargoes supplied by investors had to be accounted for and superceded the devices in importance.

The inventory of the goods shipped to Africa aboard the snow Nassau, taken in January of 1730, does mention a basket which held a quantity of "Splinter Padlocks" and two dozen "Flatt padlocks" next to its cargo of 246 "Barrs of Iron." The total of 24 locks is most likely a trade cargo or could have been intended for use by slavers on the African Coast. The number is far too small to be of any use in a securing a large cargo of slaves.

John Atkins, a surgeon in the Royal Navy, recorded an extensive report of his travels to Guinea and included within it a detailed invoice of a "Guinea Cargo" that was shipped from London in 1721. The inventory makes no mention of shackles or any other such devices, although he mentions slaves being chained together in coffles in West Africa.

Excavations at Savi in the African Coastal Republic of Benin have produced an example of shackle loops attached to several links of iron chain, as well as other examples of wrought iron restraints. Archaeological investigations were conducted in an African town 7 km north of Ouidah that had played host to a multi-nation European trading presence in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, rather than a town that grew outside of the walls of a European fort, such as Elmina. The large, multi-linked bar chain with ankle shackles
loops was exposed in the remains of a storage facility that had several large storage jars of local manufacture (Figure 21). From the shallow context, associations and disposition, it appears that the bar chain was possibly stored suspended from a rafter and fell, breaking a jar below it, when the building was burned. A U-shaped neck restraint was also recovered adjacent to the chain and shackle loops. These slave shackles were thought to be the first ever recovered archaeologically in West Africa. Excavations in the 1994 season produced information that the building was burned prior to the conquest of the Hueda Kingdom by Dahomey in 1727.47

Figure 21: In situ photograph of wrought iron shackle loops and bar chain from the Savi excavations in Benin, Africa (Photo by Kenneth Kelly, used with permission).
Plantation excavations in the Western Hemisphere have also produced some wrought iron restraining devices in archaeological contexts. Excavations at Kingsmill in Virginia revealed a set of leg irons and chain in a well at the Pettus Plantation, or “Littletown,” which was thought to have been occupied between 1669 and 1700 (Figure 22). The leg irons, which have an overall length of 93.3 cm, were found in a deposit layer of the well that also contained a bottle which could be dated conclusively through the seal of a Williamsburg merchant to 1730 – 1735. This association, as well as the fact that one of the leg irons was chiseled through, suggests that the irons were discarded into the well, which was used as a trash pit by neighboring residents, in the years after the plantation enterprise was abandoned.

Figure 22: Unscaled tracing of shackles recovered at Pettus Plantation, Kingsmill Virginia (After Kelso, Kingsmill Plantations, 47).
The Pettus shackles are of a much more refined and complicated style than the crude bar chain and shackle loops recovered at Savi. The two specimens are quite close in terms of their dates of deposit. The Pettus shackles have no direct association with maritime slave trading enterprises. The inland plantation complex was a final destination for slaves, unless they were traded to other plantation owners. The goal of confinement in such restraints seeks to hinder mobility, but does not limit it to the degree of shackles of the *bilbao* type.

Savi, a relatively short distance from the African Coast, is more likely to have been associated with transport activities. In the business of profiting from transport, the simplest methods of manufacture would produce the most cost effective solutions to restraining a captive. Also, with the flow of European slave traders through Savi, the reuse of components from shackles in maritime context is more likely, as is the influence of such components in local manufacture. Simple economy and purpose are the most logical explanations for the widely different morphologies of the two types of restraints.

It is possible that the Pettus leg irons were used in a punitive context, rather than commercial purpose of restraining slaves for transport. Examples of several different types of wrought iron restraining devices are curated at the Old Gaol of Colonial Williamsburg. These include leg irons with cuffs similar to the set of irons recovered in the Pettus well, as well as a ball and chain, and fragmentary remains of “cylinder lock type” shackles which have parallels to a type of shackle recovered in Ivor Noel Hume’s excavations at Martin’s Hundred (Figure 23). Shackles of this cylinder lock type have also been recovered during
excavations in Maryland at St. Mary's City from the St. John's Site, which has been dated to 1638 - 1720.51

Figure 23: Unscaled rendering of a cylinder locking shackle (After Hume, Martin's Hundred, 155).

These types of cylinder lock shackles are thought to have been commonly used to restrain slaves in the United States long before and after the War of American Independence.52 They were simple in design and cheaply made, relative to other types of locking restraints (Figure 24). One side is a "puzzle" shackle. It was placed around the ankle, and the chain and loop arrangement, once assembled and end locked with the other shackle, which was placed around the other ankle, do not come apart again until the other shackle is unlocked. The other shackle uses a device, such as simple screw, to bolt it shut. A key with a socket that fits over the head of the bolt was used to open and close it.

While locking shackles of this type are commonly found in both North America and Europe, archaeological evidence that they were employed in the maritime slave trade remains elusive. Moreover, practical reasoning suggests that these more complicated devices
would not have been employed aboard ship, when the simple and effective *bilboe* was available. The internal mechanical workings of the cylinder lock would have been prone to rust and corrosion in the salty air at sea. Once frozen, a high degree of effort would be required to render the locks operative again. Oiling shackles would have clearly been a normal part of the work routine aboard a slaver, but the unnecessary complications of puzzle shackles make little sense when more economical solutions were available.

![Figure 24: Typical example of puzzle lock slave shackles from the early nineteenth century](image)

*Figure 24: Typical example of puzzle lock slave shackles from the early nineteenth century (Courtesy Yossie Silverman, no scale).*

*Bilboe* type shackles are more readily applied to restraining large groups whereas cylinder locking shackles are generally seen for restraining individuals. There are two sets of *bilboe* style manacles at Colonial Williamsburg such as those found in the collection of *Hermita Marie*. The utilitarian type clearly had broad application. The bolts of these shackles have heads that are short cylinders, differing from the four styles seen among *Hermita Marie*’s shackle bolts. According to William Pittman, Curator of Archaeological Collections
at Colonial Williamsburg, all of the shackles and restraints were recovered from the site of the Gaol, but cannot be conclusively dated to any time frame other than the seventeenth or first half of the eighteenth century.\textsuperscript{53}

![Image of leg irons](image)

Figure 25: Leg irons from the Old Gaol at Colonial Williamsburg (Photo courtesy William Pittman, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation).

One of the shackle types found in the restraints of the Colonial Williamsburg Gaol (Figure 25) is also seen in an engraving of Matthew Henderson in the Condemned Cell at Newgate Prison (Figure 26).\textsuperscript{54} Henderson was convicted of murder in 1746. This type of leg iron has two ankle cuffs which are connected by two large long links which meet at a round link. This central, circular link could be attached to other chains or an iron belt that encircled the prisoners waist. Shackles of this type seem to be associated with prison contexts, and there is no evidence to suggest that they were ever intended to be used commercially upon African slaves or in other maritime application.
Figure 26: Historical engraving of Matthew Henderson in condemned cell at Newgate (Merseyside Maritime Museum MS 5404).

Manacles were used upon slaves, without a doubt, and slave collars and chains are found in several museum collections in the United States and abroad. One example, which is not pictured here, is curated in the collections of the Merseyside Maritime Museum in Greenwich England. The neck iron, which is dated from the eighteenth century, is a thin circle of round stock comprised of two halves which are linked and then meet transversely in two eyes, through which a light chain passes. Eighteenth century bellboes are also in the collection. One example has a bolt whose head tapers into a flattened square, rather than
the blocky heads seen in previous examples. This bolt also has a nearly circular locking eye, through which a bent pin is passed to hold the loops in place.

It appears that *bilboes* were the most common type of shackling device for application at sea. *Bilboes* carried aboard the ships of the Spanish Armada, intended to restrain captives taken in the failed 1588 invasion of England, are now among the collections at the Tower of London.56 Bilboes were employed aboard naval ships well into the nineteenth century. The commonly known seafaring expression, “Clapping a man in irons,” meant to put a man in shackles and spike the iron restraining bolt to the deck of a ship. An illustration of a Royal Navy petty officer in irons spiked to the deck of his own vessel and about to be decapitated by a pirate of the Barbary Coast dates to the early nineteenth century illustrates the protracted use of this simple technology (Figure 27).

Figure 27: Mr. Sharp, Chief Mate of the Brig *Admiral Trowbridge* in irons, spiked to the deck (National Maritime Museum, Greenwich England B4863).
Bilboe shackles have been recovered from shipwrecks other than *Henrietta Marie*. Among the artifacts recovered from the seventeenth-century Spanish wreck of *Nuestra Senora de la Atocha*, there is a set of shackles with rectangular-sectioned loops, which were examined by the author (Figure 28). The bolt of the shackle has a rounded head, which is 4 cm in diameter, and is 44.8 cm long. The loops are very uniform in shape and curve, measuring 12 cm by 10.8 cm.

![Figure 28: Unscaled tracing of shackles recovered from the wreck of *Nuestra Senora de la Atocha*.](image)

Excavations of the shipwreck at Molassess Reef in the Turks and Caicos islands, which is thought to date to the early sixteenth century, produced two sets of wrought iron shackles of the bilboe type that are probably of Spanish origin (Figure 29). The loops of both of these shackles were round in section. During conservation, it was noted that the shackles were stored locked, which was accomplished by passing an iron band through the eye and wrapping it around the bolt. This was probably done to keep the shackle loops in place for convenience of handling, for it is unlikely that they were in use at the time of deposit.
These vessels were not slave ships, but they carried bilboe shackles such as the type aboard *Henrietta Marie*. This archaeological evidence, when combined with reliable historical depictions, suggest that bilboes were the favored device to restrain all types of captives aboard ships and remained so for centuries. That this type of shackle was employed at sea makes logical sense from a functional viewpoint. They are compact, effective, and simple to use. They are cheap and easily manufactured, and their components are generally interchangeable. Aboard ship, where wave action created a rolling motion, lengths of chain could be problematic for the captive and unmanageable for the captor to employ.

![Figure 29: Rendering of bilboe shackles recovered from the Molasses Reef Wreck (Drawing by Joe J. Simmons III, courtesy Ships of Discovery).](image)

Historical depictions of slavers conducting the trade are difficult to interpret in terms of accuracy (Figures 30 and 31). While some concur with archaeological evidence, some representations are clearly created from an uninformed perspective and are possibly
intended for use in abolitionist literature. One such illustration depicts slaves entering aboard a ship and being bound in pairs in chains and cuffs (Figure 30). It is unlikely to think that slavers in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century actually employed shackles of this type. Compared to bliboes, they would have been more expensive to manufacture and difficult to manage aboard ship.

Figure 30: Engraving depicting slaves coming aboard ship and being placed in chains and cuffs (Courtesy Mansell Collection).

Wrought iron restraints that employed cuffs and chains would have been implemented in situations where a slave's mobility was to be constrained, but not rendered impossible. Encountering these restraints in penal settings or in use on slaves being transported over land would be expected. Restraints with cuffs and chains, or even
“shackles” with cylinder locks could have been used aboard ship and may well have been. Yet, with the archaeological record from the *Henrietta Marie* and other vessels being comprised exclusively of simple *bilboes*, reason suggests that these were the restraints of choice at sea and possibly on the African coast (Figure 31).

![Figure 31: A painting of slave traders in Africa depicts a man (detail, right) with a stock iron bar with several shackle loops on it (Courtesy Chicago Historical Society).](image)

*Bilboes* are found illustrated in historical depictions, some of which can be reliably dated and set in context. This makes them more reliable than non-verified historical engravings that are frequently seen in popular literature. A French engraving of the seventeenth century (Figure 32) shows slave traders negotiating for trade on the African Coast. The pair of slaves is bound at the ankles by a single set of *bilboes*. One of the slaves holds what appears to be a long, thin rod or rope that is attached to the other’s ankle or
foot. In this way, the pair of slaves could walk together with the one holding the rope or rod directing the other’s steps along the fashion of a “three-legged race.”

Figure 32: French engraving depicting a pair of Africans bound by a set of *bilboes* (Courtesy Cliché Ville de Nantes).

In 1808, when Thomas Clarkson published his *Abolition of the Slave Trade*, he included illustrations of several devices used in the restraint of slaves (Figure 33). These included a set of handcuffs comprised of hinged bands, thumb screws, a “Spectrum Oris” (used in opening closed jaws), and a set of “Leg Shackles.” The shackles are *bilboes*, locked in place by flat pin, which is secured by a padlock.
Clarkson, who embarked upon his abolitionist cause claiming a ‘direct revelation from God,’ is far from an objective historical source. However, his obsessive nature led him to interview thousands of seamen, doctors, captains and merchants as he compiled a phenomenally detailed dossier on the abuses of the slave trade. He also assembled a large collection of instruments employed in the trade. Editing aside, such exhaustive research makes his work one of the more reliable documents available from the abolitionist sources.
A French brig, Vigilente, was captured by the Royal Navy on the West African coast in the River Bonny on 15 April 1822 operating as a slaver. As was the tradition of the Navy, the lines were taken off the prize vessel. In addition to the lines in this case, the draftsman recorded the stowage pattern of the human cargo and included diagrams of the implements used to shackle the captives in the margins of the stowage plan (Figure 34). A slave collar, roughly similar to a device curated in the Merseyside Museum collection (not pictured), and a large padlock and “skeleton” key are illustrated. The diagram also depicts two sets of bilboes, large and small. While the taper of the bolts’ stocks are quite pronounced as illustrated, the rounded heads and simple pins that secured the loops would have fit right into the stores of shackles aboard Herrietta Marie, 122 years earlier.
CHAPTER VI
CONCLUSION

Jamaica was central to the success of the British slave trade, and Port Royal was once the trade center of Jamaica. Given the dramatic rise of the commercial importance and wealth of Port Royal, as well as its role as Jamaica's *de facto* capital until its demise in 1692, many have convincingly argued that the history of the town is the history of the island itself. Along these lines, it would seem reasonable to contend that Port Royal was the keystone of the British slave trade.

The period of Port Royal's commercial rise and peak was one of intense international competition in the slave trade. Throughout the seventeenth century, the trade was impeded by incessant squabbling among various factions that included traders and consumers. Acts and government policy were ineffective in stimulating the trade to satisfy market demand and increased competition from interlopers devalued the profitability of the trade.

While Jamaica's geographical location made it well situated for trade with markets within the Spanish colonies, the additional distance from the earlier landfall in the Leeward Islands brought a slight challenge to slavers whose ships carried a perishable cargo. While higher prices could be garnered for their cargoes in Jamaica, the proximity of the Leeward Islands could be considered as enticing. With several nations having colonized in the Leewards, the environment of international competition was somewhat more intense than in Jamaica.
In the eighteenth century, these hindrances lessened by considerable degrees and the trade developed accordingly by becoming more extensive, more expansive, and more profitable. As the British slave trade began its most significant rise, Port Royal was already in its commercial decline. With the slave trade commanding a certain share of its total commerce, Port Royal was the cornerstone of the Jamaican slave trade as the island developed. Still, it was Kingston, with the offices of the South Seas Company and a throng of separate traders supplying the asiento and the island’s internal market, that would take the role as the keystone of England’s success in this enterprise.

As it developed in the seventeenth century, the English slave trade was contentious and problematic. There were many factions who struggled for a share of the trade’s potential wealth. In England, merchants and companies argued over monopolies which unfairly excluded them from the trade. In Jamaica, planters and merchants complained incessantly about the companies that were ineffective in supplying the demands of the market. Company agents and representatives on both sides of the Atlantic complained about interloping traders and international competition, casting blame wherever possible to deflect the many criticisms they faced.

Joint stock companies, first the Royal African Company and then the South Seas Company, succeeded in trafficking large numbers of slaves, but were still unable to meet the demand in order to actualize their monopolies. Interlopers played a significant, yet hard to define, role in the slave trade at Port Royal. While some officials may have been vexed by illegal trade, the lawless environment of the island made the practice acceptable. Internal
sources of competition, graft, and corruption all to hindered the overall success of the British slave trade.

The slave trade was pervasive and an accepted fact of daily life. People who were involved in the commerce of the slave trade at Port Royal represented wide strata of the town's population. From common sailors to wealthy merchants and plantation owners to powerful public officials, nearly every social niche was within the maritime community and beyond was involved with the trade to a certain degree.

At the time of Henrietta Marie's voyage to Port Royal, racial justifications for slavery were not yet widespread. European society was harsh and conditions in the Caribbean colonies bordered on brutal for whites and blacks alike. Disease, poverty, and simple survival knew no confines of race, as is evident in contemporary literature. For instance, Daniel Defoe's Robinson Crusoe offers a depiction of a society where slavery was an accepted fact of life. Crusoe observes the slave trade in Africa, is enslaved himself, and even sells a faithful Moorish companion to a Portuguese slaver.

Henrietta Marie exemplifies expectations of an English slave ship operating at the turn of the eighteenth century. Several ships of her type were likely at anchor in Port Royal at any given time around 1700. While operating under a license from the Royal African Company, her backers and her financing from several separate sources indicate the increasing capitalist character of the mercantilist system where individual profits sought to devaluate the joint stock monopolies.

Though considered commonplace and unremarkable in slavery's heyday, the grim furniture of bondage employed to restrain slaves during commercial voyages survive as the
most chilling artifacts among the thousands of items collected from the wreck site of Henrietta Marie. Close examination of a sample set of these shackles reveals that the devices were fashioned by more than one source, and that they were perhaps of several different origins. There is significant variance in the sizes and dimensions of the shackles in the ship’s collection; however, the majority of the components are interchangeable for the most part. The simple devices are an effective and easily manageable solution to the problem of restraining the cargo when necessary.

Through comparison of wrought iron restraints recovered from underwater and terrestrial contexts and contemporary depictions, it is apparent that shackles of the bilboe type were the preferred restraints for maritime application. The archaeological record does not substantiate the concept that restraints with cuffs and chains or manacles were ever employed on a wide scale at sea. Furthermore, the archaeological and historical records show that bilboes are in use aboard ships and on land from the 1500s to the 1800s. With only bilboes represented in artifact assemblages from shipwreck sites, it is logical to assume that these were the most commonly employed method of shipboard restraint. Clearly bilboes were the shackles of choice used in the maritime slave trade during Port Royal’s commercial peak, and most likely, well beyond.
ENDNOTES

Chapter I

1. Estimating the exact number of Africans transplanted during the entire period of the Transatlantic slave trade’s existence is a formidable, if not impossible, task. Daniel Mannix sets the figure at fifteen million for the period between 1518 and 1865 in *Black Cargoes: A History of the Atlantic Slave Trade 1518 – 1865* (New York, Viking Press, 1962), vii. Other historians of the slave trade are less conservative and have offered totals as high as 40 million. The foremost effort in assessing the total numbers of slaves delivered to the New World is P.D. Curtain, *The Atlantic Slave Trade: A Census* (Madison, Wis., University of Wisconsin Press, 1969). Curtain offers that Spanish colonies received more than 1.5 million slaves and the colony of Brazil acquired between 3.5 and 5 million slaves throughout the trade’s existence, 46. His work with a variety of primary sources has produced convincing evidence for the transport of around 10 million slaves, 73.


Chapter II


2. Thomas, Dalby, *An Historical Account of the Rise and Growth of the West India Collonies* (London, 1690), 9.

3. S. Everett, *History of Slavery* (Seacaucus, New Jersey, Chartwell, 1991), 30. Africans were only one demographic group in an extremely diverse slave population, which included slaves from domestic sources as well as foreign, e.g. slavic and Islamic captives.


10. Craton, Sinews of Empire, 37.


14. In his The Rise of the English Shipping Industry (London, Newton Abbot, David & Charles, 1962), Ralph Davis contends that these vessels provided the English traders with a cheap source of cargo vessels and was one of the most important events in England’s rise in maritime power. The fluyt was indeed popular in England. As more and more of them were captured over the course of the Anglo-Dutch wars, the cat was developed by English shipwrights, which was clearly derived from the round cargo ships of the Dutch.

15. Everett, History of Slavery, 32.


25. Craton, *Sinews of Empire*, 57. Two years earlier, Holmes had seized a fort at the mouth of the Gambia River from the Courlanders, who were under Dutch protection.


27. *ibid*, 58.


30. *ibid*, 58.

31. *ibid*, 326-327. Davies makes an interesting case that the treaty was also motivated by a scheme to bring business to newly established Spanish shipyards.

33. L.I. Rudnyanszky, 'The Caribbean Slave Trade.' (Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of Notre Dame, August, 1973), 94. The company was obligated to pay the King of Spain an advance of two hundred thousand crowns as well as a duty of 33.5 crowns for each slave landed. The King of England and the King of Spain were each to receive one-quarter of the profits.


Chapter III


10. D.L. Hamilton, ‘Simon Benning: Pewterer of Port Royal’, in B. J. Little, ed., *Text-Aided Archaeology* (Boca Raton, Florida, CRC Press, 1992), 40. Port Royal’s closest rival in terms of wealth and size was Boston, Massachusetts. In 1690, Boston is thought to have had a population of approximately 6000 individuals, while Port Royal is estimated as having anywhere from 6,500 to 10,000 residents. The area at the end of the Pallisadoes (as the sandpit it called) had as many as 2000 building densely packed into a 51 acre area at the time of the 1692 earthquake.


13. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 154. Dunn used the Index to Jamaica Land Patents, 1661-1826, File 1 B/11, in the Jamaica Archives at Spanish town to derive these figures.


17. John Taylor, *Multumm in Parvo or Taylor’s Histori of his Life and travels in America and other parts of Taylor’s Life and Travels 1686 - 88* (Undated MS on file at Library of Jamaica, Kingston, Jamaica), 505. Among the many commercial interests represented, imports at Port Royal included goods from Africa (primarily slaves), New England (foodstuffs, spars, cooper’s materials), and a wide range of consumables, finished goods, and other materials from England and Ireland.


20. Pawson and Buisseret, *Port Royal, Jamaica*, 121 – 122. The figure is confirmed by several historical sources.

21. *ibid*, 121. There are numerous historical accounts of the disaster, some of which include *A Full Account of the late dreadful Earthquake at Port Royal in Jamaica* (London, 1692); *The truest and largest account of the late Earthquake in Jamaica* (London, 1693); and J. Shower, *Practical Reflections on the late Earthquake in Jamaica* (London, 1693).


27. The two volumes of K. Ingrahm’s Sources of Jamaican History (Kingston, Jamaica, University of the West Indies Press, 1975) list a wealth of primary sources.

Chapter IV


5. See R. Sheridan, Sugar and Slavery (Baltimore, Maryland, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), 208 – 233, for a more detailed discussion. Also refer to Dunn, Sugar and Slaves, 149 – 165.


7. Dunn, Sugar and Slaves, 153.

8. The case of Martyn van Russen is found in E. Donnan, Documents Illustrative of the History of the Slave Trade to America, 153 - 154

9. Dunn, Sugar and Slaves, 155. Dunn gleaned his population figures from CSP Col, 1669 – 1674, 270.

10. ibid, 155. In 1673, the white population of Jamaica numbered 4050 men, 2,006 women and 1,712 children.


13. COSP Col., 1661 - 1668, 222 - 224.


17. *ibid*, 65 - 73. In this instance, Bybrook was a ‘colony’ that was populated by East Cokers. Refer to W. A. Claypole, ‘The Merchants of Port Royal 1655 – 1700.’ (Unpublished PhD dissertation, University of the West Indies, Kingston, 1972) for a complete discussion of merchants as planters at Port Royal.


20. *ibid*, 157. This figure is drawn from immigration records. The white population grew at a rate of roughly 700 per year.


27. Davies, *The Royal African Company*, 245 - 252. The company was under heavy criticism at this time in the West Indies.


29. COSP Col., 1677 – 1680, 85.

30. COSP Col., 1677 – 1680, 319.


32. COSP Col., 1681-1685, 59.


35. *ibid*, 299.

36. Figures for 1662 and 1673 are from *Journals of Jamaican Assembly*, I, app., 20,40. The census is reported in the Colonial Office Series 1/45/97-109. As reported in Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 180.


40. Galenson, *Traders, Planters and Slaves*, 161. The conception of Jamaica’s slave population numbering 40,000 in 100 has its roots in documents found in COSP Col., 1700.

41. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 312.


49. Davies, *Royal African Company*, 298. Councilors were also disqualified, as they served as justices on courts of appeals.


51. *ibid*, 296 - 297. T70/85 fo. 11

52. *ibid*, 298. T70/85 fo. 44d.

53. T70/85, fo. 66.

54. T70/15, 3.

55. *ibid*

56. Island Record Office, Spanish Town, Jamaica, Wills (hereafter IRO Wills), vol. 6, fo. 97.

57. Island Record Office, Spanish Town, Jamaica, Grantor’s Series (hereafter IRO Grantors), vol. 19, fo. 208.

59. IRO Grantors, vol. 18, fo. 38.

60. IRO Wills, vol. 6, fo. 125.


62. IRO Grantors, vol. 21, fo. 132.

63. IRO Grantors, vol. 24, fo. 29.

64. IRO Grantors, vol. 20, fo. 182.


67. IRO Inventories, vol. 3, fo. 431b

68. IRO Inventories, vol. 3, fo. 24


71. *ibid*, 10.


74. Galneson, *Traders, Planters, and Slaves*, 82. PRO T70/57, fo. 50.


77. Galenson, *Traders, Planters, and Slaves*, 16, 22. It has been estimated that this arrangement led to the transfer of nearly twenty percent of the slaves delivered through the Royal African Company to the West Indies passed to ship owners and captains.

78. *Ibid*, 16. Galenson quotes correspondence from the Royal African Company to Edward Chester in Antigua on May 29, 1713, which is contained in PRO T70/2 fo. 66.


82. As quoted in Palmer, *Human Cargoes*, 47.


86. *Ibid*, 279. In *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 136, Rediker states that wages by the run for a voyage to London from a colony ranged between £6 and £30 for voyages that were completed in an average of six weeks. Seamen frequently negotiated wages between £10 and £12 with an allotment of rum, and supplemented their wages with smuggling.


88. *Ibid*, 139.
89. As quoted by Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea*, 61.

90. Pawson and Buisseret, *Port Royal, Jamaica*, 70, 199.

Chapter V


7. *ibid*, 89. For a complete and detailed description of the structural remains, refer to Chapter V of Moore’s thesis.


9. *ibid*, 120. According to Jamaican Shipping Returns, *Henrietta Marie* is listed on 25 June 1700 as a ship of 120 tons.

10. *ibid*, 140 – 142. Moore argues a technology gap between merchant vessels and naval ships, as well as a confluence of English, French and Dutch design trends.
11. *ibid*, 128. Henrietta Maria was a daughter of Henry IV, King of France (1589 – 1610). With the War of the League of Augsburg having ended in 1697, the theory that *Henrietta Marie* could have been taken as a prize from the French is not unreasonable.

12. *ibid*, 135. Moore draws his rigging comparison from a contemporary draught of the *Mary Galley* (1704), a small East Indian interloper.

13. *ibid*, 140. Many elements listed are conjectural and unsubstantiated by the archeological record; however they are reasonably expected from what is known historically about slavers and general ship construction.


17. *ibid*, 66. The value of this cargo in modern currency is more than a quarter of a million dollars.


19. Burnside and Robotham, *Spirits of the Passage*, 66. Skinner’s Hall was the meeting place of the East India Company in the 1690s.


21. *ibid*, 68.


25. Moore, ‘The Anatomy of a 17th Century Slaver,’ 37. Christopherson’s will was given orally around the 10th of June 1698, depicting that he died on the middle passage. He left all of his meager possessions to his “Countryman and messmate” Johnson.


27. Moore, ‘The Anatomy of a 17th Century Slaver,’ 25 – 27. With an average price of slaves on the African coast at the time being £3, the net worth of this sale was £3, 589.

28. Burnside and Robotham, *Spirits of the Passage*, 172. Known from Barbados Shipping Returns, PRO CO 33/13, fo. 35.s.

29. Moore, ‘The Anatomy of a 17th Century Slaver,’ 37. A date on Christopherson’s will, 26 December 1698, could represent the approximate time of the return.


31. Moore, ‘The Anatomy of a 17th Century Slaver,’ 38. Taylor’s will is also transcribed in Moore’s thesis, App. J. His father-in-law was the heir to his estate. The delay is thought to have been associated with problems clearing customs.


33. *ibid*, 173. This low mortality incidence could have been because Taylor set sail in frustration without over crowding his hold.


36. *ibid*, 174. Obtained for roughly £4 per head in Africa, the slaves fetched between £24 and £30 apiece in the high demand of the Jamaican market.
37. *ibid*, 179.

38. The name originates from the steel, forged at Bilbao, Spain, which was reckoned at the time to be the finest in Europe. Refer to Peter Kemp, ed., *The Oxford Companion to Ships and the Sea* (London, Oxford University Press, 1976), 82.

39. David Moore, personal communication.


41. Robert Marx, personal communication.

42. Island Records Office, Inventories, vol. 3, fo. 72,73.

43. Donnan, *Documents Illustrative of the Slave Trade*, vol. II, 323.

44. *ibid*, 386.

45. John Atkins, *A voyage to Guinea, Brasil, and the West-Indies; in his Majesty's Ships, the Swallow and Weymouth* (London, 1735).


47. *ibid*, 2.


49. William E. Pittman, personal communication. Pittman is the Curator of Archaeological Collections at Colonial Williamsburg.


51. Silas Hurry, personal communication. Hurry is the Archaeological Laboratory Director of Historic St. Mary’s City.

52. Yossie Silverman, personal communication. Silverman has collected handcuffs for several years and maintains an extensive virtual display of handcuffs and other types

53. William E. Pittman, personal communication.

54. Merseyside Maritime Museum, MS 5404.


59. Dow, *Slave Ships and Slaving*, 159. In 1807, Britain reversed its position and declared that to engage in the maritime slave trade was an act of piracy.
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