

CHAPTER 14

THE THIRD AND FOURTH GENERATIONS

The third generation of Anguillians were those born in the thirty-years between 1711 and 1740. The fourth generation were those born between 1741 and 1770. There is not a great deal of material on their living conditions during this period. We must sift through the few documents that survive to gain a glimpse here and there into what their life was like at that time.

We saw that when Governor Walter Hamilton received word in late 1717 that the Anguillians migrated in numbers to Crab Island, he visited both islands.¹ In both of them he took a census of the persons present, giving the names of the free white men and the numbers of persons present in their households. The names of the persons mentioned in the 1717 Anguilla census are of interest.² If one examines it carefully, one notices gaps in the first column of 'men'. These gaps indicate that the men named were missing on the day the census was taken. The likelihood is that they were the men who went to Crab Island with Abraham Howell Sr. They left their families, households, and estates behind in Anguilla, as they tried to carve out a new life for them and their families. Most of the absent men were not, as we might

¹ Chapter 10: Crab Island Revisited.

² Ibidem.

reasonably have assumed, young single men with no families and few responsibilities. They were for the most part married with children and estates.

The 1717 Crab Island census tells us that there were 46 white planters settled on that island.³ Most of the Crab Island settlers were accompanied by slaves. This indicates that the immigrating planters were men of some substance in Anguilla. We saw that 42 men signed the 1717 Petition to settle Crab Island. Of this number, a comparison of the names indicates that, not surprisingly, 40 of them went to Crab. This high ratio of petitioners to emigrants indicates the determination of the men involved. In addition, they took along with them 6 other planters who did not sign the petition, and 62 slaves. We are not told the names or any other information about the black slaves who accompanied them. At the time of Hamilton's visit to Crab, there were, therefore, 46 white planters and their indentured white servants and 62 black slaves present at the prospective new colony.

The 1717 Crab Island census gives us the names of the 46 white persons, but only the numbers of slaves who went with them to Crab Island, not their names. Some of these early Anguillian names disappeared from the Anguillian records after this fiasco. We may assume that some of them died when the Spaniards from Puerto Rico

³ Ibidem.

destroyed the settlement. Others who survived their subsequent incarceration in the Spanish gaols later emigrated to other islands. Such were: Henry Osborne, Thomas Allen, George Garner, Abraham Wingood, William Beal, Joseph Mason, Andrew Watson, and William Smith. Among the important planters that we lose track of around this time are Peter Downing, Bezaliel Howell, Nehemiah Richardson, Abraham Chalwill Sr, and Samuel Floyd. Some of the Crab Island names do re-appear in subsequent documents as evidence that they survived the Crab Island adventure. These include, of the major planters, Abraham Howell himself and Thomas Gumbs. Other Anguillians who survived and continued to play a role in Anguilla's affairs included Thomas Hodge, Thomas Coakley, Thomas Howell, and Abraham Chalwell Jr.

The 1717 Anguilla census shows who the major planters were. They were only the third generation of Anguillians, in this difficult period of Anguilla's history. At the head of the list, both literally and figuratively, is Captain George Leonard with his wife, four children and forty-one slaves. Compared to the other planters of the island, his was a large establishment. There were only seven others, out of just over one hundred planters, who possessed twenty or more slaves. The biggest planters after Leonard were John Rogers, Peter Downing, Thomas

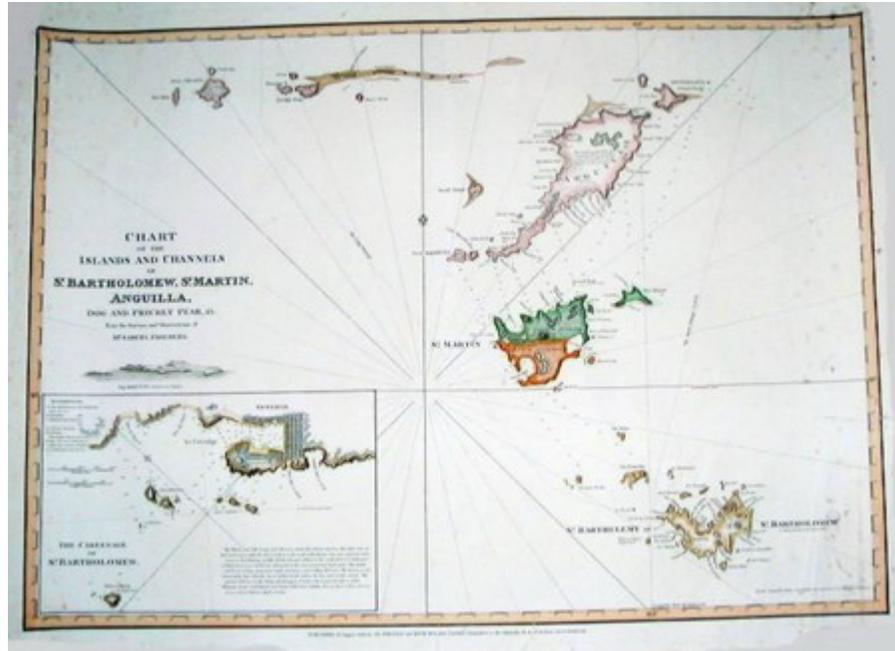
Gumbs, Thomas Howell, Bezaliel Howell, Thomas Rogers, and John Richardson. Three of these seven major planters, Downing, Gumbs and Bezaliel Howell were with Abraham Howell on Crab Island in 1717. This suggests that almost one half of the influential planters of Anguilla joined Howell in the attempted exodus to Crab Island. The situation on the island that year was desperate for such a course of events to take place.

The starving condition of the Anguillians due to the lengthy drought was not appreciated by those who did not experience it. We have seen John Oldmixon's scathing description of the people of Anguilla in the first decade of the eighteenth century.⁴ It is clear from what he wrote that he never visited Anguilla, but merely repeated the old canards and libels. He related how it was called 'Anguis Insula' or 'Snake Island', which is utter nonsense.

The country, he wrote, was level and woody and the soil fruitful. The English first settled there, he wrote, in 1650, in the area where the island was broadest and there was a pond. By this, he seems to be indicating that the first settlers occupied the fertile areas around Cauls Pond and Bad Cox Pond in the east end of the island. The Fahlberg map made from observations in the year 1792, shows Anguilla in the familiar tadpole shape of later

⁴ See Chapter 6: War and the Settlers.

maps which it was not to lose until the Carter Rey map of 1921 restored its true contours (see illus 1).⁵



1. Samuel Fahlberg's Chart of Anguilla, St Maarten, and St Barthelemy.

The major ponds of Anguilla at this time were believed to lie in the east of the island. This view, that the first settlements lay in the Stoney Ground-Cauls Pond area, accords with the surviving documents of the earliest period of Anguilla's history. They deal mainly with titles to land in the Stoney Ground and Shoal Bay areas. Oldmixon claimed that the only reason why the Anguillians were so poor at this time was that they were the laziest creatures in the world. He claimed, out of ignorance of the real soil and climate conditions, that if

⁵ Dr Samuel Fahlberg (1758-1834) moved to St Barts as a physician in 1784 after the island was ceded to Sweden by France. In 1803 he was named Director of Survey of St Barts, and thoroughly mapped the island for the Swedish West India Company.

only an industrious people were in possession of Anguilla it would soon be developed.

In 1717, a few days before Abraham Howell led his party of settlers away from Anguilla to Crab Island, Robert Lockrum of Tortola but formerly of Anguilla executed a conveyance of his plantation in Stoney Ground in favour of Thomas Lake. He obtained his Stoney Ground Plantation by a 1704 patent from Governor Christopher Codrington Jr. His 1704 patent is now lost. It was for land bordering other land at Stoney Ground granted in the same year by Codrington by a surviving patent to his brother Edward Lake.⁶ Thomas Lake's plantation is described as being bound on the north by the land of Edward Lake and the land of Gilbert Roe, west with Cockpit estate, east with the land of Thomas Call and south with the land of Rice Williams. The reason for Robert Lockrum selling his estates in this manner is not clear. Neither he nor any of his family of five children and three slaves joined Abraham Howell in the exodus to Crab. We know this from the 1716 census. Robert Lockrum's name is still preserved today as a place name. Lockrum's Estate is the area between Little Harbour and Blowing Point. He and his family probably emigrated to Tortola to join the Quaker settlement in that island. Thomas Call is remembered today only as the

⁶ Chapter 5: The Second Generation.

eponymous owner of the pond and plantation that lies to the east of Stoney Ground and that bears his name.

Oldmixon claimed that the people of Anguilla at the beginning of the century were completely without any culture or learning.⁷ They lived, he wrote, without any concern for anything other than to be able to have something to eat and something to wear. Of the two, he jeered, their food was of a better standard than their clothing. They gave themselves to each other in marriage, without the benefit of any lawyer to put them to the expense of a marriage contract, or of a priest to pluck money out of their pockets for licences. Though their marriages were only common law marriages, they stayed faithful to each other as a change could never improve their condition, everyone being equally poor. He concluded his libellous description by claiming that in Anguilla, due to the absence of law, every man was his own master. It was a primitive society, he wrote, where no man's power exceeded the bounds of his household.

Some indication of how unbearable conditions in Anguilla were at that time is provided by Governor Woodes Rogers' claim in a dispatch to the Committee that the entire population of Anguilla accepted his offer to transfer to the Bahamas.⁸ Anguilla was at that time in 1719, as he described it, a defenceless and barren island,

⁷ Chapter 6: War and the Settlers.

⁸ CO.23/1: Dispatch from Rogers to the Committee cited at Calendars, para 737.

with about 1,800 blacks and whites. The people were, he asserted in his dispatch, poor but industrious. He was anxious to have them relocate to the Bahamas as he observed that they lived in perfect friendliness with each other. They were of modest behaviour and their influence would help to reform the rough manners of the people then inhabiting the Bahamas. Governor Rogers was yet to learn that, though the Anguillians complain bitterly about their island, referring to it even today as ‘The Rock’, they were unwilling to give up one inch of it. It is unlikely that many of them removed to the Bahamas on the boat he sent to collect them.

By 1724, the date of Governor Hart’s estimate of the population of the Leeward Islands, the population of Anguilla is still declining.⁹ The long drought of 1680-1725 has not yet ended. There are approximately 360 white men, of whom 85 are in the militia (see table 1). Governor Hamilton just four years earlier put the population of whites at 409, with 121 in the militia.

	White	Black	Militia
Antigua	5,200	19,800	1,400
St Christopher	4,000	11,500	1,200
Nevis	1,100	6,000	300
Montserrat	1,000	4,400	350
Anguilla	360	900	85
Spanish Town	340	650	78
Tortola	420	780	100
Total	12,420	44,030	3,513

Table 1: Governor Hart’s Estimate of the Population of the Leeward Islands, 1724. CO.152/13.

⁹ CO.152/14, folio 325: Hart to the Committee on 10 July 1724, enclosure: Answer to Queries.

One indication that conditions improved in Anguilla after the long drought, and that the population was increasing, occurs in the year 1734 when Governor Mathew reported that the militia was now increased from 85 to about 100.¹⁰

The year 1734 marks the last attempt of the colonial authorities for the next hundred years to keep track of the population of the now virtually abandoned colony of Anguilla. The Governor's in Chief, following the lead shown by London, virtually cease to report on conditions in Anguilla. Table 2 is the result of a careful search through the Colonial Office records of the eighteenth century for Anguilla. It shows all attempts to calculate the population of the island.

Year	White men	White women	White children	Total white	Total black	Total
1668 ¹¹				200 or 300		
1672 ¹²	150					
1678 ¹³	100 ¹⁴	150	300	550 ¹⁵		
1705 ¹⁶	100					
1716 ¹⁷	89	103	342	534	820	1,354

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- ¹⁰ CO.152/20, folio 148: Mathew to the Committee. Enclosure: A State of His Majesty's Leeward Caribbee Islands in America, 31 August 1734 (folio 149).
- ¹¹ Co.1/23, No 103, folio 212: An unattributed memorandum, cited in the Calendars of State Papers, para 1781, as 'Willoughby to the Board of Trade.'
- ¹² CO.1/29, No 14, folio 22: Stapleton of 17 July 1672 to the Council. At Enclosure 1, Answers to the Several Enquiries of the Sundry Councils, he gives the militia of Anguilla as consisting of "two companies of fifty men in each company."
- ¹³ CO.1/42, No 98, folio 193: Stapleton of 29 June 1678 to the Council. Enclosure 1: 'Answers to the General Heads of the letter of 10 September 1677', Anguilla census (folio 239).
- ¹⁴ CO.1/42, No 65, folio 130: Council of Trade of 25 April 1678 to the King concerning the state of the Leeward Islands advises that in Anguilla there were 60 men bearing arms.
- ¹⁵ Of the total, 250 are English and 300 are Irish.
- ¹⁶ CO.152/6, No 39: Johnson of 3 November 1705 to the Council [See also CO.239/1, No 8]
- ¹⁷ CO.152/11, No 56, enclosure 3: Hamilton of 3 October 1716 to the Council.

1717 ¹⁸	96	97	154			
1720 ¹⁹	133	164	251	548	879	1,537
1724 ²⁰				360 ²¹	900	1,260
1734 ²²	100					

Table 2 An abstract of the various estimates of the population of Anguilla made by Governors in Chief between 1650 and 1776 compiled by the author.

The tough conditions forced the early Anguillians to look elsewhere for the means of their survival. In this early period, one significant destination was the Virgin Islands. There are in the Anguilla Archives fleeting glimpses of Anguillians who immigrated to Crab Island and the other Virgin Islands. In his 1731 Will, Peter Rogers Sr, left his estates to his children in equal shares.²³ This is what he wrote:

Imprimis. I give my beloved children all my lands equally to be divided between them, both what land I have in said Island and in the island of Tortola to them and their lawful heirs forever.

Item. I give my son Peter Rogers one Negro man named Jacob to him and to the lawful heirs of his body freely to be possessed by them.

Item. I give my daughter Elizabeth and the lawful heirs, of her body a Negro wench named Marrote with all the increase that shall come from said Negro wench.

¹⁸ CO.152/12/1, No 67, Hamilton of 6 January 1718 to the Committee. Enclosure 4: List of the Inhabitants of Anguilla taken on 22 January 1717.

¹⁹ CO.152/13, folio 159: Hamilton to the Council, unnumbered enclosure, List of the Inhabitants of the Leeward Islands on 18 July 1720.

²⁰ CO.152/14: Unnumbered dispatch, folio 325: Hart of 10 July 1724 to the Council with Answers to Queries. See Chapter 14.

²¹ Of these, there are 85 men in the Militia.

²² CO.152/20, folio 149: Mathew of 31 August 1734 to the Committee: A State of His Majesty's Leeward Caribbee Islands in America. Actually, his estimate of the number of "effective men," ie, the Militia, rather than of all men.

²³ Anguilla Archives: [Peter Rogers' 1731 Will](#).

Item. I give to my daughter Mary and to the lawful heirs of her body a Negro wench called Lucilla with all the increase that shall come from said Negro wench.

Item. I give unto my son Bezeliall and to the lawful heirs of his body one Negro man named Sampson.

Item. I give unto my daughter Rebecca and the lawful heirs of her body one Negro man named Jupiter.

Item. I leave the rest of my Negroes to the disposal of my lawful and now married wife Mary to give and dispose of them amongst our children according as she thinks proper.

He devised land in both Tortola and in Anguilla to his children. The likelihood is that he emigrated, residing in Tortola for at least a part of each year. Peter Rogers died the same year he made his Will. He died quite young, as the children in his Will were minors. He was probably a son of Mannin Rogers, and one of Thomas Chalkey's Quaker converts. He was one of those Anguillians who did not accompany Abraham Howell on the third illegal venture to Crab Island in 1717. Instead, he sought to improve his lot by acquiring additional land on the British Quaker settlement of Tortola.

In the Will, he described himself as a planter. He did not say whether he planted cotton, sugarcane, or only food crops. He did not mention any mill-house, still, or other sugar works. The likelihood is that despite his extensive landholdings in Anguilla and Tortola, he survived in typical Anguillian fashion by keeping small

stock and growing pigeon peas, corn, and sweet potatoes when the weather permitted it.

His Will is an example of an early Anguilla document being fortuitously preserved in the Archives due to its production in evidence in a land dispute many years later. There is a note written on it that it was presented for recording in the Secretary's Office in Anguilla in 1760. This is the earliest Anguillian Will preserved in the Archives.

Samuel Downing was another Anguillian who emigrated. In his 1739 deed, he conveyed for the price of £172 10s his Crocus Bay plantation to Elizabeth Rogers.²⁴ We last saw Samuel Downing in the 1717 Anguilla census listed as a married man with six children and with a grown daughter in his household. He was now described in the 1739 deed as "*of Tortola, merchant.*" He emigrated from Anguilla to Tortola, where he did well.

Deputy governor John Richardson was another Anguillian with extensive family connections in the Virgin Islands. His 1741 deed from William Hodge of Tortola and his wife Elizabeth Hodge reveals him purchasing, just before his death, a plantation of the late Jacob Richardson, on the south coast of the island in Spring Division.²⁵ The deed reads:

²⁴ Anguilla Archives: [Elizabeth Rogers' 1739 deed.](#)

²⁵ Anguilla Archives: [John Richardson's 1741 deed.](#)

Anguilla. Know all men by these presents that we William Hodge of the island of Tortola and Elizabeth my wife do for ourselves our heirs Executors Administrators and Assigns as also for and in the behalf of Rachael Richardson daughter of my said wife and Jacob Richardson deceased the former husband of my said wife in consideration of the sum of one hundred pistoles current cash of this island to us in hand already paid by John Richardson Esq of said island the receipt whereof we do hereby acknowledge and ourselves therewith fully and entirely satisfied

have given granted bargained and sold and by these presents do in plain and open market according to due form of law give grant bargain and sell unto the said John Richardson Esq, his Heirs, Executors, Administrators and assigns for ever, a certain parcel of land or plantation situate lying and being in the Spring Division of the said Island being butted and bounded as follows on the eastern side with the lands of said John Richardson Esq and Benjamin Gumbs, on the south part with the sea, on the west side with the land formerly belonging to Edward [. . .] now in possession of the said John Richardson Esq and the land formerly belonging to Patrick Campbell and lately in possession of Bezeliel Rogers deceased, and on the north part bounding with the neighbouring plantation

to have hold occupy possess and enjoy the aforesaid parcel of land or plantation to the only proper use benefit and behoof of him said John Richardson Esq his heirs executors Administrators or Assigns together with all the appurtenances benefits and privileges thereto belonging there from arising or in anywise . . .

Jacob Richardson also died a young man. He was an infant at the time of the 1716 census. His name first appears in the Archives when he signed the 1727 Proclamation. His widow Elizabeth Richardson remarried William Hodge of Tortola, a leading member of the Tortola branch of the Hodge family. By the law of succession of the time, Elizabeth required the signature of her new husband to the deed, which was also expressed to be made on behalf of Jacob's daughter and heir, Rachael.

Anguillians are credited with introducing the Society of Friends, or Quakers, to the Virgin Islands. As James Birkett wrote to John Dilworth in 1740,²⁶

Tortola has been settled above 20 years, and the first that professed our principles there was the present governor's father Abednigo Pickering. He came from Anguilla where formerly a small meeting was held and he at times frequented the same. After settling in Tortola, he was instrumental in convincing his overseer and steward, who is now a very conscientious and honest friend, and an example worthy of imitation by those who enjoy far greater privileges.

Abednigo Pickering previously lived in Anguilla for twenty years at least. He owned property purchased as early as 1698. In either that year or the following year, he purchased from Jacob Howell the plantation that Howell acquired in 1698 from deputy governor George

²⁶ CF Jenkins, Tortola: A Quaker Experiment of Long Ago in the West Indies (1923), p.9, quoting Birkett.

Leonard.²⁷ He appeared in the 1717 Anguilla census listed as a planter. He was then married with four children and ten slaves. He emigrated to Tortola sometime after 1717 and settled there.

James Birkett's 1740 letter describes how Abednigo Pickering attended Quaker meetings in Anguilla before he emigrated, and how he brought the principles of Quakerism to Tortola. His son, John Pickering, subsequently became deputy governor of Tortola. Thomas Coakely also describes holding Quaker meetings at John Pickering's house in Tortola.

It was not unusual for the deeds and patents of this period to grant several parcels of land in different parts of the island. In the years before sugar was grown, the cotton and provision grounds of a planter might be scattered in different parts of the island. So, Edward Lake's 1704 patent granted him three separate parcels.²⁸ The first was an estate south of the Lake's estate at Shoal Bay. The second was Waters', or Wattices, which previously belonged to Ann Hackett. The third was Hazard Hill estate, the location of which is now lost, and which reappeared again in William Gumbs' Will of 1748.²⁹ We have noted that this is one of the first surviving

²⁷ As appears from an endorsement of Jacob Howell's 1698 deed in the Anguilla Archives.

²⁸ Chapter 5: The Second Generation.

²⁹ See Chapter 18: Sugar Arrives.

Anguillian patents granted directly by the hands of the Governor-in-Chief Christopher Codrington Jr.

In the year 1711, Anne Williams, the widow of Rice Williams, made a most complicated and unorthodox arrangement for the disposal of a portion of her cotton and provision lands. Her land was a part of the estate of her late husband Rice Williams. The deed reads as follows:

Anguilla. Know all men by these presents that I, Ann Williams, of the Island of Anguilla, widow, for and in consideration of the love, goodwill and affection which I have and do bear to my well beloved son-in-law Thomas Lake of the said island, planter, have given and granted and by these presents do freely clearly and absolutely give and grant unto him the said Thomas Lake his heirs executors administrators or assigns for ever a certain part or parcel of land out of the plantation I now dwell on known by the name of Well Ground, bounding eastwardly with the rocks above the well, so running westwards to the foot of the Rosemary grass, bounding north with the rocks, and south with the stone wall and Rowland's Cotton Ground.

Likewise if the other part of the plantation should come to be divided or parted at my death that he is then to have his equal share of all the rocks and woods as far forth as any other of my natural children. On the contrariwise if the plantation should never be divided then he shall occupy and measure as far forth as any other of my children as aforesaid.

So that likewise if the plantation should be divided as aforesaid and the land whereon the said Thomas

Lake's house doth stand should fall to any of the other children that he shall have free liberty to withdraw his said house and the said Thomas Lake is not to debar or hinder me nor any of my children of the well and nut tree.

By this deed of gift, she granted her son-in-law Thomas Lake a portion of her Well Ground Plantation. This was a cotton estate lying adjacent to Edward Lake in Shoal Bay. It was bound, she wrote, on the south by Rowland's Cotton Ground. We first saw Rowland Williams in the 1716 Census, married with one child and 5 slaves.³⁰ This was the household of a typical Anguillian small cotton farmer of the time. The same Census listed Ann Williams as a widow with one child and 3 slaves in her household. The areas called the Well Ground, the Rosemary Grass and Rowlands Cotton Ground are now unknown. This document is primary evidence of the continuing cultivation of cotton in Anguilla in the last years of the long drought.

Ann Williams intended that if, after her death, the remainder of Rice Williams' estate was divided among the heirs, then Lake was to share equally in the estate. If, at that time, the land on which Lake's house stood should fall to the lot of one of the other children, then he should be free to take up his house and move it to another site. This type of home-made deed of gift could only be made in a community where small parcels of land were cultivated, and sugar cane was not yet introduced.

³⁰ Chapter 10: Crab Island Revisited.

Quite what legal right she claimed to be dictating how her husband's estate was to be disposed of is not clear. The deed reads more like a Will than a deed of conveyance. It must have caused her heirs countless years of confusion and litigation. It will not surprise us to learn that a copy of it is preserved in the records of the Court of Common Pleas of Anguilla.

The Thomas Lake Sr mentioned in the deed of gift owned several pieces of land. He was a member of one of the oldest families on the island. Yet we notice that he occupied a chattel house. A chattel house was one that was so small it could be lifted onto a cart and moved, by mule or donkey, to another location. The paucity of eighteenth-century stone ruins in Anguilla confirms that the housing of the early settlers and planters were in the main chattel houses, if not wattle and daub ones.

Wattle-and-daub houses were a common sight throughout the islands as homes of the less well-off. Such a house was made by daubing a mixture of cow-dung and mud over a latticework of canes or wattles to build up a wall. The floors of such houses were normally the same as the ground outside. Most of these in Anguilla were destroyed by Hurricane Donna. They were

replaced by concrete houses, the preferred building style of the Anguillians until the end of the twentieth century.³¹

The houses of the early eighteenth century Anguillian worthies were not substantial stone houses as were those of their peers in the other Leeward Islands. Chattel houses remained the common habitation of the Anguillians until well into the second half of the twentieth century when the last of them were removed by Hurricane Donna in 1960.

Edward Welch witnessed Thomas Lake's deed of gift from Ann Williams. He was one of the Welch family that owned the area in the north-east of Anguilla that we now know as Welches. Of the three persons who executed this deed, two of them, the grantor Ann Williams and one of the witnesses Edward Welch, were unable to write their names.³² They signed by making their marks. The writing of the letter 'X' in lieu of a signature is a recognised procedure for persons who cannot read and write. They sign a legal document by marking the letter 'X' in the designated spot after it is read over to them and they confirm to the witnesses that they understand its contents and agree to them. Thomas Howell, on the other hand, was a man of some education and standing.

³¹ One 1978 architectural report on the housing of Anguilla amused itself by describing the post-Hurricane Donna houses of Anguilla as belonging to the "neo-Puerto Rican, concrete style of architecture".

³² Probably the father of deputy governor Edward Welch of 1749. See Chapter 17: The Council.

At any rate, he was literate as he was able to write his own name. We see him later appointed to be a member of the Anguilla Council. In the absence of any lawyer on the island, he probably drew the deed himself.

As we pick through the surviving documents in chronological order, we find evidence of the progress of the cotton industry. In 1712, the Surveyor General of Barbados and the Leeward Islands reported to the Council that Anguilla and Virgin Gorda made between 50,000 and 60,000 lbs of ginned cotton-wool per year.³³ He complained that the majority of this was traded for household essentials either in the Danish island of St Thomas or in the Dutch islands of Statia and Saba. These islands remained important depots for inter-island trade for centuries. Statia was only closed as an international free port, with which the British West Indians illegally traded in breach of the Navigation Acts, by Admiral Rodney in 1781. St Thomas remained open to the Anguillians until recently.

The Surveyor General proposed that a customs officer be placed on each of these islands to ensure that this illegal trade was stopped. No customs officer was, however, appointed in Anguilla for another sixty years. The deputy governor was expected to perform this function as part of his duties. We saw that deputy

³³ Calendars of State Papers, citation misplaced.

governor Arthur Hodge collected the powder money from incoming vessels, and never accounted to anyone for it, occasioning a suit against his estate in later years. Deputy governor Benjamin Gumbs describes himself in the occasional document as the customs collector for Anguilla.³⁴

Some light is shed on the system of government in the short period when Anguilla was informally grouped with the Virgin Islands by the Colonial Office. In early 1716, the Committee for Trade and Foreign Plantations requested that Governor Hamilton send them an account of the state and nature of the Virgin Islands. He was also to give his opinion on how far each of the islands might be made useful to the United Kingdom. He was to give the fullest details on what type of trade was carried on between the British islands and the island of St Thomas. He was also to explain how the deputy governors of Anguilla and Virgin Gorda were appointed, whether they received any salary, how many people were under them, and what controls existed over them.

Governor Hamilton replied to this enquiry on 3 October.³⁵ From his response it is clear that government in Anguilla at that time was rudimentary. The deputy governor, he wrote, functioned alone without the assistance of any Council. He was never appointed by

³⁴ See Chapter 18: [Sugar Arrives](#).

³⁵ CO.152/11, No 56: Hamilton to the Committee on 3 October 1716.

Royal Warrant, as was normal in the other islands. He was instead informally appointed by the Governor-in-Chief. The Governor chose one of the best persons available in the community. He sent the deputy governor his instructions from time to time. It was, he explained, sometimes difficult to select someone who was tolerably suitable from amongst them to put in authority. There was only a handful of persons available to choose from. He submitted in support of this statement a copy of the 1717 census of Anguilla. The list showed Anguilla's population in 1717 to be a total of 1,354 persons. He commented that at that time Anguilla was the heaviest populated of the Virgin Islands. Indeed, he wrote, there were more people on it than all the rest of the Virgin Islands put together.

The chief produce of the island, he wrote, was the raising of small stock and a small quantity of cotton. It is clear from his remarks that sugar was not yet produced in Anguilla. With this dispatch, the Governor enclosed the 1716 list of the inhabitants of Anguilla that we have previously examined.³⁶ The population at that time consisted of 89 white men, 103 white women, 342 white children, and 820 black slaves, of whom 414 were described as 'working negroes'. This is a more detailed and exact figure than the earlier one given by acting

³⁶ See Chapter 10: Crab Island Revisited.

Governor Johnson in 1705, when he complained of having suffered a violent and malignant fever as a result of his visit to Anguilla.³⁷ He reported that in Anguilla there were only 100 men suitable for the local militia in case of war.

It is noticeable that, as we saw in Chapter 10, after Abraham Howell led some 40 white men and 60 slaves from Anguilla to Crab Island in 1717, the former island showed no drop in the adult white population from the figures given for 1716. The numbers found in Anguilla in 1717 were 97 white men, 154 white women, 234 white children and 824 black slaves, or a total population of 1,309. Despite the exodus, the population increased from 1,309 to 1,354. Only the children show a reduction in number.³⁸ This is not unusual, as a high rate of infant mortality was a common feature of life in the Leeward Islands at that time. It would appear, from the above, that persons continued to come to settle in Anguilla at a time when conditions were so difficult.

Two years later, the evidence is that the population has again increased, despite the long drought and the limited supply of agricultural land. In 1719, Governor Hamilton wrote to the Council estimating that there was a maximum of 1,000 people including 100 men suitable for

³⁷ CO.152/6, No 39: Johnson to the Committee on 3 November 1705.

³⁸ Chapter 10 *ibidem*.

the militia on the island.³⁹ From what he knew of them he had a high opinion of their abilities. He described them as very industrious and careful. He lamented that they might be of excellent use to his government of the Leeward Islands if only they were resettled on St Kitts, Antigua, or Nevis. He despaired of being able to keep them together much longer in Anguilla. Some of them, including deputy governor George Leonard, were already removed to Antigua. It was more than probable, he wrote, that others would follow. For all that, the population continued to grow. One concludes that there was some other attraction in Anguilla besides scratching for provisions in the inhospitable soil.

The main pursuit of the small planters on the island, in this early part of the eighteenth century, was the growing of food crops for subsistence, and of cotton for export. The principal food crops were pigeon peas, corn, and sweet potatoes. Fishing was, as always, a sure source of relish. Goats and sheep were the main small stock kept, as there was seldom enough rain for cows. But, the more enterprising of the Anguillians found other outlets for their entrepreneurial energies. We will recall Governor Codrington's description in 1701 of Anguilla being then a hotbed of smuggling. The sloops and

³⁹ CO.152/12.4, No 155: Hamilton to the Committee on 20 July 1719 with answers to their queries.

schooners of Anguilla, then as later, provided her people with a lucrative alternative to agriculture: smuggling.

Anguillian seamen did not confine the trade of their sloops to nearby islands. Even the Atlantic posed no barrier to their enterprise. There was a well-recognized route, via Bermuda, across the Atlantic for the sloops of the Leewards. Bermuda did a good business in providing fresh meat and provisions for boats setting off eastwards across the Atlantic. In November 1706, the Governor of Bermuda wrote to the Committee for Trade and Foreign Plantations that he was taking the opportunity offered by a sloop that touched there to take on water on her way from Anguilla to England to send his latest dispatch to the Committee.⁴⁰ In the Colonial Office records there is at least one later instance, in 1711, when the same deputy governor of Bermuda is mentioned as having issued a clearance for a sloop, bound this time in the other direction, from London to Anguilla.⁴¹ Impressively, Anguillian sloop captains were at this time regularly embarking on their vessels across the Atlantic Ocean in pursuit of trade.

Trade with neighbouring islands was much more common than was trade directly with Britain. It required an exceptionally brave captain and crew to sail a small inter-island schooner across the Atlantic to a port in

⁴⁰ CO.37/7: Governor of Bermuda to the Committee on 8 November 1706.

⁴¹ CO.37/9: Governor of Bermuda to the Committee.

Britain. In May 1726, Governor Hart wrote from St Kitts to the Committee about an amending Act passed by the St Kitts Assembly.⁴² This episode tells us something of the Anguillian trade with St Kitts. It appears that the original Act, passed four years earlier, imposed a 'powder money' tax on the arrival in Basseterre of ships intending to trade. The tax was known as 'powder money' because it was intended to purchase guns and gunpowder for the defence of the island in time of war. The 1726 amending Act provided that the tax no longer applied to vessels belonging to Anguilla and the other Virgin Islands. Anguillian vessels were now free to enter port in St Kitts to sell their cargo of corn, peas, sweet potatoes, and goats. We may be sure that the St Kitts Assembly was not passing the amending Act as a favour to the Anguillians. It was solely for their own relief and benefit. It is likely that the tax resulted in the reduction or even cessation of trade from these islands. In the sugar islands such as St Kitts, all cultivable land was under sugarcane production. All food for both slave and planter was imported. The livestock and provisions that the Anguillians and Virgin Islanders previously brought to St Kitts to sell were sorely missed by the planters of St Kitts for them to repeal this tax on Anguillian trading sloops.

⁴² CO.152/15, folio 260: Hart to the Committee on 20 May 1726.

The powder money was not collected in Basseterre alone. It was supposed to be collected in Anguilla as well. We saw earlier that deputy governor Arthur Hodge of Anguilla collected the powder money in Anguilla.⁴³ He applied it to recoup his expenses in going to England with the Anguilla petition for the retention of the St Martin lands. It is uncertain by what authority the tax was collected in Anguilla as taxes can only be imposed by a legislature. In the absence of an Assembly to pass laws for Anguilla, there would be no taxing statute empowering Hodge to impose the tax. The tax was an unauthorised or illegal imposition in the case of Anguilla. It was no more than a forced payment, extracted by the deputy governor acting as chief customs officer. He collected it by dint of his own will and personality. It helped that the tax was familiar, being collected legally in all the other islands. Few captains of visiting ships would challenge its legality. In Anguilla, the tax was treated as one of the perks of the office of the deputy governor.

We know little about the size or cargo of the Anguillian schooners and sloops of the period. One source of information is the series of customs returns from the various islands. A few of them are preserved in the Colonial Office records in London. They recorded the names and a few particulars, such as the size, crew,

⁴³ Chapter 12: The French Wars.

cargo, and destination of all the ships leaving port. When a ship arrived, the return indicated which port it came from. It showed the goods declared on the ship's manifest. It is possible to pick through the Antiguan returns and list each vessel entering Antigua from Anguilla or departing Antigua for Anguilla.⁴⁴ No one seems to have made a similar return for an Anguillian port until much later in the century. There is none from Anguilla included in the shipping returns of our period. The names of the Anguillian sloops and their captains listed on the Antigua returns were:⁴⁵

1706 - <u>Merit</u>	Charles Keagan, master;
1707 - <u>Elizabeth and Mary</u>	Paul Ruan, master;
1708 - <u>Content</u>	Richard Richardson, master;
1712 - <u>Sea Flower</u>	John and William Downing, masters;
1714 - <u>Susanna and Mary</u>	William Downing, master;
1715 - <u>Elizabeth and Sarah</u>	John Downing, master;
1715 - <u>Mary</u>	Thomas Hodge, master.

These Anguillian sloops are noticeably smaller than the sloops of other islands trading with Anguilla. The biggest was 10 tons. The Sea Flower was only 2 tons. Their cargos are particularly revealing. Their freight was cotton, yams, hammocks, livestock, a little tobacco, and turtle. The hammocks were not only for the navy, they were for domestic use as well. Proper beds would not become common in the islands for many more years. These were

⁴⁴ Chapter 7: The Leeward Islands.

⁴⁵ These vessels are deemed to be Anguillian if their captain carries an Anguillian name. There are no vessels in the returns of our period that are declared to be registered in Anguilla. They are all registered in Antigua, Bermuda, St Kitts or Nevis. In the absence of a proper system of government, Anguilla was not entitled to maintain a Registry of Shipping.

all the goods that were recorded as exported from Anguilla to Antigua between the years 1704 and 1715.

If there were substantial profits to be made in trade, whether lawful or unlawful, between the islands, the Anguillian sloops also put up with hazards that were at least equal to the profit. In one report in 1735, we learn something of what it was like to be an Anguillian ship's captain at that time.⁴⁶ Captain Adams testifies that he was bringing his sloop laden with timber from St Croix to Anguilla.⁴⁷ At about midnight on 27 February, he came upon a pirate ship. Heavily laden, he was unable to escape from the pirate who hoisted out its ship's canoe with thirty men on board, twenty-five of them armed with muskets, and five Indians with their bows and arrows. The pirate captain forced Adams to pilot him into Lime Trees Harbour on St Croix. There, he took another sloop captained by another Anguillian, one McDonnogh.⁴⁸ There is no record of what happened to either of Adams' or McDonnogh's sloops.

We also saw earlier the unnamed Anguillian sloop "*bound for Rocas turtling*" captured by a Spanish sloop.⁴⁹ The catching of turtles and the extracting and preserving of their meat was a useful sideline for Anguillian sloop

⁴⁶ Calendars of State Papers, citation misplaced.

⁴⁷ The first of that name we meet in Anguilla.

⁴⁸ Perhaps our George MacDonnah. See Chapter 4: [The First Generation](#).

⁴⁹ Chapter 12: [The French Wars](#).

owners. Turtles were a staple meat of the planters in the West Indies in the eighteenth century. Live turtles were also essential for the long sea voyages back to Europe. They were kept on deck to be butchered and eaten as needed. The preserved meat was sold for export to Europe and America. When properly prepared, it was esteemed by the planters of the islands further south. The turtle capital of the West Indies was the Cayman Islands. There, towards the end of the seventeenth century, one hundred and eighty sloops supplied the turtle market at Port Royal in Jamaica. The salted turtle of the Leeward Islands was always considered an inferior product, so crudely prepared that it was often found mixed with sand. Those butchers of the Cayman Islands who salted the meat commercially took more care than the fishermen of the Leeward Islands who prepared the meat on the beach and in the open air.

An early West Indian remedy for kidney stones was the pisle of a green turtle.⁵⁰ Richard Ligon described how the planters in Barbados viewed this delicacy.⁵¹ He called it the best 'fish' that the sea produced. The fishermen caught them by turning them on their backs in great numbers with staves. He was sure that there was no

⁵⁰ According to the Oxford English Dictionary this word was originally of 16th century Flemish/Dutch origin and referred to the penis of an animal. It is now mainly retained in 'bull pizzle', either a flogging instrument until recently favoured in the West Indies by wife-beaters or a modern source of dog treats.

⁵¹ Richard Ligon, A True and Exact History of the Island of Barbados (1657).

creature on earth or in the sea that was more delicate in taste or more nourishing than the turtle. He rhapsodised over the island cure for kidney stones. The penis of a green turtle was dried and pounded in a mortar to powder. He took as much of this powder as fit on a shilling. In a short time, it cured him of his kidney stone. He described in detail how the medicine worked. After fourteen days of being unable to pass water, he tried the island cure. Within ten hours, he wrote, the remedy broke up and brought away all the stones and gravel that stopped his passage. His water, he wrote, came as freely from him as ever, and carried before it such quantities of broken stones and gravel as he never saw in his life. The treatment was probably less hazardous to health than the infusion of goose dung prescribed by other doctors at the time.

Anguilla offered few other avenues for profit even to the most enterprising of her inhabitants. There was trading with the buccaneers, and with the French, Dutch and Danes. Such trade was contrary to law and could result in hanging. We have mentioned dye-wood lumbering, salt reaping, the turtle trade, and the cultivation first of tobacco and later of cotton. There was some minor Indian trade and Spanish slave traffic. Profits were never as significant in these activities as in the two new occupations of the Anguillians as the century

progressed: sugar manufacturing, and privateering. This last activity flourished during the Rebellion in the Northern Colonies, as the British at the time styled the event later known as the American Revolution, and in the wars that followed. Sugar enjoyed a noticeably short life in Anguilla. It flourished in the period 1740-1776, when the increased rainfall encouraged some Anguillians to risk everything on become West Indian sugar planters. The American Revolution, and Admiral Rodney's blockade of maritime trade, as well as the resumption of drought in the 1780s, brought the Anguillian sugar planters to breaking point, and the sugar estates all failed.

Richardson's 1738 Will tells us something about the currency in use at the time. Of the many bequests of money to his children and grandchildren, not one is expressed to be either in 'pounds sterling' or in 'local currency'. The gifts of money are all expressed in 'pistoles'.

During the period, the supply of British coins was limited throughout the West Indies. The copper coins of Britain were huge and cumbersome until they were replaced by the smaller bronze coinage of 1860.⁵² In any event, it was only in 1838 that large numbers of copper coins were minted for use in the West Indies: the one and

⁵² The new bronze coinage continued out of habit to be called 'coppers' until pounds, shillings, and pence were abolished in 1971 and replaced by decimal currency.

a half pence,⁵³ the two pence, and the three pence coins. Silver and gold coins from the six pence up were smaller but hoarded by those that were lucky enough to acquire any, and not widely in circulation.

The principal coins current in the Leeward Islands in the eighteenth century were the Portuguese gold *johannes* and *half-johannes*, Spanish gold *doubloons*, French *pistoles*, and Spanish *silver dollars*. The *half-johannes* was valued in England at thirty-six shillings, and in the West Indies at fifty-five shillings. The *doubloon* was worth five pounds five shillings. The *dollar* was worth six shillings and eight pence. One hundred pounds sterling was equivalent later in the century to one hundred- and forty-pounds local currency.

As one of the most common circulating coins used in the first half of the eighteenth century, the *pistole* is frequently mentioned in the deeds. It is difficult to express eighteenth century values as twenty-first century equivalents. A *pistole* probably amounted to around the purchase price of a cow, perhaps as much as between US\$500.00-\$1,000.00 today. It was thus a not inconsiderable sum. It is worth noting that the *pistole* was described as 'current cash of this island' in John Richardson's 1741 deed. The expression means that it

⁵³ Also called a 'three half-pence'.

was accepted as legal tender by the Anguilla Council in disputes.

With French St Martin lying just ten miles off the coast of Anguilla, and with the family and business connections and interests that tied the planters of St Martin to those of Anguilla, when they were not invading each other, one imagines that *pistoles* were relatively easy to come by.

There is a series of court judgments in the Anguilla Archives which illustrate the shortage of coin in circulation on the island. Due to a lack of coin, the local cotton planters of the eighteenth century paid their debts by barter in cotton. This was the normal and recognised way to pay one's debts. From time to time, some merchant would refuse to accept barter and would demand cash. The case would go to court. The Council consisted principally of cotton and sugar planters. They would give the expected judgment. So*, in one case in 1752, two newly established merchants, Nicholas Dunbavin and George Dunbavin, sued Mary Arrindell for thirty-seven pounds, fifteen shillings, five and a quarter pence. The Dunbavins would become important players in Anguilla later in the century, but they were yet unaccustomed to local ways. The court record reads:

Anguilla]	
May the 5 th 1752]	At a meeting of His Majesty's Council, being present
The Honourable Benjamin Gumbs, Esq		
John Hughes]	
Benjamin Roberts]	
Joseph Burnett]	Esqs, and Members of the Council
Thomas Gumbs]	
Edward Payne]	
Nicholas and George Dunbavin versus Mary Arrindell		
Action for £37 15s 5¼d		
Judgment with costs of suit that Mary Arrindell be obliged to pay cash or merchantable cotton wool at cash price for the contents of the bond, and that Nicholas Dunbavin shall be obliged to take cotton at the price that cotton pays debts in this island.		
Signed by command Edward Payne		

Table 3: Nicholas and George Dunbavin v Mary Arrindell. (Anguilla Archives)

The meaning of the court order was that the court found that she did owe the amount. She was given a choice of paying it in either cash or in cotton wool of a reasonable quality. The court found that the plaintiff was not permitted to demand cash. He was obliged to accept cotton wool at the established price if it was offered. Cotton wool was legal tender in the island's cash-strapped economy. The court ordered payment in the very form the Dunbavins rejected, and that caused them to bring the suit. In their mind and in the eyes of observers, they lost their suit. The island Council reaffirmed the local way of doing business, tender by barter. In the absence of coin and bank notes, tender by

barter was the only realistic way to pay for goods and services.

A later case in the same year shows the risk a merchant took in rejecting payment tendered in the form of barter. Another stranger, George Warden, sued John Welch for thirty-eight pounds, six shillings and seven pence. The court record reads:

Anguilla June the 6 th 1752 At a Meeting of His Majesty's Council, being present The Honourable Benjamin Gumbs, Esq John Hughes] Benjamin Roberts] Esqs, and Members of Council Joseph Burnett] Thomas Gumbs] George Warden on behalf of James Brown versus John Welch Action for £38 6s 7d It is the opinion of the majority of the Council that George Warden shall be obliged to receive cotton from Mr John Welch at 22d per lb as it was the currency when tendered, and that George Warden be obliged to pay costs of suit, and, furthermore, we do certify it was given by the majority of the dealers in that product.
--

Table 4: George Warden v John Welch. (Anguilla Archives)

The meaning of the order is that the plaintiff was obliged to accept cotton tendered by an Anguillian planter at the rate of twenty-two pence per pound. This was the price accepted by most dealers in cotton at the time the payment was tendered. George Warden was ordered to pay the costs of the lawsuit, as he wrongfully refused to accept the cotton wool when it was offered to him.

David Derrick's 1752 deed sheds light on the fluctuating value of land in Anguilla then. He purchased Richard Richardson Jr's Little Dix Plantation for the sum of two hundred pounds 'current money'. Little Dix was a substantial estate then by Anguillian standards. A mere three years later, the Derrick sold the plantation for the lesser sum of one hundred and fifty pounds 'current money' to Isaac Arrindell. There is no explanation for the 25% fall in its value in such a short period of time. The 1750's was the dawn of Anguilla's short-lived sugar plantation period. We can only assume that then as now Little Dix Plantation was not suitable for growing sugar cane and was only suitable for raising small stock and growing the usual subsistence crops of maize, peas and sweet potato.

And so, from the documents in the archives we get glimpses of living conditions in Anguilla during our period. The overwhelming impression is that the Anguillians endured lives of relentless hardship. The Will to survive and prosper against all odds that characterizes the Anguillian of today was forged at this time. The willingness to travel far and work in oppressive conditions began then. Anguillians have never until recently enjoyed, if not an easy life, then at least the opportunity by hard work to save money.