

## CHAPTER 4

### THE FIRST GENERATION

We do not know the names of the first generation of settlers who came from St Christopher, better known as St Kitts, in the year 1650. We do not know for certain whether they met anyone living on the island when they arrived, and, if they did, who they were. We do not know how many, or which of them, died in the Amerindian raid of 1656. Nor do we know the names of those who survived the raid. We can only speculate that not all the first settlers were killed in the 1656 raid. Most survived to found the growing settlement. While Abraham Howell<sup>1</sup> and his men were defending the settlement during the 'Carib raid', many of the women and children escaped into the forest. This was then virgin forest, even more impenetrable than the thorny scrub that now covers the island. These first settlers knew places such as caves to hide in on the island that a casual Carib raiding party from the distant Windward Islands would not easily find. It is not likely that Pere Du Tertre is right in assuming that they were almost all wiped out in the Carib attack.

By 'the first generation' is meant those who arrived in Anguilla in 1650 together with those who were born here in the thirty years prior to 1680. The period 1650 to 1680 appears to have been free from drought, and agriculture prospered. This period was followed by 40

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<sup>1</sup> Deputy governor of Anguilla, 1666-1689. See Chapter 17: The Council.

years of drought, when the crops repeatedly failed, and the islanders were driven to extremes of poverty. Abraham Howell was the undoubted hero of the first generation of Anguillians. The records show that he was one of the most propertied of the planters. He held title to several parcels of land, all of which he must have granted to himself. This is to be expected of the man who was for nearly three generations the most powerful person in the community. We see his name cropping up repeatedly right up to the end of the century and into the early part of the next. It is likely that he was one of the original settlers on the island who arrived in 1650, as he was elected to be their leader only sixteen years later in 1666.

Within a few months of the Carib raid of 1656 the ruined homesteads of those colonists that survived the raid were rebuilt. Restoring their houses was not particularly difficult. There are contemporary descriptions of these first West Indian tobacco farmers' houses in other islands.<sup>2</sup> We have a good idea of how these early Anguillians lived. Their houses were simple huts, framed by four or six forked stakes, walled by reeds, and thatched by palm leaves. Furnishings of the best tobacco planter houses, typically, consisted of no more than an old chest, a few hammocks, some empty barrels, a broken kettle, an old sieve, some battered pewter dishes,

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<sup>2</sup> See Richard S Dunn, Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of a Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713 (1972).

two or three napkins, a glass bottle, and, occasionally, a book or pamphlet.

Not only did they rebuild their houses, but the settlement continued to grow. The first Anguillian settlers of 1650 arrived from St Kitts. Their relationship with that island continued through the ensuing years. We know from Charles de Rochefort that Anguilla was not occupied because of any public encouragement.<sup>3</sup> No one was given a commission to settle it. It was not settled under any plan or design.

The evidence suggests that settlers were continuing to drift into Anguilla. That information could only have come from the other islands, as Anguilla had no direct communication with England or Africa. The bulk of these settlers likely consisted of freed indentured servants and ex-slaves, looking for land of their own. In the islands of St Kitts, Nevis and Antigua, land was already in short supply. Among those coming to Anguilla were small holders from the greener islands to the south, who sold their cotton and provision grounds to the growing class of sugar planters. Some were run-away debtors and criminals. There was also the occasional successful planter from St Kitts or Antigua taking a grant of land in Anguilla from the Governor in Chief. These rich planters did not reside in Anguilla. They were probably only

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<sup>3</sup> John Davies, History of the Caribby Islands (1666), a translation of Charles de Rochefort, Histoire Naturelle et Morale des Isles Antilles de L'Amérique (1658). See Chapter 3: The Carib Raid.

collecting additional plots of land in the island to add to their holdings.

Civil War broke out in England in 1642 and lasted off and on for eighteen years. In 1649, King Charles I was tried and executed by order of Parliament under Oliver Cromwell. The monarchy was abolished, and Cromwell ruled as 'Lord Protector'. In 1650, Charles II landed in Scotland, which was then invaded by English forces. Civil War broke out in Barbados, lasting to 1652. The Civil War did not come to an end until the year 1660 with the death of Oliver Cromwell and the restoration of King Charles II. The contest between the Parliamentary Forces and the Royalists spilled over into the West Indies, particularly in Barbados. War and conflict produce refugees. We must not be surprised that distant little Anguilla was viewed as a place of sanctuary for those wishing to escape from the dangers that affected the richer islands during the Civil War. The likelihood is that many of the earliest settlers of Anguilla were refugees from the contest between Parliament and the King in England.

In 1660, after the restoration of the Monarchy in England, Charles II gave Francis Lord Willoughby (see illus 1),<sup>4</sup> a Royalist supporter, letters patent to the revenue

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<sup>4</sup> Francis Lord Willoughby (1605-1666), Governor in Chief of the Leeward Islands 1660-1666. He was first appointed governor of Barbados in 1650 but surrendered to Commodore George Ayscue of the Parliamentary force which took Barbados from the Royalists.

of the Caribbee Islands.<sup>5</sup> He was appointed Captain General and Governor of the properties included in the Carlisle Grant of the West Indies.



1. Governor Francis Lord Willoughby

In other words, Willoughby bought the right to develop and to exploit the islands of the West Indies as best as he could. Specifically included in his 1660 grant were the islands of "*Angilla also Angvilla and Sembrera also Sembroa also Essembrera.*" At least the King's secretary came close to spelling the name of Anguilla correctly.

Both the spelling and etymology of the island's name are of some interest and controversy. The word

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<sup>5</sup> Calendars of State Papers, para 387: Francis Lord Willoughby's Patent, dated 18 November 1662.

'Anguilla' is the Latin and Italian word for eel. 'Anguille' with an 'e' is the French, and 'Anguila' with one 'l' is the Spanish, word for eel. From the earliest topographies to the most modern tourist literature, one finds the legend repeated that the name is derived from the French or Spanish word for eel. There is no truth in it. No early map or travel account spells the island's name as either 'Anguille' or 'Anguila'. The name does not go through an evolution from one form of spelling to another. It was always the Italian spelling, 'Anguilla', from the earliest recorded mention of it up to the present day. It is more likely that some forgotten Italian navigator or cartographer amongst the early Spanish explorers gave the island its name. The Italian Christopher Columbus does not mention or name the island and does not appear ever to have seen it. Perhaps the Italian explorer Amerigo Vespucci himself first set down the name of the island in ink. In any event, whoever named it, the correct account for the name of the island is that it is neither French nor Spanish, but the Italian word for eel.

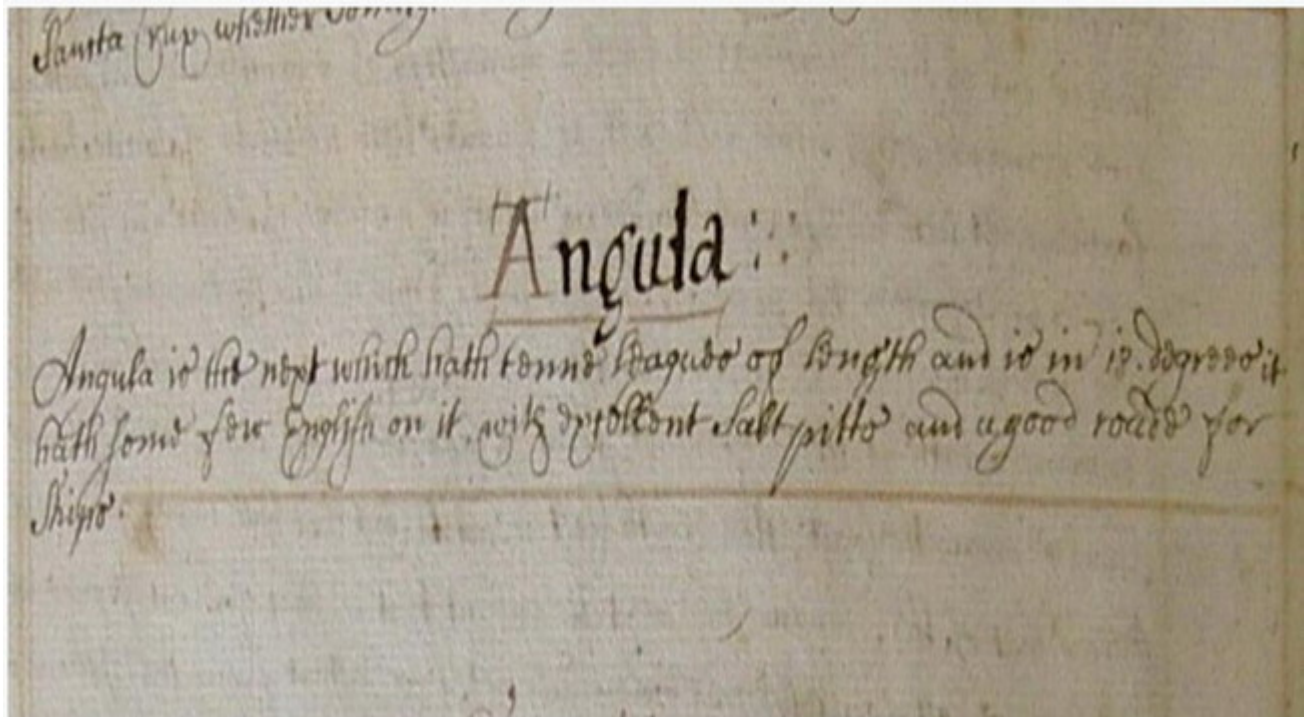
Once the island was successfully occupied, it was only intermittently and ineffectively brought under the protection of the English Crown. In the year 1660, Governor Francis Lord Willoughby appointed William Watts, a planter of St Kitts, to be lieutenant governor of both St Kitts and Anguilla.<sup>6</sup> This date was only four years after the Carib raid. It may seem promising that already

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<sup>6</sup> Lieutenant Governor of Anguilla and the Virgin Islands, 1660-1665.

the settlement had a lieutenant governor. But Watts never lived in Anguilla and was lieutenant governor of it in name only. There is no evidence he even visited it once before he died in St Kitts fighting the French in 1666.

In the year 1665, an anonymous memorandum was prepared for the use of the Committee for Trade and Foreign Plantations.<sup>7</sup> It is a magnificently written document titled, The General Description of America or the New World. Anguilla merits just two sentences in it (see illus 2).



2. Extract relating to Anguilla taken from A Generall Description of the New World. (UK National Archives®)

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<sup>7</sup> It is found at CO.1/19, folio 351: A Generall Description of America or the New World.

The General Description's analysis of Anguilla reads:

*Angula is the next which hath ten leagues of length and is 18 degrees. It hath some few English on it with an excellent salt pit and a good road for ships.*

There is no mention of any commercial or agricultural activity at this early date. The 'salt pit' can only be the Road Salt Pond. Its mention shows the role the early salt industry already played in Anguilla's economic life. A roadstead is another name for a harbour. The 'good road' must be what came to be known as 'Road Bay'. Any Anguillians growing tobacco and keeping small stock were not considered strategically important enough for mention in this memorandum.

The following year, 1666, the French in St Kitts under Robert Lonvilliers de Poincy defeated the English forces in that island. De Poincy expelled some 1,300 of the English and those he deemed to be vagabonds, probably the Irish. The French landed some 300 of them, known to history as the 'Wild Irish', in Anguilla. These caused the settlement much damage. We shall examine this invasion in more detail in a subsequent chapter dealing with Anguilla's involvement in the wars between the Europeans.<sup>8</sup> What seems inescapable is the conclusion that several of the Irish names of Anguilla appear to date from this early period. There is Wild Irish blood alive in the Anguillians of today.

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<sup>8</sup> Chapter 6: War and the Settlers.



Francis Lord Willoughby made Barbados the centre of government for his holdings in the West Indies. He did not last long, and there is no evidence he ever visited Anguilla. In 1666 he and his entire fleet were lost at sea in a hurricane. He was succeeded to his title and his lands by his nephew Henry.<sup>9</sup>

Henry Lord Willoughby took active steps to repopulate the Leeward Islands which were devastated during the war.<sup>10</sup> The following year 1667, he sailed from Barbados with a party of colonists for the stated purpose of resettling Antigua, Montserrat, Saba and Anguilla. How many, if any, of them came to Anguilla is not known.

Major John Scott was a notorious trickster, who spent a mottled career as an international spy and counterspy, peddling dubious maps and military information to the English, Dutch and French authorities.<sup>11</sup> In a dispatch back to London Major Scott recorded that he left Anguilla in September 1667 in good condition.<sup>12</sup> If anything that Scott wrote can be taken seriously, that would certainly suggest that the island quickly recovered from the French and Irish attack of the previous year. We can speculate that it is likely that the island benefited from Willoughby's deliberate policy to plant settlers on it. There is no firm evidence one way or the other.

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<sup>9</sup> Francis' only son, William, is sometimes named in the histories as his heir and successor. However, William died during Francis' lifetime. Francis left his lands in the West Indies to his daughters and to his nephew Henry who succeeded to his titles.

<sup>10</sup> Henry Lord Willoughby, Governor in Chief of the Leeward Islands, 1666-1668.

<sup>11</sup> Per Dunn, *op cit*.

<sup>12</sup> CO.1/21, No 146, folio 289: Scott to Williamson.

The following year, 1668, we see Under-Secretary Joseph Williamson receiving a dispatch from the new Governor, Henry Lord Willoughby, concerning his responsibilities in the Leeward Islands (see illus 3).<sup>13</sup> Anguilla is included in his remit. About this island he writes,

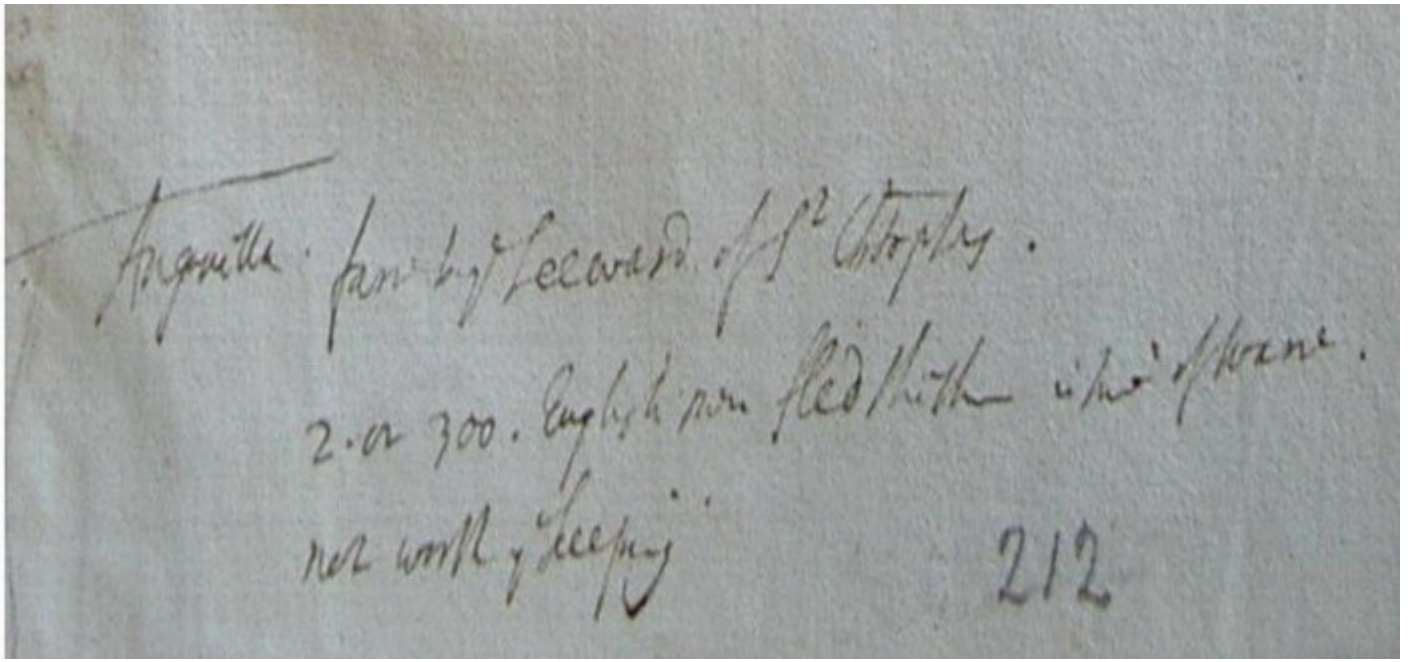
*Anguilla. Far to the Leeward of St Christopher. 200-300 Englishmen fled thither during time of war. Not worth keeping. Makes tobacco. Inhabitants poor and would move to Antigua. Governor Abraham Howell.*

Governor Willoughby informs Mr Williamson that these first Anguillians fled there in time of war. That would be the English Civil War. In his opinion, the island was not worth keeping. The people there grew tobacco. This crop soon lost much of its value on the world markets, and in Barbados, Antigua, Nevis, and St Kitts sugar cane early replaced it.

The inhabitants were poor, he writes, as we would expect of homesteaders who were still planting the unprofitable tobacco crop. He opines that they would happily remove to Antigua. He confirms that Abraham Howell was then the deputy governor.

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<sup>13</sup> CO.1/23, No 103, folio 212, Willoughby to Williamson.



3. Part of Henry Lord Willoughby's description of Anguilla in 1668: CO.1/23. National Archives®.

Under-Secretary Williamson and his successors in office enthusiastically take up Lord Willoughby's opinion about Anguilla. We have no corroboration that the Anguillians of 1668 wished to abandon the island and transfer themselves to Antigua. Since there was by this time no spare land in Antigua with which to compensate the Anguillians for the loss of their properties, it is highly unlikely that the assertion is correct. What is more informative to us is the statement that there were settlers in Anguilla who fled there during the Civil War in England.

The Royal Navy Captain and author, Thomas Southey, recorded, but without citing a source, that in 1668 several planters removed from Barbados to Anguilla.<sup>14</sup> Needless to say, we have no idea who the Barbados planters were or what their names were.

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<sup>14</sup> Thomas Southey, A Chronological History of the West Indies (3 Vols, 1827).

There, he wrote, they found conditions so favourable that they were able to soon prosper. But, he wrote, they managed without any of the trappings of government or religion. These twin themes of a lack of any institution of government or of a church are to recur repeatedly in the colonial reports of the conditions of life in Anguilla.

The surviving evidence suggests that, commencing with Abraham Howell, the deputy governor of Anguilla was always elected by the islanders and recognised in an informal way by the Governor in Chief of the colony of the Leeward Islands. This is a marker of Anguilla's poverty and insignificance to the colonial power. This procedure is to be compared with the appointment of the deputy governors of the richer islands. These were appointed by letters patent granted by the King. As we shall see, the deputy governor of Anguilla ruled the island by the weight of his personal power and authority rather than any official appointment. The deputy governor of Anguilla was informally elected by the settlers, not formally appointed by Royal Patent. All his support was the consent of the most important of the Anguillians. He was not backed by any legal infrastructure. There was no legislature to make law. Anguilla in this early period was the most perfect example of a community ruled by a man as compared with the rule of law. Rough justice was the best that the inhabitants could hope for throughout the one hundred and seventy-five years that passed until Anguilla was joined to St Kitts in 1825. After that date, the laws of the

Legislative Council of St Kitts were one by one applied to Anguilla. Prior to that date the Anguillians lived without any semblance of a formal legal system.

As for religion, occasionally, a minister of religion would spend a few years among the people. More often, a visiting cleric, such as the Quaker missionary, Thomas Chalkley, would drop in if only for only a short visit.<sup>15</sup> Such visits would be interspersed by decades when no clergyman touched on the island. The residents gave each other their hands in marriage with no more formality than if they lived on a desert island. The truth is that the island was too poor to support a permanent cleric. The marvel is that despite these hardships, the settlement persisted and was never abandoned from that first unknown day in the year 1650 when Abraham Howell and those first intrepid adventurers landed on Anguilla with the intention of making a new home for themselves.

Although Anguilla was ill-defended throughout the seventeenth century and beyond, being so poor, it was not destroyed by enemy action as often as the richer of the Leeward Islands were. Refugees from neighbouring islands, attacked by the French or Spanish in time of war, filtered into Anguilla throughout this century, adding to the numbers, as we have seen. The island clearly offered some sort of sanctuary to refugees from other English islands attempting to escape attack.

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<sup>15</sup> Thomas Chalkley, The Journal of Thomas Chalkley (1808). Chapter 5: The Second Generation.

Less reputable elements contributed to the stream of early settlers in Anguilla. There were retired buccaneers, runaway debtors, convicts, and prostitutes deported from England, and the Wild Irish harboured by the French in St Kitts and later banished to Montserrat by Sir Thomas Warner. Except for the last, the Wild Irish, there is little or no hard evidence of the source of the early European settlers arriving in Anguilla.

It is likely that there were African residents at this time as well.<sup>16</sup> Warner brought the first 60 African slaves to St Kitts in 1626, the first of the countless thousands to be transported to slavery in the Leeward Islands. We have seen the record of the African prisoner taken from Anguilla who was mortally wounded in the Carib pirogue, and who preferred to commit suicide rather than be rescued by Pere Du Tertre's ship in 1656.<sup>17</sup> Some of the Africans living on Anguilla in this early period were free men, and some were slaves. Sugar cultivation does not appear in the records of Anguilla until some one hundred years after it began to flourish in Barbados in 1640. West Indian sugar's handmaiden, African slavery, did not reach its peak in Anguilla until the mid-eighteenth century. Slave imports into the West Indies during the seventeenth

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<sup>16</sup> Pere Du Tertre, in his account of the 1656 attack on Anguilla quoted in full in Chapter 3: The Carib Raid, describes the French attempt to rescue the prisoners of the Caribs. One of them was an African who was mortally wounded by the French canon fire on the Carib pirogue. Du Tertre describes his last moments with these words, "*A Negro who had lost both his legs by our shot refused the hand which was held out to save him, he threw himself head foremost into the sea. But his feet not being quite separated from his legs, he hung by the bones and drowned himself.*" It is likely that this man was a prisoner from Anguilla, but we cannot be certain.

<sup>17</sup> See Chapter 2: The Carib Raid.

century reached high numbers, as Professor Phillip Curtin shows:

Years	Barbados	Jamaica	Leewards	Total
1640-1650	18,700	0	2,000	20,700
1651-1675	51,100	8,000	10,000	69,200
1676-1700	64,700	77,100	32,000	173,800
<b>Totals</b>	<b>134,500</b>	<b>85,150</b>	<b>44,100</b>	<b>263,700</b>

Table 1: Estimated English Slave Imports, 1640-1700. Curtin, *Atlantic Slave Trade*, 52-64, 88-89, 119.

Table 1 indicates that in the two generations between 1640 and 1700, 44,100 slaves were imported into the Leeward Islands. We do not know how many of them came to Anguilla, as compared to the richer and wetter islands of Montserrat, Antigua, Nevis, and St Kitts.

In Governor William Stapleton's census of the population of the Leeward Islands taken in 1672 he records the numbers of the slaves found in each island.<sup>18</sup> He shows no slave being present in Anguilla as of that early date:

	Acres	Men able to bear arms	Armed	Horse	Negroes
St Christopher	5,988	496	437		352
Nevis	22,000	1,411	1,330	80	1,739
Montserrat	28,000	1,175	700	50	523
Antigua	40,000		1,052	100	570
Anguilla		500			
Saba			40		
Statia			120		
<b>Total English</b>	<b>95,988</b>	<b>3,582</b>	<b>3,679</b>	<b>230</b>	<b>3,184</b>

Table 2: Statistics of Population in 1672.

In the custom of the day, Governor Stapleton titles the slaves 'negroes' a description at that time normally restricted to black slaves. Throughout the records of that

<sup>18</sup> Thomas Southey, *A Chronological History of the West Indies* (1827, Vol 2, p.104).

time, the word negro is not used to designate race specifically, but to designate status. Thus, we can say that in 1672 no black slaves are recorded as being present in Anguilla.<sup>19</sup> It is likely, however, that there were present either pure Africans or black persons of mixed blood who were free persons. The island was a safe harbour for all kinds of refugees and runaways. If there were free Africans present on the island in 1672, it is unlikely that they were counted among the negros. That designation appears to be reserved in the early colonial period for slaves. The description 'men' in the colonial records of the period normally describes free white men. White indentured servants would not be counted as 'men', though they might be included in the statistics as 'men able to bear arms'. It would be some centuries before free black men would be counted by the colonial authorities among the "men" of the island. But, as with so much about Anguilla in this early period, we cannot be certain what the people did.

The earliest document to mention the presence of Africans in Anguilla is Governor Walter Hamilton's 1716 List of the Inhabitants of Anguilla.<sup>20</sup> This can be called the first Anguilla census. It records that there were then 820 Africans as compared to 534 whites. We can speculate from these figures, that Africans were among

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<sup>19</sup> Today, the word negro is considered disparaging and is not in general use, being the obvious source of the insulting "n" word.

<sup>20</sup> CO.152/11, No 56: Hamilton to the Committee on 3 October 1716, enclosure: [The 1716 List of the Inhabitants of Anguilla.](#)



the first generation of Anguillians, but we do not know either their names or their numbers. We shall look more closely at this document when we come to deal with the Anguillian attempts to settle Crab Island and the population censuses that were taken at the time.<sup>21</sup>

References to Anguilla continue to crop up occasionally in the seventeenth century dispatches from the Governor in Chief to the Committee for Trade and Foreign Plantations. These references are usually no more than a footnote, or a passing reference. Throughout the seventeenth century, Anguilla does not appear to be the object of a single dispatch back to London based on its own merit. These colonial reports offer us but tantalizing glimpses of those distant days in Anguilla. Typical is the mention of the island in an unattributed 1666 report:<sup>22</sup> "*Anguilla . . . Inhabited by a few English.*" How few, and what were they doing, one wants to ask. Clearly, in the opinion of the Committee for Trade and Foreign Plantations, they were not producing enough revenue to the Crown to make it worthwhile going into any detail.

In the same year 1672, Col William Stapleton replaced Sir Charles Wheeler as Governor of the Leeward Islands.<sup>23</sup> With his dispatch of 17 July 1672, at the beginning of the Third Dutch War, Governor Stapleton enclosed to the Council for Trade and Foreign Plantations

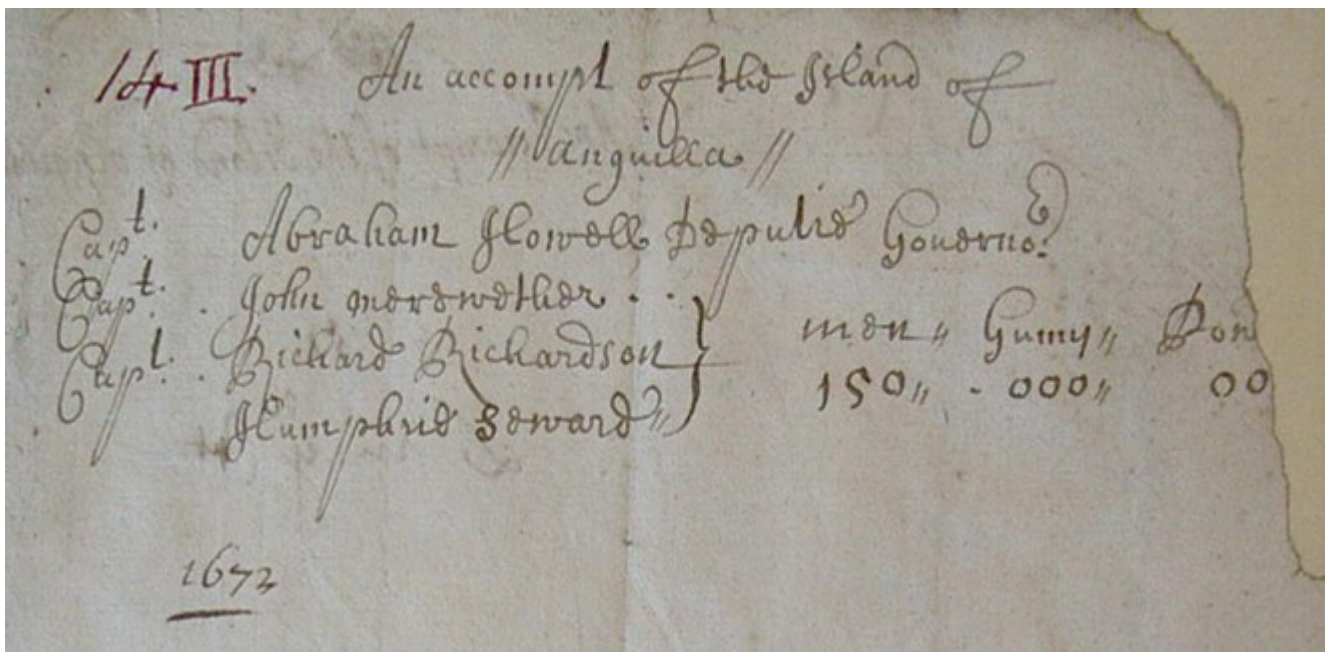
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<sup>21</sup> Chapter 9, *The Lure of Crab*.

<sup>22</sup> CO.1/20, No 202, folio 349: *A Description of ye Carebby Islands*.

<sup>23</sup> Spelled "Wheler" in the correspondence.

a short account of the island of Anguilla (see illus 4).<sup>24</sup> This simply related that Captain Abraham Howell was still the deputy governor, and that Captain John Merewether, Captain Richard Richardson and Humphrie Seward made up his Council. There were only 150 men available for the island's militia. They possessed no heavy guns or gun powder with which to defend themselves. As we have seen in table 2, he gives a rough estimate of the population of the island as being 500. We have no idea who they were. Certainly, 150 men is a major increase from the estimated 25 men of 1650, just 22 years before.



4. Stapleton's Account of the Island of Anguilla in 1672:  
CO.1/29 National Archives®.

In 1676 Stapleton replies to enquiries from the Committee for Foreign Plantations about the condition of

<sup>24</sup> CO.1/29, No 14, folio 22: Stapleton to the Committee on 17 July 1672, enclosure 3: Account of the Island of Anguilla.

the Leeward Islands.<sup>25</sup> In the whole colony of the Leeward Islands, he reports, there were only ten churches. Four were in Nevis and two each in St Kitts, Montserrat, and Antigua. There was neither church nor minister in Anguilla. Stapleton asks for six more ministers for the islands. Six are eventually recruited. Two years later he reports to London that five of the six ministers arrived to serve the colony of the Leeward Islands.<sup>26</sup> They were Parsons Foster, Jones, Molineux, Davis, Milward, and Lambert. Two were sent to each of St Kitts and Antigua, and one to each of Montserrat and Nevis. None of them was sent to Anguilla.

Stapleton gives his estimate, which he admits being a rough one, of the value of the plantations in the islands in 1676.<sup>27</sup> He includes Anguilla. He values the estates of the planters of Anguilla in 1676 at £1,000 (see table 3). This must be compared to Nevis, the richest of them all, which he valued at £384,660. He repeats that Abraham Howell was deputy governor, with 60 ill-armed men available for the militia.

Island	Value in £
St Christopher	67,000
Nevis	384,000
Antigua	67,000
Montserrat	62,000

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<sup>25</sup> CO.153/2, folio 76: Stapleton to the Committee on 22 November 1676: Answers to Enquiries. Stapleton later reported that 6 parsons were sent out: Foster, Jones, Moliniux, Davis, Milward, and Grief. Grief never arrived, but a Lambert did. They were assigned: St Kitts, Davis and Milward; Nevis, Foster; Montserrat, Molineux; and Antigua, Jones.

<sup>26</sup> CO.153/2, folio 265. Stapleton to the Committee on 24 January 1678.

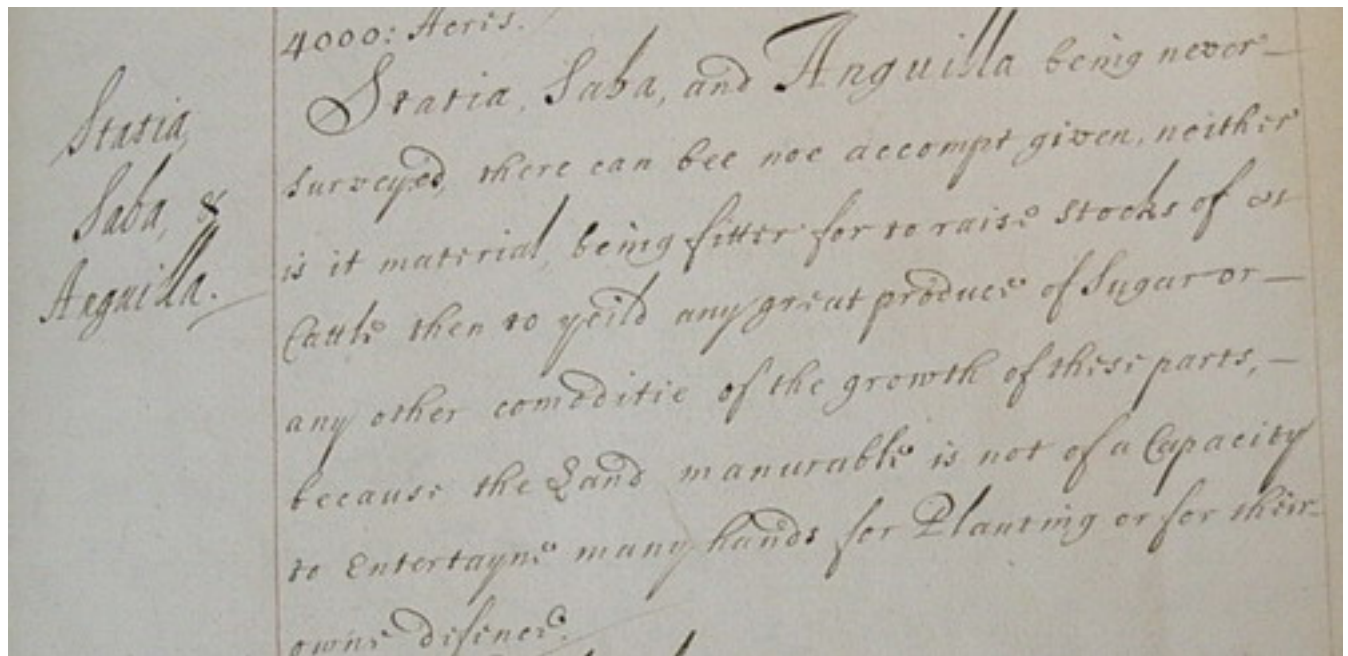
<sup>27</sup> CO.153/2, folio 139: Stapleton to the Committee on 22 November 1676: Answers to Enquiries.

Statia	1,000
Saba	1,000
Anguilla	1,000
Barbuda	2,500

Table 3: Stapleton's Estimate of the Value of the Estates of the Planters of the Leeward Islands in 1676: CO.153/2 (UK National Archives®)

Stapleton takes the opportunity to describe Anguilla in 1676. He is neither complimentary nor hopeful for the future (see illus 5).

Anguilla, he wrote, like Statia and Saba, Dutch islands then held temporarily by the English, was never surveyed.

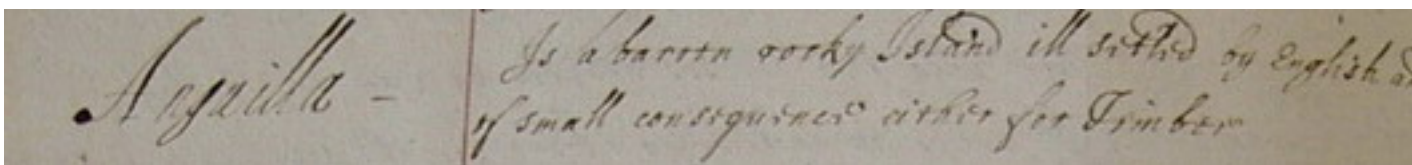


5. Stapleton on conditions in Anguilla in 1676: CO.153/2. (UK National Archives®)

Thus, he could not give a detailed account of Anguilla's acreage and potential for development. Indeed, he advised, there was no need to survey the island. It was so small, and the land so poor, it would always be incapable either of holding many people or of defending

itself. It was fitter for raising livestock than for planting any of the cash crops of the islands at that time.

Colonel Philip Warner, deputy governor of Antigua, was detained at the Tower of London for several years. He was being investigated on a charge of murdering the war chief of the Carib Indians of Dominica, his alleged half-brother, Indian Warner. He knew Anguilla well. He whiles away the time spent in the Tower preparing a memorandum on the various Leeward Islands for the use of the Committee for Trade.<sup>28</sup> He writes of Anguilla that it *“is a barren, rocky island, ill settled by the English, and of small consequence either for timber”*. He did not attempt any estimate of the number of the inhabitants. Nor did he give us any description of conditions of life in Anguilla at the time. When on 25 April 1678 the Privy Council advises the King on the state of the Leeward Islands Warner’s words above have become the definition of Anguilla:



6. Philip Warner’s description of Anguilla, CO.153/2. (UK National Archives®)

The first Anglican minister in Anguilla for whom we have a record was a Parson Nelson. We are never told his full name. We learn about him from George

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<sup>28</sup> CO.153/2, folio 76: Warner to the Committee on 3 April 1676: [An Account of the Caribbee Islands](#).

MacDonnah, an Anguillian planter, nearly a hundred years later.<sup>29</sup> MacDonnah was a cotton planter. In 1774 he is testifying in a trial before members of the Anguilla Council. This is just before the American Revolution, when Anguilla was at the height of its short-lived slave-made sugar prosperity. The members of the Council were appointed Judges in Ordinary by the Governor in Chief. Their authority was very limited. There was no lawyer among them, and there was no Legislative Assembly to pass any laws for them to apply.

The case was brought by the Council against Thomas Hodge, himself a member of the Council. The lawsuit sought a declaration that the land occupied by Thomas Hodge was in fact the Glebe Land. The glebe land is land that belongs to the Anglican Church. MacDonnah was permitted, in effect, by the legally untrained Council of Anguilla to give what amounted to hearsay evidence. He testified as to what John Harrigan, then deceased, told him about what one old lady named Eleanor Connor, then also deceased, told him, John Harrigan.<sup>30</sup> It is evident from this litigation that in the 1770s there was a hope to revive the Church in Anguilla and to recover the land which was previously attached to it. The affidavit reads:

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<sup>29</sup> Anguilla Archives: [George MacDonnah's affidavit](#). Maybe Parson Nelson was the Anglican clergyman sent by Governor Parke in 1709, as he sarcastically put it, "*to make Christians of the Anguillians*".

<sup>30</sup> We see this John Harrigan appearing in the records as a member of Anguilla's Executive Council between the years 1735 and the 1750s.

*Anguilla. Before the Honourable John Smith<sup>31</sup> Esq, Lieutenant Governor of the said island and Ordinary of the same.*

*Personally appeared before me George McDonough and deposed on the Holy Evangelists of Almighty God that the said deponent is upwards of seventy years old, but cannot say exactly, that he remembers he went to school at a church situated on the land now called the glebe land in The Valley, in the time of the Wars of Queen Ann. That he believes one Parson Nelson, as he has been told of old, was the first parson who came to Anguilla and that in the time of Governor Leonard. John Harrigan Esq one of His Majesty's council told him the said deponent that Governor Leonard had recommended it to him the said Harrigan that it would be necessary to show the younger people of the island the boundaries of the glebe land in The Valley, in consequence of which one Eleanor Connor a very aged woman was sent for who deposed, as the said Harrigan informed him the said McDonough, that the Southern bounds of the said Glebe Land were a certain step of rocks, adjoining a Grape Tree waterhole and a large loblolly tree, the Eastern bounds adjoining the land of Lieutenant Derrick, the Western bound adjoining the lands of Scully, and the Northern bounds with the head line of the Valley Plantation, and that the said Harrigan showed these bound to him the said deponent George McDonough, which said bounds at the request of the Reverend John Shepherd he the said deponent hath lately shown to the Honourable John Smith Esq, John Payne Esq and Captain Samuel Gumbs, and that he the said deponent verily thinks and believes to the best of his memory and knowledge that the said land as butted and bounded above has been always reputed as land left for the use of the Church and the public ever since his time and as he*

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<sup>31</sup> John Smith served as deputy governor of Anguilla for several years, 1771-1776.

*has been frequently told ever since a clergyman came  
first to the island, and further this deponent sayeth not.  
Sworn before me ]*

*this 29th day of ] (sd) George McDonough  
November 1774 ]*

*(sd) John Smith*

To summarise, in his affidavit, George MacDonnah deposes that he was at the time of making it upwards of seventy years of age, but he could not say exactly how old he was. This suggests that some of the planters of Anguilla at that time were innumerate and probably illiterate as well. He says that he remembered that he was a child in the time of the Wars of Queen Ann. These wars lasted from 1702 to 1713, so he is speaking of the first decade of the eighteenth century. He says that at that time he attended a school at a church built on the Glebe Land at The Valley. What is interesting about this statement is that it is the first and only testimony of the existence of a church building in Anguilla during the first generation of Anguillians. He then says that he believed, from what he was told as a youngster, that Parson Nelson was the first parson who had come to Anguilla. This was back in the time when George Leonard was deputy governor (1689-1735). At Leonard's request, the old lady, Eleanor Connor, showed John Harrigan, and other young men of the time, where the bounds of the glebe lands were. John Harrigan then, at the request of Rev John



Shepherd, showed him, MacDonnah, where the boundaries were.<sup>32</sup>

This glebe land that was in dispute refers to the Anglican Church lands at the Valley. The St Mary's Anglican Church and its presbytery presently stand on the glebe land. There was a church on the site since at least the year 1700. The result of this suit was that Thomas Hodge Esq was persuaded by his fellow councillors to be a gentleman and to give up or quit his claim to the land. Hodge consented to an Order being made in favour of the church. It was very rarely that an island Council would make an Order in a disputed case against one of its members. This 1776 case report is significant because it records the oral history of that much earlier time in Anguilla.

In about the same year 1678 that the five Anglican ministers arrived in the Leeward Islands, Governor Stapleton reported back to the Privy Council on the condition of the islands in his colony.<sup>33</sup> He listed all able men bearing arms, together with the number of women and children. There was a total of 550 white persons in Anguilla. This estimate is either too high, or his estimate of '62 men capable of bearing arms' made just two years before is too low.

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<sup>32</sup> We have in the archives a copy of Rev John Shepherd's 1774 patent to be minister of Anguilla from Governor in Chief, Sir Ralph Payne.

<sup>33</sup> CO.1/42, No 98, folio 240: Stapleton to the Committee on 29 June 1678: [An Abstract](#).

	Nevis	Antigua	St Kitts	Montserrat	Statia	Saba	Tortola	Anguilla
<b>White Males</b>								
English	1,050	800	370	346				
Irish	450	360	187	33				
Other	34	76	138	33				
<b>White Women</b>								
English	700	400	409	175				
Irish	120	130	0	410				
Other	8	14	130	33				
<b>White Children</b>								
English	920	400	543	240				
Irish	230	120	0	690				
Other	9	14	120	13				
<b>Total White</b>	3,521	2,308	1,897	2,182	69	90	15	550
<b>Black Males</b>	1,422	805	550	400				
<b>Black Women</b>	1,321	868	500	300				
<b>Black Children</b>	1,106	499	386	292				
<b>Total Black</b>	3,859	2,172	1,436	992				

Table 4: Population of the Leeward Islands in 1678: Governor Stapleton, CO.1/42.

It is inconceivable that Anguilla became so attractive a destination for settlement that the population nearly tripled in such a short period of time.

We do know that immigrants were continuing to trickle into Anguilla from neighbouring islands. By the year 1680, the Barbadian authorities were complaining about the high rate of emigration from that island. Freeman, that is, property-holders in Barbados with less than ten acres, many of them lately indentured servants, were not able to vote or to play any part in Barbados's political and social life. There was no more available land in Barbados, and no future there for the small aspiring planter. Those planters with sugar estates tended to

swallow up the land of the small tobacco farmers, adding to the number of landless persons. Most of those that left Barbados to make a new start, turned to the mainland colonies of Boston, Virginia, and Carolina, or returned to live in England. But some moved to the other islands to the north of Barbados. Of the 593 persons reported<sup>34</sup> by Governor Atkins as leaving Barbados in 1679, fully 73% were described as 'time out', suggesting that they were recently indentured servants.

Caribbean		North America		England		Other	
Antigua -	65	Boston -	68	London -	151	Holland -	1
Nevis -	14	Rhode Island -	3	Bristol -	39		
Montserrat -	1	New England -	25	Liverpool -	8		
Leeward Islands -	15	New York -	34	Beaumaris -	3		
Jamaica -	35	Virginia -	62	Topsham -	3		
Bahamas -	12	Carolina -	38	Poole -	1		
Tortuga -	3	Newfoundland -	3				
Suriname -	5						
Bermuda -	4						
Totals -	154		233		205		1

Table 5: Destinations of 593 persons leaving Barbados in 1679: Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, Table 11.

Table 5 shows that nearly one-sixth of the total emigrants from Barbados in 1679, or 95 of them, hoped to set themselves up as planters somewhere in the Leewards. Some of them may well have settled in Anguilla where there was land available for those that cared to work it. A list of the tickets granted to immigrants from Barbados to Antigua and other places reveals several names that are significant in this early period of Anguilla's history.

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<sup>34</sup> Dunn, op cit.

April 10, 1679	Howell, Sarah in the barque <u>Providence</u> for Bermuda
April 17	Bushell, William in the ship <u>Pearle</u> for Antigua
August 28	Lloyd, John in the ship <u>Barbados</u> , Merchant, for the Leeward Islands
December 4	Maden, Patrick in the sloop <u>Friendship</u> for Antigua
December 24	Downing, John in the ship <u>Laurel</u> for Nevis

Table 6: List of persons with Anguillian names shipping out of Barbados in 1679: Dunn, Sugar and Slaves.

All these surnames extracted from Governor Atkins' list of persons shipping out of Barbados are Anguillian family names. They crop up in the Anguillian Archives from time to time in subsequent years. Sarah Howell claimed she was shipping to Bermuda. It is more likely she got off the boat in Anguilla.

Picking through the documents, it is just possible to assemble a list of the names of the first generation of Anguillians who we believe lived in the period 1650-1680. A few of them were to survive, we cannot say prosper, until the end of the century. Most of them appear to die in the many violent conflicts to which the island was subject and from disease and accident. Those we can be relatively sure of include:

	<b>Mentioned in</b>
Burrose, John	John Lake's 1684 certificate.
Carty, Owin	Thomas Connor's 1689 certificate.
Blake, Valentine	David Derrick's 1708 deed.
Bryan, Daniel	Thomas Connor's 1689 certificate.
Bushell, Thomas	David Derrick's 1708 deed.
Call, Thomas	Edward Lake's 1704 patent.
Connor, Thomas	Certificate in 1695.
Derrick, David	David Derrick's 1708 deed.
Derrick, Leo	David Derrick's 1708 deed.
Derrick, Thomas	David Derrick's 1708 deed.
Edney, Peter	Jacob Howell's 1698 patent.
Floyd, Samuel	David Derrick's 1708 deed.
Gallway, Richard	John Lake's 1684 certificate.
Green, John	Jacob Howell's 1698 patent.

Hackett, Ann	Edward Lake's 1704 patent.
Harrigan, John	Thomas Connor's 1689 certificate.
Harris, John	Jacob Howell's 1698 patent.
Howell, Abraham	Elected deputy governor in 1666.
Howell, Jacob	Thomas Connor's 1689 certificate.
Howell, Ruth	Thomas Connor's 1689 certificate.
Jones, Lewis	Jacob Howell's 1698 patent.
Huntington, Richard	Edward Lake's 1704 patent.
Lake, Edward	Edward Lake's 1704 patent.
Lake, Jacob	Edward Lake's 1704 patent.
Lake, Joan	Edward Lake's 1704 patent.
Lake, John	Certificate in 1684.
Leonard, George	Deputy governor in 1689.
Lockrum, Robert	Edward Lake's 1704 patent.
Lynch, Humphrey	Patent of 1676 from Abraham Howell
Mereweather, John	Member of Council in 1672.
Perkins, Walter	Humphrey Lynch's 1676 patent
Pickering, Abednego	Purchases from Jacob Howell in 1699.
Richardson, Jeremiah	Edward Lake's 1704 patent.
Richardson, John	Edward Lake's 1704 patent.
Richardson, Richard	Member of Council in 1672.
Roberts, William	Edward Lake's 1704 patent.
Romney, Thomas	Patent in 1673.
Ruan, Mary	Thomas Connor's 1689 certificate.
Seward, Humphrie	Member of Council in 1672.
Thomas, William	Jacob Howell's 1698 patent.
Waters	Edward Lake's 1704 patent.
Welch, Richard	Thomas Connor's 1689 certificate.

Table 7: The names of the first generation of Anguillians known to us.

The only other document that provides us with a list of the names of persons who were born into the first generation of Anguillians is the Anguilla Census of 1716 taken by Governor-in-Chief Hamilton.<sup>35</sup> Although it was produced early in the period of the third generation, 1711-1740, we can expect that many of the older persons named on that list were present in Anguilla fifty years previously.

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<sup>35</sup> Chapter 10: Crab Island Revisited.

There are no further statistics available in the National Archives in London for the population of Anguilla for the balance of the century. We do know that numbers of them began to leave after 1680 when a severe drought that was to last for 40 years began. The instability and hazards of island life were aggravated by the Nine Years War (1689-1697) in Europe and the Caribbean. But, other settlers undoubtedly came when conditions improved to replace those who left. The seventeenth century closes with war in the region, the settlement destroyed, and the colonists temporarily evacuated to Antigua, with large numbers of them emigrating to Crab Island, then, like Anguilla, considered to be one of the Virgin Islands.