

## CHAPTER 6

### WAR AND THE SETTLERS

For the first two generations of Anguillians, war and the threat of attack, was a regular feature of life. In Europe, the English were continually at war with the Dutch and the French. These wars lasted to the end of the century. Economic issues determined the official attitude to the miniscule colony. As the island produced so little wealth, and contributed so little revenue to the central coffers, the official attitude was not encouraging. Governor Henry Lord Willoughby's casual dismissal in 1668 describing Anguilla as "*Not worth keeping*", was not an isolated remark.<sup>1</sup>

The Governors-in-Chief wrote a stream of disparaging dispatches about the island back to London. They regularly commented on the failure of the colony to contribute anything to the royal revenue. The Navigation Acts, passed by the British Parliament commencing in the year 1650, and the mercantilist policy espoused by the Lord Protector Thomas Cromwell and his successors, both had the same aim. They were designed to ensure that the profits of the colonies were enjoyed by English merchants and traders, as well as the English exchequer or treasury, not by foreigners. At the time, the Dutch were

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<sup>1</sup> CO.1/23, No 103, folio 212: The memorandum is unattributed, but it is cited in the Calendars of State Papers, paragraph 1781, as "*Willoughby to the Board of Trade*".

the principal traders in the Caribbean. Official policy was to make it illegal for English citizens to trade with them. The Navigation Acts tied the colonists to English ships, English merchants and the home markets. From 1660, by what was called the 'enumeration clause', all colonial produce of cotton, sugar, tobacco, indigo, etc, was obliged to be exported to England or another English colony, and in English ships. Export to a foreign port or trading with a foreign ship was illegal. In the same year, the Royal African Company, previously known as the 'Company of Royal Adventurers into Africa' was given a monopoly over the English slave trade by its charter.<sup>2</sup> These mercantilist measures naturally led to conflict with the Dutch, especially during the three Anglo-Dutch Wars of 1652-1654, 1665-1667, and 1672-1674.

Then, there were the wars with the French. The Anglo-French Wars ravaged the islands of the West Indies, and Anguilla did not escape. These took place mainly when the French declared war on England in support of the United Provinces in the Second Anglo-Dutch War (1665-1667), and the Nine Years' War (1689-1697), also known as the War of the League of Augsburg or the War of the Grand Alliance or King William's War.

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<sup>2</sup> In 1698 it lost its monopoly though it continued trading in slaves until 1731 when it abandoned slaving in favour of ivory and gold. It was set up by and was headed by James, Duke of York, and brother of King Charles II, whom he succeeded in 1685 becoming King James II.

Insofar as the islands were affected, these wars were fought not over territory but over markets. The conflicts were very destructive to the Caribbean. The aim of the combatants was to damage enemy property rather than to appropriate it. Officially sanctioned fleets of English, French, Dutch, Spanish, and later US, privateers cruised the Caribbean during these wars. They did more damage than buccaneers and pirates. Privateers, ie, private men-of-war, were merchant ships and pirates commissioned by the various sides to seize ships of the enemy. French and English expeditions repeatedly raided each other's islands. They carried off slaves and equipment, burned plantations, and seized shipping.

The first raid on Anguilla since the Indian attack of 1656 came exactly ten years later at the commencement of the First Anglo-Dutch War. Francis Sampson of St Christopher, or St Kitts, wrote to his brother John Sampson in England to advise on the death of lieutenant governor Watts.<sup>3</sup> He reported that the French from St Kitts landed 300 men on Anguilla. Faced with such a huge force, he wrote, the inhabitants had no alternative but to put their houses to the flame and to take to the woods for refuge. At this early time, it is likely that the woods of Anguilla were extensive enough for concealment.

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<sup>3</sup> CO.1/20, No 97, folio 165. Sampson to Sampson of 6 June 1666.

Pere du Tertre writing later gives us little more detail.<sup>4</sup> In 1666, the Sieur des Roses was the governor of the French part of St Martin. Du Tertre described him as one of the bravest of the French in the Americas. It was Des Roses, he wrote, who took three hundred men on board the Harmonie, the Concorde, and three smaller vessels, to attack Anguilla. The Anguillians did not put up any resistance. At the sight of the French ships, they abandoned their property. They set fire to their canoes and fled to the woods and mountains. Du Tertre claimed that they really did more damage to themselves than the French intended to do. As the orders of the French were not to do more damage to the Anguillians than that they did to themselves, the French returned to St Martin with two prisoners and three pieces of cannon.<sup>5</sup>

England being at war with the Dutch, the French seized the opportunity to attack the English colonies. In the same year, 1666, they also took the English part of St Kitts, and occupied Antigua, from both of which islands refugees fled to Anguilla. The Irish Catholics in Montserrat welcomed their arrival, and many of the men joined the French forces. The peace established by the Treaty of Breda in 1667 lasted for only a decade, but

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<sup>4</sup> Jean Baptiste du Tertre, Histoire Generale des Antilles habitees par les Francois, tome 4, p.59.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Southey, Chronological History of the West Indies, Vol 2, p.145, summarising du Tertre.

Anguilla was not attacked again until the Nine Years War.<sup>6</sup>

The Spanish were by this time the sick man of the Caribbean. War in Europe and repeated assaults on their monopoly in the West Indies seriously weakened them. This did not stop them from bringing their share of grief to the Anguillians. Their privateers preyed on shipping. Their forces on at least one occasion landed on the island taking prisoners.

In 1686, Peter Battery was a passenger on a sloop bound from Nevis to Anguilla. He subsequently swore a deposition in which he described what happened to the vessel he was in. Off the neighbouring island of St Martin, they were stopped by a ship flying the French flag. Perceiving her to be Spanish, he and three others took to the sloop's dinghy. Being close to land they managed to make the shore without being captured. The others were taken prisoner. Another Englishman who escaped from the Spaniards told him that the ship contained one hundred and fifty Spanish creoles and between twenty and thirty cannon. The report does not reveal what was the fate of the sloop and her passengers after she was stopped and boarded by the Spanish ship. A marauding

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<sup>6</sup> Much of the tourist literature, and even some academic websites, say that Anguilla was returned to the English by the 1667 Treaty. St Kitts, Antigua and Montserrat were. But, the French never took Anguilla, they merely set the Irish on her. Many of them stayed, and were subsequently assimilated into the local population. No foreign flag ever flew over Anguilla. The island was too poor to be of interest to any other nation.

vessel of this size would have terrorized the little island. Several of the prisoners mentioned were likely Anguillians.

Two years later, in 1688, the Spaniards attacked Anguilla. They also assaulted the Anguillians on Crab Island. We will look at the attack on Crab Island in a separate chapter.<sup>7</sup> Suffice it to say that at the time of the Spanish assault on Anguilla, the Anguillian forces were split. Half their number was absent with William Pellet and his Scotsmen on Crab Island. Abraham Howell remained behind in Anguilla with his depleted forces. We have his written description<sup>8</sup> of the engagement. He wrote,

*May it please Your Excellency,*

*After my humble service, these few lines are to acquaint you that on the 21st instant, our island was attacked by a sort of people under the notion of Spaniards, but there were with them English, Irish, some Turk mulattoes, Negroes, and others. It was said by some, as one did inform me, having been their prisoner, that Captain Bear was with them, whatever truth or not I cannot tell.*

*They came to a vacant part of our island which had few inhabitants and there landed in the night, took a man and his wife prisoner who they did force to pilot them to a place called the Road, where they about two*

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<sup>7</sup> Chapter 9: The Lure of Crab.

<sup>8</sup> CO.152/37, No 5: Johnson to the Committee on 20 April 1689, enclosure 5: Howell to Johnson on 31 December 1688. [The copy in the National Archives in London appears to be the original written in Howell's own hand. This is unusual as copies of enclosures to London were normally prepared by the Governor's secretary, so that all enclosures are usually written in the same handwriting. This one is different.]

*hours before day took some prisoners and wounded two men, who broke through them and escaped. They also took a woman and she being in their custody one held her by her hands and called her by her name, and asked the way and how far it was to my house, naming my name unto her. And, whilst he was examining her, a mulatto shot her in the belly with a load of carbine bullets. The woman I have now in care and the danger, I hope, is passed. This being done about four miles from my house.*

*About 8 in the morning, I met them with a small number of men and put a stop to their further progress; so they retreated and went to their ships and embarked leaving what prisoners they had of ours on shore with ten French prisoners which they had taken in sundry places, which I have since taken care of and have sent them to St Martins, one of which prisoners doth speak good Spanish and did inform me that he did hear the Spanish Commander say that he did intend for Spanish Town and Tortola, so to Porto Rico, and take in new men and go to Crab Island and destroy it and not give any quarter to any.*

*Our great want is a small frigate in these parts. I am informed by our people that they did rob them of the value of fifteen hundred pounds current money. They were two ships, one brigantine and one sloop. Their number of men was two hundred and fifty. One of their ships was of 26 guns, the other, 16. That is what I am informed by the French prisoners.*

*Our men are few and we have [ . . . ] none, which is a great expense of powder. Wherefore, my humble request to your Excellency is that you be pleased to furnish me with one barrel of powder for my guns when I plant in breastworks. I hope in case they come again to give them a better welcome.*

*They robbed the people of, as they informed me, to the value of fifteen hundred pounds current money and two negroes. The Commander in Chief did say he sent them on land not for such plunder, but for negroes and to take me. But, they went away with more expense of blood than they spilled of ours.*

*This is a true and just account of what hath passed, though in plain words. I humbly beg pardon for my rudeness and subscribe my salutations, your Excellency's most humble servant to be commanded.*

*(sd) Abraham Howell*

From this dispatch, we learn that on the night of 21 December 1688, approximately 250 Spaniards, accompanied by some English and Irish renegades, landed at a deserted beach on Anguilla. They took a man and his wife prisoner and forced them to guide them to Road Bay. There, about two hours before daybreak, they took some prisoners and wounded two men, who managed to escape into the bush. They tortured one of the women to find out the location of Howell's house. One of the Spaniards shot her in her stomach while she was being tortured. Fortunately, she survived. We learn that Howell's house was about four miles away from Sandy Ground, but he does not say in which direction. The likelihood is, from the title deeds we looked at earlier, that his home was at Valentine Blake's Plantation in the Valley. It is the right distance or four miles from Sandy Ground. At about eight that morning, Howell and the men



of his militia met up with the marauders and put them to flight. The Spanish retreated on board their boats so precipitously, he writes, that they left on the shore all their Anguillian prisoners and ten French from other islands.

It seems that the Spaniards knew their target on Anguilla. They demanded of their prisoners the way to Howell's home. They were overheard by one of the French prisoners planning their next target, namely the new settlement on Crab Island. Information from the rescued prisoners was that the Spaniards were in two ships, a brigantine and a sloop. The brig carried 26 cannon and the sloop 16 cannon. Howell's one plea to the Governor-in-Chief in Antigua was for a barrel of powder for his guns. These, he hoped soon to be able to obtain and to erect on the breastwork he was planning. This, he says, would allow him to give the Spanish a better welcome if they visited again. In his dispatch to the Lords of Trade, Governor Sir Nathaniel Johnson commended the bravery of the Anguillians in clearing the vastly superior Spanish forces from their island. He remarked at the modesty with which Howell described the way he and his men handled the incident.

We learn a few more details of the Spanish engagement from another dispatch.<sup>9</sup> The following year, Sir Francis Watson reported that he sent HMS Drake to

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<sup>9</sup> Calendars of State Papers.

the Spanish Governor in Santo Domingo to claim the prisoners brought from Anguilla and Crab. He wrote that one Captain Bear, an Englishman who enjoyed the protection of the Spaniards, led the expedition against both Crab and Anguilla. He did not record if he was successful in obtaining the release of the Anguillians.

Though in 1688 the islands were at war, Anguilla was not protected by any warship or troops, as one would expect. There were no cannon, and no gunpowder even if there were cannon. For the protection of Anguilla, there was only the lightly armed local militia. We know how many men there were. At the beginning of the Third Anglo-Dutch War in 1672 Governor Sir William Stapleton reported that in Anguilla there were available two companies of fifty men each.<sup>10</sup> Those were probably all the men of fighting age available in Anguilla at that time. For a while, the island was fortified and boasted cannon installed on it. But, once war came, the government of the Leeward Islands decided that the island was not worth defending, and in 1673, the cannon were removed to St Kitts. The Minutes of the Council of St Kitts of 8 March 1673 record the decision that the Anguilla cannon be brought by Captain John Jones to St Kitts from Anguilla. They should be landed at or near Cleverly Hill for the defence of that island. If the cannon were retained in

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<sup>10</sup> CO.1/29, No 14, folio 22: Stapleton to the Committee on 17 July 1672, enclosure 1: Answers to the Several Enquiries of the Sundry Councils.

Anguilla, and the island's defences maintained, the islanders would have been better equipped to defend themselves in 1688 against both the French and Spanish attacks.

From the English point of view, there was no point in spending money on the defence of Anguilla as they did for New York or Antigua. The island was more of a nuisance than anything else. Throughout the Leeward Islands, the planters and merchants were attempting to evade the Navigation Acts, and to trade with the Dutch. Trading with the Dutch was attractive. They gave better prices for local produce than English ships. They carried European manufactured articles for trade at better prices. It was doubly difficult to enforce the Acts in relation to Anguilla. That island was surrounded by the Dutch trading depots of St Martin and Statia, and the Danish free ports of St Thomas and St John. Governor Stapleton was even more emphatic in a 1680 dispatch to the Committee for Trade than Governor Willoughby was.<sup>11</sup> He wrote, "*It were to be wished that St Eustatius, Saba and Anguilla were as much under water as above it.*" In 1683 he wrote again of Anguilla that, "*Anguilla is fit for little or nothing but goats.*"<sup>12</sup> Throughout the seventeenth century, Anguilla being so poor, it was viewed by all the

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<sup>11</sup> CO.1/44, No 59, folio 404: Stapleton to the Committee on 18 May 1680.

<sup>12</sup> CO.1/51, No 9: Stapleton to the Committee on 30 August 1683.

authorities as more of a nuisance than any benefit to the Colony of the Leeward Islands.

The revolution of 1688 against the Stuarts in England gave the French another opportunity to harass the English in the Caribbean. Holland, King William's mother country, allied itself this time with England. King William's War was to last from 1689 to 1697. Once King William III and Queen Mary II were declared king and queen in 1689, Louis XIV of France declared war on both England and Spain. The result was more suffering for the Anguillians.

In 1688, the French on St Kitts were Roman Catholics, as were the Irish, while the English were Protestants. The Irish Catholics supported the Catholic Stuarts against both the protestant Lord Protector, Thomas Cromwell, in the 1650s and the protestant prince, William of Orange, brought in to replace the Roman Catholic Stuart dynasty in 1688. Numbers of Irish were deported to the colonies by the English. Irish merchants and traders also sent colonists to the islands. Many of these Irish sought refuge in the French quarter of St Kitts. From there, they assisted the French in their attacks on the English. Thomas Warner set aside Montserrat for the Irish Catholics. There was little opportunity for them in that small island, and they tended to immigrate to the richer islands. The census records of the period show

that large numbers of Irish were in Nevis and in St Kitts where they were treated with suspicion. They were viewed by the protestant English as natural allies of the Catholic French, and supporters of the deposed King James II of England.

Fighting broke out in the Caribbean between the French and the English a year before there was any formal declaration of war in Europe. Thomas Southey recorded that in 1688 a party of 'Wild Irish' landed on Anguilla and "*treated the defenceless inhabitants more barbarously than any of the French pirates who had attacked them before*".<sup>13</sup> What would one not give for a little more information on that nugget tucked away in the quotation? Which French pirates? Which attacks? Perhaps he is referring to the attack by the 300 men under the Sieur des Rose ten years before, but those men were not pirates. Governor Codrington describes the attack on Anguilla differently. He writes that the attack was carried out by the French from St Martin and St Bartholomew. The French commander in chief installed an Irishman as governor of Anguilla with a commission to protect the French interest. However, as soon as he heard of the attack, Codrington sent three requisitioned vessels to retake the island from the French. They captured the Irish governor and brought him back to

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<sup>13</sup> Thomas Southey, A Chronological History of the West Indies (3 vols, 1827) Vol 2, p.145.

Antigua where he was placed in custody. We do not know what became of him, but he is not likely to have survived long.

In 1689, acting on instructions from Codrington, Lieutenant Edward Thorne evacuated to Antigua all the surviving population of Anguilla. Codrington reported to the Committee that on 30 September all the rest of the inhabitants of Anguilla who survived the Irish attack were brought over from Anguilla to Antigua by sloops.<sup>14</sup> He ordered their evacuation because their defences were too weak to resist another attack by the French. He expressed the view that not only would they be safer in Antigua, but he could let them have enough land to cultivate for their own benefit and to increase the King's revenue.

Governor Codrington's plans for the Anguillians in Antigua were frustrated. Most of them either returned to Anguilla or their places were taken by new settlers. The jealousy of the Nevis planters towards the Antiguans no doubt assisted the Anguillians in returning to Anguilla. They complained against Governor Codrington for having brought the Anguillians to Antigua. They wanted the Anguillians to be employed on their own plantations in Nevis. As Governor Codrington reported, the Nevisians censured him as partial and unjust because he ordered

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<sup>14</sup> CO.153/4, folio 188: Codrington to the Committee on 8 November 1689.

the people of Anguilla to be transported to his own island of Antigua rather than to Nevis. He claimed he had a good reason for his choice of Antigua. The Anguillians could never earn their bread in Nevis as well as they could on Antigua. Antigua, he pointed out, was four times as big as Nevis, and yet did not have a third of Nevis' population. This was not the last time that the authorities were to have designs on the persons of the Anguillians, as we shall see in a later Chapter.

Edward Thorne of the Anguilla evacuation turned up again in the Anguilla Archives, as we saw, as a landowner.<sup>15</sup> He was given a patent to land, probably by Governor Codrington in compensation for his expenses during the war in 1689. In 1691 he submitted a petition to the King.<sup>16</sup> A copy of it is preserved in the Colonial Office records. It gives a different perspective on the evacuation of Anguilla.

*To the King's most Excellent Majesty.*

*Sheweth*

*That in the year 1689 your Petitioner having considerable quantities of arms and ammunition by him in the island of Antigua, and there being then a great appearance of a war with France and that St Christophers in all probability would be the first place attacked by the enemy, your Petitioner out of zeal to your Majesty's service did go down to St Christophers and*

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<sup>15</sup> Chapter 5: The Second Generation.

<sup>16</sup> CO.152/1, No 3, folio 5: Thorne's undated petition.

*supply the garrisons and inhabitants thereof with about £500 worth of his said arms and ammunition; soon after which the French and Irish joining together against the English, your Petitioner with Major Joseph Crisp were sent to Barbados to desire aid against them where they procured a Regiment of 700 men under the command of Sir Timothy Thornhill, of which your Petitioner at his own charge raised a company; but before they could get to St Christophers that island was lost, and another island called Anguilla was also taken by the French, to reduce which your Petitioner was sent with 100 men and succeeded therein; and afterwards was at the taking of St Bartholomews, St Martins, St Christophers and St Eustatia, for all which, although there were great riches taken from the enemy, and your Petitioner received many fair promises of reward from General Codrington yet the General keeping all the plunder to himself except some small matter given to the inhabitants of his own government.*

*That after your Petitioner was discharged by the General and going home to Barbados with his soldiers in your Majesty's ship the Hampshire, he was commanded on shore by the said General and confined 19 days, and then discharged without letting your Petitioner know for what he confined although often demanded, by which he lost his passage in the Man of War, and hiring a Sloop to carry him and his effects to Barbados was on the way taken by the French to his damage and loss of £1,000 besides two months imprisonment.*

*Wherefore your Petitioner most humbly prays your Majesty would be graciously pleased to give strict orders to the said General Codrington to make your Petitioner satisfaction for his aforesaid goods, losses and services*



*and not let him be ruined for his zeal to your Majesty's service*

*AND HE SHALL PRAY ETC*

*Edward Thorne*

Thorne clearly felt hurt that Codrington had not sufficiently compensated him for his exertions in Anguilla in 1689. His version has his mission to Anguilla much more heroic than Codrington's version. He claimed that Anguilla was taken by French forces. What in fact the French did was to set their Wild Irish allies on the inhabitants. They never took the island in the sense of capturing it for France. Thorne states that Codrington sent him with 100 men to overcome the French, and that he managed to accomplish this. In fact, the French had set the Wild Irish on the island and departed shortly after. He complained that he sought compensation for the losses he suffered during the war, but that General Codrington refused him. There can be no doubt that it must have been expensive for him to bring his militia troupe from Barbados and to house and provision them in Antigua.

Thorne was exaggerating the significance of his mission in Anguilla. Southey has confirmed Codrington's version.<sup>17</sup> He described the action as one in which Codrington sent three sloops with 80 soldiers under

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<sup>17</sup> Southey op cit, Vol 2, p.149.

Thorne's command to fetch off the inhabitants with their goods and livestock from Anguilla. It was a total, though temporary, evacuation. The Anguillians left their island temporarily abandoned. Thorne was not required to overcome any French force. Contrary to the literature, the French did not take possession of the island. Nor was it returned by the Treaty of Breda. It was much too poor a place for the French to want to hold on to it.

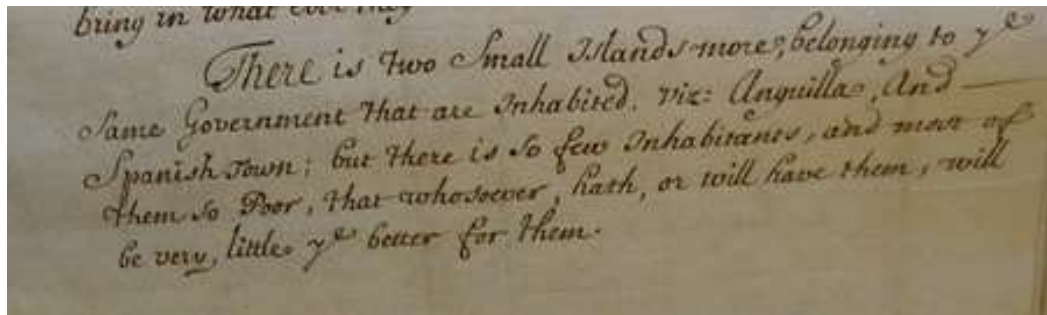
In November 1689, Governor Codrington reported that on the 29 and 30 of October he held court sessions in Antigua, the seat of his government.<sup>18</sup> Amongst those tried for various offences were three Irish men brought from Anguilla where they were captured. They were tried for rebellion and treason, convicted and executed. It seems clear that most of the Irish who settled in Anguilla were not prosecuted in this way. Just what was the special crime of these three men, to justify their execution, is not clear from the records.

By 1700, the half-forgotten little settlement was now fifty years old. The second generation of Anguillians were coming of age. The authorities in London and Antigua showed no greater concern than earlier for the protection of the inhabitants. The disparagements of Anguilla continued. Colonel Edward Fox of Antigua was a senior member of the Antigua Council. He acted as Governor of

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<sup>18</sup> CO.152/37, No 52, folio 164: Codrington to the Committee on 11 November 1689.

the Leeward Islands in 1700, while Governor Christopher Codrington Jr was delayed in London negotiating the terms of his salary. At the trial of deputy governor Norton of St Kitts in 1701, Governor Codrington lists Fox in the transcript as ‘Lieutenant governor of the Leeward Islands’. That year, Fox wrote a dispatch to the Lords of Trade making a military evaluation of the various islands. Anguilla and Virgin Gorda, he wrote, possessed “so few inhabitants, and most of them so poor, that whichever nation should have those islands would be little better off for them” (see illus 1).<sup>19</sup>



1. Edward Fox on the value of Anguilla: CO.152/4. (UK National Archives®)

This dismissive reference to the small number of people on Anguilla, and their poverty, sets the background for the continuing lack of either concern or activity on the part of the colonial power.

John Oldmixon was an English poet, historian and hack writer. His British Empire in America<sup>20</sup> was highly inaccurate but written in an engaging style and became

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<sup>19</sup> CO.152/4, No 37, folio 95. Fox to the Committee on 11 July 1701.

<sup>20</sup> John Oldmixon, The British Empire in America (1708), Vol 2, p.264.

very popular. It was the first description in English of the British colonies in America. It greatly influenced public opinion for a long time after it was written. This is what he wrote of Anguilla in 1708,

*Anguis Insula or Snake Island, so called from its figure, being a long tract of earth, but narrow, winding almost about near St. Martin: from whence it may easily be seen. It lies in 18 degrees, 21 minutes.*

*The country is level and woody, the soil fruitful, and the tobacco that grew there formerly was reckoned very good in its kind. There's not a mountain in it. Where 'tis broadest there's a pond, about which the English settled in the year 1650. Their business, like the inhabitants of Anguilla, was to plant corn, and breed tame cattle; for which purpose they brought stock with them. They were poor and continue so to this day, being perhaps the laziest creatures in the world. Some people have gone from Barbados, and the other English Charibbee Islands, thither, and there they live like the first race of men, without government or religion, having no minister nor governor, no magistrates, no law, and no property worth keeping, if a French author is to be believed: 'L'isle n'est pas estimee valoir la peine qu'on la garde ny qu'on la cultive.' The island is not thought worth the trouble of defending or cultivating it: In which perhaps the Frenchman is out; for the soil being good, if an industrious people were in possession of it, they would soon make it worth defending.*

*The way of the present inhabitants is to take no care for anything but food and rayment [clothing] which are both ordinary enough, tho' of the two their food is best. They generally marry here, and are given in*

*marriage, after the good old fashion. They have no lawyers to put them to the expense of jointures; nor priests, to pluck money out of their pockets for licences; they trust to honour, and it being difficult for any man or woman here to make their condition better or worse by change, there are seldom any divorces: and if there is any reason for them, the people have good nature enough to put it up, every man being his own master, at least every master of a family. This is a sort of primitive society where no man's power exceeded the bounds of his household.*

*One would think such a poor people as this should live quietly, and that no enemy would pretend to invade them; indeed 'twas worth no nation's while, but the Wild Irish, we call them so to distinguish them from the English of Ireland; and these wretches thinking 'twas impossible for any man to be poorer than themselves, landed in the last war, and took away from the inhabitants of Anguilla the little they had. In the year 1689 the French put them ashore, and they not only robb'd, but abus'd, and barbarously treated the English.*

*Sir Timothy Thornhill, who was then at Antego, hearing of it, sent Captain Edward Thorn, with 80 men, to bring off the English that were on the island, to prevent their being so insulted again.*

*Whether they remov'd or not, we have not learnt, but 'tis certain, there are now 150 families upon it, and 8 or 900 souls, who live poorly, and we might say miserably if they were not contented; and considering they desire no more, and that they want nothing necessary for life, why are they not as happy as the inhabitants of Peru and Mexico?*

Contrary to Oldmixon's sarcastic dismissal of the efforts and achievements of the Anguillians, in the first fifty years of settlement, the Anguillian colonists were attacked in turn by Indians, French, Spanish and the Wild Irish. Their houses were repeatedly burned, the men killed, and the women seized. On one occasion, the survivors were evacuated to Antigua for a period of weeks if not months together with all their possessions. Anguillian sloops plying between the Virgin Islands, where valuable dyewood and building timber grew, and the already overpopulated and deforested islands of St Kitts and Nevis, were at the mercy of the larger vessels of the French and Spanish and of the pirates of all nations. Long years of drought added to their misery. It will not surprise us to learn that the more enterprising Anguillians sought to emigrate to more attractive islands. We shall deal with the various efforts of the Anguillians to find greener pastures in a later chapter.