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The Unmaking of St. Vincent: Colonial Insecurity and Black Indigeneity, 1780-1797

A dissertation submitted in partial satisfaction of the

requirements for the degree Doctor of Philosophy

in History

by

Thabisile Griffin

2021

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

The Unmaking of St. Vincent: Colonial Insecurity and Black Indigeneity, 1780-1797

by

Thabisile Griffin

Doctor of Philosophy in History

University of California, Los Angeles, 2021

Professor Robin D.G. Kelley, Chair

Scholarship on St. Vincent during the Age of Revolutions has grappled with building a fuller narrative of the Black Caribs that explores their lives beyond the limitations of colonial warfare. Because the Caribs left little to no written documentation, scholars have had to rely on the biased accounts of British and French administrators to extract a wider field of possibilities. New methodologies have emerged over time that answer to these challenges of building narratives around groups that have been historically neglected in the Assembly and care of traditional archives. More recently, articles and histories of the Black Caribs have been written with a critical eye towards racialization, colonialism, and claims of genocide. However still, the Caribs are still historicized in relation to a framework of colonial warfare that considers declarations of success and defeat as finite, overlooking the potentials of a variety of experiences of the Black indigenous population, and others on the island. In this dissertation, I examine British colonial anxieties in the "interwar" periods, and the points of departure from prominent logics of differentiation on the island. Specifically, I look at the political and social ruptures that occurred in between moments of official warfare and treaties, to determine what that meant for attempts at racialization and class structure for the rest of the island's inhabitants. By exposing

the colonial anxieties during times of "ceasefire," and their panicked attempts at legislation to remedy both interior and exterior attack, I uncover a much more complex system of precarity, fear, and subversion in the British settlement. Through problematizing ideas of what it meant to win, lose, conquer, own, succeed, defeat, and petition, this work reveals the unstable modes of hierarchy that the British settlement desperately tried to enact. In this revealing, more possibilities for who the Black Caribs were, as well as other criminalized populations on the island, ultimately transpired. The research for this dissertation draws from a close reading of British Council Assembly meeting notes, property petitions, letters to parliament, newspapers, and governmental and military records from the National Archives in Kew, Britain. I examine British colonial insecurity and the Black Caribs during the final two decades of the eighteenth century, starting before the British claimed control of the island through the Treaty of Paris, up until the months following the end of the Second Carib war. I look at the condition of British militias, struggles for land holdings, precarious support from the metropole, prolonged legislation, and interior and exterior threats, and how these factors rendered frail the colonial settlement in St. Vincent. Throughout, I employ a method of "corroborated imagination" for Black Carib groups and individuals, that is grounded in evidence from primary documents, but also fills in the phantom context with details from secondary source materials and critical supposition. This dissertation argues that changing racial, gender, and class logics towards populations in St. Vincent were vital in erecting and maintaining the frail British settlement. These logics of differentiation and hierarchy were unstable, and constantly refused by the Black Caribs. These periods of social and political instability contribute towards my reframing of St. Vincent, "unmaking" the settlement and stripping it from its historicity of a unified and ideologically secure colonial state. Ultimately this dissertation explores how St. Vincent was a

multi-space of possibility, not just for land surveyors and capitalists, but for Black indigenous people as well.

The dissertation of Thabisile Griffin is approved.

Carla G. Pestana

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University of California, Los Angeles

2021

Dedication

To the freedom fighters, past and present, that have laughed at the conceit.

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I'd also like to thank the Garifuna Heritage Foundation and Zoila Ellis Browne for hosting me in St. Vincent during March of 2017 and taking us to Ballicioux—an experience I am still struggling to find the words for. Thank you to the UWI Open Campus of St. Vincent and the Grenadines, and the St. Vincent National Archives for supporting me during my research trips. I must give a special shoutout to the warm diaspora in Brixton during the London chill, the Caribbean, African, Pakistani, and Indian communities that engulfed me in color, vibrancy and laughter during a particularly bleak autumn. Thank you to the archivists and staff at the National Archives in Kew for the assistance in finding numerous documents, and patience as I learned

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My sincerest apologies for the simplified expressions and the people I've missed—with reassurance that the acknowledgements in the book manuscript will be robust and overflowing with rightful praise. Let the record reflect that the bulk of this work was completed within the auspices of a vicious capitalism-induced virus and global pandemic, and within a city witnessing a heightened warfare against its houseless population, a directed criminality against its poor, Black and undocumented.

And finally, and with hopes that this is the most enduring point in this study: Thank you to the Garifuna people, who have won the wars before, with full confidence that the war will be won again. "*Quel Roi?!*"

Vita

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Introduction: On William Brown and the African Grove Theater

There's no place more theatrical than history.
-George C. Wolfe

In 1832, a playwright in New York City wrote a script entitled "The Drama of King Shotaway!," a story that would go on to be considered the first recorded drama ever written by a Black writer.[1] The playwright's name was William Brown, a Black Carib man that had previously worked in the maritime industry as a steward on a packet ship carrying freight and passengers to London, Kingston, New York and other Atlantic seaports. [2] After leaving the maritime industry in the early nineteenth century, Brown moved to an apartment in a mostly white westside neighborhood in Manhattan. It was there that he started the African Grove Theatre, a small all-Black theater company deliberately located right next to door to the Park Theatre, a popular white establishment that showcased minstrel productions. William Brown would audaciously re-produce the same plays as Park Theater, on the exact same night, except without the blackface. These productions directly contested not only the racist plays mounted by Park Theater, but the institution of slavery itself. The African Troupe Theater consisted of a collective of international Black artists that were invested in anti-racist productions and organizing for the abolition of slavery. [3] Included in the troupe were James Hewlett and Ira Frederick Aldridge, both having been educated at the Quaker School for Abolitionists before

[1] Errol Hill makes this claim in his article "The Revolutionary Tradition in Black Drama," in which he uses William Brown to set the foundation for a discussion on a tradition of Black theater against colonialism and imperialism.

[2] He was referred to in primary documents as both William Henry Brown and William Alexander Brown.

[3] Jenna Gibbs is writing a forthcoming manuscript that argues that Brown used theatre to "challenge racism and assert Black freedom."

joining the African Grove Theatre. The African Grove Theatre lasted for about two and half years and had a major trans-Atlantic reach— welcoming patrons from all around the world.

William Brown wrote "The Drama of King Shotaway!," a triumphant narrative about Chief Joseph Chatoyer during the Second Carib War. The playbill described the production as "founded on facts, taken from the insurrection of the Caravs [Caribs] on the island of St. Vincent; written from experience by Mr. Brown,"[4] and while the script of the play did not survive, the production would make Chief Chatoyer the first recorded Black revolutionary hero in a theatrical drama.

The life of William Brown and the establishment of the African Grove Theater represented a later rendition of significant historiographical gaps in the narratives of the Black Caribs. The location of the African Grove Theatre, its antagonism towards white elites and entertainment, and its first production on Chatoyer and the Black Carib militia, were a direct continuation of the Black Carib tradition of abolitionist warfare and resistance. The African Grove Theatre and its productions against racism and slavery, appeared less than four decades after the Second Carib war against British colonialism. Through Brown, the Theater inherited crucial elements of the international Black Carib militia, including multi-racial and multi-class participation, and an indomitable commitment to freedom. The scope of participation in both of these organizations, the Black Carib militia and the Theater, is an integral factor that goes under-emphasized in the histories written about them. This dissertation addresses these gaps and gives a fuller account of the involvement in the Black Carib militia during the 1790s, and the

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[4]George C. D. Odell, Annals of the New York Stage (New York: Columbia University Press, 1928), III, pp. 70-71.

cataclysmic effects on the British settlement from going head-to-head with an international and abolitionist army in St. Vincent.

Today, the discourse on the Black Caribs often disconnects them from their immediate descendants, known as the Garifuna, or the *Garinagu*. Contemporary portrayals of the Caribs situate them as a group whose majority were killed off by colonial militaries in Dominica, St. Lucia and St. Vincent in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. The Black Caribs of specifically St. Vincent are a population that are discussed as frozen in time, and while they are understood as ancestors of the Garifuna, they bear the burden of historical genocide. After the Black Caribs were taken to Ballicioux in 1796, the population that survived the famine, displacement, viral epidemic, and the destitute conditions on the island were then shipped to Roatan, an island off of the coast of present-day Honduras. Over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, communities of Caribs set up villages along the Caribbean coast, in Honduras, Guatemala, Nicaragua and Belize. Their migrations were yet again a consequence of European displacement and aggression, particularly from Spanish and British governments in Central America. The Garifuna, however, have taken extra care to preserve and write about their history in ways that energize the struggles against contemporary conditions.

The Garifuna are a people of strong oral tradition and have written histories, poems, and songs about the events of the eighteenth century in St. Vincent, the island known as *Yurumei* in the Garifuna language. Popular Garifuna narratives of the Black Caribs in St. Vincent highlight Chatoyer's military prowess, the indomitable spirit and resistance of the Black Caribs, and an emphasis that they were the only African-descent people that were never enslaved in the western hemisphere. These stories are useful in rectifying a co-opted history, but more importantly they empower ongoing struggles against state violence, displacement and marginalization. Today,

Chief Chatoyer is St. Vincent's National Hero and a symbol of independence and autonomy for the island. There exist a handful of Garifuna communities still on the island, but the majority of the African population in St. Vincent were brought in in the early nineteenth century as a labor force for the newly developed plantation society. The Garifuna, however, are still understood in St. Vincent as the original inhabitants of the island, that were forced out by the British. Presently, there are delegations hard at work, grappling with ideas of repatriation and land for the return of the Garifuna to St. Vincent.

The Garifuna struggle in the U.S. is one of cultural preservation and humanitarian appeal. As prominent Garifuna environmental leaders are being assassinated by military governments in places like Tela, Honduras, these human rights violations often go ignored within the public discourse and international news. The Garifuna bear the brunt of neglect and marginality, treatment to which African countries and native communities in the Americas are subject. As such, Garifuna in the U.S. are constantly producing scholarship, art and media that expose the severity of state violence enacted on their communities back home. Much of the appeal is through an exhibition of cultural reverence and a unique history of resistance. This dissertation explores this same history of resistance, and the critical implications beyond colonial success and defeat.

The "Unmaking of St. Vincent" explores how racial, gender and class logics shaped the colonial treatment of the indigenous populations and the erection and maintenance of Britain's the frail settlement. I investigate the changing British narratives of the Black Caribs at several periods within the course of two decades, and the colonial structures, fissures, and warfare to think about who the Black indigenous population might have been at those moments, beyond flat characterizations that worked in service to the colonial project. The attempts at institutionalizing

these racial and class rationalities, along with the rejection of them from the populations themselves, contribute to what I call the "unmaking" of St. Vincent. Annexed lands in the Caribbean, specifically those held by the British, were unstable projects during the last two decades of the eighteenth century. The uncertainty of power and thus the possibility of potential outcomes, "unmakes" the colonial state—the conceit of its institutions, the teleology of its history, and the enduring logics that have developed from these systems. Exposing the panic, and the moments where power shifted towards the disenfranchised, disturbs the fiction of the homogenous, ideologically secure, and united colonial-state. Ultimately, "Unmaking St. Vincent" explores how the possibilities of autonomy were just as prevalent as the treaties and argues that the Atlantic world was a multi-space of potential not just for European capitalists and surveyors, but for African-descendant people and native populations as well. This dissertation is neither a comprehensive nor a chronological history of the Black Caribs and the British invaders in St. Vincent during these decades. Instead, I focus on prevailing legislation, and social and political shifts within the island to determine what these attempts meant for the rest of the inhabitants. I trouble the idea of ownership as it has been written in the historiography, and instead specify British and French claims to St. Vincent as "treaty-ownership." This distinction is crucial especially in the case of St. Vincent, as European colonists did not control much of the island until 1796. This project is guided by three major questions; first, how can administrative meeting notes, legislation, and the surrounding discourse reveal colonial priorities that are not necessarily emphasized in the text or writing? What effect did these colonial urgencies and insecurities have on the Black indigenous population on the island? And finally, how can we locate alternate or counter-narratives about the Black Caribs through the examination of colonial insecurity?

On Black Indigeneity in the Atlantic World

Historical theory on Black indigeneity and/or Blackness and Indigeneity has been responsible for the imagination and new language that working with colonial documents necessitates. Sylvia Wynter's unpublished manuscript, *Black Metamorphosis: New Natives in a New World*, provided monumental inspiration for new ways of conceiving indigeneity.[5] Her study looks at the way Africans became indigenized in the "New World," specifically within the Caribbean under the conditions of plantation slavery.[6] Although the Black Caribs differ slightly in circumstance, the idea of "indigenization" as part of a Black cultural resistance in the Americas is applicable to the Black indigenous population in St. Vincent. Much of the theoretical scholarship on Black indigeneity however has taken this analytic as two separate bodies, with an interrelated experience. Tiffany Lethabo King's book *The Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Black and Native Studies* used metaphors to explain the shifting ground where Black and Native studies meet, while also troubling the colonial concept of "humanness" as it related to these two identifications.[7] Histories of the multiple ways in which this amalgamation appeared, have afforded us with rich narratives of Black Seminoles and Black Cherokees, amongst many others, and the circumstances responsible for their emergence. Scholars like Tiya Miles have examined specific families of this amalgamation, using the emergence of an Afro-Cherokee family during conditions of slavery, freedom and warfare, to explore the complexity of Black slavery within

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[5] Sylvia Wynter, *Black Metamorphosis: New Natives in a New World.*

[6] This was only one of the main contentions in her 900-plus page manuscript.

[7] Tiffany Lethabo King, *The Black Shoals: Offshore Formations of Native and Black Studies*, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019).

Native American nations.[8] Whether theoretical, historical, or a mix between the two, both are essential to discuss historical and contemporary Black and indigenous populations especially given the deficit of fragmented archives. Much of the work that has been done on Black indigenous people in the Americas has produced a world of possibility around identity, positionality and reparations. It has prompted us to imagine beyond imposed borders of the nation-state and has fostered important coalitions between Black and native social and intellectual groups.

Scholarship specifically on the Black Caribs has emerged from multiple registers and disciplines. The first, has been a series of colonial histories written by British administrators and planters with a central focus on continuing ongoing efforts at propaganda about the Caribs to defend St. Vincent's plantation economy ambitions. The most infamous of them are William Young's *Account of the Black Charaibs in St. Vincent* (1795) and Charles' Shepard's work compiled later on in 1831, entitled *An Historical Account of Island of St. Vincent*. Broader colonial histories of the "West Indies" have also included portions dedicated to St. Vincent and the Black Caribs, like Thomas Southey's series of a *Chronological History of the West Indies Vol. 1-3*, published in 1827, and Bryan Edwards' *The History, Civil and Commercial, of the West Indies*, published a bit earlier in 1798. British botanist Alexander Anderson also contributed to the collection of Black Carib history written during that period and took a slightly empathetic stance regarding the Caribs. Anderson blamed the Second Carib War for destroying the flora and fauna he was studying on the island, and the Caribs' subsequent removal as affecting the natural development of the island's ecology, which suggests he was making a case for "the problem of

[8] Tiya Miles, *Ties That Bind: The Story of an Afro-Cherokee Family in Slavery and Freedom*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005).

indigenous dispossession."[9] Although most of these earlier histories were written with violent characterizations of the Caribs, and through a British triumphalist lens, they are still useful as primary documents that can be read methodologically.[10]

In the twentieth century, more accounts appeared on the history of the Black Caribs in St. Vincent that have been historical, anthropological, and ethnographic. Lowell Jospeh Ragatz' *Fall of the Planter Class in the British Caribbean*, 1763-1833 has a significant section on the history of the Caribs but approaches the story from a western paradigm of success and defeat, which limits the discussion on the Black indigenous population. Hilary Beckles has included discussions of the Caribs within a handful of his works, situating them within a critical analysis of Caribbean slave societies and capitalism. Nancie Gonzalez has written several accounts of the history of the Black Caribs and the culture of the Garifuna, although much of her description does not sufficiently challenge the narratives and tropes of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Her anthropological and ethnographic work, however, has been the formative ground which other studies on the Black Caribs have taken off from. Peter Hulme and Neil Whitehead dedicated the entirety of Part 3 of their anthology *Wild Majesty* to the Black Caribs, including transcriptions of important primary documents like the Peace Treaty of 1773.

Later on, Christopher Taylor's *The Black Carib Wars* (2012), became the most thorough and comprehensive history written on the Black Caribs to this date. His work is in many ways a military history, spanning throughout the entire eighteenth century. Joseph Palacio has been a

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[9] Julie Chun Kim makes this argument in her article "Natural Histories of Indigenous Resistance: Alexander Anderson and the Caribs of St. Vincent." (2014)

[10] For a thorough discussion and a comparative on the broader histories written about the British West Indies, see Elsa V. Goveia's momentous work, *A Study on the Historiography of the British West Indies to the End of the Nineteenth Century*, (Washington D. C.: Howard University Press, 1980 reprint, orig. 1956).

leading figure in the study and preservation of Black Carib/ Garifuna culture and oral histories. His compilation, *The Garifuna, a Nation Across Borders: Essays in Social Anthropology* (2005) has been critical to the discipline. In the edited volume, Palacio explicates his own methods in deciphering and understanding oral histories and includes the only other historical account of a Black Carib woman and her life in Roatan after the Second Carib War. Her name was Gulisi, and her story had been passed down through folktale in the Garifuna communities of Belize.[11] I. E Kirby and C.I. Martin have also contributed a very useful and succinct history of the Black Caribs in St. Vincent, a booklet that has importantly become widely available in the eastern Caribbean islands.[12] More recently, there have been numerous articles written on the Black Caribs that have approached the history more critically, and situated it within a tradition of Black Atlantic resistance. Mia Bagneris and Melanie Newton have written some the most compelling of these articles on the history of the Black Caribs, as it relates to race-making.[13] The questions they asked around race, historicization, and archives, were integral to the formulation of this project.

The Black Caribs are a unique population to theorize on, because they exist at the nexus of several colonial constructions of difference. They are of African descent and were racialized as Black by most accounts. In eighteenth century St. Vincent, they were a free and autonomous

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[11] Joseph O. Palacio, ed., *The Garifuna: A Nation Across Borders, Essays in Social Anthropology* (Belize: Cubola Productions, 2005), pgs. 43-63.

[12] I. E. Kirby and C. I. Martin, *The Rise and Fall of the Black Caribs (Garifuna)* (Toronto: Cybercom Publishing, 2004)

[13] See Mia Bagneris, "Brunias's Tarred Brush, or Painting Indians Black: Race-ing the Carib Divide," *Colouring the Caribbean: Race and the Art of Agustino Brunias* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2018), 7-53; and Melanie J. Newton, "The Race Leapt at Sauteurs". Genocide, Narrative, and Indigenous Exile from the Caribbean Archipelago," *Caribbean Quarterly, A Journal of Caribbean Culture* 60 no, 2 (2014), 5-28.

majority that defended and stewarded the island, however their multiple origin stories either describe them as being shipwrecked enslaved Africans or fugitive slaves that swam over from surrounding islands.[14] They share a history of enslavement, and survival of the Middle Passage with other African populations, and yet they were also understood as the natives of St. Vincent likely of Arawak and "Carib" descent." A history of enslavement and ethnic mixture also theoretically includes the Black Caribs within a discourse of free people of color with mixed ancestry, like creole populations in other colonies.[15] As far as British documentation has revealed, the Black Caribs did not intermix with any Europeans, which was not exceptional to only them, but a specific detail of their makeup.

This project conceives of them as both Black and indigenous, first because of their immediate genealogical makeup, but second and most importantly, through their unwavering adversarial relationship to the colonial state. I use "Black" and indigenous" within these chapters to situate the Black Caribs within several traditions. "Black" includes them as participants within the Black radical tradition, as African-descended people that across space and time, were united in a practice against domination and a history of refusal, ultimately rejecting categories of hierarchy and differentiation.[16] The Black Caribs also share a history of indigeneity in the Americas, specifically South America and the Caribbean islands. Their native genealogical makeup has been recorded as both Arawak and "Carib." Beyond ancestry, I use indigeneity here as an analytical marker to describe a set of people that have been encroached upon and dispossessed by colonialism and imperialism. It is an indicator shared by surviving populations

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[14] Christopher Taylor gives an excellent discussion of the various origin stories of the Black Caribs in Chapter One of *The Black Carib Wars* (2012).

[16] Cedric Robinson describes the Black Radical tradition as the continuing development of a collective consciousness informed by historical struggles.

all over the world, not just of a certain phenotype, nor limited to the Americas. Given these traditions, I find that "Black indigenous" is the most accurate descriptor for this population in St. Vincent. For purposes of clarity however, I shift between using Black indigenous and Black Carib within the following chapters. This is to distinguish the specific population, geography and era that this project is focuses on, not to reinforce colonial nomenclature.

On Race-making

Histories of differentiation are rich when it comes to the Atlantic world. Recent work by literary scholars and historians demonstrate how race was constantly reconfigured and challenged, shifting alongside logics of nationalism, capitalism, and colonialism. Kim Hall and Roxann Wheeler have both explored the process of race-making from early modern England to the eighteenth century, through analyzing Renaissance texts, civil histories, and travelogues.[17] More recently, Sharon Block's *Colonial Complexions: Race and Bodies in Eighteenth Century* America, has investigated race-making in colonial North America by analyzing advertisements calling for the return of servant and enslaved laborers. Joyce E. Chaplin has interrogated the role of invention and science in shaping racial notions between English and Native Americans in her text *Subject Matter: Technology, the Body, and Science on the Anglo-American Frontier, 1500-1676.*[18] Jennifer Morgan's book *Laboring Women*, reveals how slaveowner's beliefs about African women's reproductive labor and gender, were fundamental to the making of racial ideologies in the English colonies. Race-making in the British Caribbean specifically, has been

[17] See Roxann Wheeler's *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-century British Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), and Kim Hall's *Things of Darkness: Economies of Race and gender in early Modern England* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1995).

[18] Joyce E. Chaplin, *Subject Matter: Technology, the Body, and Science on the Anglo-American Frontier, 1500-1676*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

written about extensively by Catherine Hall. While Hall's work has mainly focused on Jamaica, the questions she asks are applicable to every British colony in the Caribbean. The combined studies of these historians and literary scholars provided the methodological blueprints to read the colonial archives within a tradition of critique and revelation. I am indebted to their work and example, and each of their interventions have contributed to the way the Black Caribs have been discussed within this project.

Scope of the Project

The island of St. Vincent is the central geographic point of study in this project. It is located in the lesser Antilles chain in the eastern Caribbean, and part of a long, partly volcanic arc of 30 islands. St. Vincent and the Grenadines are just above the northwest part of South America, which is significant in the Black Carib origin story.[19] St. Vincent is located between St. Lucia and Grenada, and just a bit over 100 nautical miles west of Barbados. The proximity of these two landmasses is responsible for much of the African population in St. Vincent, as people would swim over from Barbados to St. Vincent to escape enslavement. Thus, the location of the island was as a pivotal factor in determining the population, power struggles and fugitivity throughout the eighteenth century. St. Vincent is also conceived of as the land that birthed the "Black Caribs," and later came to be known as the ancestral home of the Garifuna people. Up until the 1790s, European colonial authorities would attempt to expand control over the island, however with no success, as the Black indigenous population put up a constant defense of their homeland. The Black Caribs' hold on the island up until 1796, is an incredible story of both resistance and a tumultuous string of events in the larger Atlantic world.

[19] Black Caribs are historicized to have had specifically "Carib" and Arawak ancestry; the latter which migrated from South America to the eastern Caribbean islands in the seventeenth century.

While St. Vincent is centered in this dissertation, the project is Atlantic in scope since the island was a multi-space of imperial rivalry, international abolitionist organizing, and warfare, particularly in the last decade of the eighteenth century. Even prior to the 1790s, the business of maintaining British military fortifications was contingent on developments on the surrounding islands. I look to Grenada specifically, as the governor of the island Edward Mathew, was also the head general of all British military units in the Caribbean and called the shots on garrison formations and dispersal. British correspondence and Assembly papers that I examined also expand the range of this project across the Atlantic into Whitehall, and other British legislative factions in the metropole. In this sense, the scope of this work extends beyond the small leeward island of St. Vincent, into the meeting halls of British parliament, the neglected Black Loyalist communities in Nova Scotia, and British Army training grounds in Grenada.

On the Archives of the Black Caribs

> He would not have asked, Who are the Carib people? or, more accurately, Who *were* the Carib people? For they were no more, they were extinct, a few hundred of them still living, my mother had been one of them, they were the last survivors. They were like living fossils, they belonged in a museum, on a shelf, enclosed in a glass case. That these people, my mother's people, were balanced precariously on the ledge of eternity, waiting to be swallowed up in the great yawn of nothingness, was without doubt, but the most bitter part was that it was through no fault of their own that they had lost, and lost in the most extreme way; they had lost not just the right to be themselves, they had lost themselves.
>
> -Jamaica Kincaid, *The Autobiography of my Mother* (1996)

Documentation of the Black Caribs are scarce, and appear in British and French colonial archives, located in the National Archives in Kew, and the Archives Nationales d'Outre-mer in Aix, France. St. Vincent's National Archives in Kingstown also hold records of the Black Caribs in the eighteenth century, though all of them are copies of primary documents from

National Archives in the United Kingdom. Most of the mention of Black Caribs in the eighteenth century are penned by either a British or French administrator, or military official— elite men who shared an investment in portraying the Black indigenous population in ways that advanced imperial aims. For this project, I chose to center specifically British correspondence, meeting notes and newsletters, to extract as many inconsistencies and ruptures as possible. Limiting this dissertation to an analysis of mostly British documentation allowed me to sit with the documents more closely and identify patterns of fear and instability that may have otherwise gone unnoticed or trivialized. The only surviving document penned by a Carib in St. Vincent during the eighteenth century was the declaration of Chief Joseph Chatoyer. It was drafted March 12, 1796, just three days before his death by a British military commander. The declaration was a revolutionary appeal to the French inhabitants of the island to join the Black Carib army towards the cause of liberty.[20] The second register of Black Carib archives are oral histories, and are equally as generative as colonial documents, sometimes more. The Garifuna people are tremendously skilled in storytelling and have made sure to pass down critical stories about the events in St. Vincent (and beyond) to each new generation.

Because colonial archives on the Black Caribs are so fragmented, they demand a creative and specialized methodological approach. I read the archives both *against* and *along* the archival grain, employing the examples and scholarship of specifically Ann Stoler and Marissa Fuentes. Stoler, a historical anthropologist, challenges historians and ethnographers to use archival traces of marginalized groups to identify the conditions of possibility that shaped what warranted repetitions, what competencies were rewarded in archival writing, and what stories could not be

[20] Chatoyer's Declaration, Document #16, 12 March 1796, Box 260, Folder 13, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 5 November 1794- 8 September 1796, The National Archives in Kew.

told and what could not be said.[21] St. Vincent's colonial documents are laden with repetition, unstable markers of differentiation and slippery power dynamics. They offer a host of new interpretations and therefore new narratives. While Stoler's method examines the bias within archival documents, Marissa Fuentes, a historian of gender and enslavement in the Caribbean, asks what the possibilities are. This project employs Fuentes' technique of reading along the bias grain,[22] and utilizing imagination to build context around historically phantom figures, especially in Chapter Two: Ann's Petition. I use the explicit absence of non-European representations to determine in fact the opposite—that Black indigenous people, and specifically Black indigenous women, were very much crucial factors on the island and involved in creating the possibilities for other people in the society. What I call a "corroborated imagination" is used here, to make connections that are otherwise sundered within the colonial history. Imagination alongside evidence asks *what could have been* and creates opportunities to read the surrounding documents in different ways, beyond what Stoler calls the panoptic official gaze, what she says is ultimately a frail conceit.[23]

Summary of Chapters

Chapter One examines the dominant discourses around new legislation on the island in 1793, specifically around police enfranchisement, and shifting conceptions of criminality across race. It argues that the parliamentary decision to terminate the slave trade activated new attempts toward a carceral geography in St. Vincent, that prioritized the protection and consolidation of

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[21] Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2009), 34.

[22] Marissa Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016)

[23] Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain.*

property, and further criminalized enslaved rebel Africans, militant Black Caribs, and now also poor whites. The second chapter draws from a 1790 petition for sale of property of a Black Carib woman and her family, using administrative meeting notes and colonial correspondence to construct the context surrounding her land transfer, to build both a familial history and a larger Atlantic narrative. It argues that an escalation of attacks coming from Black Carib militias and potential Spanish and French intruders, as well as a scramble towards property acquisition from all classes of British inhabitants, resulted in the dispossession of Ann Barramont and her family. Investigating the Barramont petition and the early insecurities of the 1790s, explore the groundwork for Chapter One's later attempts towards a carceral geography.

Chapter Three looks at the emergence of the first all-Black British military unit in the Caribbean, to both build a larger context of contingency around the race-making of the Black Caribs, and to uncover the growing enthusiastic appeal for military enforcements of any makeup in St. Vincent. This chapter contends that evolving colonial myths of the Black Caribs intentionally positioned them as an adversarial population to the all-Black British military unit, the Black Corps. It was only through arguments of Black Carib formidability and destructiveness, that General Edward Mathew was able to eventually garner enough support from the metropole and surrounding legislatures to organize and train the first official unit of Black Corps in 1792.

The final chapter examines prevailing anxieties in the British settlement after the Second Carib War. Using the discourse around bills that were presented to the legislature, a report on losses sustained after the war, and a report on disease penned by surgeon N. Dickenson, this chapter argues that the immediate post-war urgencies were to dramatically shift the logics of race and class within the British settlement. The possibility of going up against another multi-racial

and abolitionist Black Carib-led army pressured British administrators to prioritize the forging of a unified colonial state, a specified national character, and an imagined "public." Along with these attempts, property value increased in proximity to where the majority of Caribs had once lived, which was supported by the allure of a newfound security, now that the threat had been forcibly removed. And finally, the post-war scramble and the forced displacement of the Black Caribs brought about another attempt at racialization, this time gendered, and through the lens of a widespread disease in Ballicioux.

The relevance of this project is most evident by examining together the narratives of past and contemporary conditions to locate two continuities; that the Black Caribs have been in a constant state of both dispossession, and resistance, for over two centuries. Colonial administrators and statesmen from the seventeenth and eighteenth century were the main progenitors in describing the Carib story as genocide, claiming rights to their land as a result of their de-population. As such, Black Carib stories are told only through the lens of colonial warfare, with their narratives "ending" when the British or French had claimed total dominion over their land. Today, the Garifuna live mostly on the Caribbean coasts of Central America, but since the 1970s, have immigrated to cities like New York, Los Angeles, and London. Their violent displacement out of Central America was due mainly to the privatization of their land in the coastal regions of their countries to prepare for a parasitic tourism industry. The Garifuna in Honduras, Guatemala, and Belize are continuously being dispossessed of their land and resources and are largely ignored in global politics and humanitarian efforts. Their historical and contemporary attempts at erasure calls for an examination of the ways we understand and use their history, particularly the false claims of genocide and defeat.

Chapter 1: Disassembled: Black Indigeneity, Vagabonds, and Attempts Towards a Carceral Landscape

> "The only way to discover the meaning of "black Man"… is to consider the context."
> -Roxanne Wheeler,
> *The Complexion of Race:*
> *Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture*
> (2000)

> "The Charaibs are in possession of the finest trail of country in St. Vincent but instead of availing themselves of the advantages to be derived from a most excellent soil they give themselves up entirely to an idle vagabond life." [24]
> -James Seton, January 1789

"Irregularly Scattered and Entirely Unoccupied"

The above title that heads this subsection and starts the chapter is pulled from a quote by Sir William Young in 1767, describing the windward part of the island: the most agriculturally fertile region and home to the majority of the African-indigenous population in St. Vincent. [25] Sir William Young had been appointed three years earlier, to be President of the Commission for the Sale of Lands in the Ceded Islands,[26] which included St. Vincent and its inhabitants. That he

[24] Seton to Lord Sydney, Correspondence #55, 20 March 1789, Box 260, Folder 9, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 29 June 1788- 26 November 1789, The National Archives in Kew.

[25] William Young Esq., Memorial to the Lords of the Treasury, 11 April 1767, in *Authentic Papers Relative to the Expedition against the Charibbs and the Sale of Lands in the Island of St Vincent* (1773).

[26] Born in Antigua in 1725, Sir William Young held various positions within the British Caribbean. Along with becoming a wealthy sugar planter in Antigua, he was appointed Commissioner for Sale of the Ceded Islands in 1763 and became Governor of Dominica in 1768. After being appointed as President of the Commission for Sale, Young spent a considerable amount of time in St. Vincent, where he produced notes and entries describing the topography and the Black Caribs. His son would eventually publish these notes in a compilation entitled *Account of the Black Charaibs in the Island of St. Vincent's* in 1795, which is one of the most frequently cited documents scholars have used to discuss the Caribs.

used these terms in reference to the home of over 3,000 recorded Black Caribs in the middle of the eighteenth century, four years after St. Vincent, along with Grenada, Tobago and Dominica, were ceded to Britain through treaty is unsurprising considering the colonial priorities of the era. Land commissioners like Young associated occupation with land cultivation and market productivity, and habitation to be significant when done so through an understanding of British civility, usually through subjecthood. The Black Caribs were neither subjects nor exemplars of British civility, but rather lived scattered, living, working, playing, building families, and resting, in a land "unoccupied." This descriptor of the land as irregularly scattered and entirely unoccupied was not only used to justify British superiority over the next few decades, but it also continued what would become the focus points in arguing the changing logics of differentiation in the colony. Administrators like Young would begin by interrogating questions of *who* lived on land, *how* they lived on the land, and how the land was organized. This chapter begins by disassembling some of the colonial myths that resulted from these inquiries.

This chapter does two things. First, it explores who the Black Caribs "were", through identifying both interior and exterior factors that determined their shifting nomenclatures within primary documents. Along with a discussion of who the Caribs were from a colonial vantage point, this chapter introduces critical 1792 legislation as it complimented, refined, or sometimes conflicted with the crown's orders or even the sentiments of the colonial governor. Struggles between the British empire and its citizens over the control of land-holdings, infrastructure fortifications, policing, military resources, among other issues, were in direct relation to the constant rejection of a sugar and slave society by the Black indigenous and enslaved populations in St. Vincent. I argue that the parliamentary decision to terminate the slave trade activated new attempts toward a carceral geography in St. Vincent, that prioritized the protection and

consolidation of property, and the further criminalization of enslaved rebel Africans, militant Black Caribs, and now also poor whites. The year 1792 marked the beginning of crucial transformations in legislation, policing, and criminality within the British colony—all revolving around fears of an abolition at their doorstep.

Context

The Atlantic world, which constituted the societies, cultures, and structures that witnessed trans-Atlantic travel across the ocean, was at a particular crossroads in the last two decades of the eighteenth century. Sugar grew to be the most valuable commodity in European trade by 1750, with Jamaica surpassing Barbados as the leading sugar colony a few decades before that date.[27] The decades that followed witnessed the tumultuous ramifications of its commercial ascent. Sugar production in the Caribbean relied on plantation agriculture that exhausted and exploited people and soil, which drove the seizures of new lands, a continuation of indigenous dispossession, and an ongoing kidnapping of African laborers. The insufferable violence that this global market relied on also necessitated constant recalibrations of social and political reasoning, especially in the wake of frequent insurrections and an Atlantic abolition movement gaining success towards the end of the century.

Relationships between British entities across land and water determined the political decisions that occurred in the Caribbean colonies. Colonial agents in Britain, Parliamentary

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[27] For more on the rush towards sugar in the Caribbean in the last half of the eighteenth century, see Michael Duffy's *Soldiers, Sugar and Seapower: The British Expeditions to the West Indies and the War Against Revolutionary France* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987). For broader discussions on the rise of the sugar empire in the Caribbean, and its ramifications towards African-descended people, particularly how the history of sugar is inseparable from the history of slavery and made possible the financing of the Industrial Revolution, see Eric Williams' *Capitalism and Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2014) first published in 1944, and *From Columbus to Castro: The History of the Caribbean, 1942-1969* (Virginia: Harper and Row, 1970).

members, merchants, planters, and absentee landlords participated in a trade network of precarious loyalty and insecurity. Like other British colonies in the Americas, settlers in the Caribbean had a conflicting relationship to the king and metropole—one that both demanded military and financial support during warfare, but also insisted upon a certain autonomy. These contradictory needs emerged more fully during scrambles around property, new legislation, taxation and quit rents, as well as exchanges around military fortifications. But with or without support from King George III or Parliament, sugar and the prospect of vast profit fueled the settlers' drive to stay and struggle in the Caribbean.

British colonies in the Caribbean were organized much like the North American colonies. Each settlement was administered by a Council, a representative Assembly, and a governor. There were parish churches, vestrymen, justices of the peace, and a militia for protection.[28] After the American Revolution, disgruntled Loyalist settlers came to live in the Caribbean in search of land with high profit-yielding potential, and less restriction from the crown. Along with settlers from North America, St. Vincent would also be a destination for Barbadian planters who were convinced of the potentials farther west. The British Caribbean also held a handful of gentry families, such as in the case of the Setons, kin of James Seton, who would take over governance of St. Vincent in the 1780s and 90s. British class structure on the island ranged from peasants to

[28] Andrew O'Shaughnessy's *An Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania, 2000), and Carla Pestana's *Religion and the Making of the British Atlantic World* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2009) both give diligent and detailed portrayals of the lives, multitude of cultures, and structures of British colonies in the Americas. In his text, O'Shaughnessy specifically describes how after the Stamp Act Crisis of 1765- 1766, British settlers in the Caribbean colonies sided with Britain during the American Revolution, to secure defensive measures for their islands and support in sugar plantation development, amongst other factors. After the Revolution, colonists would soon find that the support never fully came. The following chapters in this dissertation detail instances in which settlers became more and more disgruntled with their condition as neglected subjects.

wealthy proprietors, the latter frequently holding positions in the local Council and Assembly. The British from the metropole looked down upon poorer subjects in the Caribbean colonies, seeing them as deplorables and dubbing them "inarticulate islanders."[29] As details of their livelihoods were not considered significant, details on the poorer caste of settlers in the islands are also a fragmented archive, making it difficult to quantify exact social structures and familial patterns or to provide a precise demographic analysis. Much like the Black and indigenous populations, clues on the poorer whites also appear in the fissures of official colonial documentation.

Three realities, often supplementing each other, augmented the fears of British planters and administrators on the islands: 1) the majority enslaved African population, 2) the political, military and social strength of fugitive and maroon populations, and 3) the growing "mixed-race" or creole populations. All three of these conditions, sometimes driven by different political motives and strategies, all presented a very palpable threat to plantation infrastructure and society. During the final decades of the century especially, planters and colonial officials were materially and psychologically recovering from the fact that their largest sugar settlement, Jamaica, had almost been completely obliterated by organized maroon factions during Tacky's Rebellion in 1763.[30] News of periodic military defeats and destruction during this rebellion spread throughout the islands and kept proprietors and government officials on edge. The very recent historical example of not just material loss and economic degradation, but a humiliation of

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[29] Richard Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972).

[30] Vincent Brown, *Tacky's Revolt: The Story of an Atlantic Slave War*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2020).

almost being defeated by a people argued as inferior, permeated the British colonial psyche in the Atlantic world.

During the 1780's and 1790's, the British settlement in St. Vincent specifically was attempting to make sense of class and differentiation of subjects, through property and ownership. Because of its infrastructural nascency during these decades and vulnerability to hurricanes or imperial attack, St. Vincent's class stratification within the settlement was more fluid than the longer-established neighboring British Caribbean societies. Settlers came with already-formed ideas of race, gender, and class from societies in North America, Britain, and other Caribbean colonies, but were constantly adjusting and creating new logics of differentiation that would make possible their quest towards profit specifically on this new island. Struggles around treaty-ownership, land tenure and natural devastations relegated even wealthy proprietors in Bequia or St. George's Parish to an insecure state, that frequently threatened their livelihood and fortune. They were constantly at risk of being demoted into peasantry, which made legislation regarding race and class all the more urgent, impatient, and riddled with inconsistencies.

By this time, the island's stewards and native inhabitants—the Black Caribs, had spent over a century resisting French and British settlers' attempts at colonial land grabs. St. Vincent had remained mostly off the radar for large scale settlement and plantation development, but the continuous land exhaustion and deforestation in the booming nearby sugar colonies of Barbados and Jamaica that propelled British planters once again to attempt expansion to the nearby terrain, recognizing it as fertile and uncultivated.[31] The end of the Seven Years' War and the subsequent

[31] The second release of Hilary Beckles' *A History of Barbados: From Amerindian Society to Caribbean Single Market* (2007) explains the influence of Barbadian systems of large-scale sugar economies as the blueprint for surrounding British colonies in the Caribbean, as does the more recent Simon P. Newman

1763 Treaty of Paris formalized British claims over the island, and military officials and land commissioners were instructed to start surveying the island. While a minimal number of French peasants had already settled on the drier leeward coast, British settlements were now being fortified along the southern tip of the island, recognizing Kingstown as the commercial center. However, and quite crucially, settlements were strictly conditional from the beginning, resting on the authority of the Caribs. Black Carib settlements were widespread on the island, and ranged from agricultural villages on the windward coast, to maroon-like settlements in the mountainous interior region.[32] Military factions of the Black Caribs kept both British and French settlers at bay, forcing them to live in the least fertile parts of the island and destroying any attempts at large-scale plantations. [33] The windward eastern coast specifically, was defended vehemently by the Caribs, as it was the most fertile region of the island with flat, good soil, and home to the majority of the African-indigenous population.[34] The Black Caribs also disrupted larger

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text, *A New World of Labor: The Development of Plantation Slavery in the British Atlantic (The Early Modern Americas)* (2016) in Chapter 9 and Conclusion.

[32] "Maroon-like" because they were not necessarily escaped slaves but were still living in conditions in the mountains that were strategic to the possibility of European encroachment or attack. The question of autonomy and freedom was particular to their case as well, although not entirely divergent from maroons on other lands.

[33] Christopher Taylor's *The Black Carib Wars: Freedom, Survival and the Making of the Garifuna* (2012) serves as the most recent and in-depth military history of the Black Caribs in St. Vincent during the eighteenth century. Taylor's work, along with I.E Kirby and C.I Martin's *The Rise and Fall of the Black Caribs (Garifuna)* (2004), detail the longevity of Black Carib defense, and how the Caribs, for much of the eighteenth century, regulated European settlement in St. Vincent and the nature of both British and French plantation production.

[34] In *Authentic Papers Relative to the Sale of the Expedition Against the Charibbs and the Sale of Lands in the Island of St. Vincent*, William Young writes that the soil on the windward coast is "perhaps the best in the world, and it is admirably supplied by rivers, it would probably soon become a more valuable sugar colony than any possessed by the crown, unless Jamaica, which must be excepted only on account of its very superior extent."

plantation attempts by welcoming Africans who escaped from nearby British properties, offering refuge to the formerly enslaved, and inducting them into Carib society.

The question of ownership of the island was contested. Britain claimed possession through treaty over St. Vincent in 1763, and erected a weak settlement, leasing small plots to French settlers on the western coast, but were unable to assert control over any part of the windward coast. Although the French invaded the island in 1779, by the ending of the American Revolutionary War, it was restored back to the British under the Treaty of Paris in 1783. According to European treaty, the island was indeed signed off to the British, although imperial ownership was not recognized nor ever respected by the indigenous populations on the island. During these decades of seesawing imperials possession claims, the Black Caribs remained autonomous and maintained a defensive front over not just the eastern coast, but the majority of the island.

Governor James Seton would be the first to attempt to change this. He was the second to take the position of governor on the island after St. Vincent was formally transferred back into British rule in 1783, replacing Edmund Lincoln, who had died earlier that year from a gunshot wound to his leg from a conflict within the colonial government. Seton was a vice admiral and had served in the navy before his appointment. He had come from a family with close to eight centuries of aristocracy. Described as a man of a "cool, steady and determined character," within the first few years of his direction, crop cultivation on the island increased slowly. [35]

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[35] Charles Shephard provides this caricature of James Seton in his *Historical Account of the Island of Saint Vincent* (1831), but because of his absence during the governor's tenure, it's likely that he pulled these character traits out of stories from earlier accounts written on the island such as Bryan Edwards' *The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies* (1794), Thomas Coke's *A History of the West Indies* (1808) and William Young's *Account of the Black Charaibs in the Island of St Vincent's* (1795).

Yet still, the appointment of British and French governments did not deter the Caribs from exerting a vigilant and militarized care over the land and their communities. Earlier French settlers who had arrived in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century were only allowed to practice small scale coffee, tobacco, and cacao production—Black Caribs forbade the development of sugar mills by anyone.[36] Much to Governor Seton's dismay, the Caribs would sabotage all his efforts to transform the island into a significant sugar hub, up until the nineteenth century. While there existed for decades abolition and anti-colonial movements waged by enslaved and free Africans and Caribs in Dominica and St. Lucia, St. Vincent was the only island that witnessed this prolonged sort of dual possession, formally owned by the British or French by treaty, but socially, geographically, and militarily controlled by the Black Caribs up until 1795. Through these circumstances, the Black Caribs too, "owned" the island. Europeans may have possessed fleeting periods of treaty-ownership, but the Caribs had almost consistent control of the *land*.

To Both Refuse and Use a Name

"Definitions belong to the definers, not the defined."
-Toni Morrison, *Beloved* (1987)

The term "Black Carib" was fabricated under the duress of colonial contingency. The population that the British termed "Black Carib" and its handful of variations, were a people inhabiting a range of skin tones, features, customs and ideas.[37] The necessity to forge their

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[36] Robin Fabel, *Colonial Challenges: Britons, Native Americans and Caribs*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2000)

[37] In her article *Colouring the Caribbean* (2018), Mia Bagneris explains how the British exaggerated phenotypic diversity among the individuals or groups that identified as Carib. Through primarily an

differentiation *against* the "yellow Caribs" on the island was in direct service to a wider British colonial project that relied on racialization and fabricated divisions to make arguments for land appropriation, and attempts at genocide. Ultimately, the Black Caribs rejected all finite categorizations through their constant insistence on autonomy, and this refusal of racialization ironically can be argued as perhaps the only constant marker of their identity.

Who the Black Caribs were within British colonial documents was dependent on changing factors both in and beyond the island. The project of their on-going racialization was fumbled around by the hands of both major correspondents from the British metropole, such as Lord Sydney in Whitehall, and British colonial administrators and governors in St. Vincent in the eighteenth century. Central participants in this process of differentiation were the governors presiding over St. Vincent's British settlement during times of treaty-ownership, as well as French rule, including Ulysses Fitzmaurice (lieutenant governor from 1772-1776), Valentine Morris (lieutenant governor and governor from 1772-1779), Edmund Lincoln (governor from 1783-1787), and finally James Seton, who would serve as governor from 1787-1798. These four governors would have tremendous roles in communicating characteristics of the indigenous population to the metropole, which would be used as markers of differentiation dependent on colonial conditions. Their letters, proclamations, requests, meeting notes and memorandums would at times be imbued with elaborate accounts of the Black Caribs that would be communicated across the Atlantic and used for fortifications. At times, descriptions of the Caribs in particularly formidable ways would backfire once they were communicated to the king, and the governor and his legislature would be judged harshly for their inability to render the island

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analysis of Agostino Brunias' eighteenth century paintings, she argues that "Black" and "Red" as applied to the Caribs were "ideological fictions built around the unmarked centrality of whiteness."

safe for its British inhabitants. Racializing the Caribs within these documents could lead to two separate outcomes, the crown would either provide more military support, or neglect the settlement further as a failing project. Governor Valentine Morris in particular ruled over a colonial administration that was frequently looked at in disdain by the crown, and provided the bare minimum supplementation.

One of the most persistent external factors in the changing terminology and thus conception of the Black Caribs was the strategic but precarious alliance between Carib and French military forces. A failed attempt at a slave raid in 1719 would be the last time the French would send a military force against the Black Caribs, and it was after this overwhelming defeat that ultimately a long-standing network between Martinican French authorities and Black Carib militants and tradesmen and women emerged. The Caribs used the proximity of the French settlement nearby to develop linguistic skills and trade networks through close communication with the settlers, traders, and military and government officials in Martinique. The adoption of French names, both first and surname, became common amongst the wider Carib community. Leaders of Black Carib military units would also eventually take on French version of their Carib names; for example, Chief Tourouya, a name of Arawak and Carib language origin, would come to be known in British and French documents as Touriac, along with Bigot, another wartime chief. Satuye would become Joseph Chatoyer. The later Anglo-Carib "Peace Treaty" of 1773 would be signed by 28 Black Carib militants, most donning a French version of their name.[38] Even by the late 1770's, as some Carib families qualified under British colonial law for property leases in St. George Parish, they retained their French names, like Pierre and Ann Rouille

[38] Peace Treaty of 1773, Document #68, 14 July 1790, Box 101, Folder 17, Colonial Office, Commonwealth and Foreign and Commonwealth Predecessors 26 December 1772 – 25 July 1774, The National Archives in London.

Barramont—whose stories appear in the following chapter. This kind of sustained amalgamation with the French signified a refusal to engage with British culture and law, and access to tun to the French as allies during moments of crises.

The Caribs' decision to side with the French as allies revealed their cognizance of two possibilities: first, that the problem of British encroachment on St. Vincent would be long-term, and second, an awareness of enduring conflict between the British and French that could potentially work in their favor. The calculated adoption of French names by the Black Caribs was a strategy that suggested a close monitoring of the Atlantic competition between Britain and France, and the long series of military conflicts between the two for land holdings. Depending on the outcomes of European warfare, colonial terminology referring to the Caribs within primary documents would reflect the state of imperial matters. Thus then, within letters, meeting notes, travelogues, newspapers and land, the African-indigenous population on the island were conceived of, and racialized, partly in response to a tumultuous Atlantic world.

The political climate within St. Vincent also dictated changing terminology in regard to the indigenous population. Second to British warfare with the Caribs, the uncertain relationship between the colonial government and Carib leaders was the strongest determinant in the changing racialization of the indigenous group. For the final two decades of the eighteenth century, the primary person invited to negotiations was Joseph Chatoyer. He would be invited to meetings and dinners by colonial administrators looking to further negotiations and gain security assurances for their expansion projects.[39] Although the British organized these meetings with diplomatic intentions in mind, Chatoyer would use information gathered to gain intelligence for future attacks and raids. The distrust of the Carib chief and his cadre, whether in response to

[39] Taylor, *The Black Carib Wars: Freedom, Survival and the Making of the Garifuna,* 60-61.

uncertain moments of cooperation, or in recovery from full-out agitation and attack, would propel administrators to construct new characteristics of the group as a whole. Working with the constant betrayal and confusion from Carib leaders, institutions that emerged during eras of British control necessitated the malleability of theories about the African-indigenous population. Given the insecurities of infrastructure and building materials, imperial defense, and climate catastrophes, this in turn would demand a constant recalibration of who the Black Caribs were, to keep up with crises after crises. Edmund Lincoln and James Seton specifically would conceive of them in multiple ways during the last two decades of the century, when the pressure to control and develop the nascent colony was at an all-time high.

The conceptualization of the Black Caribs for the British was an ongoing experiment, a colonial crutch, and a theoretical exercise to extract more funding and support from the metropole. Terminology assigned to them within letters, reports and meeting notes, ranged from categories like savages, Negroes, blacks, yellow, red, Caribs, Charaibs, natives, Black Caribs, Africans, and militants. During moments of the exchange of goods between settlers and Black Carib women, settlers conceived of them as merchants and skilled traders. When Chatoyer and other chiefs were guests at William Young's estate to negotiate over drinks, Young deemed them respected militants. Later on, as the pressure for policing and an accompanying carceral landscape emerged, the British came to understand the Caribs largely as criminals and vagrants. They were used to argue for a handful of colonial moral and civil binaries, which would be used to ultimately justify the superiority of the white, male, land-owning class. The making of the "Carib," and specifically the "Black Carib," revealed the many fissures and unstable conditions of the colonial state. Undeniably however, the reality and multiplicity of who the Caribs were beyond colonial strategy complicated these designations. However, through their attempts at

racialization, British administrators gravely underestimated the ramifications of the Caribs' refusal.

On Maroonage

In 1739, the British military in Jamaica was losing an ongoing war against the island's maroon population, which threatened the infrastructure of their entire sugar plantation industry. Colonial officials and planters were exhausted and suffering defeats at the hands of a highly organized militia. Not only did the maroons exhibit superior military expertise and survival proficiencies, but they had also spent the past eight decades organizing a mutually beneficial revolutionary network with rebels on plantations working as spies and actors of subterfuge. The first set of maroon treaties were presented that year, as a panicked and final resort to gain leverage against the rebel maroon army. The treaties stipulated that in return for an end of British attacks and a guarantee of freedom for their community, the maroons would also agree to return future plantation runaways and accept periodic "interference" from British representatives in their community life.[40] The maroons responded to the treaties in multiple ways, but it was largely a grueling decision for most of the fugitive population. Some were unable to sign out of guilt from having to return fugitive slaves, and some refused out of bare principle. There was a faction that left the maroon community and disappeared higher into the mountains, and some took their own lives. [41] Maroon response to the treaty wasn't unanimous nor was it necessarily successful for the British, yet it was used years later in St. Vincent to gain control during similar conditions.

[40] Lauren Dubois, "On the History of the Jamaican Maroons." *The Journal of African American History* 93, no. 1 (2008): 64-69. Accessed December 22, 2020. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20064256.

[41] In his book *True-Born Maroons* (2005), Kenneth Bilby highlights how profoundly difficult this decision was for them, some members who signed the treaties were dead-set against them, and how at least one of them left when the treaties were signed, disappearing higher into the mountains. Some took their own lives.

Three decades later, the Black Caribs held a sort of Atlantic kinship, a conjectural connection with the maroons of Jamaica. British politicians in the metropole and colonial officials in St. Vincent approached the Carib situation as an extension of earlier events in Jamaica, evident by legislative efforts imparted in both islands. During what the British considered the "First Carib War" in 1772, the Black Caribs were positioned as counterpart to Jamaica's maroons in the midst of ongoing warfare. After receiving numerous letters from acting governor Valentine Morris, the king in response thought it best to make the Caribs "useful subjects instead of dangerous enemies," proposing that the colonial government attempt a similar agreement with them in lieu of the British accepting defeat. This final attempt, led by a very real fear of being overpowered, was comparable to British sentiment in Jamaica more than three decades earlier. Morris and the British military on the island were already in weak form, incapacitated and in no position to deal with an organized militia numbering in the thousands. During this period of heightened warfare with the Caribs, they desperately grasped for any legislative or military assistance from the metropole that would assist in either "exterminating" the Caribs or subduing them. In April of 1772, the Earl of Hillsborough, secretary of state responsible for Britain's West Indian colonies, sent over a copy of the 1738 Jamaican Maroon Treaty as a guide to settle the conflict in St. Vincent.[42] A handful of Black Carib militants signed the treaty, while still continuing to agitate planters, obliterate larger infrastructure and estates, and block road and port construction on the island. Carib military leaders used their signatures as a stratagem to temporarily confuse Governor Morris with their compliance. While Jamaica's

[42] William Young Esq., *Authentic Papers Relative to the Expedition against the Charibbs and the Sale of Lands in the Island of St Vincent*, 73.

maroons and the Caribs responded variously to negotiations with the British state, British colonial officials compartmentalized both populations into a similar unit of fugitive Black autonomy, and significant threats that could potentially obliterate all traces of colonial domination and market production.

Along with the formidability of the Black Caribs, their designation as "maroons" and the implementation of Jamaica's document was indicative of the major disregard of St. Vincent's settlement by the metropole. Britain was distracted with larger colonial warfare simultaneous to the crises in St. Vincent, including the American Revolution in the north, which was by far a greater priority than fortifying minimally producing settlements in the leeward islands. St. Vincent as a colonial project was continuously neglected because of both imperial priorities in the larger Atlantic world and a distrust in the ability of Morris' government to manage a secure foundation for sugar production. Both external distractions and defeats at the hands of the Black Caribs kept the British War Office and Secretary of State convinced of the colony's inadequacy. Throughout the 1770s, the metropole exerted little effort on the particularities of St. Vincent's internal conflicts, resulting in the use of a recycled document in response to the panicked requests about the Caribs.

The larger context of the American Revolution also made way for an increased fears around the possibilities for Black Carib military alliances. Governor Morris spent the decade penning letters to Whitehall requesting urgent support in the form for funding and military fortifications. These enhancements were not intended to protect the colony from French forces; instead, they were a response to Black Carib militias, who were by now known for collaborating with specifically enemies of the British during wartime. In addition to Carib military numbers surpassing the British soldiers, Morris was highly concerned about specifically American pirates

and privateers coming to help arm the Caribs. His correspondence sent to London carried a language of a new internal enemy; whereas previously it was the French, now, because of a combination of crises, the Black Caribs and runaway slaves living in the interior mountains were their top adversaries on the island. According to Morris, it was an intimidating situation to the colony, "whose number of white people, free mulattoes, and even free negroes, holding property, or owning slaves with all their children, as also the number of slaves—the same as the number of the Caribs and the runaway negroes…"[43] The struggling settlement was losing their labor power to an autonomous and growing indigenous population that was actively destroying their plantations. In addition to the numbers Caribs themselves, the settlers now also feared the potential supplementation of rogue American supplementation. Whether pirates or privateers ever came to St. Vincent to back the Caribs, the rumors of such a coalition enhanced the Black Caribs reputation as powerful military actors on an Atlantic scale.

Colonial officials had a limited understanding of maroonage, that underestimated the scope and possibilities of Atlantic coalition. During the final decades of the eighteenth century, British administrators mistakenly imagined runaway Africans, indigenous populations, and the Black Caribs as only having the political capacity to demand sovereignty for themselves. The actions of maroon populations in St. Vincent, Brazil, Grenada, Cuba, Jamaica, St. Lucia, ad infinitum, prove otherwise—that there was a collective, anti-colonial, and abolitionist spirit that animated each "fugitive community." The colonial analysis erred in thinking that to be fugitive was to be independent from the whole. In fact, the Black Caribs would later go on to demonstrate not just a Black diasporic collectivity connected through networks of information and shared

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[43] Morris Letter "Outnumbered" #110, 19 March 1777, Box 260, Folder 4, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 27 June 1776- 16 September 1777, The National Archives in Kew.

military reinforcements, but also an internationalism founded on abolitionist struggles across race, class, and geography.

Police Expansion and Property

> "…while the remedy is withheld, the Evil is increasing."
> -Council Meeting Notes
> Kingstown, 5 April, 1792

One of the most urgent institutions that would demand new racial and class logics in St. Vincent was the settlement's police force. In March of 1792, Council members were discussing the possibility of passing a new bill for regulating the police in Kingstown, that would expand and specify the duties and jurisdiction of the settlement's officers. As the capital of the British settlement of the island, Kingstown was the site of major administrative buildings, the public market, and protected ports. Because of its centrality, most social and political restructuring that occurred within the capital would also be applied to surrounding parishes. Members of the legislature were frantically pushing for an amendment of the Police Act put into place five years earlier, which had failed to respond to the escalating threats from interior adversaries led by Black Carib militias. Passed in 1787, the previous act came with a limited duration, and failed to address the specific developments that had transpired in and around the island. 1792 marked the year that high profile planters and administrators pushed for legislation that moved beyond responding to threats strictly within the parameters of the settlement and were now contending with the possibilities of defense against a much larger abolitionist threat.

The push to expand police mandate on the island would last the entire duration of the year, as it was deeply wound up in emergent logics of property protection and criminalization—all which needed sanctioning through specific legislation. In April of 1792, the new bill for "regulating the Police of the town of Kingstown" was refused by Governor Seton for fear that it

would interfere with orders from the king. The crown had instructed against any new bills that would undermine the series of perpetual Acts already in place, which constituents bitterly remarked were "almost the whole code now in force" in the colony. While Seton and the legislature both admittedly agreed with the necessity and benefits of the new bill, the possibility that it might present as a novel bill that would go against the king's decree, kept the governor hesitant to assent. The Council was pushing for an urgent renewal of the earlier 1787 Police Bill and were angered by the refusal, declaring drastically that while the "remedy was being withheld, the evil is increasing."[44] The evil that Council members were alluding to came in the form of both agitators to the settlement's production and industry, the Black Caribs and all of their comrades, as well as their own heightened fear of their livelihoods falling into a what was described as a deplorable state, with their properties in such an insecure condition.

The vulnerability of colonial infrastructure, both existing and future, drove the push towards heightened security and policing within the colony. Specifically, the possibility of insurrection in the form of fires being set to wooden buildings drove the bulk of the requests for amended police legislation and property protections. Buildings were at risk of being burned down in multiple British parishes, but especially in Kingstown. The board of the Council described the town as experiencing "growing dangers" to the construction of wooden buildings that had already been erected, threatened by internal forces, circum-Caribbean revolt, and changes in the Atlantic market for trade and imports. Within the interior, fugitive slaves and Black Carib militias had been targeting these buildings during smaller attacks and anti-colonial warfare since the early 1760s. But along with Black indigenous people on the island "regulating"

[44] Council Meeting Notes, 5 April 1792, Box 260, Folder 12, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 05 November 1792- 15 October 1794, The National Archives in Kew.

the construction of infrastructure via blazed demolition, British colonial administrators knew all too well of the of networks among enslaved, and free Black societies in the Caribbean. The itinerant Black Caribs were well-experienced in island hopping for trade and weaponry negotiations with French colonies, placing them within the Caribbean networks of power, autonomy, and abolition. Knowing this, British administrators in St. Vincent considered news of insurrection from any other close colony disastrous. During the very same meeting in April that rejected the new Police Bill, growing concerns around the town's buildings being set on fire were directly prompted by news of a neighboring island's "late providential and narrow escape from conflagration in the capital." This was indeed the season for warfare and resistance against plantation slavery through means of obliterating property. Along with threats coming from insurrectionary forces, prospective wooden buildings were also vulnerable to market conditions of this period. In St. Vincent, planters and merchants were experiencing a great scarcity of lumber coming from North America, causing the delay of desired buildings. Planters grew desperate and took to praying for the admission of now "all kinds of American lumber," and pressured Governor Seton to issue a proclamation to open the port for the admission of lumber by June of that year.[45]

In addition to the struggle around the police amendment and the lumber shortage, the colonial government lacked the funding for the maintenance and reception of new properties. Some island leaders suggested passing a bill for the levying of taxes, but Council members soon realized that their constituents would not be paying for new structures while their own property was already susceptible to destruction, living in conditions described as "so insecure a

[45] Council Meeting Notes, 5 April 1792, Box 260, Folder 12.

situation."[46] Proprietors already contributed greatly to the payment of public expenses, and passing new tax legislation that would require their support towards new infrastructure, while existing property was being threatened, would certainly be unpopular and might incite a riot. The refusal of a new police bill, blocked by a perpetuity clause, would mean the security requested for existing properties would be denied—and thus prevented the likelihood of further taxation to the constituents of the colonies. Without strengthening the police force, they would not be able to tax their subjects and have that form of funding for infrastructural projects on the island. Saddled with this desperate set of circumstances, the colonial government and its constituents struggled to prioritize and protect infrastructure and property. From the frustrations, however, a new rendition of "private property" developed through its defense—one that needed to be approached multifariously.

Criminals, Abolition, and Private Property

Constructing a new defense of property demanded an expanded notion of criminality, one that intersected directly with Atlantic anti-slavery campaigns that had reached their peak by the late 1780's. Methodist preachers in St. Vincent found themselves entangled in rebel strategies on plantations and uniquely positioned against the settlement's police. Complaints of them carrying on in unlawful behavior, preaching and promoting doctrines "incompatible with the established police of the colony" were surfacing, brought forth primarily by a wealthy planter in St. Vincent, John Wilson, who served in Council. Methodist preachers, the bulk of them situated right at the border of Carib Country, had already built relations with the island's Black indigenous group over the past decade, but suddenly allegations of illicit activity in service to potential insurrections abounded. Preachers were accused of receiving money from the slaves, likely to

[46] Council Meeting Notes, 5 April 1792, Box 260, Folder 12.

assist in attempts at escape or revolt. There was a tension in how to go about dealing with these accusations, and some members of the Council thought that the laws already in place were sufficient and some suggested a new bill to remedy these "evils." The political alliance among Methodist preachers, enslaved laborers, and Caribs served as one of the first arguments for pushing better legislation for tighter policing and public restrictions in the colony. Government officials now deemed Methodist doctrines abolitionist, which fundamentally meant that they went against the priority of securing property, whether the institution of slavery, plantations, or infrastructure. Governor Seton demanded that the preachers be called to attend Council at the next meeting. On July 19, John Wilson motioned for a new bill once again, this time specifically entitled "An Act for Licensing Under Certain Circumstances Protestant Dissenting Preachers and Chapels."[47]

The conflict between the police and Methodist preachers was an indication of a larger panic by the colonial government over the prospect of full Atlantic abolition and a cessation of the slave trade entirely. Throughout the year, the House of Commons in Britain had been sending Governor Seton memorandum, warning him of what was to come. In May of 1792, the House passed a formal resolution that was sent to the Assembly by the Deputy Provost Marshall, quite deliberately stating that the "trade carried on by the British Subjects, for the purpose of procuring slaves from Africa, ought to be gradually abolished."[48] The resolution was accompanied by a letter from Secretary of State Henry Dundas to Governor Seton, maintaining that while the

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[47] Council Meeting Notes, 19 July 1792, Box 260, Folder 12, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 05 November 1792- 15 October 1794, The National Archives in Kew.

[48] Council Meeting Notes, 7 April 1792, Box 260, Folder 12, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 05 November 1792- 15 October 1794, The National Archives in Kew.

subject was to undergo further discussion, the resolution had passed on the instant. He warned that there would be a measure ultimately adopted, with details that could not yet be disclosed but for now the urgent message was a warning that "the Negroes be led into no violences from entertaining false ideas and conceptions of the intentions" of the King's plans. Dundas knew of the history and present possibility of enslaved Africans on the island receiving news of abolition and either leaving the plantations and/or or exacting revenge. He challenged Seton to use his conduct and conversation to affirm the constituents in St. Vincent that the general system of control and subordination of "the Negroes" on the island was still in their power. He stressed that the idea of "internal regulation" still belonged properly to the colonial assemblies.[49] Despite the assurance of the planters' continued control over the enslaved population already on the island, Seton and the Assembly strongly felt the loss of a labor force that they had yet to develop.

The panic around the cessation of the slave trade, the threat to property, and the general feeling of distrust in the settlement led the colony to rework hierarchies of difference amongst themselves, expanding the idea of criminality into a shared class designation. Now administrators in St. Vincent were looking directly to police poor whites on the island. Within a few days of introducing a bill restricting Methodist activities and threatening their station, another bill was brought forward that attempted to expand the sanction of the colony's police entitled "An Act for Punishing Rogues, Vagabonds and other idle and Disorderly Persons and Declaring who Shall be Deemed Rogues, Vagabonds, Idle and Disorderly Persons."[50] White peasantry, both British and French, were heavily implicated in this bill, joining the ranks of the Caribs who were long-established as the resident vagabonds on the island. The bill specifically

[49] Council Meeting Notes, 7 April 1792, Box 260, Folder 12.

[50] Council Meeting Notes, 5 April 1792, Box 260, Folder 12.

utilized descriptors of idleness, dishonesty, or disorderly, as they could be easily argued and defended by proprietors of higher standing. It was an appeal to punish or kill anyone suspected of anti-colonial or abolitionist thought or practice—poor white citizens, French peasantry, and Caribs alike.

The Vagabond Act attempted to grant wealthier proprietors the ability to enforce their own policing as they saw fit, with no repercussion. It was an appeal to sanctioned vigilantism. The contents of the Act and the details determining who would be considered disorderly were one thing, but the introduction of the Act in effect expanded the imperative of policing outside of those actually hired as the settlement's police. Assembly members of the House were now arguing for the individual right to be able to determine who the criminals were and to order their punishment. The emergence of such an act at this time was not arbitrary, as they feared the abolition of the slave trade would be followed by the abolition of slavery. They were losing the unstable authority they had.

The board was still conflicted about the Methodist preachers and their relationship with rebels, and this fear propelled them to double down on measures of defense and control in and around the island. Within the same month of the Vagabond Act, the legislature also pushed for the establishment of a "Court of Grand Session" to be held by Commissions of *Oyer and Terminer*. The Court of Grand Session was directed around taking away the benefit of clergy from people convicted of certain crimes, and extending that same jurisdiction to the waters, meaning crimes committed on the seas within a certain distance of the shores. A three-person committee had been appointed to receive proposals for building a courthouse and jail back in 1787, but it had not acted upon; its members had since either died or left the House, and a new committee was appointed to get started on these buildings immediately.

Following the appeal to vigilantism through the Vagabond Act, and a refusal of clergy from people convicted of crimes, a new string of property legislation rolled in to help justify the expansion of carceral policies. Bills demanded a more "equal distribution" of estates, highway repair, protection of the springs that were the source of water for rivers running into the different towns and supplying certain estates, and construction of a new main road in St. George's and Charlotte Parishes. [51] "An act for the better regulating of seamen and suitors and obliging masters of vessels to take care of their sick seamen and sailors and performing their contracts with them" was read aloud for a second time. Having heard of a recent price drop on sugar in Britain, the House also gave special concern in making sure that the little industry they had, was protected. The defense of property in St. Vincent was now more than ever centered around the rights of the elite to enclose and appropriate all public goods: common areas, the waters, the forests, control systems, and defense. The flurry of legislation towards these accommodations represented the surfacing of a new entitlement towards private property in St. Vincent. These responses to the forthcoming cessation of the slave trade, transformed the meanings of criminality, police, and property throughout the colony. The settlement was attempting to become a carceral landscape, in both infrastructure and ideology.

September of that year would start the beginning of a power struggle between the colonial government of St. Vincent and the king over legislative rights. At the next House meeting, the new Police Act was laid before Governor Seton again. Seton announced clearly that the Act did not in any way differ from the former police bill passed in 1787 but only in the details of the title, thus again preventing his assenting to the newer bill, especially without

[51] Although intentions toward the "equal distribution of estates" were put forth during Council, the surrounding discourse made clear that only the inhabitants seen as deserving would be eligible, the majority of which were elite planters.

having obtained the king's approbation for the first bill. The king's response to the continued appeals for an updated police legislation would instead suspend Governor Seton's powers in passing grants of any lands, tenements, or hereditaments for the island. The control over land distribution was now usurped by the crown. [52]

In response to the warnings of abolition, Governor Seton grappled in his position to satisfy the urgent requests for an increase in police regulation from the legislature, while still adhering to the clear directions from the king. Both the Council and governor felt anxious for the safety of the town, however, Seton knew he was not sufficiently authorized to approve of the Bill in its present form without first having the Crown's approval to depart from his explicit instructions.[53] Deputy Provost Marshall relayed extracts of the 17th and 23rd articles directly from the crown, that after reading, the governor felt militated against the police bill. First, Article 17 prohibited the colony from passing laws that included clauses that had "no proper relation to each other," or clauses inserted that differed from what the title of the Act imported. The excerpt from Article 23 forbade what the crown called "bills of unusual and extraordinary nature and importance in the plantation." The king stated that mischief would consequently arise from the frequent passing of these sorts of bills, and the temporary nature in which they were passed. Requests like the Police Reform Bill were framed as inconsistent legislation, which the king felt invited confusion amongst constituents. Seton was advised against assenting to any Bills that exhibited these characteristics, which the king feared would further tamper with property of the

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[52] Council Meeting Notes, 7 September 1792, Box 260, Folder 12, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 05 November 1792- 15 October 1794, The National Archives in Kew.

[53] Seton understood the 17th and 23rd articles of the King's instructions to him militated against the Police Bill as it stood, and he was prohibited from passing the bill of regulation, as well as granting or appropriating any crown lands. Taken from meeting Notes on June 12th, 1792 (92)

British subjects and affect the "trade or shipping of the Kingdom." The Bill could not become law until it was transmitted across the Atlantic by a principal Secretary of State, and to the Committee of Privy Council for Trade and Plantations. Seton, having been sent excerpts of these clauses, suggested the Council transmit a draft of the Bill directly to the king's ministers, to avoid the inconveniences of passing a temporary Police Bill. However, news of the prohibition of bills had already reached other colonies and was not received well.

The Collective Colonial Clapback

The crown's new clauses delayed the execution of bills, angering colonial legislators across the islands. Mr. Campbell, from the joint committee appointed to correspond with the legislatures of the other West Indian settlements, informed the board they had prepared resolutions in response to the novel and repressive legislation. British colonies of the windward and leeward islands understood themselves to be in an alarming situation, and felt these laws were greatly detrimental to the already unstable internal security of the settlements. Council members in St. Vincent were persuaded to correspond with the legislature of the other islands, to adopt proper measures for guarding against the dangers which threatened them, and the limitations of the new clauses. The resolution called for some correspondence to respond to these panics, voicing disapproval in their "united voices [of] the ruin which must inevitably fall on the devoted colonies if the oppressive and unconstitutional system now in contemplation by the Mother country" should persist.

Immediate concerns submitted to the Council and assemblies of different islands were as follows; first, demanding the right to have control over internal legislation on all matters relating to the internal colony. Secondly, that the islands should be entitled to a full recompence from Great Britain for whatever losses they sustained in consequence of either a gradual or total

abolition of the slave trade. Thirdly, while at the same time demanding autonomy to dictate internal legislation, the colonies still sought effectual protection to be supplied by Britain, and that the protection afforded to them already should be increased, as the internal security of the settlements are now greatly endangered by the possibility of abolition. And, finally, they voiced the astonishment and indignation at the "unconstitutional and oppressive measures" adopted by the British Parliament for reducing the price of British sugars at the British market far below the price of sugars of other foreign islands, thus "clogging and restricting" trade. These demands were then sent out to the Council and House Assemblies of each colony for approval and notes on further action, followed by selected measures for the purpose of "averting those evils which threaten our interests and our security."[54]

A month later, after the Council in Kingstown were presented with this collective resolution in defense of their autonomy from the mother country, the House took it upon themselves to attempt the police bill again, with the lengthy title "An Act for Regulating the Police and for the Improvement of the Town of Kingstown rendering the same healthy and commodious guarding against the dreadful effects of fire supplying the town with wholesome water and conforming the Title to certain spots of land mentioned therein appropriated by the Commissioners for the Sale of Lands in this and the other Islands in the year 1765 for the use of the inhabitants of the said town and for other purposes and for building a Stone Bridge over the North River where the old Wooden one now is."[55] The introduction of the bill insisted that it was in no part liable to objection or offensive to the spirit and letter of the king's most recent

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[54] Council Meeting Notes, 12 July 1792, Box 260, Folder 12, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 05 November 1792- 15 October 1794, The National Archives in Kew.

[55] Council Meeting Notes, 20 July 1792, Box 260, Folder 12, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 05 November 1792- 15 October 1794, The National Archives in Kew.

instructions. The House demanded the agreement of the new town bill from the governor and the rest of the Assembly, declaring that the "the property and the very lives" of those residing in the town were hinging on the passing of the bill.

Conclusion

The events of 1792 demonstrated the frenzied manner in which colonial administrators in St. Vincent attempted to secure their power, and in the process, decipher *who* lived on the island with them, and how the social landscape was organized. The Black Caribs, conceived of as both a militia and an entire population, had been consistent as formidable and strategic adversaries to the British for much of the eighteenth century. Their racialization, especially towards the final decades of the century, was erratic and sometimes contradictory— as it was fundamentally contingent on internal and external warfare and crises. Sometimes Black Carib descriptors would work in favor of colonial military requests, and other times it would invite contempt and more neglect from the king. The Black Caribs' designation as maroons both proved their military prowess, comparable to Jamaican fugitive societies, *and* demonstrated the level of disregard by the metropole towards the colony. Ultimately, the pervasive insecurity of the colony was responsible for assembling different iterations of the African-indigenous population, as a necessity to argue for the protection of their properties and economic expansion.

The requests for a new and improved form of policing, that expanded their jurisdiction and duties, revealed a larger insecurity around attacks on infrastructure and private estates. Attempts to expand police mandates would be prolonged by the king's own fears of inciting confusion and more instability on the island and would potentially interrupt the small business on the island. St. Vincent's colonial administrators needed to come up with logics to justify the urgency of their requests and constructed an expanded version of "criminality" in the settlement

to now include poor British and French settlers. They were conceived of as “vagabonds,” joining the Black Caribs in this designation and category of illegitimacy within the island. With The Vagabond Act, administrators attempted to sanction vigilantism among wealthy proprietors, and give them the power to punish whomever they deemed vagrants and “rogues,” as they saw fit.

The continuous appeals for a new Police Act were most importantly a window into the pervasive fears around abolition and anti-colonial movements happening in and around the island in 1792. Surveillance around Methodist preachers also increased, as rumors of their collaboration with rebel slaves and Caribs was brought up in the Assembly. Fear around the Methodist’s actions also led to the Council introducing a bill that refused the benefit of clergy from people convicted of crimes, on land or on water. This was an attempt to keep Methodist preachers and fugitive slaves or Caribs, as separate as possible. The king still feared an instability among the inhabitants in St. Vincent and proceeded to issue clauses that delayed the execution of bills. These clauses were intended for multiple colonies in the Caribbean and resulted in a collective uproar from the committee of legislatures within each settlement, and they responded with demands of their own, in defense of their own autonomy. This was a period of an intensified determination towards a carceral landscape in St. Vincent, and these efforts would continue until the Second Carib war.

Chapter 2: Ann's Petition

> *After three weeks of searching through hundreds of molded and hurricane-stricken eighteenth century documents at the National Archives in Kew, a petition for the sale of property in 1790 came across my lot. The letter was primarily for the property sale of Ann Barramont, a Black Carib woman living in St. Vincent, a Caribbean island in the Lesser Antilles chain just west of Barbados. The petition mentioned herself, her children, and a man named Pierre Barramont in the transaction—positioning her as the matriarch and head of the family. Rarely have the colonial archives mentioned a Black Carib woman, let alone contained a document detailing her individual experience. After photographing Ann's petition, I shut the hundred-page folder the letter was stuffed into, only to have it fall open again, exactly on her page.*

In 1790, Ann Barramont was a Black, indigenous, free, and landowning elder living in Ribishi, a British settlement located in Saint George's Parish, a few miles away from Kingstown. While her position as a property-owner in a British settlement was anomalous in the context of colonial impositions of identity and restriction, like Black, indigenous, savage and woman, the possibility of her land tenure signaled a colonial dependence on systems of ownership, reinforcing the priorities of racial capitalism.[56] As a participant in a colonial market of land tenure and transaction, Ann's story is a unique contribution to the emerging and unstable dynamics of property and subjectivity in the Caribbean in the eighteenth century.[57] Directed by

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[56] Cedric Robinson describes how the function of racial capitalism was not to create fixed racial markers of differentiation: instead, it held priority in reproducing property, violence and expansion. Ann Barramont's position as a Black-indigenous woman who owned property was atypical given the social and political climate, but her story succumbed to the larger system at play. For more on racial capitalism and its genesis, see Cedric Robinson's *Black Marxism: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (1983), chapters 1-3.

[57] Ann's story is unique within the particular context of St. Vincent, as only a handful of families were allowed ownership within the British settlement. However, within the larger British Caribbean, she joins a tradition of free Black women that were able to gain property holdings in the eighteenth century, some even achieving wealth and power that surpassed while male proprietors on the islands. For accounts on these women, see Kit Candlin and Cassandra Pybus' text *Enterprising Women: Gender, Race, and Power in the Revolutionary Atlantic* (2015).

the Barramont petition for sale, this chapter explores the insecurities of colonialism to craft the world in which Ann Barramont and her family resided.

Mention of individual Black Caribs are scant within the colonial archives. When directly discussed, they emerge through flat characterizations, mostly treated as a violent and perfidious group. They appear in the archive primarily within letters, as official complaints and tactical information dispatched to the metropole. These documents primarily reacted to Black Carib military subversion, including rescinding on previous signed agreements of access and boundaries, preventing the construction of roads and ports, and setting fire to estates. Except for Black Carib military leaders like Chief Joseph Chatoyer, primary documents rarely included individual names or intimate details from this population. Within the colonial archive, they appear mostly as a pesky and dangerous singular unit, void of variation and complexity.

During the last two decades of the century, the Caribs faced increased challenges and threats towards their livelihoods. Because of this, they found alternative ways to respond to and resist domination. Black Carib women and men engaged in a variety of activities, from occupying military posts to selling cassava to British settlers on the floors of Kingstown's outdoor markets. By this time, most Black Caribs were fluent in French and had taken up French names. Their families had stayed connected to armies and the colonial government in Martinique. Some Caribs had enough military clout to have direct access to the British king and participated in communications and even negotiations across the Atlantic. Their petitions accompanied correspondence that Governor Seton sent to Whitehall—Britain's administrative unit that handled colonial affairs, and then eventually be transmitted to the Lords Commissioners of the Treasury. A handful of Black Carib families were even given ownership of properties on the settled parts of the island by the British, as exemplified by the case of the Barramont family.

The probable movements that led to the various lives of Black Caribs can only be determined by a close reading of the documents, and by apprehending the worlds that helped mold them. Ann's petition for sale is so crucial in this regard, because it is at the intersection of historical convergences—the possibilities for French and Spanish invasion, revolt from the indigenous population on the island, and struggles for land tenure.

Ann and her family's ownership of these plots of land also raise important questions on the endurance of matrilineal power dynamics during a time when primarily men were heralded as wartime chiefs and leaders of the various subgroups of the Black Caribs. Currently, there exist no written histories of Black Carib women during this era. With historical gaps such as these, in which Black Carib women have become phantom actors in Caribbean and Atlantic history, their stories get eclipsed by masculinized narratives of insurgency and anti-colonial struggle.[58] These women and their families get abstracted into flattened ideas of colonial warfare. The following chapter aims to fill in those gaps.

[58] Aisha Finch discusses authorities in colonial Cuba framing insurgencies as "compulsively linear, deeply militarized, leadership heavy, and threaded with violence," and calls the documents produced during this time a "violent form of selectivity," see *Rethinking Slave Rebellion in Cuba: La Escalera and the Insurgencies of 1841- 1844* (2015). St Vincent's own colonial documents regarding the events surrounding insurrections and anti-colonial struggles of enslaved, fugitive and autonomous Black Caribs, mirror much of the described selectivity in nineteenth century Cuba.

Ann's Petition

> July 14, 1790
> Unto your Excellency that your petitioners the said Ann Rouillé Barramont, Pierre Barramont, Celeste Barramont, Mary Ann Barramont and Rosalie Barramont are each of them separately professed of a small lot, Piece or Parcel of Land in the quarter of Ribishi in the said island of St Vincent held under concession from his Majesty on condition nevertheless of nonalienation without the consent of his Majesty's commander and chief for the time being.
>
> That your petitioner Ann Rouillé Barramont is now very aged, infirm and unable of herself to cultivate her said lot of land and your other petitioners are of themselves also unable to cultivate their lots which are themselves too inconsiderable for distinct settlements wherefore they are all desirous of disposing of the same to your petitioner the said William Bannatyne who has offered them a full and fair price therefore with which they are perfectly satisfied and which will be much for their ease, benefit and advantage to accept provided your petitioners have your Excellency's permission herein…[59]

A handful of meaningful entry points can be deduced from this document. Ann was an elder, the matriarch of her household, with three adult children—Celeste, Marianne, and Rosalie. The petition states that she was a widow, so we know her partner had died prior to the construction of this document. Pierre Barramont was likely another family member who was also allotted a plot of land in Ribishi. The way in which Ann is primarily identified within the petition, makes clear she is the head of the family. She is portrayed as an older woman that is no longer able to care for her plot. The family's French names tell us that they too, were part of the political tradition shared amongst the Black Carib population that had spent decades in strategic community with French settlements. However, in the petition, Ann and her late partner are described as "Caraibess Widow" and "Caribman" as opposed to "Black Charaibs," intentionally

[59] D. Campbell to Governor James Seton, 14 July 1790, Box 260, Folder 10, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 2 January 1790- 22 November 1790, The National Archives, Kew.

deducting part of a racial supposition for her and her family and suggesting that they were a different sort of Carib. The five of them had each been declared owner of a small lot of land in Ribishi and were some of the last of the Black Carib families to have property holdings within the settlement in 1790.

The Barramonts were not the only Black Caribs who had owned property within the British settlement. Multiple pieces of land were granted by British commissioners in 1773 to Carib families who reportedly possessed a "friendly disposition," in contrast to the Caribs characterized as militant that were scattered throughout the island. The purported friendly Black Caribs were also positioned against the inhabitants living in "Carib Country." [60] Families like the Barramonts were not considered militant, or even neutral, like the population in Carib Country. Their perceived "friendly disposition" implied an adopted subjecthood that would grant them access to the same legal concessions as the island's white settlers. These select Black Carib families were permitted to "reside in different situations in the settled part of the country," with most of them having been allotted plots also in St. George's Parish. Although the paperwork proving that they were lawfully living on British-settled land was destroyed during the Great Hurricane of 1780, Governor Seton promised that the new colonial government would respect the Caribs' title to land.[61] The petition for sale interrupted Ann Barramont and her family's lives in Ribishi after almost two decades of residency.

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[60] Seton to Grenville, Account No. 105, 14 July 1790, Box 260, Folder 10, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 2 January 1790- 22 November 1790, The National Archives, Kew.

[61] Seton to Grenville, Account No. 105, 14 July 1790.

When British administrators made the notation of "friendly disposition," they attempted to assign a hierarchy of character within the Black Caribs, carrying over an older and larger logic of subjugation within the Caribbean—the binary of the friendly Carib and the hostile Carib.[62] This differentiation that Governor Seton wrote about, was based on the perceived malleability of certain Carib families and the potential for their submission as adopted subjects within the colony. The British used land grants to incorporate elements of the Carib population into the regime and to establish potential allies against hostile Black Caribs. The "friendly" families would have the privilege of lawful property ownership within the British settlement and the Black Caribs that refused colonial legislation and ownership were by contrast unfriendly and unworthy. According to colonial administrators, they ultimately did not belong on the island.

Although the Barramonts were understood by administrators as "friendly Caribs," new property, cultivation and security conditions led to the family's dispossession in 1790. Tensions escalated on the island between British authorities and the Black Carib militia and fostered more of a distrust of the indigenous population as a whole. External threats from the Spanish and French had also been building up in the larger Caribbean, which put the British settlement in a place of wanting to consolidate the little control they had over the land. British peasants, small landholders and larger proprietors, all scrambled towards securing property holdings for themselves, amidst the insecurity in and around the island. St. Vincent still was not producing enough crop to garner attention or consistent support from the metropole, which was an even larger reason to establish British land holdings and take back what had been previously granted

[62] Peter Hulme discusses this character polarization within the historiography in *Wild Majesty: Encounters with Caribs from Columbus to the Present Day* (1992). After European invasion, the dynamic of the friendly versus the savage Carib was often argued through travelogues to legitimize claims of the Caribs as cannibals, see Philip Boucher's *Cannibal Encounters: Europeans and Island Caribs, 1492-1763* (1992).

to Black Carib families. Ann, Pierre, and her children were among of the last to be pushed off of their land in St. George's parish. Their land ownership significantly threatened colonial desires to establish a thriving plantation economy on island.

Spatial Portrait and Demography

In 1790, St. Vincent was structurally varied and diverse. The island was occupied by British and French settlers, enslaved Africans, Black Caribs and a smaller population of what the British termed "Yellow Caribs"—the ethnic group presumed to have less African lineage than the Black Caribs. The small number of French inhabitants living on small scale plantations were confined to the leeward shore of the island, in an area called Sandy Bay. British colonists had settled in southern and western parts of the island, in parishes such as St. Andrew and St. George. The Caribs still prevented them from building infrastructure in what was considered the most fertile portion of the land—the windward coast, where Caribs lived. The Caribs limited the French settlers to the leeward bays and along the river valleys going inland,[63] and severely restricted the location of their properties as well as the nature and volume of the agricultural production on those properties. French settlements that had taken up small lots of land on the island prior to the Treaty of Paris were governed by the French Marquis in Martinique, while British settlers answered to Governor Seton and were negotiating their place under the British crown.

The "Yellow Caribs" in 1790 were products of the colonial narrative and its attendant racial markers. Residing on the leeward coast, they were reported to be few in number (officials placed the population at about one hundred); this small population likely bolstered the narrative

[63] Taylor, *The Black Carib Wars: Freedom, Survival and the Making of the Garifuna*, (2012).

of Black Carib destructiveness, characterizing the latter as vicious runaway slaves that came to the island and devastated the earlier indigenous population.[64] In a way, colonial attempts to census St. Vincent revealed more about the spatial restrictions the British confronted, than about who inhabited the island. British and French writers were not permitted access into all Black Carib spaces on the island, so they calculated Carib population numbers mostly from the western coast of the island. This limited access allowed them to disregard the intermixing of the two communities, Black and Yellow Caribs, over the previous decades. Colonial population surveys furthered a racial binary between the Black and Yellow Caribs based on European access only to the western leeward bank and their restricted knowledge of Carib Country. Surveys of inhabitants in the 1790's were not so much accurate reports, as they were evidence of a local struggle to divide and subjugate the Carib population.

People of African descent were everywhere, and included the Black Caribs, an enslaved population brought by both the British and French, and those that escaped. Enslaved Africans on the island were constantly destabilizing plantation production, destroying property, and escaping to free societies on different parts of the island. Rebellions on plantations were strategic, the enslaved population often staged uprisings during the holiday season in December. They presumably found this a likely time for a successful action, since servicemen within the colony would request leave during the holiday season to travel home. [65] Governor Seton was forced to

[64] Christopher Taylor calls their numbers "dwindling" by this time in *The Black Carib Wars*. This sentiment was made popular primarily through primary accounts such as Bryan Edward's *The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies* (1794), pgs. 270-276, and William Young's assertions of the decrease in population in his *Account of the Black Charaibs in the Island of St Vincent's* (1795).

[65] Meeting Notes, 6 August 1789, Box 260, Folder 10, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 2 January 1790- 22 November 1790, The National Archives, Kew.

withhold new proclamations until the celebratory seasons had passed, as word of newly developed legislation provoked even larger and more effective insurrections. Revolts in the estates would stall if not completely prevent the progress of law-making and governance on the island. Along with uprisings, an increasing number of enslaved people also escaped and formed maroon societies in the company of the Black Caribs, living autonomously in the mountainous regions away from the coasts.

The island, and particularly Kingston, was still recovering from the most destructive and largest hurricane ever chronicled to hit the Caribbean. Known as the "Great Hurricane," the massive storm swept through the islands in October of 1780 and was reported to have taken the lives of close to 30,000 people total in Barbados, St. Lucia, St. Vincent, Martinique, Grenada and Guadeloupe. Winds were estimated to have reached 200 miles per hour, and in terms of modern measurements, this storm qualified as a Category 5. It first slammed into Barbados and destroyed most of the infrastructure in Bridgetown, ruining fortifications, churches and sugar mills, and taking close to 4,500 lives. The hurricane devastated the shipping and trade economy on every island, sinking Dutch, French and British vessels, and smashing them to pieces on the coast. Out of the 600 houses built in Kingston, the capital port of St. Vincent, only sixteen survived. Sugarcane was torn up from the ground and homes were demolished. The storm disproportionately took the lives of enslaved Africans on each island it encountered, either through direct contact or subsequently, from disease, lack of food, or injury suffered from the storm. [66]

[66] For a circum-Caribbean context of the Great Hurricane of 1780, see Stuart B. Schwartz' *A History of Hurricanes in the Greater Caribbean from Columbus to Katrina* (2015). Travelogues along with colonial officials who were present at the time also detail the material havoc the storm caused, such as Charles Shephard's *An Historical Account of the Island of St Vincent,* and Thomas Southey's *Chronological*

Nearly a decade later, colonial infrastructure on the island was still recovering from the massive hurricane, and new buildings were slowly going up in and around Kingstown. The settlement was distracted with recovery and was still at the nascent stages of a functioning colonial society. By 1789, there were still no churches, and settlers used the courthouse in Kingstown for prayers and mass. Two missionaries had been sent to the island that year by the Society of Methodists in England, for the instruction of the Caribs. They were fully unsuccessful in their conversion plans but received a grant of sixty acres of land with consent from the Council made out for them. After waiting 12 months for the grant, the failed crusaders erected a house that was bounded on one side by Carib County. With little to no support, the two lone missionaries would occasionally read prayers, and they would preach a few times a week in Kingstown. Along with the pair of English Methodists, only two French Roman Catholic priests resided on the island. The French inhabitants were "rather of the poorest cast" and their numbers were considered by Governor Seton to be inconsiderable.[67] The same religious neglect was evident throughout the island, whether it involved Methodists, Catholics, or the Church of England. The government's intention could not yet be directed towards anything other than defense. Although most of the buildings on the island were demolished by the hurricane, the impetus of government officials was to invest the bulk of their present and prospective resources into building much needed fortifications.

*History of the West Indies, V. 2 (*1827)—both of them chronicling the destitute state in which the hurricane had left their attempts at colonial infrastructure.

[67] Seton to Grenville, 28 August 1789, Box 260, Folder 9, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence, The National Archives in Kew.

The Present Crises

British inhabitants on all social levels were navigating a precarious livelihood in St. Vincent. The government in particular was struggling both to increase plantation production, and to defend their colony. Because of the embryonic nature of the settlement, Governor Seton wished to dedicate a sizeable portion of time and resources to securing coastal ports for importing and exporting goods in hopes of establishing a booming sugar industry. However, he was unable to dedicate resources solely towards production, however—instead he was also forced to contend with present threats against what was already established. The colonial administration, forced to amend their priorities, would also need to focus their efforts on building and maintaining fortifications and defense from impending intrusions and warfare coming from both internal and external groups on the island.

While the urgent need to build fortifications was communicated as protection against outside disturbances, an overwhelming fear of the Black Caribs augmented the anxiety. British inhabitants were under constant attack from various Black Carib militias that were insistent on preventing the development of a sugar colony. News of the destruction caused by Carib attacks reached the metropole by the mid 1780s, and authorities there immediately recommended measures for the defense of the island. During proceedings of the House, Seton appointed the use of enslaved Africans to build storage for ammunition and to make other military provisions in response to the encroachment of the Caribs and the destruction of British plantations. The crown instructed General Mathew to take measures for the relief of the settlers.[68]

[68] Whitehall to Seton, 19 November 1789, Box 260, Folder 9, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence, The National Archives in Kew.

By 1789, enslaved Africans who were brought in originally for plantation labor, were instead conscripted to build barricades and walls to reinforce dilapidated military barracks. The urgent need for fortifications prompted the *St. Vincent Gazette* to feature a weekly warning notifying slave owners that they were subject to fines of six shillings per day for every "Negro so absconding or being absent for a length of time,"[69] or for any enslaved laborer not working on fortifications at the urgency expected of them. By March of that year, 150 enslaved Africans were brought to labor in Public Works solely to build fortifications for the island.[70]

The number of African laborers deployed for defense soon surpassed those working on plantations and on other public infrastructure projects. The settlement was filled with uncertainty—inhabitants fearing for their property and livelihoods, coupled with the anxiety surrounding the colony's inability to defend itself from inside and outside forces. Planters and merchants pushed to pass an act regarding a certain number of Black workers to provide continuous work in building defense infrastructures, for their own security and protection. "The Act Toward Negro Labor and Fortifications" was passed in June of 1790, authorizing close to 200 enslaved Black laborers to work for the next 12 months on building fortifications in an effort to alleviate the fears of the island's white inhabitants.[71]

Along with protecting their plantations, British inhabitants were also having trouble securing a sustainable port for exporting sugar. The best areas to do so were on the windward side of the island, adjacent to Black Carib territory. The coasts of Carracaribou or Sans Souie

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[69] Meeting Notes, 30 July 1789, Box 260, Folder 10, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 2 January 1790- 22 November 1790, The National Archives in Kew.

[70] Seton letter, 20 March 1789, Box 260, Folder 9

[71] Letter from Seton to Grenville, 5 June 1790, Box 260, Folder 10, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 2 January 1790- 22 November 1790, The National Archives in Kew.

were much preferable to any other bay for a shipping location, both located in St. George Parish. These areas were optimal for shipping because of the large rocks that held back the surf, the water between the rocks and the land was shallow which made it easier for port construction, and vessels could easily clear the pier head with the wind from the east, which were the prevailing winds during crop season. A rough pier had already been started by the British at Coubain and there were attempts to make a pier at Byabou (also spelled Biabou) as well. Both projects were unstable. Shipping ports located beyond Colonorie, at the northward and westward the bays, were at risk of uncertain winds that could destroy vessels.[72] Governor Seton remained nervous about the danger of building ports directly on the coastal area occupied by a large population Black Caribs, who had already made clear their capabilities.

Seton was also experiencing heavy anxiety about nearby Spanish colonies and the potential for Spanish intrusion. The British governor was preparing to meet the urgency of such an event. In June of 1790, the Spanish Minister of State, Count de Florida Blanca, was involved in a heated discussion with the British Ambassador at Madrid over Spanish dominion in the Americas, including the West Indies. English vessels had already been detained at Nootka island, west of Vancouver Island, Canada, in an ambush known as the Nootka Crisis.[73] The island was a Spanish colony at the time, and de Florida Blanca was suspicious of England's intentions to encroach on other Spanish dominions, particularly in the South American hemisphere. Reports of a shortage of gunpowder and other ammunition were sent out from Whitehall, in reference to the

[72] Seton Letter no. 103, 2 July 1790, Box 260, Folder 10, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 2 January 1790- 22 November 1790, The National Archives in Kew.
[73] For more on the Nootka Crisis and Britain's interest in the northwest coast of North America, see V.T. Harlow's *The Founding of the Second British Empire 1763-1793* (1964), and John M. Norris's article found in *The English Historical Review*, entitled "The Policy of the British Cabinet in the Nootka Crisis" (1955).

condition of St. Vincent's British settlement. A large supply of gunpowder was shipped to the West Indies in June, with 200 barrels destined for St. Vincent. As soldiers on the island still had not received the gunpowder, requests were made for more different kinds of ammunition to be sent immediately to the West Indies.[74] Whitehall stipulated that nothing in any way would be neglected that could contribute to the security of the colony.[75] In a secret letter to Grenville airing out his anxieties, Seton reported that everything has been done for the defense of the island—they had just received a hundred barrels of gunpowder, and a hundred for the use by the Navy. The troops in the island garrison were reported in high health as well. [76] The looming threat of Spanish invasion would last well into the new year, what Seton gravely referred to as "the present crisis."[77] In actuality, unstable sugar production, threats from Spain and non-stop agitation from Black Carib military forces had the colonial government experiencing multiple crises. British inhabitants in St. Vincent desperately needed to secure something for themselves, to determine their security in an uncertain Atlantic world. The anxiety around security, both from external and internal enemies, would be the driving force that led to Ann and her family's dispossession. The certainty of property holdings within the settlement, were a crucial part of recuperation for the struggling settlers.

[74] Whitehall Letter No. 12, 16 September 1790, Box 260, Folder 10, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 2 January 1790- 22 November 1790, The National Archives in Kew.

[75] Secret Letter from Seton to Grenville, 1 October 1790, Box 260, Folder 10, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 2 January 1790- 22 November 1790, The National Archives in Kew.

[76] Secret Letter from Seton to Grenville, 1 October 1790.

[77] Secret Letter from Seton to Grenville, 29 June 1790, Box 260, Folder 10, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 2 January 1790- 22 November 1790, The National Archives in Kew.

The Struggle for Property

Property and land ownership offered a semblance of certainty to an insecure colony experiencing continuous threats. After the American Revolutionary War, British Loyalists rushed towards the colonies in the Caribbean in hopes of securing livelihoods that yielded more profit than their time in North America. Their hopes rested in the sugar industry, but they were also in desperate need of a sense of more immediate security. They joined the British settlers that had already been living in St. Vincent during the earlier French occupation, in hopes of securing land and property. It would not be an easy feat.

British inhabitants in St. Vincent were growing impatient. After French forces invaded the island in 1779 and took over British territory with the help of Black Carib military units, the remaining British settlers were allowed to continue to enjoy their previous civil government, laws, usages and ordinances. Justice would be administered by the same people that were then in office, and the business of interior policing would be settled between the French governor and inhabitants. In case the island should be ceded formally to France during the Treaty of Peace, the inhabitants were given the option to either preserve their political government, or to accept the presiding French government in Martinique, General Marquis D' Bouille. Because of the inattention of the French government on the island, the British king was still able to delegate on property and land holdings for the remaining subjects. The king released the land (freehold as well as leasehold) from all claim of future quit-rents and attempted to renew leases and make alterations on the tenure of these lands. The drafts of the new grants were prepared and approved by government, but because of an absence of intendants, various accidents with paperwork, and changes of governors, the grants remained unexecuted, even at the restoration of the colony to

the crown of Great Britain in 1783.[78] The failure to follow up in grant renewals, heavy sums built up from past quit-rents, the massive hurricane of 1780 and "other calamities incident to the state of a captured island," provoked a questioning of loyalty to the crown for the British inhabitants.[79] Not only were they fed-up with the precarious conditions of warfare in the Americas, but also with their dependence on a monarch who could not guarantee their survival.[80]

Past conditions, as well as the circumstances they had inherited on the island, further destabilized their allegiance to the crown, and after suffering from the losses sustained during the revolutionary war, British settlers felt entitled to the immediate ratification of their land occupancies. Under the Treaty of Peace, both the British and French kings had reciprocally agreed that the settlers in the islands conquered during the war and restored or ceded by that treaty, should preserve their properties upon that same title and conditions by which they had acquired them. Since Britain's earlier claims to the island in 1763, the Privy Council limited individual estates so that they did not exceed five hundred acres, to prevent them from becoming too large. This measure was taken to prevent soil exhaustion from "haphazard" agricultural attempts on other islands. It was estimated that one white men, or two white women were permitted to 100 acres.[81] Nevertheless, on St. Vincent, past claims to land and property leases

[78] Council Letter to Seton, 13 April 1790, Box 260, Folder 10, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 2 January 1790- 22 November 1790, The National Archives in Kew.

[79] Council Letter to Seton, 13 April 1790

[80] As a result of the American revolutionary war, the white colonial elite formulated different strategies towards self-government, however still within the British empire. For more on attempts towards sovereignty within empire, see Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery*, 198-200; Edward Braithwaite, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica;* and Edward Long's struggle with parliamentary inclusion in Jamaica in Elsa V. Goveia, *A Historiography of the British West Indies to the End of the Nineteenth Century* (Mexico, 1956), 56.

would be neglected by both former British governors on the island, as well as by the French government.

In April of 1790, British settlers petitioned the king for two things. First, to have their land grants from past years honored and renewed from time to time, without expense. Second, they sought to have the crown ratify the contract made by the French king with British subjects, towards the redemption and abolition of quit rents reserved on "any of the lands on the island, so as their properties might by some public act or declaration or record, appear discharged or released from every claim of that nature." The petition for these demands remained unanswered for the next two years, and the proprietors on land grants still held their properties subject to quit rents, a system of taxation that had survived from feudalism. During the Middle Ages, feudal dues paid by peasants were reduced into set payment that came to be known as a quit rent. Through this shift, peasants were freed from all excess dues, and quit rent became an annual fixed and heritable charge upon the land. [82] Centuries later, it remained a property taxation system payable the king, as a symbolic way for the crown to claim ownership of the land. The feudal notion of land-tenure, that the soil belonged to the crown who collected rents, was transferred to proprietors in the thirteen North American colonies, Canada and the Caribbean. In the Caribbean, quit rents were collected from property holders, then conceivably paid directly to the crown. Owners were left with past-due rents, an expectation for future rents, and expired leases, but without any title on record to that part of their possessions.

George Young, who was serving as president of the Council in 1790, described settlers on the island as debilitated, and less able to obtain loans for carrying on and conducting their

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[82] William Francis Finlason, *The History of Law of Tenures of Land in England and Ireland* (Bell Yard, Temple Bar: 1870), 54-60.

estates with “vigour and to the best of their advantage.”[83] Young considered the situation deplorable, and felt it was not the settlers’ responsibility to contend with the French government for their property and tenure rights. Property owners were furious that the possessions of land originally reserved for them under renewable leases were never activated, due to the inattention of the French government.[84] They attained no French grants or concessions in perpetuity as was promised to them and were left with little to nothing on record in regard to their land holding possessions. Both British and French colonial administrators had neglected to assist them in securing their livelihoods and prosperity.

Frustrated that they had paid a gross sum to take care of their properties as well as another amount for the abolition of future quit rents and a confirmation of their titles, property owners were furious to learn that their lands still appeared on record as subject to quit rents. This situation put them in a vulnerable position of indebtedness and without property. They were considered disabled, and unable to obtain loans for carrying on and conducting future estates, much to the detriment of themselves and their families. On a larger scale, owners were also shamed with not being able to conduct "the king's revenue,” which was the expansion of the sugar industry in St. Vincent, along with tobacco and indigo production. In a follow-up letter written in April of 1790, two years after the original set of demands, British settlers on the island were forced to accept that more "weighty concerns of his empire" had driven the king's attention from their petition. They had lost all support in securing property, still carried past debt to the crown, and were thoroughly panicked.

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[83] Council letter to Seton, 13 April 1790.

[84] Meeting Notes, 28 January 1790, Box 260, Folder 10, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 2 January 1790- 22 November 1790, The National Archives in Kew.

The upsurge of crises led to a significant increase of petitions for land ownership. Settlers were no longer asking but demanding the "secure enjoyment of their properties" in the future.[85] Inhabitants were scrambling to stake claims over land that would give them a sense of stability, security and identity, land they could hold separate from the crown. British Council meeting notes from 1790 revolved around property acquisition—proposals, details on who the petitioners were, and cultivation conditions of the lots. According to earlier notes from January 2, the legislature immediately proposed an act for supplying the loss of certain title deeds and records destroyed by the 1780 hurricane. Within this same document, land titles were confirmed for a Harry and Isaac Thomson for the Sion Hill plantation, as well as certain garden lots in the St. George Parish, where the Barramont family lived.[86] There were immediate attempts to recover land from the prior French Governor, especially the Old Barrack Ground and the Botanical Gardens.[87] The rest of the year would see upwards of 30 petitions for land in the nascent British settlements of St. Vincent. Surveyors were continuously called forth to examine both the fertility of the soil in relation to the climate, and the shipping potentials of the nearby windward coast. Property acquisition was crucial to the settlement now more than ever.

The Wearisome Process

Land grants came with a prolonged petition and renewal process. British inhabitants that had been living on the island prior to the Seton administration had to maintain claims to their

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[85] Council Letter to Seton, 13 April 1790.

[86] Seton Letter No. 82, 2 January 1790, Box 260, Folder 10, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 2 January 1790- 22 November 1790, The National Archives in Kew.

[87] Seton Letter No. 86, 7 January 1790, Box 260, Folder 10, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 2 January 1790- 22 November 1790, The National Archives in Kew.

lease with every change in government, and scramble to secure their property and paperwork amidst uncertain conditions. By 1789, even French settlers were desperately engaging in the process of property renewal through the British colonial administration. In the case of "ungranted lands," petitioners had to lay over, and wait until a diagram of the land was produced by a sworn surveyor. It could take more than 12 months after petitioning for a land grant before a Warrant of Survey would be issued for the requested lot. The process was so drawn out, planters would often withdraw their initial petitions in frustration.[88] Requests for land would be brought up in detail during administrative meetings held monthly in Kingstown, with Governor Seton as well as five Council members presiding—all wealthy, land-owning white Englishmen. If the requests were not met with any conflict, the Council would grant a "prayer of petition" to the requestor and they would be allowed to proceed.[89] Settlers in St. George, the parish which held the Barramont holdings, were hoping for grants for over 80 acres of land each. [90]

Notice of the petitions were given in the island's newspaper, the *St. Vincent Gazette*, which listed the specific lots of land prospective owners requested. They were posted for three months, during which the Council awaited any objections from the public, or any counter claims ownership of the requested land. Requests generally ranged from 22 acres to 82 acres, some intended for small-scale settlement and others with an eye toward large-scale production and plantation development. Petitions ranged for land within the parishes of Charlotte, Kingstown or

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[88] Meeting Notes, 6 August 1789.

[89] Ibid.

[90] Meeting Notes, 25 February 1790, Box 260, Folder 10, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 2 January 1790- 22 November 1790, The National Archives in Kew.

St. George on the mainland, as well as plots in the smaller Grenadine islands, like Canuouan.[91] After three months uncontested in the newspaper, the requests would be taken into consideration, and planters would be granted the prayer of petition if no caveat was featured within the newspaper through the duration of this period. The *St. Vincent Gazette* was used to give official public notice on the lots requested, and in this way, served as a forum for public discourse and contestation around land grants for the overwhelmed British settlement.

There were also cross petitions submitted to the Council, from both British and French settlers, which contributed to the confusion of property qualifications and restrictions. Such was the case for Mr. Keane and Mr. Wilson's petition for land on the Grenadine island of Canoun, submitted in conjunction with Marquis de Casaux and Paul Antoine's request for the same plot.[92] Although the Council favored English petitioners, the formalities of making sense of unequal requests presented even more complications to an already lodrawn-outawn out process. During these meetings, French settlers would also actively defend petitions for lots submitted by other French inhabitants and force the Council to govern settlements beyond British jurisdiction. Meeting notes did not go into much detail beyond names and brief locations within the documents, but because of the complicated relationship towards France and by extension, French settlers, property cases like these would sometimes take as long as 6 months to settle. The duration of these conflicts between French/ British and French/French settlers not only contributed to the disorder but forced a continuous reckoning over the restrictions of property ownership and citizenry within the British colony.

[91] Canuouan was also referred to as Savanne or Savannah by British colonial administrators.

[92] Meeting Notes, 6 August 1789.

White women also served as petitioners at this time, such as in the case of Catherine Seton, a family member of Governor Seton.[93] Her residence was on the nearby Grenadine island of Bequia, and she was interested in renewing a grant of thirty acres on the island. Catherine Seton's petition received similar treatment as the men of the colony—a posting in the *Gazette* to publicly announce the request as well as welcome any counter claimants the grant renewal.[94] Afterwards her request would be taken into consideration. Catherine Seton received no recorded special treatment as an immediate family member of the governor. Earlier that year, a man named Antoine Andrea attempted to block Catherine from another plot of land she had been petitioning for, claiming he was to receive half of the grant as inheritance for his infant child. After being read, his petition was ordered to lay over, and he was denied her request.[95]

The Barramont Dispossession

In July of 1790, in the midst of colonial instability and crises, the Barramont petition to sell was transcribed. It was penned amidst a mass discouragement around securing property and land renewals, first because of governmental neglect, and second because of a protracted process of attainment. The Barramonts, an African-indigenous family that had been deemed "friendly" enough in 1773 to be granted acreage, were now being displaced from their land under the formality of a petition. They were offered a "full and fair price" to participate in this transaction and were made to each sign off on the letter, first Pierre, then Ann, Celeste, Rosalie and Marianne. The other details within the petition are instructive of the condition of the settlement

[93] George Seton, *History of the Family of Seton During Eight Centuries* (Edinburgh, 1896) Vol. II, pp. 630-631; accessed: https://digital.nls.uk/histories-of-scottish-families/archive [accessed 02/02/2019].

[94] Meeting Notes, 6 August 1789.

[95] Meeting Notes, 25 February 1790.

during this era, and the colonial narratives told in order to now dispossess any and all Carib families and consolidate land holdings.

First, the author of the petition used the specific priorities and language of the British colony as a reason for the sale. The document's description of Ann, stating that she was "aged, infirm and unable of herself to cultivate her said lot of land," insinuated that she was singularly unfit to use the land to the standards of the colony. From the petition, we know that her children's plots could not have been too far from hers — Ribishi is a small quarter within the Saint George parish on the southern block of the island. It is probable that they would have been able to maintain the lot for their mother. The distinction here appears in what maintenance and usage, versus proper cultivation meant within the settler imagination. Just off the heels of extreme environmental exhaustion in surrounding sugar colonies in the Caribbean, British cultivation standards were still urgent and exploitative. Desperately looking to set up a large-scale sugar industry that mirrored if not exceeded Barbados, British proprietors were clear on their objective. Because Ann's lot was not used for any kind of exportable cultivation, the land was deemed not properly maintained and had to be taken from her and her family.

Also curious is the inconsistency in the descriptive conditions of the request. The supplicant writes, "and your other petitioners are of themselves also unable to cultivate their lots…wherefore they are all desirous of disposing of the same to you petitioner the said William Bannatyne." The request does not go on to give physical descriptions of the other petitioners, Ann's children, as it did with her. Because the qualifications for the sale of Ann's lot were her age, infirmity and inability to cultivate the land, it is assumed that her neglect of the land was due to these factors and was the impetus behind the petition. Her children's conditions were not described in the document, nor was any premise given for their sale.

While there appeared select details on the personal and social conditions of the Barramonts, not much was revealed in the petition about the purchaser, William Bannatyne. Bannatyne had taken on the role of one of the Assistant Justices of His Majesty's Court of Kings Bench earlier that year, and was a prominent British figure on the island.[96] He had been principally involved in a large and significant scandal two years earlier, when in August of 1788, Bannatyne and James Gerald Morgan unlawfully intruded upon 48 acres of land that were being explicitly reserved by commissioners to the king for military hospital barracks and garden grounds for the use of his troops.[97] Bannatyne and Morgan had never received a direct letter of attorney from Charles Snell Chauncey, who had been holding possession of the land until the barracks and garden grounds were to be built. Instead, Bannatyne and Morgan produced a letter from "executors" of Snell Chauncey and proceeded to intrude on the land.

Although repeatedly ordered to depart the area, and forbidden to remain by Governor James Seton, Bannatyne and Morgan rushed the 48 acres with several people, including a group enslaved laborers. Equipped with cutlasses, they then cleared the land, cut down several trees, built a boarded house and stayed, against the will of the governor. It is unclear whether Bannatyne remained on the lot. Evident by this scandal, Bannatyne was experienced in intrusion and had a history of unlawfully seizing land in St. Vincent. He also had a history of forging the necessary documents to procure the land of his liking. [98] In two years, the relationship between

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[96] Meeting Notes, 12 March 1790, Box 260, Folder 10, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 2 January 1790- 22 November 1790, The National Archives in Kew.

[97] Seton Account No. 3, 20 November 1788, Box 260, Folder 9, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 1788 June 29-1789 Nov 26, The National Archives in Kew.

[98] Seton Account No. 3, 20 November 1788.

Governor Seton and Bannatyne would drastically change, and Seton would later describe him as a member of the Assembly who had always assisted to forward every measure for the benefit of the colony. As the Assistant Justice, and on the good graces of Governor Seton, Bannatyne was now seemingly enjoying unfettered access to the uncultivated and fertile portions of the island.

Months after receiving the petition to sell, Governor Seton wrote a letter to British Secretary of State William Grenville explaining the situation behind the Barramont transaction. The letter revolved around the land grants given to multiple Carib families decades before, the conditions surrounding them and the reasons for sale. Colonial descriptions of Black Caribs during this period were purely derogatory, and the letter from Seton to Grenville was inconsistent with earlier letters written to the metropole, demonstrating the complexities around race and subjectivity. Here, Ann and her family were adopted subjects within the empire, possessing a friendly disposition and participating within the property market. They were granted land on the same conditions of non-alienation without consent, just as British settlers were, confirming they were not allowed to sell or transfer their land to someone else without permission from the colonial government.

Seton's letter to Grenville characterized the Barramonts and other property-owning Caribs as exceptional, with a remarkable "Want of Industry" that prevented them from putting their lands in a state of cultivation. [99] It pointed at a list attached to the letter, an enclosed petition signed by multiple Caribs who had wished to dispose of their lands. Although the list was not present within the archives, it also speaks to the variation of lived experiences of Black Caribs in the late century. Assuming Seton's characterization of the list was accurate, here was a group of

[99] Seton to Grenville, Account No. 105, 14 July 1790.

Caribs requesting to dispose of their lands on a British settlement in St. Vincent. The individual circumstances leading up to their property acquisitions, and the conditions upon ownership are unclear, however the existence of multiple Carib families as property owners in British settlements in the late 1770's complicates what survival meant for this Black and indigenous population. With the consent of former governors, most of the Caribs that owned land in settled parts of the country had disposed of their lands to planters prior to 1790. Seton's letter claims that they had contracted debts and were desirous of changing their place of residence. Still, in the case of Ann Barramont and her family, neither indebtedness nor the want to change residency is mentioned within their earlier petition. The Barramont document, void of conditions that were previously utilized for sale, meant that dispossessing them in 1790 had to be argued in relation to the cultivation of the land.

The language of the Barramont petition argues that their failure to properly cultivate the land signified that they were never truly inhabiting the space. The document states that the areas were "inconsiderable for distinct settlements,"[100] although Seton's later letter to Grenville explains that the distribution of these lots to the Caribs were intended to support their residency. Whomever authored the petition for sale was suggesting the land was uninhabited in its negligence. On the contrary, Ann and her family lived on these acres for more than a decade, surviving the hurricane of 1780 that destroyed the original record of their grant. Here, the idea of inhabitance in the colonial imagination ran synonymously to cultivation, and ultimately accorded more fully with rights of the land granted to a white proprietor, intent on plantation production.

Considering the layers of pressure the Barramonts endured during this transaction, it's

[100] Seton Account No. 3, 20 November 1788.

clear that Ann and her family struggled with property ownership and security against larger and more powerful proprietors. Although she was a Black Carib woman, Ann's experience aligned her with a wider class struggle of multi-ethnic peasants on the island. The shared struggle against disenfranchisement and intimidation invariably destabilized racial logics of the day—making possible coalitions and solidarity movements across class lines. The Barramont's story, however, would still be complicated by their own ties to the land and the impending warfare that would follow.

Conclusion

Ann's experience on the island allows us to examine the unwritten details of the world around her. Through her family's document, we first have evidence of an obvious but neglected point in the history of St. Vincent and the Black Caribs—that they were a varied and complex ethnic group that survived dispossession in multiple ways. Details of Ann Barramont's life, like her family, age and circumstances— all complicate what it meant to endure through warfare and colonial violence. The particulars of her family, their French surnames, the two generations involved, the deceased husband and the attendance of Pierre Barramont, are all important features that provide understanding on an otherwise flattened and simplified people.

The existence of the Barramont petition itself also reveals an internal struggle for land holdings. The claims about land usage and physical descriptors, all signify the power and structural dynamics within the British settlement, even as property-owning Caribs were understood and given privileges as adopted subjects. Bannatyne's history and involvement with the transaction indicates the determination and violence of better capitalized proprietors on the island. The example of Ann and her family's incorporation into the settlement as "friendly," assisted in building more opposition to the militarized Black Caribs. The creation of the petition,

its content and implications, confirm the priorities of the nascent colony—to profit through expansion and cultivation, through dispossession, intimidation and reinforcement of property.

The documents surrounding the petition build a crucial context of both local and external conflicts. At the onset of the final decade of the century, St. Vincent's colonial government was facing three crises simultaneously. First, they were dealing with a hostile and unpredictable indigenous group that prevented large scale production. To survive and profit from the land, they needed to request more fortifications from the crown. The second crisis was serious incoming threats from the Spanish government and the prospect of impending warfare with French soldiers that would later transpire on the island, which also demanded more resources for defense. Fortifications did not come easy, and the overall inattention from the British metropole had the colonial government feeling neglected and panicked. The third predicament was the intensified frustration from poor white settlers and small landholders surrounding the process of ownership and rents. Larger proprietors on the island scrambled for land possession and subsequently lower-class inhabitants were disenfranchised of their security through the stalling and disregard of their paperwork. The colonial administration was preoccupied with defensive measures and tending to their anxiety around both internal and external attacks. Planters and proprietors felt the Crown and colonial government rejected their concerns, through rents and failures to rectify their land lease instabilities. It was within this context that Ann and her family's petition emerged.

The beginning of the final decade of the eighteenth century would be but a glimpse of what was to come. Panic and insecurity around fortifications would increase, as both internal threats and Atlantic struggles intensified. The Barramont story offers a closer look at the rapidly changing relationship between British officials on the island and the Black Caribs, the continued neglect of British settlers and peasantry, and the struggle to consolidate and prioritize property.

Chapter 3: The Black Corps Project

> "Racial regimes are subsequently unstable truth systems…
> they may "collapse" under the weight of their own artifices, practices, and apparatuses; they may fragment, desiccated by new realities,
> which discard some fragments wholly
> while appropriating others into newer regimes."
> -Cedric Robinson, *Forgeries of Memory and Meaning*

> "Wherever the British were,
> there were also their Black auxiliaries."
> -Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution* (1961)

From 1781 to 1790, the British Caribbean military and colonial administrators struggled with renegotiating their racial truth systems— through a recalibration of defense. The last two decades of the century were ripe with not only the insurrections of enslaved Africans, but also threats from competing European powers and indigenous populations. The severity of struggles was contingent on the specific context of each island; factors such as sugar and tobacco production rates, the condition of free Black and creole populations, and the geopolitical understanding of the topography of each settlement, determined the conflict climate of each colony. Threats from French, Spanish, and Black Carib militaries especially, had colonial administrators in the British Leeward islands increasingly alarmed. Across the pond, the British state managed its colonial military support on a system of hierarchy, based on each colony's productivity and potential. Settlements in smaller islands with less cultivation and sugar/tobacco export were periodically neglected, in favor of focusing on islands with larger economic yields. Precarious financial support, in addition to already high mortality rates for white soldiers stationed on the islands, relegated British defense in select colonies to a tattered state. In order to survive, local authorities made constant re-adjustments to garrison structure and fortifications, that ultimately disrupted racial sensibilities. The British Caribbean military would develop a contentious reinforcement in the 1780s, incentivized by previous strategies used during the

American Revolution. Military officials and colonial administrators in the Caribbean were now reckoning with the possibility of employing and arming entire battalions of Black men for the British Army.

Formerly called the Carolina Corps during their time in North America, the Black Corps were a unit comprised of a few hundred Black soldiers who had served in the British Army during the American Revolution. They were deployed to the Caribbean in waves, first in 1781, to help build, maintain, and defend plantation societies. The ever-persistent General Edward Mathew took the lead as the orchestrator of the Black Corps. Mathew had previously served as a commander during the American Revolution, and through his successful record on the battlefield, was promoted to Major General. By 1782, he was dispatched to the Caribbean and stationed in Grenada to help defend the colonies against French forces. [101] His dual position as commander-in-chief of all British military units in the Caribbean, and also the governor of Grenada, leveraged his almost decade-long struggle with colonial governors and the crown in attempts to legitimize the use of Black units and argue for their loyalty and efficacy.[102] Due to increasingly urgent Atlantic crises that called for military recalibrations, Mathew was eventually

[101] Allan Chilver documents some interpersonal elements of Edward Mathew's life in his familial account, *The Berties of Grimsthorpe Castle* (Indiana: AuthorHouse, 2010), while more focus on Mathew's military history can be found in Mark Boatner III's *Encyclopedia of the American Revolution* (New York: David McKay & Co., 1976).

[102] More on military structures in the British Caribbean can be found in Bryan Edwards' *The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies Vol. 2*, (1798), and listings of Mathew's legislative efforts in Grenada during his tenure, see *The Laws of Grenada, From the Year 1763, to the Year 1805: With Tables of all the Statutes Passed in That Period, and of all the originals yet remaining in the public office and an index of the contents* (London: H. Bryer, 1808), reprinted by William Sanxay and George Smith.

successful in his pursuit, and the Black Corps would be proceeded in the following decades by a myriad of military units by different names[103]—all Black men hired to serve in the British Army.

Participation in the Black Corps in the Caribbean was complicated. Members of the corps were paid Black laborers with more access in and around the British colonies, and much like the military factions of the Black Caribs, with shifting alliances. In some cases, the Corps functioned as a site of maroonage, like in early nineteenth century in Barbados when runaways would pass as "free" among Black soldiers, absorbed into the communities in which they resided. [104] They would enlist in the Black Corps throughout the British colonies, as in the case of a man named Fortune, who "by virtue of a certificate given by some evil-disposed person of his freedom, he enlisted in the Black corps under the name of Thomas Panton, a native of Jamaica" in 1805.[105]

My research reframes the narrative of Black British troops in the Caribbean in two ways. First, the men in the Black Corps carried a certain political consciousness that enabled them to negotiate their labor conditions in Grenada. Their refusal to work in the British army under the direction of General Mathew unless given adequate pay, was striking, as their circumstance was already imbued with minimal options for survival. In the midst of a plantation society in the 1780's, their entitlement bears testimony to the fortitude of their spirits and intellect. This narrative understands Black troops as more than mere casualties in the making of the Black

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[103] The original unit that was organized in Grenada was termed the "Black Corps," but they were also known by their previous title from the American Revolution, the "Carolina Corps." Starting in 1794, they would be succeeded by over 20 different units, each on different islands, including the very first West India Regiment in 1795. René Chartrand briefly outlines them in his article "Black Corps in the British West Indies, 1793-1815" in the *Journal of the Society for Army Historical Research* 76: 248-254, 1998.

[104] In *Slaves in Red Coats: The British West India Regiments, 1795-1815* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), Roger Buckley argues that white West Indians may have been right to worry about the effects of free Black soldiers on a slave society, as they embraced runaways and provided respite in colonies like Barbados.

[105] *The Barbados Mercury*, 27 April, 16 Nov., 9 Nov. 1805

Corps, by also recognizing them as organized determinants in that process. For this military project to come to fruition, demands made by these men had to be met.

Secondly, the particulars of the condition of St. Vincent in the 1780's helped "create" the Black Corps. Lack of infrastructure had settlers focused on re-building and fortifications, rather than the potential risks of inviting over Black troops. Being stationed on an island with small scale-plantation settlements and mostly uncleared land, also exempted the troops from the ravages of yellow fever that was widespread in larger plantation societies in the Caribbean. The absence of epidemic turmoil reinforced prior ideas about Black men's immunity, irrespective of the accuracy of such an assessment. And finally, evolving myths of the Black Caribs, as a criminalized population that refused colonial property and excessive production, provided for a critical adversarial population to the Black Corps. The narrative of the Black Caribs existed in part so that the fantasy of the Black Corps could come alive.

The construction of the Black Corps was integral precursor in the British attempt to build a carceral landscape in St. Vincent. Governor Seton's requests for the British soldiers, throughout the 1780s, demonstrated that the British colony in St. Vincent desperately needed reinforcements to carry out law and order within the colony. Just a year after the official instatement of the Black Corps unit in Grenada, St. Vincent would attempt to pass bills on vagrancy, abolition activity, and requests to expand police jurisdiction. The possibility of Black soldiers that were believed to be able to regulate Black Carib militias, or even exterminate them, if necessary, was kept at the forefront of Seton's mind. This military supplementation would prove of crucial use years later, during the Second Carib War.

“Liberty to the Slaves”: Logics and the American War

Prior to their arrival in the Caribbean, men in the Black Corps had already experienced various forms of involvement within the British army in North America. Although colonists, as well as British military commanders avoided arming Black men as combatants, American revolutionary war saw their participation mostly towards the end, when warfare grew more arduous and the need for a “different kind” of soldier arose. By 1779, British Commander-in-chief Sir Clinton, issued a proclamation offering legal respite from bondage to enslaved men who would make the sacrifice of escape and join British forces.[106] Sir Clinton’s announcement was an expansion of an earlier proclamation by Virginia’s Royal Governor Lord Dunmore in 1775, and would promise freedom and protection to anyone who escaped enslavement, regardless of their enlistment in the British army. However, even prior to the formal decree, men and women would escape their plantations to enlist for military service on both sides, despite legislature against it. Escaping slavery in order to take up military duty was another iteration of a long-standing tradition of Black fugitivity within the Atlantic. Not only were Black people seizing opportunities for legal freedom, runaways were of course also eager to pick up arms against planters. Women escaped their holders, to find a complicated protection in the British Army, working in Public Works.[107] The British army was a precarious refuge for runaway Black

[106] Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution*, (Chapel Hill: UNC Press, 1961).

[107] The history of Black women loyalists is severely underwritten, but a prominent example is of the story of Mary Postell, and her journey from enslavement to the British Army and then to Nova Scotia; see Carole Watterson Troxler’s article “The Re-enslavement of Black Loyalists: Mary Postell in South Carolina, East Florida, and Nova Scotia” in *Acadiensis: Journal of the History of the Atlantic Region* (2008).

men and women, and yet hundreds were still ready to enlist in exchange for protection and legal freedom.

Upon enlisting, Black soldiers in the British army were mostly used for tasks that did not require direct combat. Lack of formal training was a factor in their positions, but more importantly, generals that were fearful of slave revolts were highly nervous about arming these men. The Black troops were instead used as spies/informers, land and topography guides, and sea pilots during marauding operations. Because of their intimate knowledge of the waterways, Black soldiers were often sought to steer British boats during attacks or raids. Some would be assigned to forage from the property of enemy farmers, driving off livestock and emptying their cellars of food supplies stored for winter use. Black military labor in the South also involved recapturing escaped slaves.[108] By 1781, the Carolina Corps numbering nearly 500, were involved in mostly trench fortifications, largely positions that did not call for armament.

Decisions on the initial placement of the Black soldiers in the British Army were ridden with anxiety and mythopoeia. There was the overwhelming fear that formerly enslaved men would turn on British authorities after being supplied with arms and entrusted to patrol and organize. This paranoia endured, and informed the tasks delegated to the soldiers, especially in the beginning. Their disposability as "negroes," and the racial myths surrounding Black men in the eighteenth century also informed their assigned duties. Black militiamen were expected to be conditioned to the harshest of climates, because of racialized assumptions carried over from plantation slavery. The soldiers were thought to have a higher tolerance for suffering. They were expected to possess both an experiential and superhuman immunity to disease, and the ability to withstand microbes either foreign or domestic. Black military laborers were in fact even more

[108] Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution*, (1961).

susceptible to disease, as they were afforded fewer sanitary precautions than their white counterparts. Smallpox was particularly devastating to the Black units during the American revolutionary war, and the ones who had not died from the virus were involuntarily used as contagious throwaways for germ warfare in enemy spaces.[109] Black soldiers were simultaneously conceived of as both superhuman in their capabilities, and subhuman in their disposability.

Towards the end of the war, it was clear British officials would not consistently abide by their promises to the Black soldiers. For instance, when the army was evacuating South Carolina, several Black men were immediately returned to their masters in that province. Many of them that had taken an active part in the army, had disrupted the business and properties of their former owners, and feared the worst of punishments once they returned. They requested alternative measures and instead of facing their previous masters, were permitted to follow the army to the Caribbean. Some were sent to St. Lucia and employed among troops already stationed there during the remainder of the war. After the Peace of 1783, more were sent with a new garrison to join General Mathew in Grenada. He would assign them to several duties—to work on the King's Works and Buildings, to labor in the Quarter Master General's departments, to serve by performing various duties for each regiment, and to guard orderlies.[110]

The Black Corps were part of the thousands of enslaved men who fled during the revolutionary war and were not returned to slaveholders after the American Revolution. Realizing that the government of Grenada would not immediately allow for the shipment of hundreds of Black soldiers, roughly 200 of the troops and their families were sent to live in

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[109] Ibid.

[110] Edward Mathew Report, Grenada, November 1790, Box 101, Folder 31, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 2 January 1790- 22 November 1790, The National Archives in Kew.

Birchtown, Nova Scotia in 1783, joining the thousands of Black Loyalists sent to the province after the war by the British army. The province was transformed into a free Black community. The British military promised the transplanted former slaves' citizenship, resources and land grants; they expected to stay indefinitely. Conditions of the town were dismal, and the climate was unbearably cold. Leaders of the province started petitioning for assistance in the form of relocation and support, and for the promised certification of legal freedom. The former men of the Carolina Corps stayed in Nova Scotia until once again being recruited back into the British Army and shipped to Grenada in the years.

The Black troops in both North America and the Caribbean were active under a very particular set of circumstances. Enslaved and free Black men had found a strategy to achieve their liberty and a better mode of survival than their present condition. Scholars have understood their participation as assimilatory, as an expression of loyalty to British imperialism. Accounts of the Black Corps tend to describe their existence as a racial equalizer of sorts, and that their own racialized reality was eclipsed by their station in the army and what that entailed.[111] Their participation on behalf of colonial power tells a different story. The Corps were used towards the protection and defense of land and property, during an era when plantation slavery was under siege. Thousands of white settlers moved to the Caribbean, betting on the prospects of Atlantic mercantilism fueled by slave labor. The Black Corps were not beyond racialization because of

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[111] In his 2018 article, "Black Skin, Red Coats: the Carolina Corps and Nationalism in the Revolutionary British Caribbean," Gary Sellick argues that in ways, the British military establishment had begun to see the Carolina Corps as soldiers over Black men, simply because they had received soldier's pensions. David Lambert posed a similar claim, although it was their status as "free men" that contributed to their equalizing; he argues that the Black Corps lived a "truly liminal racial existence" in the West Indies, they were Black but not enslaved, in his 2001 article "Liminal Figures: Poor Whites, Freedmen, and Racial Re-inscription in Colonial Barbados." Both of these contentions do not do enough to demonstrate the conditions.

their enlistment in the British army: instead, their participation functioned with the spread of plantation production and the rise of industrial capitalism. They were not a negation of racism in the second half of the eighteenth century, but instead their enlistment was a confirmation of imperial priority.

Caribbean Emergence

> "Who were the Black Corps of Dragoons, Pioneers and Artificers?
> All we can be certain about them is that they were black, they came from America,
> they had fought for the King and they were soldiers."
> -Shamus O.D. Wade, (1994)

From the Carolinas, the Black troops would be transferred to the Caribbean in waves, starting in 1781. The first group was deployed to Jamaica, serving as soldiers from 1781 to 1783. During their time there, the troops were described as a "white elephant" in the room, because of how uncomfortable their presence as armed Black men fit within a large slave-holding colony. Planters did not know how to conceive of this garrison, which included some who were originally free men, and others who had been purchased by the British government. They agitated for the removal of the troops, but no colony wanted to receive them. The appointment of General Mathew in Grenada was something of a saving grace for Jamaica's white settlers, as he was willing to take these Black soldiers. Administrators petitioned their immediate removal to the Leeward islands under the command of Mathew. Around 188 troops that were fit for duty were sent to St. Vincent under the command of Captain Anderson, and 111 were kept in Grenada, under the companies of Captain Mackrill and Captain Millar.[112] The Corps were

[112] Alfred B. Ellis, *The History of the First West India Regiment*, (Covent Garden: Chapman and Hall, 1885).

accompanied with one captain per unit, a white British soldier taken from the regular army, for a total of 3 captains-- two in Grenada and one in St. Vincent.

From the beginning, Mathew was committed to making the Black Corps primarily function as a centralized unit of trained, funded, and armed troops in the British Army, and argued for their superiority in viral immunity, navigation skills, and warfare. Following the boundary negotiations in 1783 between France and Britain, Grenada was ceded back to Britain and the Black Corps were assigned to the garrison of the island.[113] After having been stationed in the West Indies' tropical climates, with both flat and mountainous terrain for three years, colonial myths of the durability of Black troops swelled. For almost a decade, Mathew would tirelessly petition the metropole for funding for a team of Black soldiers, claiming they were considered long inured to a "southerly climate" and accustomed to arms.[114] He was met with constant opposition, specifically from his own legislature in Grenada, which was paranoid about arming these men. Hesitancy from the body of administrators in Grenada, overrode the governor and commander in chief's plans, and the Black Corps were eventually dispersed among other islands and given "safer" duties that did not involve bearing arms.

For almost a decade, the variation in response to the Black troops in different settlements revealed the state of revolt and defense on each island. As an earlier example, the reality of having free Black men employed in the British army was unthinkable for Jamaican administrators and planters. These troops were disarmed and assigned to build fortifications for

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[113] The transfer of Grenada was a byproduct of the Treaty of Paris, see Andrew Stockley's *Britain and France at the Birth of America: The European Powers and the Peace Negotiations of 1782-1783* (University of Exeter Press: United Kingdom, 2001).

[114] Letter from Mathew to Grenville, 11 December 1790, Box 101, Folder 31, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 2 January 1790- 22 November 1790, The National Archives in London.

the rest of their tenure in Jamaica, and yet still, the symbolism of their social positioning presented too glaring a contradiction. Although Jamaica held multiple long-standing and organized maroon settlements, having free Black men in authority over white peasantry through their military rank was not conducive to the colonial racial fantasies of the island. Whether artificers or armed soldiers, Jamaica would not have the Black Corps inhabiting the settlement for long.

Grenada, as a potential site for centralizing and training the troops, was unprepared for the task, because of the implications of the rising numbers of its free Black and colored population. Since the Peace of 1783, the white population had been decreasing. The numbers went from sixteen hundred in 1771, to thirteen hundred in 1777, and by 1799, the numbers had shrunk to only twelve hundred whites.[115] In contrast, by the end of the 1780s, the Free Black/ Colored population in Grenada was sizeable and growing. From census lists of the colony's treasurer, the population of "Free Coloreds" in 1787 was recorded at 1,115, also including children. The number of enslaved Black people on the island at this time was at 23,926,[116] and there was around one free Black person to every 22 that were enslaved in Grenada. Records of free colored and enslaved populations were subdivided under French and English settlement, as the island's colonial lineage was layered similarly to St. Vincent's--both French and British planters still resided on the island. Given the rate of decrease within the white population in the last decades of the eighteenth century, their numbers in the 1780s could be estimated at 1,250—only one hundred over the free Black population. Insurgency, organized in part by free Black

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[116] Governor Mathew to Lord Sydney, 13 April 1788, Box 101, Folder 31, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 2 January 1790- 22 November 1790, The National Archives in London.

populations in Caribbean settlements, was a growing movement—and would only expand well into the 1790s.[117] The British colony of Grenada was already susceptible to revolt through being outnumbered by the enslaved population, but in addition to that possibility, the quickly growing population of free Black people invited a very palpable fear of an organized insurrection.

Grenada's Black/colored population not only exceeded the white population, but the mainland and its highest-producing grenadine island, Carriacou, also grappled with the pressure to compete in the Atlantic market. Sugar, rum, and cotton were the largest and most lucrative exports out of the colony, followed by molasses, coffee, cacao, indigo, and miscellaneous items such as hides and dying woods. Between 1787 and 1788, Grenada was producing and shipping over 2 million pounds of cotton, and just under 20 billion pounds of sugar and 102,590 gallons of rum to Great Britain alone.[118] It was of prime importance for the settlement to guarantee consistency of a slaveholding mode of production, which meant ensuring internal security. The Legislature of the colony were not willing to risk production for rumors of a more efficient garrison, even as their governor insisted.

Beyond the project of the Black Corps, General Mathew's broader experience and work during this period ultimately assisted him in developing arguments to support later applications of the Black troops. While he constantly advocated for the development of Black Corps, he was also involved in military oversight, and aware that support from Britain was contingent on the lucrativeness of each colony and that this imperative left certain settlements vulnerable and

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[117] Inspired by the revolutionary ideals in San Domingue, Julian Fedon, a Free mixed-race man in Grenada helped ignite a rebellion against the British in 1795. For more on this movement, see Edward L. Cox's paper "Fedon's Rebellion 1795-96: Causes and Consequences," in The Journal of Negro History 67, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 7-19.

[118] Mathew to Grenville, 21 February 1791, Box 101, Folder 31, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 2 January 1790- 22 November 1790, The National Archives in London.

neglected. The enduring military needs in the British Caribbean was for more soldiers and more laborers. Mathew concerned himself mostly with the distribution of regiments on different islands and ship transport. He was particularly focused on the organization of regiments going to and from Antigua, Jamaica, Dominica, St. Christopher, and St. Vincent, evaluating drafting needs and deciding which garrisons would receive the new men.[119] The process of furnishing settlements with proper military reinforcements was anything but coherent, as internal and external threats disturbed the confidence of administrators. Regiment distribution in the British Caribbean during these decades was an imperial chess board, constantly shifting and with high stakes.

Soldier transferal was ongoing, based on the arising needs of each island. In April of 1788, Governor Seton in St. Vincent requested an additional 200 men for his garrison, insisting that the island was ready to receive them, and barracks had already been erected for that purpose. Two battalions had arrived earlier that year in Barbados, and the 5 companies that were already stationed there were ordered to move to Dominica. Five more battalions from Barbados were also sent to St. Vincent.[120] One extra regiment was ordered for the station in Grenada to "give confidence to the planters."[121] Knowledge of the different political climates of each settlement, and experience in providing military supplementation for them, would later propel Mathew into the 1790s with a stronger conviction on the utility of the Black troops. Even as he organized

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[119] Edward Mathew to Governor Parry, 20 March 1788, Box 101, Folder 31, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 2 January 1790- 22 November 1790, The National Archives in London.

[120] Mathew to Lord Sydney, 30 April 1788 Box 101, Folder 31, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 2 January 1790- 22 November 1790, The National Archives in London.

[121] Mathew to Lord Sydney, 18 June 1788, Box 101, Folder 31, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 2 January 1790- 22 November 1790, The National Archives in London.

circum-Caribbean soldier distribution, centralizing and getting the Black Corps funded still remained a priority on his list, and he continued to petition on that score through the course of the decade.

As the governor of Jamaica complained about the Black troops in 1783, colonial administrators in St. Vincent were more than happy to receive them. Both the presiding military commander and the governor requested the Black Corps to put down "disturbances" from the Caribs. The governor at the time, Edmund Lincoln, had been writing to General Mathew to complain about the Black Caribs, and he requested that the local force be supplemented specifically with Black troops. St. Vincent as a British settlement was often undermined as a nascent colony by the crown, although it held 61 sugar estates, 500 acres in coffee, 200 acres in cacao, 400 acres in cotton, 50 acres in indigo and 500 acres in tobacco.[122] The rest of the island (a total of 84,000 acres) had remained uncleared and untouched by European development, and it would remain so until the very end of the eighteenth century. St. Vincent indeed had plantation and production potential.

Along with cultivation potential, anxiety about other developments superseded worries about armed Black soldiers in the British army in St. Vincent. The settlement had had to recoup from changing governments and the devastating hurricane of 1780 that destroyed the majority of their paltry infrastructure. These conditions were shared by other islands, but St. Vincent's lack of economic development prior to the devastation relegated the island to a uniquely struggling state. Because the presence and pressure exerted by the Black Caribs only allowed planters in St. Vincent to have smaller sugar estates, they also did not have as much experience with plantation

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[122] Bryan Edwards, *The History of Civil and Commercial, of the British Colonies in the West Indies Vol. 1*, (1798).

insurrections as the larger colonies like Barbados and Jamaica. St. Vincent planters and colonial officials were more concerned with the protection of their properties from the Black Caribs. After the Treaty of Versailles in 1783, when Britain regained the island, its support for maintenance and defense of the island was lackluster. The House of Assembly voted to relegate 5,000 pounds to be used for forts and fortifications, but the entirety of that vision was never accomplished.[123] The settlement experienced inconsistent support from the crown and even from the local legislative body. Even through the neglect and trepidation, as soon as Britain regained St. Vincent back on paper, Captain Anderson and Governor Lincoln took immediate interest in the Black troops.

St. Vincent as a Testing Site for Black Troops

The Black Corps had been deployed to St. Vincent on two separate occasions in the 1780s—once with a battalion of 188 men in 1783, and again in early 1784 with 27 more.[124] In both instances, the Black troops had been requested on the island first as protection and defense against Black Carib military factions, and second as laborers for fortifications. The first batch of men had arrived during the tail end of the French occupation of the island, when St. Vincent was under the control of Pierre-Jean François de Feydeau. Although St. Vincent was under French ownership through treaty, their governance was meager and, since the annexation in 1763, British peasants and planters living in St. Vincent were free to manage their own affairs. When the island was signed over to the British later in 1783, General Edmund Lincoln stepped in, and

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[123] See Charles Shephard's *An Historical Account of the Island of Saint Vincent* (London: W. Nicol, 1831).

[124] A.B Ellis describes almost half of the original detachment sent to Jamaica being split between Grenada and St. Vincent in 1783, while the governor of St. Vincent at the time, Edmund Lincoln, wrote to Lord Sydney in Britain that the colony had welcomed 27 more troops.

remained governor until Seton's term began in 1787. Within the first few years of his tenure, Lincoln became convinced that the Black troops were capable of warfare against the Caribs, especially when it came to fighting in the mountainous regions in the interior of the island. The inland country of the island was mountainous, unchartered, and dangerous to European troops, and the Black Caribs were experts at navigating these regions. There are no specific instances recorded of the Black Corps actively fighting against the Black Caribs in the 1780s, but it was in the propaganda in colonial correspondence that the adversarial relationship came alive came alive. The confidence of early reports of the units of Black men that were transferred from Jamaica and Grenada, although likely embellished, contributed to the growing mythology of the Black British soldier in the Caribbean.

Conditions in St. Vincent played a crucial role in cementing myths of the Black troops' geographical abilities and immunities, which provided the arguments for their colonial creation in the Caribbean. Unlike surrounding islands, St. Vincent had yet to exhaust the land through large-scale plantation production. Societies that had already underwent widespread cultivation and had been transformed into sugar landscapes, created the ideal habitat for the Aedes mosquito genre to flourish, the primary carrier for yellow fever.[125] In contrast, St. Vincent's forests still took up the majority of the island, and the protected topography became the new context for the Black troops. Until 1793, when the first outbreak was reported in Kingstown, St. Vincent was mostly unaffected from the virus that was rampant throughout the Caribbean. [126] Outbreaks had

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[125] For a compelling investigation on the links between landscapes, yellow fever, and malaria, see J.R. McNeill's *Mosquito Empires: Ecology and War in the Greater Caribbean, 1620-1914* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[126] Colin Chisholm, *An essay on the malignant pestilential fever introduced into the West Indian Islands from Boullam, on the coast of Guinea, as it appeared in 1793 and 1794*, (Philadelphia: Printed for Thomas Dobson, 1799).

occurred in islands like Barbados and Guadeloupe since the mid-seventeenth century, but because of the slow nature of production and thus the lack of comparable ecological devastation in St. Vincent, there was no widespread virus to be immune from. Early transfers of Black troops in St. Vincent were surviving without the immunities needed elsewhere. Reports on them during their early years on the island exaggerated their endurance abilities, largely due to the lack of viral threat within the settlement.

A critical factor that contributed to the creation of the Black Corps in the Caribbean, was the simultaneous creation of a colonial mythos about the Black Caribs. After the island was returned to the British, the new administration failed to control the majority of the Carib community, especially the military factions. The earlier peace agreement between the British and Black Caribs from 1773 was not being honored by the indigenous population, and the investments of property owners and planters were either at risk or actively being destroyed. During the earlier French occupation of the island, the Caribs had also become closer to that enemy empire, much to Britain's dismay. Attempts at small-scale warfare between chiefs of the Black Caribs and British troops ended with far more casualties among white soldiers, largely due to the interior terrain of the island, which the Black Caribs were experts at navigating. The British grew increasingly frustrated with their losses, and started using the Black Caribs and their skillsets and knowledge of topography, as a point of adversary for the Black Corps. Through propaganda in colonial correspondence, the Black Corps were created as the perfect match for the Black Caribs, as the former now had extensive abilities in mountainous terrain and difficult warfare conditions. As the British imagination evolved the Black Caribs into a specific kind of enemy, the molding of their narrative allowed for the creation of a Black Corps to stand as their equals.

The vulnerability of the British settlement in St. Vincent, and the enduring mythos of the Black soldiers, provided for a different kind of ethos of the Black Corps—one of appreciation that was contrary to other islands. When the first Black soldiers arrived, settlers in St. Vincent were living under the desperation and uncertainty of the transfer of governments, recovering from a devastating hurricane, and navigating a highly organized and indignant Black indigenous military. From the very beginning of the Black Corps in St. Vincent, they were welcomed and appreciated as much needed laborers and potential protection against Black Caribs. They were so appreciated, that after the second transfer of the troops in 1784, Governor Lincoln expressed his disappointment that their numbers were so small. He bemoaned the fact that he was expected to work with a mere unit of 40 Black pioneers against the 3-5,000 of estimated Caribs living in Carib Country.[127] The governor of St. Vincent imagined an army of loyal Black men that would equal, if not exceed, the number of Black Caribs on the island.

Although Lincoln requested the Black troops specifically to protect the settlement from the Caribs, early arrivals were mostly used to build and fortify a military post at Byabou. The outpost at Byabou was the only post the British military had in proximity to what they deemed Carib Country, on the eastern side of the island. By 1788, the outpost was considered impractical for surveilling the Caribs and defending British properties, as it was located too deeply within the settlement and therefore considered useless for monitoring Carib country.[128] Although their work at Byabou did not bring the settlers the security they sought, their fortification work contributed

[127] Lincoln to Lord Sydney, 8 March 1784. Box 260, Folder 7, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 2 January 1790- 22 November 1790, The National Archives in London.

[128] Mathew to Lord Sydney, 18 March 1789, Box 101, Folder 31, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 2 January 1790- 22 November 1790, The National Archives in London.

to a narrative of the Black Corps in St. Vincent as loyal and useful. The British population were grateful for them.

When the presiding governor switched from Lincoln to James Seton, more military provisions were requested in attempts to be ready for the Caribs. The Caribbean as a whole was not an attractive military post for soldiers; along with high fatalities due to yellow fever and malaria that were already well known and would in fact escalate in the 1790s, white soldiers who were presently serving in St. Vincent also described "deplorable" and "inadequate" pay rates that "made life impossible with the excessive price of provisions." In September of 1788, St. Vincent was scantily occupied by only a total of 470 militiamen, including 4 surgeons and 7 officers in the Northern Regiment. Along with the Northern Regiment, the island had a Southern Regiment, a "Troop of Horse," and an Independent Company. [129] The Southern Regiment held the most troops, holding 234 men, which was double the number of the Northern Regiment. This regiment protected major ports and the largest British settlement and the capital-- Kingstown. Given these circumstances, Governor Seton was especially keen on making sure he was prepared on the island. His requests for military augmentation for defense against possible attacks from Spanish and French forces was secondary in priority. It was of highest importance that the colony was furnished with a complete and capable army, in the event of a large-scale attack from the Black Caribs.

Starting in 1788, Seton requested an additional 200 troops for the garrison in St. Vincent, along with 5 more companies of battalions later that year. It was clear that competing European powers were not the overwhelming threat in St. Vincent, as Governor Seton requested hundreds

[129] Return of Militia, 24 September 1789, Box 260, Folder 9, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 1788 June 29-1789 Nov 26, The National Archives in Kew.

more troops, specifically, to "impress them [Caribs] with an idea of our force, to stifle any notion they have at a future period, entertain of their own consequence."[130] Barracks were erected in preparation for augmenting the military presence in the British colony, but throughout 1788, no troops were reported to have actually been sent. Two battalions had arrived at Barbados, but the British authorities ignored the request for troops made by St. Vincent and Dominica. Seton was adamant about preparing the settlement for possible Carib attacks by increasing the armed force, hoping their mere presence would serve to stifle future attacks. The island would not receive satisfactory troop augmentation until 1790, two whole years after the initial requests.

In 1789, General Mathew took it upon himself to visit St. Vincent to determine the state of the colony and its military needs. Accompanied by the Chief Engineer of the colony, he concluded the posts on Dorsetshire Hill and Old Woman's Point, along with the single regiment with a proportion of artillery, were entirely insufficient for the protection of the settlement. Upon his visit to the boundary line of Carib Country, he also noted that some families had established themselves between the border at Colonarie, and the one established by the Treaty of 1773. Settlers nearby had reported their feelings of unease and the fact that the Black Caribs had committed some unspecified "outrages," likely the destruction of their property and production sites. They complained about their lack of security, as the only substantial military post was in Byera, which was situated within their own boundaries and had been deemed inadequate for years. Mathew moved forward with plans for a secondary post, this time on the south side of Byera, closer to the boundary between the Caribs, in hopes that it would "give effectual confidence to the industrious settlers and induce the Charibbs to retire peacefully within their own boundary."

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[130] Mathew to Lord Sydney, 30 April 1788, Box 101, Folder 31.

As these precautions were being discussed and acted upon, there appeared to be a stark contradiction in military request and reports of conflict in colonial correspondence. From 1783 until 1789, the colony was characterized in letters as being in an undisturbed state of tranquility, with cultivation proceeding slowly, albeit proceeding. They described the military factions of the Black Caribs as cooperating with British administrators, on land agreements and sugar production plans partly due to an inattention from their French allies. British governors attributed the Black Caribs' earlier non-cooperation over matters of land development as a sign of French influence, and not a reflect of their own insistence on protecting and defending their land. Throughout the decade, the settlement was described as peaceful, and the Black Caribs as a friendly bunch.[131] At the same time, it was reported that the appearance of a faction of the Black Corps under the direction of Captain Anderson, helped quell disturbances from the Caribs. Seton desired the troops for both current and preemptive defense, as they "tended very materially to induce these people [Black Caribs] to remain quiet." [132] Requests and updates about the Black Corps in St. Vincent revealed that the settlement was indeed in a tumultuous state throughout the decade, and the deployment of the Black Corps were now being utilized as a military strategy against the Black Caribs. This role was their first and most enduring appeal in the British Caribbean in the 1780s.

The Black Corps remained scattered and divided among other islands, until the latter months of 1790, when General Mathew finally drew them together once more in a final attempt at centralizing and training them. He first started making use of them in and around his station,

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[131] Ibid.

[132] Mathew to Grenville, 11 December 1790, Box 101, Folder 31, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 2 January 1790- 22 November 1790, The National Archives in London.

arranging for one company, a few artillery men, and a detachment of the Carolina Corps as a garrison to go to Carriacou, the largest island in the Grenada Grenadines. Although it was a smaller island in the southern grenadines, Carriacou held 3,049 slaves and 86 white male planters and produced 987,048 pounds of cotton annually.[133] There were plans and estimates for a barrack, small works, and other public services, and Mathew used the men as laborers for construction. The Corps in Carriacou were finally inching towards what he had imagined as a useful unit—one that would be capable of maintaining and defending a significant and productive colony. Although the Black Corps were still deficient in arms and in some cases forbidden to carry them, Mathew was quick to offer the assistance of a detachment of the troops to other colonies, should any serious disturbance ensue.

Determination and Labor Struggles

> "An objection may be made to the armory of blacks as soldiers, but it has no weight, as experience has shown they are not only to be depended upon, but are more inveterate (deeply) against people of their own color, than any other Troops, and they may always be as much confided in, if properly commanded, as any part of the Army."
> -Edward Mathew report, Grenada 1790

The end of 1790 was a turning point for the project of the Black Corps, with General Mathew and British Secretary of State William Grenville setting their sights on augmenting a central unit— with free Black and mulatto men in Grenada. [134] Most of the original unit had been gathered from different islands and Barbados and relocated back to Grenada, and the new

[133] Population and Produce of Carriacou, 1 September 1790, Box 101, Folder 31, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 2 January 1790- 22 November 1790, The National Archives in London.

[134] Mathew to Grenville Letter, 11 December 1790, Box 101, Folder 31.

recruitment plan was the most desirable mode of increasing their numbers. Socially and economically, this attempt would prove futile. Although soldier's pay, rations, and clothing would be promised to the troops, the reality of these attempts would leave the men with no compensation and little incentive to train and perform duties within the Corps. During the months of November and December, Mathew struggled with various testing grounds for the particular kind of garrison he had all the while envisioned, employing help from trusted allies in Grenada, like Louis La Grenada.

Louis La Grenada was a "mixed race" man who worked closely with General Mathew in the latter months of 1790. Classified as a mulatto with "considerable property,"[135] La Grenada had been used for many years and upon many occasions, as a principal agent in locating and retrieving runaway slaves. He had built up a reputation amongst colonial administrators through his character, property, and position as a captain of a colored company attached to the St. George's regiment. Lord Macartney had even granted him a Black Ribbon to be worn in consequence of his former services for the British colony. General Mathew held La Grenada in such high esteem and found him to be so useful, that he himself petitioned the King to award a Gold medal to be appended to the Black Ribbon, as this would be a favorable moment to bestow an honor upon La Grenada, "whose zeal in the cause of Great Britain has been often manifested."[136]

In November, La Grenada was commissioned to help Mathew attempt to raise a Corps of Free Black and "mixed race" men. The original contingent of men that arrived from South

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[135] Secret Letter: Mathew to Grenville, 28 November 1790, Box 101, Folder 31, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 2 January 1790- 22 November 1790, The National Archives in London.

[136] Ibid.

Carolina during one of the multiple transfers were fatigued from long service, old age, and disease. La Grenada set out to locate additional men who were deemed loyal and trustworthy enough for this project. To keep to 300, the number of the original crew, Mathew appointed some of these men as subaltern officers to the regiment, with the hopes that their employment in these positions would keep them invested in their duty.[137] Some of the new appointees had previous experience in the British colonial army, like Mr. Haveckern, who had already served as a volunteer under General Grant at St. Lucia, and had been awarded the rank of Lieutenant for courageous behavior in battle but had since left the service. Mr. Haveckern was appointed to First Lieutenant by general Mathew, along with a Mr. Miller from the island. Another young man from Grenada, Mr. Diggin, was recommended to be Second Lieutenant. With the additions, the Black Corps in Grenada now consisted of 3 captains, 4 First Lieutenants, 1 Second Lieutenant, 1 Quarter Master, 1 surgeon and about 240 men fit for duty, although 40 of them were described as "worn out and of little service." Mathew attempted to find a place to employ the men who were ill, aged or injured, but ended up discarding them as military invalids. For their immediate future, he gave little attempt to secure them a dignified life, noting that later, after more consideration and due attention to economy, "arrangements could be made."[138] For the fit for duty men, however, a lack of funding revealed the difficulty in putting together a military unit without the support of both the colonial state legislature and the crown.

After consolidating the troops and augmenting the unit with local men, the Black Corps project ultimately flopped, due to empty promises of payment. The price of a hired Black laborer in Grenada was a mere three shillings per day, an amount much less than any other hired

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[138] Mathew to Grenville Letter, 11 December 1790, Box 101, Folder 31.

laborers.[139] The newly organized Black Corps did not even receive this amount. Once settled in their station, the majority of the regiment refused to train or work without compensation. Out of the 250 men involved in the Corps, only 9 were engaged—the ones that had been appointed as subaltern officers. The positions within the army perhaps gave these men a sense of dignity and optimism towards a better chance of payment. General Mathew did not have anywhere near a complete and enthusiastic unit on his hands. Eventually, even the recently added appointees, whose position within the Corps was now understood as "conditionally attended, with no expense," found that their lack of compensation as free men was unacceptable, and their participation within the army soon wavered.

"Measures of Real Utility and Economy"

The failure of La Grenada and Mathew's early attempts at building the Corps, with no funds, bares an important audacity—that Free Black and mixed-race men in Grenada not just insisted on labor demands and compensation, but as stated in a letter to Grenville, they would not work unless given "a very high bounty."[140] Mathew had been receiving suggestions of hiring 10 new men per company in each future Black Corps regiment, by some of his contemporaries in legislature. He now knew this could only be done by hiring enslaved men for duty. By the end of December of 1790, the volunteering of free and mixed-race men, was neither socially nor economically conducive to the vision for the Black Corps. The proposal for hiring enslaved men to build the military units was decided to save money in the long run and would guarantee their participation. These projections were based on the La Grenada and General Mathew's failed

[139] Edward Mathew Report, November 1790, Box 101, Folder 31.

[140] Mathew to Grenville Letter, 11 December 1790, Box 101, Folder 31.

attempt with the "volunteer" troops, but it led to an act being unanimously passed in Grenada for hiring two "seasoned" male slaves per company in each garrison, and 10 others to be attached to the Royal Artillery. [141] These would be men who were already on the island and working on plantations in nearby estates. By the end of December, he was now proposing 20 male slaves be added to each regiment on each island, still keeping the extra 10 added to each artillery. According to Mathew, these additions would help him keep each colony in a "perfect state of discipline," and ready and willing for public service.

Along with purchasing initiatives, the failure of retaining unpaid Black men as troops also propelled General Mathew into a full-blown campaign for a properly funded, armed and supported Black regiment to fight on behalf of the British Empire. Feeling he had wasted time with La Grenada, he was now insistent on the plans and conditions for the Corps in the British Caribbean colonies. He would settle for nothing less than the men to be granted as permanent aids to other colonies' governments, hired as part of the regiment, "and of course paid, victualled and clothed, as soldiers; and transferred on a Regiment's quitting this country to the Battalion by which it is relived."[142] General Mathew's advocacy for compensation for the Black troops was not an egalitarian attempt at fair payment across racial lines in the British army. He needed funds either to purchase enslaved men and arrange for compensation, or to set up free men on adequate soldier's pay. He now realized what should have been obvious all along, that Black men in the colonies refused to work for free in the British army.

His second strategy for the support of Black troops, was arguing that at the very least, they would be consistent laborers for the settlements. Even in supposed times of peace, it was

[141] Ibid.
[142] Ibid.

necessary to keep a military force in the West Indies-- as public works, like government buildings, churches, and roads, were constantly being constructed. Building new infrastructure and repairing old was an ongoing project. The Black Corps' employment was to be founded on principles of "real utility and economy," and he maintained that these particular soldiers could work as well as any hired men, and at a much less expense. [143] This argument as a foundation for his future requests, helped convince the more hesitant figures of legislature in the colonies.

Ultimately, Mathew was adamant that it was preferable to purchase the service of Black troops, as opposed to recruiting white soldiers or free Black men. His vision was not immediately economical, as much as it was an investment plea. The expense of a white soldier recruited and landed in Grenada was around 20 pounds. Ten pounds was paid for their passage, around 6 pounds were paid as an initial amount on an average before joining, and 3 pounds were given to each recruit as levy money. Levy money was a one-time payment, and a common practice in the eighteenth century to encourage recruits into the British Army or Royal Marines. In contrast, the purchase of an enslaved man from the island, what he called a "seasoned negro," would be considerably more, at 50 pounds per man.[144] Once hired, both populations would be gravely underpaid, but a comparative of just the initial payment for the two groups indicated that although hiring an enslaved man was much more expensive, it would be well worth it over time. By taking the duties deemed most unsuitable to Europeans, they would save the lives of many soldiers, and add to what was described as the "comfort, convenience and durability of the

[143] Edward Mathew Report, November 1790, Box 101, Folder 31.

[144] Ibid.

troops."[145] There was no initial expense to recruit a free Black soldier in Grenada, but, as previously demonstrated, these men would go on strike if not given adequate pay. For the next few months, Mathew struggled with hiring free Black men, as he awaited reactions to the new strategy. The disposition of each colony was changing, and their state of defense and willingness to renegotiate their racial truth systems would be the crucial factor in allowing for the support of purchasing enslaved men and arming them.

Another important economic advantage to using only Black men directly from the colony, free or enslaved, was their Atlantic displacement. When white British troops fell ill or injured, they would be sent back home to England for the recovery of their health. The cost of passage for going home and then coming back to their regiment was around 20 pounds for each man.[146] This cost was almost identical to the amount spent on each soldier upon recruitment. This expense, in addition to the loss of their military service while absent from their duty, would not be incurred from Black soldiers because their "homes" were right where they were. There was no returning passage, and they were expected to recover locally. Governor Mathew considered white British soldiers' rehabilitation process as a waste of men, time, and money.

Other viable recruitment possibilities also surfaced—this time involving the men and the provinces of Nova Scotia and New Brunswick, "where a great number of free negroes who had been employed as pioneers to the army serving in the southern states of America, took refuge at the close of the last war."[147] The idea was first brought up in December YEAR?, to ship former

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[145] Mathew to Grenville, 22 December 1790, Box 101, Folder 31, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 2 January 1790- 22 November 1790, The National Archives in London.

[146] Edward Mathew Report, November 1790, Box 101, Folder 31.

[147] Mathew to Grenville, 1 March 1791, Box 101, Folder 31, Colonial Office and Predecessors:

soldiers from Nova Scotia to the Caribbean. The cost of their passage from the Northern Atlantic to Grenada would be expensive, even considering the prospect of using a sailing vessel owned by one of the island's governments to transport them. This idea was ultimately dismissed, in favor of purchasing "able and seasoned negroes" from the nearby estates. Months later, in March of 1791, Mathew considered the uses of the Canadian coast as a training ground, as well as a recruiting location for men who were already experienced in combat on the side of the British army. The free inhabitants were reported not to have applied themselves to the cultivation of the lands and were described at present as "very needy" and infirm. By gathering men from these provinces that already "belonged" to the army, the islands would theoretically be relieved from the expenses of purchasing enslaved and local Black men to serve as troops. Relocating the training ground to Canada was eventually disputed, but Mathew was keen on retrieving at least 60 more men to complete the Black Corps in Grenada, which was easier done with able-bodied men who were already trained in such service and willing to leave the long winters and harsh climates for the Caribbean.

The Antidote

At the onset of the new decade, ideas on the utility of the Black Corps changed dramatically. Previously, their formation in the 1780's was hampered by an upper-class anxiety of armed revolt, which stalled the introduction of any organized and trained Black troops on the islands, and relegated any men who were recruited to unarmed, hard labor in select settlements. There was no support for the possibility of dragoons or any other kind armed soldier with this racial makeup. For years, General Mathew was unable to garner consistent backing from colonial

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St. Vincent Original Correspondence 2 January 1790- 22 November 1790, The National Archives in London.

administrators or the crown, to fund, centralize or develop the troops as more than laborers. That all changed, as the last decade of the century welcomed the emergence of a new image for the Black Corps. The shift was in response to a changing Atlantic world, as warfare was escalating in and around the British Caribbean and the "common wind" carrying news of insurrection was circulating.[148] Colonial administrators and military officials were now more than ever, pining for fortifications and defense strategies that would address the specificities of slave revolts and subversion. By 1791, the Black Corps had been specially manufactured as the anti-thesis to the Black Caribs, fugitive slaves, and to a lesser degree, any threat to the British colonial project. Mathew himself was now branding the troops using specificities against the Black Caribs, evident by one of his proclamations in January of 1791: "I have the fullest assurances of their fidelity, and in the case of an insurrection there or in any of the islands, I should rely much on their services, as they are particularly formidable to the Charibbs and slaves, and much better qualified than European troops for the fatiguing duty of searching out fugitives in the interior country."[149] Through their success in St. Vincent, and accompanying mythology, the Black troops were now fashioned into the perfect counter to narratives of slave and indigenous deviance. Within the colonial imagination, they were the antidote, forged over the course of almost a decade to extinguish the present enemies.

Considering Governor Mathew's responsibilities and reach within the British Caribbean as head commander and general, the usage and framing of the Black Caribs as the primary

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[148] See Julius Scott's magnificent study on Atlantic networks of communication that informed revolts and rebellions during the "Age of Revolutions" in *The Common Wind: Afro-American Currents in the Age of the Haitian Revolution* (London: Verso, 2018), based on his unpublished 1986 doctoral dissertation at Duke University.

[149]Mathew to Grenville, 27 January 1791, Box 101, Folder 31, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 2 January 1790- 22 November 1790, The National Archives in London.

potential enemy of the Corps is significant. Seton's military career exposed him to Black fugitive settlements and instances of insurrection all over the British Caribbean. Mathew regularly made trips to Antigua, Barbados, Jamaica, and Dominica. One of the enduring tasks within his station, was to negotiate which settlements needed defense from urgent aggressions, and advocate for who needed to be provided the proper reinforcements. The project of the Black Corps however, remained important to him throughout, and both tasks intersected in logic and strategy. Mathew argued the Corps were a very practical solution for British losses throughout the Caribbean, and later positioned the Black Caribs as the only specific population as adversarial to them. It was the military factions of the Black Caribs that would be used to supplement arguments for the fidelity and efficacy of the Black Corps. The almost decade-long anxiety and hesitancy around the Black Corps, meant that convincing planters, administrators, and military officials would have to come through the most urgent and formidable of situations—or threats. This creation of this opposition proposes an additional argument: that the acceptance of the Black Corps exposed the military factions of Black Caribs as a much larger threat to the colonial project than correspondence let on. Herein lay yet another shift in colonial vulnerabilities, and the temporal but major role the mythos of the Black Caribs played in legitimizing and actualizing armed Black troops in the British army.

The military faction of the Black Caribs was by now deeply entangled with the French government and militia in Martinique. Carib leaders, like other anti-colonial and abolitionist groups in the Atlantic, also adopted Franco-Caribbean republican values of liberty to supplement their own aims of autonomy and protection of the land. In the first week of January, under the Act of 1791, the first assembly day of the Black Corps militia occurred in Grenada. The application of the garrison was urged, not from an apprehension of war, but to preserve the

"quiet of the island," due to the influx of mulattoes and others from "distracted French colonies."[150] It was clear that the rebellions that preceded the revolution in Saint Domingue, as well as the ones in Martinique and Guadeloupe, had caught wind in the colonies.[151] Free mixed-race populations were also increasingly leading insurrections against both British and French armies. Haiti's example reverberated throughout the colonies and restructured the ways people found alliances and cooperation with imperial entities. Evident in the British colonies, was an increased paranoia of potential French alliances with Black and creole populations on their islands. St. Vincent was no exception, as the Black Caribs had been in communication and strategizing with French forces in Guadeloupe and Martinique for decades. The Black Corps came about during a time when the Caribs shared in this tradition of alliance.

Empowered by the newfound support, Mathew audaciously used this moment to demand back payments for the troops. On October 2 of that year, Secretary of State for War Henry Dundas received a copy of an agreement and a letter from St. Vincent requesting past and present funding. The agreement, made on behalf of the Lords of Treasury, was that Mathew was to receive 981 pounds annually for the Black Corps in Grenada for "accoutrements"- clothing and other items for the troops. Only 523 pounds, 8 shillings, and 11 pence were received on July 5, 1789, with still a hefty balance owed. The difference, along with roughly 981 pounds left over from 1790 and 1791, came to a grand total of 2420 pounds, 17 shillings, and 1 pence.[152] Mathew, with the help of St. Vincent's colonial government, was now insisting that this unit be taken

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[150] Letter from Mathew to Grenville, 7 January 1791, Box 101, Folder 31, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 2 January 1790- 22 November 1790, The National Archives in London.

[152] Memorial on Corps of Blacks, 22 October 1791, Box 101, Folder 31, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 2 January 1790- 22 November 1790, The National Archives in London.

seriously--and it would, as the final decade of the century saw the additions of over 20 Black units in the British army, employed and armed and serving on the frontlines of imperial warfare.

Conclusion

Black troops demonstrated that their visions of liberty were not confined to British or French iterations of freedom, rather, they strategically moved towards a dignity shared by, but not exclusive to, the Black diaspora. Their refusal to work at times was methodical and direct, so much so, that General Mathew, with his military clout and standing, could not effectively organize a centralized unit for almost a decade, until the crown finally agreed to finance his project and provide a soldier's pay to the Black Corps. It was evident these men carried a political consciousness with them that travelled through different spaces of conflict.

Through surveying the emergence of the Black troops in the British Caribbean in the 1780s, a narrative arose: of selective military supplementation vis-a-vis the social and political climate of colonies, economic strategies to mitigate deficiencies in the military, and Black soldiers' entitlement to proper payment and consequently, the beginnings of their labor strikes. The Black Corps themselves were not simply a scattered and neglected first attempt at augmenting the British Caribbean army with Black men, they were determinants in the foundation of the Black soldier tradition. Mathew's individual fight to actualize the Black Corps project revealed the layered contentions for a reinforcement of this sort, and what it would take for them to gain the trust and support of insecure and paranoid colonies. Their reception at different sites speaks to myths of formidability that preceded them, that was received differently on each island, dependent on its history and present conditions.

The myths that accompanied them from the American Revolution became augmented with the particularities of the land and people of the Caribbean islands. St. Vincent unknowingly

served as a testing site for this project and provided the ideal conditions and adversaries to propel the Black Corps project forward. The island's ecology, still largely unaffected by settlement and extraction, did not witness a viral epidemic until the 1790s. The absence of occasion to test immunity theories, did not exempt the troops from these myths but instead enhanced previous fantasies of their invincible nature. They were reported to be still surviving in difficult conditions, and still carried prior assumptions of expendability and tolerance from the American Revolution. The troops' involvement in public works and buildings led to reports of only appreciation for the soldiers from Governor Seton, which became foundational for their entrustment among other colonies by the end of the century. St. Vincent, its topography, the conditions of its nascency, and the urgent sentiments of the settlers, all contributed to creating a foundational and enduring narrative for the Black Corps in the Caribbean.

Lastly, the mythmaking about the Black Caribs that was occurring simultaneously was instrumental in defining who the Black Corps were and who they could potentially be. Inching towards the 1790s, colonial anxieties about the Caribs and their relationship to nearby French forces increased. The Black troops were being requested by Governor Seton for preemptive measures, and St. Vincent was the first and only settlement in the Caribbean to consistently invite a unit of this makeup. Whether from actual instances of conflict or colonial propaganda promoting the idea, the possibilities for opposition between these two groups imagined the Black Corps to be the definitive solution for the problem of the Black Caribs. Through the course of 9 years, the Black Corps played a vital role in ultimately creating the Black Caribs within a Caribbean context—their mythos, reality, and possibilities.

Chapter 4: Post-war Crises and the New National Character

Introduction: Liberté and Land

The final decade of the eighteenth century witnessed a heightened warfare on the island, with multiple interests at the forefront. The rebellion was known and understood through various names, because it was part of both a local and global struggle for power and land, and it meant different things for different people. It was referenced by British writers and administrators in St. Vincent as the "Second Carib War," another attempt at defense and control after their defeat during the "First Carib War" in 1772. Within the expansive reach of the Atlantic world, the conflict was part of a broader abolitionist uprising and a struggle for autonomy, largely animated by Saint Domingue's insurrections, the French Revolution and the emergence of France's First Republic. Slogans of liberty and equality emphasized freedom movements, that free and enslaved African people had already been theorizing upon and operationalizing in the colonies. French colonies like Martinique, St. Lucia, and Guadeloupe had already been engaged in uprisings at the leadership of the masses of free and enslaved Black populations. For the Francophone world specifically, the 1790s was an era of recalibration of power and land, through revolution and armed struggle. [153]

France and Britain came to a head once again, conflicting over the same territory that had been parceled out by treaty during the Seven Years' War and the American Revolution. Considered the "ceded islands," St. Vincent and the Grenadines, along with Grenada, St. Lucia, Dominica and Tobago were territories that had been in and out of British treaty-ownership for

[153] For more on abolition in the French Caribbean and the relationship between Black insurgency and French republicanism, see Laurent Dubois' *A colony of Citizens: Revolution and Slave Emancipation in the French Caribbean, 1787-1804*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004).

decades, and because of the absence of sustained colonial control, had an unstable British defensive front. French Jacobin military leaders would use these conditions to their advantage, and actively gift, recruit and delegate Black and indigenous community leaders in the fight against British imperial dominance in the Caribbean. Within the context of French and British relations, the Second Carib War was just part of a larger "Brigand's War," an ongoing European conflict for territories in the Eastern Caribbean. Politician and former planter turned Jacobin, Jean-Baptiste Victor Hughes, led these efforts on the side of the French Republic, and would indefatigably try to convert maroon, Black and indigenous communities on these islands to the cause of French republican revolution.

Months after rebels had already seized control of Saint-Domingue, the French National Convention voted to abolish slavery in its colonies in February of 1794, although it was only implemented in Saint Domingue, Guadeloupe and Guyane.[154] Following the revolt in Saint Domingue, France abolished slavery in its colonies which supplemented the French military force in the Caribbean, with the addition of former slaves. French forces, led by Hughes, assisted the Black Caribs in waging a final war against the British settlers in St. Vincent. Ultimately, as global events coalesced on this small island of 133 square miles in the Eastern Caribbean, the Black Caribs led a very close struggle for autonomy, land, and the abolition of British plantation economy and slavery—and almost won.

The starting point of the "Second Carib War" within British colonial documents and the date widely used in Caribbean historiography was determined by two factors: first, the period of

[154] The decree was not implemented in French colonies of Reunion, Martinique, Mauritius and Senegal, Mauritius and French India. See Sue Peabody's *Introduction* in "French Emancipation," In *obo* in Atlantic History, https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199730414/obo-9780199730414-0253.xml (accessed 17 Aug. 2021).

official French backing and reinforcement, and second, the burning of Madame La Croix's estate. La Croix was a French woman known for her pro-British sympathies, and her property was located on the windward side of the island. The Second Carib War is understood to have begun on March 8, 1795, and ended over a year later, on June 10, 1796. However, the warfare on the island of St. Vincent was much more complicated than two clear cut dates suggest.

Second Carib War

Black Carib militias waged formal warfare once two strategic elements were set into place. Both strategies had been used and refined during previous attacks on the British and had been proven effective.[155] Prior to the war, Chatoyer and other Carib leaders kept diplomatic relations with British administrators, occasionally having dinner with William Young at his estate, and drinking with British officials to consolidate agreements. During these meetings, the Caribs would have been able to gauge the condition of British political and military units—the demand throughout the Atlantic, the availability of soldiers and ammunition, and the moments of British conflict on other lands. Since the 1780s, Black Carib women had been strategically participating in Kingstown's Sunday markets, selling produce and carved goods to British settlers, including members of the House and Council. Caribs occasionally operated the lighters needed to transport sugar from shore to ship, and like Ann and her family, were also participants in the property market in St. George Parish. For decades, Black Carib women and men had been weaving in and out of the British settlement, as a survival tactic to make money on products or services, but naturally collecting information from and about their adversaries. From a strategic

[155] Kirby and Martin first identified these two consistencies as the most important Black Carib strategies of anti-colonial warfare that had been proven to work since 1779. From Council Meeting notes, Caribs tended to attack estates when a larger conflict was happening in the wider Atlantic world that also demanded the attention of British fortifications. *The Rise and Fall of the Black Caribs (Garifuna)*, 36.

engagement with colonial society emerged a trusted intelligence and the first condition of warfare; an assurance that British military and naval units were distracted and overburdened in conflict in the wider Caribbean. The second condition of warfare was the support, but not the leadership, of French troops, weapons, and ammunition. Circumstances in the 1790's checked both of these boxes—a weak British defensive, and an enthusiastic and friendly French republic.

As the Caribs strategized, Victor Hughes sent men to St. Vincent in 1794 to offer coalition towards the annihilation of the British, fulfilling the second condition of Black Carib warfare. Prior to Hughes' arrival it must be stressed the Black Caribs had been engaged in warfare on a tactical level for the duration of British settlement, blocking infrastructure plans, and destroying sugar ports and plantations. The Jacobin presence provided more military troops and European armament, both resources understood as more than necessary to engage in direct warfare with the British army. Had the Black Caribs battled against British troops already on the island, on their own terms of guerilla fighting, night-raids, bows and arrows, there would be no contest, as the British were already outnumbered and unprepared for the terrain. The Caribs understood they had to engage in warfare beyond their customs and match their adversaries with potential reinforcements from beyond the island.

After taking Guadeloupe from British rule in 1794, Hughes' strategy would be to send representatives to the island to appeal to male leaders of the Black Carib militia, particularly Chatoyer and Duvalle. French representatives arrived at the island with gifts, currency, ammunition, and a Republican statement that promised an inevitable victory over British forces. This rhetoric appealed to Black Carib militias, and their strategy would be to welcome the French army as comrades, temporarily. The new Carib/ French army would plan to coordinate their attacks with rebel armies in Grenada, and officially start offenses on March 17. However,

Hughes' inability to appeal to and organize with enslaved populations in Grenada foiled this plan, and twelve days earlier than the planned attack, an insurrection broke out in Grenada that put Governor Seton on high vigilance.[156] After receiving tips from a planter on the windward coast that a Carib insurrection was forthcoming, Seton attempted to meet with the brothers Chatoyer and Duvalle, who rejected the meeting. Communication with the Black Carib leaders was no longer an option for the British, and the Carib army continued warfare on the colonial state in St. Vincent.

Waiting until a period of British imperial distraction proved to be a successful tactic for the Caribs. Chatoyer and Duvalle started at the northernmost point on either side of the island and commenced south, destroying every plantation, planter, and suspected pro-British slave along the way.[157] This level of warfare continued for over a year, with most successes happening at the hands of the Carib army. Leading French property owners on the island enthusiastically joined the Carib front, offering services in exchange for protections. Throughout the year, the British colony was only fortified with inconsistent shipments of ammunition and soldiers. Britain was largely overwhelmed with attacks from French, Spanish, Black and indigenous forces and were losing against the Carib army.

The Caribs continued to receive support and information from nearby French-controlled islands and Victor Hughes, but their successes waned after three new contingencies had

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[156] Taylor, *The Black Carib Wars: Freedom, Survival and the Making of the Garifuna,* 118.

[157] Given their history, it is also likely that Chatoyer and Duvalle's armies also recruited enslaved people that were eager to fight against the British during this clearing. Charles Shephard also bitterly notes that they destroyed their own plantations as well, suggesting that even the Carib chiefs' decision to embrace hierarchal homesteads, their slaves and estate accommodations, were all a ruse to temporarily convince the British that they had accepted their culture and economy. They played the role of British citizen until it was time to set the colony ablaze. See Charles Shephard, *Historical Account of the Island of Saint Vincent*, 61.

emerged. The first was the enlisting of Black soldiers, modeled after the original Black Corps in the 1780's. The Caribs had major advantages against British soldiers, including their expertise in guerilla warfare, their propensity to strike at night and stay hidden, their knowledge of the waterways and landscapes, and their strategies in hiding ammunition. By 1795, Black men recruited to be in the British army were well-versed in these tactics and were able to meet the Caribs at their own level. Not only had white British soldiers been unable to defend themselves against nighttime ambushes, or climb up mountains, but they were also suffering from the fatal Yellow Fever virus that had reached the island a couple years earlier. New Black Corps troops were recruited and used to identify and hunt down Carib soldiers, as well as enslaved Africans from British plantations on the island. The Caribs were reported to be in such shock to see enslaved people from the estates on the offensive against them, that from the betrayal they became weaker. Carib military leaders had been accustomed to organizing revolutionary networks with rebels on plantations, and experiencing the new British offensive succeed in their assignments, and revealing their hideouts, significantly affected both their strategy and their spirits.[158] Impressed by the "trustworthy negroes" that fought alongside them, Governor Seton organized what would be known as the St. Vincent Rangers—a corps comprised of hired slaves and free men. Approximately 500 rangers were drafted for service. By October 10, 1795, the St. Vincent Rangers had been reduced from 500 men to 247, and they would later be drafted into the 2nd West India Regiment or "Myers Regiment of Foot," now headed up by newly appointed Colonel William Myers.

The second and third elements were the unpredictability of European capabilities and allegiances; the decrease of French support, and the unexpected and sudden augmentation of

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[158] Kirby and Martin, *The Rise and Fall of the Black Caribs (Garifuna)*, 43-50.

British military fortifications. The combination of these three occurrences weakened the Carib army and forced a series of submissions from different factions. Food supplies, and cane fields were destroyed, in order to starve them out of hiding, and when families emerged—they were forcibly shipped to the neighboring island of Balliceaux.

Worth noting, the timing of Chief Chatoyer's death and the duration of successful warfare that commenced afterwards, troubles the colonial narrative of masculinized warfare. The Black Caribs' strength and military prowess was far from dependent on a singular or even a handful of charismatic male leaders. Chatoyer's death, less than a week after a declared insurrection had begun, makes clear that although the British understood him under a European military lens of General, it was the skillset of a mass of people, numbering anywhere from 8-10,000, both men and women, that sustained the offensive and defensive front. The "Second Carib War" proceeded for more than a year without Chatoyer, at full force, and winning.[159]

Argument

This chapter is less about the details of the Second Carib War, and more about what happened after the war was understood to be over. I look at the instructive moments right after crises and warfare to determine a specific set of priorities that revealed many things about the nature of power, success and defeat. The first contention, that sets the conditions for what happened after the war, was that the Black Carib militia was an international army that was multi-racial, multi-class, multi-gendered, and part of a larger abolitionist movement that persisted beyond June 10, 1796. The Black Caribs were thus instrumental in the abolition of slavery and were a part of the pantheon of Black rebel movements that demanded autonomy, land, and liberty during this era.

The possibility of another coalition of rebel fighters aiding the Caribs, also drove British officials to shift the prevailing logics of class and race once again within the settlement. Authorities engaged in an ideological scramble to regain a semblance of security and preparedness. After the war, they struggled to make sense of their superiority, after witnessing the capabilities of a stronger political enemy. These anxieties forced them to transform social and political structures within the colony to better understand themselves as victors. First, British authorities insisted upon Black British armies, as they were responsible for much of the advancement of the British army during the war. The success of the Black Corps and St. Vincent Rangers led to the commissioning of eight new West India Regiments, all organized in defense of British Caribbean colonies. Secondly, racial and class logics once again shifted. After the surrender, attainted people that had been convicted of a crime, some that were formerly grouped together with the Black Caribs as *vagabonds*, were now pardoned and codified into a public whiteness. They were forgiven for their past crimes, as well as given priority in assistance with acquiring property. This shift in status was in direct service to an emergence of a new "national character" and "public good," emergent principles that would help fabricate a unity for the settlement. A unified national character was desperately forged to protect the colony against later attacks, and to appear in political agreement for the sake of requesting future support from the metropole. Criminal white men on the island became a redeemable population, for the devotion to a "Public Good." Taking the place of the formerly criminalized, a new lower class was instilled—the indebted, who were now prevented from receiving compensation, and were neglected in their losses.

The second point of this chapter is that the destruction of properties at the hands of the Carib militia, and the dispossession of Carib families, led to a new racialized understanding of

property value that had not been in operation before. Property value on the island went up after the "evacuation" of the Caribs, but holdings in St. George's parish specifically were marketed at a much higher price. St. George had been the closest parish to Carib Country, on the windward coast. The location of the prized land, and condition of the soil, were not the driving factor behind the increase in value. Instead, the colonial allure was the new promise of security. Now that the Caribs were gone, the committee denied proprietors any large compensation for crop failures and other losses, because the rise in property value and the claims of enhanced security were argued as sufficient.

Finally, as families were forcefully exiled into the nearby island of Balliceaux, the Caribs specifically racialized as "Black" were accused of being both the carriers and progenitors of a widespread strain of what was likely yellow fever. British surgeon N. Dickenson fabricated a narrative that insisted a causality between infectious disease and colonial resistance. He argued that the last of the Black Carib soldiers, specifically the men that had "abandoned" their families to fight against the British were the cause of the widespread disease and the tragic fatalities. Dickenson's report showcases how even the afterlives of Black indigenous people were not exempt from the violent grasp of falsified colonial narrative. Simultaneously, the fact that the report went through such lengths to explain its thesis, also proves the formidability of the Caribs, both as survivors and deceased. The international Black Carib militia was powerful indeed.

Common Winds

Powers that will work for thee – air, earth, and skies…
-William Wordsworth to Toussaint L'Ouverture

(1803)

Almost exactly two years prior to the burning of Madame La Croix's estate, Governor Seton received a letter from Secretary of State Henry Dundas, warning him of the abolition movement spreading across the French and British colonies in the Caribbean. In March of 1793, Seton was instructed to issue a proclamation restraining the "French mulattoes and Free negroes" from entering St. Vincent. He was notified specifically about two Black abolitionists that may have entered or attempted to enter the island—Raimond and Francois, who had developed a circum-Caribbean and Atlantic reputation of being serious threats to the British colonies. Earlier that year, a meeting of St. Vincent's absentee planters had been called together at City Chambers in London. The resounding call for this emergency gathering across the Atlantic was the urgent need for support, to put the island in what they called "a proper state of defense." St. Vincent's planters in Britain felt that Seton and the government assembly were not ensuring the security of their property. After the convening, St. Vincent's Council and House voted unanimously to cooperate with move forward with these measures. As early as January 1793, Seton had attempted to issue a proclamation closing the settlement to what he called "foreigners of every description." The first proclamation was not respected, and Seton attempted it again in February, this time with the backing of the Council and published in both English and French. According to Seton, he had responded to early anticipations of Black rebel armies accordingly, and his proclamations "in great measure had the desired effect."[160]

Knowledge and fear around Black and French networks of abolition dated from many years before the beginning of the Second Carib War and the burning of Madame La Croix's

[160] Seton to Henry Dundas, Account No. 50, 8 March 1793, Box 260, Folder 12, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 5 November 1792- 15 October 1794, The National Archives in Kew.

estate. A year before Seton's proclamation attempting to isolate the Black Carib population on the island ideologically and militarily, the settlement was already hyper vigilant about prospective uprisings and their potential connections to rebels from outside of the island. In January of 1792, there were reports of an intended revolt amongst the enslaved Africans on estates on the leeward side of the island. The principal magistrate held an investigation that determined the rumors of the intended revolt groundless. However still, the investigation found reports on "very different ideas held by the Negroes than has been known," referring to shared revolutionary slogans and language of the Atlantic abolition. Suspicion of intended revolts continued throughout the early 1790s, undoubtedly connected to the wave of insurrections occurring across the Caribbean. After investigation, the settlement's governor made sure to reassure Dundas and the metropole that every precaution was taken to prevent any "improper communication with the French islands," and even the smallest suspicions of "mutinous or improper behavior" from in the colony would be immediately checked.

The Black Carib Militia International

Abolitionist currents of communication across the Atlantic also led to a body of diverse characters that travelled to St. Vincent to participate in the Black Carib struggle. The Black Carib militia grew to be a multi-racial crew of abolitionists and French nationalists. While they were considered the "rebel army" in St. Vincent, certainly rebellious against British colonialism, they were not rebel in a marginal or peripheral sort of way. The forces that conspired, trained, and fought against the British army in St. Vincent in the 1790s were a diverse group of powerful people, coming from various backgrounds, islands, and expertise. While there were successful and decorated French militants like Victor Hughes, attorneys, and "rogues" turned commissary for French Republican ideals were also in attendance. These men and women were united by a

common enemy, yet still they grappled with opposing values even under the umbrella of abolition.[161] Hughes himself had recently been a planter with enslaved laborers working for him and was now rallying for the cessation of slavery in the interest of French republicanism. This particular military force was a Black Carib-led army of Caribbean abolitionists, and with assistance from French Nationalist forces. However, it was still mostly populated and led by Black and indigenous people, not just from St. Vincent, but also from surrounding islands like St. Lucia, Martinique, and Grenada. These were men and women that were either formerly enslaved and joined the French revolutionary cause after the British were defeated in their own colonies, or free men and women adamant on aiding the Black Caribs in their struggle against British colonialism and domination.[162]

Although the British claimed success over the Caribs in St. Vincent in June of 1796, the nature of the Black indigenous rebellion was that it was international, multi-racial, and part of a larger abolition struggle that persisted even after said surrender. Months after the certain factions conceded, Caribbean abolitionists that had been a part of the Black Carib army were rounded up after being captured in the leeward islands. They had still been waging war against British forces, up until their capture. Many of these prisoners were later vetted by British officials on their character, history, and the potential threat if they were to be exchanged with the French in

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[161] In Chapter 5 of *The Complexion of Race* (2000), Roxann Wheeler discusses the flurry of abolition debates happening in the late eighteenth century, and how it intersected with prevailing racial discourses across the Atlantic.

[162] The diversity of Black participants in the Carib militia were an eighteenth century iteration of what Brent Hayes Edwards argues as *Black diasporic décalage*—the work of "differences within unity," and how the variation of conditions of oppression have historically been opportunities to forward movement. For more on this, see his text *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2003).

return for British prisoners of war. Lists were drawn up for these men and women, crucial figures in the Black Carib war of the 1790s, and the larger abolitionist movement in the Atlantic. In September of 1796, eight of these militants were assembled and deemed "Remarkable prisoners," worthy of further consideration.

A military couple of "remarkable" status, was General Marinier and his wife Eulalie Piemont. They had made it to St. Vincent earlier that year, after the French garrison successfully occupied Fort Charlotte in St. Lucia in May. Three weeks later, Marinier and his Eulalie went on to fight in St. Vincent. It was noted that Marinier was highly admired by free and enslaved Black populations in both St. Lucia and St. Vincent and had developed a reputation as a man of principle and character. He was described as a Black man of "singular enterprise and abilities," perhaps a nod towards his military skillsets. [163] It was also noted that he had always conducted himself with great humanity and moderation to the English prisoners in St. Lucia in earlier years, a detail of his character that pleased British officials. Exchanging him for a British prisoner of war was considered a "proper return," and Marinier was given further attention upon this process. The listing for possible exchange does not discuss Eulalie, although she herself was likely a formidable soldier as well, crossing national and geographic bounds for the cause of liberty and abolition.

In addition to Marinier, white deputies were also listed, all comrades in arms against the British. A man named Divers, said to be once of Victor Hughes main advisors, had been sent

[163] In the English Heritage Foundation's special on Black Prisoners of War at Portchester Castle, Abigail Coppins describes General Marinier as a "free, mixed-race soldier, who had been commander-in chief of the French forces on St. Lucia and had organized resistance to British rule." Her dissertation on the Black Caribbean Prisoners at Portchester Castle is forthcoming. "Black Prisoners of War at Portchester Castle," English Heritage, accessed August 28, 2021, https://www.english-heritage.org.uk/visit/places/portchester-castle/history-and-stories/black-prisoners-at-portchester/.

home a prisoner from Tobago in 1793 and had been captured in the abolitionary struggle. An attorney named Lupin, with property in St. Lucia and in St. Vincent, had been active since 1794 and was named the principal conspirator against the English during a Christmastime ambush. He was described as an "extremely vicious clever rogue, and guilty of many crimes." Another soldier listed as M. Sugue, was noted as an "intriguing, cheating scoundrel," and a man listed as Bone, formerly a priest and now officer d'Artilliere, was described as a dangerous man. Both Sugue and Bone were captured at St. Vincent.

Other Black or "mixed-race" soldiers were also included in the listing. General Marinier's brother Jean-Louis Marin Pedre, and Captain Louis Delgrès had been captured in St. Vincent, and had both fought on the side of the Black Caribs. Another man, marked down as a "Negro from Grenada" was listed as Brutus, although he went by different names in different locations. Brutus had been taken at St. Lucia and suspected to have been involved in the murders in Goyave Guadeloupe and the assassination of Lt. Governor Horne and 40 men in their camp. Victor Hughes frequently employed Brutus because he was known to be skilled in intelligence and ammunition. Marinier, Eulalie, Marin Pedre and Louis Delgrès would later be shipped across the Atlantic to Portchester Castle, joining more than 2,000 Black people brought to the castle turned prison. All were considered "French prisoners of war," including 99 women and children.[164]

Post Crisis Scramble, Race, and Priority

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[164] Portchester Castle was originally a medieval fortress built by the Romans to ward off "barbarian pirates," but by the seventeenth century onward, was now used to detain Dutch, Spanish, and French prisoners of war.

The following sections detail the haste with which St. Vincent's legislature and military officials pushed to enact laws that would not only restore the settlement to its previous condition but in fact enhance it into a colony of specified national character and defense. This emerged as an intense ideological struggle, that forced the colony to recalibrate its notions of difference, value and criminality. After the British colony had experienced the devastating attacks on its inhabitants, property, and military, a new tension arose that forced administrators to once again recalibrate how society was to be organized. These modifications were frantic and driven by a fear of another inter-racial and class coalition, an enemy that had demonstrated its strength before and could potentially organize again.[165] The possibility of another international front against the British settlement haunted colonial and military officials. The rush towards both present stability and future prevention involved a critical transformation of logics of race, gender, class, criminality, and militarism.

New Black Corps/West India Regiments

The first immediate modification was made in relation to the racial makeup of the British army. The success of the Black Corps during the Second Carib War resolved any residual uncertainty or fears of an all-Black military unit that British administrators may have still had. British troops of all backgrounds were graciously thanked for their involvement in the war and were now considered a "very respectable military force," however, a new confidence and envisioning emerged for Black troops in the British army. In November of 1796, Lieutenant Governor Alexander Houston addressed the gentlemen of the Council and the House on what he termed "the dreadful and unprecedented sufferings of the colony's inhabitants," requesting everyone's support for an official new makeup of soldiers. Houston announced these troops as

the "new modeling of the Black Corps," now officially called the West Indian Regiments. He suggested that through their example, companies of "trusty slaves" should also be added to the militia to augment the force of the island.[166] The recommendation was made for immediate consideration, suggesting that first, the colony was still fearing another Black Carib attack even after surrender and the forced exile of the majority of the Caribs, and secondly, even in their victory, the British army was still insecure in both numbers and capabilities.

[166] Alexander Heath Letter to the Council, Account No. 10, 3 November 1796, Box 101, Folder 35, Colonial Office and Predecessors: Grenada, Original Correspondence, The National Archives in Kew.

National Character and the New White

> We have however, to lament the dreadful and unexampled sufferings of the Colony, during a long contest with a savage and Barbarous enemy; but you should consider that our misfortunes can only be repaired, by looking our situation boldly in the face, and taking the necessary steps to restore the Island as speedily as possible, to its former prosperous situation, which will require the united exertions and energy of all the inhabitants in their Public and Private capacities.
> -Letter to the Council, 1796

> Whiteness was a slippery concept —was it a class or a species? How could it be secured?
> -Catherine Hall, "Gendering Property, Racing Capital" (2014)

Along with a determined push for Black military enhancements, an Act for "handling the estates of persons attainted" was introduced in the Assembly meeting. Under British criminal law, a person attainted had had their land and civil rights relinquished, as a consequence for committing a felony.[167] The new act outlined measures for the well-being of attainted persons, and primarily focused on securing estates for them. This project was proposed as a "State of Public Credit" and a matter of great importance, that deserved "the most serious consideration." The Board of Commissions received a list of names of gentlemen that would be eligible, along with a revision that suggested commissioners would have full power to act on these cases. Within the same act, commissioners were also recommended for an additional jurisdiction that would permit them to sell enslaved African people who were not attached to estates, "to prevent their growing idle and dissolute."[168] Along with scrambling to prevent the growth of a free Black population on the island, the legislature was now seriously invested in redeeming the rights and security for formerly criminalized white inhabitants, through property legislation.

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[168] Alexander Heath Letter to the Council, Account No. 10, 3 November 1796, Box 101, Folder 35.

The new act would however have an important gendered feature; only formerly criminalized *men* in the colony would be eligible to attain property. British women of the poorer class that had been treated as criminal had no such "public credit" argued for on their behalf, or for any sort of securities or recuperation after the war. This meant that even as formerly criminalized, lower-class British men were granted the relief that was normally reserved for wealthier proprietors on the island, their women counterparts had no such opportunity. This distinction suggested an endurance of British patriarchal hierarchy, but also a consolidation of white male identity within the context of a recuperating colony.[169]

Appropriating estates to the population of attainted British men was a vital shift in the way the colonial state had imagined its inhabitants. Through property, these men were promoted into a whiteness, a racial logic and unity that was necessary to sustain the forging of a national character. They were renamed in legal papers, from vagabonds and criminals, into small landholders. Titles to land was considered a moderate provision for the families that had suffered what was stated a "just sentence of law for their crimes." [170]This gesture had tremendous implications in the way racial dynamics and truth-systems were organized within the colony. Although the act was posited as a generous and a salutary measure, it was in fact a scheme to create a national character based on white unity.[171]

Urgency for the passing of the act for persons attainted was driven by a need to quell what was described as a "present hate" of the population of the island. As this legislation was

[169] In her article "Gendering Property, Racing Capital" (2014), Catherine Hall explains that throughout the British Caribbean, the control of white women's property was critical in the maintenance of male dominance and patriarchal power.

[170] Alexander Heath Letter to the Council, Account No. 10, 3 November 1796, Box 101, Folder 35.

being decided upon, colonial officials were still experiencing high level of unease about potential newcomers to the island. Officials attempted to prevent all people that had been racialized as Black from entering St. Vincent, insisting upon “precautions against the admission of negroes into this Colony, who have been in rebellion in the neighboring islands.” These measures of defense were stressed at the board Assembly meetings, even as over a period of six months starting in July, the majority of Black Caribs had been kidnapped and exiled to Balliceoux. The Act for persons attainted was revealing of the residual fears from the recent assembly of international abolitionists that had appeared on the island. The British colony feared it would be able to defend itself against a multi-racial coalition again, unless a unified national character was constructed. The scramble to secure the property holdings of poor and formerly criminalized white men in the colony was a crucial step towards this plan, as this population were more likely to side with aggressors against the British state. St. Vincent’s colonial administrators considered this to be a crucial element in the restoration of the settlement.

“The Very Important Objects of Public Business”

> “The sincere interest which I take in the prosperity and happiness of these Islands; and my earnest wish to fulfill the Duties of my station to the approbation of His majesty, call on me in the strongest manner, to devote my time to the Public, and to co-operate with you in every regulation, which may tend to perfect the re-establishment of the Colony.”
> - Letter to the Council, 1796

A new interest in a unified national character also included the language of a “new public,” and a “public good.” Before the war, governmental assistance, credit, and priority of ownership was first delegated towards wealthy proprietors in the settlement. A new concept of “the Public,” was an attempt towards a consolidated social and political character on the island. These designations were constructed to rival the emergence of their opposite; a new public and a

new national character was imagined to be capable of preventing another multi-class and multi-racial army to contend with. The "Public," also translated into public credit, which was an extended aid to all inhabitants now part of the national character. Special attention was given to inhabitants that had a precarious land tenancy and property holdings to begin with, and they were granted priority in assistance, what was called "public credit." St. Vincent's newfound devotion to the "Public" was forged in service to a mythical national unity, of integrated wants and needs, and with the same enemies. It was also an attempt to gain back the trust of a pessimistic population that had witnessed back-to-back destruction of their livelihoods and properties and had little faith in the colonial governance.

A stronger defense for the financial welfare of British citizens in St. Vincent also emerged, in attempts towards building a "public good." After British administrators requested aid from the crown to cover the debt that had incurred from the war, they were denied, and instead legislators in London recommended that the colonial government instill a new taxation system for the citizens on the island. Houston immediately rejected the idea, arguing that the resources of the colony were already so limited, and that new expenses were not viable and would "press on some individuals." He insisted that new taxation would be a measure particularly painful and impossible for the inhabitants of the colony. [172]

The priorities of the colony post-crises were clear and revealing; a new modelling of the Black Corps, the addition of "trusty slaves" to the militia, the creation of public good and public credit, and the expanded jurisdiction of commissioners. Attainted British men were given provisions of surrendered estates to build on what was being manufactured as a "generosity" of national character. The special attention to the appropriation of lands to small settlers had giant

[172] Alexander Heath Letter to the Council, Account No. 10, 3 November 1796, Box 101, Folder 35.

implications, considering that British landowners of all classes had experienced losses and damage from Black Carib military offensives. Within a year after the claimed victory, small settlers and formerly convicted British men were now catapulted as participants within national discourse and defense. After the Second Carib war, British officials were now invested in in re-working class and racial logics in the settlement to forge a unified white British public.

Priority and Loss

On February 21, 1797, the Council and House of Assembly produced a report that itemized the damages after the Second Carib War, for the purpose of distributing compensation to select parties. The report included a pointed descriptor in its subheading, to "investigate and ascertain the LOSSES suffered in consequence of the REBELLION AND INVASION of the CHARAIBS AND FRENCH."[173] British inhabitants of all classes had submitted their accounts of damages earlier and were hoping for recompense that would enable them some stability. Poorer overseers and tradesmen had sent the committee their statements of losses, some which amounted amounting to several hundreds of pounds. They were reported to not have appeared before the committee, even as after receiving repeated notices to show up in person. Others of this class failed to send in any claims, even though the committee was looking to prioritize their compensation, remarking "small sums to poor men are great objects to them."[174] Wealthier property owners, however, were eager to submit their claims in detail. The report lists a total of ninety-nine of the island's British proprietors and estate names and itemizes their losses in pound sterling. The listing included both men and women holders and was divided into six categories:

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[173] Report of Losses, 21 February 1794, Box 1, Folder 4389, Treasury: Treasury Board Papers and In-Letters, 1790-1840, The National Archives in Kew.

[174] Report of Losses, 21 February 1794, Box 1, Folder 4389.

1) Buildings, 2) Negroes and Stock Killed, 3) Negroes dead of epidemical disorders, 4) Wearing apparel, Furniture and Liquor destroyed, 5) Lumber, Merchandise, and Implements of Trade and 6) Loss sustained by owners of Task Work Gangs. The six categories revealed what was of highest priority in the British settlement in the 1790s, and how these units of property were defined and compartmentalized.

Every category was understood as a component of private property. "Buildings," as privately owned infrastructure, added up to the most in losses—£14,041. Next in terms of value was wearing apparel, furniture and liquors destroyed, at £9,609 in losses. Enslaved African people and animals were categorized together as "Negroes and Stock killed," and took up third in value, followed by lumber, merchandise, and implements of trade—both categories amounting to around £7,500 in losses. "Negroes dead of epidemical disorders," amounted to £2,806, and finally "Loss sustained by owners of Task Work Gangs" [175] came to £2,778. From this itemization, the scope of prioritized "property" for wealthy British owners in St. Vincent consisted of people, animals, infrastructure, and belongings. These categories displayed what proprietors themselves reported as their most significant losses after the war.

`The reports of losses that were organized by parish differed, in that the categories demonstrated what was of most importance to the larger colony as opposed to individual proprietors. Damages were divided by the numerous colonial crises that had endured for much of the 1790s. The first category was for property destroyed by fires, which referenced directly the

[175] "Task Work Gangs" was in reference to the organization of labor on plantations. Both "tasking" and "ganging" have been theorized as two different labor systems, although blurring into each other depending on context. For more on the features of these systems, see Philip D. Morgan's chapter "Task and Gang Systems: The Organization of Labor on New World Plantations," in Stephen Innes' book *Work and Labour in Early America*, (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988) 189–22.

persistent insecurity surrounding the recent lumber shortages, destruction of property from the 1780 hurricane, constant small and large-scale demolitions by the Black Carib military, and overall neglect from the metropole. The second expanded category is in reference to the fugitive slaves who escaped to Black Carib communities and fought alongside them during the war, or the enslaved who were killed by the Caribs, as well as the destruction of plantations and tools. The third category alludes to the most recent "pestilential fever" or yellow fever that had reached the island by 1793.[176] The final two are projections of prospective money lost for crops that had already grown, and crops that were expected to have emerged the next year. While proprietors organized their damages mostly by buildings and labor power, colonial officials understood a wider scope of destruction that revealed some of their most enduring fears. The insecurity around lumber shortages, fear of rebel slaves and maroons, yellow fever, and struggling crop produce were the top contenders in the post-war fears of British administrators. Overall, it was clear through these reports that colonial administrators were trying to make sense of shifting ideas of property and value, from the lens of both proprietors and the British colony as a whole.

The committee found submissions for the final category of itemization, "Deficiency of Produce," to be greatly exaggerated, and they disregarded it based on logics that intersected with a new racial geography. Starting in 1795, estimates of crop deficiencies had been taken each year, and most of the reports had been noted as more extravagant than realistic. Given the possibilities and history of the settlement when confronted with the Black Caribs, proprietors were rightfully panicked and predicting the direst of outcomes for their estates, thus embellishing

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[176] Colin Chisholm, *An essay on the malignant pestilential fever introduced into the West Indian Islands from Boullam, on the coast of Guinea, as it appeared in 1793 and 1794*, (Philadelphia: Printed for Thomas Dobson, 1799), Accessed online, https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/evans/N26554.0001.001?view=toc

the nature of their yield. The Committee not only found the numbers they submitted excessive but rationalized their compensation through a property value system that had been reformulated by means of dispossession. First, the legislature calculated compensation for these owners by deducting for military and mule hire, and secondly, they instated an increase in the value of the land, which they felt balanced out the deficiency in crops for estates in parishes that had not been destroyed. New property values through Black and indigenous dispossession were now being established throughout the island.

Property Value and Dispossession

> "Estates in this parish, are also more valuable,
> as well as every property in the island, by the removal of the Charaibs."
> -Report on the Losses, 1797

The location of Ann Barramont's former property, St. George's Parish, had suffered the most in monetary loss at the hands of Carib and French soldiers. The total loss projected for the parish was estimated at £380,913.[177] The man who had been requesting the Barramont properties, William Bannatyne, was not listed as a proprietor in 1797, so he either never acquired the property or he had lost it in the seven years intervening between the attempted transaction and the construction of the report. Sir William Young, the eldest son of his father of the same name, also had holdings in St. George's Parish, and suffered losses close to £190,00 from the Carib War, in addition to his losses from estates in St. Andrew. After his father's death, he inherited the two sugar plantations in St. Vincent, and with them, the damages of which contributed to the debts he had already inherited from his father of £110,000.[178] St. George

[177] Report of Losses, 21 February 1794, Box 1, Folder 4389.

[178] E.I. Carlyle, "Young, Sir William, second baronet (1749–1815), colonial governor and politician." *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography.* 2004; Accessed online,

Parish took up the southern tip of the island, including Kingstown, the central site of British administration, market trade and seaports. The superior level of destruction that happened within this parish was a tactical move by the Black Carib militias to cripple the British colony at its heart.

There were also a handful of submissions for compensation coming from French property owners. These proprietors expected to be paid in the same manner as their neighbors by the British colonial government. Their losses were taken seriously, including the compensation of a lone matriarch named Madame La Croix. Although they were a small population in St. Vincent, French inhabitants were split in allegiance and in duty, and British administrators took seriously the political divergences within this group. Jean Pradié, a proprietor who had experienced the destruction of his buildings and more, submitted a report of his losses to the committee. Although he was listed as "independent," British administrators had received secret information that was given on oath, of his being instrumental and active in "exciting and promoting the rebellion."[179] Pradié, and others suspected like him, were swiftly denied any compensation for their losses during the war—whether they were proven traitors or only hinted as such.

The second section to suffer major losses was Charlotte Parish, which until 1797, was perhaps the most highly contested area in terms of ownership. Although the land held twenty-seven British estates, Charlotte Parish was on the windward easternmost side of the island, and the home base for the majority of Black Carib communities. In Bryan Edwards' 1794 map of St. Vincent [Figure:1], it is apparent that even prominent surveyors could not stake claim to this

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https://www.oxforddnb.com/view/10.1093/ref:odnb/9780198614128.001.0001/odnb-9780198614128-e-30284

[179] Report of Losses, 21 February 1794, Box 1, Folder 4389.

parish in full confidence. Each British parish is outlined in the map, with the exception of Charlotte. In the report of losses, the parish is described as “having been so long in the possession of the enemy, and the canes of course not being kept in order, and many of them of a great age.” It was estimated that no estate within Charlotte would make more than one-fourth, or even little to nothing, of what they would have done had their proprietors been in “quiet possession” of their plantations. With this claim, legislatures attempted to shift the liability of destruction to the past actions of planters and suggested that they could have had fostered better relations with the Caribs. The irony was that it was in part British soldiers who had burned down sugar cane fields within this parish, such as the case on William Gilchrist’s estate, with a loss amounting to £5,902 from arson and destruction.[180] Because Charlotte was adjacent to Carib Country proper, the forced removal of most of the Caribs would end up transforming the value of the land. Beyond the quality of the soil on the windward side, a new desirability emerged for lands that once bordered Black indigenous communities.

Predictions for the windward side of the island once most of the Black Caribs had been starved and forcefully evacuated, cemented a new intersection of property value and race in St. Vincent. Charlotte Parish was the area second-most decimated by the Black Carib militia, and became the most highly sought-after land to settle and develop. The foremost logical factor was the location—Charlotte Parish in theory covered the entire eastern coast, which was optimal for successful port shipment of exports and imports across the Atlantic Ocean. Prior to 1797, the Caribs would not allow the construction of ports past Byera River, and they closely monitored the nature and frequency of maritime shipments. The control of land in Charlotte Parish was always sought after for these logistical reasons, but after Carib Country and the majority of its

[180] Ibid.

inhabitants had been removed, the area took on a next level of attraction. The dispossession of the Black Caribs "added to the security and enhanced the value of property." The new windward coast, with its security assurances and projected value, was said to compensate to some degree if not fully, for the close to £6,000 in losses and deficiencies in the present crops.[181]

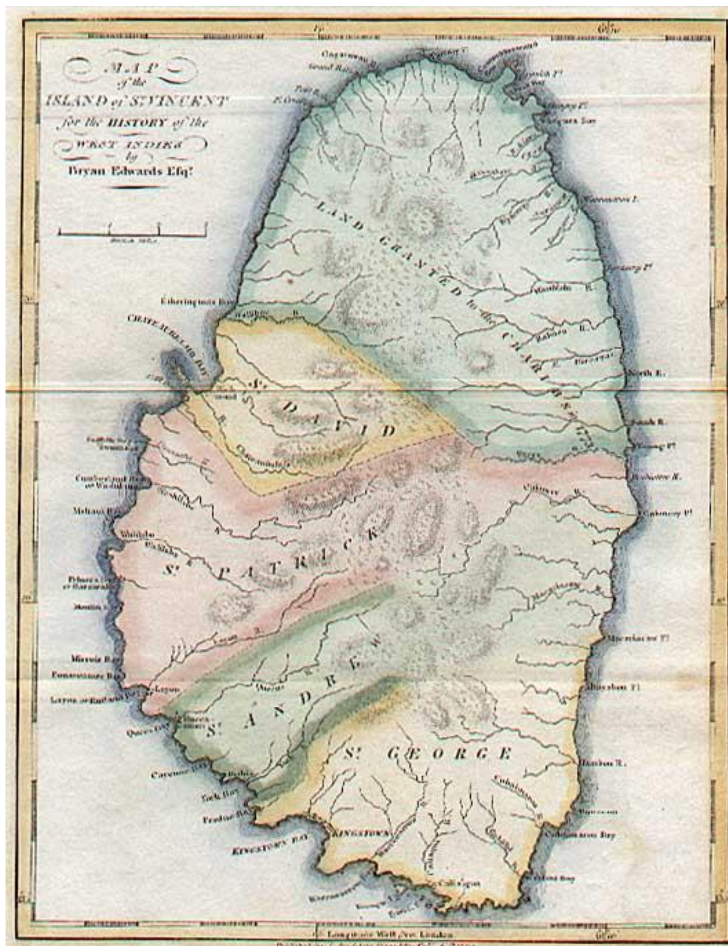

Figure 1 1794 Map divided into Parishes, London 1794 Bryan Edwards

The Committee of legislature took three months to determine the value of losses from the report. They examined every person who came before them on oath, from millwrights, house-carpenters, masons, and planters, in order to collect what they understood as precise figures. The committee argued that submissions from people whose entire "works" had been destroyed by the

[181] Report of Losses, 21 February 1794, Box 1, Folder 4389.

Carib army were at a much greater deficit than simply the appraised value of the destroyed buildings. Generally, however, every property on the island was determined more valuable by the removal of the Caribs. British administrators claimed that the Black Caribs, now coded as "internal disturbances" within the report, made every individual suffer in all the parishes and throughout the island. Deductions were made from every proprietor's claim for the increase in property value.

Despite the new "public credit" and provisions for people attainted, settlers were still in a tight spot. Prices for materials had increased greatly during the war, but unlike Britain, tradesmen did not have laborers to deliver materials to them on the spot. Following the lumber shortages from North America in 1792, there was difficulty in bringing materials not just to estates but to St. Vincent's entire British settlement. Enslaved African people on the estates were considered for this business of rebuilding, even as the compensation for this project was already described by the committee as trifling. Before factions of the Caribs even surrendered, some "sufferers" were able to request loans and credit from the government through correspondents in Britain. They had also been expecting material provisions from Britain that had never arrived, including plantation utensils and other tools required on their estates. Along with lumber, they were also unable to achieve any shipments of lime and other materials necessary for reconstructing buildings. After the war, some settlers were unable to provide necessary securities to apply for a part of the government loan, nor were they able to obtain credit with any or their correspondents in the metropole. Material shipments from Britain and North America were increasingly unreliable, and in 1797 British settlers had to rely on only the support of their own colonial government.

The Indebted

After the war, the committee also developed new stipulations to determine who was eligible for compensation, or any type of assistance at all. Settlers who had any degree of debt, or were involved in it in any way, would not have their reports investigated for recompenses. Even proprietors who were close to independent status and those who had been affluent prior to the Second Carib war, would still be denied assistance. The indebted settlers would not be able to recover from their losses for many years, some whose businesses and livelihoods were reported to be “irretrievably ruined.” They were unable to obtain loans or credit from the metropole and were now being rejected by the House of Assembly. Both the indebted poor and the indebted wealthy were denied post-war assistance from the colonial government.

There were also conditions for the reimbursement for enslaved laborers who died from epidemic diseases. The committee paid certain attention to populations that were determined to have died from sickness, anyway, had there not been a rebellion. Considerable deductions were made from the value of the slaves that they determined would have inevitably died. Only owners that had not fled their estates during the war made claims for the reimbursement for enslaved laborers that had died from epidemic diseases. They were determined to be better entitled to these allowances. Other factors that determined the value of enslaved African people who had died, were if they had died when healthy, sickly, weakly, or young—all descriptors that revolved around labor capabilities.

Along with the mainland, settlers on the Grenadine islands were also requesting compensation for their losses. Like Charlotte Parish, the small island of Mustique was highly contested in terms of ownership. Before the war, James Campbell had purchased the island for around £69,000 sterling and built plantations on it. During the war, he had requested funds to

build a fort at Mustique, and money to employ "negroes" on the fort as guards and watchmen, as he was "in constant dread and apprehension of an invasion of the Charaibs." The Black Caribs occupied most of the island and heavily regulated his production and developments. Campbell had also been renting the island of Balliceoux, the new prison destination for the captured Black Caribs. As British soldiers moved Carib families onto Balliceaux, their presence there forced him to abandon the island and lose his investment. Campbell requested funds for rebuilding, as well as a claim for crop deficiency in both Mustique and Balliceoux. After factions of the Caribs surrendered, the Committee considered this enough of a "repayment" for him.[182] The property value of Mustique increased through the removal of the Caribs, which the committee considered to balance out the losses Campbell had sustained throughout the years.

Propaganda, Racialization and Disease

> …and the promise of protection was purchased at the shameful price of an Eternal Dispossession.
> -N. Dickenson, Surgeon

The final attempt in the saga to racialize the Black indigenous group of St. Vincent, was perpetrated through a narrative of disease and transmission. It was an audacious effort that implicated both living and dead Caribs, and colonial officials took advantage of the latter condition specially to construct myths upon. In 1793, the first case of yellow fever was reported in St. Vincent. [183] Three years later, as the British colonial government was still fighting military battles after the claimed surrender, small groups of Black Caribs were captured, and entire families including children, were periodically shipped to a nearby barren island in the

[182] Report of Losses, 21 February 1794, Box 1, Folder 4389.

Grenadines called Balliceaux.[184] The traditional story around this series of forced exiles is that the conditions on the island were so treacherous, that most Caribs got sick from depravation and didn't make it to the second round of deportation to Roatan, in March of 1797. The navy was prepared to transfer 3,500 people to Roatan from Balliceaux, but it was reported that at least 2,212 had died from disease alone. The death toll paved the way for a historiography of genocide to take root on the case of the Caribs, and scholarship itself around "who survived" performed a second round of genocide on them.[185] Population numbers that were recorded in official documents were inconsistent in the number of Black Caribs who were left after the war in St. Vincent, and the ones that had survived Balliceaux. However, this section is less about the numbers, and more so about the legacy of this narrative. New and strategic myths were constructed, even after their death.

British surgeon N. Dickenson was appointed to oversee the epidemic in Balliceaux and constructed a write-up of his observations and suppositions about the deaths and spread of the illness. The name of his report bore an immediate and initial claim of the racialized journey of the virus, entitled "History of the Causes of a Malignant Pestilential Disease, introduced into the island of Baliseau, by the Black Charaibs from St. Vincent."[186] The specificities of the heading are telling, as the population termed the "yellow Charaibs" were also exiled to Balliceaux,

[184] The spelling of the island varies within documentation; it is contemporarily referred to as "Balliceaux," while in Dickenson's report, he writes "Baliseau." For purposes of clarity, the contemporary spelling will be used, unless referring to a direct quotation from his report.

[185] Melanie Newton explores the meaning of both the act (or attempt) of genocide, *and* the material for a genocidal historical narrative, "which is a version of history that seeks to complete the work of the original act of genocide." See her article "The Race Leapt at Sauteurs: Genocide, Narrative, and Indigenous Exile from the Caribbean Archipelago," (2014).

[186] N. Dickenson Report, Account No. 661, Box 1, Folder 82, War Office and Predecessors: Secretary of State for War, and Commander-in-Chief, In-letters and Miscellaneous Papers, 1793-1797, The National Archives in Kew.

though in smaller numbers. By specifying the racialized *Black* Caribs in the title of the report, Dickenson implied only they could have been the carriers of the disease— not the attendant "yellow Caribs," nor the British soldiers who got sick and died from it as well. The Black Caribs were also argued as the progenitors of the widespread nature of the disease, primarily because of their political decisions. Along with an insistence on cultural remedies and healing conditions for their sickness, the Black Caribs' resistance to colonial domination was argued as the central factor in the spread of the virus. They were now being declared both the carriers and instigators of its specific strain. The Caribs' social and political decisions were the cause of its rampant spread, taking out soldiers, adults, and children across ethnic bounds.

Dickenson argued the causality between infectious disease and colonial resistance immediately within the report. He began by outlining an exaggerated final scene of warfare, that claimed after "stubborn and useless" resistance, the Caribs began to realize their inadequacies and inability to defend themselves against a "martial and enterprising army." He wrote that before, the Black Caribs were living with abundant resources through "luxurious nature," until the British army had pushed them from this retreat and forced them to agree to the promise of protection at the "shameful price of eternal dispossession." The report went on to state that the removal of the Caribs, although petitioned upon for decades, was never carried into effect until this particular war when their transport was rendered necessary "both for the cause of humanity and the prosperity of the injured colony." British officials understood that only one of two conditions would be possible; either the removal of the Caribs or the "immediate emigration of the planters." Colonial officials chose Balliceaux as a temporary destination for its convenience to the British navy, as it was located only 33 kilometers from Kingstown. The surgeon however, made sure to outline the destituteness of the island, writing that it did not have adequate water

supply and was “by no means favorable to the comfort and convenience of its new inhabitants, who regard the luxury of immersion in fresh water, an indispensable necessary of Health. Neither does Baliseau afford those fruits and vegetables which constitute a principal part of the diet of these people.”[187] The report does not attribute the conditions of the island to be a defining factor in the onset of the disease, only to have augmented the spread. The illness had already affected a portion of Caribs in St. Vincent before their forced removal.

A month after the British claimed victory, the first group of Caribs were collected from their homes and taken to Balliceaux under very strategic conditions. The British soldiers that oversaw this group provided them a “very liberal allowance of provisions,” including a water supply from St. Vincent. The Commander in chief of this voyage was specifically instructed to furnish them with the following weekly allowance of Provisions, “either three pounds of Salt Fish, or twelve herring, or three pounds of beef, or two pounds of pork, and seven pints of Firm Manioke, or seven pounds of flour, or seven pounds of black eyed pease, or seven pints of corn meal, or five pints of rice.”[188] The Council also recommended establishing strong guards in the islands of Balliceaux and Mystique, and also to procure a vessel from the admiral to be constantly stationed between these islands.

The Caribs were reported to have made the trip in “the most perfect health and apparent satisfaction.” This group was then used as a sample population, who were then sent back to St. Vincent to relay the conditions of their treatment amongst other Caribs. They were also used to embellish on the supposed benevolence shown by the British detachment that accompanied

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[187] N. Dickenson Report, Account No. 661, Box 1, Folder 82.

[188] Letter from the Council, 1796, Colonial Office and Predecessors: St. Vincent Original Correspondence 15 September 1796- 28 November 1797, The National Archives in Kew.

them. In his own report, Dickenson distinguished the intention behind the care of the first group of Caribs, and the final groups. He stated, "Humanity was at this period highly political," referencing the strategic, gracious treatment of the first group of Caribs by the British commanders.[189] This statement also suggested that the treatment for the later groups of Caribs didn't also work to service the project of British colonialism in St. Vincent. The narrative purported to have been extracted from the first group of Caribs that went to Balliceaux was believed to have quelled the apprehension of the ones that remained in St. Vincent and contributed to their eventual surrender to the British.

Dickenson's argument of a causal relationship between anti-colonial resistance and malady had yet to be used against the Black Caribs. The shipments of Caribs that had been brought to Balliceaux in small numbers throughout the year were insisted to have "maintained a perfect state of health—as did every other person on the island."[190] According to the surgeon, Balliceaux inhabitants were doing quite well, despite the destitute land, the lack of fresh food or water, and other treacherous conditions reported later. It wasn't until those final families that had stayed on the offense with the British, children included, had been cornered and starved into submission, that the virus reached Balliceaux. The last rebel groups that had rejected any offers at consolidation or surrender, were to blame for the onset, and protraction of the virus. Dickenson created myths specifically around the rebel Caribs, that had fought the British until the last possible moment, to be the carriers of this malignant and pestilential disease. Their militancy, indignance, loyalty to the cause of their own liberty, and colonial refusal was

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[189] Ibid.

[190] N. Dickenson Report, Account No. 661, Box 1, Folder 82

simplified into a “stubbornness”—an enduring marker of the last batch of Carib families who arrived in late October of 1796.

The report also constructed the narrative of “survival” of the pestilential disease with political strategy. Every group experienced fatality from the disease, the newcomer Caribs, the Carib families that had already been in Balliceaux, as well as the British detachments stationed at the island. The Caribs that had arrived more recently were said to have all been afflicted with the disease, every single one. However, upon use of a “common prophylactic” for the British troops and others willing, fatalities dwindled [see Image 2]. From August 1796 to December 1796, the reports of those infected and deceased suggested that most Caribs on the island either rejected the preventative medicine or were denied it. After October, Dickenson charted an increased number of Caribs dying from the disease, while fatalities among British troops decreased. He stated that the Carib families that received his administered medicine were the ones that survived.

Periods	No. of Sick		No. that died	
	Troops	Charibs	Troops	Charaibes
August	12 to 18	20 to 35	1	12
September	30 - 45	40-160	2	100
October	50 - 70	160-400	5	400
November	75 - 80	5-800	3	750
December	80 - 30	8-1200	2	950

Figure 2 Chart of British troops and Caribs infected and fatalities. N. Dickenson

Although Dickenson stated he had received orders to give the Caribs medical attention, isolation was chosen strategy for those that had fallen ill. After a British Lieutenant died from the disease, it was found that he contracted it through sleeping a few yards windward of a small hut of several Carib women and children. From this case, Dickenson decided that isolating the Caribs away from British units was the most strategic to ensure the survival of the populations on the island. Barracks were built at a high point to windward, and a hospital was erected at a distance as well. The women and children who had been sleeping in that hut were reported to also have died within a few days of contracting the disease. Aside from separating the Black Caribs from everyone else, and a ration of wine, rice and sugar, the surgeon claimed that "the most rigorous measures" were adopted to "arrest its fatal career."[191] Immediate and complete isolation, and foods and wine that the Caribs were unaccustomed to, and which potentially made them sicker, were not sufficient to save most of the population at Balliceaux. Less than half of the Caribs who surrendered in St. Vincent a few months earlier now remained on the destitute island.

Dickenson, the informal reporter for the afterlives of the dispossessed, concluded his document with a recapitulation; "…that the original cause of this malignant disease, was owing to the impolitic obstinacy of the Charaibs themselves in not making an earlier submission [to the British], and that its subsequent dreadful consequences are in great measure to be attributed to their own inhumanity."[192] Still, the surgeon makes a strong case that it was indeed the conditions

[191] N. Dickenson Report, Account No. 661, Box 1, Folder 82

[192] Ibid.

of capture and dispossession that accelerated these fatalities, and turned the disease into an epidemic.

Gendered Inhumanity: Villainous Men and Weak Women

In his description, Dickenson also relied on another grave mischaracterization: that the Black Carib family culture was patriarchal and dominated by the male figure. He ran with this assumption and used it to add an additional level of villainy to the final shipments of Black Carib men. Black Carib men, assumed to be rebels, were argued as now being culprits not only against the British army during the war, but against their own women and children.

The Caribs were described as already having been in an "emaciated state" when they landed on the Ballicioux. The surgeon reported that women and children were fatigued when they were separated from the sea and their "fertile habitations," as well as deprived of their "means of existence."[193] He stressed that prior to the forced removal, when British soldiers had entered the deserted homes of Carib soldiers, they found they had left their families and retreated into the woods. The soldiers found the hammocks "occupied by their deceased wives and children." The framing of these households again suggest that Carib women were understood in indigenous society only in relation to their men, and that it was their rebel husband's fault that they suffered death. The tragedy of their death was not decades worth of encroachment and British colonialism, constant warfare and defense, the destruction of their food and waterways, but instead Dickenson argued, it was because their husbands or men had abandoned them to go to the woods. The rebellious Black Carib men were thus framed as responsible for the women and children's advanced suffering in both St. Vincent and Balliceaux.

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[193] N. Dickenson Report, Account No. 661, Box 1, Folder 82

Through this gendered account, the surviving Carib men were thoroughly vilified, accused of stealing the "indulgencies" of the sick women and children, like the wine, bread and sugar, and were accused of having to be forced to bury their dead. It was specifically Black Carib men's "stubbornness," the rebels of the population, that exposed them and their families to these "severe and active agents of disease." Dickenson argued that had they not been so resistant to surrendering to the British, their families would still be alive.

Conclusion

The Second Carib War in St. Vincent brought about yet another recalibration of social and political logics. The colony was unprepared to defend themselves against a Black Carib militia that was bolstered by experienced soldiers from around the Atlantic world, that were invested in liberty and abolition in and beyond St. Vincent. The Black Carib international army shared a common enemy of all British colonial forces, and continued agitation even after the official surrender of the Caribs. The range of participation in the Black Carib militia, and their determination to fight until captured, instilled a new level of panic amongst British colonial officials and military leaders. The legislature would spend the next year scrambling to make sense of their own power and security after almost being defeated by the rebel army.

After the war, the colony's Assembly immediately got to work, drumming up new bills to solidify a newly imagined national character and unity. First, the efficiency and value of all-Black troops in the British army was solidified, and from the Black Corps emerged multiple regiments of West Indian Regiments. The settlement then attempted to construct a new "national character" through centering discourses of the "public" and the "public good." To support the efforts at presenting as a unified colony, the category of whiteness expanded to now include white men that had been convicted of felonies. These men, who were categorized as "persons

attainted" in the new bill, were given priority in securing estates after the war. They joined the ranks of proprietorship and were forgiven of their crimes, which integrated them with the other white, male property-owners on the island. Formerly categorized as criminal, and sometimes vagrant, these men were now argued as part of a unified white, male, property-owning population.

Post-war reports of losses and damages revealed a certain set of priorities that both individuals and the committee as a whole were anxious over. Different categories of private property that included people, animals, buildings and belongings, were the most significant losses as determined by individual owners. The report of losses organized parish revealed slightly differing priorities, that exposed the enduring fears of the colony as a whole. The Committee of Assembly were still struggling with the prospect of lumber shortages, rebel and maroon forces, losing labor by malady and fraught crop production. Reports of damages also ushered in a new racialized way of interpreting land value. The price of land holdings in St. George's parish specifically, went up due to its proximity to Carib Country, the former home for a majority of Black Carib families. Property value increased as British officials attempted to convince settlers of a newfound security in a formerly dangerous area. This professed security was the primary reasoning behind the increase in property value. Administrators and surveyors now considered the increase in worth as sufficient compensation for some proprietors that had experienced loss during the war.

As attainted white men were pardoned for their crimes and secured property, indebted settlers became lowest on the social wrung of society. Inhabitants that had any form of debt, were being denied all compensation after the war. Although the British were struggling to fabricate a unified colony, the nature of capitalism still depended on a hierarchal system of

differentiation. The proposed bills revealed that the indebted would take the place of white male criminals as the lowest rung of society.

And finally, the post-war scramble would demand a new racialization of the Black indigenous population. After the last shipment of Black Caribs were taken to Ballicioux, British surgeon N. Dickenson constructed a report that argued that the Black Caribs alone were responsible for the spread of a disease that had killed hundreds. His main contention was placing the onus of the epidemic on specifically Black Carib men that had been brought to Ballicioux later, claiming that their stubbornness in resisting British rule was the reason the disease had spread and killed their families. Dickenson attempted to racialize the Black Caribs into inherent carriers of a pestilential disease and indicted not only the Black Caribs that had survived, but the deceased as well.

The conclusion of this final chapter is that the struggle against British domination and colonialism was and is, inconclusive. The Garifuna are still suffering and dying from the "eternal dispossession" that the Black Caribs had been guaranteed, more than two centuries later. However, the constant attempts at their dispossession, and to render them silent, in countries like Honduras, Guatemala and Nicaragua, are further proof that the "Black Caribs" are still a significant threat to be fearful of. Powerful indeed.

“I am the hollowed, hallowed, haloed trunk
And the hills and the vales and the streams and the soul
Of Africa
And the banks and the waters
And the heart and the mind
Of the Amazon and the Orinoco

And the queen’s English shall not quiet the
Drums of my fathers
Rumbling in my bones
Recapturing my soul

Drum! Beat
Beat on!
Drum on!
And on!

- “Drums of my Father” Roy Cayetano, Garifuna poet

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