

Colonies, Commerce, and Empire: The British Plantation System in the Chesapeake and Caribbean

The Problem

In 1627 James Drax, a young man "of uncertain origins," arrived in Barbados among the first wave of settlers sent by an English merchant-investor to establish a colony that would become a profitable venture. According to legend, Drax once boasted that he would not return to England until he "was able to purchase an estate with an annual income of £ 10,000." Less than thirty years later he was the richest man in the West Indies. Drax left for England in 1654 (he was seen off by the governor of Barbados), was knighted by Oliver Cromwell, and the year after the restoration of the British monarchy in 1660 was made a baronet by King Charles II.¹

In 1635 John Wise, age 18, was seized by hoodlums and put aboard a ship of indentured servants bound for the fledgling colony of Barbados. Securing his release, he moved to the Eastern Shore of Virginia, became a well-to-do planter, was selected as a church warden of the local Anglican parish in 1662, and by the time of his death in 1695 had been awarded the rank of "colonel."²

Single Market (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), pp. 28–29; Ronald Tree *A History of Barbados* (New York: Random House, 1972), pp. 17–18. For more on the Drax family see Peter Thompson, "Henry Drax's Instructions of the Management of a Seventeenth-Century Barbadian Sugar Plantation" in *William and Mary Quarterly*, vol. 66 (July 2009), pp. 565–604.

2. On Wise see Jennings Cropper Wise, *Col. John Wise of England and Virginia, 1617–1695* (Richmond: Bell Books, 1918), pp. 29–30; Alison F. Gains, "Opportunity and Mobility in Early Barbados," in Robert L. Paquette and Stanley L. Engerman, eds. *The Lesser Antilles in the Age of European Expansion* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), p. 165.

1. On Drax see Larry Gragg, *Englishmen Transplanted: The English Colonization of Barbados, 1627–1660* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), pp. 51–52 and *passim*; Hilary McD. Beckles, *A History of Barbados: From Amerindian Settlement to Caribbean*

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Drax and Wise were by no means typical British colonists. Yet they are representative of those Englishmen who were able to take advantage of and profit from the emergence of a global economy that profoundly affected nearly every man, woman, and child in the Atlantic world from the 1500s to the 1700s and beyond. Part of this economic transformation involved the establishment of colonies in what Europeans called the "New World;" colonies that could serve as military outposts, extractors of raw materials that could be sent to the mother country for processing, and eventually as markets for England's processed and manufactured goods.

The founding of such colonies, however, was no simple operation. In Virginia, of the 105 original settlers of Jamestown in May 1607, only 38 were still alive by January 1608. Indeed, it took several decades before Britons could feel confident that the fragile settlement would be a permanent one.

Initial settlers on the West Indian island of Barbados fared little better. The island was heavily forested and totally destitute of any edible plants. Some of the earliest settlers lived in caves while others built flimsy huts of palmetto fronds which often fell victim to storms. A visiting soldier of fortune who passed through the settlement a few years later observed

This Island is the dunghill whar our
England doth cast forth its rubidg.
Rodgs and Hors and such like people

are . . . generally broght heare; . . . a
hor if handsome makes a wife for some
rich planter.³

And yet, by the middle of the eighteenth century the Chesapeake and Caribbean societies had not only grown and matured but also had become among the most opulent and refined of Great Britain's American colonies. By the late 1600s Barbados contained "the wealthiest men in British America" and was described as "that fair jewel of your Majesty's Crown." For its part Virginia and Maryland were on the brink of providing exceptionally talented leadership for Britain's North American colonies as well as for the early nation.⁴

How were these colonial societies able to reach such impressive heights after such inauspicious beginnings? What factors were responsible for these colonies' prosperity and maturity? What parts did Virginia, Maryland, and Barbados play in England's emergence as a major world commercial and economic power?

The evidence you will be using to answer these central questions will be statistics. Analyzing and interpreting statistics is one of the best ways that historians can measure and assess change over time. In this chapter you will be doing precisely that.

3. The soldier of fortune was Henry Whistler. See Tree, *History of Barbados*, p. 16. Interestingly, the initial settlements in Virginia and Barbados both were named Jamestown.

4. Gragg, *Englishmen Transplanted*, p. 1.

Background

Although the discoveries of Christopher Columbus (1446?–1506) and the forays by *conquistadores* like Hernando Cortés (1485–1547) and others proved that the so-called “New World” was a place of enormous wealth, it took nearly a century for England to turn its attention to concerted exploration and colonization. This was primarily because of internal instability as well as England’s engagement in a series of wars in France, Scotland, and Ireland that kept the English home. Although Henry VII’s defeat of Richard III on Bosworth Field in 1485 brought some measure of internal peace to England, it was not until the reign of Elizabeth I (queen from 1558 until her death in 1603) that the emerging nation-state could consider itself comparatively stable. Even so, bitter fighting in Ireland in 1568 (the “Northern Rebellion”) and numerous plots on Elizabeth’s life (prompted in part by Pope Pius V’s excommunication of the English queen and call for her overthrow in 1571 and efforts to replace Elizabeth with the imprisoned Mary Queen of Scots) kept England and its government in an almost constant state of uncertainty. In addition, threats from abroad such as the Spanish Armada (1588) prompted England to keep her forces and ships at home.⁵

At the same time, however, other forces were pushing England toward the sea and colonization. Chief among them was a demographic explosion in the sixteenth century, in which England’s population surged from approximately 2.3 million in 1552 to between 4.11 and 5 million by 1600. These figures are especially astounding given that England experienced a horrible influenza epidemic between 1557 and 1559 that resulted in a death toll of almost 15 percent of England’s total population in 1551. To be sure, life expectancy was short (roughly 36.23 years in the period from 1551 to 1591), but crude birth rates were very high (12.72 in 1551). For its part, London’s population mushroomed during the sixteenth century, from approximately 50,000 people in 1500 (2 percent of the total English population) to about 200,000 by 1600 (5 percent).⁶

England’s rapid population increase was accompanied by a dramatic price revolution during the sixteenth century. A doubling of the money supply (due to increased trade and to floods of gold and silver pouring into Europe from Spanish America and elsewhere)

5. Mary was the great-granddaughter of Henry VII and therefore the next lawful heir to the throne after Elizabeth. Roman Catholics often referred to Elizabeth as “Queen of the Heretics.” Fearing that the impending attack by Spain might cause a Roman Catholic uprising in Mary’s favor, Elizabeth finally had her put to death in 1587.

6. For studies of England’s population, see E. A. Wrigley and R. S. Schofield, *The Population History of England, 1541–1871* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1981), esp. pp. 496–497, 528; R. A. Houston, *The Population History of Britain and Ireland, 1500–1700* (London: Macmillan, 1992); David Coleman and John Salt, *The British Population: Patterns, Trends, and Processes* (Oxford University Press, 1992), esp. pp. 20–21, 28.

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combined with the burgeoning population and a failure of agriculture and manufacturing production to keep pace with demand caused an enormous rise in prices. Agricultural prices rose approximately 150 percent between 1510 and the 1550s, as demand for food far outstripped supply. The price of wheat tripled, and throughout the century the prices for all goods in England quadrupled. Because of population increases, wages failed to keep pace with the rise in prices, and real wages slumped from an index of 615 in 1559–1560 to 436 in 1599–1600. General famines due to crop failures in 1586 and 1598 only made a terrible situation even worse.

Seeking to increase their own incomes to keep pace with prices, landowners raised the rents they charged to peasants, driving many off the land entirely. In addition, landlords and wool merchants sought to increase wool production by dividing up the traditional open fields into individual parcels, which forced even more people off the land. Many lived in cottages and barely eked out a living on the “putting out system,” whereby a merchant would deliver raw materials (wool, for instance), which would be carded, spun, and woven in the cottages and then be picked up by the merchant, who in turn brought more raw materials. Others simply abandoned their cottages and wandered as vagabonds who lived by getting odd jobs, begging, and crime.⁷

7. On England's price revolution, see Barry Coward, *Social Change and Continuity in Early Modern England, 1550–1750* (London: Longman, 1988), esp. pp. 31–39, 53–55, 70. On transient labor, see Warren M. Billings, John E. Selby, and Thad W. Tate, *Colonial Virginia: A History* (White Plains, NY: KTO Press, 1986), p. 5.

For some Englishmen, colonization was one way to remove what they considered an excessively large and increasingly dangerous population. In an extended essay on “western planting” (New World colonization) written by Richard Hakluyt (Hak' loot, 1152?–1616) and given to Queen Elizabeth in October 1584, the author expressed his deep concern about the “multitudes of loiterers and idle vagabonds”:

wee are growen more populous than ever . . . that they can hardly lyve one by another . . . and often fall to pilferinge and thevinge and other lewd-ness, whereby all the prisons of the lande are daily . . . stuffed full of them, where either they pitifully pyne awaye, or els at lengthe are miserably hanged.⁸

In Hakluyt's opinion, this was a strong argument in favor of colonization.

In addition to ridding England of its excess population, Hakluyt offered the queen other reasons why Britain should embark upon a program of colonization. He asserted that Englishmen could bring “the gospel of Christe” to other peoples, stimulate trade to “supply the wantes of all our decayed trades,” establish coastal outposts for

8. Richard Hakluyt was called Richard Hakluyt the Younger to distinguish him from his cousin, also named Richard Hakluyt and also a proponent of colonization. See Hakluyt the Younger's *Discourse Concerning Western Planting* (1584) in David B. Quinn, ed., *English Plans for North America*, Vol. III of *New American World: A Documentary History of North America to 1612* (New York: Arno Press, 1979), p. 82. The words *colony* and *plantation* began to appear in English in the 1550s. See D. W. Meinig, *The Shaping of America: A Geographical Perspective on 500 Years of History* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986), Vol. I, p. 29.

protecting and resupplying the British navy, increase revenue through custom duties, discover the immensely profitable Northwest Passage "to Cathaio and China," and check the expansion of Spain in the New World.⁹

Yet it was easier to advocate planting colonies than actually to plant them. In 1583, Sir Humphrey Gilbert led five ships to Newfoundland, where he planted a colony; but that effort collapsed after Gilbert perished at sea (according to witnesses, his last words were: "We are as neere to heaven by the sea as by lands"). The next year, Gilbert's half-brother, Sir Walter Raleigh, convinced Queen Elizabeth to renew Gilbert's charter in his own name. Raleigh's two attempts at colonization were disastrous, however, especially the "lost colony" of 1587 in which 118 men, women, and children simply vanished into thin air. And another abortive effort, this one at Plymouth, was abandoned after two years of struggling and pain.¹⁰

Nor did the prospects seem more promising for the Jamestown settlement. In December 1606, the three ships *Susan Constant*, *Godspeed*, and *Discovery* sailed from England bound

for the New World. Earlier that year, King James I had granted a charter to the Virginia Company of London (more familiarly known as the London Company, to distinguish it from the Virginia Company of Plymouth), a private corporation that hoped to imitate Spain's good fortune by finding gold, silver, and precious gems that would enrich the stockholders. On board the three vessels were 144 prospective colonists, the vast majority of them either fortune seekers or salaried company employees (such as goldsmiths, jewelers, and apothecaries¹¹). None planned to be permanent settlers.

In spite of meticulous planning by the company, in Virginia things were desperate almost from the start. Only 105 would-be colonists survived the voyage, and a combination of disease, starvation, the eventual hostility of the nearby Native Americans, and conflicts between the settlement's leaders made the situation ever more dire. By the time relief ships sent by the company arrived in January 1608 with provisions and more colonists, only thirty-eight survivors remained at Jamestown.

Nor did the Virginia colony immediately improve. With few colonists skilled in agriculture and clearing land (most colonists had to be taught how to use an axe), the colony depended on food from company relief ships and trading with the Native Americans. Thus, in the winter of 1609 to 1610, Jamestown experienced its horrible "starving time," when only sixty of a fall 1609 population of five hundred survived,

9. Hakluyt, *Discourse Concerning Western Planting*, pp. 71-72.

10. For Gilbert's supposed last words, see William S. Powell, *Paradise Preserved* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1965), p. 3. For what is probably the definitive history of the "lost colony" of Roanoke Island, see David Beers Quinn, *Set Fair for Roanoke: Voyages and Colonies, 1584-1606* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1985). For a conspiratorial view of what happened to the Roanoke Island colony, see Lee Miller, *Roanoke: Solving the Mystery of the Lost Colony* (New York: Arcade Publishing, 2000).

11. Apothecary: pharmacist, druggist.

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as they were forced to eat dogs, cats, rats, snakes, and even corpses from the graveyard. As Captain John Smith later wrote:

And one amongst the rest did kill his wife, powdered her, and had eaten part of her before it was knowne, for which hee was executed, as hee well deserved.¹²

Even after the “starving time,” it was by no means clear that Virginia would survive. By 1616, the colony’s population hovered at only 380, and a well-coordinated Indian attack in 1622 very nearly wiped out the fledgling settlement.¹³ But John Rolfe had experimented with transplanting a variety of West Indian tobacco to the “lusty soyle” of Virginia, where it thrived. In 1614, Virginia shipped four barrels of tobacco to England and by 1617 was exporting 50,000 pounds of tobacco leaves. And in spite of the facts that the London Company initially opposed the cultivation of the “noxious weed” and King James I railed against its importation and use, tobacco ultimately became the colony’s salvation.¹⁴

In the meantime, the company had abandoned its hopes of finding gold and precious gems in Virginia and turned to

long-range profits from lumber, hemp, turpentine, and finally tobacco. In order to attract settlers to the colony, in 1618 the company revised its charter to permit individuals to own land—previous to that “greate charter,” all land had been owned by the company. Settlers claimed lands touching Chesapeake Bay and the many rivers and streams that fed it (to use the waterways to ship their tobacco). By the time the London Company finally went bankrupt and Virginia became a royal colony (1625), landowners were building homes close to their fields and away from the settlements and stockades. Laborers were found in the form of indentured servants from England who, in exchange for their passage and a land grant after finishing their “indenture” (usually seven years), agreed to work for the landowners. Even so, it was not until around 1675 that Virginia’s natural increase and not immigration replenished the colony’s population.

Maryland, the other colony on the Chesapeake Bay, was created by King Charles I in 1632 as an immense land grant to George Calvert, a gentleman who had served the Crown in return for a peerage (as Lord Baltimore) and a land grant in America. According to tradition, Calvert himself drew up the document, leaving a blank space for the name of the proposed colony, which Charles I filled in with “Terra Mariae” (Mary’s Land, or Maryland) in honor of his wife Queen Henrietta Maria.

The first settlers came ashore in Maryland on March 25, 1634. Avoiding many of the errors made by the early settlers of Virginia, Maryland colonists (led by Cecilius’s younger brother) purchased land from the Native Americans,

12. John Smith, *The Generall Historie of Virginia*. . . . (1624) in James Horn, ed., *Captain John Smith Writings and Other Narratives*. . . . (New York: Literary Classics of the United States, 2007), p. 411. “Powdered” meant “salted.”

13. The colonists retaliated against the Native Americans by inviting them to a peace conference at which they killed around 250 of them with poisoned wine.

14. A short excerpt from James’s *A Counter-blast to Tobacco* (1604) may be found in Warren M. Billings, John E. Selby, and Thad W. Tate, *Colonial Virginia: A History* (White Plains, N.Y.: KTO Press, 1986), pp. 40–41n.

planted food crops as well as tobacco, and laid claim to generous land grants on which Calvert charged low rents ("quit rents"). As was the case later in Virginia, the population was dispersed, living on or near their landholdings and thus breaking the English pattern of village life and discouraging the growth of large towns or cities.

By the mid-1700s, when many of those who would become leaders of Virginia and Maryland societies during the American Revolution were coming of age, the Chesapeake region was dotted with large plantations, fine houses, an educated and cultured gentry class, and enough socioeconomic mobility to give at least the appearance of an open and egalitarian society. Indeed, the Chesapeake region had come a long way from the "starving time" of 1609-1610.

The island of Barbados is the easternmost island in what Europeans named the West Indies. When the original British colonists arrived in 1627, the island was completely uninhabited, although there was considerable evidence that Native American people had once lived there. By 1627, however, they were gone, either taken off by Spanish slave raiders or driven away by other Native Americans.

As noted earlier, Barbados originally was covered with dense vegetation but contained no edible plants. Until later ships arrived with seeds and provisions, the early settlers lived on fish and wild pigs that had been brought to the island decades ago by Portuguese explorers. Equally important, those same ships brought axes and saws that could be used to clear the forests and plant food crops (by 1650, most of the forests had been cut down). Land was

cheap and those who arrived earliest (like James Drax) acquired the best land. By 1635, there were over 1,200 colonists above the age of 14.¹⁵

Barbados originally was the brainchild of William Courteen, a wealthy merchant who envisioned an agricultural colony that would ship food products to England for sale in the market of inflated prices. Courteen and his brother invested over £200,000 in the Barbados venture, sending several shiploads of settlers and numerous supplies. He encouraged the colonists to grow tobacco (to copy Virginia's success), cotton, ginger, and indigo. He also encouraged them to raise their own food.¹⁶

Unfortunately for Courteen, he had never secured a royal charter for Barbados. Recognizing the chance to oust Courteen and make a fortune for himself, the Earl of Carlisle convinced James I to grant him ownership of Barbados as a proprietary colony. Settlers sent by the greedy and duplicitous nobleman clashed with the original colonists over land ownership and governance. The earl emerged triumphant and Courteen died in 1636 impoverished and embittered.

Hoping to imitate Virginia's prosperity, Barbados planters embraced tobacco. The climate, however, was too hot and the Barbadian leaf was coarse. As one person who examined

15. Richard S. 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), p. 55.

16. Between 1623 and 1625 the price of tobacco on the London market doubled, a sure invitation to Courteen and Barbadian planters. Beckles, *History of Barbados*, p. 16.

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the first Barbadian shipment (in 1628) observed, it was "ill-conditioned, foul, full of stalks, and evil colored" and "the worst that grows in the world." As bad as Barbadian tobacco was, however, its sale drove down the price of all tobacco and the Barbados "tobacco fever" simply collapsed. Once mocked as a colony "wholly built on smoke," Barbados abandoned tobacco cultivation and searched for another cash crop. An effort to flood the London market with Barbadian cotton was only a repeat of the tobacco tragedy (the price of cotton in London plummeted 50% between

1635 and 1641). An experiment with indigo produced the same results in 1643. It was at this point that planter James Drax learned from Dutch merchants how to grow sugar cane and produce sugar. At last, it was hoped, Barbados had found its cash crop . . . and its wealth.¹⁷

What were the major factors responsible for the evolution of both Chesapeake and Barbados societies? What were the key ingredients of those societies? What part did those two colonies play in England's emergence as a major economic power?



The Method

How can we begin to answer such questions? Even the tiny fraction of Chesapeake and Barbadian colonists who left letters, diaries, account books, and so forth represented only a small fraction of the total population and, moreover, rarely if ever addressed these questions or issues. Indeed, it is not clear that many of those colonists who left written records were even aware of the trends and forces that were acting to shape their lives. And, of course, the vast majority of colonists left no written records at all.

Recently, however, historians have become more imaginative in using the comparatively limited material at their disposal. We know, for instance, that almost every person, even the poorest, left some record that he or she existed. That person's name may appear in any number of places, including church records of baptisms, marriages,

and deaths; property-holding and tax records; civil or criminal court records; military records; ship manifests; slave auction records; and cemetery records. Thus, demographic and economic trends can be reconstructed, in some cases allowing us to understand aspects of these people's lives that they may not have perceived themselves.

How is this done? One important way is to use statistics to help reconstruct the past. Today we are bombarded almost daily with statistics—about the stock market, teenage pregnancy, and illegal drug use, for example. In order to function productively and successfully in today's world, we must use those statistics to aid us in shaping our opinions and making decisions.

17. *Ibid.*, p. 17.

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Historians have learned to use these same types of statistics and statistical methods and to apply them to the past. Working carefully through those materials that still exist, historians begin to reconstruct the demographic and economic trends and forces that affected a past epoch. Was the population growing, shrinking, or static? Was the source of that population changing? Did the nature of landholding and wealth change over time? Did the source of labor change? To historians, each statistical summary (called a statistical *set* or *aggregate* picture) contains important information that increases our understanding of a community or people being studied. Table 1 shows the types of questions historians ask with regard to several different kinds of records.

Having examined each set of statistics, the historian places the sets in some logical order, which may vary depending on the available evidence, the central questions the historian is attempting to answer, and the historian's own preferences. For this

chapter, we have divided the statistics into two major groupings: Chesapeake statistics and Barbados statistics. For each grouping, we have arranged the statistical sets beginning with population, then moving through size of landholding, wealth distribution, crops and prices, types of labor, and so forth. Note that the statistical sets for each colony do not always match perfectly the sets for the other colony.

Up to this point, the historian has 1) collected the statistics and arranged them into sets, 2) examined each set in order to measure trends, tendencies, or changes over time, and 3) arranged the sets in some logical order. Now the historian must begin to ask "why" for each set. For example:

1. Why did the crops being raised in the Chesapeake and Barbados change over time?
2. Why did the type of labor in both colonies change over time?
3. Why did planters in the Chesapeake and Barbados grow richer or poorer?

Table 1

Type of Record	Questions
Census	Was the population growing, shrinking, or static? What were the sources of population growth (immigration, natural increase, slave importation)? Was the composition (race, etc.) of the population changing or stationary?
Land records, wills, probates	Did the prices of land change over time? Was wealth evenly distributed among the adult male population? Were various socioeconomic groups growing wealthier? Poorer? Did landowners employ non-family members? Did the source of that labor change over time?
Trade and custom records	Were agricultural crops being raised change over time? Was production increasing, decreasing, or stationary? Were prices increasing, decreasing, or static? Was the balance of trade (exports over imports) positive? Negative?

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In many cases, the answer to each question (and other "why" questions) is in one of the other statistical sets. That may cause the historian to alter his or her ordering of the sets in order to make the story clearer.

The historian is actually linking the sets to one another to form a chain. When two sets have been linked (because one set answers the "why" question of another set), the historian repeats the process until all the sets have been linked to form one chain of evidence. At that point, the historian can summarize the tendencies that have been discovered and, if desired, can connect those trends or tendencies to other events occurring in the period, perhaps even the American Revolution.

One example of how historians link statistical sets together to answer a "why" question is sufficient. Sources 6 and 21 in the Evidence section showed that between 1654 and 1689 the number of indentured servants shipped from Bristol to Virginia, Maryland, and Barbados declined precipitously. How can we account for this trend? Would the fact that Irish indentured servants revolted against their masters in the 1650s provide an important clue? Look at sources 1, 7, 9, 13, 22, and 23, all of which deal with the slave populations in both the Chesapeake colonies and Barbados. We can clearly conclude that planters in both regions were changing their sources of labor from British indentured servants—who in Virginia and Maryland could acquire land after their terms of service and begin to raise tobacco to compete with their former masters, and in Barbados would have great difficulty becoming landowners

and would either leave the colony or remain as a troublesome population—to permanent slaves from Africa.¹⁸

Now ask yourself why both Chesapeake and Barbados planters did that. Is the answer to *that* "why" question another statistical set? For other possible answers to that "why" question, consult your instructor.

One thing you will notice almost immediately is that historians never have all the primary sources they need. When dealing with statistics, we know that until the nineteenth century record keeping was haphazard at best. Many of the statistical sets you will be examining and analyzing have been painstakingly compiled by historians from the fragmentary data that has been saved. Also, the lack of air conditioning prior to the mid-twentieth century meant that many historical records in the mainland South and the Caribbean fell victim to a combination of heat and humidity. In some of those historical archives, historians could almost literally smell their valuable sources decomposing. In the Caribbean, some records were destroyed by hurricanes. And in the American South some records perished in the Civil War.

18. In his extremely valuable article "Servant Emigration to the Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century," historian James Horn has reported that between 1650 and 1680, 70% to 85% of all British migrants to the Chesapeake region were indentured servants, most between the ages of 15 and 24. In Thad W. Tate and David L. Ammerman, eds., *The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century: Essays on Anglo-American Society* (Chapel Hill: Univ. of North Carolina Press, 1979), pp. 54, 62. See also Edmund Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1975), pp. 295–299 and *passim*.

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Working with historical statistics is not so difficult as it may first appear. Often it is helpful to assemble a small study group with a few of your classmates. As members of the group discuss the problem, each individual can contribute something that possibly the

other members of the group did not see, thereby broadening every student's understanding of the problem. Analyzing statistics can be a challenging undertaking, but the results can be immensely satisfying, especially as you come to "see" the *people* the statistics represent.

◆ The Evidence

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Sources 1 and 2 data from the U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Historical Statistics of the United States* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1975), pt. 2, p. 1168; and Jim Potter, "Demographic Development and Family Structure," in Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds., *Colonial British America: Essays in the New History of the Early Modern Era* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1984), p. 138.

1. Population Growth, Virginia, 1640-1770.

Year	Whites	Increase (%)	Blacks	Increase (%)	Blacks as % of Total Pop.
1640	10,292	—	150	—	1
1650	18,326	78	405	170	—
1660	26,070	42	950	135	—
1670	33,309	28	2,000	111	6
1680	40,596	22	3,000	50	—
1690	43,701	8	9,345	212	—
1700	42,170	-4	16,390	75	28
1710	55,163	31	23,118	41	—
1720	61,198	11	26,559	15	—
1730	84,000	37	30,000	13	26
1740	120,440	43	60,000	100	—
1750	129,581	8	101,452	69	—
1760	199,156	35	140,570	39	41
1770	259,411	30	187,605	33	42

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2. Population Growth, Maryland, 1640–1770.

Year	Whites	Increase (%)	Blacks	Increase (%)	Blacks as % of Total Pop.
1640	563	—	20	—	3
1650	4,204	647	300	1350	—
1660	7,668	82	758	153	—
1670	12,036	57	1,190	57	9
1680	16,293	35	1,611	35	—
1690	21,862	34	2,162	34	—
1700	26,377	21	3,227	49	11
1710	34,796	32	7,945	146	—
1720	53,634	54	12,499	57	—
1730	73,893	38	17,220	38	19
1740	92,062	25	24,031	40	—
1750	97,623	6	43,450	81	—
1760	113,263	16	49,004	13	30
1770	138,781	23	63,818	30	31

Source 3: From *A Place in Time: Middlesex County, Virginia 1650–1750* by Darrett B. Rutman and Anita H. Rutman, p. 129. Copyright © 1984 by Darrett B. Rutman and Anita H. Rutman. Used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

3. Wealth Distribution in Middlesex County, Virginia: Personal Property of Deceased Adult Males, 1699–1750.

Through 1699	
1.	The poorest 31.2% of the male population owned 3.6% of the total wealth.
2.	The next poorest 28.6% of the male population owned 12.8% of the total wealth.
3.	The next poorest 13.9% of the male population owned 11.1% of the total wealth.
4.	The next poorest 20.8% of the male population owned 30.9% of the total wealth.
5.	The wealthiest 5.6% of the male population owned 41.6% of the total wealth.
1700–1719	
1.	The poorest 42.5% of the male population owned 3.4% of the total wealth.
2.	The next poorest 26% of the male population owned 7.9% of the total wealth.
3.	The next poorest 17.8% of the male population owned 12.6% of the total wealth.
4.	The next poorest 7.9% of the male population owned 14.7% of the total wealth.
5.	The wealthiest 5.8% of the male population owned 61.5% of the total wealth.
1720–1750	
1.	The poorest 35.3% of the male population owned 3.1% of the total wealth.
2.	The next poorest 30.4% of the male population owned 11.2% of the total wealth.
3.	The next poorest 26% of the male population owned 31.3% of the total wealth.
4.	The next poorest 5.6% of the male population owned 21.3% of the total wealth.
5.	The wealthiest 2.7% of the male population owned 33.2% of the total wealth.

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Source 4 from Gloria L. Main, *Tobacco Colony: Life in Early Maryland, 1650-1720* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 54. Data from probate records of six counties, Maryland Hall of Records, Annapolis. © 1982 Princeton University Press. Reprinted by permission of Princeton University Press.

4. Average Gross Personal Wealth of Ranked Strata of Maryland Probated Estates, 1656-1719 (in pounds sterling).

Strata of Estates	1656- 1683	1684- 1696	1697- 1704	1705- 1712	1713- 1719	% Change 1656-83/ 1713-19
Bottom 30%	£16	£15	£14	£14	£13	-19
Lower-middle 30%	48	49	48	46	42	-12
Upper-middle 30%	142	150	169	146	146	+3
Wealthiest 10%	473	652	719	971	1009	+113

Source 5 data from Social Science Research Council, *The Statistical History of the United States from Colonial Times to the Present* (Stamford, Conn.: Fairfield Publishers, 1965), pp. 765-766; and Census Bureau, *Historical Statistics of the United States*, pt. 2, p. 1198. Slightly different numbers can be found in Elizabeth Boody Schumpeter, *English Overseas Trade Statistics 1697-1808* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1960), pp. 52-55.

5. Tobacco Imported by England from Virginia and Maryland (in thousands of pounds) and Maryland Tobacco Prices (in pence sterling/pound), 1620-1770.

Year	Total (in thousands of pounds)	Tobacco Prices (pence sterling/pound)
1620	119.0	12.00
1630	458.2	4.00
1640	1,257.0	2.50
1650	—	—
1663	7,371.1	1.55
1672	17,559.0	1.00
1682	21,399.0	0.80
1688	28,385.5	0.75
1700	37,166.0	1.00
1710	23,351.0	0.85
1720	34,138.0	1.19
1730	34,860.0	0.67
1740	35,372.0	0.80
1750	50,785.0	1.16
1760	51,283.0	1.60
1770	38,986.0	2.06

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Source 6: From *Sugar and Slaves: the Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713* by Richard S. Dunn. Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture. Copyright © 1972 by the University of North Carolina Press. Used by permission of the publisher. www.uncpress.unc.edu

6. Indentured Servants Shipped from Bristol to Virginia and Maryland, 1654-1686.

Destination	1654-1659	1660-1669	1670-1679	1680-1686	Total
Virginia	796	2,484	1,477	117	4,874
Maryland	1	20	81	35	137
Totals	797	2,504	1,558	152	5,011

Source 7 from Richard S. Dunn, "Servants and Slaves: The Recruitment and Employment of Labor," in Greene and Pole, *Colonial British America*, p. 165, Table 6.1. © 1991 The Johns Hopkins University Press. Reprinted with permission of The Johns Hopkins University Press.

7. English Slave Imports to America, 1600-1780 (in thousands).

Years	West Indies	Southern ¹⁹ Mainland	Mid-Atlantic	New England	Total
1601-1625	—	—	—	—	21
1626-1650	21	—	—	—	69
1651-1675	69	—	—	—	184
1676-1700	174	10	—	—	190
1701-1720	160	28	2	—	269
1721-1740	199	64	4	2	332
1741-1760	267	63	1	1	417
1761-1780	335	80	2	—	417
Total	1,225	245	9	3	1,482
Black population in 1780	346	519	42	14	921

Source 8: From *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Low Country* by Philip D. Morgan. Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture. Copyright © 1988 by the University of North Carolina Press. Used by permission of the publisher. www.uncpress.unc.edu

19. The Southern Mainland included Maryland, Virginia, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Georgia.

8. Plan

Decade

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8. Plantation Size in Virginia by Number of Slaves, 1700-1779.

Decade	Number of Slaves on Plantations			
	1-5	6-10	11-20	21+
1700-1709	39%	19%	32%	10%
1710-1719	30	20	27	23
1720-1729	30	29	27	13
1730-1739	28	27	20	25
1740-1749	25	25	32	17
1750-1759	18	22	29	31
1760-1769	15	22	29	33
1770-1779	13	22	35	29

Source 9: From *Adapting to a New World: English Society in the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake* by James Horn. Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture. Copyright © 1994 by the University of North Carolina Press. Used by permission of the publisher. www.uncpress.unc.edu

9. Number of Servants and Slaves per Household, Lower Western Shore of Maryland, 1658-1700.

No. of Servants and Slaves per Household	No. of Households Owning	Proportion of All Households Owning	Proportion of All Households in Class Owning Mostly Slaves
1658-1674			
1-3	2	10.5%	0%
4-6	8	42.1	37.5
7-9	5	26.3	20.0
10+	4	21.1	25.0
Overall	19	100.0	26.3
1675-1684			
1-3	8	17.8%	12.5%
4-6	18	40.0	5.6
7-9	8	17.8	25.0
10+	11	24.4	36.4
Overall	45	100.0	17.8
1685-1700			
1-3	24	28.2%	33.3%
4-6	25	29.4	48.0
7-9	12	14.1	58.3
10+	24	28.2	66.7
Overall	85	99.9	50.6

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Source 10: Gloria L. Main, *Tobacco Colony: Life in Early Maryland, 1650-1720*.
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University Press; data from probate records of six counties, Maryland, in Hall of
Records, Annapolis.

**10. Percentage of Slaves in Small and Large Bound Labor Groups,
1656-1719.**

Years	Number of Laborers in Group	
	2-5	6+
1656-1683	9% slave	40% slave
1684-1696	18	57
1697-1704	32	70
1705-1712	66	89½
1713-1719	68	94

Source 11 data from Census Bureau, *Historical Statistics of the United States*, pt. 2,
pp. 1176-1177.

**11. Value of Exports to and Imports from England by Virginia and
Maryland, 1700-1770 (in pounds sterling).**

Year	Exports (£)	Imports (£)
1700	317,302	173,481
1705	116,768	174,322
1710	188,429	127,639
1715	174,756	199,274
1720	331,482	110,717
1725	214,730	195,884
1730	346,823	150,931
1735	394,995	220,381
1740	341,997	281,428
1745	399,423	197,799
1750	508,939	349,419
1755	489,668	285,157
1760	504,451	605,882
1765	505,671	383,224
1770	435,094	717,782

Source 12 from Robert D. Mitchell, *Commercialism and Frontier: Perspectives on the Early Shenandoah Valley* (Charlottesville, Va.: University Press of Virginia, 1977), pp. 95-100.

12. Virginia Population West of Blue Ridge Mountains, 1745-1790.

Date	Total Population	Slave Population
1745	c. 10,200	—
1750	c. 17,000	—
1755	c. 20,800	760
1782	—	6,744
1790	74,767	10,715

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Source 13 from Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, p. 87; and Beckles, *History of Barbados*, p. 53.

13. Population Estimates, Barbados, 1655-1770.

Year	Whites	Slaves	Slaves as % of Total Population
1655	23,000	20,000	46.5%
1673	21,309	33,184	60.9
1684	19,568	46,602	70.4
1700	15,400	50,100	76.5
1720	17,700	58,800	76.9
1740	17,800	72,100	80.2
1760	17,800	86,600	83.0
1770	17,200	92,000	84.2

Source 14 from Russell R. Menard, *Sweet Negotiations: Sugar, Slavery, and Plantation Agriculture in Early Barbados* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006), p. 27.

14. Land Prices (per acre in Barbadian currency), 1638-1650.

1638	£1.20
1640	1.30
1645	4.70
1650	5.50

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Source 15: Hilary McD. Beckles, *A History of Barbados: From Amerindian Settlement to Caribbean Single Market*. Copyright © 2006 by Cambridge University Press. Reprinted with the permission of Cambridge University Press.

15. Landed Proprietors, Barbados, 1645–1680.

Year	Number of Landed Proprietors
1645	11,200
1667	745
1680	1,406

Source 16: Hilary McD. Beckles, *A History of Barbados: From Amerindian Settlement to Caribbean Single Market*. Copyright © 2006 by Cambridge University Press. Reprinted with the permission of Cambridge University Press.

16. Wealth Distribution, Wealthy Planters, 1673 and 1680.

1673–74 “most eminent” planters (those who owned 200–1,000 acres) owned 31.6% of all arable land.

1680–175 wealthiest planters (those who owned 60+ slaves) owned approx. 60% of all landed property and 60% of all enslaved Africans.

Source 17: From *Sugar and Slaves: the Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624–1713* by Richard S. Dunn. Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture. Copyright © 1972 by the University of North Carolina Press. Used by permission of the publisher: www.uncpress.unc.edu

17. Wealth Distribution, Jamaica, 1674–1701 (percentages).²⁰

Appraised Value	% of Estates
£1–99	34.4%
100–499	37.9
500–999	12.8
1,000–1,990	9.4
2,000+	5.5

20. Unfortunately, no such figures are available for Barbados. Jamaica, however, was similar to Barbados and even exceeded Barbados in sugar production in the mid-eighteenth century. At the same time that 14.9% of Jamaican planters owned estates valued at £1,000 or more, that figure in Maryland in 1690–1699 was 1.5%.

Sources 18-20 from Menard, *Sweet Negotiations*, p. 18.

18. Commodities Transactions in Barbados, 1639-1652 (percentages).

Year	% Tobacco	% Cotton	% Sugar
1639	57%	43%	0%
1640	21	79	0
1644	43	26	8
1647	12	47	41
1648	8	32	60
1649	0	0	100

19. Estimated Sugar Exports from Barbados to London, 1651-1706 (tons).

Year	Sugar Exported (in tons)
1651	3,750
1655	7,787
1669	9,525
1683	10,000
1691	9,191
1696	7,613
1698	15,587
1700	12,170
1706	10,236

20. Prices of Cotton, Indigo, and Sugar in Amsterdam, 1624-1650
(in guilders per Dutch pound).

Year	Cotton	Indigo	Sugar
1624	0.81	4.13	0.30
1630	0.53	3.72	0.57
1634	0.48	3.75	0.50
1640	0.34	8.10	0.49
1645	0.61	2.78	0.57
1650	0.28	2.79	0.49

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Source 21: From *Sugar and Slaves: the Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713* by Richard S. Dunn. Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture. Copyright © 1972 by the University of North Carolina Press. Used by permission of the publisher. www.uncpress.unc.edu

21. Indentured Servants Shipped from Bristol to Barbados, 1654-1686.

1654-1659	1660-1669	1670-1679	1680-1686	Total
1,405	948	252	73	2,678

Source 22 from Menard, *Sweet Negotiations*, p. 47; and Philip D. Curtin, *The Atlantic Slave Trade, A Census* (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1969), p. 55.

22. Estimated Slave Imports into Barbados, 1630s-1766.

Years	Est. Number Imports
1630s	1,000
1640s	18,000
1650s	31,364
1660s	28,650
1670s	22,219
1680s	21,885
1690s	35,027
1698-1701	36,400
1708-1729	71,700
1730-1752	56,500
1753-1766	46,900

Source 23 from Menard, *Sweet Negotiations*, p. 32.

23. Sample of Servants and Slaves per Estate, Barbados, 1635-1670.

Years	# Estates	Servants per Estate	Slaves per Estate
1635-1640	8	15.4	0.1
1641-1643	9	12.0	3.4
1646-1649	6	9.5	11.1
1650-1657	7	18.4	24.0
1658-1670	10	3.1	111.1

Source 24: Hilary McD. Beckles, *A History of Barbados: From Amerindian Settlement to Caribbean Single Market*. Copyright © 2006 by Cambridge University Press. Reprinted with the permission of Cambridge University Press.

24. Average Prices for Slaves, Barbados, 1638–1710 (in pounds sterling).

Year	Average Price
1638	£40.88
1639	44.15
1640	30.03
1643	20.54
1645	20.98
1681	13.21
1686	13.28
1694	16.94
1705	26.22
1710	20.97

Source 25: From *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* by Edmund Morgan. Copyright © 1975 by W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. Used by permission of W. W. Norton & Company, Inc.

25. Estimated Deaths of Slaves, British West Indies, 1640–1762.

1640–1700 Approx. 264,000 slaves were brought to the British West Indies. In 1700, the total black population was approx. 100,000.

1712–1762 Approx. 150,000 slaves were brought to the British West Indies. In 1762, the total black population was approx. 128,000.

Source 26 from Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, p. 111; and Philip D. Curtin, *The Rise and Fall of the Plantation Complex* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2nd ed. 1998), p. 83.

26. Whites Who Left Barbados, 1645–1700.

1645–1700 Approx. 30,000 whites left Barbados, most without any land or capital.

1679–593 persons left Barbados (35% to England, 38% to British mainland colonies, 26% to other British Caribbean colonies).

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Questions to Consider

When analyzing statistics, look at each set individually and ask the following questions:

1. What does this set of statistics measure?
2. How did what is being measured change over time?
3. Why does that change take place?
As noted earlier, the answer to this question often can be found in another statistical set or sets. When you are able to connect one set to another in this way, statisticians say that you have made a *linkage*.

Begin by examining all the Chesapeake statistics. Sources 1 and 2 show that the white population generally increased in both Virginia and Maryland throughout most of the colonial period. However, did the *rate* of that growth change over time? How might you explain this phenomenon (see Source 6)? What does the increase of the black population suggest (see Sources 6, 7, and 10)?

From the late seventeenth century to the mid-eighteenth century, a socioeconomic revolution took place in the Chesapeake. What were the principal features of that revolution (see Sources 4, 8, 9, and 10)? Clearly the adoption of tobacco was a key factor. How did the tobacco culture cause other important changes (Sources 4, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12)?

Tobacco is an extremely labor intensive crop, requiring continuous hoeing and weeding as well as topping the plants (to prevent flowering and stimulate existing leaves), suckering (removal of new growth to force the plant's

energy into existing leaves), cutting, hanging, curing, stripping, bundling, and packing into hogsheads (large barrels holding over 300 pounds of tobacco leaves). Therefore, a great deal of labor was needed to grow a good crop of tobacco. What were the traditional sources of agricultural labor in the Chesapeake? How did those sources change over time? Can you account for this change?

In addition to labor, those who would raise tobacco needed land, preferably a large amount of it because continuous cultivation of tobacco resulted in serious soil exhaustion. How did patterns of landholding change over time (see Sources 3, 4, 8, and 10)? Combined with changing labor patterns, what kind of economy and society was emerging in the Chesapeake by the mid-18th century?

At this point, allow us to remind you that statistical analysis requires extreme care. For example, as you examine wealth distribution in Middlesex County, Virginia (Source 3), be very careful to note that the "wealth clusters" in the three time periods are different. For example, in the wealth distribution through 1699, the poorest group represents 31.2 percent of the male population, whereas in 1700 to 1719 the poorest group is 42.5 percent and in 1720 to 1750 it is 35.3 percent. In spite of the apparent inconsistency of this pattern, you nevertheless will be able to see general trends of wealth distribution. What are those trends?

There is little question that by the eighteenth century the evolving Chesapeake society was beginning to face

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increasingly severe demographic and economic troubles. What was the nature of those difficulties? Your chain of evidence should be able to give you insight into the Chesapeake residents' approaching demographic and economic crisis. Was there such a thing as raising *too much* tobacco (see Source 5)? What growing problem does Source 11 reveal? How would you link that to Source 5? Finally, the consolidation of land into larger and larger plantations clearly affected small farmers, to say nothing of those who had lost their holdings to their wealthier neighbors. How did some of them respond to this (Source 12), a trend that continued in the Chesapeake until Civil War times?

To summarize, what factors were responsible for the evolution of a mature society in the Chesapeake region by the mid-1700s? What part did the Chesapeake region play in England's emergence as a major economic power? Were there any negative aspects to that region's growth and change?

Now repeat the process for Barbados. Looking at Source 13, how did the rate of white population growth change over time (see Sources 14 through 17, and Sources 21 and 22)? How did

landholding patterns change (Sources 14-17)? How can you explain these changes?

Obviously the shift to sugar production was a crucial factor in the growth and change of Barbadian society. Why was there a shift to sugar and away from tobacco, cotton, and indigo (Sources 18-20)? How did *that* change prompt a change in the source of labor (Sources 21-25)? Why did Barbados continue to import slaves from Africa when the Chesapeake was able to fill its labor needs through slaves' natural increase? What happened to whites who were negatively affected by these changes? Finally, what role did Barbados play in England's emergence as a major power? How did Barbadian society change in this period? Were there any negative aspects to those changes?

Finally you are ready to put the Chesapeake and Barbadian statistics together. While there are significant similarities in those societies' demographics, there are some striking and crucial differences as well. As you look at the major factors (population, landholding, adoption of a one-crop agricultural system, changes in labor system, and so forth), what are the similarities? The major differences?

Epilogue

To a person traveling through the Chesapeake Bay region in the mid-eighteenth century, all appeared well. The plantation system—complete with great planters' houses, private tutors, imported furniture, clothes, and wines,

and even seasons of parties and balls—seemed to be a grander reproduction of the lives of England's country squires—except that a large percentage of the wealthiest planters had come from the “middling sort,” small land-owners

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whose hard work and good fortune had brought them to the apex of one of British North America's grandest elites.²¹

And yet, beneath the gilded surface not all was well. As the statistics clearly show, the lion's share of the Chesapeake society's benefits went to the wealthiest 10 percent of the landholders (Source 4), whereas free white smallholders' positions were eroding. Too, the shift to slave labor required an increasingly rigid and harsh system to prevent insurrections. As Thomas Jefferson later put it, such a system of bondage restricted the liberties of free and slave alike.²²

Although only a few sensed it, the zenith of Virginia already had passed by the outbreak of the American Revolution. Overproduction of tobacco and the resulting soil exhaustion,²³ continued reliance on imported manufactured goods, the opening of new plantation lands to the south and west, the emigration of whites from eastern Virginia, and the overpopulation of slaves acted together to increase Virginia's economic troubles. By the time of Thomas Jefferson's death in 1826, the leadership of the southern

states had passed from the Chesapeake to a more strident South Carolina.

Finally, one is tempted to wonder if there was any relationship between the Chesapeake's demographic and economic concerns and the region's ultimate revolution against Great Britain. Did planters' growing debts to British merchants (see Source 11) play any role in the Chesapeake's uprising against the mother country? To be sure, Patriot leaders from the Chesapeake doubtless were sincere when they avowed that they took up arms in defense of their liberties. Is it possible, however, that other, unacknowledged reasons also were pushing the colonists of the Chesapeake toward rebellion? Over a century and a half, they had laboriously constructed the Chesapeake society; but even as the revolution approached, that society was under increasing strain and tension. How to maintain the plantation system and slavery while simultaneously advocating equality and freedom became the Chesapeake—and the American—dilemma.

At first glance Barbados remained "that fair jewel of your Majesty's Crown" into the nineteenth century. To begin with, England's demand for sugar was nearly insatiable. Originally affordable only by England's wealthiest elite, by the mid-18th century virtually all of England could partake of sugar, "even the poor wretches living in slumhouses will not be without it." Largely responsible was England's infatuation with tea. In 1770, England imported only 91,260 pounds of tea, whereas by 1770 an astounding 11 million pounds was being imported. As tea consumption rose, so also did the consumption of sugar in Britain, from

21. See Lois Green Carr, Russell R. Menard, and Lorena S. Walsh, *Robert Cole's World: Agriculture and Society in Early Maryland* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), p. 15.

22. For examples of the increasing repressiveness of the Chesapeake's slave system, see Warren M. Billings, ed., *The Old Dominion in the Seventeenth Century: A Documentary History of Virginia, 1606-1689* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), pp. 172-174.

23. See Avery Odelle Craven, *Soil Exhaustion as a Factor in the Agricultural History of Virginia and Maryland, 1606-1860* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1926), esp. pp. 32-35.

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roughly 4 pounds annually per capita to 18 pounds in 1800. By 1750, "the poorest English farm laborer's wife took sugar in her tea."²⁴ When the mainland colonies invited Barbados to join in their "revolution" in 1775, the Barbadians firmly refused. They should, they reasoned, remain in the British Empire where their sugar would be bought . . . and sold.

And still, like the Chesapeake, Barbados encountered severe difficulties. Soil exhaustion led to falling crop yields, and Barbados's eminent position was taken over by Jamaica. The share of Barbados's sugar imports to England fell from 47% in 1705-1709 to a bare 5.5% in 1775-1779. Most of this can be explained by the phenomenal rise of Jamaica, whose sugar production leaped from 19.4% of all sugar imports into England and Wales in 1700 to 39.5% in 1770. Clearly Barbados was facing difficulty. The slave rebellion in what ultimately became Haiti (the largest producer of sugar in the Caribbean) artificially raised prices, but only temporarily.²⁵

Efforts by England and the new nation of the United States to end the slave trade in 1807-1808 did not excessively alarm the planters of Barbados, since by that time natural increase caused no need for further imports.

Barbadian planters actually offered incentives to slave women to have numerous children (one overseer reported that "I encourage the slaves to breed as much as I can"). Indeed, Barbadian planters even sold their excess slaves.

As a member of the British Empire, the end of the international slave trade in 1807-1808 and the emancipation of slaves in 1834 clearly affected the colony. Yet freedom came gradually, with compensation to the former owners. And most former slaves found themselves continuing to work on their former plantations or scraping out a meager existence as tenants on subpar land. Food rebellions and laborers' riots occurred regularly (the 1876 revolt resulted in 700 to 800 blacks killed). Self-rule came gradually. Finally, in 1966, Barbados achieved full independence. Comparatively speaking, Barbados has achieved a better living standard than have most of Europe's former Caribbean colonies, in terms of literacy, life expectancy, birth rate, and so forth.

The planters of Barbados refused to join their mainland brethren in their revolution against their mother country. Similar in many ways to the planters of the Chesapeake, their differences were significant enough to cause them to choose a different path. Their own revolution would come later.

24. For tea imports see Schumpeter, *English Overseas Trade*, pp. 48-55. For English usage see Edward Long (1774), Quoted in Richard B. Sheridan, *Sugar and Slaves: An Economic History of the British West Indies, 1623-1775* (Barbados: Caribbean Universities Press, 1974), p. 26; Davis, *The Rise of the Atlantic Economies*, p. 251.

25. By 1770 Britain was making enormous profits by re-exporting sugar. See Sheridan, *Sugar and Slaves*, pp. 493-495, 500-501.