

FROM HARRY TO SIR HENRY: SOCIAL MOBILITY IN THE 17TH CENTURY
CARIBBEAN

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ABSTRACT

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During the 17th Century, the Caribbean saw an explosion in seaborne raiding. The most common targets of these raids were Spanish ships and coastal towns. Some of the men who went on these raids experienced degrees of social and economic mobility that would not have been possible in continental Europe. This was because the 17th Century Caribbean created an environment where such mobility was possible. Among these was a Welshman was known to his compatriots as Harry Morgan. By the end of his life, Morgan would become one of the most famous buccaneers in history, a wealthy sugar planter, the Lieutenant Governor of Jamaica, and a knight.

No one is exactly sure of Morgan's social status before he entered the Caribbean. Historians largely agree that he was born to a freeholding family in Wales, although some dissenters contend that Morgan entered the Caribbean as an indentured servant. From either position, he experienced a high degree of social and economic mobility through his raids against the Spanish Empire and the conventional businesses that those raids funded. His life does not

represent the way that social or economic mobility worked for a typical buccaneer. What it does represent is the best case scenario for an individual who came to the Caribbean and engaged in buccaneering. Morgan utilized his raiding as a means to fund more conventional business interests such as sugar planting. This paper argues that the Caribbean provided a unique political, economic, and military atmosphere for an individual to climb the social and economic ladder from Harry Morgan, a common buccaneer, to Sir Henry Morgan, Lieutenant Governor of Jamaica and Admiral of Buccaneers.

INTRODUCTION: SIR HENRY MORGAN, ADMIRAL OF BUCCANEERS AND LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR OF JAMAICA

Henry Morgan was famous for his bold attacks on shipping and towns along the Spanish Main. His exploits include sacking the Spanish ports of Panama,¹ Maracaibo, and Portobello, attacks which would not have been possible in Europe and were direct challenges to European military and diplomatic arrangements. He was given to “damning and cursing upon the smallest provocation” and known for his inability to “abstain from company, drinking and sitting up late.”² Despite his humble beginnings as a part of a buccaneering community, the name Henry Morgan would go down in history not as a pirate or buccaneer. Most of Morgan’s contemporaries remembered him as Sir Henry Morgan, Lieutenant-Governor of Jamaica and Admiral of Buccaneers. For a man of Morgan’s social class to rise to such positions of power and honor required a special set of circumstances unimaginable in 17th century Europe. This was especially true when combined with his reputation as a buccaneer, an occupation for those living on the fringes of society, and his low social and economic status upon entering the Caribbean.³ The social, political, and military situation in the Caribbean allowed individuals a greater degree of social mobility than in Europe.

The idea that the Caribbean was a unique region where Europeans inhabited spaces separate from European societal norms is not new. One can trace this argument to Richard Dunn’s concept that the Caribbean lay “beyond the line”.⁴ That is to say, that when one entered

¹ Modern-day Panama City, Panama.

² Cyril Hamshere, *The British in the Caribbean* (Harvard University Press, 1972), xii.

³ Hamshere, *The British in the Caribbean*, xii.

⁴ Richard Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1972), 11.

the region, the doctrine of effective occupation became far more important than formal treaty agreements and international law. Dunn's argument, however, has been largely limited to European diplomatic relations. This work's purpose is to illustrate that Dunn's "beyond the line"⁵ idea extends beyond diplomatic history and into the realm of social mobility, using Henry Morgan's life as a case study.

For around two hundred years after the Spanish first settled in the New World, English, French, and Dutch colonists waged an "unholy crusade"⁶ against Spanish towns and merchant fleets.⁷ This constant state of violence would play a major role in determining colonial supremacy in the Caribbean for the next two hundred years. The undeclared war between Europe's colonial powers in the Caribbean would also create a means to attain wealth and social mobility for those willing to take respectability at the tip of a sword just like they would any other prize. This thesis will argue that Henry Morgan was just such a man. He took advantage of the loosely sanctioned violence in the Caribbean, made possible by the Caribbean's distance from European metropolises, to climb the English social ladder. The unique military, political, and social environment of the Caribbean made it possible for men, like Henry Morgan, with no title, fortune, or route to respectability to rise to positions of power and authority. More importantly, these men could achieve respectability, and even nobility, through means that were less than noble.

⁵ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 11.

⁶ Hamshere, *The British in the Caribbean*, xi.

⁷ Hamshere, *The British in the Caribbean*, xi.

One of the less than noble means through which many individuals sought wealth and social mobility was through seaborne raiding. These raiders could take three different forms- pirates, buccaneers and privateers. Historians have referred to Morgan as a member of all three groups. A full historiographical discussion of these terms will follow, however it is critical to note that describing an individual by one of these terms speaks volumes about an author's argument and that these terms are not interchangeable. Although the lines dividing these groups were permeable and often unclear, they signify three distinct sections of Caribbean society.

For purposes of this study, the major common factor between pirates and buccaneers was their tie to seaborne raiding. One may distinguish a pirate from a buccaneer by examining the way in which each group lived apart from their raiding. Pirates would visit established port cities and conduct business there. They may have also had business and political relationships with government officials. In contrast, Buccaneers were essentially members of maroon colonies who occasionally took to seaborne raids to support their communities. Privateers are the easiest of the three to distinguish. They possessed a document, issued by one of Europe's colonial powers, called a letter of marque, which allowed them to attack an enemy nation's ships and settlements. Essentially, privateers were government sanctioned pirates.

Before beginning a historiographical discussion of where this work lies in current historiography, it is important to understand the life events of its central figure. Historians may only speculate as to the exact time and place of Henry Morgan's birth. Most argue that he was born in Wales to a freeholding farm family in about 1635.⁸ He came to the Caribbean and began

⁸ Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, 36.; Richard Frohock, *Buccaneers and Privateers: The Story of the English Sea Rover, 1675-1725* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 2012), 51.; David Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag: The Romance and Reality of Life Among the Pirates* (New

a career of buccaneering as a member of the Brethren of the Coast. Morgan gained fame, wealth, and a title of nobility working as a privateer. Under a letter of marque from Sir Thomas Modyford of Jamaica, Henry Morgan led bands of men, most of whom belonged to buccaneer communities in Jamaica, Tortuga, or Hispaniola, on raids against Spanish towns at Puerto Principe⁹, Portobello, Maracaibo, and Panama.¹⁰ These raids formed the platform from which Henry Morgan attempted to climb the English social ladder.

While Sir Thomas Modyford sanctioned these raids as governor of Jamaica, Charles II of England did not approve of them. Morgan would spend 1672 through 1674 in London under arrest for raiding the Spanish Empire during a time of peace. However, he would return to Jamaica as Sir Henry Morgan, lieutenant governor of Jamaica.¹¹ While Morgan possessed the trappings of the Jamaican upper class, the island's planters did not accept the former buccaneer into their ranks. Henry Morgan's life represents the ways in which the Caribbean could facilitate social mobility for individuals of all classes, but also that this mobility had limits.

The foundational work on social class in the Caribbean is Richard Dunn's *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713*. Dunn argued that the Indies lay "beyond the line,"¹² meaning that European treaty agreements did not apply there. While the great colonial powers of Europe may have been at peace on the continent, the

York: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1995), 44.; Peter Earle, *The Sack of Panama: Sir Henry Morgan's Adventures on the Spanish Main* (New York: Viking Press, 1981), 58.

⁹ Puerto Principe is a Spanish town in Cuba.

¹⁰ Earle, *The Sack of Panama*, 40, 68, 226.

¹¹ Earle, *The Sack of Panama*, 237.

¹² Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 11.

Elizabethan Wars continued in the New World, unchecked by treaty or international law. The concept that international law was more of a guideline in the West Indies led to a “might is right”¹³ mentality among the great powers in the Caribbean. The English, French, and Dutch would freely occupy unclaimed territory in the Indies, if they had the strength to do so. Likewise, the Spanish would suffer no international repercussions for driving other European colonial powers from the New World, if they could muster the necessary force.¹⁴

Dunn argues that English colonists in the Caribbean lived in an area where European class distinctions applied, but not the social norms that accompanied those distinctions.¹⁵ He states that English settlers in the Caribbean “robbed and massacred each other more freely than the rules of civility permitted in European combat.” According to Dunn, violence not only manifested itself in the form of combat in the Caribbean, but in the form of labor management. The same men who “robbed and massacred” each other also “exploited their black and Indian slaves more shamelessly than was possible with the unprivileged laboring class in Western Europe.” Additionally, Dunn asserts that the English Caribbean bred a rougher existence than Europe or Virginia.

In “Changing Identity in the British Caribbean: Barbados as a Case Study,” Jack P. Greene has argued that, as seventeenth-century British colonists in the Caribbean were coming to terms with their new social, economic, and environmental spaces, they also became “active

¹³ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 11.

¹⁴ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 11.

¹⁵ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 12.

agents in changing them, in creating new social landscapes.”¹⁶ While Greene’s case study is limited to Barbados, his argument applies to the larger British Caribbean. In the same way that Dunn represented international law as a more of a guideline than a hard and fast rule in the West Indies, Greene has argued that social class was subject to the same loose interpretation in the Caribbean. Greene argues that distance from the metropole, and the necessities of survival in the face of ever present military threats made social class more porous in the Caribbean than it was in Europe.¹⁷ While social mobility was not easy to obtain anywhere in the European world, it was much less elusive in the Caribbean.

As their title suggests, Carl and Roberta Bridenbaugh’s *No Peace Beyond the Line: The English in the Caribbean, 1624-1690* affirms Richard Dunn’s concept of the West Indies as a place where European colonists perceived treaty arrangements and class barriers in shades of grey.¹⁸ Unlike Dunn, the Bridenbaughs give a geographic definition of what lies “beyond the line.”¹⁹ According to them, this region is “the boundless area west of the longitude of the outermost of the Azores and south of the Tropic of Cancer.”²⁰ This will serve as the geographic definition for this term throughout this study.

¹⁶ Jack P. Greene, “Changing Identity in the British Caribbean: Barbados as a Case Study,” in *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World, 1500-1800*, ed. Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 213.

¹⁷ Greene, “Changing Identity in the British Caribbean” in Canny and Pagden *Colonial Identity*, 214-215.

¹⁸ Carl and Roberta Bridenbaugh, *No Peace Beyond the Line: The English in the Caribbean, 1624-1690* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 3.

¹⁹ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 11. Bridenbaugh and Bridenbaugh, *No Peace Beyond the Line*, 3.

²⁰ Bridenbaugh and Bridenbaugh, *No Peace Beyond the Line*, 3. For purposes of this study, the author will apply this geographic definition for what lies “beyond the line.”

The Bridenbaughs claim that the Caribbean's unique environment enabled men like Henry Morgan to leave Wales as the son of a farming family in 1650, and emerge from "beyond the line,"²¹ "a rich man, lieutenant-governor, commander in chief of the forces of Jamaica—and also a knight."²² The Bridenbaughs do not argue that Morgan's success was the norm. They are careful to note that many European immigrants to the Caribbean did not achieve anything like this level of success. What they do argue however, is that the new social spaces that English colonists in the Caribbean created "beyond the line"²³ allowed social mobility for those with the skills, audacity, and luck to take advantage of them.²⁴

Dunn, Greene, and the Bridenbaughs all argue that the long distance from London allowed new social, political, economic, and military models to develop in the British West Indies. The extreme distances between West Indian colonies and their European metropolises created an environment where social, political and economic barriers were less rigid than in Europe. The desperate clamor for military might in these colonies allowed individuals with innovative ideas at the tactical and operational levels of military thinking to advance along the social ladder in ways unimaginable in European society. These studies all argue that the seventeenth-century Caribbean represented a unique social, political, and military space separate, but connected to, the great European metropolises. This thesis will extend this argument into the realm of social mobility, using Henry Morgan's life as a case study and revealing how the Caribbean acted as a vehicle for social mobility in the 17th century.

²¹ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 11.

²² Bridenbaugh and Bridenbaugh, *No Peace Beyond the Line*, 110.

²³ Bridenbaugh and Bridenbaugh, *No Peace Beyond the Line*, 3.

²⁴ Bridenbaugh and Bridenbaugh, *No Peace Beyond the Line*, 3, 110.

The Caribbean's distance from European metropolises played another important role in creating an atmosphere conducive to upward social mobility. The three thousand miles of ocean between Europe and the New World not only separated the Caribbean from European treaty arrangements and barriers to social mobility, but also from European military forces. The massive distance between European naval forces and the Caribbean colonies and supply lines that they needed to protect created a fertile hunting ground for pirates, buccaneers, and privateers. These groups preyed upon vulnerable Spanish shipping in the Caribbean, as well as coastal Spanish cities.

Philip Ainsworth Means' work, *The Spanish Main: Focus of Envy, 1492-1700* expresses one of the primary reasons that the Caribbean was a breeding ground for piracy and privateering ventures. Means uses the term "Spanish Main" loosely, to refer to the "entire Caribbean Sea and the Southern half of the Gulf of Mexico, together with the islands in those waters and the mainland adjacent thereto."²⁵ Referring to the Spanish Main as the "focus of envy" is fitting. This term expresses the idea that the Spanish Main was more than a geographic region. It was the Spanish Empire's lifeline. Spain tasked the majority of its Caribbean military force with defending this highway of gold and silver from the New World to Spain. Likewise, attacking this line of supply was the way in which Europe's other colonial powers concentrated their resistance to Spanish military and economic dominance.²⁶

²⁵ Philip Ainsworth Means, *The Spanish Main: Focus of Envy, 1492-1700* (New York: Gordion Press, 1965), vii.

²⁶ Means, *The Spanish Main*, vii.

Spain's difficulty defending this supply line is the central theme of Alejandro de la Fuente's *Havana and the Atlantic in the Sixteenth Century*. British and American historians' works have focused on the ways in which the English defended their possessions and took advantage of Spanish weakness. De la Fuente, a Cuban historian writing in English, has focused on the Spanish side of this problem. In his study of seventeenth-century Havana, de la Fuente discussed how the violence that permeated the sixteenth and seventeenth-century Caribbean led to the Spanish *Flota* or "fleet" system. The massive treasure fleets that comprised the *Flota* system would assemble in Havana harbor to wait out hurricane season. When the turbulent Caribbean weather permitted, they would depart for Spain laden with gold and silver from the Peruvian and Mexican mines. De la Fuente also argued that the massive size of the *Flota* made it necessary for the Spanish to build large, well-defended port cities. Portobello, Cartagena, and Havana served as way points for the *Flota* during its long journey across the Caribbean. These cities helped to secure safe passage for the treasure fleets, but were also rich targets for English, French, and Dutch pirates, buccaneers, and privateers.²⁷

Other scholars have also discussed the difficulties the Spanish faced in defending their treasure fleets and port cities. In *The Spanish Crown and the Defense of the Caribbean 1535-1585 Precedent, Patrimonialism and Royal Parsimony*, Paul E. Hoffman argued that while the Spanish made a valiant effort at defending their West Indian possessions, their task was unfeasible. The weather and winds of the Caribbean, as well as the sheer size of Spain's New World empire made the task of defending so much treasure difficult if not impossible. Like de la Fuente, Hoffman focuses his work from the Spanish perspective of this problem, not on how the

²⁷ Alejandro de la Fuente, *Havana and the Atlantic in the Sixteenth Century* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2008)

English, French, and Dutch capitalized on the vulnerable Spanish treasure fleets, and the port towns in which they were housed when not at sea.²⁸

Together, these works argue that while the Spanish Empire made strong attempts at defending their wealth from foreign incursion, the task was insurmountable. Many Spanish outpost colonies did not have the manpower to defend themselves against an attack by concentrated English forces. This lack of manpower, combined with the expenses involved in maintaining the fortifications and equipment necessary to defend the empire, created a prime hunting ground for unconventional military forces bent on looting the Spanish. Innovative military thinkers like Henry Morgan and Sir Francis Drake gained fame, wealth, and elevated social status by taking advantage of difficulties in defending the Spanish Empire's mineral wealth. While the Spanish military held responsibility for defending the Spanish Main, they faced the daunting task of fighting an unconventional enemy, namely seaborne raiders, with conventional forces. Also, in a conflict such as existed in the seventeenth-century Caribbean, perceptions of victory were different for each set of combatants. From the Spanish perspective, any ship or town lost to privateers, buccaneers, pirates, or her enemies' regular navies was unacceptable. To her enemies, any successful attack on Spain's Empire was a tremendous accomplishment.

Historians are divided on the distinctions between buccaneers, pirates, and privateers. This confusion reflects the various terms primary sources employ when referring to individuals engaged in these pursuits. It mattered little to the Spanish what class of seagoing enemy re-

²⁸ Paul E. Hoffman, *The Spanish Crown and the Defense of the Caribbean, 1535-1585, Precedent, Patrimonialism, and Royal Parsimony* (Baton Rouge, Louisiana State University Press, 1980), 3, 7.

appropriated their goods. Likewise, the English Crown did not lose sleep when pirates, buccaneers, or privateers plundered Spanish shipping. However, making a clear distinction between these groups is important to understanding social mobility. During the seventeenth-century, membership in each of these groups carried different degrees of social respectability. Individuals hoping to achieve upward social mobility, like Morgan, faced the task of navigating the murky waters that separated these groups.

The next few pages contain a chronologically organized discussion of the definitions other historians provide for these terms. There exists a myriad of definitions assigned to the terms pirate, privateer, and buccaneer in both primary and secondary sources. This variance in terminology reflects a wide swath of authors attaching different connotations to these terms to better serve the purposes of their respective works. Additionally, the confusing ways in which current historians use these terms reflects the numerous definitions that 17th and 18th century sources assigned to the words pirate, privateer and buccaneer. Following the discussion of other historian's definitions of these shifting terms, the next paragraphs will offer a working definition of pirates, privateers and buccaneers for purposes of this study.

In his 1965 work *The Age of Piracy*, Robert Karse has asserted that the Caribbean was uniquely suited to piracy and privateering. According to Karse, the massive Spanish treasure fleets were “slow and clumsy”²⁹ and they were “too easy to miss in the confined waters around the Antillean islands.”³⁰ His work also looked at the difficulty of navigating the thin, permeable line between pirates, buccaneers, and privateers, citing cases such as Francis Drake and John

²⁹ Robert Karse, *The Age of Piracy* (New York: Grosset & Dunlap, 1965), 11.

³⁰ Karse, *The Age of Piracy*, 11.

Hawkins. Many men built an identity based on the ease with which they could traverse the line between pirate and privateering. Karse referred to individuals such as Drake and Hawkins as the “Queen’s Pirates.”³¹ Karse differed the most with Peter Earle and other scholars discussed in this section when he called Henry Morgan a pirate rather than a privateer or buccaneer. Karse referred to Morgan as the captain of a pirate ship, instead of using the title “Admiral of Buccaneers”³² that Governor Sir Thomas Modyford commissioned Morgan, or as a privateer, as Earle referred to Morgan.³³ Karse reserves the title of privateer for men like the brothers Woodes and John Rogers.³⁴

In the 1977 work *The Buccaneer King: The Biography of Sir Henry Morgan*, Dudley Pope argues that it is most accurate to refer to Henry Morgan as a pirate.³⁵ However, Pope occasionally refers to Morgan as a “buccaneer”³⁶ and by his title of “Admiral.”³⁷ Pope’s decision to call Morgan a pirate stems from Pope’s view that Morgan’s association with the Brethren of the Coast as the main component of Henry Morgan’s identity. Buccaneers would take to the sea to sack a Spanish town without a letter of marque, whereas, the men that Karse referred to as the “Gentlemanly Privateer”³⁸ were restricted to only acting under the orders of a letter of marque. Pope identifies Morgan as a pirate rather than a privateer because of his continued association

³¹ Karse, *The Age of Piracy*, 15.

³² Earle, *The Sack of Panama*, 155.

³³ Karse, *The Age of Piracy*, 16.; Earle, *The Sack of Panama*, 155.

³⁴ Karse, *The Age of Piracy*, 16.; Earle, *The Sack of Panama*, 155.

³⁵ Dudley Pope, *The Buccaneer King: The Biography of Sir Henry Morgan* (New York: Dodd, Mead and Company, 1977), 263.

³⁶ Pope, *The Buccaneer King*, 263.

³⁷ Pope, *The Buccaneer King*, 188.

³⁸ Karse, *The Age of Piracy*, 16.

with buccaneers as well as his heavy drinking and womanizing.³⁹ This treatment of Morgan as well as the Brethren of the Coast is complicated. While Pope identifies the Brethren of the Coast as buccaneers, he bases his decision to classify Morgan as a pirate on Morgan's association with the Brethren.

In his 1981 work *The Sack of Panama: Sir Henry Morgan's Adventures on the Spanish Main*, Peter Earle agrees with Dunn's "beyond the line"⁴⁰ concept. In this military history of English privateers' exploits against the Spanish Main, he discusses the relationship between legalized plunder of the Spanish colonies and the limited capability that English settlements, such as Jamaica, had of defending themselves against Spanish, French and Dutch naval attacks. Earle's work illustrates the important role that privateers played in defending English colonies in the English Navy's absence. He calls the political environment of seventeenth-century West Indies the "lunatic world."⁴¹ This refers specifically to how Governor Sir Thomas Modyford of Jamaica was once forced into a de facto declaration of war against the Spanish Empire in order to maintain a large enough privateer fleet to defend his island against the French.⁴² While the French were the main military threat to Jamaica, private men-o-war were not willing to offer their services to king and country without permission to hunt lucrative Spanish prizes. More generally, this statement describes the diplomatic and military nightmare that individuals like Sir Thomas Modyford faced in defending English colonies. This "lunatic world" created an environment where Henry Morgan's transformation from buccaneer to titled gentry was possible.

³⁹ Pope, *The Buccaneer King*, 137.

⁴⁰ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 11.

⁴¹ Earle, *The Sack of Panama*, 25.

⁴² Earle, *The Sack of Panama*, 24-25.

Carl Swanson's definition of a privateer in *Predators and Prizes: American Privateering and Imperial Warfare, 1739-1748* further complicated the process of defining privateers and pirates. He defined an English privateer by the stipulations set forth in a 1739 set of sixteen guidelines for issuing letters of marque. These instructions stipulated what ships were eligible prizes and the manner in which prizes were to be adjudicated. According to Swanson, these rules intended to classify English privateers as an extension of the Royal Navy. They required private men-of-war⁴³ to give aid to all English ships in distress or under attack by an enemy, and granted the right to claim prizes to officers in the Royal Navy, as well as private men-of-war.⁴⁴ These royal guidelines that Swanson used to distinguish between pirates and privateers already existed as part of an unwritten code of behavior in use by seventeenth-century privateers. Although they were only officially codified 1739, Morgan and his contemporaries would have operated (at least ostensibly) under an unwritten code of operations similar to these rules.

Jennifer Marx states, in *Pirates and Privateers of the Caribbean*, that, "whether they were outlaw pirates, buccaneer 'Brethren of the Coast,' or privateers carrying letters of marque, which made them legitimate in the eyes of the issuing authority, mattered little to the Spaniards," the most likely victims of acts of piracy or privateer attacks.⁴⁵ Marx subscribes to the idea that the label of pirate or privateer lay in the eye of the beholder. To the victims of attacks at sea, the political affiliation of the attacker carried little meaning. Whether one's shipping was being

⁴³ This term refers to private vessels outfitted for war engaged in raiding enemy towns, or shipping.

⁴⁴ Carl E. Swanson, *Predators and Prizes: American Privateering and Imperial Warfare, 1739-1748* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 32-35.

⁴⁵ Jennifer Marx, *Pirates and Privateers of the Caribbean* (Malabar, Florida: Krieger Publishing Company, 1992), 1.

looted by a privateer, land-based buccaneer, or a sea-roving pirate made no difference to the individual footing the bill for such losses. The Spanish Crown suffered the same financial losses if its ships fell prey to privateers, buccaneers, common pirates, or the English, French or Dutch navies.

Kris E. Lane's *Pillaging the Empire: Piracy in the Americas, 1500-1750*, also acknowledges the difficulty associated with discerning piracy from privateering or normal acts of war. He writes that "Defining piracy, as these examples suggest, has always been problematical,... always plastic in the manipulative hands of nationalist historians."⁴⁶ While Lane does draw a distinction between privateer and pirate, he makes it clear that the victims of privateer or pirate attacks rarely recognized this distinction. He points to examples of Piet Heyn, Francis Drake and Henry Morgan to illustrate this point. All of these individuals were considered heroes in their own nation, but mere pirates by the Spanish Empire.⁴⁷

At this point, it is appropriate to establish a working definition of the terms pirate, privateer, and buccaneer used in this study. The term buccaneer originated with marooned Frenchmen on the island of Tortuga, who were famous for the method by which they cured meat obtained by hunting the wild cattle and pig herds that inhabited the island.⁴⁸ This term enters the realm of this study when these men took to the sea to attack Spanish shipping and towns. Members of buccaneer communities would shift between hunting wild cattle and pigs, and

⁴⁶ Kris E. Lane, *Pillaging the Empire: Piracy in the Americas, 1500-1750* (London: M.E. Sharpe, INC, 1998), xvi.

⁴⁷ Lane, *Pillaging the Empire*, 4-6.

⁴⁸ C.H. Haring, *The Buccaneers in the West Indies in the XVII Century* (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1966.), 67.

hunting Spanish treasure as each individual saw fit.⁴⁹ It is fitting to describe buccaneers as part time pirates. Buccaneers often held occupations other than maritime robbery. Individuals who engaged in buccaneering often supplied passing merchant and military vessels with meat, naval stores and other provisions, but would occasionally take to sea to attack lucrative shipping targets. These individuals existed on the bottom rung of the Caribbean social ladder, living outside of civil society.⁵⁰

Pirates, on the other hand, were individuals who chose to attack Spanish shipping as their primary means of supporting themselves. The biggest difference between pirates and buccaneers was that pirates had no connection to the cow hunting or other land-based occupations that defined the lives of buccaneers not actively engaged in raiding. This is not to say that pirates did not have other occupations. The ranks of pirate crews expanded and contracted with the political winds in the Caribbean. Many pirates started out as merchant sailors or held other unskilled labor professions in the Caribbean. One may distinguish a pirate from a privateer in two ways.

First, a pirate held no sanctioning document or letter of marque from a colonial power authorizing the ship's company to engage in raiding against a belligerent power's shipping. Pirates acted of their own accord as seaborne thieves when choosing to take a Spanish, English, Dutch, or French ship as a prize. The second distinguishing characteristic of a pirate from a privateer is the matter of who owned the vessel in question. Privateers crewed ships known as

⁴⁹ Haring, *The Buccaneers in the West Indies*, 67.

⁵⁰ For a definition of "civil society" see Partha Chatterjee, *The Politics of the Governed: Reflections on Popular Politics in Most of the World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004). This work as well as C.H. Haring's *Buccaneers in the West Indies in the XVII Century* influenced my definition of a buccaneer.

“private men-o-war.”⁵¹ These vessels belonged to an individual owner, or a private company, hence the name “privateer”, and were licensed one nation to attack another nation’s shipping. By virtue of the illegal nature of pirate crews, a pirate vessel had no clear, legal, owner. Many ships engaged in piracy were stolen, or had fallen victim to a mutinous crew. The owner of the ship was whoever happened to be serving as captain at a particular point in time.⁵²

Although the term privateer is the most clear of the three, it is still difficult to define. Simply put, privateers functioned as government sanctioned pirates. Douglass R. Burgess describes colonial governors hiring pirates to act as “surrogate navies”⁵³ in his work, *The Pirates’ Pact: The Secret Alliances Between History’s Most Notorious Buccaneers and Colonial America*. Burgess uses the term pirate in this sentence to make the point that the men colonial governors in the British New World hired to serve as privateers were going to engage in seaborne raiding with or without a letter of marque. However, when individuals accepted a letter of marque from a royal governor, they were no longer pirates, but privateers. For purposes of this study, a privateer is defined as any individual engaging in commerce raiding at land or sea under the license of a letter of marque.

While the theoretical definition of a privateer was clear, this clarity did not extend into the everyday lives of pirates and privateers. A thin, permeable line divided the ranks of pirates and privateers. Privateers, buccaneers, and pirates all sought to profit by attacking merchant ships at sea. However, unlike common pirates or buccaneers, privateers held a license, issued by

⁵¹ Swanson, *Predators and Prizes*, 32-35.

⁵² Lane, *Pillaging the Empire*, 5.

⁵³ Burgess, Jr., *The Pirates’ Pact*, xii.

one nation, to attack ships of another nation. This license was called a letter of marque. The fact that sailors on privateering vessels swelled the ranks of pirate ships during times of peace, and pirates would often offer their services as privateers during times of war illustrates that the line between privateer and pirate was purely a legal construction. The actions carried out by pirates and privateers were nearly identical. The only major difference between the two groups was whether or not an individual carried a letter of marque. At times the difference between privateering and piracy depended on nothing more than the day of the week. If a privateer took a prize on the wrong side of a peace treaty, he became a pirate, the privateer's ignorance of the treaty notwithstanding.⁵⁴ While privateers' actions were sanctioned by their own governments, if a private man-o-war fell prisoner to the nation whose ships she attacked, her captors would view the actions of her crew as common piracy. The letter of marque that a privateer carried mattered little if he were captured.⁵⁵

Chapter One of this thesis will examine the way that buccaneers, one of the three types of seaborne raiders in the Caribbean, negotiated the ways in which they became a part of European empires. Examining Henry Morgan's life provides a lens through which historians may view these negotiations. Morgan occupied a unique position in Jamaica's political system. As a member of the Brethren of the Coast and a buccaneer leader, he facilitated an alliance between buccaneer communities in Jamaica, Tortuga, and Hispaniola, and the English colonial

⁵⁴ Marcus Rediker, "Under the Banner of King Death," *The William and Mary Quarterly* Vol. 38, No.2 (April 1981): 207.

⁵⁵ Rediker, "Under the Banner of King Death", 206.

government in Jamaica. However, Morgan also held political authority in Jamaica. He was in charge of Jamaica's defenses and eventually held the title of lieutenant governor.⁵⁶

Chapter Two looks at Henry Morgan and Sir Thomas Modyford's arrests following the Sack of Panama in 1671. This raid represented the high-water mark of the Anglo-buccaneer alliance in the Caribbean. In raiding Panama during a time of peace, Modyford and Morgan managed to challenge the peace in Europe based on their actions in the Caribbean. Although Charles II ordered both men arrested, the terms of their arrests show that the idea of "no peace beyond the line"⁵⁷ was still alive and well. Charles II's minimal punishments for these men illustrate that the Caribbean was still a separate space where European powers could fight each other for dominance without challenging the peace on the Continent. Additionally, Morgan's celebrity reception in London represents the ways in which this separate space could facilitate social mobility. The English capital received Morgan like a national hero, and he returned to Jamaica in 1674 after two years in England as a knight, and lieutenant governor of the island.⁵⁸

The final chapter explores the problems Morgan faced upon his return to the Jamaica. Although Morgan had escaped punishment for attacking the Spanish Empire during peacetime, his buccaneer past would not allow him to fully enjoy the status that his title and political power should have provided him. While Morgan possessed celebrity status, and associated with certain members of Jamaica's political and social elite, the planter class did not accept the former buccaneer as one of their own. This chapter will also examine the ways in which Morgan found

⁵⁶ Bridenbaugh and Bridenbaugh, *No Peace Beyond the Line*, 110.

⁵⁷ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 11.

⁵⁸ Earle, *The Sack of Panama*, 237.

his place in Jamaica's upper class after his death. While Jamaica's planter class may have not been fond of the direction in which Morgan guided the colony's development, they paid their respects to him after his death.

Sir Henry Morgan's life represents a superb lens through which to view social mobility in the 17th century Caribbean. From 1668-1671, he used attacks against the Spanish Empire to elevate himself from the position of rowdy buccaneer leader to lieutenant governor of Jamaica.⁵⁹ Morgan's raids may have gained him riches, fame, political power, and title, but the fact that he perpetrated these raids in the manner of a buccaneer would not allow him enter the hearts and minds of Jamaica's planter class as an equal. Morgan's rowdy lifestyle, reminiscent of his buccaneer days, would dominate how Jamaica's upper class perceived Morgan throughout his life.

⁵⁹ Bridenbaugh and Bridenbaugh, *No Peace Beyond the Line*, 110.

CHAPTER ONE: MEN WITH NO NATION

Three qualities defined Caribbean buccaneers in the mid-17th century. First, their communities acted in an anational manner. Individual buccaneers may have hailed from any of Europe's great colonial powers, but many did not identify themselves as belonging to any of these empires.⁶⁰ Second, they did not display the same degree of racial and class divisions that dominated relations in the major colonial powers. While buccaneering communities were not bastions of racial equality or classless societies, many members (including high-level members) of these communities were former slaves and indentured servants.⁶¹ Third, buccaneers maintained a state of constant conflict with the Spanish Empire. This fighting could manifest itself in defensive actions to protect buccaneer settlements in places like Hispaniola and Tortuga, or as instances of seaborne raiding.⁶² Buccaneers in the 17th century saw the Spanish Empire both as their most feared adversary, and as their access to the greater Atlantic World and its wealth of consumer goods.

English, French, and Dutch officials knew the levels of damage that seaborne raiding could inflict upon an enemy's economy. Many of these individuals felt a righteous desire to challenge Spanish dominance in the New World. A 1690 pamphlet by London merchant Sir Dalby Thomas expressed the feelings of many officials in England relating to Spanish

⁶⁰ Jack Beecher, Introduction to *The Buccaneers of America* by Alexander Exquemelin, (Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications, INC, 1969), 9.

⁶¹ Alexander Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, (Mineola, N.Y.: Dover Publications, INC., 1969), 34, 119.

⁶² James Burney, *History of the Buccaneers of America*, (London George Allen and Unwin LTD, 1816), 57.

domination of West Indian trade. Thomas questioned the “unaccountable negligence, or rather stupidity” of English rulers who had not challenged Spain’s claim to the New World earlier. He argued that Englishmen should not “sit still and see the Spanish rifle and plunder and bring home undisturbed, all the wealth of that golden world.”⁶³ This attitude encouraged Englishmen in many parts of the New World to challenge Spain’s dominance in the West Indies. Additionally, English colonial governors like Sir Thomas Modyford of Jamaica rarely possessed regular naval forces at their disposal. A lack of a uniformed, nation-funded naval force made the prospect of a surrogate navy comprised of buccaneers all the more appealing.⁶⁴

These same officials had seen the effects of Piet Hein’s 1628 attack on the Spanish treasure fleet near Matanzas Bay, Cuba. This attack resulted in Spain losing that year’s supply of gold and silver to the Dutch.⁶⁵ Memories of Sir Francis Drake’s 1573 raid on Panama still fueled English imaginations and Spanish nightmares.⁶⁶ Closer to home, English privateers had destroyed most of the French fishing fleet in 1549, jeopardizing much of France’s food supply.⁶⁷ These examples illustrated how effective these types of raids could be.⁶⁸

⁶³ Dalby Thomas, *An Historical Account of the Rise and Growth of the West India Colonies*, (London: 1690) in, C.H. Haring, *The Buccaneers in the West Indies*, 35.

⁶⁴ Philip Ainsworth Means, *The Spanish Main: The Focus of Envy, 1492-1700*, (New York: Gordian Press, 1965), 207.

⁶⁵ Henry Kamen, “The Destruction of the Spanish Silver Fleet at Vigo in 1702” *Historical Research*, 39 no. 100: (November, 1966), 165.

⁶⁶ *Audencia* of Panama to the Crown, May, 4, 1573.

⁶⁷ W.G. Hoskins, *The Age of Plunder: The England of Henry VIII, 1500-1547*, (New York: Longman, 1976), 187.

⁶⁸ Haring, *The Buccaneers in the West Indies*, 1.

Buccaneering communities rarely raided non-Spanish shipping and coastal towns, making them a minimal threat to English, French or Dutch shipping.⁶⁹ They also provided European monarchs with a level of plausible deniability when their subjects crossed lines of acceptable behavior. When Sir Francis Drake raided Spanish shipping and coastal towns in the 16th century Caribbean, England's Elizabeth I denounced Drake's actions when corresponding with Spanish diplomats. In private, however, she was a major stockholder in the enterprise. Despite the advantages that buccaneering attacks and privateers offered, they did not act as the professional, surrogate navies that many European leaders imagined.⁷⁰ Instead of acting as a naval militia, early privateers and buccaneers acted in their own interests with little concern for their sovereign's.

Just as European governments realized that buccaneer communities were not the surrogate navies that they desired, members of buccaneering communities realized that they could gain some clear advantages from allying themselves with a European power. One advantage that buccaneers obtained by allying themselves with the English, in common opposition to the Spanish Empire, was that they gained a degree of legitimacy by becoming privateers. Buccaneers were not pirates, but English, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, and French law subjected them to trial and execution as pirates if colonial authorities captured buccaneers during a raid. Letters of marque from this period illustrate the benefits of operating as a privateer. Henry

⁶⁹ Peter Galvin, *Patterns of Pillage: A Geography of Caribbean-based Piracy in Spanish America, 1536-1718*, (New York: Peter Lang Publishing, 1999), 6.

⁷⁰ Haring, *The Buccaneers in the West Indies*, 31.

Morgan's 1670 letter of marque from Governor Sir Thomas Modyford promised him, "all the assistance this island (Jamaica) can give you."⁷¹

No one understood the difference between the legal actions of privateers and the illegal actions of pirates and buccaneers better than Sir Henry Morgan. As lieutenant-governor of Jamaica in 1682, he oversaw the executions of three men convicted of piracy for actions against the Spanish. These very same types of actions had earned Morgan nobility, wealth, and fame just a few years earlier.⁷² Obtaining a letter of marque from colonial governors in Jamaica entitled buccaneers-turned-privateers to reciprocal aid from English and allied vessels. Privateering also entitled former buccaneers to the security of English and allied ports, and freedom from prosecution for piracy in English and allied courts for the types of actions they already conducted.⁷³

Allying themselves with European governments would change buccaneering communities forever. No longer would they possess the national character that defined them for the first part of the 17th century. However, members of buccaneer communities would gain some important advantages from this alliance. For individuals like Sir Henry Morgan, this alliance would lead to elevated social and economic status. For the vast majority of other buccaneers, alliance with a European power would mean little more than a change in job title.⁷⁴ They would

⁷¹ Sir Thomas Modyford to Admiral Henry Morgan, "Instructions for Admiral Henry Morgan," July 2, 1670, C.O. 1/25, no 46.

⁷² Sir Henry Morgan to Sir Leoline Jenkins. March 8, 1682, Public Record Office, C.O. 1:48 no. 37.

⁷³ Carl Swanson, *Predators and Prizes: American Privateering and Imperial Warfare, 1739-1748*, (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 30-31.

⁷⁴ Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *The Atlantic in World History*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 42.

become privateers, operating under a letter of marque that gave them immunity from prosecution as pirates in courts of the issuing nation or any allied nations for actions against that nation's enemies.⁷⁵ Buccaneers' skill as raiders and seamen gave them the ability to negotiate the terms of their community's transfer from anationality to colony.

Morgan's life is important to this story not because he was the first buccaneer to ally himself with a European empire, but because his attacks on Portobello and Panama represent the high water mark of anational buccaneering communities working alongside European powers in mutually beneficial actions. Before Morgan's raids on Portobello and Panama, buccaneers tended to act as members of anational communities. Buccaneer communities would occasionally ally themselves with a European power, but it was not a common occurrence. After Morgan's raids, buccaneer communities routinely sacrificed their anational character for the security of privateer's licenses and a safe port to sell captured Spanish goods and ships.⁷⁶ As Marcus Rediker argues in *Villains of all Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age*, many individual buccaneers turned to piracy and maintained their anational identities.⁷⁷ However, for buccaneering communities as a whole, the economic and physical security of associating with European empires outweighed the advantages of retaining their anational existences.

Members of buccaneering communities in the 17th century Caribbean often did not identify themselves as subjects of one of Europe's great colonial powers. While those living in English settler colonies certainly did not operate as part of mainstream English society, they

⁷⁵ Swanson, *Predators and Prizes*, 30-31.

⁷⁶ Burney, *History of the Buccaneers of America*, 70-85.

⁷⁷ Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age*, (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004).

possessed greater cultural and political ties to the metropole than individuals in buccaneering communities.⁷⁸ Many of these communities possessed an international population that complicated efforts to assimilate these communities into European empires. Bartolomeo el Portugues, Rock the Brazilian, and Henry Morgan, all claimed membership in Jamaica's buccaneer community, but hailed from Portugal, Holland, and Wales, respectively.⁷⁹ Buccaneer communities on Tortuga and Hispaniola possessed a similar international makeup.⁸⁰ These communities did not possess a homogenous nationality, or a dominant nationality like many settler colonies. In buccaneer communities, international populations led to anational identities.

Religion was often a more important identifier for these groups than nationality. The Spanish referred to buccaneers from Tortuga as "Protestant pirates" or "*los corsarios luteranos*."⁸¹ This referenced the Protestant religious zeal that served as a secondary motivation for many early buccaneering voyages against the Catholic Spanish Empire. Conversely, Irish Catholics led many of the early Spanish-sponsored raids against Protestant British⁸² buccaneers. One Irishman known only as Murphy led an attack on Tortuga. Another named Philip Fitzgerald led a 12 gun warship out of Havana with the goal of exterminating Protestantism in the New

⁷⁸ Jack P. Greene, "Changing Identity in the British Caribbean: Barbados as a Case Study," in *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World, 1500-1800*, ed. Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 213.

⁷⁹ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 79, 81, 119.

⁸⁰ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 29-38.

⁸¹ Beecher, Introduction to *The Buccaneers of America* by Alexander Exquemelin, 8.

⁸² For purposes of this study, the term "British" will refer to individuals tracing their heritage back to the British Isles. While Great Britain does not become a political entity until 1707, this is the clearest way to refer to individuals from this region living in the New World.

World. Neither attack experienced a large degree of success, but they still illustrate what Jack Beecher describes this religious identity as a “supra-national loyalty that cut both ways.”⁸³

For many years after buccaneers began allying themselves with European empires, they continued to act in a limited anational manner. For example, Sir Thomas Modyford of Jamaica sanctioned Henry Morgan’s 1688 attack on Portobello, and 1671 attack on Panama. This made these acts clear privateering ventures under an English license.⁸⁴ However, French buccaneers comprised a significant number of this expedition’s compliment. According to Exquemelin, Morgan’s call to arms roused more buccaneers than Morgan had room to carry on his ships. Many of these individuals hailed from the island of Tortuga, a haven for buccaneers, but nominally a French colony.⁸⁵

Buccaneering communities exhibited a greater degree of racial and class equality than their settler colony counterparts. Alexander Exquemelin notes that during Henry Morgan’s raid on Maracaibo, his buccaneers refused to ransom a slave who had collaborated with them. Morgan’s men feared that the Spaniards would have “burnt him alive if they could have laid hands on him.” This slave later became a member of Morgan’s crew. Morgan’s men turned down the ransom money for this individual in order to reward his contribution to their enterprise.⁸⁶

⁸³ Beecher, Introduction to *The Buccaneers of America* by Alexander Exquemelin, 12.

⁸⁴ Sir Thomas Modyford to Admiral Henry Morgan, July 22, 1670, C.O. 1/25, no. 45; Sir Thomas Modyford to Admiral Henry Morgan, “Instructions for Admiral Henry Morgan,” July 2, 1670, C.O. 1/25, no 46.

⁸⁵ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 167-168.

⁸⁶ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 153.

This may seem like a self-serving tale on the part of Exquemelin. He was present at the raid and felt the need to justify his participation. Before writing off this tale as a participant's attempt at personal redemption, remember that Exquemelin was no friend of Morgan's. In *The Buccaneers of America*, Exquemelin took every available opportunity to disparage Morgan's name. This was particularly the case when it came to telling of atrocities that Morgan and his buccaneers perpetrated. Morgan even sued the English-language publishers of Exquemelin's book for libel. Although Morgan only received £200 of the £10,000 in damages he requested, the court still found Thomas Malthus' reproduction of Exquemelin's work libelous.⁸⁷

When buccaneers took to the sea to engage in raids, individuals of all races and social classes formed the crews of their vessels. The ways in which buccaneer crews made decisions aboard ship and divided the spoils of raids speaks to the racial and class equality of these communities. Before Henry Morgan set out to attack Panama, he held a conference to determine the command structure of his fleet and the ways in which the expedition would divide the spoils of their raids. Recognizing his role as organizer, the expedition voted Morgan overall commander. Typical buccaneer custom would dictate that these discussions take place in a general council of the entire expedition, but considering the large size of the fleet, only ship captains and squadron commanders participated in this particular meeting. However, the council was only able to make recommendations to the expedition as a whole to meet with the approval or disapproval of the entire expedition. Final decision-making power lay in the hands of the

⁸⁷ *Morgan vs Malthus*, Coram Rege Roll King's Bench, No. 2041, m. 526, Easter Term, I James II.; E.A. Crookshank, *The Life of Sir Henry Morgan With an Account of the English Settlement of the Island of Jamaica, 1655-1688*, (Toronto: Macmillan, 1935), 377.

expedition as a whole, and in the conscience of each individual buccaneer, who could participate, or walk away as he saw fit.⁸⁸

Importantly, buccaneers did not distribute these additional shares based upon class or racial distinctions. Buccaneer expeditions were not egalitarian ventures. Certain individuals did receive a greater share of plunder than others, but these extra allotments recognized services these individuals performed during a venture. Ship captains received eight individual shares in addition to their own. Surgeons received two-hundred additional pieces of eight for furnishing their medicine chests. Carpenters earned an extra one hundred pieces of eight for furnishing their tools. Individuals who displayed “extraordinary gallantry”⁸⁹ also received additional spoils. The first to raise the English flag over a fort received fifty pieces of eight, a man who took a prisoner who yielded valuable intelligence would receive an extra two-hundred pieces of eight. Grenadiers received an extra five pieces of eight for each of their grenades that landed in an enemy fort. Morgan’s crew also laid out a number of compensations for individuals wounded in battle.⁹⁰

Surgeons, carpenters, and individuals who performed well in battle received additional loot because of their contributions to the expeditions, not because of their elevated social or economic classes. Ship captains did receive eight additional shares of the loot, but instead Morgan’s expedition earmarked these shares for care of their ships. Captains merely administered these extra funds. When giving a general description of the ways buccaneers went

⁸⁸ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 171-173.

⁸⁹ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 172.

⁹⁰ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 172.

about outfitting their expeditions Exquemelin remarked that, “The captain is allowed no better fare than the meanest on board. If they notice he has better food, the men bring the dish from their own mess and exchange it with the captain’s.”⁹¹ The only individual that received a disproportionate share of wealth from the raid on Panama based on his position was Morgan himself. The expedition voted him a share of one one-hundredth of the entire expedition’s plunder, a disproportionate share in a crew of over 400 men, as organizer of the venture.⁹²

Like any other member of the crew that drew a larger share than his shipmates, Morgan’s disproportionate share of the wealth reflected his contribution to organizing the expedition. This was no easy task. Morgan operated under a letter of marque from the English governor in Jamaica.⁹³ This may have aided his efforts at recruiting in Jamaica’s buccaneer community, but not communities that leaned toward other empires like Tortuga and Hispaniola. Once Morgan formed his forces, he had to create a command structure that appeased members of an international and interfaith community. The crew of this venture voted him this share of the expedition’s profit in recognition of his contributions to the expedition.⁹⁴

Although Morgan’s share was larger than that of any other member of his expedition, it was significantly smaller than those that individuals in similar positions would collect in the future. Royal Navy captains received three eighths of the prize once the British government allowed them to profit from their duties. This was a common rule of thumb for private men-of-

⁹¹ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 71.

⁹² Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 172.

⁹³ Sir Thomas Modyford to Admiral Henry Morgan, “Instructions for Admiral Henry Morgan,” July 2, 1670, C.O. 1/25, no 46.

⁹⁴ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 172.

war as well during the mid-1700s.⁹⁵ Morgan's small share of his expedition's wealth reflects the democratic and less class oriented society of the buccaneer communities. Even in this instance where a council of ship captains determined treasure allotment, Morgan's share of the wealth was significantly smaller than future leaders would receive.

While buccaneer crews may have divided loot from raids without much regard to class or race, buccaneer communities were not bastions of racial and class equality. Many of the same buccaneers that would take their captain's food if they thought it was better than their own owned slaves. Indentured servitude was also rampant among their ranks, Alexander Exquemelin was an indentured servant on the island of Tortuga and he accuses Henry Morgan of having been an indentured servant upon entering the Caribbean. Exquemelin writes of buccaneers treating their indentured servants with abnormal cruelty.⁹⁶ When discussing the way that the hunters of Hispaniola treated their indentured servants he writes, "These men are cruel and merciless to their bondsmen: there is more comfort in three years on a galley than one in the service of a *boucanier*."⁹⁷ Members of buccaneer communities did not make the transition from anationality to colony without an understanding of European class and racial divisions, but they did exhibit a greater degree of social and economic mobility than their counterparts in settler colonies.

Many buccaneers, including Sir Henry Morgan, owned plantations and slaves.⁹⁸ Enslaved Africans in buccaneer communities fared little better than their counterparts in European settler

⁹⁵ Swanson, *Predators and Prizes*, 20-21, 50, 100-102, 22.

⁹⁶ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 64-66.

⁹⁷ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 55.

⁹⁸ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 170.

colonies.⁹⁹ However, free blacks in buccaneer communities did not experience the same types of social and economic barriers as those in European settler colonies. They also gained greater acceptance and equality in the hearts and minds of the white populations of buccaneer communities than did free blacks in European settler colonies. Henry Morgan's last days provide evidence of this. Throughout his life he was a heavy drinker, and his lifestyle caught up with him in 1687. Dr. Hans Sloane, Morgan's physician tells us that Morgan, "consulted a black doctor."¹⁰⁰ While this may have been the desperate action of a man on his deathbed, it still represents an equality of the heart that would have been uncommon outside of the buccaneer community.¹⁰¹

The alliance between buccaneers and the English in Jamaica benefitted both parties. Members of buccaneering communities gained some degree of legitimacy and security by becoming privateers. The English utilized the buccaneer communities on Tortuga, Jamaica, and Hispaniola as fertile recruiting grounds for a surrogate navy. Buccaneers not only possessed the skills of seamanship required in a surrogate navy, but they knew how to sail, plan, and fight as a fleet. For better or worse, the practices that buccaneers employed in raids changed very little after they began associating themselves with the English colonial government.

⁹⁹ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 55.

¹⁰⁰ Hans Sloane, *A Voyage to the Islands of Madera, Barbados, Nieves, S. Christophers, and Jamaica* (London: 1717-25). In Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, 55.

¹⁰¹ This paragraph is based upon arguments from Stephen Kantrowitz' *More Than Freedom*, this work argues that free blacks in 19th century Boston strove not only for legal citizenship, but for a "citizenship of the heart." Stephen Kantrowitz, *More Than Freedom: Fighting for Black Citizenship in a White Republic, 1829-1889*, (New York: Penguin Books, 2012), 6.

Henry Morgan's capture of Maracaibo is a prime example of the ways in which English patronage did little to change the ways in which buccaneers squeezed Spanish communities for treasure. Association with the English Crown did nothing to curb the cruelty with which buccaneers extracted wealth from their captures. When Morgan's forces landed at Maracaibo, they found it abandoned except for a man that Alexander Exquemelin described as a "poor ignorant simpleton."¹⁰² When ordered to show the buccaneers the town's wealth, the man led the buccaneers to the church sacristy, but the citizens of Maracaibo had taken all of the valuables from the church with them when they fled. This made the buccaneers think that their guide was "a rich man pretending to be a fool."¹⁰³

The lack of plunder in the town enraged Morgan's forces. They tied the old man to a tree and tortured him until he claimed that his name was Don Sebastian Sanchez, the brother of the governor of Maracaibo. He then led his tormentors to the place where he kept his "goods and money."¹⁰⁴ This turned out to be nothing more than a hovel where the man had buried a few clay pots and three pieces of eight. At this revelation, the buccaneers tortured the man anew. They bound him, hung stones from his neck and feet, and burned palm leaves under his face while beating him. The man lived through thirty minutes of these tortures before succumbing to

¹⁰² Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 148.

¹⁰³ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 149.

¹⁰⁴ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 149.

death.¹⁰⁵ Ironically, Henry Morgan, the leader of this expedition, claimed to “abhor bloodshed”¹⁰⁶ during his tenure as lieutenant-governor of Jamaica.

These brutal tactics were nothing new to members of buccaneer crews. Long before buccaneers began associating themselves with the English Crown, they utilized similar methods. Period accounts describe one buccaneer captain known as Rock the Brazilian, as so cruel as to make other buccaneers cringe. Exquemelin relays stories of this captain spitting Spaniards on wooden stakes and roasting them alive for refusing to show him the road to a town.¹⁰⁷ A French buccaneer named Jean-David Nau (referred to often as “Francois L’Olonnais, once “tore the living heart out of his (a prisoner’s) body, gnawed at it, and then hurled it in the face of one of the others.”¹⁰⁸

Buccaneer atrocities stand as a superb example of Richard Dunn’s “beyond the line”¹⁰⁹ idea. Dunn argued that the Caribbean bred a rougher existence than Europe or North America. Stories of buccaneers support this statement. These individuals lived in a boom and bust economy. A successful raid could take them from the edge of starvation to the lap of luxury in a month’s time. Although stories of epic debauchery litter buccaneer legends, these events stood in contrast to the very real fear of starvation that many buccaneer crews faced. The quest for food was a prime factor in many decisions aboard a buccaneer ship. Buccaneers seeking to provide a

¹⁰⁵ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 149.

¹⁰⁶ Sir Henry Morgan to Sir Leoline Jenkins. March 8, 1682, Public Record Office, C.O. 1:48 no. 37.

¹⁰⁷ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 80.

¹⁰⁸ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 107.

¹⁰⁹ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 11.

steady food source for their ship would take Spanish turtle fishermen prisoner off of the coasts of settlements such as Bayamo. These men would catch sea turtles and prepare the meat for the buccaneers. Many captive turtle fishermen would not be able to return to their homes for periods of nearly five years if a buccaneer crew happened to capture them.¹¹⁰ Many barbarous acts attributed to buccaneer crews occurred after long periods at sea with little food. These types of acts, and the rewards that accompanied them, would not have been possible in Europe.

For example, Edward Mansveldt was a Dutch buccaneer from Jamaica who raided into New Granada and the South Sea. The threat of starvation cut short his lucrative 1667 raids against the Spanish. Rock the Brazilian and his crew experienced similar bouts of hunger during raids. In one instance, he and his men captured a Spanish ship but found it lacking provisions for their coming journey. Poor supply forced the buccaneers to attack a Spanish cavalry force on Campeche in order to supplement their diets with horsemeat from captured Spanish horses.¹¹¹ Eating horsemeat is not a surprising course of action for men in a survival situation. This episode is notable because these buccaneers actively sought battle with a superior military force in order to acquire horsemeat.

If association with the English Crown did little to decrease the buccaneers' brutality, it did even less to change the military tactics these fierce fighters employed during their raids. One of the reasons that the European powers welcomed buccaneer crews as surrogate navies is because they were a cost effective method of expanding a nation's naval power. This was due to

¹¹⁰ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 73.

¹¹¹ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 83. The buccaneers outnumbered the Spanish, but had to disembark in order to attack the patrol. This placed them at a tremendous disadvantage against a mounted force on open ground.

the fact that buccaneer crews were skilled, ingenuitive, and bold raiders. These men had employed irregular naval and amphibious forces in concert to loot Spanish coffers, and maintain their anational independence long before associating themselves with any nation. Once buccaneer communities began alliances with European empires, they put these same skills to work for king and country.

Buccaneering ventures experienced high degrees of success from their earliest days. Despite repeated attacks from Spanish forces, the buccaneer communities on Tortuga and Hispaniola survived for many years before allying themselves with the French.¹¹² These communities fought for their very existence against Spanish invasions and extermination gangs sent to harass parties of buccaneers that hunted wild cattle and pig herds.¹¹³ When members of these communities took to the sea to raid Spanish shipping, they took the skills that they learned fighting the Spanish and hunting wild boar and cattle with them. Superior marksmanship and the ability to fight as a cohesive unit, skills that they learned hunting, served them well as raiders.

Exquemelin speaks of buccaneers holding marksmanship contests where they would attempt to shoot oranges off of a tree by nicking the stem with a single bullet.¹¹⁴ Whether or not Exquemelin exaggerated the marksmanship skills of the buccaneers, they possessed a distinct tactical advantage in the areas of marksmanship and rate of fire over their Spanish enemies by virtue of practicing with their weapons much more often.¹¹⁵ This would have been a nearly impossible feat with the smoothbore muskets of the late 17th century. Andrew Roberts, a student

¹¹² Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 30-31.

¹¹³ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 57-58.

¹¹⁴ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 55.

¹¹⁵ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 75.

of Napoleonic Warfare, estimates that as late as 1815, aimed musket fire only possessed a five percent accuracy rate past ten yards.¹¹⁶ Even with the more advanced weapons of the early 19th century, shooting fruit off of trees by the stem represented a nearly impossible feat.

At this point it is appropriate to point out the tactical, operational, and strategic reasons that buccaneering ventures against the Spanish Empire were so successful. At first glance, the Spanish seem to have all the military advantages. They funded their defenses with a constant flow of hard specie from their gold and silver mines in Peru and Mexico, they operated the largest naval force in the Caribbean, and housed troops in fixed fortifications. Many Spanish towns housed a garrison of professional soldiers in addition to a local militia that trained at least on a monthly basis. Buccaneers seeking to raid these communities faced a daunting task.¹¹⁷

Seaborne raiders, of all types, possessed some important advantages that become apparent when analyzing the strategic, operational, and tactical environment of the 17th century Caribbean more closely. First, while the Spanish Empire as a whole may have been very strong, every individual town was not. The Spanish Crown considered the entire New World, and particularly the Caribbean, its own private fiefdom. This attitude emerged from Pope Alexander VI's Papal bulls that declared the New World an "Iberian sphere of influence."¹¹⁸ This mentality began to change early in the colonial period, but would endure into the early 19th century. The Spanish recognized Portuguese claims to the Brazilian Coast in the 1507 amendments to the

¹¹⁶ Andrew Roberts, *Waterloo June 18, 1815. The Battle for Modern Europe* (New York: HarperCollins, 2005), 66-67, 80.

¹¹⁷ Hoffman, *The Spanish Crown and the Defense of the Caribbean*, 2.

¹¹⁸ Anthony Padgen, *Lords of All the World: Ideologies of Empire in Spain, Britain and France c. 1500-c. 1800*, (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1995), 33.

1496 Treaty of Tordesillas. However, Spain would not recognize claims to any other part of the New World from any Christian monarchs until the 1697 Treaty of Ryswick.¹¹⁹ The Spanish Crown felt that the Pope and New World leaders such as the Aztec leader Montezuma had donated the entirety of the New World to Spain in a method reminiscent of the Donation of Constantine.¹²⁰ This position required that the Spanish Crown defend the entirety of the Caribbean from the English, French, and Dutch whom Spanish officials considered interlopers.

A number of scholars have discussed the difficulties that the Spanish faced in defending their New World possessions and supply lines. Works like Philip Ainsworth Means' *The Spanish Main: The Focus of Envy, 1492-1700*, Alejandro de la Fuente's *Havana and the Atlantic in the Sixteenth Century*, and Paul E. Hoffman's *The Spanish Crown and the Defense of the Caribbean 1535-1585 Precedent, Patrimonialism and Royal Parsimony* argue that the Spanish took great pains to repel seaborne raiders and conventional military forces, but that the task was insurmountable.¹²¹ Means describes the Spanish Main as "The Focus of Envy."¹²² There could not be a more appropriate term. The treasure fleets that carried gold and silver from the New World to Spain constituted the lifeline of the Spanish Empire. As Anthony Padgen argues, Europeans viewed the West Indies as "places where they might secure for themselves goods and a way of life which they could never have hoped to acquire at home."¹²³ Likewise, seaborne

¹¹⁹ George Breathett, "Catholic Missionary Activity and the Negro Slave in Haiti," *Phylon* 20, no. 3 (3rd Quarter, 1962): 279.

¹²⁰ Pagden, *Lords of All the World*, 33.

¹²¹ Means, *The Spanish Main*, vii.; Alejandro de la Fuente, *Havana and the Atlantic in the Sixteenth Century*; Hoffman, *The Spanish Crown and the Defense of the Caribbean*, 3, 7.

¹²² Means, *The Spanish Main*.

¹²³ Padgen, *Lords of All the World*, 6.

raiders could not have dreamed of a more lucrative target. The same is true for the port cities like Portobello that housed trade goods and treasure on its way to Havana. Buccaneers focused their efforts at obtaining upward social and economic mobility through raids against Spain's Empire.

These cities and fleets were daunting, but not impossible targets for attacks by raiders of all kinds. Patience, preparation, and daring paid huge dividends for those looking to plunder Spanish coffers. By the time that buccaneer crews began associating themselves with European governments, these individuals had acquired extensive knowledge of the routes that Spanish ships traveled. They knew what times of the year these vessels would be fully laden, and in vulnerable positions. Additionally, buccaneers could make intelligent guesses as to when merchants or treasure fleets visited coastal Spanish towns. This meant that these towns would have been full of treasure or trade goods when buccaneers struck. Buccaneers would plan their attacks on Spanish settlements and shipping at times when these attacks would yield high returns with the least amount of risk.¹²⁴

Overcoming Spanish defenders during a raid was all about having a higher concentration of firepower in a specific moment than the defenders could absorb.¹²⁵ While Spanish defenders typically possessed greater numbers of heavy weapons, and fired from prepared defensive positions, buccaneers could deploy their forces in such a way as to neutralize this advantage. Buccaneer crews prided themselves on their skill with small arms. When attacking an enemy ship or defensive position, most buccaneer captains considered four men with muskets the

¹²⁴ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 75.

¹²⁵ Beecher, Introduction to *The Buccaneers of America* by Alexander Exquemelin, 10.

tactical equal of one heavy cannon.¹²⁶ In such an attack, the goal was to kill the gun crew rather than destroy the weapon. This also saved the gun so the buccaneers could move it to their ship, if feasible.

In certain situations, raiders would attack a ship or defensive position under the cover of darkness. This minimized the threat that Spanish cannons posed to the raiders. Darkness did not reduce the effectiveness of the attackers' heavy weapons, however, because they were firing against immobile positions. Fighting after dark, when most defenders were asleep, also reduced the speed with which the Spanish could muster the local militia to bolster a town's defenses. In this situation, raiders faced the minimum number of defenders, and neutralized the effectiveness of the defenders' heavy weapons.¹²⁷

Buccaneers were no strangers to ruse and subterfuge. In the face of superior firepower, buccaneers often had better luck using innovative tactics to overcome defenders rather than relying on superior training. Henry Morgan's escape from Lake Maracaibo is a superb example of the daring and cleverness that made many buccaneering ventures rousing successes. After sacking the town of Maracaibo, Morgan attempted to sail to the open sea with his small fleet and the plunder he had gathered taking the town. However, he found three Spanish warships guarding the mouth of the lake and that Spanish forces had re-occupied the fort overlooking the entrance to Lake Maracaibo. The most heavily armed ship in Morgan's fleet only carried

¹²⁶ Beecher, Introduction to *The Buccaneers of America* by Alexander Exquemelin, 10.

¹²⁷ Burney, *History of the Buccaneers of America*, 69-71.

fourteen guns, while the Spanish possessed a forty-eight gun ship and two smaller vessels mounting thirty and twenty-four guns respectively.¹²⁸

In order to make his escape, Morgan fitted one of his vessels as a fire ship and ordered it to attack the Spanish flagship. His fleet sailed toward the mouth of the lake with the fire ship in the lead, disguised as a man of war. The fire ship's crew grappled itself to the forty-eight gun Spanish ship, causing the larger vessel to catch fire. The two smaller ships ran for the safety of the Spanish fort. One ran aground in the hasty retreat, after which, the buccaneers easily captured the other. Morgan's men then attempted to assault the fort, but the Spanish defenders repulsed them.¹²⁹

This presented Morgan with a new challenge. His heavy guns were not sufficient to breach the fort's walls, and his men had proven unable to take the fort by storm. He prepared a ruse that would allow him and his men to sidestep the fort and escape Lake Maracaibo with all their treasure. Morgan sent several canoes full of men to act as if they were a landing party intending to attack the fort under cover of darkness. When the canoes returned to the ships, however, all but a few of these men lay flat on the bottom of the vessels to make the Spanish think an attack from the land side of the fort was imminent. This caused the Spaniards to shift all of their artillery to the landward side of the fort. When darkness fell, the buccaneers weighed anchor and allowed their ships to drift with the tide so as not to rouse suspicion. When they reached the mouth of the lake, they raised full sails and made haste away from the fort. The

¹²⁸ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 153-154.

¹²⁹ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 154-158.

Spanish managed to move a few guns to the seaward side of the fort but not before the buccaneers made a clean escape to the open sea.¹³⁰

The irregular tactics and cruelty that buccaneers showed to their Spanish enemies were markers of their anational origins and the fact that they lived in a world “beyond the line.”¹³¹ These were not the tactics of regular armies or navies, but of individuals who raided more powerful enemies for trade goods and infusions of hard currency. While the latter part of the 17th century may have seen buccaneers act under the guise of nationalism, the ways in which these individuals fought harkened back to an anationalistic existence. This identity predated their association with Europe’s great colonial powers.

Early buccaneering historian and Royal Navy Captain James Burney gave a poignant description of the relationship between buccaneers and European nations other than Spain, “More Europeans, not Spaniards, consequently allies of the buccaneers, continued to pour into the West Indies.”¹³² Following the principle that non-Spanish immigrants to the Caribbean held common cause with buccaneering communities, the English colonial government in Jamaica, and the French government in Tortuga made efforts to incorporate these communities into their efforts to challenge Spanish dominance in the Caribbean. This would transform the buccaneering community in profound ways. By allying themselves with the English Crown, buccaneers lost parts of their anational character. Most became a part of the greater British world, or scattered and became pirates. Others attached themselves to another of Europe’s colonial powers.

¹³⁰ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 162; Burney, *History of the Buccaneers of America*, 69-71.

¹³¹ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 11.

¹³² Burney, *History of the Buccaneers of America*, 55.

Even the concept of the buccaneer as a part-time pirate would disappear after the end of the 17th century. Professional privateers with ships purpose-built for commerce raiding would become the new surrogate navies of Europe's colonial powers.¹³³ Never again would buccaneers exist as an independent, anational community in the Caribbean. Although buccaneers lost their political and cultural autonomy after allying themselves with the English, they used their position as skilled, independent fighters, to negotiate the terms on which they would enter, or remain apart from, British society.

¹³³ Swanson, *Predators and Prizes*, 54.

CHAPTER TWO: “THAT DRUNKEN, SILLY PARTY OF SIR H. MORGAN’S”¹³⁴

In *The Name of War: King Phillip’s War and the Origins of American Identity*, Jill Lepore argues that 17th Century New England colonists’ “Englishness had been compromised”¹³⁵ by their decision to adopt certain Native American ways of living. She extends this argument, contending that the brutality of conflicts such as King Phillip’s War further alienated colonists from their Englishness.¹³⁶ Wayne Lee also examines violence in *Crowds and Soldiers in Revolutionary North Carolina: The Culture of Violence in Riot and War*. He argues that the “end goal of public violence plays the critical role in shaping the violence.”¹³⁷ Although these two studies take place in the English North American colonies, their arguments are relevant to ways in which individuals like Henry Morgan achieved limited amounts of social mobility in the 17th Century Caribbean. Morgan received a title of nobility, a formal marker of social advancement, but never fully integrated into Jamaica’s planter class.

While Lepore argues that Englishmen in the Plymouth Colony lamented losing their Englishness to the American wilderness. This was not the case with many 17th century buccaneers. These individuals existed in anational communities despite Spanish attempts to wipe them from the Caribbean, along with English, French, and less aggressive Dutch desires to build strong empires in opposition to the Spanish. Buccaneers lived anationally because they wanted

¹³⁴ Burgess, *The Pirates’ Pact*, 45.

¹³⁵ Jill Lepore, *The Name of War: King Phillip’s War and the Origin of American Identity*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1999), 94.

¹³⁶ Lepore, *The Name of War*, 1999, 94.

¹³⁷ Wayne E. Lee, *Crowds and Soldiers in Revolutionary North Carolina: The Culture of Violence in Riot and War*, (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), 4.

to, not out of necessity. Conversely, buccaneer communities became a part of European empires because doing so gave buccaneers limited immunity from prosecution as pirates, and greater access to the Atlantic World's wealth of consumer goods. Associating with European empires allowed buccaneers to acquire letters of marque, making them privateers. It also gave them access to stable markets where they could sell captured goods and spend captured money. Only after many former buccaneers integrated into European colonial society did they begin to concern themselves with legitimacy and social status. Within a buccaneer community, a buccaneer leader was a legitimate member of society. When those communities became intertwined with European colonial society, buccaneer leaders like Henry Morgan, found their rowdy pasts an obstacle to social mobility.

As Lee contends, the way in which individuals perpetrated violence dictated the legitimacy of their actions. Henry Morgan is a prime example of how this idea presented itself in the 17th century Caribbean. He, like countless other buccaneer leaders, participated in a number of barbarous acts during his time raiding the Spanish Empire. Morgan achieved a much higher degree of social mobility than other buccaneer leaders, and social requirements of the day demanded that he present his actions in manner befitting an individual of his status. Before discussing the ways in which Henry Morgan and Sir Thomas Modyford justified their military actions in the Caribbean through the language of legitimate violence, it is important to understand the types of actions they performed. It is equally crucial to understand the reasons that members of the 17th century Jamaican planter elite considered these actions less than legitimate.

After Morgan's early successes at raiding the Spanish Empire and bringing other buccaneers into the service of the English government, Governor Sir Thomas Modyford gave

him the title of Admiral of Buccaneers in 1668. Modyford also placed Morgan in command of Jamaica's defenses. This title and assignment gave Morgan the authority to command regular naval forces as well as Jamaica's privateer fleet. Morgan becoming an admiral marked an important point in his social climb. He was a former buccaneer, but was now able to command ships of the Royal Navy.¹³⁸

Defending Jamaica from European enemies was a tall order, seeing that Modyford had no regular naval forces at his disposal.¹³⁹ In the "lunatic world"¹⁴⁰ that was the 17th century Caribbean, defending Jamaica from feared Spanish, French, and Dutch incursions took innovative military thinking. The most creative innovation came on March 4, 1666 when Sir Thomas Modyford and the Council of Jamaica resolved that "it is the interest and advantage of the island of Jamaica to have letters of marque granted against the Spaniard."¹⁴¹ It mattered little to Modyford that Spain and England had agreed to cease hostilities in the Caribbean with Charles II's return to the throne in 1660. Morgan was not yet in command of Jamaica's defenses, nor was he a part of the decision to issue letters of marque against the Spanish Empire during this time of peace, but this decision would have profound effects on his life.

On June 29, 1670, Henry Morgan assumed command of Jamaica's military forces. The newly-appointed admiral inherited a difficult situation. As Peter Earle argues, buccaneers would fight the French or Dutch only in self-defense, but would actively pursue conflict with the

¹³⁸ Morgan only commanded one Royal Navy vessel, HMS *Oxford*, for a short time before it exploded due to an accident.

¹³⁹ Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, 48.

¹⁴⁰ Earle, *The Sack of Panama*, 25.

¹⁴¹ CO 1/20, No. 24(i) Council of Jamaica, 22 February, 1665/6 OS.

Spanish.¹⁴² This was a logical position. Buccaneers raided in order to infuse their local communities with hard specie, and trade goods. The Spanish Empire was the richest source of these goods in the Caribbean. Therefore, the most effective way to gather a fleet of buccaneers was to offer them commissions to raid the Spanish Empire. In 1666, Modyford had provided the incentive for a buccaneer fleet. Morgan's task was to determine the best way to utilize this fleet to act in Jamaica's defense. There was no economic incentive for buccaneers to remain near Jamaica to engage in any type of defensive action. Additionally, buccaneers did not crew dedicated warships in this period. They fought with what ships they could capture or purchase. Maintaining a standing fleet of buccaneers therefore was as impossible as it was ineffective. Buccaneers did not fight in the same way as a regular naval force or an amphibious militia. They attacked their enemies using speed and daring, not superior firepower and overwhelming force.

In a conflict against Spanish, French, or Dutch warships, an English buccaneer fleet would have been all but useless. The ships comprising the buccaneer fleet did not possess the armament necessary to fight a line-ahead battle with regular naval forces.¹⁴³ While buccaneers had defended their communities in the past against Spanish forces, these actions pitted buccaneers against Spanish forces sent to attack buccaneer communities and hunting parties, not large-scale invasion fleets.¹⁴⁴ Had the Spanish, French or Dutch attempted to retake Jamaica, their forces would have been much more numerous and better armed than the ones buccaneers had repulsed in the past.

¹⁴² Earle, *The Sack of Panama*, 50.

¹⁴³ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 76.

¹⁴⁴ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 32.

Morgan's actions against the Spanish at Portobello, Maracaibo, and Panama (1668-1671) constituted the most effective way he and Modyford could have used of the forces at their disposal.¹⁴⁵ While Morgan only carried the title of admiral for the Panama raid, his actions at Portobello and Maracaibo illustrate the same type of strategic thinking on the parts of Morgan and Modyford. They realized that a fleet of buccaneers were poorly suited to defensive actions, so they used the raiders in an offensive manner to prevent the Spanish from being able to gather enough forces to attack Jamaica. By attacking Spanish settlements, Morgan created a situation where Spanish commanders would not come to each other's aid for fear of leaving their own towns poorly defended.¹⁴⁶ This served to spread Spanish defenses to a breaking point and, more importantly, prevent the Spanish from attempting to retake Jamaica.

Evidence of how effective this strategy was comes from Morgan's raid against Portobello. While Morgan held the city of Portobello hostage, the Spanish Army of Panama attempted to rescue it. But when its commander and interim President of Panama Don Augustin de Bracamonte, attempted a rescue of the city, they discovered that Morgan's French¹⁴⁷ allies were no longer with him. Bracamonte feared that this was an attempt to lure the Army of Panama to Portobello and leave Panama unguarded and open to the French contingent. Maestre de Campo Juan de Salina, the commander of Bracamonte's advance guard expressed the predicament in which the Spanish Army found itself. "We find ourselves today with just eight

¹⁴⁵ Sir Thomas Modyford to Admiral Henry Morgan, July 22, 1670, C.O. 1/25, no. 45; Sir Thomas Modyford to Admiral Henry Morgan, "Instructions for Admiral Henry Morgan," July 2, 1670, C.O. 1/25, no 46.

¹⁴⁶ Panama 81, 1669 (III) fos 33v-39v, 328v-331. In Earle, *The Sack of Panama*, 86.

¹⁴⁷ Morgan raised an international coalition of buccaneers for this mission much like the one described earlier that invaded Panama. Many of the French-speaking members left the expedition after an Englishman killed a Frenchman unfairly in a quarrel.

hundred men, inexperienced and poorly armed people who, man for man, are not the equal of their enemies. These men are the only defence of this Kingdom and so all of Peru... I consider it impossible for us to recover Portobello and its castles.”¹⁴⁸ As de la Fuente, Hoffman, and Means have argued, Spanish forces in the Caribbean were spread too thin to mount an effective defense of their supply lines.¹⁴⁹

Morgan and Modyford’s strategy prevented the Spanish from mounting any real threats against English Jamaica, however, Charles II of England had not sanctioned any of Modyford’s de facto declarations of war against the Spanish. Just as Spanish diplomats protested Sir Francis Drake’s raids to Elizabeth I, their 17th century counterparts demanded satisfaction from Charles II for Morgan and Modyford’s actions. Modyford was no friend of pirates, raiders that attacked English or allied targets as well as Spanish ones. Shortly before Morgan’s raid on Portobello, he condemned three pirates to the gallows for attacking English ships. However, in the tradition of Sir George Carey’s 1585 declaration, he followed the thinking that, “her Majesty shall not need to espy the faults of those that will venture on their own to do her service.”¹⁵⁰ Plundering English shipping constituted piracy, but looting the Spanish Empire was privateering.

This idea served Modyford well within the Caribbean. It allowed him to defend his colony from foreign invasion, and turn a tidy profit for himself and Charles II.¹⁵¹ For example,

¹⁴⁸ Panama 81, 1669 (III) fos 33v-39v, 328v-331. In Earle, *The Sack of Panama*, 86.

¹⁴⁹ Means, *The Spanish Main*, vii.; Fuente, *Havana and the Atlantic.*; Hoffman, *The Spanish Crown*.

¹⁵⁰ Kenneth R. Andrews, *Elizabethan Privateering: English Privateering During the Spanish War, 1585-1603* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1964) 3.

¹⁵¹ The total haul from the Portobello raid amounted to 250,000 pieces of eight plus “a huge hoard of plate, linen, silks, and miscellaneous wares.” The figure of 125,000 reflects only the

Morgan's raid against Portobello earned nearly 125,000 pieces of eight for the Crown. However, it placed the English in a difficult position in European diplomacy. Typically, when Europe's great colonial powers fought each other in the Caribbean, the conflicts stayed in that region.¹⁵² However, Morgan's raids against Portobello and Panama proved too much for the Spanish to ignore. From the Spanish perspective, these were not limited attacks on remote coastal towns. These two raids constituted a serious threat to Spanish economic security and territorial integrity in the Caribbean. In a letter to Charles II, England's Ambassador to Spain could not "describe the effect of this news upon Madrid."¹⁵³ Spain's queen led her capital city in a period of "uncharacteristically bleak mourning" by falling to her knees in prayer and staying there for hours.¹⁵⁴ This was not the type of relationship that Charles II wanted to cultivate with his Spanish allies.

Furthermore, Morgan was not a mere buccaneer seeking to gain hard currency for his local community. He carried the rank of Admiral in the English Navy, and a letter of marque from an English colonial governor.¹⁵⁵ Spanish officials interpreted this as an English endorsement of Morgan's actions. Small-scale English-sponsored attacks and even large-scale raids by buccaneers did not threaten the peace in Europe. Morgan and Modyford's English-sponsored buccaneer coalition accomplished just that. Luckily for English diplomatic efforts,

Crown's share of the hard money. Accurate figures for the other goods are not available. Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, 58.

¹⁵² Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 11.; Hamshere, *The British in the Caribbean*, xi.

¹⁵³ C.S.P Colonial Series 1671, n. 484, 534. In Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, 67.

¹⁵⁴ *State Papers of Spain*, vol. 58, 156-157. In Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, 67.

¹⁵⁵ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 171.

Spanish officials had no knowledge that a Royal Navy frigate, HMS *Oxford*, had been the intended flagship of the Maracaibo raid.¹⁵⁶

This type of clear threat to the peace in Europe demanded a response from Charles II. He authored a number of reprimands to Modyford, demanding that he recall all privateers and pirates. As Douglass Burgess argued, “The difference between illegal piracy and legal privateering might have been semantic to a Jamaican governor, but it was not so for an anxious king desperately trying to avert war with Spain.”¹⁵⁷ Because of the intense diplomatic situation in Europe, Morgan and Modyford faced the necessity of justifying their actions to a sovereign making desperate attempts to keep peace on the Continent, and to those who considered their actions the epitome of corruption and lawlessness. They did so through their correspondence with each other and their superiors.

Modyford’s instructions to Morgan pre-empting the Portobello raid gave the two the justification they needed to attack a rich Spanish target during a time of peace. Morgan’s commission read that he should, “draw together the English privateers and the prisoners of the Spanish nation, whereby he might inform [Modyford] of the intentions of that enemy to invade Jamaica.”¹⁵⁸ In order to justify his attack against Portobello, Morgan sent a warning to Modyford. While sailing near Puerto Principe, Cuba, Morgan had heard rumors of a massive Spanish fleet massing near Portobello with intentions to make its way to Havana, and lead an

¹⁵⁶ Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, 48.

¹⁵⁷ Burgess, *The Pirates’ Pact*, 52.

¹⁵⁸ Colonial State Papers Colonial Series, 1669-8, 1838, September 7, 1668.

invasion of Jamaica.¹⁵⁹ Such a direct threat to Jamaican security was the only possible way for a colonial governor to justify declaring war against Spain.

Morgan and Modyford justified the Panama raid in a similar fashion, but with important differences. Panama was one of Spain's most important outposts, and the seat of Spanish colonial government in the region. Although the language that Morgan and Modyford used in justifying this attack still portrayed the Spanish Empire as a threat to Jamaica, they could hardly justify attacking a city on Panama's Pacific coast as a defensive action. Rather, circumstances forced Modyford to feign ignorance to Charles II's orders to recall the privateers and blame slow communications between England and Jamaica for dispatching Morgan to attack Panama.¹⁶⁰

The important difference between the Panama raid and similar actions against Portobello and Maracaibo, was that Modyford deliberately disobeyed a direct order from Charles II in sanctioning this action. Morgan's expedition to Panama left on December 18, 1670. Less than a week before Morgan's departure, Governor Modyford received a letter from secretary of state Lord Arlington. Arlington's letter stated that "His Majesty's pleasure is that in what state soever the privateers are at the receipt of this letter you will keep them so til we have a final answer from Spain, with this condition... he obliges them to forbear all hostilities on land."¹⁶¹ After receiving this letter, it was clear that any raid against a Spanish town would be in direct opposition to Charles II's wishes. Despite their orders, Morgan and Modyford decided to continue with their plan.

¹⁵⁹ Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, 57.

¹⁶⁰ Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, 59.

¹⁶¹ Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, 59.

Both the Governor and Admiral would claim later that Morgan had “unwittingly”¹⁶² sailed against Panama against Charles II’s direct wishes. They noted the delay in communication between the New World and London, and claimed that they were unaware of the King’s order to cease hostilities with Spain before setting sail for Panama. Modyford would even claim that he had sent a fast ship to call Morgan back to Jamaica, but that it arrived too late to prevent the attack. This blatant lie would cost Modyford his position as governor and lead to both his and Morgan’s arrests.¹⁶³

These types of justifications littered correspondence between Modyford and his allies in Charles II’s court. For Caribbean governors of all nations, however, blaming the delay in transatlantic communication, or claiming to have a better plan of action than someone in Europe was common.¹⁶⁴ The concept of, “*obedezco pero no cumpro*” (I obey, but do not comply) litters correspondence between Spain’s colonial governors and their sovereigns. This phrase indicated that a governor was still the loyal servant of his Catholic majesty, but that he was taking a different course of action based on a communications lag, or his own analysis of a particular situation. As Stanley and Barbara Stein argue in *The Colonial Heritage of Latin America*, contemporaries did not see this attitude as paradoxical, nor did they attempt to convey irony with this phrase. It was merely a way in which colonial officials expressed loyalty to their sovereign while blatantly disobeying his orders in order to suit local conditions.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶² Burgess, *The Pirates’ Pact*, 62.

¹⁶³ Burgess, *The Pirates’ Pact*, 62.

¹⁶⁴ Burgess, *The Pirates’ Pact*, 53.

¹⁶⁵ Stanley J. Stein and Barbara H. Stein, *The Colonial Heritage of Latin America: Essays on Economic Dependence in Perspective*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 74-75.

As this Spanish phrase illustrates, a colonial governor disobeying his sovereign was not a uniquely English problem, nor was Modyford more likely to do this than his counterparts in other colonies. The Panama raid crossed the line of acceptable disobedience for two reasons. First, the raid placed Charles II in a difficult diplomatic situation. Charles II had lived in exile in Catholic France and Spain for a number of years before the Restoration. Spanish and French officials considered this raid poor compensation for their hospitality.¹⁶⁶ Also, raiding Panama not only expressed disobedience to a single order, but a blatant disregard for Charles II's overall foreign policy, as well as a series of reprimands ordering Modyford to cease hostilities against Spanish territories.

The king's actions were swift, by 17th century standards. Spain's ambassador to England, the Conde de Molina declared that to avoid a war, Modyford must go.¹⁶⁷ In 1672, King Charles II dispatched Sir Thomas Lynch to Jamaica with orders to replace Sir Thomas Modyford as governor. Lynch was also to arrest Modyford and send him to England. "Contrary to the King's express commands," Modyford had, "made many depredations and hostilities against the subjects of His Majesty's good brother the Catholic King."¹⁶⁸ He would receive a two-year stay in the tower of London for his actions.

Although Modyford was technically imprisoned, his captors treated him as a gentleman for the duration of his sentence. After two years, he returned to London's high society, and eventually sailed back to Jamaica to serve as the island's chief justice.¹⁶⁹ Importantly for the

¹⁶⁶ Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, 51.

¹⁶⁷ *State Papers of Spain*, vol. 58, 156-157. In Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, 67.

¹⁶⁸ *C.S.P., Colonial Series, 1669-74*, 405. In Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, 67.

¹⁶⁹ Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, 54.

buccaneers, and Morgan, Modyford's arrest brought an end to the glory days of buccaneer patronage in Jamaica. From that point forward, privateers would act as a naval militia in the service of European power.¹⁷⁰ Future officials, including Morgan, would punish individuals who attacked Spanish targets during peacetime just as if they had attacked an English target.¹⁷¹

By the time Lynch left for Port Royal, Modyford and Morgan had attained such popularity in Jamaica that Charles II's orders to Lynch specified that he take possession of the fort guarding the city before attempting to relieve Modyford of his position.¹⁷² If arresting a bureaucrat would require such drastic action, Lynch could only imagine how difficult it would be to arrest Henry Morgan, the man Douglas Burgess described as "a folk-hero for every schoolboy and an inspiration for every out-of-work buccaneer."¹⁷³ To arrest Morgan and stem the tide of buccaneer raids, Lynch hatched a plot to systematically dismantle Morgan's support within the Jamaican government. Lynch hoped that this would prevent a civil war within the colony when he attempted to arrest Morgan. While Lynch had the support of Jamaica's planters, Morgan was a popular man among the lower classes and had many supporters among Jamaica's political elite. Lynch eliminated Morgan's support system by issuing a blanket pardon for all individuals who participated in raids against the Spanish, and by offering Morgan's closest associates positions

¹⁷⁰ Swanson, *Predators and Prizes*, 3.

¹⁷¹ Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, 68.; Sir Henry Morgan to Sir Leoline Jenkins. March 8, 1682, Public Record Office, C.O. 1:48 no. 37.

¹⁷² Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, 67.

¹⁷³ Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, 68.

within the new colonial government.¹⁷⁴ It took nearly a year, but finally, Lynch eliminated Morgan's support system in the Jamaican bureaucracy.

Lynch arrested Morgan in April of 1672. The admiral departed Jamaica aboard the Royal Navy ship HMS *Welcome*. Despite his status as a prisoner, Morgan never saw the inside of a jail cell while in England.¹⁷⁵ He spent two years touring London and visiting with family and friends. Throngs of English citizens followed his carriage wherever he went in the capital. Morgan was a celebrity not only to the English masses, but also to London's upper class. He enjoyed audiences with the Lords of Trade, who commissioned him to write the King on how to improve Jamaica's defenses. He even met with Charles II himself. Morgan was only a prisoner in the loosest sense of the word.¹⁷⁶

As Charles Burgess and David Cordingly also assert, it seems logical that Charles II's actions against Morgan and Modyford were little more than an attempt to simultaneously appease Spanish officials and political opponents in England.¹⁷⁷ Charles II's policy of alliance with Spain was beyond unpopular in England. Even if the king had desired to take firm action against Modyford and Morgan, it would have amounted to political suicide. Morgan was, as Burgess claims, "a hero and potential martyr."¹⁷⁸ Additionally, Morgan's raids poured tremendous amounts of money into English coffers. Official accounts estimate the haul from Morgan's Panama raid at nearly £30,000. This was only half of the amount Morgan seized at

¹⁷⁴ Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, 68.

¹⁷⁵ Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, 54.

¹⁷⁶ Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, 70.

¹⁷⁷ Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, 71.

¹⁷⁸ Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, 71.

Portobello.¹⁷⁹ Even to a monarch hoping to maintain strong relations with his Catholic allies, these sums of money could make diplomatic humiliation more palatable.

For buccaneer leaders like Henry Morgan, attaching his labor to the English Crown produced a need to gain greater social and economic status. Morgan gained wealth, lands, and noble status for his service to the English Crown. While this was not the case for the rank and file members of his expeditions, Morgan's meteoric rise to wealth and respectability from more humble origins represents many paths to social and economic mobility in the 17th century British Caribbean. Morgan received titles and political appointments because of his actions against the Spanish, but these official markers of class mobility did not guarantee him acceptance in the hearts and minds of Jamaica's planter class.¹⁸⁰ The fact that he held close association with members of Jamaica's buccaneer community made it difficult for Morgan to fully assimilate into Jamaican high society. If Morgan now possessed a title of nobility and high political office, why would Jamaica's planter class not accept him as one of their own? The answer lies not with Morgan himself, but in the type of people that Morgan brought to Jamaica.

By 1690, Port Royal had gained the title "Sodom of the New World."¹⁸¹ The city possessed more taverns per square mile than any other city on earth.¹⁸² In contrast, only six of Jamaica's fifteen parishes had a church. Only four of these churches possessed clergy, one

¹⁷⁹ Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, 67. There is speculation that the actual haul from Panama was closer to £750,000.

¹⁸⁰ Lynch to Secretary Arlington, Sept. 23, 1674, Coventry Papers, LXXIV, 19. In Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 157.

¹⁸¹ Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, 45.

¹⁸² Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, 45.

doubling as the only schoolmaster on the island.¹⁸³ Lord Vaughn, the governor of Jamaica whom Morgan accompanied back to the island after receiving his knighthood, described Jamaica's residents as those "who chose transporting rather than hanging and Jamaica rather than Tyborn."¹⁸⁴ Jamaica was the sort of place an individual came to make his fortune, not to enjoy it.

While a sailor coming ashore in Port Royal may have seen architectural similarities between this city and any other in the English World, that is where the similarities stopped.¹⁸⁵ Port Royal was a town built for visitors, many of them less than welcomed by Jamaica's elite residents. Its taverns and brothels attracted weary merchant and Royal Navy sailors, as well as buccaneers, and pirates. Port Royal's merchants probably desired the latter two types of seamen above the former two because of their greater access to hard money.¹⁸⁶

Buccaneers may have not constituted Jamaica's highest social class, but their presence supported the colony's economy. In reference to his decision to issue letters of marque against the Spanish in 1666, Sir Thomas Modyford remarked, "His Lordship cannot imagine what a universal change there was on the face of the men and things."¹⁸⁷ The buccaneers brought economic prosperity to Jamaica. Their voyages fueled the island's naval stores industries and their post-raid binges provided a market for the taverns, brothels, and other merchants in Port

¹⁸³ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 157.

¹⁸⁴ Vaughn to Sec. Coventry, May 28, 1677, Coventry Papers, LXX, 181. In Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 157-158. Tyborn tree was a massive gallows erected in London during Elizabeth I's reign.

¹⁸⁵ Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, 45.

¹⁸⁶ Marcus Rediker argues that many merchant and Royal Navy sailors often did not receive the wages due them. This made buccaneers and pirates, with their access to hard money, a better market for Port Royal's merchants. Rediker, *Villains of All Nations*, 3.

¹⁸⁷ C.S.P Colonial Series, 1661-8, 1264, August 21, 1666. In Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, 55.

Royal.¹⁸⁸ However, their lifestyles were not compatible with the type of society Jamaica's planter elite imagined for the island.

Buccaneers practiced their belief in living a short life and a merry one. The festivities that buccaneers engaged in after a successful raid were the stuff of legends. Exquemelin describes some buccaneers as spending, "a good two or three thousand pieces of eight in a day-and next day not having a shirt to their back."¹⁸⁹ Exquemelin's own master gained a reputation for buying a butt of wine, setting it in the middle of the street, and forcing at gunpoint all who passed by to drink with him. He tells of one Jamaican buccaneer paying "500 pieces of eight to a whore, just to see her naked."¹⁹⁰ This same lover of the female form later found himself indentured for his debts to one of his favorite drinking partners.¹⁹¹ These were not the types of individuals that Jamaican sugar planters wanted in their midst. A travel account by Ned Ward described the island as "the Dunghill of the Universe," referring to its population of "prostitutes, convicts, and drunks."¹⁹² In order to enter high society in Jamaica, Henry Morgan would have to overcome the fact that he was once a member of the Brethren of the Coast, a notorious buccaneer community.

If Henry Morgan's contemporaries subscribed to Wayne Lee's argument that the way in which a group of people engaged in violence determined that group's social and political legitimacy, entering the Jamaican planter elite would have been a nearly impossible task for

¹⁸⁸ C.S.P Colonial Series, 1661-8, 1264, August 21, 1666. In Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, 55.

¹⁸⁹ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 82.

¹⁹⁰ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 82.

¹⁹¹ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 82.

¹⁹² Edward Ward, *A Trip to Jamaica: With a True Character of the People and Island* (London, 1700) 13, 15-16. In Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 149.

Morgan. Port Royal's brothels and taverns were not the only places that saw buccaneers engage in debauchery of epic proportion. Buccaneers carried their devil-may-care lifestyles with them on raids. Chapter One discussed the cruelty with which buccaneers treated their victims, but did not touch on the idea that this cruelty was not purely a part of a buccaneering business model. Many of the atrocities in which these raiders engaged were an integral part of the buccaneer lifestyle.

During the Portobello raid, Morgan's forces required the mayor of the town, along with several priests, friars, and nuns, to carry the siege ladders into place when they stormed Portobello's final castle.¹⁹³ It is easy to construe this event as a part of a plan to lessen the fort's resistance, or minimize the amount of casualties taken during the assault. However, one should remember that Spanish forces in the Caribbean had resorted to cruel and extreme measures to remove buccaneer communities from Hispaniola and Tortuga. Forcing the Catholic clergy and town officials to place siege ladders may have been an exercise in 17th century risk management. Having Spanish clergy place siege ladders would either cause the Spanish to hold their fire to prevent killing their own, or the clergy would become cannon fodder instead of Morgan's own men. This action could also have represented an attempt to repay the Spanish for years of persecuting buccaneer settlements.

Alexander Exquemelin also gives details of buccaneers under Morgan's command participating in rape during the assaults on Panama and Portobello. It is certainly reasonable to assume that Morgan's men may have engaged in such actions. However, it is important to remember that Exquemelin was a part of the French contingent in Morgan's Panama raid. Many

¹⁹³ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 137.

parts of this contingent felt Morgan and the other English-speaking members of the company slighted the Frenchmen, cheating them out of their share of the plunder.¹⁹⁴ Accusations of rape may have been just another case of Exquemelin attempting to besmirch Morgan's name. He claims that after capturing Portobello the buccaneers, "began making merry, lording it with wine and women."¹⁹⁵ This statement certainly implies that Morgan's men engaged in sexual misconduct with Portobello's female population.

While Exquemelin implied sexual misconduct at Portobello, he made explicit accusations of rape at Panama. He wrote, "Nor did they spare the women, except for those who yielded themselves completely... once a woman was in their hands they would work their will upon her, or beat her, starve her, or similarly torment her."¹⁹⁶ Not only did Exquemelin accuse Morgan's men of rape at Panama, but he accused Morgan himself of engaging in lecherous behavior. He stated that "Morgan, being the general, should have set a better example, but he was no better than the rest."¹⁹⁷ Exquemelin goes on to give a detailed account of Morgan's attempt to woo a married Spanish lady through every means possible. He accuses Morgan of trying to buy the lady's affections by offering her better treatment than the other prisoners and by offering to return the goods stolen from her husband's estate. Exquemelin wrote that when kind treatment failed, that Morgan beat and starved the woman. Exquemelin's account mirrors accusations that the Spanish Governor of Panama leveled against Morgan in a complaint to the Spain's

¹⁹⁴ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 207.

¹⁹⁵ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 82.

¹⁹⁶ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 201.

¹⁹⁷ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 201. Here, Exquemelin describes Morgan as a general. This is an error. For this raid, Morgan carried the rank of Admiral.

ambassador to England. These included “gang rape, infanticide, desecration of the Church, and the wanton torture and murder of clergy.”¹⁹⁸

While Exquemelin and Spanish officials attempted to portray Morgan as a ruthless marauder, a few men from within Jamaica mounted a defense of Morgan’s honor. These included Dr. John Browne who assisted Morgan in contesting charges of rape. Browne claimed that “as to their women, I know nor heard of anything offered beyond their wills... as for the Admiral himself, he was noble enough to the vanquished enemy.”¹⁹⁹ Beyond helping Morgan contest accusations of rape, Browne wrote to Lord Arlington describing Morgan as a “gentleman.”²⁰⁰ He also defended Morgan and Modyford’s decision to raid Portobello and Panama as a necessity of Jamaica’s security. He implored Lord Arlington to trust Morgan’s judgment in this matter stating, “I assure your Honor that no man whatever know better... the Spanish force, strength, or commerce.”²⁰¹ This statement illustrates that many citizens of Jamaica supported Morgan and Modyford’s actions.

Beyond having allies London and in Jamaica, Henry Morgan had a friend in the highest of places. Despite Morgan’s role damaging royal policy with Spain, Charles II liked the hard-drinking buccaneer. After ordering Morgan’s arrest, the King met with Morgan in his bedchamber. When Charles II asked Morgan if any Spanish officials had told him that Spain and England were at peace, Morgan declared that “If the governor or any of the Spanish officers had

¹⁹⁸ Burgess, *The Pirates’ Pact*, 69.

¹⁹⁹ Burgess, *The Pirates’ Pact*, 69.

²⁰⁰ C.S.P Colonial Series, 1669-74, 608. In Burgess, *The Pirates’ Pact*, 68.

²⁰¹ C.S.P Colonial Series, 1669-74, 608. In Burgess, *The Pirates’ Pact*, 68.

told him that, he would never have believed them. The Spanish are nothing but liars.”²⁰² After a tense moment, the King burst into laughter and exclaimed, “Oddfish!” and sent Morgan on his way.²⁰³

This unlikely ally would transform Morgan’s celebrity status into a gateway to titled nobility. Just three years after being hauled to London as the king’s prisoner, Henry Morgan became Sir Henry Morgan. As a buccaneer he had associated with the Brethren of the Coast, an anational group of seaborne raiders and cattle hunters. He had participated in three major raids against Spanish colonies during times of peace, and assisted a corrupt colonial governor make Port Royal a haven for nefarious characters.²⁰⁴ Henry Morgan was not the character one would imagine befriending the King of England, and gaining a title of nobility. He was the last person that one would think Charles II would give a high political office in Jamaica. However in 1674, Charles II knighted Henry Morgan and made him Lieutenant Governor of Jamaica.²⁰⁵

Despite his knighthood and political position, Morgan left for Jamaica in March of 1675 without having gained legitimacy in the eyes of Jamaica’s planter class.²⁰⁶ He was a popular hero in both Jamaica and England, and had charmed London’s high society during his three-year stay in the city. However, in Jamaica, the planter elite still considered him little better than a pirate. In a 1676 letter to Lord Vaughn, Secretary of State Coventry stated that, “the King intendeth to

²⁰² Burgess, *The Pirates’ Pact*, 71.

²⁰³ Burgess, *The Pirates’ Pact*, 71.

²⁰⁴ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 139, 167.

²⁰⁵ Burgess, *The Pirates’ Pact*, 71.

²⁰⁶ Burgess, *The Pirates’ Pact*, 71.

make a Plantation of Jamaica and not a Christian Algiers.”²⁰⁷ Morgan and his buccaneer associates were not the sort with whom Jamaica’s planters wished to share their island. Morgan would spend the last years of his life straddling the line between his buccaneer past and his new role as a member of the titled nobility and Jamaica’s political elite.

While Morgan was a celebrity in Jamaica and England, the way in which he earned that status did not translate into social legitimacy. The planter elite in Jamaica considered him little better than a pirate. While he had accomplished some amazing military feats, and helped swell his majesty’s coffers, Morgan had acted very much like a pirate in accomplishing these feats. Although he carried a letter of marque, technically making him a privateer, his actions were not publicly approved by Charles II, only Sir Thomas Modyford.²⁰⁸ Morgan may have possessed the wealth, titles, and political power of a Jamaica’s elite class, but he was not yet a legitimate member of their circle.

Morgan’s raids on Portobello, Maracaibo, and Panama were brilliant military feats, but they were exercises in plunder. While privateers may not have faced the gallows for their actions, members of high society considered them little better than pirates. Sir Thomas Lynch, the biggest ally of the planter class, was appalled to find that Sir Henry Morgan was to be his replacement. He wrote in a letter to England’s secretary of state, “Here’s non, ever thought it

²⁰⁷ Coventry to Vaughn, June 8, 1676. In Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 158. Coventry is referring to Algiers as the home of the Barbary Corsairs, an Islamic group of pirates operating out of North Africa.

²⁰⁸ Sir Thomas Modyford to Admiral Henry Morgan, “Instructions for Admiral Henry Morgan,” July 2, 1670, C.O. 1/25, no 46.

possible his Majesty should send the Admirall of the Pryvateers to governe this Island.”²⁰⁹ The planter class was unwilling to accept Morgan as one of their own, especially after reports of brutality and dishonesty on his voyages began to circulate. While Jamaica’s lower classes, and bureaucrats may have been comfortable with Morgan’s new status, the island’s highest levels of society did not.

Having someone like Morgan hold high political office in Jamaica had brought what Jamaican planters considered the wrong sort of resident to the island. Wealthy and socially elite sugar planters did not want to reside in the “Sodom of the New World.”²¹⁰ As Richard Dunn argues, sugar planters were no strangers to barbarous acts. They “exploited their black and Indian slaves more shamelessly than was possible with the unprivileged laboring class in Western Europe.”²¹¹ However cruelly planters may have treated their slaves and indentured servants, this type of exploitation represented a socially acceptable form of violence in the 17th century. Piracy did not.

Morgan fought like a pirate, and looted like a pirate. While his letter of marque prevented him from hanging like a pirate, it did not gain him entrance into Jamaica’s elite planter class. As late as 1683, Sir Thomas Lynch would describe Sir Henry Morgan and his associates as “that little drunken silly party of Sir H. Morgan’s.”²¹² This statement was representative of many planters’ feelings about Morgan and his buccaneer companions. Gaining entrance into this class

²⁰⁹ Lynch to Secretary Arlington, Sept. 23, 1674, Coventry Papers, LXXIV, 19. In Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 157.

²¹⁰ Burgess, *The Pirates’ Pact*, 45.

²¹¹ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 12.

²¹² Lynch to the Lords of Trade, Nov. 2, 1683, C.O. 138/4/181. In Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 159.

would take years of political service and personal re-branding on Morgan's part. Although he would never fully enter the ranks of Jamaica's elite, Morgan would make tremendous inroads during his time as Lieutenant governor. Despite achieving great wealth and political power, Morgan's reputation as a buccaneer would follow (and at times lead him) to his grave.²¹³

²¹³ Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, 55.

CHAPTER THREE: A KNIGHT IN THE “SODOM OF THE NEW WORLD”²¹⁴

Upon his return to Jamaica, Sir Henry Morgan possessed a title of nobility, the rank of Admiral in the Royal Navy, and the position of Lieutenant Governor of Jamaica. Despite these titles, the Jamaican planter class did not accept him as part of Jamaica’s social elite. This was due to a number of factors, first among them, constant infighting between Jamaica’s planters and the buccaneers who used the island as a base of operations. Jamaica’s planters and buccaneers had two different ideas about the way in which the colony should develop. Planters wanted a stable settler colony like the English had established in Barbados. This would allow the sugar interest to establish large plantations with a stable labor force that was not subject to the distractions of the buccaneer lifestyle.²¹⁵

The buccaneers, or privateers, as many called them by this point, wanted Port Royal to remain a haven for those who sought to raid the Spanish Empire. Under Governor Sir Thomas Modyford’s administration, they got their wish. Raids, such as those that Admiral Henry Morgan led, often sailed under letters of marque from Modyford’s Jamaican government. They recruited men in Port Royal’s taverns, and on Jamaica’s plantations.²¹⁶ Many buccaneer leaders owned small plantations, yet most existed on the bottom rungs of Caribbean society. Although many buccaneer leaders owned small plantations, most buccaneers existed on the bottom rungs of Caribbean society.²¹⁷ Exquemelin shares an anecdote of a buccaneer paying five hundred pieces

²¹⁴ Burgess, *The Pirates’ Pact*, 45.

²¹⁵ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 46, 150.

²¹⁶ Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean*, 165.

²¹⁷ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 150.

of eight to a prostitute in a night of merry making, then having to indenture himself to a tavern owner within a week.²¹⁸

This incident illustrates the riches to rags existence of many buccaneers. The buccaneers (and particularly Sir Henry Morgan) practiced their beliefs in “a short life and a merry one.”²¹⁹ The buccaneer lifestyle was not compatible with the way Jamaica’s planters wanted the island to develop. These differences contributed to an unbridgeable gulf between the planter and buccaneer interests in mid to late 17th century Jamaican political and social life. Individuals who did not engage in buccaneering, or in the many businesses associated with buccaneering, sought to end the practice. Those who were actively involved in raiding the Spanish Main, and who profited indirectly from this practice, desired Jamaica to remain friendly to the buccaneers.

Richard Dunn described Sir Henry Morgan as being the most famous of the Caribbean’s 17th century residents, yet he likened this statement to declaring Al Capone the most famous American of the 20th century.²²⁰ This comparison clarifies the difficulties that Morgan experienced in becoming a part of Jamaica’s highest social class. Dunn sees economics as the source of “a bitter internecine struggle for control of the island.”²²¹ He sees Morgan as the leader of one side of this struggle, and men like Sir Thomas Lynch as leading the other. Economic interests certainly represented a major point of contention in the struggle between planters and buccaneers over control of late 17th century Jamaica. However, social class and legitimacy were also key causes of this factional dispute.

²¹⁸ Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 82.

²¹⁹ Captain Charles Johnson [Daniel Defoe], *A General History of the Pyrates*, ed. Manuel Schonhorn (1724-1728; reprint Columbia, S.C., 1972), 224.

²²⁰ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, xv.

²²¹ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 150.

Sugar planters that did not engage in buccaneering certainly had much to lose from those that engaged in raiding the Spanish Empire. The threat of violence between English and Spanish vessels severely curtailed opportunities, albeit illicit, for commerce between Jamaica and Spanish colonies. Bayamo, the same coastal town in Cuba where buccaneers captured Spanish turtle fisherman, stands as a prime example of this idea. Bayamo was a major hub of illicit trade between the English and Spanish from 1600 until nearly 1750. It is no coincidence that trade between the English and Spanish at Bayamo increased after Jamaica ceased being a major buccaneering haven in the 18th century. During the buccaneers' heyday, the raiders would often take Spanish turtle fishermen prisoner off of this island to help supply meat for long voyages.²²² After the buccaneers ceased being a major force in the Caribbean, illicit trade between Bayamo and the English empire increased. Individuals who were not afraid of becoming prisoners aboard a buccaneering vessel were much more likely to engage in shady trade with outsiders.²²³

The decrease in privateering commissions issued after 1671 also contributed to the shift to a monoculture economy in Jamaica. Dunn points out that between 1671 and 1684, over forty Jamaican plantations switched from raising indigo, cacao, or provisions, to raising sugar while only two planters moved away from sugar cultivation.²²⁴ He attributes this dramatic shift toward sugar production to greater availability of labor. Dunn argues that an increase in available labor occurred due to the decrease in letters of marque issued by Jamaica's government after 1671. He also argues that Jamaica imported an average of 1500 slaves per year during this period and that

²²² Exquemelin, *The Buccaneers of America*, 73.

²²³ Louis A. Pérez, Jr., *Cuba: Between Reform and Revolution*, 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 1995), 40.

²²⁴ "Plantation Jamaica, 1684," Charles Bochat and Humphrey Knollys, A New and Exact Map of Jamaica (London, 1684) in Bridenbaugh and Bridenbaugh, *No Peace Beyond the Line*, center illustrations.

most of this labor went to the sugar plantations.²²⁵ It is no coincidence that this dramatic shift in sugar planting occurred in the same year that buccaneering began to dwindle in Jamaica. With fewer opportunities to engage in legal raids against the Spanish, Jamaica's buccaneer population began to drift toward employment ashore, or as pirates.

What Dunn does not take into account is the fact that many individuals in Jamaica participated in buccaneering (or benefitted from the enterprise) while engaging in planting sugar. After his 1668 raid against Portobello, Sir Henry Morgan also purchased a large sugar plantation. He owned 122 slaves and two sugar estates in St. Mary Parish. Many of his buccaneering comrades owned small to medium-sized sugar estates. The buccaneers' greatest patron, Sir Thomas Modyford, was also a major planter. He and his immediate family owned 22 parcels of land amounting to over 21,000 acres of Jamaican soil. Additionally, the Governor owned over 400 slaves.²²⁶ By Dunn's own reckoning, both Morgan and Modyford qualified as major sugar planters.²²⁷ This illustrates a significant overlap between the sugar interest and buccaneering interest.

Although many buccaneers were also sugar planters, the two groups did not share the same economic concerns. This came about because of a 17th century version of de-gentrification. Dunn does acknowledge that the goal of many Jamaican planters was to leave the island and return to England as rich men. However, he attributes this to economic push factors as well as an inhospitable climate and rampant disease. An additional push factor causing Jamaica's planters to leave the island in droves was the less than desirable buccaneer population that inhabited the

²²⁵ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 171.

²²⁶ "Index to Jamaica Land Patents", 1661-1826, File 1 B/11, Jamaica Archives, Spanish Town. In Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 154.

²²⁷ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 154.

island's capital. Many upper class Jamaicans did not wish to live in an island whose capital was known as the "Sodom of the New World."²²⁸ Planters who engaged in buccaneering and those who did not had similar economic needs. They required a stable labor force, a secure market for their agricultural products, and military protection for their plantations.²²⁹ The buccaneers' presence in Port Royal provided indirect security from foreign invasion, but challenged the planters' labor market and their ability to engage in illicit trade with the Spanish Empire. Economics certainly represented important in an individual's decision to oppose or support the buccaneering interest, but most Jamaicans based their political affiliations upon whether or not they personally participated in raiding the Spanish Empire.

Sir Thomas Modyford's alliance with the buccaneers, beginning in the 1660s, proved very profitable for the city's merchants. However, these new inhabitants made Jamaica, an already difficult frontier land, an even less desirable place for the sugar planters to live. In 1670, John Style, a wealthy planter, commented that, "The number of tippling houses is now doubly increased."²³⁰ These included, as the Bridenbaugh's argued, "more than 100 licensed establishments, besides sugarworks and rum distilleries that sell without license."²³¹ While individuals like Sir Henry Morgan and his "drunken, silly party"²³² may have rejoiced that the streets of Port Royal flowed with liquor, many planters shared Style's misgivings about the way

²²⁸ Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, 45.

²²⁹ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 46, 150.

²³⁰ PRO: C.O. 324/1 fols. 253-258. In Bridenbaugh and Bridenbaugh, *No Peace Beyond the Line*, 314. A "tippling house" is a period term for a drinking establishment.

²³¹ Bridenbaugh and Bridenbaugh, *No Peace Beyond the Line*, 314. "Port Royal, Jamaica, Before and After the Earthquake of 1692", Patrick Browne, "A New Map of Jamaica," (London, 1775). In Bridenbaugh and Bridenbaugh, *No Peace Beyond the Line*, center illustrations.

²³² Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, 45.

Port Royal was developing. Individuals that supported the planter interest, like Lord Vaughn and Sir Thomas Lynch, also did not appreciate the way in which Port Royal was developing. They wanted to live in style rather than in city of brothels and barrooms.

When Port Royal literally vanished into the sea following the devastating 1692 earthquake, the London press marked the event as “a Dreadful Warning to the Sleepy World: Or, God’s heavy judgments shewed on a Sinful People.”²³³ John Pike, a Jamaican Quaker wrote a letter home to his brother saying, “Great men who were so swallowed up with pride, that a man could not be admitted to speak with them, and women whose top-knots seemed to reach the clouds, now lie stinking upon the water, and are made meat for fish and fowls of the air.”²³⁴ Statements such as these illustrate the contempt with which many Englishmen, in Europe and in the Caribbean, viewed Port Royal. Religious men like Pike equated Port Royal’s destruction as divine retribution against the new Sodom. Just as God had destroyed the original Sodom in Genesis, he had reached down and smote Port Royal.²³⁵

To many observers, Port Royal had received its just fate. The response to Port Royal’s destruction throughout the English Empire makes it easier to understand Henry Morgan’s difficulties in entering Jamaica’s upper social class. Although Morgan had little to do with the physical design of Port Royal, he and Sir Thomas Modyford were the co-architects of the city’s soul (or lack thereof). Modyford’s tombstone reads, “Mistake not, reader For hear not only lies

²³³ “A London Version of the Jamaican Disater of 1692, A True and Perfect Relation of that most Sad and Terrible Earthquake, at Port-Royal in Jamaica.” In Bridenbaugh and Bridenbaugh, *No Peace Beyond the Line*, center illustrations.

²³⁴ John Pike to his “Loving Brother,” June 19, 1692. In Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 187.

²³⁵ Genesis 19:23 NIV.

the body of Sir Thomas Modyford, but the life and soul of all Jamaica!”²³⁶ The pair had brought the buccaneers, whose pockets overflowed with Spanish gold, to Port Royal. The city’s brothels and taverns followed shortly, hoping to turn a tidy profit by meeting the needs of weary buccaneers. In essence, Morgan was responsible for building a new Sodom on the shores of Jamaica. Peter Earle described Jamaica’s planter class as believing that Morgan’s comrades “were pirates and should be hanged.”²³⁷ The island’s upper class held Morgan responsible for bringing the buccaneers to Port Royal and were not comfortable admitting such a man into their ranks.

The Bridenbaughs argue that after 1672, “the little port owed its riches not so much to pirates’ plunder as to the far-from-glamorous island staples and the heavy traffic in slaves.”²³⁸ Port Royal’s riches may have been a byproduct of the sugar interest, but Port Royal’s spirit was that of a buccaneer port. If Modyford represented the “soule of Jamaica”²³⁹ then Port Royal certainly was a buccaneer port. No governor had done more to entice the buccaneers to Jamaica than Modyford. Buccaneering and the alliance between Jamaica’s buccaneer community and Modyford’s colonial government reached its high point with Morgan’s Panama raid. However, the sharp decline in privateering commissions from Jamaica’s government after 1671 did not mean that the buccaneers inhabiting Port Royal immediately stopped looting and became happy freeholders and merchant seamen. These men continued to raid Spanish shipping with or without a letter of marque. Sir Henry Morgan himself ordered a number of executions for piracy during

²³⁶ Richard Robert Madden, *A Twelvemonth’s Residence in the West Indies During the Transition from Slavery to Apprenticeship* (London: James Cochran and Co. 1835), 171.

²³⁷ Earle, *The Sack of Panama*, 259.

²³⁸ Bridenbaugh and Bridenbaugh, *No Peace Beyond the Line*, 314.

²³⁹ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 159.

his time as Lieutenant Governor and as acting governor (1674-1687).²⁴⁰ These executions did not mark a return to law and order for members of Port Royal's less than legitimate inhabitants. They merely expressed a desire by the Crown, and many members of Jamaica's civil government to curtail the buccaneering community. Members of the buccaneering faction, Modyford, Morgan, and Albemarle saw buccaneering as an avenue to riches and security for Jamaica. Lynch, Vaughn and the planter faction saw the situation differently. They saw the buccaneers as an unnecessary nuisance and an obstacle to Jamaica becoming a stable settler colony like Barbados.

John Taylor, a visitor to Jamaica, gave an in-depth description of Port Royal in 1690. His travel account describes the city's architecture, businesses, and its commercial activities. Taylor remarked that "lodgings are here very deare, so that you must give six [Spanish] Dollars a Month for one Chamber reasonably furnished."²⁴¹ In Francis Hanson's 1682 description of Port Royal, he called the city, "The storehouse or treasury of the West Indies." He also remarked that, "bars and cakes of gold, wedges and pigs of silver, pistols, piece of eight [and] wrought plate" circulated with frequency in the city. Taylor's describes Port Royal as a city filled with hard specie, but only the Spanish possessed gold and silver in large quantities. Taylor even gave the price of his lodging in Spanish currency, indicating that Spanish currency circulated freely in Port Royal. The amount of gold and silver in circulation on Jamaica in 1690 reflects a society that built a significant portion of its economy around raiding the Spanish Empire with or without sanction.

²⁴⁰ Sir Henry Morgan to Sir Leoline Jenkins. March 8, 1682, Public Record Office, C.O. 1:48 no. 37.

²⁴¹ Taylor, *Multum in Parvo*, II, 509-12. In Bridenbaugh and Bridenbaugh, *No Peace Beyond the Line*, 315.

This had profound effects on Jamaica's seafaring community. Many members of Jamaica's buccaneering community had transformed from buccaneers, to privateers, to outright pirates in the years that Henry Morgan resided in the Caribbean. These individuals now raided the Spanish Empire without a letter of marque, as many did before coming to Jamaica, but now they had no connection to the cow-hunting and naval stores industries that formed the basis of buccaneer societies. Additionally, Jamaica's population of seaborne raiders now resided in an English settler colony. This destroyed the buccaneers' national identities. Unsanctioned raids by members of an national buccaneer community did not trouble the English in Jamaica, but when buccaneers made an alliance with the Jamaican colonial government, they traded their national identities for letters of marque and steady markets for their plunder. These securities had a price, however. Associating with the English Empire destroyed the middle ground between privateer and outright pirate that buccaneers occupied for most of the 17th century.

By becoming subjects of a colonial power, buccaneers resigned themselves to following that power's lead in hostility or alliance with Spain. Residing in an English settler colony Imperial alliance meant that the English government in Jamaica would consider individuals that did not refrain from raiding Spanish shipping and settlements as pirates rather than buccaneers. For the average crewman, this mattered little. Be they buccaneers or outright pirates, they would still hang for piracy if Spanish authorities caught them.²⁴² Nor did rank and file buccaneers possess the wealth necessary to enter high society in English settler colonies. However, the buccaneer's journey from sea rover to pirate caused a problem for Sir Henry Morgan and his attempted rise to social legitimacy. Since the buccaneers were no longer national, but identified

²⁴² Marx, *Pirates and Privateers of the Caribbean*, 1.

as part of the English Empire, many members of Jamaica's upper class saw him not as the man who tamed the buccaneers. The planters would later attack Morgan for his pirate-like qualities and for bringing an undesired element into Port Royal. Jamaica's large planters did not care for the buccaneers when they kept headquarters on Tortuga and Hispaniola, or when they operated under letters of marque. Planters became even less tolerant of the buccaneer community when Morgan and his new ally, Governor Christopher Monck, used an armed gang to insure that pro-buccaneer forces dominated the Jamaican parliamentary elections in 1688.²⁴³ As Dunn argues, the planter class began "retiring en masse to England in disgust"²⁴⁴ after this action. Although Jamaica's planters would eventually dominate the island's politics, they would do so as absentee owners.²⁴⁵ Morgan would never formally enter their ranks or achieve any type of legitimacy in their eyes as long as he lived. Planter supporters like Sir Thomas Lynch and Lord Vaughn would refer to him as "silly"²⁴⁶ and "unreconstructed."²⁴⁷ Morgan acted in a manner that individuals like Vaughn and Lynch thought to be unbecoming of a public officer.

Morgan and Monck were "boon companions"²⁴⁸ from the very beginning of their short relationship. Dunn describes Monck as "a profligate and irresponsible man."²⁴⁹ He and Morgan both developed a fascination with treasure hunting after one of Monck's ships found a sunken

²⁴³ C.O. 1/65/75-90 (Clarendon Parish); C.O. 137/2/142 (Port Royal). In Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 161.

²⁴⁴ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 161.

²⁴⁵ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 161.

²⁴⁶ Lynch to the Lords of Trade, Nov. 2, 1683, C.O. 138/4/181. In Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 159.

²⁴⁷ Vaughn to Sec. Coventry, May, 28, 1677, Coventry Papers, LXX, 181.: in Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 158.

²⁴⁸ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 161.

²⁴⁹ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 160.

Spanish galleon worth £50,000 off the coast of Hispaniola. Unfortunately for the buccaneering interest, both Morgan and Monck would die of alcohol induced ailments in 1688 before they could influence the island's policy in favor of the buccaneers.²⁵⁰

Defending his honor against accusations that he was a pirate had been a constant struggle for Henry Morgan and his supporters since his earliest raids as an English privateer in the 1660s. The Spanish had always considered him a pirate. In a letter to Moran during the Portobello raid, Don Augustin de Bracamonte, the President of Panama, wrote to Morgan, "I take you to be a corsair and I reply that the vassals of the King of Spain do not make treaties with inferior persons."²⁵¹ To this Morgan answered, "your letter does not deserve a reply, since you call me a corsair."²⁵² During his arrest in London, Major General Bannister, commander of Jamaica's land forces wrote to Lord Arlington on Morgan's behalf. He described Morgan as "a very well deserving person, and one of great courage."²⁵³ These were not the words Bannister would have used to describe a pirate.

After Morgan's knighthood and return to Jamaica in 1674, the direct accusations of piracy largely abated. Replacing them were remarks about his appearance and his fondness for prostitutes, gambling, and drinking.²⁵⁴ Morgan's political opponents dared not accuse a well-connected and titled man like Morgan of piracy. Rather, they attempted to brand him as a pirate based on his lifestyle. During his second term as Governor, Sir Thomas Lynch described

²⁵⁰ Sloane, MSS, 3984/283-284. In *Dunn, Sugar and Slaves*, 161.

²⁵¹ Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, 47.

²⁵² Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, 47.

²⁵³ Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, 43.

²⁵⁴ Lynch to the Lords of Trade, Nov. 2, 1683, C.O. 138/4/181. In *Dunn, Sugar and Slaves*, 159.; Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, 55.

Morgan's lifestyle as a series of "debauches which go on every night."²⁵⁵ Lynch commented that "In his drink, Sir Henry reflects on the government, swears, damns and curses most extravagantly."²⁵⁶ While heavy drinking, gambling, and sexual promiscuity were not exclusively the pursuits of pirates, Morgan's contemporaries associated them with the pirate lifestyle. Deriding Morgan for his lifestyle may have not been a direct accusation of piracy, however those who made derogatory statements about Morgan's habits did so to label Morgan as a pirate in the spirit of the law, if not by its letter.

A prime example of these new attacks came in 1676 when Governor Vaughn decided to attempt to try Sir Henry Morgan in Jamaican court under charges of "financing privateering voyages, granting illegal commissions, and engaging in secret deals with the French government on Tortuga."²⁵⁷ The crux of Vaughn's objection to Morgan as Lieutenant Governor was that Morgan acted like a pirate, and supported the buccaneering interest through means both fair and foul. The way in which Morgan contested these charges illustrates that they were not, at their core, charges of government corruption or treason, but thinly veiled accusations of piracy. Morgan appeared in court "dressed immaculately in the garb of an admiral of the fleet."²⁵⁸ He did not deny the charges against him, but dismissed his actions as necessary for the security of Jamaica. Pirates did not wear the trappings of an English admiral. Nor did they receive knighthood for services to their sovereign. Morgan understood the nature of the charges against him, and answered them accordingly. A jury acquitted Morgan and his brother in law (accused of

²⁵⁵ Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, 74.

²⁵⁶ Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, 74.

²⁵⁷ Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, 73.

²⁵⁸ Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, 73.

being a co-conspirator) to the sound of cheers from the gallery. Importantly, those attending the trial represented a wide cross-section of Jamaican society. The men of the jury were all gentlemen of standing in the island, but the gallery was comprised of individuals from the all classes.²⁵⁹

In addition to defending his honor against accusations of piracy, a number of individuals attacked Morgan based on the circumstances under which Morgan entered the Caribbean. Most famous among these individuals was Alexander Exquemelin, the author of *The Buccaneers of America*. Exquemelin's work leveled a number of attacks against Morgan. The narrative claims that Morgan was guilty of a number of atrocities, including rape, infanticide, torture, and desecration of churches during his raids against Portobello, Maracaibo, and Panama. Perhaps most damaging to Morgan's good name was the accusation that Morgan had entered the Caribbean as an indentured servant. This was a complete falsehood. Most historians agree that Morgan was born to a farming family in Wales in the 1630s, and entered the Caribbean as part of an expedition launched by General William Penn and Admiral Robert Venables.²⁶⁰ In 1685, Morgan would sue Thomas Malthus, one of the publishers of Exquemelin's work, for libel.

William Croke, another of Exquemelin's publishers, was not mentioned in the suit and settled out of court, agreeing to print a retraction. The settlement that Morgan reached with Croke, and the judgment against Malthus each speak volumes about Morgan's motives in protecting his good name. In the complaint against Malthus, John Greene, Morgan's attorney in

²⁵⁹ Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*. 73.

²⁶⁰ Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, 56.; Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 152.; Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, 53. A notable exception to this consensus is found in Bridenbaugh and Bridenbaugh, *No Peace Beyond the Line*, 110. They argue that Morgan was an indentured servant when he entered the Caribbean.

London, requested £10,000 damages. Morgan only received a judgment of £200 in damages plus expenses from Malthus.²⁶¹ At the *coram rege* hearing, Green offered an interesting defense of the Morgan family, arguing that,

against all evil deeds, piracies, etc., [the Morgan family] had the abhorrence and disgust, and that in the West Indies there are such thieves pirates, called ‘buccaneers,’ who subsist by piracy, depredation and evil all kinds without lawful authority, that of these people Henry Morgan and still has hatred.²⁶²

Greene’s defense described quite a different Henry Morgan from the one who claimed to “abhor bloodshed”²⁶³ after reluctantly hanging three convicted pirates. It also failed to note that Morgan’s carried the title admiral of buccaneers. This was an intriguing title for a man who claimed hatred for the group.

Although Morgan won the case against Malthus, the court did not require the publisher to print a retraction. Malthus did not do so, and never printed another version of Exquemelin’s work.²⁶⁴ Crooke, on the other hand, settled with Morgan out of court. He printed an apology immediately following his settlement with Morgan. In future editions of Exquemelin, Crooke included an introduction that gave specific page numbers where he believed Exquemelin to be in error. Crooke’s introduction also claimed that he, “never had in mind, the least intention or design, either of reflecting, or aspersing of him, or any other Person whatsoever, named in that

²⁶¹ Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, 53.; *Morgan vs Malthus*, Coram Rege Roll King’s Bench, No. 2041, m. 526, Easter Term, I James II.; Crookshank, *The Life of Sir Henry Morgan*, 377.

²⁶² Frohock, *Buccaneers and Privateers*, 65.

²⁶³ Sir Henry Morgan to Sir Leoline Jenkins. March 8, 1682, Public Record Office, C.O. 1:48 no. 37.

²⁶⁴ Frohock, *Buccaneers and Privateers*, 65.

history.”²⁶⁵ The language of Crooke’s retraction and the introduction shows that he had the utmost respect for Morgan and his “heroik actions.”²⁶⁶

The fact that Morgan did not pursue damages against Crooke, who printed a retraction, illustrates that Morgan was not interested in financial compensation, but in having Exquemelin’s publishers retract the libelous statements and having a court of law refute Exquemelin’s claim that Morgan was once an indentured servant. Charles Hatton wrote that after Morgan’s lawsuit, “History of ye Buccaneers wase looked upon as fabulous and sold for noe more then wast paper.”²⁶⁷ While Morgan’s libel suit may have vindicated his good name in the 17th century, Hatton’s assertion was a gross overstatement. The first English editions of Exquemelin’s libelous work continue to circulate to this day and were readily available when Hatton wrote of their worthlessness.

In 1695, William Whitwood and Anthony Feldham published an exact copy of Crooke’s second edition without his introduction. This gave their readers no indication that Crooke had retracted certain passages. As David Cordingly points out, “earlier editions continued to circulate are still quoted today in many histories of piracy.”²⁶⁸ It is not certain if Whitwood and Feldham were truly ignorant of Morgan’s libel suit, or if they merely felt safe from prosecution because

²⁶⁵ For a description of Crooke’s apology and the introduction to his second edition of Exquemelin see Frohock, *Buccaneers and Privateers*, 66, 73. The original apology no longer exists, but it is quoted in full in Francis Russell Hart, *Admirals of the Caribbean* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin and Co., 1922), 93-99.

²⁶⁶ Frohock, *Buccaneers and Privateers*, 66.

²⁶⁷ *Correspondence of the Family of Hatton, Being Chiefly Letters Adressed to Christopher First Viscount Hatton A.D. 1601-1704*, ed. Edward Maunde Thompson, 2 vols. (1878 ; rpt. New York: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1965), vol. 2, 225.

²⁶⁸ Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, 53.

Morgan had died in 1688.²⁶⁹ For Morgan's part, he flatly denied Exquemelin's accusations, saying that he "never was a servant to anyone in his life, unless to his Majesty."²⁷⁰ Even when defending himself against accusations that had nothing to do with piracy, Morgan felt the need to structure his defense in terms that reflected his actions against the Spanish as service to the English Crown rather than piracy.

Another marker of low status plagued Morgan throughout his life. The man who planned the brilliant assaults on Portobello, Maracaibo, and Panama gained celebrity status in Jamaica and England, and charmed Charles II himself was functionally illiterate. In a letter to his friend Sir Leoline Jenkins, Morgan admitted "I have been much more used to the pike than the book."²⁷¹ When discussing Morgan's 1676 trial for treason, David Burgess remarked that, "Evidence was almost embarrassingly easy to obtain. Morgan cheerfully signed his name to all manner of dubious documents; one sometimes gets the impression he never read them."²⁷² Sir Henry Morgan was a man out of his league. While he may have had the trappings of Jamaican high society: title, wealth, and political power, he did not fit in this circle.

On August 25, 1688, the man that David Cordingly referred to as "the greatest of the buccaneers"²⁷³ died. As Cordingly notes, a number of important individuals in Jamaica paid homage to the swashbuckler's premature (if self-inflicted) demise. The Duke of Albemarle, governor of Jamaica and Morgan's longtime patron, ordered that Morgan receive a state funeral.

²⁶⁹ Frohock, *Buccaneers and Privateers*, 66.

²⁷⁰ Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, 53.

²⁷¹ Sir Henry Morgan to Sir Leoline Jenkins. March 8, 1682, Public Record Office, C.O. 1:48 no. 37.

²⁷² Burgess, *The Pirates' Pact*, 73.

²⁷³ Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, 45.

The captain of HMS *Assistance*, a royal navy frigate moored in Port Royal noted Morgan's death in the ship's log. After Morgan's funeral, HMS *Assistance* and HMS *Drake* both fired salutes honoring Morgan. Port Royal's harbor battery, named after Morgan,²⁷⁴ and the guns of every merchant vessel in the city soon joined *Drake* and *Assistance* in bidding farewell to Jamaica's most infamous resident.²⁷⁵ This exemplifies the degree to which Morgan had earned the admiration of both Jamaica's upper and lower classes. For the seafaring men of Port Royal, Morgan's death marked the end of an era. His meteoric rise to wealth, high political office, and titled nobility was the standard to which many buccaneers aspired. It is fitting that HMS *Drake* was one of the ships that fired a salute honoring Morgan's after his funeral. Morgan was the successor to Sir Francis Drake's legacy of plundering the Spanish Empire in the Caribbean to climb the English Empire's social, political, and economic ladders. To the rank and file buccaneer, and many small Jamaican planters, Sir Henry Morgan's life represented the opportunities (limited as they may have been) for political, social, and economic mobility that the Caribbean made available to individuals of all classes.

Morgan achieved greater social acceptance in death than during his life. As his body lay in state at the King's house in Port Royal, many of Jamaica's upper class paid homage to him. His funeral took place at St. Peter's Church, a building to which Morgan had been a major benefactor.²⁷⁶ This was not the funeral of a pirate, nor final the sendoff of a buccaneer. In death, Sir Henry Morgan found his place as an English knight, an admiral of the Royal Navy, and a major player in Jamaican politics.

²⁷⁴ Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, 45.

²⁷⁵ Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, 42.

²⁷⁶ Cordingly, *Under the Black Flag*, 42.

Within four years of Morgan's passing, Jamaica would lose most of its buccaneer identity. Morgan and Albemarle's deaths in 1688, the lobbying efforts of absentee planters at Whitehall, and the disastrous 1692 earthquake that destroyed Port Royal served to turn Jamaica into England's premier sugar colony. As Richard Dunn argues, "When the buccaneers' playground literally vanished in 1692, no one could doubt that sugar was king."²⁷⁷ Opportunities for social and economic mobility in the Caribbean would vanish along with the buccaneer lifestyle. The vast majority of individuals with major estates in Jamaica during the 18th century got their start on the island within the first decade of English settlement. Dunn describes individuals who staked claims on the island in the 1670s as "relative latecomers."²⁷⁸ Those who did come to Jamaica after 1692, largely did so against their will. Just as slaves constituted the majority of immigrants to the Caribbean during this period, absentee planters constituted most of the land-owning class. The opportunity to advance oneself "beyond the line"²⁷⁹ disappeared with the city of Port Royal.

As for the buccaneers, they would scatter to the winds. Many French-speaking buccaneers would return to Hispaniola and Tortuga and continue their actions under the French government's protection. Others would work as crewmen aboard English merchant vessels. Many would continue to raid Spanish shipping as just as they had in the past, only now without the protections and veil of legitimacy that a letter of marque provided. These individuals would form the ranks of pirates during what Marcus Rediker called the second generation of piracy's

²⁷⁷ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 187.

²⁷⁸ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 176.

²⁷⁹ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 12.

“golden age.”²⁸⁰ Rediker refers to Morgan’s generation (the first of the golden age) as that of the “Protestant Sea Dogs,”²⁸¹ and remarks that profit, Protestantism, and the pirate lifestyle may have motivated men like Morgan, but that they acted, at least in the guise of nationalism. This was not the case for the second generation of pirates in the golden age. This multi-ethnic group of raiders typically showed no preference to what nation’s shipping they raided. Furthermore, the second generation of piracy during the golden age owed its existence to the triumph of the sugar interest in Jamaica over the buccaneers.

Just as Jamaican governor Thomas D’Oyley feared in 1661, eliminating letters of marque merely pushed the buccaneers into outright piracy and gave them no reason to spare English ships from their raids. As in D’Oyley’s time, the decision to enforce peace with Spain “enraged the populacy”²⁸² and caused many men to go on the account.²⁸³ In 1722, Royal Navy surgeon John Atkins described the transition from privateer to pirate as going from “plundering for others, to do[ing] it for themselves.”²⁸⁴ This was precisely the case in the Caribbean after Port Royal ceased being a haven for the buccaneers. Once the ability for social and economic mobility through privateering ventures against the Spanish Empire disappeared, individuals who had “lived solely on spoil and depredations” began to raid shipping bearing any flag. The “queen’s pirates”²⁸⁵ of the Elizabethan Era would be replaced by the “villains of all nations”²⁸⁶

²⁸⁰ Rediker, *Villains of All Nations*, 8-9.

²⁸¹ Rediker, *Villains of All Nations*, 8-9.

²⁸² Burgess, *The Pirates’ Pact*, 48.

²⁸³ This is a period term for engaging in piracy. Rediker, *Villains of all Nations*, 43.

²⁸⁴ Rediker, *Villains of All Nations*, 46.

²⁸⁵ Karse, *The Age of Piracy*, 15.

²⁸⁶ Rediker, *Villians of All Nations*, 176.

that would dominate the golden age of piracy. Sir Henry Morgan did not live to see the full extent of this transformation, but it had profound effects upon his life and attempts at social mobility. Engaging in raids against the Spanish Empire catapulted Henry Morgan to high political office and a title of nobility. However, the fact that the individuals who participated in those raids later became pirates prevented Morgan from fully integrating into Jamaica's planter class.

EPILOGUE: ENJOY HISTORY RESPONSIBLY

During his lifetime, Sir Henry Morgan used carefully orchestrated acts of violence to climb the English social, political, and economic ladder. His raids against the Spanish Main helped bring a large buccaneer community into the English Empire. While his later life was less bloody than his time as a buccaneer and privateer, it was no less combative. Jamaican sugar planters replaced Spanish soldiers and sailors as Morgan's primary enemies, and attempts at character assassination took the place of direct attempts on his life. The man Dudley Pope referred to as "the buccaneer king"²⁸⁷ was out of his element as a knight in Jamaica. Although Morgan had the physical and legal trappings of Jamaica's planter aristocracy, he did not truly belong to this group. Morgan's formal title of nobility, sizeable land holdings, and high political offices meant little to a group of people who considered him responsible for Port Royal's seedy reputation.

Despite Morgan's strained relationship with Jamaica's planters, it is important to remember that the former buccaneer made great strides in economic, social, and political mobility. His innovative actions against the Spanish Empire branded Morgan a national icon. Even while officially being under arrest, Morgan toured London as a celebrity. The English capital's upper and lower classes, and even Charles II himself, treated Morgan as a conquering hero. Morgan's reception in London was not a quickly passing curiosity, but a two-year outpouring of popular support that culminated in his knighthood. Although Morgan did not achieve the levels of social mobility that he desired, his represents the opportunities for social, political, and economic advancement that life in the 17th century Caribbean offered individuals of all classes.

²⁸⁷ Pope, *The Buccaneer King*.

It is important to understand the ways in which Henry Morgan's life illustrates social mobility in the seventeenth-century Caribbean largely because of the way today's popular culture portrays Morgan. Most people first meet Sir Henry Morgan through the brands of rum that bear his name. The fact that the Captain Morgan Facebook page has over 5 million likes illustrates this point beautifully. The 5 million individuals who liked the Captain Morgan Facebook page are only a fraction of those who view television commercials for the brand, or are exposed to Captain Morgan advertising through print media. However, the Henry Morgan on the rum bottle is a very different individual from Sir Henry Morgan, Admiral of Buccaneers, and lieutenant governor of Jamaica. The actor who portrays Henry Morgan in the television commercials for Captain Morgan rum, more closely resembles Keith Richards' portrayal of Captain Teague in Disney's *Pirates of the Caribbean* or Captain Hook than he does the available drawings of the real Henry Morgan.²⁸⁸ Captain Morgan rum's brand identity has worked to transform Sir Henry Morgan, lieutenant governor of Jamaica, into a human trademark. Not only has this advertising campaign demoted Sir Henry Morgan from admiral to captain, but from privateer to pirate. Morgan's visage presented in Captain Morgan's various advertising campaigns conjures images of Morgan's life as a buccaneer, not as the English gentleman that he envisioned himself.

These perceptions are not entirely inaccurate. During the first part of Morgan's life in the Caribbean, he represented the stereotypical swashbuckling buccaneer. Despite this, the image of Morgan that may be seen pasted on millions of rum bottles across the world do not bring their subject's story to its conclusion. Morgan saw his life as a buccaneer and a privateer as a way to achieve elevated economic and social status. He looted and pillaged Spanish cities and shipping

²⁸⁸ "Captain Morgan" Facebook Page, last modified, March 23 5, 2015, accessed March 23, 2015, <https://www.facebook.com/CaptainMorganUSA>

in an effort to transform himself into a respectable member of Jamaican society, not as an expression of his preferred lifestyle. Sir Henry Morgan was not merely a charismatic buccaneer living the short and merry life of a pirate. He was a 17th century social climber who used his ability to lead innovative military campaigns against the Spanish Empire to achieve high political office, ownership of a sugar plantation, and a title of nobility.

While it is an effective method by which to sell liquor, Captain Morgan brand's portrayal of Henry Morgan paints an incomplete picture of its subject, and of the 17th century Caribbean's porous social culture. These campaigns portray Morgan as a stereotypical pirate, when in reality, he was a buccaneer or a privateer depending on what part of his life one examines. Captain Morgan's commercials depict Henry Morgan as hard-drinking, womanizing, and living outside the rules of polite society. All of these statements could be applied to the real Morgan. However, what the commercials do not divulge is the fact that after the sack of Panama, Morgan's acts of violence and pillage led to his appointment to the English nobility, and to high political office in Jamaica. After his most famous triumph, Morgan ceased leading raids against the Spanish. He no longer needed to participate directly in the loosely sanctioned acts of violence that granted him social mobility. Morgan's exploits gained him entrance to the English nobility, a vast fortune, and high political office. After completing his climb up the social ladder, Morgan hung up his sword and pistols, but not his liquor, and left behind the swashbuckling lifestyle of a buccaneer.

It is ironic that Morgan's name is famous today because of his pirate-like tendencies, drinking, womanizing, and bold dress, when he followed this lifestyle in order to obtain upward social mobility. Popular culture obscures the fact that Sir Henry Morgan was a member of the English nobility, and held high political office. Acts of violence at sea and on land were not

Morgan's preferred lifestyle, but merely a vehicle for social, economic and political mobility in a world "beyond the line."²⁸⁹

²⁸⁹ Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves*, 11.

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