

A HISTORY OF BARBUDA UNDER THE CODRINGTONS

1738-1833

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1981

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## SYNOPSIS

Barbuda, a flat island twenty-five miles north of Antigua, had few inhabitants before the late seventeenth century. From 1684 to 1870 it was leased from the Crown by members of the Codrington family who administered it as part of their West Indian estates, by 1738 concentrated in Antigua. Barbuda's thin soil and susceptibility to drought made it unsuitable for sugar-growing, but it was developed by the Codringtons as a stock-rearing island which supplied their sugar estates and the market with meat and draught animals. This was usually the most profitable part of the economy, but the proprietor also received salvage awards from ships wrecked off the island's dangerous coasts. In addition, the Codringtons encouraged crop-growing and a miscellaneous assortment of activities which they hoped would increase their returns. The Codringtons for the period of this thesis were conscientious and usually effective absentee owners, and when there were efficient managers on Barbuda reasonable profits were made, though neither Sir William nor Sir Bethell Codrington (the two proprietors at this time) felt that they received an adequate return on their capital invested in slaves and stock.

The slave population on Barbuda is particularly interesting because there was a natural growth from 172 in 1746 to 503 in 1831, because of favourable social conditions. Succeeding generations of families therefore grew up on Barbuda developing a strong attachment to the island. Attempts made by the attorneys to utilize this increase by transferring slaves to Antigua met with little success. Opposition from the slaves themselves and an unwillingness to harm them by the proprietor meant that in the main only those who transgressed were transferred. This slave society was a relatively happy one, the only serious disturbance coming before 1746, with some restlessness after 1820.



## Acknowledgements

I wish first to express appreciation to my supervisor, Dr. R.C. Simmons, for selecting Barbuda in the first place, and for gently and persistently moving me in the right direction thereafter.

I am grateful to Mr. Brian Smith, until 1979 the Gloucestershire County Archivist, for originally pointing me to the Codrington Collection, to the present Archivist, Mr. David Smith, and to the staff at the Record Office for their unfailing helpfulness and courtesy over many years. I wish to thank the staff at the Cheltenham Public Library who have obtained many books and articles from other libraries; the Librarian of the Bodleian Library, Oxford, for allowing me to read there; the staff at Rhodes House, Oxford, and at the Public Record Office for their considerate attention at all times. I am grateful also to Sir Simon Codrington who kindly allowed me to read certain documents at Dodington, to the Librarian at the U.S.P.G., Tufton Street, London, for letting me look through their records, and to Messrs. Allen and Unwin who have allowed me to include the map of the Leeward Islands from Sir Alan Burns's History of the British West Indies.

Work of this sort is all the better for informed comment and I am especially indebted to Professor David Lowenthal who not only encouraged me but introduced me to others researching into some aspect of life on Barbuda—Dr. Colin Clarke, Dr. David Harris, and Dr. Riva Berleant-Schiller—who have all generously shared their knowledge with me. Dr. Clarke has also very kindly allowed me to reproduce the copy of the map of Barbuda, made by the Department of Geography at Liverpool University. Dr. D. Watters has very generously given me detailed information about his recent archaeological work on Barbuda.

I am grateful also to Miss Christine Baines, for mathematical advice, to Miss Margaret Barnett for help on genetics, to the late Mr. John Bayley for encouragement at a difficult time, and to Mr. V. Daykin for creating order from a messy manuscript.

This thesis could not have been started, certainly not completed, without the loyal backing of my family. I am particularly grateful to my father, the late Mr. F.P. Whiteley, who showed unfailing interest, and to my son Richard who at an early age agreed to stay to dinner at school so that I could spend complete days at the Record Office! My biggest debt, though, is to my husband whose enthusiasm for the subject has rivalled my own, and whose loving support has made the project possible.

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Abbreviations used in the Notes

GRO	Gloucestershire Records Office (Worcester Street, Gloucester, GL1 3DW). Although the records are no longer there, the GRO catalogue references are still useful as there are micro-film copies of most of the documents. The correspondence and accounts for the period of this thesis have all been put on micro-film, but unfortunately not the estate papers or legal documents.
MF375	Micro-film 375. This is the film made by Robson Lowe in the 1950s of the correspondence he bought from Sir Christopher Codrington. There is a copy at the GRO.
W.C.	Sir William Codrington (II).
C.B.C.	Christopher Bethell Codrington. Although he did not assume the name Bethell until 1797 (when he inherited the Bethell estates from an uncle) he is referred to in the notes of this thesis as C.B.C. in order to avoid confusion with the other three Christopher Codringtons.
S.P.G.	Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.
PRO	Public Record Office.

## INTRODUCTION

Barbuda is a little known island lying about twenty-five miles due north of Antigua. It does not appear likely, at first sight, to offer anything of value to the student of eighteenth and nineteenth century Caribbean history as it was not a sugar island, was not of great strategic importance, and the population only slightly exceeded five hundred in 1831. A study of its history might be thought to have only antiquarian value; of interest in itself but not of any greater significance.

This, however, is not an accurate assessment. Barbuda was in fact part of the Caribbean possessions of the Codrington family who owned extensive sugar estates on Antigua. It was an integral part of these estates, attorneys in Antigua supervising Barbuda as well as the sugar plantations. Barbuda provided the Antiguan properties with livestock, ground provisions, and estate supplies generally, and received clothing, some food and other necessities from Antigua. There was frequent communication between the islands and some interchange of the slave populations. The link with the sugar plantations owned by the Codringtons prevented Barbuda from becoming an isolated outpost, untouched by general events in the Caribbean.

Even without the close connection with these estates, however, Barbuda's history would still have some significance. The islands that were used for sugar-growing have received most attention from historians because their wealth made

them more important politically and internationally, but for a true picture of the Caribbean attention must also be given to the islands where sugar was not grown. Barbuda is a good example of an island of this sort.

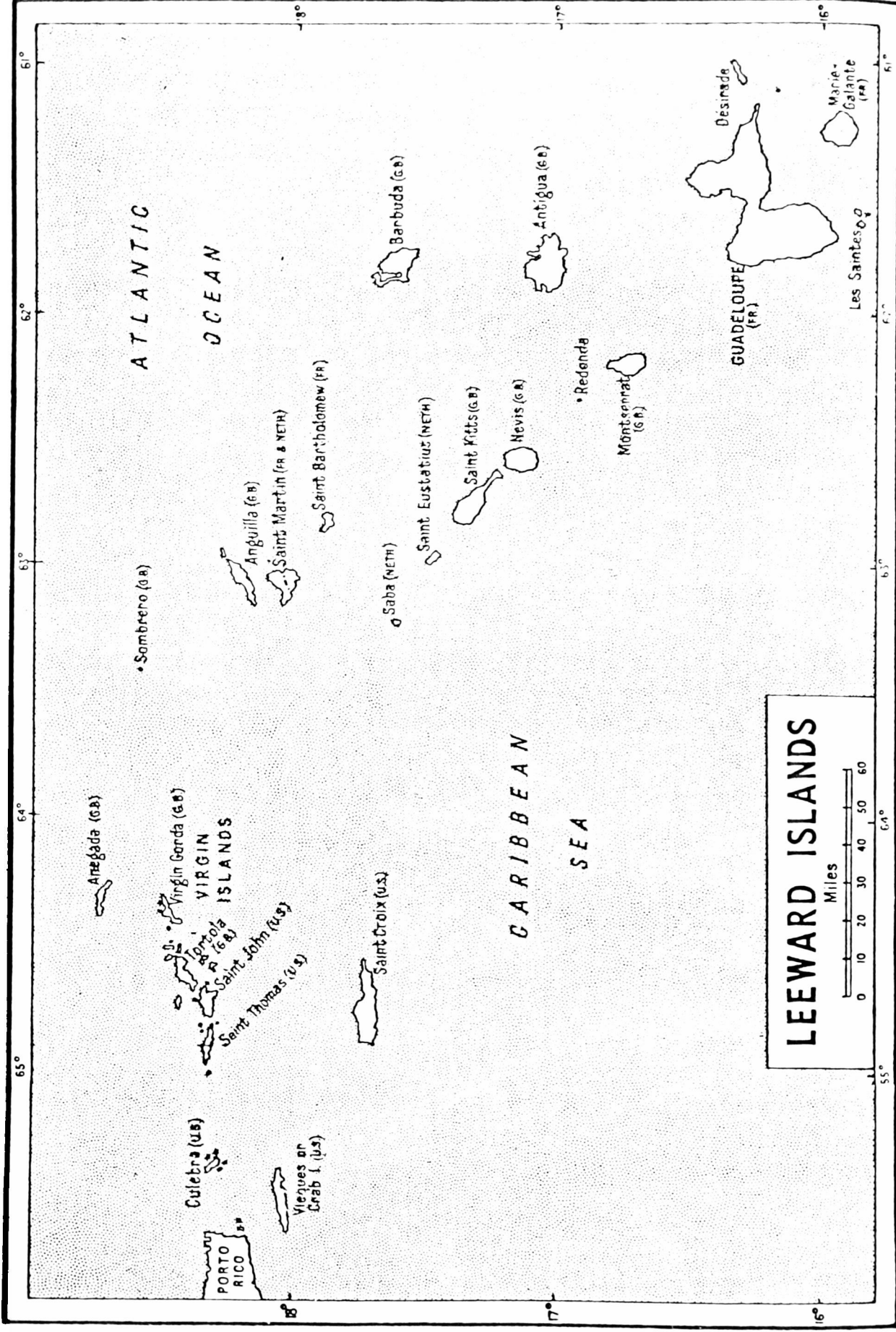
The economy was based on the rearing of livestock, but crops and crafts of various types were also tried and a not inconsiderable sum was made from ships wrecked on the dangerous reefs round Barbuda. The fact that a profit could be made from such an assortment of economic projects indicates some degree of administrative skill on the part of the proprietor and his attorneys, particularly as the Codringtons at this time were absentees.

Probably the most interesting aspect of Barbudan life for the historian, however, is the slave society there. Although there were some transfers and purchases of slaves for the island these were few in number and, in the main, the slaves on Barbuda in 1833 were descended from those on the island in 1761 and in some cases before that. This continuity, which is unusual in the Caribbean, enables one to trace the lives of some individual slaves from birth to death, and some families over several generations. In two cases, at least, it is possible to give a reasonably detailed picture of the life of an individual slave. The slave population of Barbuda, however, is also of special interest because it increased naturally, without significant purchases, from 172 in 1746 to 503 in 1831, at a time when the owners of sugar estates had to buy slaves in large numbers just to maintain the population. Barbuda was not the only island in the Caribbean to achieve this, but an increase of this sort is sufficiently unusual to be worthy of attention.

The dates chosen for this study require some explanation. The year 1833, the last full year before the slaves achieved emancipation, is an obvious one for concluding an account of an island under slavery: the year 1738 is a less immediately clear starting point. In that year, however, Sir William Codrington (I) died and his son William (II) inherited the estates as a minor. Because of this and as there are few records for the period of the first Sir William's administration, the year 1738 is a good place at which to begin.

The student of Barbuda's history is particularly fortunate in the wealth of documents available. About thirty years ago, Robson Lowe, the stamp-dealer, bought some of the correspondence, which is now available on a micro-film; it contains copies of more than five hundred documents, though not all relating to Barbuda. The bulk of the material, however, consists of diaries, correspondence, accounts, instructions to attorneys and memoranda which were deposited at the Gloucester Record Office until October 1980. Unfortunately in December 1980 Sir Simon Codrington sold the collection by auction, and the new owner's name has still not been disclosed (March 1981). The total information about the island is so detailed that Professor Lowenthal and Dr. Clarke believe 'the surviving manuscript sources for Barbuda during this period, in proportion to its population, may be more voluminous than for any other West Indian territory.'<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> David Lowenthal and Colin G. Clarke, 'Slave-Breeding in Barbuda: the Past of a Negro Myth', Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences, CCXCII (June 1977), 512.





## Chapter 1

### GEOGRAPHICAL AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF BARBUDA

#### I Geographical Background

'It resembles no Island I have seen in the W.I. . . . [It] appears to be a dead flat from the Sea it is like a vast extended bank of sand covered with bushes.'<sup>1</sup> This was how Barbuda appeared to a visitor in the 1780s. To those familiar with other islands, especially those of the volcanic inner Leewards, Barbuda must certainly have appeared unusual, but it is not, in fact, unique. It is one of the three islands of the outer Leewards and has features in common with the other two—Antigua and Anguilla—and with the other flat islands which stretch in an arc from eastern Guadeloupe and its dependencies in the south, to Anegada in the north.<sup>2</sup>

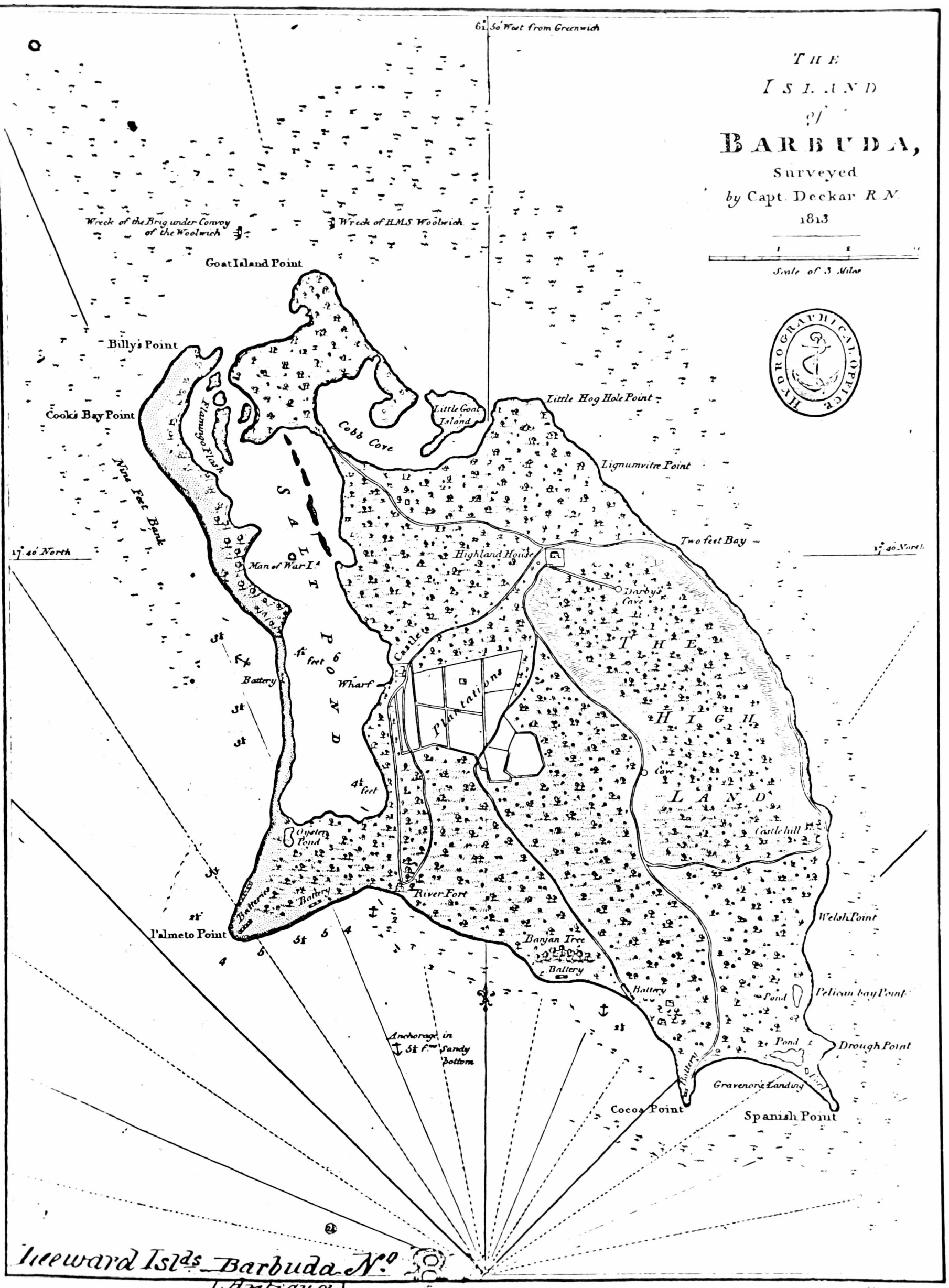
The three outer Leeward islands are frequently referred to as the 'Limestone Caribees'. All three have an annual average temperature of 80°F and, like the other islands in the Lesser Antilles, feel the effects of the easterly trade winds throughout the year. Of the three, Antigua is not only the largest (108 square miles, Barbuda 62 square miles and Anguilla 35 square miles), but the most fertile, and has greater variations in climate than the other two because of its mountains and hills.

Barbuda and Anguilla are very similar in appearance.

# THE ISLAND of BARBUDA,

Surveyed  
by Capt. Decker R.N.  
1813

Scale of 3 Miles



Newward Islands Barbuda N.º  
(Antigua)

Published according to the chart of Barbuda, dated 20th 1814 by Capt. Thos. D. Decker R.N. to the Admiralty

Both are low-lying and almost entirely flat coral limestone islands, such hills as there are rising to not more than about two hundred feet. This affects their climate. It means that there is less rainfall, little variation of temperature and virtually no difference between the windward and leeward coasts. In general the climate follows the typical West Indian pattern of dry months (from January to April) and wet (from August to November), the other months being transitional, with hurricanes possible in July and August. Usually about half the annual rainfall occurs in the wet season but the pattern is variable in both islands, even to the extent of there being in some years more rain in the dry season than in the wet. Both are dry islands, Barbuda having an average annual rainfall of about 38 inches and Anguilla about 45 inches. In both islands the soils are of the same types and quality, thin and infertile.

The comparison with Anguilla is useful for showing that Barbuda is not unique in appearance or geological composition. In one way, however, it is markedly different from other islands in that the surrounding coral reefs are exceptionally perilous. Some of the nearer reefs are shown on the map following page 1. Barbuda has, in fact, developed the reputation of being the most dangerous island in the West Indies for shipping to approach.<sup>3</sup> The flatness of the island and its lack of prominent landmarks on three coasts made it difficult for navigators, before the invention of radar, to locate it. The eastern coast, which has perpendicular cliffs marking the edge of Barbuda's higher land, is more easily seen, but has its own particular dangers. A coral reef, visible above the sea, lies about half to three quarters of a

mile off shore,<sup>4</sup> but a greater difficulty is created by the fact that from the sea it looks as though Barbuda's northern coast lies along the northern edge of the plateau of higher land, whereas actually the island's low-lying end and outlying coral reefs extend a further seven miles, much of the reef area being submerged.<sup>5</sup> For these reasons the West Indies Pilot today advises that sailors should exercise caution when passing to the north of Barbuda. It also describes the south side of the island as 'very dangerous' because of the submerged reefs out at sea.<sup>6</sup> These hazards caused many wrecks in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

Although it was so dangerous to approach, there were safe landings for those who knew. The safest seem to have been on the south coast where a sloop or schooner could sail along the shore within the reef in certain places.<sup>7</sup> One visitor described the water here as so clear that it was possible to see every rock and added, 'it is wonderful how they steer between under a bit of sail'.<sup>8</sup> Henry Coleridge (a nephew of the poet), however, expressed more concern when he described his visit to Barbuda in 1825. 'The coast is beset with shoals and reefs under water, and it was a matter of some anxiety to see how the vessel insinuated itself, as it were, between these rocks, a man standing on the bowsprit and giving his directions every minute to the helm.'<sup>9</sup> A landing known as River Fort, on the south coast, almost due south from the village settlement, was the one normally used, but there was another - Gravenor's Landing - near Spanish Point.<sup>10</sup> A small sloop could also sail into the lagoon from a narrow entry in the north coast, and a wharf was built on the east bank near the village.<sup>11</sup>

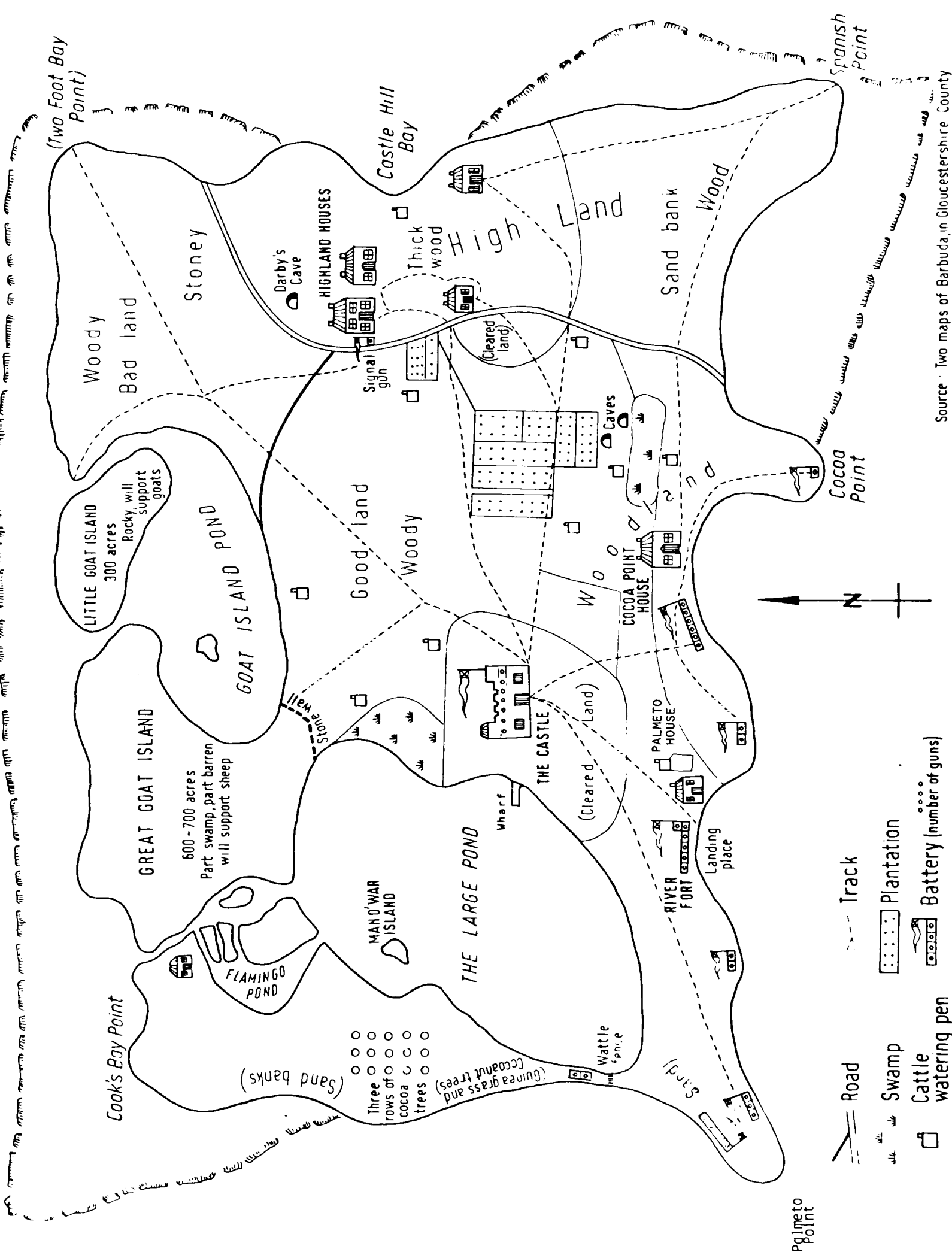
Barbuda could not have appeared an attractive proposition to early settlers. Dennis Reynolds, manager of Barbuda in the late eighteenth century, exclaimed in a letter to Sir William Codrington 'what a miserable poor place it is'.<sup>12</sup> This accords with the views of settlers a hundred years earlier who found it such 'a barren rocke' they left it.<sup>13</sup> 'A barren rocke' it must have seemed to those who tried to farm it as it consists entirely of coral limestone with only a thin layer of soil.

The interior of the island has three principal physical features. The most useful area for settlers was the flat central plain, which is low-lying, in places no more than five feet above sea-level,<sup>14</sup> flanked to the west by the lagoon which stretches almost the full length of the island, and to the east by a plateau of higher land. Here the ground rises, but only to 147 feet.<sup>15</sup> This area, known as 'the Highlands', is about five miles in length bordered by flat land to the north and south as well as to the west. Its eastern edge forms the cliffs which distinguish the east coast of Barbuda.<sup>16</sup>

It was on the central plain, near the lagoon, that the village, now known as Codrington, developed. Although there was a marshy area near the lagoon, most of the plain was covered with evergreen trees and thick undergrowth<sup>17</sup> which had to be cleared before crops could be grown. The soil, deeper here than in most other parts of the island, still only usually reached a depth of four to five inches and was not of good quality. In dry weather it cracked and became dusty, while in wet weather it flooded easily.<sup>18</sup> In this, the best, area the slaves were given their grounds and in the

# BARBUDA C 1750-1785

Reef



Source: Two maps of Barbuda in Gloucestershire County Record Office, D1610 P17. This re-drawing is based on the pencil and colour-wash map. Additional information from the pen and ink version (of identical outline) is shown here in brackets.

Approximate scale: East to West 13 miles, North to South 12 miles

late eighteenth century land was cleared for crops and pasture.

On the Highlands, in places where the ground was level, the soil was no deeper than on the plain, but there were certain depressions in which trees grew better than elsewhere.<sup>19</sup> In general, however, in the eighteenth century this was regarded as a poor area described by Reynolds as 'almost cover'd with large stones, prickly pears, Turks head and bush.'<sup>20</sup> The flat area immediately to the north of the Highlands, described succinctly on an eighteenth century map as 'bad land', supported similar plants.<sup>21</sup> To the south of the Highlands, towards Spanish Point, much of the ground was of the same type, though there were swamps in this area.

Other parts of Barbuda were either rocky (for example, Great Goat Island and Little Goat Island) supporting nothing but rather poor pasture; or sandy (like much of the area along the south coast, and to the west of the lagoon); or marshy (such as some land along the east bank of the lagoon, and another stretch in the south-east towards Spanish Point). Some crops or useful trees could be grown in places, but for the most part this type of development was only possible in the central area.

Although not of much value for growing crops, Barbuda did possess certain advantages which could be turned to account. In the early eighteenth century there was some good timber and saline flashes in some of the marshes provided salt. Turtle visited the beaches in the breeding season<sup>22</sup> and there were fish in the lagoon.<sup>23</sup> Once the island was inhabited advantage was taken of the wrecks and the Codringtons made a considerable sum from salvage awards.

However profitable these undertakings might be, though,

the real advantage of owning Barbuda lay in the possibility of its being used for rearing stock. Even in the rocky areas in the north there was grazing good enough for sheep and goats, and in other parts sufficient pasture for cattle, horses and mules. There was usually no shortage of water for stock either. In the central plain, hollows in the pastures could be used unless the weather was very dry. There were also springs, in several of the marshes, which provided brackish but drinkable water. In the eighteenth century pens were made in various places for catching the wild cattle, and these were supplied with water from wells which rarely dried up.<sup>24</sup> There was in fact usually no shortage of water for drinking. It was crop growing that suffered under drought conditions, so that fodder became very scarce. Provision could sometimes be made for this but it was often inadequate.<sup>25</sup>

From the late seventeenth century it was obviously recognized by those living in the Leewards that Barbuda could be developed as a pasture island. In 1676, Colonel Warner, writing of the advantages Antigua possessed that would be useful for a garrison, commented, 'an augmentation to these benefitts thar is barbuda and severall other small agasent islands that are only kept to breed stock which makes it a far more Plentifull place than all the other Caribe Islands.'<sup>26</sup> A hundred years later, Henri de Ponthieu, a botanist acquaintance of Sir William Codrington, who had lived a long time in the West Indies commented: 'Your island of Barbuda is to be regarded as a kind of farm producing a great deal of livestock and in that light it is undoubtedly of considerable value, particularly from its situation with respect to this Island (Antigua) which wants every thing of the kind.'<sup>27</sup> For the



owner of sugar estates on Antigua—as the Codringtons were—there were great advantages to be obtained from owning a nearby island which could be used in this way. This was expressed vividly by the manager of estates on Barbados in 1711: 'A Plantation without Stock is no more deem'd entire here than a Man without hands and Feet can be said to be whole for without Cattle we can't make Sugar, for it is produced by dung and much labour.'<sup>28</sup>

The Codringtons were particularly well placed to take full advantage of Barbuda. Their sugar estates, centring on Betty's Hope, were in the north of Antigua, near to Parham harbour which lies due south of Barbuda. So, although the journey might have its dangers the island was conveniently near. It was this which made it possible for Barbuda to become a useful addition to the Codrington estates. Under their management Barbuda was developed primarily as a pasture estate but they were not satisfied that it should be used solely for this purpose. The history of the island reveals a constant search for fresh ways of making it profitable.

## II The Historical Background of Barbuda and the Codrington Family

### (a) To 1684

The first people to settle on the Leeward Islands seem to have been the Arawak Indians, a race which came originally from South America.<sup>29</sup> They established themselves on many islands in the Caribbean and seem to have occupied Antigua by AD 600. It is possible that at some stage there was an Arawak settlement on Barbuda, but there is no conclusive proof of this.<sup>30</sup>

The Arawaks lived in small communities making a living through agriculture and fishing. They were a pleasant, somewhat indolent people and they were easy prey first for the warlike Carib Indians and then for the Spanish. By the end of the fifteenth century the Caribs had expelled them from the Leeward Islands and had established themselves in Dominica, St. Vincent, St. Lucia, and Tobago.

The Caribs, although of similar stock, and also from South America, were very different in nature. They were skilled seamen and fishermen, and fierce fighters, with a reputation for cannibalism. They specialized in the surprise attack. If they were successful they were likely to eat their male enemies and take their women into captivity. It is thus not surprising that they were feared by all European settlers, who tried to avoid the areas where the Caribs were active.

In the early seventeenth century, when the English began to found colonies in the Caribbean, they faced opposition from the Spanish and the Carib Indians, and competition from other European powers. Their successful settlements were on five islands in the more northerly part of the Lesser Antilles—St. Christopher (1624), Barbados (1627), Nevis (1628), Antigua (1632), and Montserrat (1632). These islands had not been taken by the Spanish, probably because they were small, difficult to clear for agriculture, and had neither precious metals nor large quantities of dye-woods. They may also have been put off by Carib activity in the area. This was a problem which continued to plague European settlers in the Leewards until the end of the seventeenth century.

Barbuda was probably uninhabited when English colonists began to take an interest in the Leewards. Nevertheless it

was not an easy island to settle and until the late seventeenth century their efforts met with little success. It is difficult to be sure when the first attempt was made but Barbuda seems to have been included in the lands granted to the Earl of Carlisle by Charles I in 1627. The next year the earl granted Barbuda to Thomas Littleton who tried to establish a settlement. Unfortunately Barbuda did not live up to the name—Dulcina—which the colonists gave it. Attacks on them by Carib Indians, and the barren nature of the island made them decide to leave and they went to Nevis.<sup>31</sup>

Between then and 1664 there seems to have been no official settlement but there were some inhabitants. They are referred to in the preamble to a grant of the island in 1668. According to this source, at the outbreak of the 'late war' (presumably the war with the French 1666-8) Barbuda was partly cut off by the Caribs and a few weeks later 'was wholly deserted by the remainder of the inhabitants and hath ever so continued.'<sup>32</sup> A threat that Barbuda might be taken over by the Dutch had alerted the British authorities to the need for Barbuda to be in friendly hands and in 1668 Barbuda was granted to four lessees for thirty-two years.<sup>33</sup> Settlers were to be encouraged to live there to defend the island from Carib and other attacks. They were not entirely successful in this aim. In 1681, in revenge for English action against them in Dominica in 1675, the Caribs attacked Barbuda, then being used as a stock farm for Nevis.<sup>34</sup> About twenty English people were living there, some of whom managed to make their escape while the Indians were drinking rum.<sup>35</sup>

At the time of that attack, two members of the Codrington family, Christopher and John Codrington, had already bought

out some of the lessees of Barbuda or their heirs.<sup>36</sup> In 1684, having acquired (with George Turney and Clement Tudway) the remainder of the original lease, for the whole island, they surrendered it to the Crown and applied for a new grant. This was given to Christopher and John Codrington for fifty years in 1684, the rent being 'one sufficient able horse' to be delivered at Nevis at Christmas.<sup>37</sup> The grant was renewed three times—in 1705, 1800, and 1856<sup>38</sup>—so that with the exception of a short period in the eighteenth century, when they sub-let the island,<sup>39</sup> Barbuda was controlled by the Codrington family or their trustees until 1870, when they surrendered the lease.<sup>40</sup>

(b) The Codrington Family and the History of Barbuda  
from 1684 to 1738

The Codringtons were an old Gloucestershire family owning land in the south of the county near Chipping Sodbury. Several members seem to have been of an adventurous disposition. One of the ancestors of the Caribbean Codringtons was with the first settlers in Virginia in 1606.<sup>41</sup> The first to settle in the West Indies was a second son, Christopher Codrington (I) who was one of the early colonists in Barbados. He arrived there in 1628 and eventually acquired two fertile plantations the larger of which he named after his home in Gloucestershire—Didmartons. He married the sister of Sir James Drax, a wealthy Barbadian planter, and in 1641 was appointed to the island's council.<sup>42</sup> By the time of his death in 1656 he had laid the foundations of the family's wealth in Barbados which made them one of the island élite.<sup>43</sup>

(A genealogical table of the Codringtons mentioned in this thesis will be found in Appendix I.)

One of his sons, Christopher Codrington (II), born in 1640, achieved a high position in the Barbados government while still in his twenties. He was appointed to the Barbados council at twenty-six and three years later he was made deputy Governor when the Governor, Lord Willoughby, went to England. In 1672, however, Codrington was dismissed. Although he had made reforms, the island's finances had been overstrained. As he also lost his seat on the Council he stood for the Assembly and was elected Speaker nine times between 1674 and 1682. The actions of a new Governor, Sir Richard Dutton, led Codrington, however, to leave Barbados for the Leeward Islands.<sup>44</sup> It is difficult to be certain when he acquired the Antiguan estates, but Betty's Hope (the principal plantation) was in his possession before 1696.<sup>45</sup> In the classification of gentry families in Antigua made by Professor Sheridan, the Codringtons are listed as acquiring their estates between 1690 and 1706. Of the twelve families who obtained land at this time the Codrington-Bethells are the second largest landowners. They had 1,734 acres and 799 slaves.<sup>46</sup> Christopher Codrington (II) was also still a wealthy Barbadian planter and his personal fortune stood him in good stead when he was appointed Governor-General of the Leeward Islands in 1689,<sup>47</sup> a position he held until his death in 1698.

From 1689 to 1713 (apart from a brief period of peace between 1697 and 1702) England was involved in war with France, and the English colonies in the Caribbean were vulnerable to French attacks. St. Christopher had surrendered to the French in August 1689 and it looked as though other islands might follow the same pattern. The situation was

improved by a vigorous three week campaign led by Codrington, when St. Christopher was recaptured by the English. In 1691 he attempted to conquer Guadeloupe and in 1693 Martinique.<sup>48</sup> Both attempts failed, but he has been described as about the most effective commander in the Caribbean in the seventeenth century.<sup>49</sup> It has been said, too, that his career in the Leeward Islands 'places him among the outstanding Englishmen of his generation in the New World.'<sup>50</sup>

Even so, it is probably his elder son Christopher Codrington (III) who is the most distinguished member of the family.<sup>51</sup> Born in Barbados he lived in the West Indies until the age of twelve when he was sent to England to be educated. At Oxford he became one of a brilliant circle known as the 'Christ Church wits' and in 1686 was elected a fellow of All Souls'. He was, however, not only a scholar: in 1692 he joined a military expedition to the West Indies. He returned to Oxford but left in 1694 to fight in Flanders with William III. From then until 1700 he not only took an active part in the war but joined in the literary life of London and returned to Oxford at intervals. In February 1699, after his father's death and in recognition of his own military service, he was made Governor-General of the Leeward Islands. Before departing for the West Indies he bought Dodrington, in Gloucestershire, from another member of the family. This became the family's principal English estate, as it still is today.

When war broke out again in 1702, Christopher Codrington (III) led an expedition which succeeded in driving the French once more from St. Christopher, but he was less effective against them in Guadeloupe. Like his father he attempted to

govern vigorously but he made enemies in doing so. In 1703 he became seriously ill and asked for leave. Although this was granted he found himself replaced as Governor in 1704. For a few years he remained at Betty's Hope, but in 1707 he returned to Barbados where he lived the life of a scholar until his death in 1710. In his will he left his Library and ten thousand pounds to All Souls' College, Oxford; and his two plantations in Barbados and part of Barbuda to the Society for the Propagation of the Christian Religion in foreign parts, for the establishment of a college to train medical missionaries, whom he wanted to be monks.<sup>52</sup>

This will illustrates the unusual attitude which Christopher Codrington (III) had towards his slaves. He was not opposed to slavery as an institution, but he believed that owners should treat their slaves in a better way than was customary. He had imbibed this attitude from his father. About him, Christopher Codrington (III) wrote: 'My Father who had studied ye genius and temper of all kinds of negroes forty-five years with a very nice observation, would say, noe Man deserv'd a Corramante 'yt wd not treat Him like a Friend rather than a Slave.' He commented that his father's Corramante slaves regularly visited his father's tomb and said that when they had finished working for his son they would 'come to Him and be his faithful slaves in ye other World.'<sup>53</sup> He himself had hoped to put into effect during his lifetime the ideas he incorporated in his will. He believed that the slaves should be taught Christianity by adequately qualified clergymen who would be dedicated to their work, and he preferred monks to secular clergy. His views were far in advance of his time.<sup>54</sup>

The first owners of Barbuda were, therefore, men of considerable standing and substance. After securing the lease to themselves alone in 1684, one of the brothers, John, went to Barbuda and built a castle on the east bank of the lagoon and apparently lived on the island until his death about 1688.<sup>55</sup> His half of the island then passed to his son, William, but as he was a minor it was managed for him first by his uncle, Christopher Codrington (II) and then by his cousin Christopher Codrington (III), until he came of age.<sup>56</sup> During this time Barbuda seems to have been used as a stock farm, supplying the family's estates in Antigua and Barbados with horses and cattle.<sup>57</sup> The island also served as a base for unfit slaves who were of no further use on the plantations.<sup>58</sup>

The heir to the third Christopher Codrington's estates in Antigua and to part of Barbuda was his cousin William Codrington, a young man then living in the West Indies.<sup>59</sup> His position in Barbuda was not straightforward. He had, before his uncle's death, inherited half the island through his father, and he acquired another portion<sup>60</sup> under his uncle's will. But Christopher Codrington had given parts of Barbuda to other people. During his lifetime he had given one eighth to Vavasour Cage and in his will he had left another eighth to Colonel Lambert and William Harman (jointly) and the remainder to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel.<sup>61</sup> A further complication was the fact that just before the death of Christopher Codrington, a French force attacked Barbuda. They destroyed the castle and other buildings and carried off most of the inhabitants and their slaves.<sup>62</sup>

William Codrington took decisive action over both problems.



He rebuilt the castle and restocked the island.<sup>63</sup> In 1719 there were ninety-two slaves on Barbuda (belonging to him) and twenty white servants.<sup>64</sup> The occupations of the latter indicate that the island was being used as a pasture estate as eight were employed to look after or round up animals; and there were two turtlers. Efforts were also made to grow crops. Corn, peas and cotton were grown<sup>65</sup> and in 1720 he suggested that ginger should be tried.<sup>66</sup> The cotton was spun and woven on the island and made into hammocks and quilts.<sup>67</sup> By 1717 he was in England, but between then and 1722 he wrote detailed instructions to his attorneys and the manager of Barbuda, aimed at making the island profitable.<sup>68</sup>

The other problem, that of sorting out how much of Barbuda he owned, and subsequently of establishing himself as the sole owner of the island, was not easily solved. He was successful in buying the shares which belonged to Vavasour Cage, Colonel Lambert, and William Harman, but the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel were less easy to persuade.<sup>69</sup> This was not surprising as Codrington made difficulties over the transfer of the estates in Barbados. As far as Barbuda was concerned matters were complicated by the parties not at first knowing that Christopher Codrington (III) had obtained a second grant of Barbuda to himself alone in 1705. However, although the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel might have felt that they were entitled to compensation for their share of Barbuda, William behaved as though he were the owner of the entire island.<sup>70</sup> In 1722, in order to pay off the debts and to provide portions for his younger children, the Antigua estates and Barbuda were settled on trustees, and provision was made for the sale of Barbuda if necessary

to discharge debts.<sup>71</sup> This did not happen, but a shortage of documents between 1722 and 1738 makes it difficult to establish any clear picture of events on Barbuda. Retrospective comments by employees of the Codringtons at a later date suggest that it continued to be used for stock with some crops being grown. Turtle and wrecks provided additional revenue.<sup>72</sup>

The proprietorship of William Codrington marks a transition between the earlier members of the family who lived in the West Indies and took an active part in affairs there, and the later owners who were absentees. William had been brought up in the West Indies and his letters reveal a longing to return. He even expressed a desire to retire to Barbuda and he gave instructions as to what he wanted done in preparation for this event. 'I beg yt youll have a good orange Orchard planted at Burbuda Sappordillers, grapes of all Sorts, plantings, Bonanahs Lime hedges, Lemons, tamarins, coccoe nuts for I design to end my days there, next the highlands where I designe a house one time or other.'<sup>73</sup> It is possible that he visited the West Indies again between 1722 and 1738<sup>74</sup> and he was still a member of the Antiguan council at the time of his death<sup>75</sup> but he made his home in England, at Dodington, and he established himself in English public affairs. His wife, Elizabeth Bethell, brought more wealth into the family, he was made a baronet in 1721 and became a member of Parliament for Minehead.<sup>76</sup>

The next two owners of Barbuda (whose period of proprietorship is the concern of this thesis) were both absentees. Sir William Codrington (II) inherited the estate in 1738 when he was a minor. He had made a clandestine marriage in 1735

when he was seventeen and was sent abroad when this was discovered by his family. He seems not to have returned to England until 1740.<sup>77</sup> During his minority his mother looked after the estates.

William Codrington (II) became a Member of Parliament for Beverley and later for Tewkesbury;<sup>78</sup> and he never visited the West Indies.<sup>79</sup> This, he fully realized, was a disadvantage. Despite that handicap he was a conscientious landowner who took pains to discover all he could about Barbuda. It was in answer to his many queries that Dennis Reynolds, the manager of Barbuda in the 1780s, wrote such detailed letters;<sup>80</sup> and sketchmaps were also provided for the same reason. Unfortunately, his only son, another William, proved a disappointment to him. In 1776, Sir William disinherited him after paying off debts of fifty-five thousand pounds and giving him an annuity of one thousand pounds.<sup>81</sup> When Sir William (II) died, therefore, in 1792, his heir was his nephew, Christopher Codrington, the eldest son of his brother Edward. He was known as Christopher Bethell Codrington after 1797 when he inherited the Bethell estates through another uncle.<sup>82</sup>

Sir William (II) had made provision in his will that his heir should reside for six months on the West Indian estates after coming into his inheritance,<sup>83</sup> but this was not enforced as Christopher (Bethell) Codrington had been sent to Antigua by his uncle in 1790-1. This certainly gave him a little first hand knowledge which must have been of benefit, but he did not return to the West Indies. Like his uncle he was a concerned and careful owner, but like him, too, was against any movement to end slavery. His main interests were in England. He rebuilt Dodington, at great expense, from

designs by Wyatt, bought more land nearby,<sup>84</sup> and was active also in public life as a Member of Parliament for Tewkesbury.<sup>85</sup>

The West Indian estates of the Codrington family were, therefore, built up by three generations of men who lived and worked in the Caribbean. Two of these men, the second and third Christopher Codringtons, were distinguished in their careers and at that time showed an unusually imaginative sympathy with their slaves. It is on this account that the family name is remembered in the West Indies today. The two men who are the subjects of this thesis were the inheritors of their efforts: neither of them chose to live in the Caribbean and their interests centred on their English estates, but they did not neglect their West Indian property. Barbuda was always a matter of intelligent concern for both of them.

Notes to Chapter 1

- 1 GRO, C13 Henri de Pontheiu to W.C. 1780-(1783).
- 2 Unless otherwise stated, for general geographical detail in this chapter, I am indebted to David R. Harris, Plants, Animals, and Man in the Outer Leeward Islands, West Indies; an Ecological Study of Antigua, Barbuda and Anguilla, University of California Publications in Geography, Vol. XVIII (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1965); Robert C. West and John P. Augelli, Middle America: Its Lands and Peoples (Englewood Cliffs, N.J., 1966); J. Macpherson, Caribbean Lands, a Geography of the West Indies (London, 1963).
- 3 Harris, Plants, Animals and Man, p. 21.
- 4 West Indies Pilot, Vol. II, 10th edition (London, 1955), 195. A good map of the whole coast and the coral reefs is the Admiralty Chart, No. 1997, Barbuda Island, surveyed by Capt. E. Barnett, 1848 (London, Hydrographic Office of the Admiralty, 1850: new edition 1861, with corrections to 1974).
- 5 West Indies Pilot, II, 196.
- 6 Ibid.
- 7 Admiralty Chart No. 1997. Also GRO, D1610 C13 Henri de Ponthieu to W.C. under 'Remarks'.
- 8 GRO, D1610 C13.
- 9 Henry Coleridge, Six Months in the West Indies in 1825 (London, 1826), p. 266.
- 10 Map, The Island of Barbuda, surveyed by Capt. Decker, R.N., 1813 (PRO, CO 700, MP/8 Antigua X/04800) (above, follows p. 1); sketchmap of Barbuda, dated about 1780, GRO, D1610 P17. A copy of this map, with additional information from another, was made at the Department of Geography, Liverpool University, for Dr. Colin Clarke. I am grateful to Dr. Clarke for kindly allowing me to use it. It appears following p. 4. At Dodington there was, until the recent sale, another similar version with some extra descriptive material.
- 11 GRO, D1610 Henri de Ponthieu to W.C. 1780-(1783).
- 12 GRO, MF375, Dennis Reynolds to W.C., 1 Apr. 1786.
- 13 J.A. Williamson, Caribbee Islands under the Proprietary Patents (Oxford, 1926), p. 68 (quoting from John Smith, Works (1907), II, 198-200).
- 14 Preston E. James, Latin America (London, 1941), p. 807.
- 15 There is some difference of opinion about the maximum height of the plateau. Some geographers give 205 feet, others, e.g. Harris, 147 feet. I am using the height given by Harris as he has recent specialist information on Barbuda.
- 16 Admiralty Chart, No. 1997.
- 17 Unless otherwise stated, the general information about Barbuda in the 18th century comes from two letters to Sir William Codrington written by Dennis Reynolds, manager of Barbuda at the time. Both are on MF 375, and are dated 1 Apr. 1786 and 1 Mar. 1787.

18 GRO, D1619 C13 Henri de Ponthieu to W.C. 1780-(1783). These facts, complained about by those who tried to cultivate land on Barbuda in the 18th century, are supported by modern research. David Harris (using C.F. Charter's research) points out that there are two types of soil on the flat land of Barbuda. Both are shallow and quickly become flooded after a downpour; but in the dry season 'readily dry out, crack and pulverize', Harris, Plants, Animals, and Man, p. 19.

19 Harris, loc. cit. His description of these depressions today must have applied equally to the 18th century.

20 MF375, D. Reynolds to W.C., 1 Mar. 1787.

21 Sketchmap of Barbuda, circa 1786, formerly at Dodington House, in many respects similar to the one reproduced after p. 4.

22 GRO, D1610 C5 Comments on Barbuda by B. King, 27 Dec. 1740.

23 Coleridge, Six Months in the West Indies, p. 275.

24 GRO, D1610 C13 Henri de Ponthieu to W.C. 1780-(1783).

25 MF375, D. Reynolds to W.C., 1 Mar. 1787.

26 Quoted by Vere L. Oliver, History of Antigua, III (London, 1899), 252.

27 MF 375, Henri de Ponthieu to W.C., 24 Aug. 1779.

28 Manager Smalridge to Dr. George Smalridge, Barbados, 23 Mar. 1711. Quoted by J. Harry Bennett, Jr., Bondsmen and Bishops. Slavery and Apprenticeship on the Codrington Plantations of Barbados 1710-1838 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1958), p. 11.

29 For information on the Arawaks and Caribs, and on the early settlements in the Leeward Islands I am indebted to: Sir Alan Burns, History of the British West Indies (London, 1954); Richard S. Dunn, Sugar and Slaves. The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713 (London, 1973); Harris, Plants, Animals, and Man; J.H. Parry and P.M. Sherlock, A Short History of the West Indies (London, 1963).

30 In 1958, at the foot of the cliffs on the east coast of Barbuda, a stone head, 'of probable Arawak workmanship', was found. It is of special interest because until this discovery Arawak stone heads had only been found in the Greater Antilles. Harris, Plants, Animals, and Man, p. 72.

31 Burns, History of the British West Indies, pp. 194-5.

32 GRO, D1610 T9 Patent to Several Persons for Barbuda, 1 Oct. 1668.

33 Ibid. They were Samuel Winthrop, Joseph Lees, William Mildon, and Francis Samson. Three of them were prominent in Antiguan affairs. Samuel Winthrop, the youngest son of the Governor of Massachusetts, was President of the Antigua Council. After the French raid on Antigua in 1666 he had only twelve slaves left, but he had built up his estates again before his death in 1678: Dunn, Sugar and Slaves, pp. 125-6; Oliver, History of Antigua, III, 252. Joseph Lee was Secretary to the Council in 1664 and signed the capitulation to the French in 1666: Oliver, History of Antigua, II, 172. Francis

Sam(p)son was Secretary to the Assembly of Antigua in 1668. His will was proved in 1668 and his widow, Mary, sold her quarter share of Barbuda to Governor Stapleton: Oliver, History of Antigua, III, 68.

34 The connection with Nevis may have come through William Mildon, the fourth person to whom the grant of Barbuda was made in 1668. He is not mentioned by Oliver, so he is unlikely to have been active in Antiguan affairs. In the grant of 1684, however, his assignees are mentioned as being residents of Nevis: GRO, D1610 T9 Grant of 1684.

35 C.S.S. Higham, The Leeward Islands 1660-1688 (Cambridge, 1921), p. 136.

36 Oliver, History of Antigua, III, 253.

37 GRO, D1610 T9 Grant of the Island of Barbuda 1684.

38 Copies of these grants are to be found in GRO, D1610 T9.

39 This lease was to Colonel Samuel Martin and William Byam, 1746-61: GRO D1610 E16.

40 GRO, D1610 T9.

41 R.H. Codrington, 'Memoir of the Family of Codrington of Codrington, Didmarton, Frampton-on-Severn, and Dodington', Transactions of the Bristol and Gloucestershire Archaeological Society, XXI (1898), 325. This memoir is not entirely reliable as the author appears to have thought that Christopher Codrington (I) and Christopher Codrington (II) were the same man.

42 Vincent T. Harlow, Christopher Codrington 1668-1710 (Oxford, 1928), pp. 6-7; Cyril Hamshere, The British in the Caribbean (London, 1972), p. 101.

43 R.S. Dunn, Sugar and Slaves, p. 48, points out that in 1680, 175 planters from 159 families formed the island élite. Some 62 of these 159 families were property holders in 1638. Among these 62 early arrivals, 'the charter members of the Barbados élite', were the Codringtons.

44 Harlow, Christopher Codrington, pp. 11-15.

45 GRO, Catalogue to Archives Relating to the West Indian Estates of the Codrington Family, I, iv. His experience as a sugar planter in Barbados was particularly useful in Antigua where landowners had only started to grow sugar in the 1660s: Dunn, Sugar and Slaves, pp. 122-3; Bryan Edwards, The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British West Indies, 5th edition (London, 1819), I, 474.

46 R.B. Sheridan, 'The Rise of a Colonial Gentry: A Case Study of Antigua, 1730-1775', Economic History Review, XIII, No. 3 (April 1961), 356.

47 Burns, History of the British West Indies, pp. 273, 375.

48 Ibid., pp. 374-9.

49 Dunn, Sugar and Slaves, p. 135.

50 Harlow, Christopher Codrington, pp. 15-16.

51 This seems, too, to be the official view of the family, expressed in a Guide to Dodington (n.d.), by P.W. Amphlett,

- p. 30. For subsequent details of Christopher Codrington's career I am indebted to Vincent Harlow, Christopher Codrington.  
52 As a result of his will the Codrington Library was built at All Souls' College, Oxford. The idea of using monks was never developed but Codrington College, Barbados, after a difficult start, became a boys' school and then a Training College for young men training to be clergymen or teachers. In 1875 it was affiliated to the University of Durham so that its students could obtain degrees: Harlow, Christopher Codrington, pp. 215-16. 'The College has given to the West Indies not only Bishops, Archdeacons, and the bulk of the clergy, but Chief Justices, Barristers, Physicians, Merchants, Planters, and men of leading position in every Colony of the Caribbean Seas. Moreover it is the proud distinction of Codrington that no difference of race, or colour, or Christian denomination has ever interfered with the perfect amity and equality of all who have the privilege of calling her their alma mater,' Handbook of Codrington College (Barbados, 1912), quoted by Harlow, Christopher Codrington, p. 216. Until 1948, when the University of the West Indies was established, Codrington College provided the only opportunity for higher education in the British West Indies: Burns, History of the British West Indies, p. 726.
- 53 Harlow, Christopher Codrington, p. 122.
- 54 Ibid., pp. 122-4.
- 55 Ibid., pp. 15, 190 (and note 2 on each page. These appear to be contradictory but the statement on p. 190, n. 2, that Barbuda was only inhabited by Captain Codrington—and presumably his slaves—seems to fit in with other evidence. Presumably 'Barbados', line 5, n. 2, p. 15, is a misprint for Barbuda).
- 56 GRO, D1610 T9 Case for a new Grant (undated).
- 57 GRO, D1610 C5 B. King, writing about Barbuda, 27 Dec. 1740. He noted that he had heard his father (who was often at Barbuda) say that 'in young General Codrington's time', there were 'upwards of 5,000 head of cattle and 1,000 horses'. These numbers were confirmed to him by 'a sensible fellow' who was his overseer and who had worked on Barbuda from 1700 to 1707. Corn and cattle were sent to the Barbados estates from Barbuda at this time: Bennett, Bondsmen and Bishops, p. 3.
- 58 Bennett, Bondsmen and Bishops, p. 28 quoting John Smalridge to SPG.
- 59 Oliver, History of Antigua, I, 169.
- 60 The actual amount he acquired from his uncle seemed clear in 1710. He thought that he owned one half of Barbuda already (through his father) and that he inherited from his uncle one half of his uncle's share, that is a quarter of the island. This would have brought his share to three quarters of the whole island. Later it was discovered that another grant, made in 1705, gave Barbuda to Christopher Codrington alone. Thus the amount he gained from his uncle's will would have been half of the whole island, but he would have held none in his own right. Obviously the proportions bequeathed to the others would have been affected similarly. There is no



independent evidence that William Codrington had actually inherited his father's share of Barbuda before the grant of 1705. The family later maintained that he had (GRO, D1610 T9 Abstract of Title of Sir William Codrington II to Barbuda) and he behaved as though this is what happened; but in that case Christopher Codrington (III) behaved somewhat dishonourably in obtaining another grant to himself alone in 1705. This grant was not known to the family in 1710, and there seems to be some doubt as to when it became public knowledge (GRO, D1610 L2 Case about Barbuda 1746).

61 Christopher Codrington (III)'s will is reproduced in Harlow, Christopher Codrington, Appendix A, pp. 217-20. GRO, D1610 T9 Case for a new grant. Barbuda. Abstract of Title.

62 Burns, History of the British West Indies, p. 425.

63 GRO, D1610 L2 Case about Barbuda.

64 GRO, D1610 C2 A List of what White Servants, Negroes Cattle Horses etc I have now at Burbuda, 27 July 1719.

65 GRO, D1610 C2 Directions to be observed by Mr. Timothy Cleckly, now Commander of Burbuda, 27 June 1715. Also C3, Letter book of Sir William Codrington, 1720-1.

66 GRO, D1610 C3 WC(I) to Brother, 28 Oct. 1720, 1 Nov. 1720, etc.

67 GRO, D1610 C2 Directions to be observed.

68 GRO, D1610 C2 and C3.

69 GRO, D1610 T9 Barbuda, Abstract of Title. E15 Indenture between the heirs of V. Cage and William Codrington, 6 Feb. 1716. L2 Case about Barbuda.

70 See above, note 60 for statement of problem. It is clear that the SPG did not know how much of Barbuda they owned, 'may be 3/8, 3/16, or 3/32 or none' (USPG records at 15 Tufton Street, London, Box 1, letter from Dudley Woodbridge to SPG, 15 Mar 1711/12). Woodbridge suggested that the SPG might sell their portion to William Codrington when they knew the extent of their share (ibid). An arrangement was made in 1712 that William Codrington should grant the SPG 'Four full equal and undivided 16th Parts' of the island and all that was on it, and the SPG would petition the Queen for a further grant of the island to William Codrington, but the grant was not made. In 1720 a proposal was made to the SPG by Codrington's attorneys either to buy out the Society's share in Barbuda or to come to some mutually agreeable compromise—but no further action seems to have been taken about it. The difficulties over the Barbados estates went on until 1742 and nothing further was done about the Society's share of Barbuda. In 1746 the Society noted 'The present Sr Wm Codrington Bart. . . . and his Family are, and have been in Possion of the Whole of the sd Isld.' (GRO, D1610 L2 Case about Barbuda).

71 GRO, D1610 F1, 27 Apr. 1722.

72 GRO, D1610 C5 B. King to W.C., 11 June 1744. He also refers to there having been 'many Tenements lett out formerly and houses erected on them.' The leases were then (1744)

vacant and the houses still in good order. He suggested that they should each be inhabited by a servant and three Negroes who would look after 500 sheep and 12 cows. There were five of these vacant houses. Nothing came of this suggestion.

73 GRO, D1610 C3 WC(I) to Bro. 2 Feb. 1720. It is possible that 'where' may be 'when'. This was suggested to me by Dr. D. Watters.

74 In 1724 Sir William wrote that he intended returning to Antigua in a year's time: Oliver, History of Antigua, I, 170. (By the time of his death in 1738 he owned three other estates near Betty's Hope: the Cotton, Cotton New Work, and Garden estates, GRO, D1610, Catalogue I, p. iv.)

75 Oliver, History of Antigua, I, 127. Benjamin King was appointed in Sir William Codrington's place.

76 R.H. Codrington in TBGAS, p. 336

77 GRO, D1610 F14 Agreement for separation of Sir William Codrington and Lady Anne Codrington.

78 Oliver, History of Antigua, I, 144. Pedigree of Codrington of Barbados, Antigua, and Dodington.

79 GRO, D1610 C14/2 W.C. to J.L. Walrond, 18 Mar. 1790.

80 GRO D1610 C17 and MF375.

81 Oliver, History of Antigua I, 144-5, 154-5.

82 Ibid., pp. 144-5. In order to avoid confusion, Christopher Codrington will be referred to as Christopher (Bethell) Codrington until he inherited the estates.

83 Ibid., pp. 152-3.

84 Codrington, TBGAS, p. 337.

85 Ibid.

## Chapter 2

### THE EXTERNAL ADMINISTRATION AND INTERNAL MANAGEMENT OF BARBUDA 1738-1833

Under the Codringtons Barbuda was developed as a private estate linked economically and administratively with their sugar plantations on Antigua. Most of this chapter will be concerned with the internal management of Barbuda and the ways in which it was connected with the other estates, but it cannot only be thought of as private property. Barbuda was also one of the Leeward Islands, considered to be an appendant member of the island of Antigua, and under the authority of the Governor of the Leeward Islands. It is therefore necessary to see how far the Codringtons had their power on Barbuda modified by external authorities.

#### I The External Administration of Barbuda

Under the terms of the Crown grants there seems to have been no intention to separate Barbuda from the other Leeward Islands. The first grant of the island in 1668, to Samuel Winthrop, Joseph Lee, William Mildon, and Francis Samson, expressly stated that Barbuda was one of the Caribbee Islands 'and always deemed an Appendant Member of the Island of Antigua'.<sup>1</sup> The grant to the Codringtons in 1684, although it gave them wide powers, expressly stated that it did not

exempt them from the authority of the Governor of the Leeward Islands, and subsequent grants did not alter this.<sup>2</sup> Moreover Barbuda was included by name in the list of islands under the governor's control.<sup>3</sup> A study of the records during the period 1738-1833, however, seems to show that Barbuda was for most practical purposes completely outside the influence of Antigua and the governor. Barbuda was not subject to Antiguan laws and did not pay Antiguan taxes; and successive governors made little effort to interfere in the island's affairs.

Barbuda was thus under the almost complete control of the Codrington family who were able to develop it as they wished, keep others out and collect what seemed to be easy money from the many wrecks off the island. For these privileges they paid to the Crown annually 'one Fat Sheep (if demanded)'.<sup>4</sup> Not surprisingly there were people who resented the privileged position which the Codringtons had acquired on Barbuda. Other Antiguan landowners objected to the fact that they could only visit Barbuda with permission from a Codrington attorney,<sup>5</sup> and sometimes those in authority in Antigua felt thwarted that Barbuda was effectively, if not legally, outside their jurisdiction. For these reasons opportunities were taken of challenging the Codrington position there.

In this period the first test of Codrington power came somewhat unexpectedly. In 1746 Sir William Codrington leased the island for fifteen years to two Antiguan landowners, Colonel Samuel Martin and William Byam.<sup>6</sup> In 1750 Colonel Martin decided he no longer wanted to rent Barbuda. Codrington not being prepared to accept this, Martin decided

to stop paying the rent on the grounds that the 1705 grant of Barbuda to Christopher Codrington (III) was not valid because it had not been registered, and so the lease to him was invalid too.<sup>7</sup> It is true that the grant had not been registered. There was no register office in Nevis (where the grant had been issued) until 1710 and though there was one in Antigua it only recorded grants and deeds within Antigua 'and Barbuda though lying near and contiguous to Antigua yet being no part of that Island or subject to the laws of Government of it'<sup>8</sup> lay outside the authority of the office. Sir William Codrington sought the opinion of R. Wilbrahim of Lincoln's Inn who thought that the rent should be paid as arranged because queries should have been settled before the lease was signed. He also thought that the grant would be considered to be valid if the matter were to be raised at a higher level.<sup>9</sup> After this Colonel Martin continued with the lease for the remainder of the fifteen years.<sup>10</sup>

The legality of the grant having once been put in doubt, however, it could be queried again. In July 1756 Sir William Codrington protested to the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations that the Governor of the Leeward Islands had threatened to grant a reversionary lease of Barbuda to one of his sons unless Sir William paid £3,000 before Christmas for a renewal of his grant. Sir William was able to state his case to the Commissioners on 20 July 1756 and their decision was communicated to Governor Thomas a few days later.<sup>11</sup> They thought that the granting of a reversion against the present proprietor would be a great hardship. 'We therefore desire you would make no reversionary Grant whatever of this Island without His Majesties directions

therein.'<sup>12</sup> Governor Thomas was forced in this way to drop his threats. In both cases justification of the Codrington position was that the family had held the island for many years and the grant had been made to them in recognition of their services to the Crown.<sup>13</sup>

The next threat to their position was more serious as it involved another nation. In 1776 a Spanish ship, the Sancta Rita, was wrecked on Barbuda and the Codrington attorney acted so high-handedly that protests were made by Spain to the British government.<sup>14</sup> The Secretary of State for the Colonies, Lord Germain, wrote to the Governor of the Leeward Islands, W.M. Burt, who promised to make a full inquiry.<sup>15</sup> The situation on Barbuda worried the governor. He had been informed that 'no white Man is allowed to settle in Barbuda, but Servants to Sir Wm Codrington, nor is any person permitted to go there without Leave first obtain'd from Sir Wm's Attorney.'<sup>16</sup> He had heard, too, of other ships wrecked on Barbuda which had received the same treatment as the Sancta Rita, and he gave details of lurid stories he had heard about events on Barbuda.<sup>17</sup>

He eventually visited the island in 1777<sup>18</sup> and reported on conditions there in January 1778. On the constitutional position he wrote: 'This Island is not annexed or subject to the Legislative Jurisdiction of any Part of this Government. They have not Inhabitants to form or Execute any System of Police or Government.'<sup>19</sup> He pointed out that there was no chart of the island either. He suggested that one should be made and in the meantime Barbuda should be annexed to the legislative and judicial authority of Antigua. He added that there were other small islands near Antigua

which were also private property and held by Crown grants and they all came under Antiguan control in the way he was suggesting for Barbuda.<sup>20</sup> Lord Germain was grateful for the suggestions, and promised to think about them 'when the State of public affairs will afford leisure for such Considerations.'<sup>21</sup> Fortunately, perhaps, for the Codringtons this time did not come. The American War of Independence and other events kept Secretaries of State otherwise occupied. A Collector of Customs was appointed for Barbuda in 1779, by the governor,<sup>22</sup> but no other attempt was made to limit Codrington control.

This lack of activity on the part of the Secretary of State did not mean that the government was unaware of the problems involved in giving such wide powers to a single individual. It was simply that Barbuda was not sufficiently important to warrant attention unless a wreck, or some other event there, caused another nation or prominent individual to protest. Even so the undesirability in general of giving grants of this kind was certainly appreciated, because when Sir William applied for a new grant he found more difficulties in his way than he expected.

From 1780 Sir William Codrington urged his attorneys in Antigua to negotiate with the governor for a new grant.<sup>23</sup> In view of the fact that Governor Burt was unlikely to receive such an application favourably it seems surprising that Sir William wanted the grant made in Antigua rather than in England. This point was put to him by his attorney in 1780.<sup>24</sup> Sir William was, however, reluctant to apply in England. He believed he could indeed obtain a new grant in London because of his contacts in the government, but he was reluctant to

prejudice his independence as a Member of Parliament and preferred to try his luck in Antigua.<sup>25</sup> Burt, in any case, was replaced in 1781. As a sitting tenant, prepared to offer a reasonable financial inducement to the governor, Codrington thought there would be no difficulty in obtaining a new and improved grant.<sup>26</sup> He wanted it this time, too, to be passed by the Antiguan Council, and under the public seal, and properly registered.<sup>27</sup> The negotiations were unsuccessful however. There were doubts whether the Council could be persuaded to agree<sup>28</sup> and the governor, Sir Thomas Shirley, proved unco-operative. He seems to have feared displeasing the government and he either offered terms which were unacceptable to Sir William or maintained that he had not the power to make such a grant;<sup>29</sup> and it had not been obtained by the time of Sir William's death in 1792. The official view was perhaps best expressed by Mr. Woodley, a friend of Sir William's who was thought likely to succeed Shirley as governor. On being approached by Christopher (Bethell) Codrington, Woodley said he did not think that if he were the governor he would be inclined to renew the grant 'upon Peppercorn terms . . . he shd make no hesitation of renewing it, but . . . thought Barbuda might be made to be of some use by furnishing . . . provisions of some sort in war time, or something of that kind'.<sup>30</sup>

This was precisely the form in which the grant was eventually renewed in 1800 when negotiations were re-started by Sir Bethell Codrington. By that time the need for a new grant had become urgent as the 1705 lease was due to expire in 1804, and he applied for it in England.<sup>31</sup> Under the new grant the British government reserved the right to resume



such parcels of land as might be necessary for the erecting of barracks, government stores, forts, or batteries. In return the lease was extended for a further fifty years, the rent being, as before, one fat sheep annually if demanded.<sup>32</sup> No attempt was made to bring Barbuda under the jurisdiction of Antigua and the island was administered as before.

The Codringtons were on the whole anxious to keep the Antiguan government out of Barbudan affairs. Sir William expressed his views on this plainly in 1789: ' . . . if there is any doubt of the Jurisdiction of Antigua over Barbuda, I wish it to remain a doubt. I do not desire to make my property in the least more liable to the controul of our Governors than Necessity compells me.'<sup>33</sup> The Codringtons had no desire to pay Antiguan taxes for their Barbudan property, nor did they want Barbuda to be subject to Antiguan laws. On the other hand they were sometimes anxious to make use of the Antiguan judicial system and then they were prepared to argue that Barbuda was an appendant member of the island of Antigua. Sir William stated his opinions on this equally firmly in 1791:

Whoever has taken upon them to say that Barbuda is not an appendage of Antigua, or is not under the same Governmt as Antigua is a very knavish fellow—he can assert it from Wickedness only, not from knowledge or even fm belief. It is as much a part of the Leeward Island Government as any of the other Islands and is named in the Commission as particularly as any other.<sup>34</sup>

The problem which prompted this extremely ambivalent attitude was that of trespassers from Antigua who did damage on Barbuda. The Codringtons in general discouraged visitors to the island, even their friends, because work was interrupted and the slaves diverted from their normal routine.<sup>35</sup> Barbuda,

however, was attractive to young men from Antigua who wanted some sport and, if they were not given permission, they were prepared to go illegally. From 1761 to 1790 this was a major problem. Groups of young men cut down and removed timber and took livestock, turtles, fish, deer and game of various sorts. Some parties even pitched their tents on the shore.<sup>36</sup>

The managers on Barbuda were given strict instructions not to allow any visitors to land without permission from an attorney,<sup>37</sup> but it was impossible to prevent determined trespassers on an island the size of Barbuda; and it was difficult to know how to act effectively against them. Sir William was in favour of strong measures, some of which would have been difficult to uphold in a court of law. He told the manager of Barbuda in the 1780s to cut and destroy the nets of people who came to steal turtle, and to damage their boats. If they stole wood and fled he should 'wound them with shot', and if they were caught they should be held and taken before a Justice of the Peace in Antigua.<sup>38</sup>

Threats of legal action against Antiguan trespassers on Barbuda were, however, of doubtful value. There were no law courts on Barbuda and insufficient white people, in any case, to form a jury, so no action could be taken there; and it was open to question whether a case of this sort could actually be tried in Antigua. In 1766 Sir William Codrington asked for the opinion of the Antiguan Attorney-General, Thomas Warner, in connection with an incident on Barbuda when a party of trespassers had been caught cutting wood. Sir William wanted to know what action he could take against them. Warner pointed out that many offences against Sir William would have to go unpunished because a local trial was needed

and there were no courts of justice on Barbuda. Some cases, he felt, might be taken to court in Antigua and these would include the stealing of wood by trespassers.<sup>39</sup> On this point, however, a contrary opinion was later given by John Burke, the Solicitor-General, in 1771: 'where the Trespass is done against the Soil, or anything growing thereon, I apprehend no Action of Trespass can be maintained here, for as Barbuda is not annexed to Antigua, the Defendant might I think Plead to the Jurisdiction of the Court'.<sup>40</sup> In 1791 Burke told Christopher (Bethell) Codrington that in the same way he did not think an indictment for sheep-stealing on Barbuda could be heard in Antigua as Barbuda was not an appendage of Antigua ('because it pays no taxes'). He went on to say that if the manager of Barbuda were to kill a white man there, he would not be brought to trial in Antigua.<sup>41</sup>

The technical question whether a case could actually be tried in Antigua was not the only problem, however. On matters of trespass and damage on Barbuda by Antiguans it was unlikely that an Antiguan jury would be sympathetic to the Codringtons. In 1791 when Sir William wanted to bring a case against a young man who had visited Barbuda with a party of friends and openly killed a sheep he was advised not to proceed. The jury, he was told, would probably saddle him with the expenses and only award him the value of the sheep.<sup>42</sup> Sir William saw the sense of taking the matter no further and was prepared to accept an apology and the price of the sheep;<sup>43</sup> but he was very dissatisfied. He could not understand why he could not obtain justice in Antigua, which was after all a part of the same King's dominions as Barbuda. In that case, he maintained, Antiguans would suffer because his agents on

Barbuda could not be prosecuted locally for a crime committed against an Antiguan.<sup>44</sup> His nephew, following the same line of thought, had already instructed the manager on Barbuda to seize the slaves of those found trespassing on Barbuda and 'let them teach us, what measures can be taken by us, by showing us what measures they can take to recover such Negroes; if we can get no redress, they can get no redress.'<sup>45</sup>

It is easy to see why the Codringtons felt frustrated. It seemed that they had no protection against determined trespassers who damaged or stole their property. On the other hand the unwillingness of Antiguan officials to co-operate with them is equally understandable. They were annoyed that Barbuda was for all practical purposes outside their jurisdiction and did not see why they should be called on for assistance when it suited the Codringtons, but not given any privileges on Barbuda in return.<sup>46</sup> Fortunately the extreme measures which the Codringtons suggested in 1791 were not found to be necessary. The problem of trespassers ceased to worry the administration, possibly because the war with France made travel between the islands more of a risk. In the early nineteenth century the activities of pirates in the area led Sir Bethell Codrington to ask that the manager of Barbuda, who was also an attorney, be made a magistrate;<sup>47</sup> and when he died the same authority was conferred on another attorney responsible for Barbuda.<sup>48</sup>

Although on questions of trespass the Codringtons did not see eye to eye with other Antiguan landowners, there were more important matters on which there was agreement. The wars fought in the area during the eighteenth century brought fundamental problems, and defence of the islands was a subject

on which there was a common policy. Barbuda would have been of little use to the Codringtons had Antigua fallen to an enemy, and Antigua's security would have been threatened in some measure if Barbuda had been occupied by a hostile force. The Antiguanians were therefore prepared to go to the assistance of Barbuda if there was any threat of invasion.

Barbuda itself was not entirely without a system of defence, though the manager of the island, in 1743, claimed that when he arrived there was no means of protection apart from the castle which he had put in the 'best posture of Defence it will admit of'.<sup>49</sup> This building, near the lagoon, was supposed to offer shelter to the inhabitants in case of attack. It had been built originally in the seventeenth century but was destroyed by the French in 1710 and rebuilt by the first Sir William Codrington 'at very great expense'.<sup>50</sup> It was kept in some sort of repair and occasionally people lived there but at the end of the eighteenth century Henri de Ponthieu pointed out that against an enemy it was virtually useless. It might have served its purpose in the past against Indians but certainly not against Europeans and their weapons.<sup>51</sup> In 1813, an officer of the Woolwich which had been wrecked on Barbuda described it as 'an old dilapidated castle',<sup>52</sup> but it was still standing in 1840—a rectangular building with towers at the north-east and south-west corners.<sup>53</sup>

What Barbuda needed was some way of preventing an enemy landing or damaging her boats. Even though the rocky coastline gave good natural protection round most of the island, the south coast and part of the west were vulnerable. In 1743 a Spanish privateer landed some men on the Sand Bank, probably to get provisions, but they retreated to their ship when the manager sent thirty armed servants and slaves after them.

The next morning, however, they rowed round to the river and took away a very fine sloop worth a thousand pounds belonging to a Mr. Gravenour who had anchored outside the rocks. The manager was able to report the incident the same day to Colonel Benjamin King, the Codrington attorney on Antigua, who persuaded Captain Purcell in the Pultney Privateer to go with him to Barbuda with fourteen soldiers loaned by General Mathew, the Governor of the Leeward Islands. On the way they encountered the same Spanish ship and they successfully chased her away, though apparently without recovering the sloop, before going on to Barbuda where they found all was well.<sup>54</sup> This incident illustrates the casual system of defence then in existence. Colonel King, in fact, wrote that he was 'quite Easey' about the security of the island, though he feared for the island sloop as she could be cut from her anchor while loading. He proposed to build, with the advice of some local masters of ships, a tower like those on the coast of Spain, and he ordered three twelve-pounders from Lady Codrington.<sup>55</sup> Some forts undoubtedly were built because they are mentioned in a 'Case for a new grant of Barbuda',<sup>56</sup> —but no real attention seems to have been paid to keeping them ready for use.

An incident in the late eighteenth century suggests that there was little change in attitude towards defence. In 1779, Richard Clarke, the Codrington attorney, was captured by the captain of a Spanish privateer when he was bound for Antigua on the Barbuda schooner. The Spaniards commandeered the schooner and returned to Barbuda to take the sloop, which had been sailing to Antigua with the schooner, though some distance away. They anchored off Barbuda and some lengthy

negotiations followed, interrupted by the arrival of the manager of Barbuda with a party of armed slaves and the brass four-pounder with which he proceeded to fire on the privateer. The Spanish fortunately decided to leave, taking the schooner with them, but Clarke was allowed to remain behind.<sup>57</sup>

After this rather alarming experience Clarke complained that if only the previous attorney, Mr. Redhead, had left one gun in the spot which had originally been a battery the vessel would not have been lost. He now gave orders for the batteries to be put in order. In the bay to the west of Cocoa Point, on the south coast, he established a battery consisting of two nines, two sixes, and two four-pounders; and for greater security placed a nine-pounder at each Point. Another battery was put in order at Palmeto Point. This made the island, he felt, tolerably secure.<sup>58</sup> Christopher (Bethell) Codrington's description, in 1790, of its being 'charmingly fortified' does not, however, really suggest efficiency!<sup>59</sup> Actually Barbuda's main defence lay in the fact that it was not sufficiently important to warrant invasion in a serious way, though there would have been nuisance value for an enemy in capturing it. The Codringtons recognized that their position in Barbuda would be vulnerable if Antigua fell to an enemy and for this reason they made arrangements to ensure that Barbuda would be included in any peace treaty made by Antigua.<sup>60</sup>

The Codringtons relied on help from the Antiguans, too, in suppressing slave rebellions. Where problems of this sort arose planters supported each other despite differences of opinion on other matters. In 1745 the slaves on Barbuda revolted, seized the castle and murdered the manager. The

Codrington attorney feared that if the French heard of this they might try to take the island, but it was quickly put down with a show of force from Antigua.<sup>61</sup> In 1832 there were signs of trouble from slaves on Barbuda and the manager asked for help from Antigua which was quickly supplied. Troops landed on Barbuda but did not even need to fire.<sup>62</sup>

In matters of defence and internal security, therefore, the Codringtons could rely on help from the same Antiguan land-owners who made difficulties for them in other ways. The question whether Barbuda was in fact an appendant member of the island of Antigua was a moot point. If it suited both Antigua and the Codringtons to think that it was, then they behaved as though that were the case, but it sometimes suited one or other to insist that this was not so. Normally the British government was not concerned either way and did not interfere with affairs, but in 1834 when the act to emancipate the slaves had to be made operative in Barbuda they were forced to pay attention to the problem.

## II The Internal Management of Barbuda

The management of Barbuda between 1738 and 1833 is a story of trial and error. Both Sir William Codrington and his nephew were anxious to make the island profitable for which purpose an efficient system of management was essential. Not only had the island itself to be properly organized but it needed integrating into the administration of the other estates: the whole having to be entrusted to men on the spot whom the Codringtons might never have seen. Not surprisingly there were many difficulties before a reasonably successful system



could be evolved. By the 1780s, however, Sir William had achieved this and it was maintained, somewhat precariously at times, by Sir Bethell Codrington, from his uncle's death in 1792 until 1833. Although there was no actual break in the management when Sir William died, the policies of the two men will be considered separately.

(a) The Management of Barbuda under Sir William Codrington (II), 1738-1792

The period from 1738 to 1746 must have been one of the most unhappy in Barbuda's history. Sir William being still a minor in 1738, the island was administered as before by a resident manager who came under the authority of the Codrington attorneys on Antigua. At this time those in charge seem to have been inefficient and in some cases cruel, and in 1745 the slaves revolted and murdered the manager.<sup>63</sup> This event must have contributed to Sir William's decision, after he had come of age, to sub-let the island. At the time of his father's death, however, the estates were burdened with debts and a regular income from rent was an attractive prospect, especially as the net profit from Barbuda for the years 1738-46 was only £325. 7s. 8½d.<sup>64</sup>

In 1746, therefore, Sir William leased Barbuda for fifteen years to Samuel Martin and William Byam.<sup>65</sup> During this period the island seems to have prospered. The numbers of slaves increased and so did all the livestock apart from mules, asses, and turkeys. There was, in fact, an increase in value of the slaves and livestock of over £18,000 between the beginning and end of the lease.<sup>66</sup> Sir William hoped he might find another suitable tenant but as no-one came forward he resumed control over Barbuda.<sup>67</sup>

From 1761 to 1783 the manager at Betty's Hope (Sir William's principal sugar plantation on Antigua) supervised affairs on Barbuda. As the principal attorney he had responsibility to some degree for all the sugar plantations belonging to the family. Until he left to settle in England in 1779,<sup>68</sup> this post was held by Samuel Redhead. He had to appoint a resident manager for Barbuda who would be responsible for the day-to-day running of the island, for supervising the work of the white assistants and all the slaves. He was paid a salary of £80 to £120 per year.<sup>69</sup> In addition a town agent received the goods sent from Barbuda, despatched necessities to the island, and kept accounts, for £100 per year. Wharfage and storage facilities sometimes provided by the same man cost a further £40 a year.<sup>70</sup> This method of managing Barbudan affairs continued until 1783.

One of the main problems in this arrangement was the fact that Samuel Redhead, or anyone else in his position, had to give more time and energy to the supervision of Betty's Hope than to Barbuda. If there had been a competent manager on Barbuda this would not have mattered but during the whole of this period Samuel Redhead had great difficulty both in finding people and persuading them to stay. Between 1762 and 1763 there were three different managers.<sup>71</sup> One problem must have been the loneliness of the position, but marriage, which might have helped that, led to the resignation of two of these managers.<sup>72</sup> Redhead asked Sir William to look out for a suitable person in England. 'He must be a sober honest and active man and if such a one could be got that had served his time with an Apothecary and knew something of medicines . . . it would be the more for your Interest.'<sup>73</sup> Appointing

a local man could give rise to a further difficulty because the man chosen might want to do favours for friends in Antigua—clearly injurious to the Codrington interests. In 1771, having just dismissed a manager who had only been there ten weeks, Redhead asked Sir William to look out for a suitable replacement and promised to 'send him over directly before he has contracted any acquaintance in this Island [Antigua]'. This time he asked for a man over forty and 'if he should have a Wife that is a Motherly good Woman she may be of service.'<sup>74</sup>

One reason for the shortness of stay of at least some of these people may well have been Samuel Redhead's own behaviour. During the early part of his attorneyship Redhead seems to have worked conscientiously, but for the last ten years or so his life, and the lives of those on Barbuda, was complicated by his relationship with a mulatto slave on Barbuda called Sarah Bullock. In 1771 he wrote to Sir William Codrington asking to purchase her freedom. He explained that he did not wish to remove her from Barbuda because she was so useful there but he was anxious to secure her peace of mind. She was afraid that if he died the other slaves would turn against her 'by having constantly discovered the abuses committed by the people of that Island, which has caused an enmity to her'.<sup>75</sup> During these years Sarah in fact seems to have more or less ruled Barbuda and to have made life difficult for those who opposed her: 'it was impossible anybody could stay there any length of time whilst Sally had anything to do with it as she was to all intents and purposes Governante'.<sup>76</sup> In November 1771 Redhead wrote to Sir William that he thought Barbuda could now be made more useful as he

was now able to go and stay there for longer periods himself as his son George could take over all the work in Antigua.<sup>77</sup> He built himself a house on Barbuda and presumably lived there with Sally.<sup>78</sup> In 1773 he informed Sir William that he now had no doubt that the island's affairs were being properly conducted, 'without being plagued with worthless managers'.<sup>79</sup> However, when Redhead departed for England in 1779, taking Sally Bullock with him, Sir William was under no illusions about the damage they had both done. He described Redhead as 'an idle Dotard to say the best one can of him'.<sup>80</sup> According to him Sally had raised a fortune through perquisites for herself and her family<sup>81</sup> and to make matters worse both Samuel Redhead and Sarah Bullock, and Samuel's son George, brought actions against Sir William claiming they had been unpaid for various services they had rendered him.<sup>82</sup>

The period of the Redhead administration of Barbuda disappointed Sir William. At the beginning he had hoped that the island might be made profitable and in 1761 he wrote to Redhead asking what his plans were for the general management of Barbuda and requesting distinct accounts for the island.<sup>83</sup> A year later, however, he expressed surprise that Redhead had not even mentioned Barbuda: 'I was in hopes to have had some good remittances from thence by this time.'<sup>84</sup> The accounts for 1762, however, show only a profit of £1,993. 16s. 11¾d: in 1768 it was £2,328. 16s. 4¾d. and in 1769 £1,199. 3s. 7¾d.<sup>85</sup> In reply to a statement of Sir William's expressing disappointment and commenting that he would have done better to have found another tenant at the expiry of the lease Redhead defended himself sensibly:

I have taken out the Nett Proceeds of every year of that Island and the amount is £2142. 11. 8. Currency a year which is considerably less than the rent you received, but as we have never given Credit to that Island for the different supplies your Ests have had which have been large (and I think it has been a mistake in us not keeping an account of those supplies) it prevents your having a proper knowledge of the benefit you have received from that Island. The Cattle, Mules, Building lime, log-wood, Negro house timber, cart timber etc, have a great deal more than ballanced that Accot in your favor . . .<sup>86</sup>

Unfortunately it is not possible to see how far Redhead's statement is true because, as he said, no account was kept of the amounts sent to the estates, but in the years 1785-90 a total profit of £22,991. 14s. 0¾d. was made by Barbuda and of this amount just under a half—£10,920. 4s. 1d.—came from goods sent to the Antiguan estates.<sup>87</sup> There is therefore likely to have been some justification for Redhead's claim.

Although Sir William was dissatisfied with Redhead's management of Barbuda there are some points in his favour. During these years the slave population increased naturally from 196 in 1761 to about 291 in 1779<sup>88</sup> and there seems to have been no serious slave unrest despite Sally Bullock's unpopularity. There must also have been an increase in livestock. In the years 1780 and 1782 Barbuda made a profit of £11,566. 4s. 5¾d. and £14,901. 5s. 11½d. respectively.<sup>89</sup> These high figures were caused by the American War of Independence which forced plantation owners to buy local rather than American stock, but Barbuda could not have taken advantage of this situation if Redhead had totally neglected the island. Redhead must therefore be given some credit for the high profits achieved in the early years of his successor.

Redhead's successor as manager of Betty's Hope and

attorney in charge of the Antiguan estates and Barbuda was Richard Clarke. Clarke's letters to Sir William Codrington are full of promises to promote Codrington interests, but he soon proved to have been a bad appointment. 'The waste, the extravagance, the Negligence and also the peculation and the Knavery have been notorious that have been practised to my Injury' wrote Sir William to J.L. Walrond some years later.<sup>90</sup> So 'abominable' and 'negligent' was his conduct that Sir William could not have borne with him much longer;<sup>91</sup> but, perhaps fortunately, Clarke died in 1782. The principal charge against him was that he traded in stock from Barbuda for his own profit. For this purpose he seems to have colluded with a Francis Martin in Antigua, and possible also with the Town Agents, Brinton and Burton, selling them stock from Barbuda at well below the market price.<sup>92</sup> Sir William pointed this out to R. Oliver, one of his attorneys, in January 1783. The accounts for Barbuda sales showed that in February 1782 Martin had with Clarke's agreement purchased twelve horses for £440 (roughly £36 each). One month later at an auction in Antigua seven horses went for £420 (£60 each), and another seven for £269 (about £38 each).<sup>93</sup> Even allowing for some variation in the quality of the horses there does seem to be more than a slight discrepancy between the price of the twelve and at any rate the first group of seven though Sir William's comments do seem a little exaggerated ('Nothing can be more glaring than the difference of these Prices or more seemingly confirming of the Collusion between Clarke and Martin').<sup>94</sup> But it was not only 'knavery' of this kind that troubled his employer. Clarke had also undertaken building schemes without prior consultation, he

had jumbled accounts of stores and given long credits.<sup>95</sup> Some of the blame for this, Sir William felt, must be taken by the other attorneys: 'if you [Langford Lovell] and Mr. Oliver had been more concerned for me in Clarke's time I should have profited and Clarke would have left a better name behind him.'<sup>96</sup> Unfortunately, yet again, Sir William had to be prepared to pay what he felt to be unfair debts, and preferred to pay rather than face a lawsuit in Antigua.<sup>97</sup>

The mismanagement of Barbudan affairs under both Samuel Redhead and Richard Clarke encouraged Sir William to consider a change of administration.<sup>98</sup> In 1779 he had been advised by Dr. James Athill—whose advice he valued because he had lived for so long in Antigua—to separate Barbuda from Betty's Hope, though he emphasized that he thought the manager of Barbuda should still be under the control of the attorneys in Antigua.<sup>99</sup> This view, endorsed by Richard Oliver,<sup>100</sup> was put into effect in 1783. Under this new arrangement there was to be a manager at Betty's Hope<sup>101</sup> and another at Barbuda neither of whom would necessarily be an attorney. Both would come under the authority of attorneys on Antigua, usually three, one being the chief or acting attorney.<sup>102</sup> Obviously this was sensible. The manager of Betty's Hope, a large sugar plantation, could hardly be expected to give time to the supervision of an island twenty-five miles away. By giving the manager of Barbuda a greater feeling of responsibility there was a chance that he would be more loyal and more conscientious.

The man appointed as manager of Barbuda under the new arrangements, Dennis Reynolds, had been in authority there as chief overseer under Clarke, since 1779.<sup>103</sup> He was,

therefore, already familiar with Barbudan problems. He stayed until February 1793<sup>104</sup> and probably did more to develop Barbuda than any other single individual, though this was not fully appreciated by Sir William. For Reynolds, an Irishman of apparently little education (though his letters are competently written),<sup>105</sup> the management of an island must have been an unexpected advancement only possible because of its peculiar situation.

As manager, Reynolds received £175 per year.<sup>106</sup> This was not considered an adequate return for a good man but no-one concerned really knew what the right amount should be. Sir William was not anxious to increase the salary as this would mean subsequent managers would have to be paid the same amount regardless of their ability.<sup>107</sup> On the other hand if an inadequate sum was paid either the manager would not stay or he would be likely to make money in other ways, by keeping stock, or selling particular commodities and pocketing the profits which should have gone to the owner. Clarke had certainly kept hogs, and Reynolds had been selling the coconuts,<sup>108</sup> a practice which Codrington deplored. In 1785 Reynolds proposed that he should be paid an increase in salary in return for giving up perquisites. Sir William thought this would be a bad precedent, but was prepared to let him have a 'reasonable reward'<sup>109</sup> the matter being solved by giving him an additional £175 for particular services. In 1785 this sum was given for 'building the "Ann and Eliza" and extra trouble attending wrecks',<sup>110</sup> but more usually it was for 'particular care and attention to the island and the negroes'.<sup>111</sup>

The manager had considerable responsibility. He was



expected to supervise the 250-300 slaves and the few white overseers, organizing their work over the whole island, and maintaining order. The work itself needed a variety of skills. He had to know about rearing livestock, and growing crops on an island subject to drought and never easy to develop. Rescues from wrecks, which might occur at any time, also had to be organized. He was not expected to formulate policy but to carry out the plans of the owner, often transmitted through the attorney on Antigua with whom he was supposed to keep in contact. He was also required to write regularly to Sir William about his work and the conditions on Barbuda.

Assisting the manager on Barbuda were two or three other white men, described usually as overseers, who were paid between £40 and £60 per year.<sup>112</sup> Sir William tried to persuade some men with abilities as grooms to go out from England to look after the horses and asses, but he did not have much success.<sup>113</sup> For all the men living on Barbuda loneliness must have been a major problem, and many of them only stayed a short time. A few, however, remained for several years, one man, Abraham Webber, settling there and founding a family: he was appointed as a turtler in 1765 and seems to have served in this capacity until his death in 1786.<sup>114</sup>

Under the new arrangements Dennis Reynolds's work as manager was supervised by one of the Codrington attorneys on Antigua. Unlike the manager of Barbuda who was appointed for his ability rather than his social standing, the Codrington attorneys were usually Antiguan landowners and men of some consequence.<sup>115</sup> They worked under the authority of letters

of attorney sent by the owner and they were usually given the power to dismiss the manager of an estate and to appoint another. They inspected and signed the accounts and were sometimes given power to manumit slaves. In general they were expected to see that the proprietor's instructions were carried out and to advise him on matters of policy, 'and . . . for me and in my name to do and execute all such matters and things necessary for the Management and Improvement of my said Plantations and Estates as fully and effectually to all Intents and purposes as I myself might or could do if personally present'.<sup>116</sup>

In 1783 Sir William made Langford Lovell (already an attorney) specially responsible for Barbuda and expressed satisfaction that his Barbuda concerns would now be conducted 'with skill attention and integrity'.<sup>117</sup> For these services he received £175 per year and commission of five per cent on sales of Barbuda produce<sup>118</sup> and on the freight of sugar.<sup>119</sup> He was also the town agent with the same responsibilities and salary as his predecessors.<sup>120</sup> It was more usual, however, for these to be separate appointments as there was less opportunity of money being diverted from the proprietor, as happened when the agent was the owner of a store in St. John's.<sup>121</sup> It was only too easy for such a trader to buy Barbudan goods cheaply and to charge the highest prices for the stores needed on the island. One attorney, Richard Oliver, had pointed this out in 1781 and suggested it would be better not to appoint someone who was both a 'buyer for you and a seller to you'.<sup>122</sup>

Sir William Codrington was quite well aware of the ways in which he could be cheated and took what steps he could to avoid it. He insisted on detailed, accurate accounts. These

were checked by the attorney before being sent home, where they were examined carefully and comments made on them.<sup>123</sup> Sir William disliked being cheated by retailers and sent as many stores as possible from England, insisting that they should be inspected on arrival and comments made on quality.<sup>124</sup> If they were unsatisfactory in any way he was prepared to take action against the supplier. He also recognized the dangers of bad debts and constantly urged the necessity of allowing only short credits. 'I desire to pay every Body to whom I may be indebted and therefore expect to be paid.' Open accounts, he said, led to disputes and lawsuits which should both be avoided.<sup>125</sup>

Sir William kept in close contact with the attorneys and manager and expected detailed information about the work on Barbuda. As he never visited the island he wanted to know exactly what it looked like and he asked innumerable questions about it. Reynolds wrote two very detailed letters in reply relating the areas he described to a rather inaccurate map which Sir William had sent out to him.<sup>126</sup> (Possibly the map following p. 4 is a copy of this.) In addition Sir William made efforts to see his employees whenever they came to England, and he inquired about West Indian affairs from anyone of his acquaintances visiting England from Antigua or any other island in the Caribbean.<sup>127</sup> In these ways he kept some sort of control himself over what went on but he recognized fully that everything in the end depended on the men on the spot.

In Reynolds, even Sir William had to admit that he had the best possible manager.<sup>128</sup> Under him Barbuda was developed more actively than before and he made improvements in

both stock and crops. There was some slave unrest, but no large-scale revolt.<sup>129</sup> Some conflicting comments were made about Reynolds's attitude to the slaves but in general he seems to have been regarded as humane,<sup>130</sup> and his comments in letters reveal a genuine understanding of the differences between those on Barbuda and on other islands.<sup>131</sup>

Barbuda was thus efficiently organized as a separate unit. It was nevertheless also fully linked with the Codrington property on Antigua and supplied many of their needs. The profits from Barbuda, for example, were sometimes used to defray the expenses incurred by the estates.<sup>132</sup> The town agent for Barbuda was also the town agent for the estates so he knew the requirements of both and kept both sets of accounts.<sup>133</sup> Barbuda was able to provide the plantations with livestock, timber, lime, some crops, and a variety of other estates supplies<sup>134</sup> which together usually made up about a third to a half (though sometimes more) of Barbuda's profits.<sup>135</sup> Barbuda was in turn supplied with rum by the estates and stores were despatched as required.<sup>136</sup> Curiously enough, Reynolds himself was not supplied with details about the profits made by Barbuda, although he knew what was sent from the island.<sup>137</sup> That the system at this time ran smoothly must have been due in no small way to the good relationship established between Reynolds and Lovell.<sup>138</sup>

For any landowner the most important test of good management must be whether a profit is made. From 1785 to 1792, full accounts are available and these show that for these years Barbuda always made a profit and sometimes a substantial one:

1785-6	£6,495	5s.	6¾d.
1786-7	£6,234	8s.	0¼d.
1787-8	£5,585	11s.	0¾d.
1788-9	£3,540	16s.	7d.
1789-90	£3,487	19s.	5d.
1790-1	£2,894	16s.	2d.
1791-2	£3,583	14s.	3¼d. <sup>139</sup>

Sir William, however, was never satisfied with the returns. He could not understand why Barbuda was not more profitable to him when it was being managed efficiently, as he usually agreed it was under Reynolds.<sup>140</sup> It must be admitted first that the figures are somewhat misleading for the accounts were given in Antiguan currency and in sterling the profit is much less: at this period £175 currency was equivalent to £100 in sterling.<sup>141</sup> Secondly there is no doubt that Sir William was expecting a return of something more in the region of £5,250 (£3,000 sterling). In 1792 it was calculated that the slaves and livestock on Barbuda were worth £30,000 sterling:<sup>142</sup> on a capital outlay of this amount an annual return of about ten per cent would not be unreasonable. The figures show clearly, however, that this amount was not attained between 1788 and 1792.

Sir William was in no doubt about the major cause of his profits being less than he expected. He complained constantly that Barbuda was 'ill-managed' and by this he seems principally to have meant that he thought more money went to his employees illicitly than rightly to himself, the proprietor.<sup>143</sup> He was obsessed with the feeling that all those involved with Barbuda were taking perquisites and that he suffered from diminished returns in consequence:<sup>144</sup> he described them as 'ruinous to the Probity of the Servant and the Purse of the Master'.<sup>145</sup> When Christopher (Bethell) Codrington visited Barbuda in 1790 Sir William urged him to find out what



Reynolds's 'perks' (his word) were 'for I question whether he has not cleared more from the Island than I have since his Residence. If you look sharp you may discern other perquisites that you do not expect.'<sup>146</sup> Sir William thought the slaves were trading in hogs and poultry, which enabled them to purchase rum from Reynolds. He believed Reynolds had his own agent in St. John's through whom he sold hogs, turkeys, turtle shell, and coconuts.<sup>147</sup> He felt sure, too, that Reynolds allowed visitors to Barbuda and took bribes to arrange this;<sup>148</sup> and that all these activities were connived at by Mr. and Mrs. Lovell—especially Mrs. Lovell who he thought sold butter from Barbuda in Antigua, and received more than her fair share of prog.<sup>149</sup> Christopher (Bethell) Codrington had a more realistic view of the situation than his uncle. Writing about Reynolds, he said:

I have a very good opinion of Reynolds having no one thing to say against him. I concieve [sic] that no man would live upon an Island by himself as he does but for want of money, and of course he will get it as fast as he can [his underlining]; and when you consider his situation there, the little controul he is under etc, it is impossible but to suppose that whoever lives there will make more money of the Proprietor than the Proprietor intends he should; for I do not myself concieve it possible entirely to put a stop to perquisites. <sup>150</sup>

Sir William was critical, too, of the attorneys. Reynolds, he felt, should have been controlled more firmly; Langford Lovell was too easy-going and the other attorneys were no better.<sup>151</sup> Christopher (Bethell) Codrington pointed out when he was in Antigua that his uncle was expecting too much. Many attorneys, like Lovell, were attorneys of more than one estate and might live nine or ten miles from an estate for which they were responsible. This distance meant much more under West Indian conditions, where the climate did not

encourage activity, than it would have done in England.<sup>152</sup> If it was difficult for an attorney to visit an estate on the same island, how much harder was it to visit an island twenty-five miles away. Further reflections about Lovell, however, made Christopher (Bethell) Codrington change his views somewhat. He felt he was a man 'of strictest intentional integrity, but, does not seem to think, that suffering you to be cheated by another man, who is under his controul, is the same thing as cheating you himself.' He thought Lovell was not a man to be acting attorney as he would overlook anything for the sake of peace and good humour 'and is as intimate with an overseer as with a Gentleman'.<sup>153</sup>

Sir William may have been right in asserting that some money was being diverted from his account; Reynolds probably was making money in ways unknown to him. Christopher (Bethell) Codrington noted that Reynolds had slaves of his own at Barbuda;<sup>154</sup> and he probably reared livestock without paying any rent for their pasture.<sup>155</sup> Nevertheless the amounts involved cannot have been very great as they would have been reported by others; it was probably worth losing a small part of the profits in order to retain the services of a competent manager who was able to increase the value of the island. Even if Lovell turned a blind eye to some of these activities, he was unlikely to allow any flagrant abuse as this would have cast doubts on his own position.

Unfortunately Sir William never really understood the difficulties Barbuda presented, even though he occasionally paid lip service to them. He had never visited any of his estates in the West Indies<sup>156</sup> so he could not imagine the problems faced by those trying to make a living there. Such

information as he acquired often could not be applied to Barbuda. He was misled by men like Colonel King and Colonel Martin whose views of Barbuda were far from the truth: Colonel King had described Barbuda as though it were Paradise;<sup>157</sup> and Colonel Martin claimed, when he rented the island, that he would make a profit of four times the rent of £1,500 sterling.<sup>158</sup> It is significant that after four years he wanted to give up the lease, and surprising that Sir William did not take this into account when reviewing the work of the men on Barbuda. It was statements of this sort, which he accepted as true, that led him to expect more from Barbuda than he ever received, and to criticize those who were out there when he was disappointed in his expectations.

(b) The Management of Barbuda under Sir Christopher Bethell Codrington, 1792-1833

The death of Sir William led to some changes in administration but in certain respects Christopher Bethell Codrington<sup>159</sup> followed the pattern set by his uncle. He took as keen an interest in Barbuda and was just as anxious to make his properties pay as Sir William had been. Equally business-like in his methods, he repeatedly instructed his agents to insist on immediate payment for produce and took the same care as Sir William in the scrutinizing of accounts.<sup>160</sup> Most of those available from Sir William's day start on 1 July and finish on 30 June. One of the first changes of any significance Sir Bethell made was to simplify the system of accounting by beginning on 1 January.<sup>161</sup>

A more fundamental change, however, was made by the re-integration of Barbuda into the administration of the



Antiguan estates. Langford Lovell was replaced as attorney responsible for Barbuda by J.L. Walrond who had been the manager at Betty's Hope since 1783.<sup>162</sup> He disapproved of Reynolds's independent attitude<sup>163</sup> (possibly because Reynolds was not technically a gentleman) and friction between them may have been the reason for Reynolds leaving Barbuda in 1793.<sup>164</sup> When Walrond left for England in 1797 his place was taken by S. Athill who followed the same policy.<sup>165</sup> Under these men the managers of Barbuda had less authority and a reduced salary. William Collins who replaced Reynolds received £100 per year,<sup>166</sup> but was summarily dismissed in 1801 because he had been selling some Barbudan produce on the side and pocketing the profits.<sup>167</sup> They were not able to find a suitable successor until 1804 and by that time Sir Bethell was anxious to revert to the system of separating Barbuda from the estates.

Athill, however, did not agree with his plans. He recognized that the returns from Barbuda were not satisfactory<sup>168</sup> but thought the profitability of the whole property would suffer if Barbuda and the estates were separated. He maintained that when they were under one management, produce from Barbuda was used first to provide the needs of the plantations: when they were separated the manager might send the goods to the market offering the best prices and be more concerned for the island's profits than for the general good of the estates as a whole. Then, too, he felt it was an advantage for the profits from Barbuda to be used to pay the expenses of the estates. This was not only a benefit to the plantations but saved the high cost of purchasing bills of exchange.<sup>169</sup>

Sir Bethell was not impressed by these arguments. He informed Athill that though he had not received any remittances from Barbuda in recent years, he had not had reduced invoices from Antigua either, which should have been the case if Athill's theories were right.<sup>170</sup> He felt, too, that Barbuda needed a resident manager with more authority especially as the French wars had made travel from Antigua to Barbuda a risky undertaking.<sup>171</sup> So, in 1804, Codrington appointed John James as manager of Barbuda, and in 1805 made him an attorney too.<sup>172</sup> Unlike previous managers James saw the accounts and was responsible for sending remittances to Sir Bethell, though it seems that sometimes they were still used to defray the expenses of the estates.<sup>173</sup>

James was paid a salary of £200 and commission on sales and wrecks of five per cent and later seven per cent.<sup>174</sup> Codrington hoped that giving him commission would prevent his taking perquisites and encourage him to increase the profits.<sup>175</sup> By January 1809, however, he was complaining that the profits were no higher than before and that the capital sum invested in Barbuda did not bring an adequate return. Writing to James in 1809 he said: 'When I reflect upon the Size of Barbuda 39000 Acres cover'd with stock of all kinds, with upwards of 250 Negroes upon it, and then look at the Returns from such Possessions, I feel that some great Errors must have pervaded the plans hitherto pursued'.<sup>176</sup> He felt the island would benefit from further advice and so when Samuel Martin, another absentee proprietor, probably related to Colonel Samuel Martin, went out to look at a new estate of his in Antigua, Codrington not only asked him to visit Barbuda but made him an attorney for the island as well.<sup>177</sup>

Letters to both James and Martin between 1809 and 1815 reveal much criticism of James's work. Codrington remonstrated with him for selling stock without firm payment, for not developing sheep breeding, for not sending money from turtle-shell, and increasingly, for not remitting bills and not writing frequently enough.<sup>178</sup> He constantly remarked that he was not getting an adequate return for the capital invested in Barbuda,<sup>179</sup> and there was some truth in his complaints. England was at war with France from 1793 to 1815 and the presence of the navy in the Leeward Islands gave opportunities for the sale of Barbudan stock and wood.<sup>180</sup> Even so the average annual profit between 1806 and 1814 was only £6,759. 6s. 6¼d. and the exchange rate halved the amount.<sup>181</sup> Included in these profits, too, were substantial wreck awards which still further lowered the profit the island had made on its produce.<sup>182</sup>

Sir Bethell was equally worried about the remittances from his Antiguan property. In 1809 his invoices had risen to £5,000, and his receipts from sugar had decreased by a half. 'Till Lately' his average annual returns had reached £15,000 sterling but in 1807 he had received only £5,148. 9s. 6d., and in 1808 £7,129. 2s. 9d.: 'and when I tell you that my W. India Property is charged with Annuities exceeding £5,000 per annum, you will see that these Estates have not latterly been of much value to me.' He assured his attorney that he did not mean 'to impute this to any other Causes than those arising from the Times'.<sup>183</sup> The concern that Sir Bethell felt for the declining profitability of his sugar estates shows that the dissatisfaction he expressed to James about Barbuda was part of a general worry about the value of his overseas possessions.

At this stage, although Sir Bethell criticized James for his lack of attention to certain matters, he still regarded him as active and competent and particularly praised his method of keeping accounts.<sup>184</sup> He seems to have felt there was something wrong with the system rather than with James personally.<sup>185</sup> From the facts available, too, James does seem to have been better at his work than some of Codrington's remarks might lead one to believe. He defended himself vigorously in a long letter in 1809<sup>186</sup> and in 1813 Codrington himself admitted that he might have been unfair to James. Writing to another attorney he said:

I have repeatedly complained to Mr. James that the returns from Barbuda were not equal to my Expectations but in truth I do not know that I ought to have complained seeing as I now do that in 1810 my Antigua Plantations were furnished with no less than 40 head of Oxen worth . . . £1600, and that with the addition of other articles, Barbuda in that year supplied my Plantations in Antigua to the Amount of £3690.17.0.<sup>187</sup>

In other ways, too, his criticisms at this time seem to have been unfair. If James did not always write as frequently as Codrington would have liked, he did over the years send very detailed accounts of the work on Barbuda and when he did not write the reason was sometimes ill-health.<sup>188</sup> Accounts might be delayed because he could not get to Antigua or had difficulty in procuring bills of exchange.<sup>189</sup>

After 1815, however, Codrington certainly had more cause for complaint about the way Barbuda was managed. James came to England in 1815 and when he returned asked permission for his wife and daughters to accompany him.<sup>190</sup> Codrington later blamed them for the subsequent deterioration in James's supervision of affairs on Barbuda. Before their arrival, he said, the property managed for him by James was all set to

bring him a 'handsome annual Income'; but after Mrs. James came to live with her husband he felt he would have been better off without the property as he had to be responsible for their debts.<sup>191</sup> The James family was not accumulating bills through living on Barbuda. In 1822 he and his family made their regular home at Clare Hall, another Codrington sugar estate on Antigua, and there they lived very extravagantly, giving parties and 'handsome assemblies'.<sup>192</sup> James himself continued as manager and attorney for Barbuda but he cannot have given much attention to the island as he only made occasional visits there. Moreover at this stage his abilities seem to have been impaired by excessive drinking.<sup>193</sup>

Unfortunately there is no series of accounts available for the period 1816-26 so it is impossible to gauge James's efforts by that means; but Codrington, writing to Lord Bathurst in 1826, complained that for the past five years he had received no revenue from Barbuda though he used to receive £2,000 sterling annually.<sup>194</sup> Codrington's views do not necessarily mean that nothing was made from Barbuda. When he made such statements he often did not take into account the value of the produce sent to the estates nor any money made from wrecks.<sup>195</sup> Codrington himself felt that the low profits were due to the large increase in the slave population on Barbuda—from 312 in 1805 to 423 in 1824.<sup>196</sup> He did not in this instance blame the absence of the manager, though some years later he said the slaves 'relapsed into a state of Idleness and insubordination fm the moment Mr. James left the island to reside at Clare Hall.'<sup>197</sup> Even so, at a time of slave unrest on other islands, the Barbudan population remained relatively well-behaved, though becoming increasingly

independent in outlook. When James tried to persuade some of them to work on the Antiguan estates they resolutely refused to go;<sup>198</sup> but even so, only two years before, in 1824, James could write that he trusted them so completely that he would sleep in the woods with them at night; and he was able to leave his wife and daughters on their own without lock or key.<sup>199</sup>

The period after James's death, from 1826 to 1833, was more unsettled. One attorney noted that the slaves were in a 'state of great insubordination'.<sup>200</sup> Although Codrington himself tended to think that views like this were exaggerated he did think that 'since there has been no resident Governour on the Island, they have relapsed from that state of obedience which was formerly their so well deserved Character'.<sup>201</sup> He felt that this was a reason why there should be a resident manager who was also an attorney.<sup>202</sup> In 1826 John Winter was appointed manager with a salary of £200 and five per cent commission on sales from Barbuda, but in spite of Sir Bethell's views he was not then made an attorney and the manager at Betty's Hope again had control over Barbuda.<sup>203</sup> Winter seems to have been a man of little initiative and fearful of the slaves who were becoming difficult to handle.<sup>204</sup> Rumours of emancipation obviously contributed to this, but Winter had to re-establish discipline after the slack time when there had been no resident manager.

Faults in management contributed not only to some unrest but to lack of direction in other ways. When Winter left Barbuda for a visit to England in 1829, the attorney at Betty's Hope, Robert Jarritt, wrote to Codrington about the neglected state of the island: 'The Buildings which he

promised me to repair not touched, everything falling to ruin, no provisions of any sort on the Island, nor will there be for 3 Months . . . I see there has been a want of Industry, Method and economy'.<sup>205</sup> In October 1829 he wrote: 'There has been no Industry, no proper application of labor, since the time of one Reynolds, many of whose works are still visible, and altho gone to decay, I learn was done by him'.<sup>206</sup> Criticism of the work of one employee by another cannot, however, be taken too literally. Others spoke highly of Winter<sup>207</sup> and when he returned to Barbuda Codrington made him the attorney for Barbuda as well as manager, much to Jarritt's mortification.<sup>208</sup> For the last four years up to emancipation, therefore, Barbuda was again administered as a separate entity, though linked as before to the Antigua estates.

Unfortunately increased authority does not seem to have made Winter a more efficient manager. There were some achievements—for example Barbuda went on supplying the estates with provisions<sup>209</sup>—but little effort seems to have been made to improve the island in other ways. When J. Liggins, Codrington's London agent, visited Barbuda in 1837 he was dismayed by the signs of neglect. Stone walls dividing the fields were falling down and gates had disappeared, the labourers' houses were neglected, the turtle crawl, wells, boats and carts were all in need of repair. Liggins was shocked. He informed Sir Bethell that if, when he was in England, he had been 'put in possession of a true and faithful report of things as they are in Barbuda—I could not have believed it! . . . I have now seen the reality and it distresses me beyond my power of expression'. He was critical of Codrington's agents in Antigua and Barbuda

and he felt the only remedy was frequent visits by someone from England who would look at affairs 'with the Eye of a Man of Business and not allow his Vision to be dim'd by the attractive glare of Pleasure and good Living'.<sup>210</sup>

Some of the neglect may have been due to laziness on the part of those in authority or to the attraction of other pursuits, but changes in the attitude of the slaves must also have contributed to the problem. In 1830 there were four white men on the island in charge of just over five hundred slaves.<sup>211</sup> While in the past the Barbudan slaves had been renowned for their good behaviour, at this time they were becoming restive. In 1832 troops had to be called in to help to restore order after some unruliness,<sup>212</sup> and in 1834 they refused to assist at a wreck and then plundered it themselves. When the Governor of the Leewards visited Barbuda in that year, they complained about Winter's treatment of them (in not providing their proper allowances of meat) and a magistrate had to be sent from Antigua to try and settle the dispute.<sup>213</sup> The thought of emancipation undoubtedly was a contributory cause of this unrest, but so was the fact that there were then so many slaves on Barbuda, many of them young people for whom there was insufficient work. Fear of provoking further trouble which might have led to a full scale revolt must have affected Winter's behaviour and prevented him from exerting his authority to get more work done. It cannot be denied that the management was weak in these years, but a more efficient system might well have driven the slaves to greater lawlessness.



The management of Barbuda was a matter of vital concern to both Sir William and Sir Bethell Codrington. Both appreciated their vulnerability as absentee landowners, in having to trust their estates to others. Attorneys were described by one contemporary as 'the locusts of the West Indies',<sup>214</sup> and John Luffman, writing about 1785, commented that the adage 'Fat managers and lean employers',<sup>215</sup> could be applied with truth to attorneys and their landlords. Barbuda was certainly a place where any absentee proprietor might expect to be cheated. An isolated island twenty-five miles by sea from the rest of the family estates would seem to present a marvellous opportunity for unscrupulous managers to make money at the owner's expense. That this did not happen to any great extent is a tribute to the system of management and the good sense of those concerned.

Of the two methods of organization that were tried, the more successful was the one giving greater responsibility to the resident manager. This did not lead to Barbuda being developed at the expense of the whole property, as Athill had feared, because the estates were still supplied with provisions and a close link was always maintained with them. The advantage was that a manager with some authority actually lived on the island and was responsible for what happened there.

Both Sir William and Sir Bethell maintained a vigorous correspondence with the manager and the attorneys. Instructions, suggestions, and criticisms were sent regularly and detailed letters were expected in reply. In addition both Codringtons kept in close contact with Antiguan landowners visiting England. Though they were absentees they nevertheless

paid scrupulous attention to Barbudan problems and this must have had some effect on their employees in the West Indies.

When one considers the remoteness of Barbuda and the irregularity of communications it is surprising that it was administered as successfully as it was. Though there were periods of considerable inefficiency there were many years when Barbuda made a profit and during the whole of the period 1761-1833, though there was occasional unrest, there were no serious slave rebellions. These achievements seem to have been due to the fact that all those involved saw that it was in their best interests to conduct the island's affairs reasonably, if not very, well. The managers, if they could endure the climate, had opportunities which they could not have found elsewhere. So while they might cheat their employers in minor ways they would not have risked dismissal by practising fraud on a larger scale. Similarly some attorneys might be prepared to turn a blind eye to small misdemeanours in order to retain a particular manager, but they could not have sanctioned too great an abuse of privilege as their own position with the Codringtons would have been jeopardized.

In keeping order the same delicate balance was maintained. The white men were in such a minority, and help was so far away, that they had to take care to avoid causing a slave rebellion. The slaves, for their part, recognized that the comparative freedom they enjoyed on Barbuda would be taken away if they behaved badly. In that case they knew they ran the risk of being transferred to the sugar plantations, a punishment they regarded as the worst that could be given.<sup>216</sup> Life on Barbuda depended on mutual co-operation, and the

Barbudan reputation for being of 'gentle disposition',<sup>217</sup> was not an empty compliment.

In spite of the fact that the organization of the island was reasonably successful, however, the Codringtons were never satisfied with their profits. They both tended to blame those in charge locally for this. Sir William in particular paid too much attention to those who spoke of Barbuda as a fertile island which was being held back from proper development by maladministration. As an absentee, only too well aware of the ways in which he could be cheated, his attitude was perhaps understandable, but it meant he did not appreciate fully the work of a man like Dennis Reynolds. Sir Bethell, for his part, was more inclined to blame his managers for inactivity. While both were probably right to a limited extent, they seem not to have realized fully the difficulties presented by the island itself. Poverty of soil and frequent droughts were a more genuine cause of reduced profits than was minor fiddling on the part of employees. These conditions applied all through Barbuda's history. In the 1820s, however, there were additional problems. After the French wars there was general economic distress in the British West Indies. Estates which had formerly been prosperous became overburdened with debts, many owners were unable to recover, and Barbuda was affected by this because landowners could not afford to purchase its products.

These conditions made it difficult for Barbuda to be run at a profit all the time. More remarkable, however, is the fact that despite the inaccessibility of the island and the difficulty of maintaining communications with those living there, the administration was sufficiently successful for

a relatively profitable society to be developed along the lines laid down by its absentee owners.

Notes to Chapter 2

- 1 GRO, D1610 T9 Grant of 1668.
- 2 GRO, D1610 T9 Grants of 1684, 1705, 1800.
- 3 GRO, D1610 E16 Royal Commission quoted in 'Case put to Mr. R. Wilbraham', and C14/2 W.C. to C.B.C., 3 Jan. 1791.
- 4 GRO, D1610 T9 Crown Grants of 1705 and 1800. The rent in 1684 was 'one sufficient able Horse' to be delivered at Nevis each year, at Christmas—invasions and bad weather being the only reasons for not doing this.
- 5 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Langford Lovell, 24 Mar. 1788; C14/2 W.C. to C.B.C., 3 and 17 May 1791.
- 6 GRO, D1610 E16 Lease of Barbuda to Wm. Byam and Samuel Martin.
- 7 GRO, D1610 E16 Case of Sir Wm. Codrington for Mr. Wilbraham's opinion, 1750 and 1751.
- 8 Ibid.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 GRO, D1610 E16 Appraisement at the end of the lease, 1761.
- 11 Journal of the Commissioners for Trade and Plantations, January 1754–December 1758 (HMSO, 1933), pp. 254–5.
- 12 GRO, D1610 E16 Note about Problem re Governor Thomas.
- 13 Ibid., also GRO, D1610 E16 Case put to Mr. Wilbraham.
- 14 PRO, CO 152/57 A full account of the wreck is enclosed in a letter from Burt to Germain, 24 Oct. 1777.
- 15 PRO, CO 152/56 Burt to Germain, 30 July 1777.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 Ibid. Also CO 152/57 Burt to Germain, 1 Nov. 1777. In this he reported that he had heard of Guinea ships wrecked on Barbuda; from these half the slaves were said to have been detained and seized for salvage. He said, 'Negroes have been rack'd on the Wheel by the Order of the late Mr. King, Attorney to Sir William Codrington, without any other Trial but where Mr. King was Arraigner Judge Jury and Sovereign: Some have also, I have been inform'd hang'd by the Sic Volo of Sir William Codrington's Attorney Mr. Redhead'. It is difficult to take these particular stories of ill-treatment of slaves as anything more than rumours. There is nothing to support them in the records. The fact that such stories were told at all though, gives an indication of the Antiguan dislike of the Codrington control of Barbuda. The report about the seizure of half the slaves for salvage is more likely to have some basis of truth, as the Codrington agents tended at one period to behave in this way (see below, ch. 5).
- 18 PRO, CO 152/57 Burt to Felton, 28 Nov. 1777; Burt to Germain, 1 Dec. 1777.
- 19 PRO, CO 152/57 Burt to Germain, 10 Jan. 1778.
- 20 Ibid.

- 21 PRO, CO 152/57 Germain to Burt, 15 May 1778. He thought that either Antigua or St. Christophers might extend jurisdiction over Barbuda.
- 22 PRO, CO 152/59 Burt to Germain, 27 Sept. 1779. This was approved by Germain, CO 152/59, 4 Dec. 1779.
- 23 GRO, D1610 C12 R. Oliver to W.C., 24 Nov. 1780, and also, for example, C14/1 W.C. to Oliver, 9 Jan. 1783 and 15 Feb. 1783. He had considered trying for a new grant long before this during the lease to Martin and Byam. C6 W.C. to Redhead, 4 June 1752; C6 W.C. to Warner, 6 Dec. 1754.
- 24 GRO, D1610 C12 Oliver to W.C. 24 Nov. 1780.
- 25 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Oliver, 9 Jan. 1783; W.C. to Langford Lovell, 15 Aug. 1788.
- 26 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Oliver, 9 Jan. 1783.
- 27 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Oliver, 27 Sept. 1783
- 28 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 17 May 1784.
- 29 GRO, D1610 C14/2 W.C. to C.B.C. 3 May 1790 and 10 June 1790; W.C. to Lovell, 29 Jan. 1790; W.C. to C.B.C., 16 Mar. 1790; C20/2 C.B.C. to W.C. 19 June 1790 and 14 Nov. 1790.
- 30 GRO, D1610 C20/3 C.B.C. to W.C., 3 June 1791.
- 31 GRO, D1610 T9 Letter from S. Cottrell (Council Office, Whitehall), 16 Apr. 1799.
- 32 GRO, D1610 T9 Grant of 1800.
- 33 GRO, D1610 C14/2 W.C. to Lovell, 5 Nov. 1789.
- 34 GRO, D1610 C14/2 W.C. to C.B.C., 5 Jan. 1791.
- 35 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 1 July 1785, 2 Aug. 1785, 4 Sept. 1785.
- 36 GRO D1610 E28 Opinion of Thomas Warner, 9 Oct. 1766; C14/1 W.C. to Dennis Reynolds, 4 Sept. 1785; C20/2 C.B.C. to W.C. 27 Oct. 1790.
- 37 GRO, D1610 C20/3 Copy of Note sent from C.B.C. to Reynolds, 16 Nov. 1790 and C27/3 C.B.C. to Martin, 4 Mar. 1812.
- 38 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Reynolds, 4 Sept. 1785. Also see, for example, C14/2 W.C. to C.B.C., 31 Dec. 1790.
- 39 GRO, D1610 E28 Opinion of T. Warner, 9 Oct. 1766.
- 40 GRO, D1610 E28 Opinion of J. Burke, 25 Nov. 1771.
- 41 GRO, D1610 C20/3 C.B.C. to W.C., 23 Apr. 1791.
- 42 GRO, D1610 C14/2 W.C. to J.L. Walrond, 14 June 1791.
- 43 GRO, D1610 C14/2 W.C. to C.B.C. 3 and 17 May 1791; C14/2 W.C. to Lovell, 15 June 1791.
- 44 GRO, D1610 C14/2 W.C. to Walrond, 14 June 1791.
- 45 GRO, D1610 C20/2 C.B.C. to W.C. 14 Nov. 1790.
- 46 GRO, D1610 C14/2 W.C. to Walrond, 14 June 1791. The Antiguan particularly resented the fact that Barbuda was not open to them.
- 47 GRO, D1610 C29 C.B.C. to R. Jarritt, 3 Mar. 1829.

- 48 GRO, D1610 C33 Lord Goderich to C.B.C., 5 June 1827.
- 49 GRO, MF375 Punter to Lady Codrington, 16 Apr. 1743.
- 50 GRO, D1610 T9 Grant of 1705; Case for a new grant.
- 51 GRO, D1610 C13 H. de Ponthieu to W.C., 1780-(1783).
- 52 'Description of Barbuda' by Captain Greville, R.N.,  
quoted by Oliver, History of Antigua, I, cxlviii-ix.
- 53 Report on Barbuda by two Magistrates, 1840, quoted by  
Douglas Hall, Five of the Leewards 1834-1870, The Major  
Problems of the Post-emancipation period in Antigua, Barbuda,  
Montserrat, Nevis and St. Kitts (Barbados, 1971), p. 70.
- 54 GRO, D1610 C5 B. King to W.C., 13 Apr. 1743.
- 55 Ibid. The Martello tower on the south coast may have  
built at this time.
- 56 GRO, D1610 T9 Case for a new grant.
- 57 GRO, D1610 C10 R. Clarke to W.C., 1 Oct. 1779.
- 58 Ibid.
- 59 GRO, D1610 C20/1 C.B.C. to W.C., 2 Mar. 1790.
- 60 GRO, D1610 C12 Oliver to W.C., 24 Nov. 1780.
- 61 GRO, MF375 King to W.C., 29 Sept. 1746.
- 62 GRO, MF375 J. Winter to C.B.C., 26 Sept. 1832.
- 63 GRO, D1610, L9 Depositions against Thomas Beech, former  
Governor of Barbuda, 1741. The manager of Barbuda was often  
styled governor, but to avoid confusion with other more  
exalted governors he will be referred to throughout this  
thesis as manager. MF375 King to W.C., 29 Mar. 1746, 29 Sept.  
1746; C6 W.C. to Redhead, 6 July 1755.
- 64 GRO, D1610 C6 W.C. to Redhead, 8 June 1754 and 6 July 1755.  
Unless specifically stated otherwise, sums of money will be  
given in Antiguan currency, the rate of exchange to sterling  
being given in the text or in an appropriate note. That rate  
should be considered to apply until a new one is given. In  
1760 £100 sterling was worth £165 currency.
- 65 GRO, D1610 E16 Lease of Barbuda to W. Byam and S. Martin.
- 66 GRO, D1610 E16 'First Appraisalment at Barbuda of Livestock  
etc. Second ditto.'
- 67 GRO, D1610 C6 W.C. to S. Redhead, 18 May 1757, 4 June 1759.
- 68 GRO, D1610 C6 W.C. to Messrs. Douglass & Grant, 24 May  
1751; MF375 James Athill to W.C., 12 June 1779.
- 69 GRO, D1610 A51 1769, A5 1779.
- 70 GRO, D1610 A5 1779.
- 71 GRO, MF375 Redhead to W.C., 1 June 1762, 25 Apr. 1763.
- 72 GRO, MF375 One manager, Kealing, was married after his  
appointment: 'She has been over there, and as it is not an  
agreeable place to her, he has resigned.' Redhead to W.C.,  
1 June 1762. Meech also resigned because of his wife.  
Redhead to W.C., 25 Apr. 1763.
- 73 GRO, MF375 Redhead to W.C., 19 Oct. 1762.

- 74 GRO, MF375 Redhead to W.C., 30 July 1771.
- 75 Ibid.
- 76 GRO, D1610 MF 375 Dr. James Athill to W.C., 12 June 1779. It should perhaps be pointed out, however, that Dr. Athill was likely to be prejudiced against Sally as he had married Samuel Redhead's daughter.
- 77 GRO, MF375 Redhead to W.C., 25 Nov. 1771.
- 78 GRO, D1610 C13 H. de Ponthieu to W.C., 1780-(1783).
- 79 GRO, MF375 Redhead to W.C. 25 May 1773.
- 80 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 2 Jan. 1786. Redhead's senility was also noted by Dr. James Athill who commented on the absolute sway Sally had had over him for some years. She had made him believe he was the father 'of a tribe which is undoubtedly the offspring of others.' MF 375 Athill to W.C., 12 June 1779.
- 81 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 2 Jan. 1786.
- 82 GRO, D1610 C10 R. Clarke to W.C., 30 Mar. 1780.
- 83 GRO, D1610 C6 W.C. to Redhead, 30 July 1761.
- 84 GRO, D1610 C6 W.C. to Redhead, 2 Sept. 1762.
- 85 GRO, D1610 A51 1762, A3 1768, A51 1769.
- 86 GRO, MF375 Redhead to W.C., 1 Oct. 1771.
- 87 GRO, D1610 A6/1, A6/2, A6/3, A6/4, A6/5.
- 88 GRO, D1610 E16 Inventory and Reappraisalment of Slaves . . . 1761. E17 List of Negroes . . . 1783. In 1783 there were 250 slaves on Barbuda, but in 1779 there must have been 291 or more as 41 slaves were transferred to Antigua in 1780-1.
- 89 GRO, D1610 A52.
- 90 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to J.L. Walrond, 4 Jan. 1784.
- 91 Ibid.
- 92 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Oliver, 11 Mar. 1783.
- 93 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Oliver, 19 Jan. 1783.
- 94 Ibid.
- 95 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Oliver, 11 Mar. 1783, and to J.L. Walrond, 4 Jan. 1784.
- 96 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 10 Jan. 1783.
- 97 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Oliver, 5 Aug. 1783.
- 98 He had also suffered in a similar way while Colonel Benjamin King was attorney, but this belongs more properly to a study of the plantations on Antigua. King was accused, however, of taking too much in commission from Barbuda and charging too highly for services: GRO, D1610 A1.
- 99 GRO, D1610 C8 J. Athill to W.C., 12 June 1779.
- 100 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Oliver, 25 Jan. 1783. In this letter he refers to his adoption of Oliver's idea.
- 101 J.L. Walrond was appointed to be manager of Betty's Hope



in 1783. He later became an attorney and in 1797 married Caroline Codrington, Christopher Bethell Codrington's sister. Barbuda was to supply annually certain articles of food for J.L. Walrond's table, as Resident at Betty's Hope. These were: 24 fat sheep, 12 lambs, 12 kids, 6 fat wedder goats, 2 dozen fowls (to be sent at Walrond's expense to Barbuda for breeding, and fed there), 12 turkeys (also to be sent to breed there), one small turtle and wood for the kitchen. 'Prog according to Luck and when opportunities offer of sending it to you, such as Crabs, Lobsters, wild fowl, Venison or other game'. 'Prog' seems here to mean food that is caught in the wild. The Shorter Oxford Dictionary does not specify any particular kind of food.

102 GRO, D1610 e.g. C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 4 Jan. 1784.

103 GRO, D1610 A5. Reynolds is referred to as the manager of Barbuda in the Accounts for 1782. D1610 A54.

104 Reynolds seems to have left Barbuda on 20 Feb. 1793, D1610 A6/8. No reason is given for his departure.

105 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 2 Jan. 1786. Reynolds wrote very long letters to W.C. on various occasions. Those on the micro-film dated 1 Apr. 1786 and 1 Mar. 1787 are particularly noteworthy.

106 GRO, D1610 The Accounts regularly show the sums paid. A6/1 gives the first reference to a salary of £100 sterling (£175 currency) and gives the rate of exchange. This remained the rate until the end of the century.

107 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 10 Apr. 1786.

108 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Oliver, 28 July 1783.

109 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 1 July 1785.

110 GRO D1610 A6/1.

111 GRO, D1610, e.g. A6/2, A6/3.

112 Wages are given regularly in the Accounts, for example GRO D1610 A6/1.

113 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Oliver, 27 Sept. 1783.

114 GRO, D1610 A4 1765, A6/1. In 1766 two infants with the surname Webber are included in the slave list, and the Webbers became an important slave family on Barbuda; Slave List, D1610 A4.

115 Richard Clarke was an exception to this—which Sir William felt was a reason for his misdemeanours; GRO D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Walrond, 4 Jan. 1784. The three attorneys appointed in 1784 (C14/1, 7 Jan. 1784), R. Oliver, M. Walrond and L. Lovell were all landowners, and gentlemen. When J.L. Walrond (M. Walrond's son) was appointed manager of Betty's Hope, Sir William wrote that he was glad to have someone in this position 'who has had the Education of a Gentleman—whose mind is above stooping to a Mean Action or conniving at improper Conduct of those under his Authority.' GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to J.L. Walrond, 4 Jan. 1784.

116 GRO D1610 E22 Power of Attorney 1780. In 1792 attorneys were given the power to manumit slaves (E22). Sir William

likened managers to subalterns and attorneys to commanding officers; D1610 C14/2 W.C. to C.B.C., 21 Mar. 1790.

117 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to M. Walrond, 7 Jan. 1784; to Lovell, 28 Sept. 1783.

118 GRO, D1610 See, for example, A6/1.

119 Amounts are given regularly in the Accounts, e.g. A6/1-7. A6/7 refers to this series as the 'Town Books'.

120 D1610, C14/1 W.C. to Oliver, 11 Mar. 1783.

121 John Hall, appointed in 1793, was an example of a tradesman acting as town agent; GRO, D1610 A6/8.

122 GRO, MF375 Oliver to W.C., 9 May 1781.

123 GRO, D1610, e.g. C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 6 Feb. 1783, where he points out a mistake in the accounts.

124 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Walrond, 17 Nov. 1784. Sir William wanted the quality noted 'so that I may be enabled to keep the Tradesmen in order, and that you may have the best of everything as I pay for the best and by prompt payment.' He commented on the poor quality of some hoes that had been sent out: 'the Tradesman has had a good lecture.'

125 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to M. Walrond, 7 Jan. 1784.

126 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 8 Feb. 1786. Sir William said that if Reynolds gave him as accurate a description as possible, 'I could perhaps hammer out a tolerable drawing and place the Island and its points to the points of the Compass, to which it really tends.' The letters which Reynolds sent in reply are on the microfilm 375, 1 Apr. 1786 and 1 Mar. 1787.

127 GRO, D1610, e.g. W.C. to Lovell, C14/1, 5 Aug. 1788. Sir William was also prepared to use less orthodox methods to check on his employees. When Matthew Meech was sent out to Antigua he seems to have been used as an informer. Sir William wanted to know all that went on and the character and behaviour of every white man employed by him. He suggested Meech should keep a journal and send it to him. He promised a reward, but Meech had to 'keep the Secret'. Sir William did not want to show distrust where none might be deserved 'but at such a distance I can't be told too much of all sorts, and if I can now and then let 'em see that I know what is going forward it will keep those in awe who want it if any such there be'. He urged Meech to destroy the letter. D1610 C6 W.C. to M. Meech, no date.

128 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Reynolds, 30 July 1786. C14/2 W.C. to C.B.C. 10 June 1790, 6 July 1790.

129 For details on both these matters please see subsequent chapters.

130 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Oliver, 28 July 1783; C13 H. de Ponthieu to W.C., 1780-(1783).

131 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Mar. 1787.

132 As in Clarke's day - GRO, D1610 C10 Clarke to W.C., no date, but received in Jan. 1780. Sometimes the profits were remitted separately; D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 1 July 1785.

133 The Accounts, GRO, D1610 A6/1-15 cover Barbuda, and its accounts with the Antiguan estates.

134 GRO, D1610 A6.

135 See, for example the figures for 1785-90:

	Total profit from Barbuda		Value of goods sent to the estates (within the total)	
1785-6	£6,495	5s. 6¾d.	£1,595	11s. 3½d.
1786-7	£6,234	8s. 0¼d.	£2,037	16s. 8d.
1787-8	£5,585	11s. 0¾d.	£3,349	18s. 0d.
1788-9	£3,540	16s. 7d.	£2,198	0s. 6d.
1789-90	£3,487	19s. 5d.	£1,738	17s. 7½d.

GRO, D1610 A6/1-5.

136 GRO, D1610 A6

137 GRO, D1610 C17 Reynolds to C.B.C., 14 May 1792.

138 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, C14/2 W.C. to C.B.C., 14 Nov. 1790.

139 GRO, D1610 A6/1-7.

140 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Reynolds, 30 July 1786; C14/2 W.C. to C.B.C., 14 Nov. 1790.

141 The Accounts give this as the rate of exchange at this time.

142 GRO, D1610 T9 Case for a new Grant.

143 e.g. GRO, D1610 C14/2 W.C. to C.B.C., 10 June 1790, 27 July 1790, 15 July 1791.

144 e.g. GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Oliver, 28 July 1783, W.C. to Lovell, 16 Nov. 1784, C14/2 W.C. to C.B.C. 1 Aug. 1791.

145 GRO, D1610 C14/2 W.C. to C.B.C., 6 July 1790.

146 GRO, D1610 C14/2 W.C. to C.B.C., 10 June 1790.

147 GRO, D1610 C14/2 W.C. to C.B.C., 14 Nov. 1790.

148 GRO, D1610 C14/2 W.C. to C.B.C., 31 Dec. 1790.

149 GRO, D1610 C14/2 W.C. to C.B.C., 14 Nov. 1790, 5 Jan. 1791. For 'prog' see above, note 101.

150 GRO, D1610 C20/2 C.B.C. to W.C., 17 June 1790.

151 GRO, D1610 C14/2 W.C. to C.B.C., 19 July 1790, and 1 Aug. 1791, in which he stresses the dilatoriness of attorneys over some Irish convicts who had been wrongly landed on Barbuda.

152 GRO, D1610 C20/2 C.B.C. to W.C. 14 or 15 May 1790.

153 GRO, D1610 C20/3 C.B.C. to W.C., 26 Feb. 1791.

154 GRO, D1610 C20/4 C.B.C.'s notes, p. 33.

155 GRO, D1610 A6/7 D. Reynolds was paid £66 for a grey mare (Irish) appraised by James Nibbs and Thomas Jarvis.

156 GRO, D1610 C14/2 W.C. to J.L. Walrond, 18 Mar. 1790.

157 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 10 Jan. 1783.

- 158 GRO, D1610 C14/2 W.C. to C.B.C., 15 July 1791.
- 159 It is difficult to know which names should be used for Christopher Codrington. When he inherited his uncle's estates in 1792 the title went to Sir William's son, Sir William Codrington (III). When he died in 1816 Christopher Codrington claimed the baronetcy as he said Sir William (III)'s son was illegitimate. In the subsequent dispute the Courts found against Christopher and the baronetcy continued in the elder branch of the family. In 1817, however, Christopher Codrington was knighted. He had already—in 1797—assumed the name Bethell when he inherited estates from another uncle and he was usually referred to as Sir Bethell Codrington after 1817. For the sake of clarity he will be referred to as Sir Bethell Codrington (or simply Codrington) after 1792, though in the notes as C.B.C. The spelling 'Bethell' has been adopted as this is the one used by a member of the family (TBGAS, XXI, 337) and it was used by C.B.C. himself on some official letters (in D1610 E36, 'Gloucester Journal', 18 Aug. 1832). The name is often spelt without the second 'l' however. Oliver, History of Antigua, II, 144-5; Amphlett, Guide to Dodington, p. 30; TBGAS, XXI, 337.
- 160 For example, GRO, D1610 C27/1 C.B.C. to J. James, 3 Jan. 1808, C27/3 C.B.C. to L.L. Hodge, 16 Feb. 1813.
- 161 Compare GRO, D1610 A6/1-7 and A6/8-15.
- 162 GRO, D1610 A6/8. Langford Lovell was also replaced as town agent—by John Hall.
- 163 GRO, MF375 J.L. Walrond to C.B.C., 21 May 1792.
- 164 GRO, D1610 A6/8. The last payment to Reynolds was his salary from 31 Dec. 1792 to 20 Feb. 1793. There is no reference elsewhere about the reasons for Reynolds's departure, nor is there any hint of what happened to him subsequently.
- 165 GRO, D1610 A6/12. Walrond was paid up to 30 June 1797, Athill from that date. Walrond married C.B.C.'s sister in December 1797.
- 166 For example, GRO, D1610 A6/11.
- 167 GRO, MF375 Athill to C.B.C., 13 May 1801, 5 June 1801.
- 168 GRO, MF375 Athill to C.B.C. 29 Mar. 1801.
- 169 GRO, D1610 C16 Athill to C.B.C., 9 Nov. 1804.
- 170 GRO, D1610 C16 C.B.C. to Athill, 22 Sept. 1805.
- 171 Ibid.
- 172 GRO, MF375 James to C.B.C., 25 Sept. 1804, 2 Aug. 1805.
- 173 GRO, MF375 James to C.B.C., 25 Sept. 1804; 7 Aug. 1820; D1610 C27/2 C.B.C. to James, 17 Jan. 1810.
- 174 GRO, D1610 A56/4, and C27/2 C.B.C. to S. Martin, 5 Nov. 1810.
- 175 GRO, D1610 C27/1 C.B.C. to James, 15 Jan. 1809, 16 Feb. 1809.
- 176 GRO, D1610 C27/1 C.B.C. to James, 15 Jan. 1809.
- 177 Ibid.

- 178 GRO D1610 C27/1 C.B.C. to James, 3 Jan. 1808 and 15 Jan. 1809; C27/2 C.B.C. to Martin, 5 Nov. 1810; C27/1 C.B.C. to James, 16 Feb. 1809, 3 May 1809; C27/4 C.B.C. to Hodge, 19 July 1815; these subjects are, in fact, constantly mentioned in the correspondence in C27/1-4.
- 179 For example, GRO, D1610 C27/1 C.B.C. to James, 16 Feb. 1809; C27/2 C.B.C. to James, 17 Jan. 1810; C27/3 C.B.C. to James, 5 Jan. 1813.
- 180 GRO, D1610 C27/1 C.B.C. to James, 3 May 1809.
- 181 GRO D1610 A56/4. The exchange rate given in these accounts varied between 1806 and 1814 but Antiguan currency was at that time about half the value of sterling. This continued as the approximate rate during the rest of this period (to 1833).
- 182 Ibid.
- 183 GRO, D1610 C27/1 C.B.C. to Hodge, 21 June 1809.
- 184 GRO, D1610 C27/2 C.B.C. to Martin, 5 Nov. 1810; C27/1 C.B.C. to Hodge, 7 Dec. 1808; C27/4 C.B.C. to Hodge, 18 Apr. 1814.
- 185 GRO, C1610 D27/1 C.B.C. to James, 15 Jan. 1809; C27/4 C.B.C. to Hodge, 19 Nov. 1815.
- 186 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 4 Apr. 1809.
- 187 GRO, D1610 C27/3 C.B.C. to Hodge, 16 Feb. 1813.
- 188 GRO, D1610 C24 and James's letters on MF375; C24 James to C.B.C., 4 Apr. 1809.
- 189 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 26 Jan. 1807, 14 Jan. 1817, 4 Apr. 1809.
- 190 GRO, D1610 C27/4 C.B.C. to Hodge, 19 Nov. 1815.
- 191 GRO, D1610 C24 C.B.C. to Miss James, 15 Nov. 1828. This letter gives a vivid picture of Mrs. James's extraordinary extravagances at Clare Hall.
- 192 Ibid.
- 193 GRO, D1610 C29 Jarritt to C.B.C., 22 Oct. 1829.
- 194 GRO, D1610 C33 C.B.C. to Lord Bathurst, 2 Apr. 1826.
- 195 GRO, D1610 C27/1 C.B.C. to James, 15 Jan. 1809; C27/2 C.B.C. to Martin, 7 Apr. 1810; C27/3 C.B.C. to Hodge, 16 Feb. 1813.
- 196 GRO, E17 Slave List 1805; PRO T71/248 Slave List for 1824.
- 197 GRO, D1610 C29 C.B.C. to Jarritt, 31 Mar. 1829.
- 198 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 10 Feb. 1826.
- 199 Letter formerly at Dodington, James to C.B.C., 7 Sept. 1824.
- 200 GRO, MF375 Osborn to C.B.C., 11 Aug. 1826.
- 201 GRO, D1610 C29 C.B.C. to Jarritt, 16 Dec. 1828.
- 202 Ibid.

- 203 GRO, MF375 Osborn to J. Winter (copy to C.B.C.), 30 Nov.  
1826.
- 204 GRO, D1610 C29 Jarritt to C.B.C., 22 Oct. 1829.
- 205 GRO, D1610 C29 Jarritt to C.B.C., 30 Aug. 1829.
- 206 GRO, D1610 C29 Jarritt to C.B.C., 6 Oct. 1829.
- 207 GRO, D1610 C37 J. Liggins to C.B.C., 9 June 1830.
- 208 GRO, D1610 C37 Liggins to C. B.C., 26 May 1830.
- 209 Supplies totalling over £7,450 were sent to the estates  
between Jan. 1827 and Mar. 1830; GRO, D1610 A56/19.
- 210 GRO, MF375 Liggins to C.B.C., 5 Apr. 1837.
- 211 There were 503 slaves in 1831; GRO, D1610 E17 Slave  
List 1831.
- 212 GRO, MF375 Winter to C.B.C., 26 Sept. 1832.
- 213 Hall, Five of the Leewards, p. 61.
- 214 Anon. ('A-B-'), A Short Journey in the West Indies,  
2 vols. (London, 1790), II, 6,7, quoted by Lowell J. Ragatz,  
The Fall of the Planter Class in the British Caribbean,  
1763-1833. A Study in Social and Economic History (1928,  
reprinted New York, 1963), p. 54.
- 215 John Luffman, Brief Account of the Island of Antigua . . .  
(London, 1789) quoted by Ragatz, loc. cit.
- 216 GRO, D1610 C12 R. Oliver to W.C., 24 Nov. 1780.
- 217 A remark by the Governor of the Leeward Islands in  
1835, quoted by Hall, Five of the Leewards, p. 65.

## THE ECONOMY OF BARBUDA

The Barbudan economy is considered in the next three chapters: first (Chapter 3), stock-rearing, as the most important activity; secondly (Chapter 4), some miscellaneous projects from which the Codringtons hoped to increase their income from the island; and thirdly (Chapter 5), transport, boat-building, and salvage operations. The total income and profits from Barbuda for certain periods when a series of accounts is available is included at the end of Chapter 5. This also shows amounts made from livestock and salvage awards. In this section 1834 is given as the final date rather than 1833 as it is the last year in a consecutive series of accounts.

### Chapter 3

#### STOCK-REARING ON BARBUDA

##### Introduction

Barbuda was principally of value to the Codringtons as a stock-rearing island. The poor quality of the soil and its lack of depth prevented the cultivation of sugar and although experiments were made with a variety of crops none proved commercially successful for very long. The island did not actually possess obvious advantages for animal husbandry either. Evergreen woodland and scrub vegetation covered most of Barbuda and although there was usually water available for drinking, the low rainfall and frequent droughts affected pasture for grazing and often destroyed the fodder crops.<sup>1</sup> 'What a miserable poor place it is', commented

Dennis Reynolds, manager of Barbuda in the 1780s,<sup>2</sup> and his opinion was echoed by other managers who had to try to make the island pay.<sup>3</sup>

Nevertheless, in spite of these major obstacles, Barbuda did support large numbers of sheep, goats, cattle, horses, and mules, and sales of these animals produced big profits throughout the period—larger than from any other source with the exception, in some years, of wrecks. Even though the stock were not of good quality they served a local need. All sugar plantations needed draught animals and manure, but few owners had sufficient land to be able to rear their own. Any surplus land which could support stock, however inadequately, was an asset, and the Codringtons, with their large plantations on Antigua, fully recognized the advantage of owning a nearby island which could be used for this purpose. Oxen, mules, and horses were regularly sent in large numbers to the estates from Barbuda for work in the plantations, and smaller numbers of sheep, goats, and cattle were supplied as food. A greater quantity of stock, however, was also sent for sale outside the estates to Antigua, and sometimes to St. Kitts and Nevis. Total profits from this source usually exceeded the amount made from the Codrington estates, and in war-time increased considerably because of the demands of the navy and the army hospital on Antigua. In addition to these assets when pasture was in short supply on Antigua, cattle were sent to Barbuda to graze;<sup>4</sup> and the estates were supplied with cattle dung from Barbuda.<sup>5</sup>

Both Sir William and Sir Bethell Codrington appreciated fully the profits made from the sales of these animals, but both felt that even more could be achieved with better



management. They imagined Barbuda as the supplier of stock for most of the other neighbouring islands and they spent much time and energy suggesting different methods and urging greater attention and care.<sup>6</sup> It is the purpose of this chapter to show what was being done on Barbuda, to estimate the degree of success that was achieved, and to see to what extent the disappointment of the owners was justified.

Some explanation must be given about the information available. There is little about stock before 1746,<sup>7</sup> but for the period of the lease to Martin and Byam there are useful accounts and figures of sales. There is correspondence for the time when Redhead was responsible for Barbuda from 1761 to 1779, but few accounts. After 1779 there is a large collection of letters and three good series of accounts – from 1785 to 1798, 1806 to 1814, and 1825 to 1834. The last set is not as straightforward as the other two since they were not always kept on a twelve-month basis. They remain useful, however, because they illustrate at least the general trend in the last years before emancipation.

### Sheep and Goats

Sheep and goats were an obvious choice for anyone intending to use Barbuda as a stock-rearing island. By nature they are capable of existing on poorer quality pasture than cattle or horses and are also better able to survive periods of drought. Thus they could be put to graze on those parts of the island which would not support much else; like Little Goat Island in the north, said to be capable of supporting only goats,<sup>8</sup> and Great Goat Island (actually a peninsula separated from the mainland by a wall) which was

described as having 'tolerable good Pasture for Sheep and Goats, particularly the latter'.<sup>9</sup> Another area on which they were put to graze was Spanish Point pasture<sup>10</sup> and they must also have been reared on the Highlands, as a key to a late eighteenth century map describes Castle Hill House as the place where all the Highland sheep were collected.<sup>11</sup> Sheep certainly do seem to have been reared and sold regularly throughout the period, but goats do not feature largely in the accounts after 1791.

The actual numbers of both species seem to have fluctuated considerably according to the estimates made at different times. Appraisements were made at the beginning and end of the lease to Martin and Byam. In 1746 there were said to be 330 sheep and 130 goats. By 1761 numbers had increased; there were 1,253 sheep and 1,500 goats. While sheep had slightly increased in value, though, goats had declined considerably—from 15 shillings each in 1746 to only 8 shillings in 1761. (Sheep were valued at £1 each in 1761 and slightly less than that in 1746.)<sup>12</sup> Figures are short for Redhead's administration of Barbuda (1761-79), but when Dennis Reynolds took over in 1779 he estimated that there were only 356 sheep and 15 goats. Four years later he claimed there were 4,000 sheep and 600 goats<sup>13</sup> and in 1786 he calculated there were 8,000 sheep and 2,000 goats.<sup>14</sup> He maintained that these increases were possible because the breed had been improved and sheep bred twice a year in the West Indies.<sup>15</sup> An even more surprising estimate was given in 1813 by one of the shipwrecked sailors from the Woolwich who thought there were 40,000 sheep roaming wild over the island.<sup>16</sup> Even if the figure cannot be accepted as accurate it does indicate

that there were a great many sheep at that time on Barbuda.

The accounts, in contrast, give a reliable picture of the number of sheep and goats actually sold. Goats never supplied a high proportion of the total profits but under Dennis Reynolds a useful sum was made from them, the best year being 1788-9 when £284. 8s. 3d. was raised from their sale.<sup>17</sup> After 1791 goats hardly ever again appear in the accounts. Sheep, on the other hand, were sold throughout the period. The charts on pp. 162-3 show the numbers that were sold at different times between 1746 and 1834, and also the proportion of the profits made by sheep in comparison with the total amount for livestock. From these it can be clearly seen that between 1785 and 1798, unlike the other periods, sheep provided a large part of the profits, varying from about a third to very nearly the whole amount. They were never sent in large numbers to the estates. Between 1806 and 1814 the number sold dropped but the price had risen; even so their contribution in proportion to the other stock dropped. At this time the value of cattle sold exceeded that of sheep and the same was true between 1825 and 1834 though at this time the profit made from livestock as a whole decreased.<sup>18</sup>

Dennis Reynolds was the manager who best recognized the value of sheep and goats. He believed they were the most profitable stock for Barbuda because they could survive spells of dry weather better than cattle and horses.<sup>19</sup> So, in 1780, 181 sheep and 35 goats were bought to help to re-stock the island. These were said to be 'very large and fine', especially some of the rams, for which the attorney, Richard Clarke, had paid £5 per head.<sup>20</sup> In October 1780 it

was reported that the sheep had increased surprisingly and some would be ready for sale in the next year or two.<sup>21</sup> Sir William Codrington was at first in favour of these developments and gave Reynolds advice on breeding methods. The improvement of the flock, he wrote in August 1783, depended more on the rams than the ewes and therefore care should be taken that good rams were provided and that their breeding was controlled by keeping flocks apart and moving the rams.<sup>22</sup> Dennis Reynolds agreed with this and with the idea that good rams should be kept in an enclosure and given a proper diet, but, as he had earlier pointed out in a letter to the attorney, there were certain difficulties to be overcome. Strong fences would be necessary, as in the West Indies there was no special breeding season and it would be impossible otherwise to restrain the rams.<sup>23</sup> Sir William wanted to send out rams from England to cross the breed, but was prevented by Act of Parliament.<sup>24</sup> However, in November 1784, he wrote to say that he was sending out two rams from his own flock on a Bristol ship and he gave strict instructions how they were to be cared for. On arrival all their wool was to be clipped off and they were to be kept shorn close until the climate changed their wool to hair. Because of the all-the-year-round breeding in the West Indies he recommended that the rams should sometimes be separated from the ewes and particular care should be taken that they were moved from one flock to another. Unfortunately, in a postscript, he had to explain that Mr. Span, a Bristol merchant, had decided he dare not, after all, risk the penalties of evading the Act, so no rams were sent from England.<sup>25</sup>

By 1786, however, Reynolds's sheep-breeding policy was

proving so successful that Sir William became more worried about over-stocking. Reynolds had been in favour of rearing sheep because apart from their physical ability to survive under poor conditions, sheep, he believed, were always in demand and there was no competition from other suppliers.<sup>26</sup> On this second point he was not entirely right. The neighbouring islands were not such ready markets as had been hoped, partly because of the customs dues and fees which had to be paid,<sup>27</sup> and partly because they seem to have had sufficient supplies of their own. Sir William wrote wryly to Langford Lovell in October 1786, 'it is not to my profit but tis to the general good to hear the neighbor Islands are so well stocked with provisions as not to want my sheep.'<sup>28</sup> The danger of there being too many sheep worried him considerably. In the same letter he urged Langford Lovell to dispose of the sheep however low the price rather than that they should overrun the island. In 1787 he advised the cutting of almost every ram lamb<sup>29</sup> and in 1788, when there had been a spell of dry weather, he felt that they (the sheep) 'had better now be at the bottom of the sea'.<sup>30</sup>

Reynolds estimated that there were between six and seven thousand sheep in 1792.<sup>31</sup> After 1798 the number sold dropped and no further concern seems to have been shown about the danger of their overrunning the island. The tremendous increase seems to have been due to the purchase of new stock though he also claimed that a major cause was the fact that he had put a stop to the Barbudan practice of sheep-stealing. This custom apparently developed into a regular habit during Sally Bullock's 'rule' of the island, her own family being particularly guilty.<sup>32</sup>

The practice can only have been temporarily checked, however, because complaints about it continued until emancipation.<sup>33</sup> The drop in numbers sold after Reynolds's time may have been caused in part by droughts and theft by slaves, but was probably due much more to the lack of interest of those in charge on Barbuda.

Sir Bethell Codrington would have liked the sales of sheep to be kept up. Apparently James, soon after his appointment to Barbuda in 1805, informed Codrington that Antigua would take 2,000 sheep annually.<sup>34</sup> Remembering this, and presumably having Reynolds' figures at hand, Codrington could not understand why more were not sold. In January 1809 he wrote that he felt 'much surprised at the small sales of sheep, which (as it seems to me) might alone produce a return equal to the whole of the present Profits; and when I recollect the number on the Island, and that they drop twice a year, I am at a loss to fancy what can become of them or why the Island is not overrun with them.' He felt that if care were taken to undersell other dealers, 'the returns from this article alone might be something very considerable'.<sup>35</sup> If two thousand sheep could have been sold annually then Codrington's estimate of their value would have been accurate. Sheep were selling at about £1. 10s. 0d. per head so that two thousand would have realized about £3,000.

Unfortunately the figure given by James in the first place was probably over-optimistic, suggested by him before he knew much about conditions on Barbuda. Even Dennis Reynolds, who must be accounted successful with sheep, only exceeded the figure two thousand in one year and usually his

totals were nearer fifteen hundred. In any case James does not seem to have had much knowledge of sheep-rearing in the West Indies. In reply to Codrington's criticism James maintained mistakenly that the idea of West Indian sheep dropping twice a year was erroneous. Drought was, however, a genuine difficulty. Many sheep had died in the dry weather of 1808<sup>36</sup> and the attorney Samuel Martin said that they were 'not at all times come-at-able, particularly during a great Drought'<sup>37</sup> (his underlining). Sir Bethell was justifiably perplexed by this. He had thought that in times of severe drought sheep might be enticed to any spot by cutting down 'bows' and he stressed again the profits he thought might be made from them.<sup>38</sup> Of course drought conditions must have affected the size of the flocks, but Samuel Martin pointed out that in fact the breed needed changing.<sup>39</sup>

Sir Bethell had actually already tried to do something about this. In January 1808 he wrote that he had hoped to send two rams 'by this opportunity' but was prevented in the same way as his uncle had been, by law.<sup>40</sup> In 1810, however, he thought he might be allowed to send out Spanish rams which did not come within the terms of the Act, and as they would be coming from a warm climate he hoped they would do well.<sup>41</sup> Unfortunately the first Spanish rams he tried to export were banned because they had not been entered at the Customs on arrival.<sup>42</sup> He had already suggested that American rams should be bought to cross the breed and in 1812 James reported on the condition of some he had purchased.<sup>43</sup> The next year Codrington at last succeeded in sending out two Spanish rams and six ewes. He wished there were some way of encouraging the sheep to keep their wool as this would be a

profitable side-line.<sup>44</sup> James did his best to respond to this suggestion. In 1816 he reported that there were then 215 American sheep and 13 merinos on Barbuda, but their fleece was thin and turning to hair on many of the older ones.<sup>45</sup> A consignment of wool sent to England in 1817, however, apparently met with Codrington's approval and James promised to do everything he could to increase the flock of 'Woolly sheep'. The next year he was able to write that the quality was better than before<sup>46</sup> but despite this activity interest in wool seems not to have been anything more than temporary.

Sir Bethell made a number of suggestions to improve the sheep but with little effect. He was unable to find a suitable English shepherd for Barbuda, as he had hoped, but at least in 1814 two slaves were listed as shepherds.<sup>47</sup> Efforts seem to have been made throughout the period to tame some flocks by keeping them enclosed but in general they were allowed to run wild.<sup>48</sup> James tried to improve the breed by turning some of the rams from the American flock into different parts of the island, but with disappointing (though hardly surprising) results. The rams were not seen again and only one lamb was found which seemed to bear any resemblance to them.<sup>49</sup> When these wild sheep were needed for sale or for some other purpose they were crudely rounded up, at least in James's time, in a manner described by Captain Greville, of H.M.S. Woolwich which was wrecked off Barbuda in 1813: 'At other times it was the practice of Mr. James to drive, by means of a long line of slaves, and every tenth man a gong, which he kept sounding, vast numbers of sheep, into an arm of the sea. They were then enclosed in this



living palisade, and the rams caught.'<sup>50</sup>

Even the improvements that were made, however, did not lead to a marked increase in sales. James tried to explain to his employer what the difficulties were. He said the Barbuda sheep were very small, usually not averaging more than 26 or 28 pounds and never in their wild state becoming fat. 'Good mutton', he said, 'will at Antigua sell readily at 2/3 but that is very different from the Barbuda sheep'.<sup>51</sup> A local butcher, writing to James in 1813, complained that he had to pay more for sheep from Barbuda than for Antiguan sheep—which were heavier and better in quality: 'yours are wild and fall off very much from being confined here' he said.<sup>52</sup> Codrington's hopes of selling large numbers of sheep were never realized, though he did try at this time to negotiate an arrangement with the Admiralty to enable sheep to be sold directly to the Navy and not through a dealer.<sup>53</sup> He did not succeed in this apparently, and the numbers of sheep sold continued to fall. During the period 1806 to 1814 the average number sold was always nearer five hundred than a thousand and by the end of the period—from 1825 to 1834—the number had dropped to well under five hundred. At this time changes of manager and unrest caused by talk of emancipation prevented any serious improvements.

One can understand Sir Bethell's frustration that so little success was achieved. Sheep, as had been proved by Dennis Reynolds, could do well on Barbuda and could make a handsome profit with only a small outlay. Codrington understood this well. Writing to Samuel Martin in 1810 he said: 'I have always thought well of Mr. James, and in truth I have but one fault to find with his Management of Barbuda,

namely, that he will not give his chief attention to those articles which I think (perhaps erroneously) would give the largest and most certain Income with the least attendant troubles or expence; I allude particularly to Sheep.'<sup>54</sup> Furthermore though it was possible for neighbouring islands to reject Barbudan sheep, the period of James' administration was one of war in the West Indies when the Navy was a keen purchaser of provisions. Even allowing for this additional market the numbers of sheep sold were very much below those of Dennis Reynolds's time. One factor which may have hindered sales was Sir Bethell's own insistence that long credit should not be given and sales should only be made to people who could pay cash or give sound promises; this it was difficult to do at a time when there was a shortage of specie and bills of exchange.<sup>55</sup> This difficulty applied as much to cattle and horses as to sheep, however, and sales of these stock remained high. Another problem facing West Indian farmers, namely the fact that tropical pasture is not as nutritious as that in temperate zones, also applied equally to all stock.<sup>56</sup>

The trouble really was that unless the man in charge on the spot was prepared to back a particular project no results could be expected. Dennis Reynolds, and possibly William Collins who succeeded him, seem to have been the only men working on Barbuda who saw the value of sheep. The others thought there was more to be made out of the larger stock – namely horses, mules, and cattle.

### Horses

Horses reared on Barbuda seem to have been regarded as

something of a joke. Sir William Codrington himself had no illusions about them. He had heard from several sources that they were 'small long legd ill shapen'.<sup>57</sup> This view was confirmed by Henry Coleridge when he visited Barbuda in 1825. He described them as 'macilent and cat-ham'd creatures which the natives from ignorance suppose to be horses; they are ten hands in height and their necks and heads fall from the shoulder in an angle of forty five degrees below the horizon.'<sup>58</sup> Their performance was no better than their appearance according to some observers. Langford Lovell said they were not sure-footed, were unsafe for the saddle, and uncomfortable because they were high-trotting; they were also too slight to use as draught animals.<sup>59</sup>

Nevertheless, in spite of these disadvantages, horses were bred on Barbuda from the late seventeenth century. Colonel King, attorney for the Codrington estates, wrote to Sir William Codrington in December 1740 expressing surprise that there were then only about 300 horses on Barbuda. He had heard his father say that in 'young Général Codrington's time there was upwards of 5000 head of cattle and 1000 horses'.<sup>60</sup> When the island was leased in 1746 there were said to be 125 horses there (valued at £5 each); at the end of the lease the numbers had increased to 371 (most valued at more than £25 each).<sup>61</sup> Between 1761 and 1786 the number must have gone up because sales were so good. In 1786 there were said to be 600;<sup>62</sup> but by 1792 there were only 83 tame horses and between 50 and 60 breeding mares wild in the woods.<sup>63</sup> In 1813 Captain Greville estimated there were about 400 altogether,<sup>64</sup> but this may not be accurate.

The value of horses to the economy of Barbuda seems only

to have been high during the American War of Independence (1776-83), when the usual source became expensive. American horses which had been sold for £16. 10s. 0d. to £35 in the Leeward Islands before the war, were selling for £30 to £70 in 1785.<sup>65</sup> This meant that locally reared horses, even though of poorer quality, would be an attractive proposition. Unfortunately the accounts of Barbuda are incomplete for the war years, but the years for which they are available show large sales of horses:

May - Dec. 1779	29 horses were sold for £1,250 10s. 0d.
1780	66 horses were sold for £1,989 19s. 6d.
1781 (one quarter missing)	49 horses were sold for £1,795 10s. 0d.
1782	81 horses were sold for £3,931 18s. 3d. <sup>66</sup>

On average Barbudan horses were selling for between £28 and £59, which made them appreciably cheaper than American horses. In 1785-6, 34 were sold, but the price had dropped to £579. 3s. 0d. and this included four mules. After this date sales decreased sharply. In the next two years, 1786-7 and 1787-8, 18 and 17 horses were sold respectively; after that date, in the groups of years for which there are consecutive accounts, the number was usually under 10 and often none at all were sold. Nor were large numbers being sent to the Codrington sugar plantations: in fact the largest number sent in these years was 9 in 1794.<sup>67</sup>

The attitude of the managers and owners of Barbuda towards horse-breeding does not seem to have been consistent. Colonel King, who was attorney in 1740, wrote to Sir William Codrington, then a young man, advocating the improvement of the breed. He noted that it seemed to have decreased in size

since his father's day and suggested that two coach stallions should be sent out each year for this purpose. Their offspring would be good either for the coach or the saddle and would make good war-horses which might sell for £20 to £35 each. Unlike many West Indians, King thought Creole horses were better than mules as draught animals, as mules were more subject to glanders, a very contagious disease. He held out hopes of horses being sold in St. Kitts and other neighbouring islands for draught, especially if they could be seasoned first in Antigua.<sup>68</sup> His views were obviously not held by Martin and Byam. During their lease of Barbuda, horses were sold but realized less than all other produce with the exception of sheep and goats.<sup>69</sup> From 1762 to 1834, the attitude of most of those working on Barbuda was that mules would be more profitable to rear than horses. In June 1762, Samuel Redhead commented that he thought horses were too costly to rear in large numbers and prejudiced the raising of mules which he felt were one of the 'best Articles' on the island.<sup>70</sup> Sir William, however, and for a time his nephew, Christopher, seemed to think that horses would be useful if certain improvements were made. The former, in particular, seems always to have felt that if horses did not do well, it was because insufficient care was being taken by the men out there.

Details of Redhead's work on Barbuda are limited, but it was obviously unfortunate for Codrington that he was still in charge, though old, when the war broke out with America. However, with the appointment of Clarke as attorney and Dennis Reynolds as manager, a more active policy was pursued. Clarke thought horses could be improved if the breed were

crossed and asked for two good stallions to be sent out. He wanted them to be not 'lofty' but about 14 hands, well-limbed, with a good barrel, legs not too long, and as short as possible in the postern joints. He also bought some mares locally and outlined his proposals for improving the breed.<sup>71</sup>

The big increases in sales of horses obviously encouraged Sir William to think that horses could be profitable and from this time he sent out stallions and mares from England and bombarded his attorneys and managers with information and instructions. In particular he emphasized that the stallions he sent there, at great expense, should not be allowed to run wild. They should be kept apart and the mares should be covered in hand. In this way, he said, one stallion would suffice for fifty mares, but if left to run wild the same stallion would only produce one colt in ten.<sup>72</sup> In 1782, he sent out two colts and commented: 'they will not be worth a shilling if turn'd loose to run among the Mares'. He observed that when they were two years old they might have three mares a week for three months. The mares they bred from were to be the best on the island and an account was to be kept of each stallion, the mares he covered, and the foals born.<sup>73</sup>

In November 1783, Codrington sent out more stallions, with more instructions. He felt that if they were properly managed and not allowed to run wild, 'I should estimate their value after safe arrival at full a present year's income of the island'. He clearly thought that not enough care was taken of the stallions on Barbuda and he emphasized how much they cost to send.<sup>74</sup> In 1786, after despatching two mares, he suggested they might be larger than American mares, but also more expensive. Those from his stable

cost 40 guineas plus freight and insurance. Mr. Span, of Bristol, charged £28 for freight of the mares. Then there was £6 duty, and provisions to be provided on board.<sup>75</sup> He saw, too, that English horses were not necessarily right for West Indian conditions. One horse he had sent out had proved 'slugish'.<sup>76</sup> Nevertheless, if the strain was most likely to be improved by sending English horses, he would continue to send them. In this case 'economy would not answer, where the difference of cost may procure an increase of goodness of Breed or propriety of Shape'.<sup>77</sup>

On the other hand he continued to stress that the stock he sent out should not be allowed to run wild, and that proper care should be taken of them. Already in August 1783 he had written that he was sending out two grooms with the colts in the hope that they would break 'the barbarous custom of turning Stallions loose'.<sup>78</sup> Another problem, he felt, was the great number of inferior horses allowed to roam over the island.<sup>79</sup> In 1787, he told Langford Lovell that he thought Reynolds would do well to shoot 'the wild spider Legd Stone horses',<sup>80</sup> and he had earlier stated that the old stallions should be cut and the runted mares removed from the island.<sup>81</sup>

Dennis Reynolds had suggestions of his own to make. He recommended that each year two or three good stallions should be sent out, 'of the Strong old Breed of Hunters none of the mixture of the Arabian Blood they are too slight and not fit to Breed from in the West Indies. I would wish for good brown Bays with as little white as possible, of good deep bright Bays: Those Kind of Horses would mend the present Breed very much. I wish to have boney and short Posterned, long fore Hands, short Backs, good Gaskins and well let down

behind.'<sup>82</sup> In 1787 he commented that a mare sent out by Sir William was too big for Barbuda's pastures. Smaller mares were to be preferred as they did not eat so much.<sup>83</sup>

Reynolds agreed with Sir William that it would be better to keep the stallions apart, but for this enclosures would be needed in different parts of the island. This was not an easy task, however, as there were not enough slaves to make the strong enclosures that would be necessary to keep the stallions safely inside,<sup>84</sup> and covering in hand was difficult when there was insufficient fodder for them. Reynolds expressed his feelings on the matter strongly in 1783: 'but good sir, if you were only one week in Barbuda you would immediately see how impossible it would be to carry this work into Execution.'<sup>85</sup> Unable to carry out the practice Sir William wanted, Reynolds tried a compromise policy of allowing the stallions to run wild for a week and then be brought back to the stables for another week. Sir William conceded that this was better than the previous policy, but not what was really needed.<sup>86</sup>

In these ways Reynolds did try to comply with Sir William's instructions. What is more, he did eventually achieve the construction of enclosures for the better stock and for crops. He made them in an area east of the castle roughly midway between the castle and the Highlands<sup>87</sup> (see map following p. 4). He described them in 1786 as being 'in culture and pasture' and already partly enclosed with a stone wall which he hoped to complete within three years. Here he intended keeping thirty to forty of the best brood mares to be covered in hand.<sup>88</sup> The enclosures were provided with wells for drinking water<sup>89</sup> but this was not the main



problem when there was a drought. Then the real difficulty was shortage of fodder<sup>90</sup> and it was this which rendered the enclosures virtually useless for three years after they were completed. In 1792 Reynolds wrote that he had had to turn the stock loose to find their own food as the dry weather meant that there was no grass in the enclosures.<sup>91</sup> In good years he tried to make provision for years of drought<sup>92</sup> but if the dry weather was prolonged this was bound to be inadequate. Reynolds certainly seems to have made efforts to enclose as many horses as possible when conditions were favourable but almost as many had to be allowed to run wild. In May 1792 a list was made showing the numbers of mares, geldings, and mules in the woods and all the stock in the parks.<sup>93</sup> It is interesting to notice that although 76 horses and 42 mules were enclosed in some way, there were still 65 breeding mares, 4 geldings, and 24 mules in the woods.

The problem of trying to find a method to rear horses successfully on Barbuda illustrates the difficulties faced by those who wanted to make the island profitable. Sir William did all he could to improve the breed and in Reynolds he had a manager who was prepared to work hard and try to carry out his wishes; but the island itself presented insuperable problems. There was very little pasture suitable for horses, fodder was difficult to provide and sufficiently strong enclosures could not be made easily. Moreover, however carefully the manager might try to carry out his instructions, he could not protect his work from the severe droughts, not infrequent occurrences, which could ruin all his efforts.

Christopher (Bethell) Codrington, who visited the family estates on Antigua and Barbuda in 1790-1, saw the difficulties at

first hand. He thought there were good horses on Barbuda, better than those from America too; and he thought that the breeding of them was not ill-conducted in the first instance (though he confessed that he did not know much about horse-breeding himself). What he did feel was wrong was the fact that there was no-one on Barbuda who understood about the 'breaking of Horses'. Potentially good horses were spoilt 'by being kicked about by a Negroe who knows nothing of breaking them'. He gave, as an example, his own horse which had been thought unmanageable, but having been coaxed and gently treated by him was now perfectly tame and taken for an English horse.<sup>94</sup>

Although he saw that Barbudan horses could be tamed and made attractive purchases, Christopher (bethell) Codrington was not in favour of rearing horses: there was little demand for them and they only fetched £25 currency. Mules, in contrast, were always easy to sell, and fetched £25 sterling.<sup>95</sup> Before he died Sir William had obviously come to think, with his nephew, that the breeding of horses was a waste of effort and money, presumably because of the difficulty of finding buyers. Although horses continued to be kept on the island little seems to have been done to improve the breed after the 1780s. In 1813, when Samuel Martin suggested that stallions were needed to improve the strain, Codrington made it clear that horse-breeding had been discontinued.<sup>96</sup> Oddly enough when J. Liggins visited the island in 1837 he not only thought that the horses there were less comic in appearance than had been suggested, but that they might now be bred successfully. 'I am however of opinion that you would derive considerable benefit from an infusion of some

new Blood among them—they would advance in Character, and soon be preferred to the American Horses, which now take the lead in the Neighbouring Islands.'<sup>97</sup>

Horses, then, did not contribute significantly to the economy of Barbuda except during the period of war with America. This fairly detailed study of horse-rearing in the 1780s is of significance, however, because it illustrates the enormous gap between English methods and the possibility of carrying them out under West Indian conditions. It also shows the extent to which a conscientious absentee landlord was prepared to give time and money to a particular project on one of his estates. Unfortunately in this case the results were not financially rewarding.

### Mules

Mule-breeding on Barbuda is of special interest because, even more than with the rearing of horses, it illustrates the extent to which a keen landowner was prepared to back a theory even though the results did not justify his policy. In this instance, too, the attorneys and managers of Barbuda shared the same view as the landowner. With the one exception of Colonel King who preferred horses, all were in agreement on the advantages of mules as an article for sale.<sup>98</sup> Mules, especially those bred in the West Indies, were tougher, worked harder, and ate less than horses;<sup>99</sup> they also fetched a higher price. In 1793 mules sent to the Codrington estates on Antigua raised £40 (currency) each, in 1797 £55 each, and in 1798 £66 each, more than horses and working cattle.<sup>100</sup> There was, too, always a ready market for them, unlike sheep and horses which were sometimes difficult to sell.

Nevertheless, despite these advantages, mules never provided more than a small part of the income from Barbuda. Between 1746 and 1755, 83 were sold for £2,611. 7s. 0d. – only about a third of the amount realized, during the same time, for cattle.<sup>101</sup> In the other periods under special consideration – 1785-98, 1806-14, 1825-34 – only 31 were sold in the first (24 in one year) and none at all in the last two. Between 1785 and 1798 a reasonable number were sent to the Codrington estates on Antigua, but never more than 24; very few were sent thereafter.<sup>102</sup> The reason for this was that mules were difficult to breed. There were always sheep and horses of some sort on Barbuda and with these species advantage could be taken of shortages in a time of emergency, as happened, for example, with horses during the American War of Independence. With mules, however, it was different. In the period when horses were doing so well, 31 mules were sold in 1780, none in 1781, and only 4 in 1782.<sup>103</sup> This was because there were no mules to sell. The prices they raised, however (£200 for the four sold in 1782), obviously encouraged all those involved to continue to try to overcome the difficulties.

The main problem was in providing prolific stallion asses large enough to cover a mare. In the 1720s and 1730s they had been purchased from the Cape de Verde islands, but Colonel King felt these were worthless as they lost their spirit. He wondered what Portuguese asses would be like. In 1743 he managed to procure ten from the Isle of Salt, an uninhabited island off the Cape de Verde islands, and he hoped they would do well.<sup>104</sup> Some success must have been realized as mules were sold throughout the period of the lease to Martin and

Byam which began three years later.<sup>105</sup> When the lease ended in 1761 Sir William Codrington began to think in terms of mule-rearing and he bought and sent over two Spanish asses in 1761;<sup>106</sup> But Samuel Redhead's inefficiencies clearly deterred him from spending much on stock for Barbuda and it was not until the 1780s that he became really active again.

When Clarke took over the attorneyship, with Dennis Reynolds at Barbuda, there seems to have been only one jackass on the island.<sup>107</sup> Clarke purchased one and commented that 'the Breed are not large, but at present no better can be procured'.<sup>108</sup> In November 1780 Richard Oliver recommended that Sir William should try to purchase one from Gibraltar or from Portugal.<sup>109</sup> For the rest of his life Sir William Codrington made tremendous efforts to secure the right kind of asses for Barbuda. He felt at first there was no point in sending any from England (though he did in fact send some later) as he thought a better size could be obtained from the Spanish settlements, and cheaper too;<sup>110</sup> but he did all he could to find suitable animals in other areas. In 1783 he was busy negotiating with the consul at Algiers to send some from there, not less than 13 hands high.<sup>111</sup> In May 1784 he wrote that he had employed someone from the south of France to send two<sup>112</sup> and in 1784 he persuaded one friend to send two from Plymouth and another to look in Ireland.<sup>113</sup> In July that year, another contact had promised to procure two from Savoy, Piedmont, or southern France;<sup>114</sup> and in December he wrote that he hoped two asses might be sent from Geneva and two from Leghorn.<sup>115</sup> He realized that he had applied for so many jackasses from so many quarters that he was in danger of having too many—but in September

1785 he had not actually received any. He hoped that he would soon hear that two had been bought for him from the King of Sardinia's stud—procured from Spain through Gibraltar.<sup>116</sup> A good deal of patience was needed to endure delays. On 2 January 1786, Sir William wrote to Langford Lovell that two stallion asses bought in Geneva and due to be sent from there on 26 November had still not arrived in England although the longest time given for the journey from Geneva to Calais was twenty days.<sup>117</sup> These two did eventually reach Barbuda.<sup>118</sup> There was no guarantee either that the asses would be prolific. The English consul at Marseilles wrote that he was unable to send any from there as Sir William had insisted on an assurance to this effect, 'which he [the consul] sais No Man of Character will warrant'.<sup>119</sup>

Sir William clearly felt that it was worth his while to exert himself in this way. He told Dennis Reynolds that 'a good Stallion Ass is a much more valuable animal at Barbuda than the finest horse I could send you.'<sup>120</sup> Asses procured from so far afield were not, however, cheap and Sir William particularly emphasized that because so much had been spent on procuring them they must be treated well in Barbuda. He remembered sending out two fine jack-asses in 1761 which cost him about £300 and from which he did not receive 300s. in return. They were turned loose, and in consequence one died by fighting and the other by getting stuck in a bog.<sup>121</sup> The instructions he gave for the care of these animals resembled those he gave for horses. On no account were they to be allowed to run wild. Asses, he said, were very salacious by temperament and would exhaust themselves if not kept in an enclosure.<sup>122</sup> It was most

important that they should cover in hand. He realized that shortage of fodder meant that all the stock on Barbuda could not be kept tame, but he thought some, namely the stallions and jackasses, should be restrained even if it cost twice as much to feed them.<sup>123</sup> The fact that he was prepared to spend so much money on these purchases, he said, indicated that he had confidence in the men on Barbuda; but he continually repeated the instructions on the way he wished the asses to be handled.<sup>124</sup>

The results of his efforts were not encouraging, however. Of the jackasses which actually arrived, some were not prolific, and if they were, great difficulty was found in persuading them to cover larger mares.<sup>125</sup> Sir William counselled patience and strict adherence to his rules; he also gave some practical advice. He suggested a stage should be made for the ass to stand on.<sup>126</sup> If the animal showed great antipathy to mares it should be shown a she-ass first and then blindfolded.<sup>127</sup> In spite of all these suggestions very few mules were born. Not only was Barbuda not able to supply neighbouring islands with mules but supplies had even to be bought for the use of Codrington's own estates. In May 1785 Sir William noted that Langford Lovell had had to buy sixteen Irish mules at £47. 10s. 0d. (presumably for each one) for the use of the estates: 'tis grievous to think Mules can be bred here and sent out at 9£ freight and with my adjoining Island I cannot supply the market.'<sup>128</sup> In 1787 he said he thought the failure 'was the most positive and undeniable proof of the gross mismanagement of that Island and what seems extraordinary is the difficulty I have had to establish a different sistem.'<sup>129</sup> It is not surprising he felt like

this as he believed three large asses (such as were on the island in 1791) with proper management and sufficient mares would produce a large number of mules. He thought that if only his instructions had been followed 'the Island would have swarmed with Mules by this time'.<sup>130</sup>

Dennis Reynolds, on his part, was not prepared to accept the blame for the failure to breed sufficient mules. He said that the fault was Sir William's because he had not sent out enough stallion asses. He said that he had repeatedly urged the breeding of mules instead of horses and had asked for large jackasses to be sent. All those on the island, he said, with the exception of two old asses, were too small to cover the mares 'in any situation'.<sup>131</sup> The difficulties Reynolds faced on Barbuda with regard to horse-breeding must have applied equally to mules, but he seems to have made some effort to comply with Codrington's instructions. He had, for example, arranged for a stallion ass to be accompanied by two slaves when it was released from its stable.<sup>132</sup>

There was some measure of success. In 1792 Dennis Reynolds told Sir William Codrington that he had twenty-four young mules, then four years old, which he was breaking into the cart. In addition there were another twenty-four aged one to three years, and eleven others, young and old. He also thought there were about a hundred mares on Barbuda most of them then in foal by jackasses.<sup>133</sup> This must have been something of an exaggeration, or some of the foals must have died as only fifty-three mules were sold between 1795 and 1798. From these records it would seem that the largest number of mules sold in any one year was thirty. This



occurred in 1795 when twenty-four were sold for £1,184.8s.0d. and another six were sent to the Codrington estates:<sup>134</sup> but even if thirty had been produced each year it is doubtful whether Sir William would have considered his mule-rearing policy successful.

Although when Christopher (Bethell) Codrington visited Barbuda in 1790-1 he was in favour of breeding mules<sup>135</sup> he seems to have done little to continue Sir William's policy after inheriting the estates in 1792. In the groups of years under special consideration there are no records of mules being sold after 1795 and few seem to have been sent to the estates after 1808. They are barely mentioned in his correspondence although he was as interested as his uncle in making Barbuda pay. No explanation is given for the dropping of mule-breeding but it can be supposed that the expense was considered too great in view of the inadequate returns. The difficulty of obtaining good jackasses and then of persuading them to breed obviously put an end to the idea of Barbuda supplying the neighbouring islands with mules, attractive though this idea was. Neither horses nor mules proved to be profitable but a study of the policy towards both breeds shows that Sir William Codrington was a very energetic absentee landowner, willing to expend both money and effort on a scheme which he thought might be of value.

### Cattle

Cattle were kept in large numbers on Barbuda for the whole of this period and, unlike the other varieties of livestock discussed in this chapter, there seems to have been no doubt at any time of their value to the economy. The accounts

show that this view was right; of the four types of stock considered, cattle were the most consistently profitable. This was not due to high quality, for there are indications that these animals were an inferior breed<sup>136</sup> and little seems to have been done to improve them, but demand for cattle in the West Indies usually exceeded supply. They were needed for their meat and as draught animals, and the market increased during the French wars. The owners of Barbuda were fortunate in having a pasture island (even if the pasture was inadequate) where large numbers of cattle could be maintained.

In 1740 there seem to have been about 2,000 head of cattle on Barbuda but Colonel King believed a much larger number—nearer 5,000—had been kept on the island at the beginning of the century. He advised Sir William to send out six bulls each year to improve the breed.<sup>137</sup> At the appraisement made in 1746, however, there were said to be only 584 and in 1761, at the end of the lease, 1,093.<sup>138</sup> Dennis Reynolds calculated there were 1,000 cattle in 1786<sup>139</sup> and Captain Greville thought there were about 3,000 in 1813.<sup>140</sup> As with sheep though, these estimates are very rough and ready: most of the cattle roamed wild in the woods and rounding them all up was virtually impossible.

The value to the economy, however, can be much more accurately assessed. In some years when drought affected the numbers, or a bad sugar crop prevented Antiguan land-owners from making purchases, there was obviously a drop in sales, but in general cattle brought in a steady income, and also provided the Codrington sugar estates with draught cattle. During the first nine years of the Martin and Byam

lease, 1745-66, £8,161 was made from the sales of cattle, while horses, sheep, goats, and mules together only made £5,386.<sup>141</sup> General shortages of livestock during the American War of Independence must be the reason for the large amounts made from cattle in two of the four years for which figures are available—£5,818. 7s. 4d. in 1780 and £2,791. 2s. 0d. for nine months in 1781.<sup>142</sup> In the period 1785-98, sheep usually did better than cattle in the ordinary sales, but many more cattle than sheep were sent to the Codrington sugar plantations and these usually more than made up the difference. In 1793, 99 working oxen were sent to the estates, valued at £3,485, and in nine of these years more than thirty were supplied. Between 1806 and 1814, in most years, profits from cattle exceeded those from other stock and reached a peak in 1810 when £4,646. 18s. 10d. was made from sales and cattle worth £1,645 were sent to the Codrington plantations. In the last period, 1825-1834, sales of cattle continued to be normally higher than those of other livestock.<sup>143</sup> These larger sales, of course, were partly accounted for by the fact that cattle were useful both as food and as draught animals, while sheep and horses served only one purpose and were therefore not always easy to sell even when numbers were high; and mules, which were always popular purchases, were difficult to raise. Mules certainly fetched a higher individual price—£40 compared with £30 for working oxen at the end of the eighteenth century<sup>144</sup>—but the numbers of mules sold was in no way comparable to the number of working oxen.

Considering the contribution made by cattle to the economy of Barbuda, and the degree of interest shown by Sir

William Codrington in the breeding of horses and mules, comparatively little attention was given by him to the rearing of cattle which, apart from a few tame animals, roamed wild in the woods. Admittedly, in view of the difficulties, it would have been impossible to do anything else, but certain disadvantages followed, and these Sir William took much more lightly than one might have expected. One of the less serious effects was the rather peculiar flavour of the meat from Barbudan cattle caused by the bushes they had grazed on.<sup>145</sup> Another, and far more serious disadvantage, was that the animals were difficult to catch and the methods adopted to overcome this problem led to other bad effects. Usually the cattle could be caught at the drinking places, but in the wet season, which from the point of view of their fitness for sale was the best time, they could not be lured there because water was so readily available elsewhere. Bulldogs were used to hunt them on these occasions, and if a beast was seen that looked ready for market it had to be seized immediately otherwise 'we may not for a Month, if the Island is under Water see him again; for the heavy underwood and Prickly pears, which are all over the Island, make it even with the best Dogs impossible almost to take them'.<sup>146</sup> In response to a request from Dennis Reynolds, Sir William sent out dogs for catching the cattle, but he warned Reynolds that his method of hunting would make the animals much more wild. They would be scared of men because they were always being chased by them.<sup>147</sup> Just as serious though was the fact that the cattle were sometimes so badly damaged by the dogs that they were unfit for sale.<sup>148</sup> The dogs he sent out seem to have been extremely fierce. He

himself seems to have thought that true bulldogs, with their quality of persistent holding-on, were too ferocious and he favoured a cross-breed; he pointed out, too, that these dogs were likely to become sheep-killers.<sup>149</sup>

These methods obviously did scare the animals. In 1785, in a letter to J.L. Walrond, he commented on the difficulty that had been found in getting the cattle into pens 'except when Much panickd for Want of Water'. He thought the pens must have been badly built or the cattle frightened when they first went in and suggested that tame animals should be fed there and used as a decoy.<sup>150</sup> Sir William would have been very critical of the method used by John James. Apparently it was his custom to go bull-hunting as a form of sport and a vivid description of this was given by Captain Greville. Two slave selected and separated

a young but full-grown bull from a large herd . . . As soon as this was accomplished, the bull generally made, at a furious rate, for the thickest parts of the wood, followed by myself and motley companions.

The huntsmen carried long ropes before them, and whenever they could get sufficiently near to the bull, they skilfully threw them over the animal's horns, and not unfrequently seized the creature by the tail, and by a sudden peculiar jerk, succeeded in turning the bull over. . . . The cattle, when wanted for exportation or consumption, are caught as above described, and lashed to the horns of tame oxen, who never fail, sooner or later, to conduct them to head-quarters without any assistance.<sup>151</sup>

Once the cattle were caught little seems to have been done to prepare them for sale. Sir William felt that the cattle should be broken and tamed before they were sent to market—he had heard them spoken of badly because this had not been done,<sup>152</sup> and Dennis Reynolds himself pointed out how the animals deteriorated once they had been caught: 'for when they are taken in the best Condition they are so exceeding

wild that they fall away in a few Days attempting to break them, that you would say they are mere Carion'.<sup>153</sup> Barbudan cattle, too, were criticized for lacking stamina and being stunted in growth. Sir William felt this was probably due to their being put to work before they were fully grown, and in the case of the males being cut when they were too young.<sup>154</sup> Christopher (Bethell) Codrington calculated, in 1791, that a Barbudan ox could work for five years, when it would be fattened (presumably for slaughter) and sold for £18 or £19 currency,<sup>155</sup> but in 1809 he doubted whether these animals could survive more than one crop season.<sup>156</sup> The numbers of draught oxen being sent to the estates would tend to support this opinion.

The methods of rearing cattle seem always to have been crude but attempts were made to improve conditions. Colonel King described avenues which had been cut through the bushes, leading to watering places for the cattle. They were paved and pitched with stone so that they never became boggy.<sup>157</sup> These avenues remained a feature of Barbuda. Henri de Ponthieu found them covered with grass and serving as pasture for tame cattle by day and for the wild at night.<sup>158</sup> Providing sufficient watering places was a perennial problem. Samuel Redhead apparently made improvements in this direction<sup>159</sup> but in times of drought there were always shortages of food. This made it very difficult to tame the cattle because if dry weather occurred they had to be turned loose to fend for themselves.<sup>160</sup> Dennis Reynolds seems, as usual, to have made the most improvements. In particular he was responsible for making enclosures. Two of these – about 300 acres – were reserved for making hay; one of about 160 acres was to be used for

fattening cattle. In 1791, 100 head of wild cattle had been put there and 50 of them had been sold in the Antiguan market to a butcher. Apparently this made a 'wonderful Difference' to the flavour of the meat as in these enclosures their diet was entirely grass. Two other 'parks' were set aside for improving cattle; one was for working oxen and the other for breeding cows.<sup>161</sup>

Sir William was clearly ready to supply animals for improving the strain of cattle as he was for other stock. In 1784 he sent out two bull calves and asked for details of the sort necessary. He was willing to send out an annual supply<sup>162</sup> but was deterred by Reynolds who felt the breed could be crossed sufficiently with bulls from other islands. He had already exchanged bulls with Antiguan stock. He said the cattle were very handsome, especially the bulls: and he observed that dark-coloured or red cattle did better than those with any white on them.<sup>163</sup> In general, however, Sir William took much less interest in the breeding of these animals than in horses or mules, possible because they nearly always sold well. When John James became manager of Barbuda in 1805 he found a shortage of breeding stock, so he made a point of building up these animals and selling off the old cattle.<sup>164</sup> Judging by the sales this policy must have been successful.

The actual selling of the cattle was not usually a problem until the 1820s although there were sometimes temporary difficulties, and the owners and managers were always eager to find new markets. The wars of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries clearly gave them good opportunities for increased sales. During the American War of

Independence an arrangement was made to supply the naval hospital at English Harbour with meat on a regular basis. Six to eight animals a week were sent there—at 1s. per pound. These cattle were transported live to Antigua and slaughtered at the Narrows or at Betty's Hope. The carcasses were then taken by cart or wagon with a canvas cover to the hospital which they had to reach by 8 a.m.<sup>165</sup> The French wars provided the opportunity of selling to the navy and more cattle were sold in this period than any other. They were either sold directly to the captains who anchored off the island<sup>166</sup>—the preferred way as payment was prompt—or indirectly through a contractor on Antigua. This method often led to delays in payment and sometimes to complete defaulting and for this reason Sir Bethell insisted that no long credits should be given and no credit at all unless to a man who was likely to be sound. He preferred lowering the price to giving credit.<sup>167</sup> This restriction meant that it was sometimes difficult for James to find buyers. In 1809 he told Codrington that at one time working oxen sold well 'but the sales being now restricted to Cash only, none can be disposed of, Antigua is so circumstanced that no Diminution of Price will command Money if the same Articles are to be had on Credit'.<sup>168</sup> In April 1813, James wrote that there was plenty of stock on the island but he was not selling because people could not pay.<sup>169</sup> Both James and Codrington hoped to make direct arrangements with the armed forces—James preferred the army because they would give an exact daily figure, Codrington hoped to make an arrangement with the navy; in fact neither plan seems to have materialized.<sup>170</sup>



There were also, of course, the usual sales of cattle to local butchers. One of these, who was behind in his payments for cattle, explained, in 1813, that ships frequently left harbour in a hurry without giving him a voucher for the meat he had supplied and this meant he himself could not get paid by the navy board. He suffered, too, from the low exchange, especially on Barbuda cattle. He described how on a typical transaction on a Barbudan bullock weighing 300 pounds he only made a profit of £1.15s. 0d. currency and this had to be put towards defraying heavy expenses – a large establishment of slaves, rent of his butchering house, offices, stores, and so on. Only on his first supply from Barbuda, when the exchange was 200 per cent did he not lose on the deal.<sup>171</sup> After the war conditions varied. In 1817, James wrote that he had sold 20 young oxen at £30 each and thought they could sell as many in about a month.<sup>172</sup> In February 1817 he arranged to sell another 70<sup>173</sup> but this success did not continue. In 1823 he described the demand for cattle as 'extremely dull'.<sup>174</sup> He hoped that there would be a good sugar crop so that Antiguan landowners would be able to afford working oxen. Beef cattle he was having to sell at 1s. per pound, where formerly they had fetched 2s. 3d.<sup>175</sup>

In the years that followed, mismanagement took its toll. John James went to live at Clare Hall, Antigua, and after his death in 1826 Barbuda was without a manager at all for six months.<sup>176</sup> In 1829, Robert Jarritt described the island as being generally neglected, with fences, gates, and buildings in a dilapidated condition.<sup>177</sup> These years, too, were years of drought, when lack of foresight and effort on the part of

those in charge meant that fodder was not provided in sufficient quantities. In October 1829, Jarritt wrote that Barbuda had had good rains and the stock were recovering,<sup>178</sup> but in April 1831, John Winter described Barbuda as being very dry again. He feared they would soon lose all the tame stock, if there was no rain, as the only food they had for them (Guinea corn stalks) was nearly finished. The wild cattle were appearing to stand it better than the tame.<sup>179</sup> In July 1832, he reported that the drought was over but the stock had been badly affected; he hoped that now that the cattle were recovering there would be a good demand for working oxen from Antigua, where many had died. He noted that the Codrington estates lost fewer stock than any other Antiguan plantations 'which speaks a great deal in favor of the Barbuda cattle'.<sup>180</sup>

Sir Bethell Codrington was disappointed in another project which he had hoped might lead to increased sales of cattle. In 1811 he bought Guana Island, just off the north-east coast of Antigua and near his estates. He hoped that this could be used to rear cattle for use on his Antiguan properties so that Barbudan cattle could be sold to other landowners.<sup>181</sup> Unfortunately it seems that Guana Island in fact was of no real value. In March 1829 he wrote: 'Guana Island has never given me a guinea; It has I believe been of much use to Mr. Osborn' (his attorney, but apparently not acting in the Codrington interests on this matter).<sup>182</sup> Barbuda certainly continued to supply the family estates with cattle throughout this period.

All those concerned with livestock were in agreement about the value of rearing cattle and there was usually a

steady demand. What is noteworthy about their place in the economy is the fact that though there were fluctuations in sales, in most years they provided a regular income and sometimes made a really substantial contribution to the profits of the island, and this in spite of the fact that rather less care was given to them than to the much less rewarding horses and mules.

### Conclusion

These varieties of farm animals are the ones included in the term 'stock' in the accounts and for this reason other living creatures from which money was made (for example turtle) have not been considered in this chapter. Two points emerge from studying the livestock. The first is that while the Codringtons were absentee landowners they were nevertheless extremely active and concerned. Both men, but particularly Sir William Codrington, kept as close an eye as they could on what was going on. Instructions and suggestions were given at great length and tremendous efforts were made to send out the type of animals required whether stallions, mares, jackasses, sheep, or bulldogs. Neither effort nor expense seem to have been spared to supply what was needed.

The second point of interest is that although Barbuda suffered from grave disadvantages as a stock-rearing island, profits were usually made, and when there was a knowledgeable manager there and the weather was favourable, the returns could be substantial. The aims of the landowners expressed throughout the period, however, that Barbuda should be able to supply all the neighbouring islands and possibly some further afield, were not realistic; and the criticisms

they made of those on Barbuda on this score were sometimes unfair. Given the geographical conditions there and the frequent occurrence of long droughts the most that could be expected was that the needs of their own estates should be met and some additional profit made from sales outside. This was very largely achieved and the Codringtons were fortunate in that they benefited considerably from increased sales during the wars at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries. Mules and horses provided little return in spite of considerable outlay, but sheep and cattle brought in a steady income throughout the period. The revenue from all livestock, however, exceeded that from all other sources except (occasionally) wrecks, as is shown in the tables at the end of Chapter 5.

Notes to Chapter 3

- 1 See Chapter 1.
- 2 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Apr. 1786.
- 3 For example, GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 4 Apr. 1809.
- 4 GRO, MF375 Redhead to W.C., 12 Dec. 1762. D1610 E23 A/c of mares, geldings and mules . . . on Barbuda 1792. This shows that in one of the enclosures there were 29 'reduced' oxen from Betty's Hope.
- 5 Clare Hall, another Antiguan estate of the Codringtons, was said to have been 'absolutely cover'd with Manure brought from Barbuda'. GRO, D1610 C29 C.B.C. to Jarritt, 16 Dec. 1828.
- 6 For example, GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Apr. 1786; D1610 C20/2 C.B.C. to W.C., 17 June 1790; C27/2 C.B.C. to Martin, 5 Nov. 1810.
- 7 When Sir William (I) died in 1738 there was little stock on the island. Punter commented that there 'was Nothing but young Stock' when he became manager. GRO, D1610 MF375, Punter to Lady Codrington, 31 Dec. 1742; C5 B. King to W.C., 11 June 1744.
- 8 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Apr. 1786.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 Map formerly at Dodington House.
- 11 Ibid.
- 12 GRO, D1610 E16.
- 13 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 22 May 1783. Clarke, in 1781, told W.C. a curious story he had heard about Samuel Redhead. Redhead was said to have had between four and five thousand sheep killed and their bodies thrown into the sea. Clarke felt that W.C. should claim compensation for this. Whatever the truth of this rumour, there were certainly very few sheep on Barbuda in 1779. D1610 C10 R.Clarke to W.C., 12 Jan. 1781.
- 14 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Apr. 1786.
- 15 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 29 Dec. 1783.
- 16 'Description of Barbuda', by Captain Greville, R.N., quoted by V.L. Oliver, History of Antigua, I, cxlviii-ix (from T. Southey, Chronological History of the West Indies (1827)).
- 17 GRO, D1610 A6/4. Reynolds thought that ten or twenty thousand goats might be kept on Barbuda without hurting the cattle 'as Goats browse on the Shrubs and wild Herbs which the Cattle and Sheep never touch unless in remarkable dry Weather, in that Case the whole must be supported by the Fodder which have been saved for that Purpose', D1610 C17 Reynolds to Oliver, 28 Dec. 1781.
- 18 GRO, D1610 E16; D1610 A6/1-14, A56/4, A56/13-22.
- 19 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 22 May 1783. See also above, note 17.

- 20 GRO, D1610 C10 Clarke to W.C., 8 June 1780.
- 21 GRO, D1610 C10 Clarke to W.C., 15 Oct. 1780.
- 22 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Reynolds, 16 Aug. 1783.
- 23 GRO D1610 C17 Reynolds to Oliver, 28 Dec. 1781.
- 24 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Reynolds, 22 Aug. 1784.
- 25 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 16 Nov. 1784.
- 26 GRO, D1610 C17 Reynolds to W.C., 17 May 1784.
- 27 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 7 June, 1 July, 4 Sept.
- 30 Sept. 1785, also C13 H. de Ponthieu to W.C. 1780-(1783).
- 28 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 1 Oct. 1786.
- 29 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 6 Mar. 1787.
- 30 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 2 Sept. 1788.
- 31 GRO, D1610 T9 Account of Stock, 14 July 1792
- 32 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 22 May 1783.
- 33 James to C.B.C., 7 Sept. 1824 (formerly at Dodington House).
- 34 Reference to this statement is made in GRO, D1610 C27/1 C.B.C. to James, 16 Feb. 1809.
- 35 GRO, D1610 C27/1 C.B.C. to James, 15 Jan. 1809.
- 36 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 4 Apr. 1809.
- 37 Letter from S. Martin dated 17 Sept. 1809 quoted by C.B.C. in one to Martin, GRO, D1610 C27/2, 6 Dec. 1809.
- 38 GRO, D1610 C27/2 C.B.C. to Martin, 6 Dec. 1809.
- 39 GRO, D1610 C27/2 C.B.C. to Martin, 5 Oct. 1810.
- 40 GRO, D1610 C27/1 C.B.C. to James, 3 Jan. 1808.
- 41 GRO, D1610 C27/2 C.B.C. to Martin, 5 Nov. 1810.
- 42 GRO, D1610 C27/2 C.B.C. to Martin, 13 Jan. 1811.
- 43 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 30 July 1812.
- 44 GRO, D1610 C27/4 C.B.C. to Hodge, 15 Dec. 1813. Re wool, D1610 C27/2 C.B.C. to S. Martin, 5 Nov. 1810. Barbudan sheep seem to have attracted attention in England. In 1811, C.B.C. wrote to Martin: 'he [Mr. Hodge] was to have sent me home 6 ewes and 2 Rams from Barbuda, but I fancy they have been forgotten; I will therefore thank you to send them by any opportunity to London consigned to the care of Mr. Trattle; They are intended for Lords Liverpool and Somerville who wish to make experiments in regard to Wool', D1610 C27/3 C.B.C. to Martin, 17 July 1811.
- 45 GRO, MF375 James to C.B.C., 1 Oct. 1816.
- 46 GRO, MF375 James to C.B.C., 21 Nov. 1817 and 1 May 1818.
- 47 GRO, D1610 C27/2 C.B.C. to Martin, 5 Nov. 1810; C27/3 C.B.C. to Martin, 17 July 1811; E17 Slave List 1814. The only other time a slave was listed as a shepherd was in 1766 (D1610 A4 Slave List 1766). Sir William had tried to find a shepherd for Barbuda, apparently with no success; D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Oliver, 1 Jan. 1783.

- 48 GRO, D1610 C24 John Black to James, 9 Apr. 1813. Occasionally efforts were made to tame a flock. Redhead, for example, had an area enclosed and the wedder sheep put in and made ready for sale; MF375 T. Clearkley to W.C., 16 June 1773. Clarke, too, refers to a tame flock of about 100 sheep enclosed presumably by Reynolds; C10 Clarke to W.C., 14 Mar. 1780. The shepherds referred to in the Slave List for 1814 looked after an enclosed flock; E17.
- 49 GRO, MF375 James to C.B.C., 1 May 1818.
- 50 Capt. Greville, R.N. 'Description of Barbuda', in Oliver, History of Antigua, I, cxlviii-ix.
- 51 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 30 Apr. 1813.
- 52 GRO, D1610 C24 John Black to James, 9 Apr. 1813.
- 53 GRO, D1610 C27/3 C.B.C. to James, 5 Jan. 1813; D1610 C27/4 C.B.C. to James, 20 Mar. 1814.
- 54 GRO, D1610 C27/2 C.B.C. to Martin, 5 Nov. 1810.
- 55 GRO, D1610 C27/1 C.B.C. to James, 3 Jan. 1808; C24 James to C.B.C., 26 Jan. 1807. In 1813 James wrote that he had done everything in his power to get paid: 'from Barbuda I could sell many things, but the difficulty of getting the money is beyond everything, and what a person in England can have no idea of', D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 30 Apr. 1813.
- 56 Pierre Gourou, The Tropical World. Its Social and Economic Conditions and its Future Status (London, 1958), pp. 53-4.
- 57 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, May 1787.
- 58 H. Coleridge, Six Months in the West Indies in 1825 (1826), pp. 266-7.
- 59 GRO, MF375 Lovell to W.C., 10 Oct. 1780.
- 60 GRO, D1610 C5 King to W.C., 27 Dec. 1740. The 'young General Codrington' referred to is Christopher Codrington (III).
- 61 GRO, D1610 E16 Appraisements of Barbuda 1746, 1761.
- 62 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Apr. 1786.
- 63 GRO, D1610 T9 Account of Stock 1792.
- 64 Greville, quoted by Oliver, History of Antigua I, cxlix.
- 65 Ragatz, The Fall of the Planter Class in the British Caribbean 1763-1833, p. 187.
- 66 GRO, D1610 A52.
- 67 GRO D1610 A6/1-14, A56/4, A56/13-22.
- 68 GRO, D1610 C5 King to W.C., 27 Dec. 1740.
- 69 GRO, D1610 E16.
- 70 GRO, MF375 Redhead to W.C., 1 June 1762. Langford Lovell was another attorney who thought it was much better to breed Mules (MF375 Lovell, 10 Oct. 1780); and so did Richard Oliver. Barbudan horses, he said, were too small; MF375 Oliver to W.C., 9 May 1781.
- 71 GRO, D1610 C10 Clarke to W.C., 10 Oct. 1779.

- 72 GRO, D1610 C14/2 W.C. to C.B.C., 15 July 1791, and, for example, C14/1 W.C. to Reynolds, 16 Aug. 1783. These instructions were repeated throughout the correspondence.
- 73 GRO, D1610 C17 W.C. to Reynolds, Jan. 1782.
- 74 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 1 Nov. 1783.
- 75 GRO D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, Oct. 1786. Thus it cost him £80 to send out two mares (and two dogs). Occasionally the money thus invested was lost when the horse died on the journey, e.g. D1610 C17 Reynolds to W.C., 17 May 1784. Nor was there any guarantee that the horse would arrive in good condition, e.g. C14/1 W.C. to Reynolds, 16 Aug. 1783. In 1791 mares in England, which had sold before at from £12 to £15 each, were fetching £25-£35. Therefore, Codrington said, mares must be procured from the Continent (America) as they were too dear from England; D1610 C14/2 W.C. to C.B.C., 30 Aug. 1791.
- 76 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Oliver, 10 Jan. 1783.
- 77 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Oliver, 26 Jan. 1783. This view, expressed in 1783, continued to be his attitude. In 1784 he said to Reynolds: 'for as you are attentive to the improvement of the Stock you shall not want for any supplies I can send you', D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Reynolds, 22 Aug. 1784. One suggestion for improving the breed, made by Lovell, he did not take up: the idea of an annual race for Barbudan horses! This he felt would be unsatisfactory because it would prevent comparisons with other horses and the stallions he had been sending out were expected to produce 'Chapman's horses', not racers; GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 3 Feb. 1785.
- 78 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Reynolds, 16 Aug. 1783.
- 79 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Reynolds, 16 Aug. 1783. W.C. suggested that to get a good sized breed all the small stock should be cleared off the island.
- 80 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 6 Mar. 1787.
- 81 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Reynolds, 22 Aug. 1784. In this letter he praised Reynolds for doing this. He continued to stress the need for it subsequently, e.g. C14/2 W.C. to C.B.C., 15 July 1791.
- 82 GRO, D1610 C17 Reynolds to Oliver, 28 Dec. 1781, with recommendations to be passed on to W.C.
- 83 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Mar. 1787. Reynolds described Barbudan mares as from 13½ to 14½ hands high (the second figure is difficult to read on the microfilm). North American mares were the same size but of greater girth, so they were preferred by those wanting draught horses. Reynolds himself favoured a slighter horse, like those bred in Antigua, as they could stand up to the West Indies climate better.
- 84 GRO, D1610 C17 Reynolds to Oliver, 28 Dec. 1781.
- 85 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 20 Aug. 1783.
- 86 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 2 Aug. 1785.



- 87 GRO, D1610 P17 Map of Barbuda c. 1785. This map (after p. 4) though not the right shape, gives better detail about Barbuda than any other.
- 88 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Apr. 1786.
- 89 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Mar. 1787.
- 90 Ibid.
- 91 GRO, D1610 C17 Reynolds to C.B.C., 1 Apr. 1792.
- 92 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Mar. 1787.
- 93 GRO, D1610 E23 A/c of mares, geldings and mules in the woods as well as all the Stock in the Parks, 11 May 1792. 'Park' here must surely mean, as in Scotland and Ireland, 'An enclosed piece of ground for pasture or tillage', Shorter Oxford English Dictionary (Oxford, 1933, reprinted 1959). Reynolds was Irish so he may well have used it in this way.
- 94 GRO, D1610 C20/3 C.B.C. to W.C., Feb. 1791.
- 95 Ibid. Also C20/2 C.B.C. to W.C., 12 Sept. 1790. Horses, he wrote, were rarely used as draught animals in the West Indies, except in St. Kitts. They were too expensive, less hardy and less able to bear the heat than mules.
- 96 GRO, D1610 C27/3 C.B.C. to James, 5 Jan. 1813, in which he said that both Sir William and he had decided on this policy. In 1819 James commented that great numbers of English horses had recently been imported. Most in demand were 'stout horses fit for the Plough'. Barbudan horses, he said, 'are too small for that use', C24 James to C.B.C., 22 Dec. 1819.
- 97 GRO, MF375 Liggins to C.B.C., 5 Apr. 1837.
- 98 See above, notes 68 and 70. Dennis Reynolds, too, preferred mules to horses, GRO, D1610 C17 Reynolds to W.C., 17 May 1784 (though he seems to have given a contrary opinion on one occasion or else was misinterpreted—D1610 C20/3 C.B.C. to W.C., Feb. 1791).
- 99 GRO, D1610 C17 Reynolds to W.C., 17 May 1784, when he said that American horses were usually cheap and easy to purchase and therefore Barbudan horses did not sell well; but Barbudan mules, on the contrary, were always in demand, GRO D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 1 Oct. 1786. GRO D1610 C20/4 C.B.C.'s notes p. 21; p. 25 for prices. C.B.C. noted that a mule was hardier than an ox and would work for twenty years or more.
- 100 GRO, D1610 A6/8, A6/12, A6/13.
- 101 GRO D1610 E16.
- 102 GRO, D1610 A6/1-14, A56/4, A56/13-22.
- 103 GRO, D1610 A52.
- 104 GRO D1610 C5 King to W.C., 27 Dec. 1740, and 13 Apr. 1743. In June 1744 he wrote that he was making an enclosure for 50 mares and 2 jackasses. If there was peace with France 'lett it Cost what it will we must procure a Breed of Large Asses from Portugal', C5 King to W.C., 11 June 1744.

- 105 GRO, D1610 E.16 An Account of all the Stock . . . sold off . . . Barbuda 1746-1755, Prices of Cattle sold . . . off Barbuda 1758-1761.
- 106 GRO, D1610 C6 W.C. to Redhead, 5 Jan. 1761. These had cost him about £260 by the time they got to Dodington, before being sent to Barbuda.
- 107 GRO, D1610 C10 Clarke to W.C., 1 Oct. 1779.
- 108 GRO, D1610 C10 Clarke to W.C., 15 Oct. 1780.
- 109 GRO, D1610 C12 Oliver to W.C., 24 Nov. 1780.
- 110 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Oliver, 10 Jan. 1783; and to Lovell, 1 Nov. 1783.
- 111 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 1 Nov. 1783.
- 112 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 17 May 1784.
- 113 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 9 May 1785.
- 114 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 1 July 1785.
- 115 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 2 Dec. 1785.
- 116 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 30 Sept. 1785.
- 117 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 2 Jan. 1786.
- 118 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 31 July 1786
- 119 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 30 Sept. 1785.
- 120 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Reynolds, 22 Aug. 1784.
- 121 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 30 Sept. 1785, MF375 1 June 1762 Redhead to W.C. Sir William also pointed out how badly asses had been handled in the past instancing the fact that he had sent out seven asses and procured so few mules, C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 1 Oct. 1786.
- 122 For example, GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Reynolds, 4 Sept. 1785, GRO, D1610 C14/2 W.C. to C.B.C. 1 Aug. 1791.
- 123 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Reynolds, 4 Sept. 1785.
- 124 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 10 Apr. 1786.
- 125 In 1783 he wrote that only one out of 10 or 15 that covered a mare would actually beget a foal, and again, in 1785, noted that only one ass in 12 or 13 was prolific. GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 29 Nov. 1783, 3 Feb. 1785.
- 126 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 10 Apr. 1786, 16 Nov. 1784, C14/1 W.C. to Reynolds, 21 Nov. 1784. This practice, he said, was usual in England when larger mares were used with small asses.
- 127 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 9 May 1787. In this letter he enclosed an extract from Buffon's 'Natural History' to be passed on to Reynolds. Apparently Buffon advocated the methods of stock-breeding approved by Codrington.
- 128 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 9 May 1785.
- 129 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Walrond, 6 Feb. 1787.
- 130 GRO, D1610 C14/2 W.C. to C.B.C., 3 and 17 May 1791.
- 131 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Apr. 1786.

- 132 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 27 Feb. 1787.
- 133 GRO, D1610 C17 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Apr. 1792. E23 A/c of mares, geldings and mules . . . Barbuda, 11 May 1792.
- 134 GRO, D1610 A6/10-13.
- 135 GRO, D1610 C20/3 C.B.C. to W.C., Feb. 1791.
- 136 R. Oliver told Sir William that Barbudan catttle were 'not in Esteem being subject to the red water and unable to bear the general bad pasture of Antigua, and not broke to be tractable', GRO, D1610 C12 Oliver to W.C., 24 Nov. 1780.
- 137 GRO, D1610 C5 King to W.C., 27 Dec. 1740.
- 138 GRO, D1610 E16 First Appraisement at Barbuda . . . Second Ditto.
- 139 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Apr. 1786.
- 140 Greville, quoted in Oliver, History of Antigua, I, cxlix.
- 141 GRO, D1610 E16 An Account of all the Stock . . . sold off . . . Barbuda, 1746-1755.
- 142 GRO, D1610 A52.
- 143 GRO, D1610 A6/1-14, A56/4, A56/13-22.
- 144 GRO, D1610 A6/2 1786-7.
- 145 GRO, D1610 C17 Reynolds to W.C., 14 May 1792.
- 146 GRO, D1610 C17 Reynolds to Oliver, 28 Dec. 1781. In the dry season their condition was likely to be so poor that it was not sensible even to try to catch them (ibid.).
- 147 GRO D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Reynolds, 16 Aug. 1783.
- 148 GRO, D1610 C11 Lindsay to W.C., 12 June 1779.
- 149 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Reynolds, 22 Aug. 1784.
- 150 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Walrond, 29 Sept. 1785.
- 151 Greville, quoted by Oliver, History of Antigua, I, cxlix.
- 152 GRO, D1610 C14/2 W.C. to Walrond, 17 May 1791.
- 153 GRO, D1610 C17 Reynolds to Oliver, 28 Dec. 1781.
- 154 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Walrond, 29 Sept. 1785 and to Lovell, 1 Oct. 1786.
- 155 GRO, D1610 C20/4 C.B.C.'s notes, p. 21.
- 156 GRO, D1610 C27/1 C.B.C. to Hodge, 21 June 1809.
- 157 GRO, D1610 C5 B. King, 27 Dec. 1740.
- 158 GRO, D1610 C13 de Ponthieu to W.C. 1780-(1783).
- 159 GRO, MF375 T. Clearkley to W.C., 16 June 1773.
- 160 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C. 29 Dec. 1783.
- 161 GRO, D1610 C17 Reynolds to C.B.C., 14 May 1792.
- 162 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Reynolds, 21 Nov. 1784.
- 163 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Apr. 1786.
- 164 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 4 Apr. 1809.

- 165 GRO, D1610 C10 Clarke to W.C., Dec. 1779, and 15 Oct. 1780. He notes that he retained the liver and lights to be used for the sick slaves.
- 166 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 26 Apr. 1810. He refers to two squadrons cruising off the island for some weeks who had been in almost constantly for fresh provisions.
- 167 GRO, D1610 C27/1 C.B.C. to James, 31 Jan. 1808, in which he described how he lost £1,500 because cattle were sold without receiving money in exchange. GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 10 Aug. 1812, James described the difficulty of getting bills from Black and Holloran through whom beef was sold to the navy. GRO, D1610 C27/3 C.B.C. to James 30 Nov. 1812, Codrington repeated his instructions to sell so cheap that it would be worthwhile for people to pay immediately – or at least every quarter.
- 168 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 4 Apr. 1809.
- 169 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 30 Apr. 1813.
- 170 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C. 2 Oct. 1813, C27/3 C.B.C. to James, 30 Nov. 1812.
- 171 GRO, D1610 C24 John Black to James, 9 Apr. 1813.
- 172 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 14 Jan. 1817.
- 173 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 19 Feb. 1817.
- 174 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 14 Jan. 1823.
- 175 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 5 July 1823
- 176 GRO, D1610 C29 C.B.C. to Jarritt, 31 Mar. 1829, D1610 C29 Jarritt to C.B.C., 22 Oct. 1829.
- 177 GRO, D1610 C29 Jarritt to C.B.C., 30 Aug. 1829.
- 178 GRO, D1610 C29 Jarritt to C.B.C., 22 Oct. 1829.
- 179 GRO, D1610 C30 Winter to C.B.C., 9 Apr. 1831.
- 180 GRO, D1610 C30 Winter to C.B.C., 22 July 1832.
- 181 GRO, D1610 C27/3 C.B.C. to Hodge, 16 Feb. 1813, and 15 Mar. 1813.
- 182 GRO, D1610 C29 C.B.C. to Jarritt, 3 Mar. 1829.

## Chapter 4

### VARIOUS COMMODITIES

Barbuda's greatest profits came from livestock and wrecks but to get an accurate picture of life on the island it is necessary to examine also the other activities which produced smaller financial benefits. Of these, two—turtle and wood—are always given separate entries in the accounts and they always contributed in some measure to the economy. The rest form a miscellaneous collection of commodities which varied over the years but included at different times: corn, yams, coconuts, lime, leather, salt, and some manufactures such as harness-making and boat-building.<sup>1</sup> None of these brought in a large income but they are worth study as they illustrate the way in which all the men involved were prepared to try anything which might be financially rewarding, providing that (as far as the men on the spot were concerned) it did not entail too much effort.

#### Turtle

It seems sensible to consider turtle first as following most naturally after stock. Turtle were valued mainly as a delicacy for the table, and for Europeans in the West Indies provided one of their chief gastronomic pleasures. There were two varieties in the West Indies, both caught on Barbuda—the Green and the Hawksbill. Luffman, writing from

the West Indies in 1787, commented that the Green was regarded as better to eat because it was milder-flavoured, though he himself thought that soup made from the Hawksbill was as good. These were caught primarily for their shell; he described that of the Green as 'useless'.<sup>2</sup>

There seems always to have been a market for turtle in Antigua, and Benjamin King suggested in 1740 that more should be made of it. He thought turtling was being neglected on Barbuda as it brought in barely £40 per year and he advocated a much more vigorous policy. He suggested that the eggs of the turtle should be searched for and removed to the sand in Goat Island Flash where they would hatch and could be reared in the water there.<sup>3</sup> This elementary idea of a turtle fishery was not carried any further, though it is interesting to note that Sir Bethell Codrington, too, had a similar idea some seventy years later.<sup>4</sup> In fact, successful rearing of turtle is only today being developed and there is no sign that either Benjamin King or Sir Bethell Codrington had any idea of the curious life-cycle of the turtle which makes rearing them a difficult task.<sup>5</sup> The normal practice in Barbuda was to catch the turtles as they came on shore to lay their eggs. Occasionally some effort was made to catch them at sea, with nets, but it was obviously easier to let them land and then overturn them.<sup>6</sup> At some stage a crawl seems to have been made in which to pen them until they were required, but by 1837 it was described by Liggins as a disgrace, 'only a remnant of what it once was'.<sup>7</sup>

The regular breeding habits of the turtle made them easy to catch but their bulk made handling difficult and may have been a reason why this source of profit was not

developed more. A fully grown Green turtle might be four feet in length and weigh 100 pounds or so.<sup>8</sup> They were not easy to carry to the boats which would transport them to Antigua. In 1837 Liggins described the difficulties involved in moving six from the crawl to the shipping place. There was only one cart on the island and this had broken down. Liggins suggested that six men should carry them, but no labourers were available as it was 'the People's own Day'. A wheelbarrow was proposed but a suitable one could not be found and eventually the turtles had to be put in two bags and slung across the back of a horse.<sup>9</sup> Even when due allowance is made for temporary misfortunes, the island does not seem to have been provided with a transport system which could cope with a large number of these bulky, heavy creatures; and the accounts confirm the view that while a certain modest sum was made from their sale a larger amount might well have been obtained had a more vigorous policy been pursued.

The most profitable period seems to have been when the island was leased to Martin and Byam. Between 1746 and 1755 over £2,300 was made from turtle, the best year being 1749 when the total was £513.<sup>10</sup> Under the various Codrington managements, however, sales at no time reached £300 and usually averaged much less: £120 a year in the period 1785-98, £151 between 1806 and 1815, £62 between 1825 and 1830, and £105 between 1830 and 1834.<sup>11</sup>

These figures were regarded as disappointing. Henri de Ponthieu had led Sir William to believe that £1,000 a year might be made from turtle alone and he implied that profits were being made by managers for their own advantage.<sup>12</sup>

In 1787 Reynolds commented that sales were not as valuable as formerly. He attributed this to the interlopers from Antigua who frequently came in the turtling season and were 'very troublesome'.<sup>13</sup> Later, both Sir Bethell Codrington and Liggins seem to have felt that the proprietor was receiving less than he ought to have done.<sup>14</sup> It is indeed more than possible that some turtle were sold from Barbuda and the profits pocketed by the manager or his assistants, or that they were given as presents to attorneys or friends in Antigua. No check could be kept on the actual number caught. It was doubtless true, too, that trespassers also depleted the supply: but such activities could not have been on a large scale or they would have attracted the notice of other acquaintances of the Codringtons in Antigua; and the facilities were not available for a big illegal trade. It is more probable that the manager of Barbuda was not prepared to give the time or attention to turtle-catching which would have been necessary for a larger profit to have been made.

In comparison with the comments Sir William made on perquisites in general he took comparatively little notice of suspected illegal deals in turtle. Sir Bethell was concerned, however, that he did not receive any credit for sales of shell. In January 1809 he wrote to James, asking why he was only paid ninepence per pound for the meat from a Hawksbill and nothing for the shell. Looking through old accounts he had found 'repeated Credit' for the sales of shells sent home.<sup>15</sup> There is certainly a reference to turtle shell in 1762 when over £82 was made from it, but there is no further entry.<sup>16</sup> Accounts, however, are only available intermittently between 1756 and 1785 and it may well be that



Codrington was referring to years for which there is no record now. In February 1809 Codrington wrote that he had been making inquiries in London and had been told that shell could be sold for a guinea to a guinea and a half per pound.<sup>17</sup> James replied, in April, that as few turtle yielded more than two to three pounds of shell he had not thought of it 'as an article likely to increase the revenue of the Island'. As disposing of the meat and collecting the money was 'troublesome' the shell had generally been considered the only profit and in some cases, he said, the butcher had been the loser. He presumed that the shell previously mentioned in the accounts must have been from those which died on the passage.<sup>18</sup> This seems a singularly feeble argument. If this were true it meant, as Codrington pointed out, that he got ninepence per pound for the meat while the butcher got considerably more for the shell. Moreover after this complaint James regularly sent the shell home. The amount realized for it is not given in the Barbudan accounts but it is occasionally mentioned in letters. In April 1810 he despatched 435 pieces of shell weighing about seventy pounds altogether and this realized £53. 5s. 0d.—rather less than Codrington had hoped. Nevertheless in 1811, 1814, and 1815 tortoise-shell was shipped to England and fetched, on average, £51 each time.<sup>19</sup> There are various references in the correspondence to this commodity being sent home up to 1819, and sometimes after this.<sup>20</sup>

This seems to be an instance where an energetic resident proprietor would have made more effort than a manager. Even though Sir Bethell Codrington hoped to encourage James by giving him a percentage of the sales<sup>21</sup> this was probably not

a sufficiently high incentive for work which was probably regarded as 'troublesome' – to use James' own word. Without too much effort a small regular income could be made from turtle and no manager seems to have felt it worth his while to develop this source of revenue any further.

### Wood

Wood was another article listed annually in the accounts. Usually this heading meant firewood, sold in cords to Antiguan residents or to the navy and, less frequently, the army; but it did also sometimes include timbers. When sold for other purposes, and used for articles on the island, it was listed separately in the accounts. It was less productive than firewood but was a regular part of the Barbudan economy.

Firewood was obtained on Barbuda from two sources – from trees and bushes on the island, and from the wrecks which occurred only too frequently off the coasts. The island was covered with small trees described by King as not being above twelve inches square and twelve feet long, most of them only suitable for burning.<sup>22</sup> The other source – wrecks – provided a constant supply only involving collection by the slaves. Sometimes they were paid for this<sup>23</sup> and when the island was being well managed wood from the shore and rocks must have been gathered regularly. At the end of the period, however, it was being neglected. Robert Jarritt, in 1829, described the coasts as littered with wood from wrecks which he valued at £1,000 sterling.<sup>24</sup>

It did not, however, always find a ready market. Benjamin King was, in this as in other matters, over-optimistic about what could be made. He calculated that a thousand cords

might be sold annually—at 28 shillings per cord.<sup>25</sup> This total, though, was rarely reached and then only in war-time. Between 1746 and 1755, under the management of Martin and Byam, the annual sales of wood, rents, and sundry credits averaged only £142;<sup>26</sup> but of course, they may well have cut down wood and used it on their estates in Antigua. Samuel Redhead, in 1764, complained that it was not selling because of competition from the ceded islands acquired by Britain in 1763,<sup>27</sup> and Richard Clarke said he could not always sell it to the navy because they 'wooded' to the south.<sup>28</sup> Sales were boosted, however, when there was war in the West Indies, and Barbuda did particularly well in this respect during the American War of Independence. In 1780 sales from wood totalled £1,761. 13s. 0d., in 1781 £1,567. 10s. 0d. (with one quarter's accounts missing), and in 1782 £4,039. 1s. 0d.<sup>29</sup> Profits from this commodity never again reached such a high figure. Between 1785 and 1798 the annual average was £330, from 1806 to 1814 it was £238, from 1825 to 1830 £50, and from 1830 to 1834 £233.<sup>30</sup> Nevertheless, considering the small outlay involved and the regularity of the income wood must be accounted a useful part of the economy.

In addition to firewood and timbers, Barbuda also supplied the Antiguan market and the Codrington estates with other forms of wood. Materials for house-building—shingles, rafters, joists; for tools—ladle and skimmer handles, poles for harpoons, hoe-sticks; and for carts—fellies, spoke-wood, yokes, shafts, wheels—were all supplied at different times. In addition Barbuda also supplied red oak staves, pitch-pine timbers, and wood for hoops, boats, and wheelbarrows. These

articles never brought in a large income but their number and variety is surprising when one considers the lack of good trees on the island.<sup>31</sup>

The small trees on Barbuda were mostly loblollies, not useful for much because of their spongy quality. Reynolds said that good timber trees were scarce because Colonel Martin had cut most of them down, but judging from the large amounts made from wood during the American War it seems likely that others must have been felled while Reynolds himself was manager.<sup>32</sup> There were still some useful trees, though, in the late 1780s. White Cedars, Sweetwood, and Lignum Vitae were suitable for cart wheel fellies and spokes. White Cedars could also be used for boat timbers as could a type of Box found at Palmeto Point; and Cinnamon trees provided rafters for the houses of the slaves. Wrecks sometimes provided timber which could be used for boat building.<sup>33</sup>

In considering the value of wood to the economy one has to bear in mind not only the money that was made but what was saved by the proprietors because they did not have to buy wood elsewhere. Boats made from salvaged timbers represent a considerable benefit. The Antigua estates, too, were supplied with building materials and equipment, as well as firewood when necessary, and though for accounting purposes the estates were debited for these it meant in fact a valuable saving of expense. It also meant that a source of supply was available when others closed or became too costly as happened during the American war.<sup>34</sup> Barbuda in this as in other ways was an invaluable complement to a sugar estate.

## Crops

Most people who visited Barbuda were in agreement that it was not an easy island on which to grow crops. The soil was very shallow, providing no depth for roots, and because of the porous nature of the rocks underneath it could not retain moisture. Much of the land, too, which might have been used for cultivation was covered with brushwood and trees. This meant that successful growing of crops would be more than usually uncertain and would require considerable effort.<sup>35</sup>

Before 1779 there is little evidence of cultivation on any scale. The best land on Barbuda, with the greatest depth of soil, was used for the slaves' own grounds where they grew some of their provisions;<sup>36</sup> but little seems to have been done by the managers to produce crops for sale. In 1742, the manager, Punter, writing to Lady Codrington, said he had cut eighty acres out of the woods and planted cotton and corn, but although the cotton crop had promised well it had been destroyed by worm.<sup>37</sup> Martin and Byam appear to have concentrated almost entirely on stock-rearing.<sup>38</sup> In Samuel Redhead's time Guinea grass and hay were grown for the livestock and some Indian provisions were planted, but when the Governor of the Leeward Islands visited Barbuda in 1777 he described it as being 'almost in a State of Nature', very little of the island being cultivated.<sup>39</sup>

The departure of Samuel Redhead for England in 1779 and the appointment of Dennis Reynolds made changes possible. There were various problems. Not only had crops to be discovered which would grow on Barbuda, but land had to be

cleared and, if the crops were successful, markets for them had to be found. In 1780 Richard Clarke said the manager had been given orders to try out everything, and listed yams, eddas, Guinea corn, Indian corn, Barbuda beans, pigeon peas, and cassada as provisions he would experiment with.<sup>40</sup> Sir William was very anxious for trials to be made and he encouraged Henri de Ponthieu, an amateur botanist, to visit and inspect the island and make suggestions as to what might be grown there. This visit took place about 1783 and de Ponthieu recommended that plants from which drugs were made should be tried.<sup>41</sup> Attempts to follow his suggestions were not very successful<sup>42</sup> and Sir William himself thought coffee might be worth a trial.<sup>43</sup> Reynolds, however, concentrated on growing food crops and cotton for which he cleared such a large area that in 1786 he was able to tell Sir William that he had five hundred acres 'of my clearing' under cultivation: of this, three hundred were enclosed pasture, forty were planted with Guinea grass, ten with yams, eighty with Guinea corn, and seventy with cotton.<sup>44</sup> By 1790, 138 acres were given to cotton and 139 to provisions.<sup>45</sup>

Cotton had not been easy to grow. In 1784 Sir William had commented to Lovell that cotton did not seem to be a suitable crop as in two successive years it had been badly damaged by worms; but when he wrote to Reynolds he encouraged him to go on trying.<sup>46</sup> Subsequent years clearly brought sufficient success for cotton to be continued though caterpillars remained a nuisance and cleaning the cotton for market was not easy. Reynolds was forced to employ the whole gang for a number of days on this using laborious hand-gins.<sup>47</sup> The results, however, justified the experiment as the

following figures show:

<u>Amounts made from cotton</u> <sup>48</sup>		
1786-7	£398	7s. 6d.
1787-8	£215	11s. 0d.
1788-9	£558	13s. 6d.
1789-90	£384	19s. 6d.
1790-1	£840	12s. 0d.
1791-2	£588	8s. 0d.
1794	£983	9s. 6d.
1795	£1,021	4s. 0d.
1796	£486	10s. 0d.

Despite these results, however, Sir William was not entirely satisfied. During these years surplus Guinea corn was sent to the estates and to the market in Antigua<sup>49</sup> and he wondered whether more corn should be grown. In 1790, therefore, when Christopher (Bethell) Codrington was sent out to Antigua, he gave him specific instructions to find out whether corn or cotton or both should be grown on Barbuda.<sup>50</sup> His view was unequivocal. He believed it would be better for Barbuda to concentrate on breeding cattle and growing provisions for slaves rather than cotton or any of the Indian spices suggested by Henri de Ponthieu. He outlined a plan he had formulated which would treat the Antiguan estates and Barbuda as one unit for feeding all the Codrington work force. According to this the estates would grow sufficient yams to feed the Barbudan as well as their own slaves for five months of the year, Barbuda would then grow another crop to supply all the estates for another five months and the final two months' supply would come from England (beans).<sup>51</sup> He was also in favour of increasing the fodder crops on Barbuda – Guinea grass and opuntia.<sup>52</sup>

This plan, on paper, seems sensible, but in reality would not have been easy to put into effect. It would have been difficult for the sugar estates to grow sufficient yams,

and conditions on Barbuda made all crop growing uncertain of success. Nevertheless there seems to have been some change of policy in this direction after Christopher (Bethell) Codrington inherited the estates from his uncle in 1792. Although cotton did well in 1794 and 1795 it ceased to appear in the accounts after 1796<sup>53</sup> (until it was re-introduced in 1810), and some attempt seems to have been made to grow more guinea-corn. In 1794 a very large amount – worth £1,122. 16s. 0d. – went to the estates, and in 1795 £762. 13s. 0d. was made in the same way. After that date, however, amounts made from guinea-corn dropped to a more normal level – an average of about £290 was made between 1796 and 1798 inclusive.<sup>54</sup>

John James, who was manager from 1804 to 1826, apparently thought that corn was the only crop that could be grown with any prospect of success and in unfavourable years he expected that would fail too.<sup>55</sup> He seems to have had a difficult time. In 1809, in a letter defending his policies to Sir Bethell, who was clearly dissatisfied with the results of his work, James said that he had concentrated on corn for two years and had made nothing because of lack of rain when it was needed. In 1808 he had planted three hundred acres but the weather became so dry that little came to ear. He did not reap more than seven hundred bushels and he had hoped for six times that amount. He had been busy clearing seventy acres of woodland for part of the next year's crop but clearly did not expect success.<sup>56</sup>

The evidence suggests that in this case James was not simply making excuses. In the Codrington correspondence all the writers from the West Indies complain about the



uncertainty of the weather and conditions on Barbuda itself must lend substance to their complaints. Those who knew Barbuda all spoke of the shallow soil which dried out quickly and made anything growing there particularly vulnerable during years of drought, which occurred only too frequently.<sup>57</sup> Crops which looked promising were often spoilt through lack of rain. In addition the island was so flat it suffered particularly from the effects of gales: not only were crops levelled but they were sometimes ruined by flooding from the sea. These difficulties were vividly described by James<sup>58</sup> and are confirmed by others. John Winter, writing to Sir Bethell in 1831, said: 'Barbuda is a very uncertain Island we cannot calculate on having more than one good year out of three'.<sup>59</sup>

The accounts available do for the most part confirm their story. There is no consistency of result. In some years large amounts were made from crops and in others nothing at all, as in the first four years of James's administration. In 1810, however, corn worth £1,527 was sent to the estates, in 1812 sales realized £405, in 1813—£1,074 7s. 6d. and in 1817—£497. 10s. 0d.<sup>60</sup> The same variability is shown for yam production. Very few seem to have been sold before 1810. The following table shows the amount made from yams between 1810 and 1816.<sup>61</sup>

	<u>Open Market</u>	<u>Estates</u>
1810	-	£420 0s. 0d.
1811	£540 0s. 0d.	-
1812	£9 0s. 0d.	£92 14s. 0d.
1813	£32 16s. 0d.	£414 2s. 0d.
1814 and 1815	-	-
1816	£88 8s. 6d.	1816-17 £1,379 5s. 0d.

The next period for which consecutive accounts are available—1825-34—was less successful. Not only were no profits made

from sales of food crops between 1825 and 1830<sup>62</sup> but not enough was produced to feed the slaves themselves, and supplies had to be bought on several occasions.<sup>63</sup> One of the reasons for this failure was probably inefficient management,<sup>64</sup> but the weather was also to blame. In 1827 it was too wet for some crops and there were drought conditions in 1829.<sup>65</sup> There were improvements in 1830, however. In 1830-1, £995. 19s. 1d. was made from corn and potatoes, and in 1832, £1,122. 18s. 5d. from corn. Smaller profits came from these crops and yams in the next two years.<sup>66</sup>

There is no doubt that Sir Bethell Codrington approved of growing food crops on Barbuda. He informed James in 1809 that those products 'which would insure Sustenance in such times, as these, as well as lessen the Invoices from this Country would be the most desirable kind of Profit.'<sup>67</sup> Nevertheless he was equally keen that other crops which might make a suitable financial return should be tried, and cotton was an obvious choice. Codrington told James in 1809 that in the past he had received two to three hundred bales of cotton but recently none at all.<sup>68</sup> In February of that year he made his point even more plainly. 'I have often mention'd Cotton to you, but I get no Cotton nor no answer; a great deal used to come from Barbuda, and a Bale of Cotton now is as valuable as a Hhd of Sugar.'<sup>69</sup>

In response to these promptings, in 1810 James planted cotton in 150 acres.<sup>70</sup> The weather affected its growth in some years<sup>71</sup> but between 1812 and 1819 James was able to send reasonable quantities to England. In 1812, fifteen bales were shipped home and fetched £282. 4s. 0d. In 1813 twenty-two bales were despatched worth £540. 10s. 0d. and in

1815 another twenty-two realized £409. 11s. 0d.<sup>72</sup> From 1816 to 1819 there is no record of the amounts made but cotton was still being sent to England.<sup>73</sup> In 1826, Winter, the new manager of Barbuda, was instructed to grow cotton<sup>74</sup> and thirty-two acres were planted in 1828,<sup>75</sup> but there is no indication of what, if anything, was achieved.

From the point of view of cash returns, crop-growing was not entirely successful. The inadequacies of Barbudan soil and the problems presented by the weather created serious difficulties. Even so it was sensible to try. In many years the results were sufficiently good for Barbuda itself, and the family estates, to be supplied and in some years surplus stocks could be sold on the open market. Sometimes cotton provided a useful additional sum. In general, however, crops did not provide a very regular or secure income. Obviously their success depended on the skill of the manager, but they were more adversely affected by the geography of the island and weather conditions than were other forms of revenue.

#### Miscellaneous

Into this category come a variety of commodities which either made small regular contributions to the economy or were tried for a few years and then abandoned. Of these, salt, lime, and leather were the most important. Colonel King, as usual, had suggestions to make. He wrote, in 1740, that there were a great number of salt flashes on Barbuda from which 'great quantities of Salt might be annually made which sells here from 12d to 3s p. Bushell, but this is absolutely neglected and never more produced than serves the Island.'<sup>76</sup> There is

no evidence to suggest that this idea was developed at all until the late eighteenth century and then not to any remarkable extent. In the accounts throughout the period 1785-1814, salt was sold frequently, but in small quantities to the estates, and less frequently on the general market. Occasionally more was made from it, for example between 1795 and 1798 it realized over £334, in 1807 £55. 7s. 0d., in 1809 £61, and in 1814 £124. 1s. 9d.<sup>77</sup>

Lime was more consistently developed. Lime-burning seems to have been practised on Barbuda before 1740 and the ever-optimistic Colonel King thought at least three thousand hogsheads might be disposed of each year.<sup>78</sup> It was certainly developed by Martin and Byam who made over £2,846 from it between 1746 and 1755, three years being particularly profitable.<sup>79</sup> Despite this, Samuel Redhead informed Sir William Codrington in 1762 that Colonel Martin had tried lime and found it yielded no profit.<sup>80</sup> There is no sign that lime-burning was developed until the departure of Redhead but after that it appears regularly in the accounts, usually sold in small amounts to the estates. In 1781, 8½ hogsheads, worth £252, were sent to the Cotton New Work (one of the Codrington sugar estates), but in general the amounts were much smaller. It seems not to have been sold on the general market except between 1795 and 1798, again in 1819 (when it raised over £303), and then regularly between 1827 and 1834.<sup>81</sup> At that time the manager, Winter, developed it as a useful way of employing the slaves when the weather was unfavourable for crops.<sup>82</sup> The amounts were slight, the best years being between 1827 and 1830 when lime worth over £360 was sent to the estates and 1832 when £108 was made.<sup>83</sup> It

seems to have been used for building rather than for tempering in the Boiling House though Sir William queried whether it might not be suitable for this.<sup>84</sup>

The third of these products, leather, comes regularly in the accounts after 1785, in a variety of forms. Hides of cattle, deer, and goats were tanned and sold usually in small amounts in Antigua and to their own estates. Richard Clarke sent home two dozen dried hides and three dozen salted ones in 1781 and informed Sir William that the salted ones 'are put up in proper manner, which I came at the knowledge of preparing lately' and he believed the price made the experiment worthwhile.<sup>85</sup> Usually only small amounts were sold, but in 1811, 1815, and 1816 it raised between £110 and £126 each year, the naval yard being one of the customers. Amounts dropped in the 1820s but picked up again in the last four years of the period when an annual average of £74 was made. At the end of the eighteenth century quite a lively trade was established in leather goods, particularly saddles, harnesses, and other equipment for horses and mules; these activities, too, seem to have declined in the 1820s.<sup>86</sup>

Apart from these three commodities, money was made at different times from a varied assortment of goods. In the 1780s, for example, coconuts were being sold, in the 1830s old copper and brass.<sup>87</sup> The Codringtons themselves offered endless ideas as to what might be attempted in addition to these. Sir Bethell suggested that salted fish, wildfowl, deer, and the growing of cinquefoil and nopal bushes might be profitable.<sup>88</sup> Whatever other faults they may have possessed as landowners neither Sir William nor his nephew can be accused of lack of interest in Barbuda, and their interest

was not merely academic. Bags of seed were despatched for experiment together with copious instructions;<sup>89</sup> and acquaintances who had lived in the West Indies were questioned for ideas.<sup>90</sup> None of the articles in this chapter, taken separately, could be regarded as particularly important to the economy, but together they represent a considerable contribution. In addition they made possible the development of a wide variety of skills among the slaves.

Notes to Chapter 4

- 1 This will be considered in Chapter 5.
- 2 Luffman, letter xiv, 21 Apr. 1787; in Oliver, History of Antigua, I, cxxxi.
- 3 GRO, D1610 C5 and 6 King to W.C., 27 Dec. 1740.
- 4 GRO, D1610 C27/3 C.B.C. to Martin, 4 Mar. 1812.
- 5 'Turtle Farming in the Caymans', by Anthony Grey, in the Illustrated London News, Sept. 1975, pp. 53-7. The life cycle of the turtle is a curious one. The female lays possibly 150 eggs at a time in shallow holes in the sand (about 1,200 altogether in one breeding season). After the incubation period the baby turtles emerge from their eggs and make for the sea; but few survive this short journey, many becoming the prey of crabs and birds. Those that do survive disappear for a year, and the migration of these baby turtles has even now not been successfully charted. After a year those that have survived turn up in feeding areas far away from their birth-place—but the females usually return to their own birth-place to lay their eggs. Obviously any attempt to breed turtles has to take this 'year of mystery' into account. In the scheme described in the article above, the newly hatched turtles are put into large tanks, but even so they swim 'frenziedly' for several days and remain 'highly active' throughout the year.
- 6 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 26 Apr. 1810 and 21 May 1819.
- 7 GRO, MF375 Liggins to C.B.C., 5 Apr. 1837.
- 8 Grey, 'Turtle Farming'.
- 9 GRO, MF375 Liggins to C.B.C., 5 Apr. 1837.
- 10 GRO, D1610 E16 An Account of all the Stock . . . off . . . Barbuda, 1746-55.
- 11 GRO, D1610 A6/1-14, A56/4, A56/13-22.
- 12 GRO, D1610 E23 H. de Ponthieu to W.C., 5 Apr. 1779.
- 13 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to C.B.C., 1 Mar. 1787.
- 14 e.g. GRO, D1610 C27/1 C.B.C. to James, 15 Jan. 1809; MF375 Liggins to C.B.C., 5 Apr. 1837.
- 15 GRO, D1610 C27/1 C.B.C. to James, 15 Jan. 1809.
- 16 GRO, D1610 A51.
- 17 GRO, D1620 C27/1 C.B.C. to James, 16 Feb. 1809.
- 18 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 4 Apr. 1809.
- 19 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 26 Apr. 1810 and MF375 James to C.B.C., 26 Dec. 1815, Account of produce . . . from Barbuda.
- 20 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C. 30 Apr. 1813, 23 Dec. 1814, and 21 May 1819. MF375 Osborn to Winter, 30 Nov. 1826.
- 21 GRO, D1610 C27/1 C.B.C. to James, 16 Feb. 1809.
- 22 GRO, D1610 C5 and 6 King to W.C., 17 Dec. 1740.

- 23 GRO, D1610 e.g. A6/6; Humanity and his crew were paid 18s. for Sunday work landing wood. A6/8 the Christopher's crew was paid 8s. 3d. for the same work.
- 24 GRO, D1610 C29 Jarritt to C.B.C., 22 Oct. 1829.
- 25 GRO, D1610 C5 and 6 King to W.C., 27 Dec. 1740.
- 26 GRO, D1610 E16 An account of all the Stock etc. . . . off . . . Barbuda, 1746-55.
- 27 GRO, MF375 Redhead to W.C., 24 May 1764.
- 28 GRO, D1610 C10 Clarke to W.C., 14 Mar. 1780.
- 29 GRO, D1610 A52.
- 30 GRO, D1610 A6/1-14, A56/4, A56/13-22.
- 31 Details of these are given regularly in the accounts - see previous reference.
- 32 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Mar. 1787; D1610 A52.
- 33 Particularly useful information on trees is given by Reynolds to W.C. in a letter on MF375, 1 Mar. 1787. D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 4 Apr. 1809, refers to a boat being built in this way. See also Chapter 5.
- 34 This was pointed out to W.C. by Lovell, GRO, MF375, 10 Oct. 1780.
- 35 See Chapter 1.
- 36 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Mar. 1787.
- 37 GRO, MF375 Punter to Lady Codrington, 31 Dec. 1742.
- 38 GRO D1610 E16 An account of all the Stock . . . off . . . Barbuda, 1746-55.
- 39 PRO, CO 152/57, Burt to Germain, 10 Jan. 1778.
- 40 GRO, D1610 C10 Clarke to W.C., 14 Mar. 1780.
- 41 GRO, D1610 C13 Henri de Ponthieu to W.C. 1780-(1783). This is a very long and useful letter describing his visit to the island, and making various recommendations for its improvement.
- 42 e.g. Sir William arranged for Senna seed to be sent (from Jamaica) (GRO, D1610 C14/1, 1 Nov. 1783); also Aloes and Jesuit's Bark (C14/1, 1 Jan. 1783 and 17 May 1784).
- 43 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 27 Feb. 1787. Sir William had heard that coffee did best on barren land: the berries, he had been told, would be small but have a good flavour.
- 44 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Apr. 1786.
- 45 GRO, D1610 C20/2 C.B.C. to W.C., 12 Sept. 1790.
- 46 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 15 Aug. 1784; W.C. to Reynolds, 21 Aug. 1784. In a letter dated 17 May 1784 (D1610 C17), Reynolds explained that though the first crop of cotton was often affected by worms, the second often escaped; when both crops survived he felt it was a very profitable article.
- 47 GRO, D1610 C17 Reynolds to C.B.C., 1 Apr. 1792.



- 48 GRO, D1610 A6/2-7, A6/9-11.
- 49 GRO, D1610 A6/2-7.
- 50 GRO, D1610 C14/2 W.C. to C.B.C., 14 Nov. 1790. Sir William had not definitely turned against cotton; in fact he thought Reynolds should grow all he could as he was expecting sugar prices to sink and cotton to rise; D1610 C14/2 W.C. to Lovell, 30 Aug. 1791.
- 51 GRO, D1610 C20/2 C.B.C. to W.C., 19 June 1790 and 12 Sept. 1790.
- 52 GRO, D1610 C20/2 C.B.C. to W.C., 10 Dec. 1790 and Feb. 1791.
- 53 GRO, D1610 A6/9-11. Amounts are given on p. 133.
- 54 GRO, D1610 A6/9-13.
- 55 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 4 Apr. 1809.
- 56 Ibid.
- 57 In the letter referred to above James comments on this: 'The nature of the Barbuda soil is such that there is no medium particularly if the weather is at all dry.' See also Chapter 1.
- 58 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 4 Apr. 1809 and 22 Jan. 1814; 2 Oct. 1813 and 25 Nov. 1813; 22 Nov. 1819.
- 59 GRO, D1610 C30 Winter to C.B.C., 9 Apr. 1831.
- 60 GRO, D1610 A56/4, A56/8-10.
- 61 Ibid.
- 62 GRO, D1610 A56/13-17.
- 63 GRO, MF375 Osborn to C.B.C., 27 Sept. 1827; D1610 C29 Jarritt to C.B.C., 6 Oct. 1829.
- 64 See, for example, GRO, D1610 C29 Jarritt to C.B.C., 6 Oct. 1829.
- 65 GRO, MF375 Osborn to C.B.C., 5 Dec. 1827; D1610 C29 Jarritt to C.B.C., 30 Aug. 1829.
- 66 GRO, D1610 A56/17-22.
- 67 GRO, D1610 C27/1 C.B.C. to James, 15 Jan. 1809.
- 68 Ibid.
- 69 GRO, D1610 C27/1 C.B.C. to James, 16 Feb. 1809. He made the same point to Jarritt in 1829; C29 C.B.C. to Jarritt, 3 Mar. 1829.
- 70 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 8 Aug. 1810.
- 71 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 2 Oct. 1813 and 22 Jan. 1814.
- 72 GRO, MF375 James to C.B.C., 26 Dec. 1815. Account of produce received from Barbuda.
- 73 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 21 Apr. 1817 and 21 May 1819.
- 74 GRO, MF375 Osborn to Winter, 30 Nov. 1826.
- 75 GRO, D1610 A56/15. There have been repeated efforts to grow cotton and the same pattern seems to develop. It does

well for a short time when conditions are favourable and then fails. This applies to the 20th century as well as to earlier periods, as Dr. Riva Berleant-Schiller points out in 'The Social and Economic Role of Cattle in Barbuda', Geographical Review, July 1977.

- 76 GRO, D1610 C5 and 6 King to W.C., 27 Dec. 1740.
- 77 GRO, D1610 A6/10-13, A56/4.
- 78 GRO, D1610 C5 and 6 King to W.C., 27 Dec. 1740.
- 79 GRO, D1610 E16 An Account of all the Stock . . . off  
. . . Barbuda, 1746-55.
- 80 GRO, MF375 Redhead to W.C., 1 June 1762.
- 81 GRO, D1610 A6/10-13, A56/12, A56/14-22.
- 82 GRO, D1610 C30 Winter to C.B.C., 9 Apr. 1831.
- 83 GRO, D1610 A56/14-20.
- 84 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 16 Nov. 1784.
- 85 GRO, D1610 C10 Clarke to W.C., 18 July 1781.
- 86 GRO, D1610 A6/1-14, A56/13-22.
- 87 GRO, D1610 A6/4, A56/20, 21.
- 88 GRO, D1610 C27/2 C.B.C. to James, 17 Jan. 1810; C24  
James to C.B.C., 4 Apr. 1809 and 26 Apr. 1810. Sir William  
also considered whether Barbuda might supply the outside  
market with salted fish. Reynolds thought that if they had  
'strenth enough' they might supply the Codrington estates  
on Antigua with fish 'but we never could make it an object  
for markets', MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Mar. 1787. Cinque-  
foil grass is referred to in C27/1 C.B.C. to James, 31 Jan.  
1808 and nopal for the cochineal insect in C30 Winter to  
C.B.C., 22 July 1832.
- 89 See above, note 42, for W.C.'s part in this. Also  
GRO, D1610 C27/1 C.B.C. to James, 31 Jan. 1808.
- 90 For example, Henri de Ponthieu, GRO, D1610 C13 1780-(1783).

## Chapter 5

### TRANSPORT, BOAT-BUILDING, AND SALVAGE

It was impossible for Barbuda to be useful to the Codrington sugar estates in Antigua or to produce goods and livestock for sale there unless regular transport was available between the two islands. When Benjamin King was attorney from 1740 he seems himself to have provided this. He kept a separate Shallop Account in which he noted: I have not chd a third part of what was done for the Estates by my Shallop as I want no more than her wear and Tare.'<sup>1</sup> In fact, however, his charges to and from Barbuda were very high (£14 for a journey to the island with a letter)<sup>2</sup> and, when Barbuda came under Codrington control again, after the lease to Martin and Byam had ended in 1761, a sloop was bought especially for the use of the island.<sup>3</sup> From this time Barbuda was supplied with transport on a regular basis, usually two or three vessels, either sloops or schooners. Sometimes these were bought for the island,<sup>4</sup> but quite often they were built by Barbudan slaves. Boat-building seems to have been started in the 1760s or 1770s<sup>5</sup> and from 1783 shipwrights or ships' carpenters were regularly included as a category in the slave lists.<sup>6</sup>

The vessels were in such constant use that repairs and replacements were frequently needed. A typical situation was reported by James in 1809 when he described the two

Barbudan craft then being used for carrying sugars from the Antiguan estates to the port for loading, as unseaworthy. The schooner had had to be hauled up at Barbuda and 'nearly new built'; the other had also needed a great many repairs which had, however, been less costly.<sup>7</sup> In 1817 he had to report that two island vessels had been lost while he was in England and the third was very old and only kept going through the repairs that had been effected.<sup>8</sup>

His plans for building a new one are interesting because they indicate how it was done. A ship-builder from Antigua had offered to superintend the work—but he wanted £165 sterling for doing so. James instead offered him £100 currency to lay the frame and was prepared to do it himself if his proposal was turned down.<sup>9</sup> By September 1818 the vessel was in 'a great state of forwardness', built of the very best materials. With the bolts obtained from wrecks he had been able to 'copper fasten her' entirely and he trusted Codrington would not object to her being 'bottom-coppered'. It was an extra expense at first, but worth it in the West Indies as otherwise a boat had to 'hove down' at least every six weeks. He needed canvas for the sails and hoped it would be sent out as quickly as possible as he wanted her to be ready for carrying sugars at the beginning of the next sugar crop. As she was about sixty tons he calculated she would be able to carry thirty-two hogsheads of sugar.<sup>10</sup> The schooner was named Bethel and was in use until the late 1820s.<sup>11</sup>

Another vessel, the sloop Lady Codrington was constructed on Barbuda and in 1827 Daniel Beazor, one of the slaves, was given a barrel of flour worth £4. 5s. 6d. for building her.<sup>12</sup> Unfortunately she was sunk off the west

coast of Barbuda in 1831 when unloading goods from a wreck.<sup>13</sup> Between 1827 and 1831, in fact, three vessels were lost, valued altogether at about £2,500. Another, of fifty tons, was being built in 1833.<sup>14</sup>

In addition to these sloops and schooners there were also smaller boats used to transport goods from one part of the island to another, or to take light loads to Antigua. These craft were able to enter the lagoon. James claimed to have started this practice and the first boat was built entirely from wreck materials in 1809.<sup>15</sup> By 1833, there were eight such boats of varying sizes, the largest being able to carry about ten tons.<sup>16</sup>

All these vessels were manned by Barbudan slaves who were provided with uniforms and paid a regular weekly allowance.<sup>17</sup> All the expenses incurred are listed separately in the ledgers (though sometimes with petty cash) and the annual outlay averaged £150-£200 per year between 1785 and 1798, and £350-£500 between 1806 to 1814. In the later years expenses varied considerably from year to year but the annual average was about £540.<sup>18</sup>

If providing and maintaining these vessels was sometimes expensive, however, their value to the island cannot be over-estimated. They were used to transport all the supplies from Antigua, to carry all Barbudan produce (including live-stock) to the estates and to market, and to ferry passengers and mail to and from Barbuda. If a third party had had to be paid at the rate charged by Colonel King the island would have had to pay £728 per year for one journey per week by one boat. Not only did the boats save money for the island, though. They also earned money by transporting sugar, grown

on the Codrington estates, from Parham harbour on the north coast of Antigua to the ocean-going vessels operating from St. John's. This work brought in a regular annual sum. The amount varied with the size of the crop—it might be as little as £30 or as much as £500. The annual average was about £200.<sup>19</sup> In addition to all this regular work the vessels played a vital part in the rescue of people and goods from the many wrecks which occurred off the Barbudan coasts. It is therefore hard to over-estimate the importance of all these small craft in the life and work of the people on Barbuda.

### Salvage

One of the most controversial sources of revenue from Barbuda was the money made from salvage awards. There were not in fact more shipwrecks off Barbuda's coasts than elsewhere in the Caribbean. St. Kitts, for example, had a great many more. Robert E. Marx, although he does not give a comprehensive list for Barbuda in his book on shipwrecks between 1492 and 1825, names thirty-five ships wrecked there, but over three hundred and fifty for the same period off St. Kitts.<sup>20</sup> Nevertheless there is no doubt that a great many ships foundered near the island and the Codringtons benefited very considerably. Wrecks were caused by the fact that Barbuda was low-lying (described by Governor Burt in 1778 as being scarcely visible at six leagues) and entirely surrounded by rocks and shoals, many submerged.<sup>21</sup> The usual route to the British West Indies and to Carolina and Virginia in the late eighteenth century lay just to the north of Barbuda<sup>22</sup> and in bad weather, particularly during the hurricane season

it was only too possible for ships to be blown onto the rocks surrounding the island. So many wrecks occurred that visitors commented on the timber scattered on the shore<sup>23</sup> and after H.M.S. Woolwich was wrecked on rocks to the north of Barbuda in 1813 the reef was nicknamed 'Sir Bethel Codrington's coppermine'.<sup>24</sup> Robert Jarritt in one of his gloomy letters about the state of Barbuda dismissed a scheme for making access easier from the lagoon to the sea with a practical appreciation of Barbuda's hazards. 'Our only Security and profit' he said 'is the Rocks we want no safe Harbours or anchoring places.'<sup>25</sup>

Wrecks, in fact, were a useful source of income in a variety of ways. In the royal grant to the Codringtons in 1684 the lessees were granted 'all flotsam and Jetsam and Wrecks which shall be found within the low water marke of the said Island'.<sup>26</sup> Though this was not repeated in subsequent grants, it was not excluded either, and the manager of Barbuda acted as though he were entitled to collect the wood and other articles found on the beaches. Actually there was no-one on Barbuda who could have challenged the Codrington claim to these articles so that they had the right de facto if not de jure. This applied to wrecks as much as to flotsam and jetsam—a point made by the Governor of the Leeward Islands when he wrote to the Duke of Newcastle about Barbuda in 1854. 'Although there is, I believe, no claim on the part of the Lessee to a chartered right to Wrecks—still, in as much as there can be no salvors offering but who are under his control, and all requisite appliances are his property, the practical result is the same as if he shall be possessed of one.'<sup>27</sup>

The money made from salvage contributed notably to the economy. In the four periods considered in other chapters the amount made from this source was:<sup>28</sup>

1746-55	£4,944	18s. 6d.	Antiguan currency*
1785-98	£4,092	15s. 2½d.	" "
1806-14	£19,464	7s. 1¼d.	" "
1825-34	£26,610	4s. 8¾d.	" "

\* This is the figure given in the document, but individual wrecks when added came to a few pence more.

The very much larger sums made in the last two periods are due not so much to an increase in the number of wrecks, as to very much bigger awards made for individual vessels, which reflects the increase in the size and capacity of merchant ships at this time. From the brig William Park, for example, the Codringtons were awarded salvage of 37½ per cent in 1829 which came to £11,704. 10s. 0d.<sup>29</sup> and two others, the brig Ann and the brig Jean brought in together £10,613. 18s. 5½d. in 1834.<sup>30</sup> For the first period there is no account of individual wrecks, but in the second, 1785-98, the largest amount awarded was £1,225. 19s. 8d. on the Jeannette in 1795.<sup>31</sup> These awards did not, of course, provide a regular income. In some years little might be made from salvage, in others a great deal. On 1 May 1797, William Collins wrote that there had been no wrecks since 1794;<sup>32</sup> in 1808 there was only one wreck which brought £293. 10s. 0d. to the Codringtons, but in 1809 there were three awards totalling £5,143. 2s. 2¼d.<sup>33</sup> The tables at the end of this chapter show the annual totals from this source.

These awards, though obviously satisfactory to the Codringtons, aroused hostility in others. Normally Barbuda was of no interest to the outside world, but when ships of foreign nationality were wrecked there, or when British



naval vessels got into difficulties, the government's attention might be drawn to the island. Before 1780 there was good reason to query what happened on Barbuda when a wreck occurred.

Samuel Redhead's behaviour seems to have been exceedingly high-handed. According to testimonies taken in the case of the Sancta Rita, a Spanish ship wrecked on Barbuda in 1776,<sup>34</sup> it was claimed by Redhead that he had 'an absolute right as Acting Attorney of the said Sir William Codrington and as the Manager and director of the said Island of Barbuda to settle the Salvage of all Goods Saved out of Wrecks without the Controul of any person or persons or any Court or Courts of Admiralty or any other Court or Courts of Law or Equity whatsoever'.<sup>35</sup> Redhead's behaviour on this occasion led to protests being made from Spain to Britain, and Lord Germain wrote to the Governor of the Leeward Islands (W.M. Burt) who promised the fullest inquiry. This was not, Burt noted, the first time that such complaints had been made.<sup>36</sup>

The master of the Sancta Rita complained that Redhead had not brought the salvaged goods to Antigua and delivered them to the Custom House officers as he should have done according to law. Nor would Redhead allow that the Court of Vice-Admiralty at Antigua had jurisdiction over wrecks on Barbuda. The master and his supporters maintained that if the wrecked goods had been brought to Antigua the Court of Vice-Admiralty would have had such jurisdiction. If Redhead had behaved in either of these ways, his opponents said, a fair proportion of the salvage award would have been granted to the Codringtons. They claimed that Redhead was

refusing to allow the goods to be brought to Antigua not only 'with a view to making himself the Arbitrary Judge of the Salvage' but because he intended to sell the goods and was in fact doing so.<sup>37</sup>

Redhead defended himself vigorously. He blamed the master for not giving as much help at the wreck as he could and for not controlling his crew. He had heard that the master had deliberately lost the ship because it was fully insured. Redhead himself had certainly not prevented an inventory being made, as the master stated, and had in fact made an agreement with the master to take half the wrecked goods in return for the help that was given. Seventy slaves had been used in the rescue, with four white men, and boats and carts belonging to the island.<sup>38</sup>

Redhead's arguments are not convincing. Even if he could prove that the Acts in question did not apply to Barbuda there was no doubt that the methods they prescribed were, in his opponents' words 'so Just that any Reasonable man would conform thereto'.<sup>39</sup> If the goods had been taken to Antigua in the first instance the efforts of the Barbudan people would have been taken into account when salvage was awarded, and a great deal of ill feeling would have been prevented. The Antiguan authorities and the Governor were doubtless irritated personally by Redhead's independent attitude, but they were also aware that such unreasonable behaviour did not help relations with other countries. There was also concern that customs dues which should have been paid were being avoided by Redhead's tactics.<sup>40</sup>

The Governor was certainly intent on extending his authority over Barbuda after his visit to the island in

November 1777. He noted that 'For want of white Inhabitants a Wanton Arbitrary Salvage is Established; not Content with a Part, the Whole is frequently plundered by the Negroes'.<sup>41</sup> He recommended that an exact plan should be made of the island by the official surveyor, and that in the meantime, Barbuda should be brought under the jurisdiction of Antigua.<sup>42</sup> The Secretary of State was occupied with other weightier matters and made no decision about this,<sup>43</sup> but another wreck gave the Governor the opportunity to take action himself.

On 16 August 1779, a Dutch ship carrying a French cargo from Bordeaux to St. Eustatius was wrecked off Barbuda.<sup>44</sup> On this occasion there was the additional problem for the authorities of deciding whether the ship was Dutch or French as treatment would differ accordingly. France was already at war with England in 1779, Holland not until 1780. The Governor decided to take immediate action. He asked the Solicitor-General whether it would not be proper to appoint a Collector of Customs to take the vessel and cargo into his custody (for the benefit of the owners if she were Dutch) and to tell His Majesty's Receiver of the Droits of Admiralty in case she should be French property 'to Secure that which belonged to His Majesty who has hitherto never received his Customs on any Goods there Stranded, nor has he received His Droits of Admiralty'. The Solicitor-General approved of these ideas and the Governor therefore issued a commission to the Collector of St. John's appointing him Collector of Customs in Barbuda.<sup>45</sup>

This wreck was important, too, because it again brought to public notice the custom on Barbuda for the manager to insist on the captain of a ship agreeing to give half the

value of the wreck and cargo to the salvors, if help were to be supplied.<sup>46</sup> Usually a court awarded only a third unless a great deal of trouble had been taken.<sup>47</sup> To this extent the criticism that 'a Wanton, Arbitrary Salvage'<sup>48</sup> was established there is a valid one,

These two cases caused so much trouble, expense, and adverse publicity that suggestions for modifying the policy were put to Sir William by the town agent and two of the attorneys. In October 1780, the town agent, J. Lindsay wrote:

You will not I hope think me impertinent when I recommend to you to abolish that inhuman practice that is observ'd in Barbuda when Vessels are unfortunately stranded there. . . . A man in Distress will consent to anything for his Relief, particularly in an Island where the only person that can relieve him is the Man that offers him Terms. . . . I would advise your giving peremptory Orders that every Assistance and Relief should be afforded, and let your Salvage etc be determined by Magistrates. Depend upon it you will always receive an ample and satisfactory Salvage.<sup>49</sup>

Sir William apparently agreed that disputes about wrecks should be avoided and an arrangement was made by Langford Lovell for salvage awards to be determined by three Antiguan Justices of the Peace, the amount awarded to be based on the extent of the services rendered on Barbuda.<sup>50</sup> This method, of course, did not apply to cases affecting English naval ships or ships of enemy countries which were dealt with by the Admiralty or the Courts of Vice-Admiralty.

On the whole the new arrangements seem to have worked reasonably well<sup>51</sup> though in the period 1825-34 a return to more direct methods seems to have been tried. There must have been some objection to this because in 1826 the advice of Dr. Stephen Lushington was sought by John Osborn, one of the attorneys, on the question of the extent of the rights

of the Codringtons in these matters. In March 1827 an American lumber vessel was wrecked on Barbuda: 'As soon as the Collector heard of the wreck he ordered over vessels to assist, which is much against your Interest - this was not the case formerly and I know not now why he should interfere. I have not as yet received Mr. Lushington's opinion, when I do I shall act up to it.'<sup>52</sup> Lushington's opinion was that Osborn had been exceeding his legal rights in certain respects<sup>53</sup> but there seems to have been no immediate return to a more moderate method of behaviour. In 1829 Robert Jarritt wrote that salvage had been awarded without reference to the magistrates 'where it is not likely we should have fared so well'.<sup>54</sup> Despite these more high-handed methods, however, there were apparently no more legal disputes about wrecks until after 1834.<sup>55</sup>

It must be acknowledged that those who were wrecked on Barbuda were unfortunate in certain respects. As the whole island was owned by one man there could be no alternative form of aid and no independent witnesses. Another hazard, but one not necessarily peculiar to Barbuda, was the probable pilfering of the cargo. In the case of the Sancta Rita Redhead was accused of allowing the slaves to take goods so that he could reclaim them later. In his defence Redhead denied this, and said steps had been taken to prevent stealing, but he believed the crew had given things to the slaves.<sup>56</sup> Clearly conditions on the island at the time of a wreck would give opportunities of pilfering to all those there. It would have been impossible to check all the goods and the practice was probably, to a certain extent, ignored, in order to encourage the slaves to help. They usually got

no other form of 'reward' however well they behaved, though the manager received a percentage of the award.<sup>57</sup> There is no doubt either that, though those on Barbuda may be criticized for their behaviour, this did not mean that those wrecked were without blame. Though the evidence available mostly comes from Codrington sources, and is therefore prejudiced in favour of their efforts, it does seem to show that in a number of cases the captains had no control over their crews who also took their chance of pilfering whatever they could. The crew of the Sancta Rita were said to have divided the goods they found on the shore amongst themselves.<sup>58</sup> When the sea-chests of the crew of the Young David were examined they were all found to contain stolen goods from the cargo.<sup>59</sup>

Some captains, too, showed a considerable lack of seamanship. Redhead complained that the Sancta Rita lost her cargo because the captain and crew abandoned the ship and the main damage was done after that, when the brig parted her cable and drifted a further mile and a half westwards onto rocks near Cocoa Point. If someone had remained on board, he maintained, it might have been possible to anchor her and the cargo could have been saved.<sup>60</sup> John James, in 1817, criticized the captain of a French brig wrecked on the south-east end of the island whose crew had immediately abandoned her, without taking in a single sail, which had led to much greater damage than was necessary.<sup>61</sup>

More to the credit of those on Barbuda, however, was the effort actually put into the saving of lives and cargoes. Wrecks usually occurred when the weather was bad and the sea dangerous, and frequently at considerable distances from the

shore so that those involved in rescue put their lives at risk. On one occasion, in 1817, the island boats had to be carried three miles overland and then rowed several miles to the wreck.<sup>62</sup> In 1821 James had to attend a wreck about seven miles from the land and for a week they had had to sleep in the island boats.<sup>63</sup> The best description of the typical difficulties they encountered was written by James in 1813:

and I must do the Men the justice to say they have behaved remarkably well at these Wrecks the last Vessel tho at the distance of a Mile and half from the shore and in a heavy Sea was discharged in three days two of which it was with difficulty we could keep the boats a long side, she was Nearly full of Water when we got to her, and is now gone to pieces. The Lumber Vessel was two Miles from the shore, and so surrounded with Rocks that whenever the Sea became rougher than usual we were obliged to quit her, we had ten Miles to Row Morning and Evening to and from them. If the Woolwich is abandoned tho it will be a very troublesome business from the size of the Cables etc as they must be carried about 4 Miles in Boats yet one third of their Value will pay well.<sup>64</sup>

Sometimes lives were lost. One slave was drowned at the Sancta Rita,<sup>65</sup> four lost their lives when giving help to a brig in 1805.<sup>66</sup> Time spent on wrecks, too, meant that most of the male work-force were diverted from their normal tasks for days and sometimes weeks at a time.<sup>67</sup>

Attendance on vessels in distress did not automatically lead to big salvage awards. Sometimes ships were refloated. It is difficult to determine how far help was offered under these circumstances, though in the case of H.M. Brig Opossum the captain acknowledged the help he had received from the overseer and thirty picked men.<sup>68</sup> Sometimes, too, the crews saved the cargo themselves and in these cases the only help needed was transport to Antigua.<sup>69</sup> Occasionally passengers and crews had to remain on Barbuda for some time.

The crew of the Woolwich, for example, were there for several months from September to December 1813.<sup>70</sup> These expenses were usually recouped later. The Admiralty paid for the food consumed by the crew of the Woolwich, and any other expenses involved in claiming salvage were normally more than adequately covered by the awards.<sup>71</sup>

To outsiders the wreck awards, particularly between 1825 and 1834, look like easy money and the question whether deliberate wrecking from the shore was practised has to be considered. The Governor of the Leeward Islands in 1854 certainly seemed to think that the 'remoteness of the Island, and its character as a dangerous locality minister occasionally . . . to fraudulent purposes'.<sup>72</sup> Professor Douglas Hall suggests that this meant that vessels were lured onto the coasts by those living on Barbuda.<sup>73</sup> The Governor's actual words must surely, however, be interpreted differently. The 'fraudulent purposes' he referred to were directed towards 'the intentional casting away of vessels'.<sup>74</sup> This could only mean that the wrecking was done not by those on Barbuda but by those on board the vessels who intended to claim insurance illegally. This fits in much more with the evidence. Although many complaints are made by those saved about their treatment, there are no suggestions of deliberate wrecking though there are hints that ships may have been deliberately wrecked by a captain. This was said to have been suggested by the sailors from the Sancta Rita, for instance.<sup>75</sup> Moreover, deliberate wrecking by those on Barbuda would not have been worth while unless there had been an easier outlet for the sale of goods than was provided by the neighbouring islands. As with other cases of malpractice



on Barbuda what was done was usually small in scale because a large-scale illicit enterprise would have involved the expenditure of too much energy and might have upset the status quo which it suited everyone to preserve. It is interesting to note, too, that the complaints made against the Barbudans after Emancipation were the same as those made before—that they more or less forced a captain to accept help on their terms.<sup>76</sup> Deliberate wrecking was never even suggested.

There is no evidence at all to suggest that the Codringtons themselves encouraged sharp practice of any sort though they made sure that they received full compensation for any work done on Barbuda in connection with wrecked vessels.<sup>77</sup> Both proprietors recognized the value to the economy of the salvage awards, but Sir Bethell Codrington, in particular, saw that they were not to be relied on as a regular source of income. In 1829 he described one as 'a windfall that has come very seasonably'.<sup>78</sup> He also insisted that his employees should regard them in the same way. Writing to Samuel Martin in 1810 he commented: 'Barbuda as you justly notice will shew a handsome Balance this year; But we must look at the Balance divested of the chance profits arising from Wrecks; Barbuda is I believe materially improving, but Wrecks must be consider'd as Casualties and should be put out of view in looking at the annual Profits.'<sup>79</sup> He insisted that the profits from wrecks should be listed separately and the amounts remitted to him<sup>80</sup> and not used to offset other debts. In this attitude he was undoubtedly right. Only in the period 1825-1834 did the total profits from wrecks exceed those from livestock though the view

expressed by the Governor of the Leewards in 1848 was that 'The Salvage on Wrecks is Supposed to have formerly constituted the chief source of profit'.<sup>81</sup> There were three exceptional years in the other periods (1749-50, 1809, and 1813) when the amount made from wrecks exceeded that from stock but usually it was well below, as the table below show. However attractive wrecks might seem to outsiders, to the Codringtons the real value of Barbuda was to be assessed on its normal, not its chance, activities.

Tables to show the profits made from Barbuda in the periods 1746-55, 1785-98, 1806-14, and 1825-34

As far as possible these tables also include total income and total expenditure, and the amounts made from stock and wrecks. All figures are in Antiguan currency.

1746-55

No figures are available for expenditure in this period so it is not known whether or not the total represents a clear profit. The accounts cover twelve months beginning 1 June.

	Total annual amount made from Barbuda			Stock			Wrecks		
	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d
1746-7	717.	7.	7½	380.	10.	7	24.	10.	0½
1747-8	3,926.	5.	4½	1,797.	18.	11	1,529.	11.	2½
1748-9	2,862.	2.	3	1,573.	9.	7	404.	4.	8½
1749-50	3,793.	14.	6½	1,188.	11.	0	1,411.	14.	0
1750-1	2,295.	5.	6	920.	10.	7	46.	9.	0
1751-2	3,271.	11.	3	2,184.	11.	10	4.	17.	9
1752-3	3,088.	4.	0	2,191.	17.	9	537.	12.	6
1753-4	1,134.	1.	1	715.	7.	0	21.	10.	3
1754-5	3,864.	11.	9	2,612.	14.	5½	964.	9.	7

1785-98

	Total Income			Total Expenditure			Total Profit			Income from Stock			Income from Wrecks		
	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d
1785-6	8,292.	8.	11	1,797.	3.	4½	6,495.	5.	6½	5,463.	7.	0	122.	0.	5½
1786-7	7,565.	5.	8½	1,330.	17.	8½	6,234.	8.	0½	5,718.	6.	0	-	-	-
1787-8	7,782.	5.	4	2,196.	14.	3½	5,585.	11.	0½	5,724.	10.	8	846.	17.	9½
1788-9	5,403.	4.	9½	1,862.	8.	2½	3,540.	16.	7	4,079.	9.	6	68.	9.	2
1789-90	4,748.	12.	9½	1,260.	13.	4½	3,487.	19.	5	2,057.	3.	9	88.	18.	10
1790-1	4,462.	2.	3½	1,567.	6.	1½	2,894.	16.	2	2,596.	0.	1	88.	8.	6
1791-2	6,455.	14.	4½	2,872.	0.	0½	3,583.	14.	3½	5,431.	1.	5	108.	4.	0
1793	8,247.	7.	10	1,302.	14.	7½	6,944.	13.	2½	7,315.	13.	10	-	-	-
1794	6,304.	16.	2	1,967.	6.	11½	4,337.	9.	2½	3,186.	16.	3	-	-	-
1795	10,220.	13.	9½	1,131.	12.	2½	9,089.	1.	6½	5,558.	9.	7	1,861.	1.	7½
1796	5,480.	8.	8½	2,113.	11.	7	3,366.	17.	1½	3,647.	2.	9	-	-	-
1797	3,940.	7.	0	1,768.	9.	5½	2,171.	17.	6½	2,686.	14.	9	200.	3.	0
1798	12,729.	2.	0½	2,678.	6.	0	10,050.	16.	0½	10,166.	9.	6	708.	11.	10

1806-14

1806	9,928.	3.	4	1,073.	2.	7½	8,855.	0.	8½	5,441.	11.	8	4,128.	6.	1
1807	4,858.	10.	6	1,202.	4.	3	3,656.	6.	3	3,648.	2.	0	657.	9.	3
1808	6,037.	8.	7	1,415.	11.	9½	4,621.	16.	9½	4,300.	15.	4	293.	10.	0
1809	9,222.	3.	8	1,045.	15.	5	8,176.	8.	3	3,663.	11.	9	5,143.	2.	2½
1810	13,035.	9.	6	1,178.	0.	7½	11,857.	8.	10½	7,860.	3.	10	2,624.	9.	6
1811	8,749.	16.	3½	1,488.	2.	11½	7,261.	13.	3½	6,487.	19.	1	1,714.	14.	0
1812	6,635.	6.	5½	1,662.	6.	11½	4,973.	0.	6	6,367.	15.	5	-	-	-
1813	10,156.	0.	8	1,672.	9.	4½	8,483.	11.	3½	3,531.	15.	6	4,902.	16.	1
1814	5,096.	5.	8½	1,695.	3.	3	3,401.	2.	5½	4,542.	15.	1	-	-	-

N.B. From 1785 to 1792 the accounts run from 1 July to 30 June, after that they cover a complete calendar year from 1 January.

1826-34

For this period it has not been possible to summarize the accounts in the same way as in the previous two because the accounting was altogether more erratic at this time. The figures, for example, are not necessarily done on a yearly basis and the goods sent to the estates are not always listed. For this reason the totals for the years 1826-30 have been added together, and omitted for 1831. From 1832 to 1834 it is possible again to give annual totals.

	Total Income			Total Expenditure			Total Profit			Income from Stock			Income from Wrecks		
	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d	£	s	d
1 Aug. 1826- 19 Oct.															
1830	27,203.	18.	2½	12,092.	5.	0	15,111.	13.	2½	11,864.	3.	9½	15,658.	1.	10½
1832	4,176.	5.	3	787.	5.	1	3,389.	0.	2	2,228.	18.	2	-	-	-
1833	3,188.	8.	6½	1,026.	5.	8	2,162.	2.	10½	1,978.	15.	4½	191.	0.	5
1834	12,661.	6.	5	2,128.	2.	11	10,533.	3.	6	849.	1.	3	10,761.	2.	5½

References (All GRO)

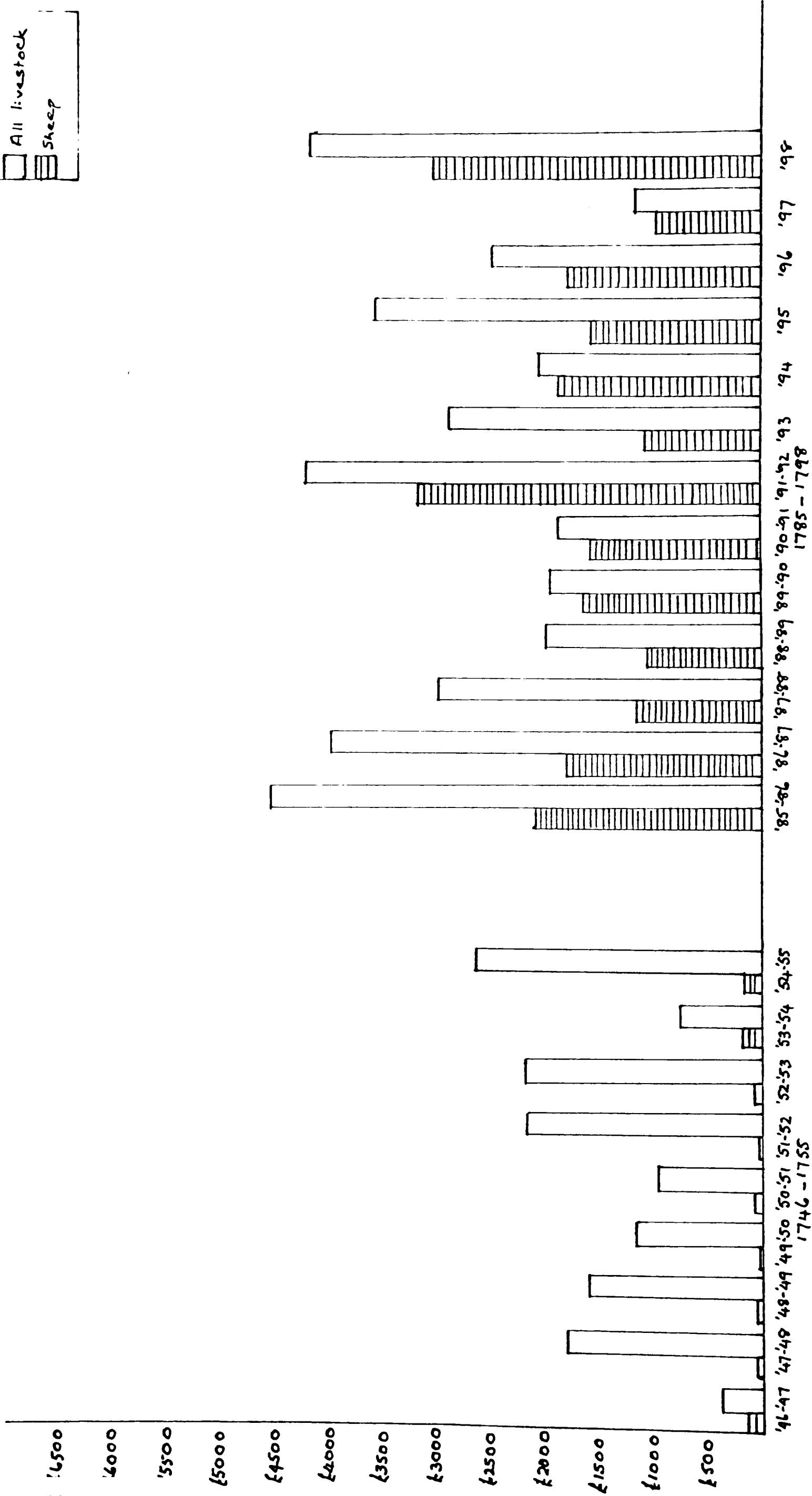
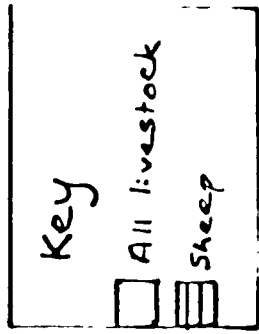
D1610 E16  
D1610 A6/1-13  
D1610 A56/4  
D1610 A56/14-18  
D1610 A56/20-22

Approximate rates of exchange

In the 1780s, £175 currency was worth £100 sterling. In the early 19th century (to 1834), £200 currency was worth £100 sterling.

Charts showing the sales of sheep in proportion to the sales of all livestock in  
1746-55, 1785-98, 1806-14, 1825-34

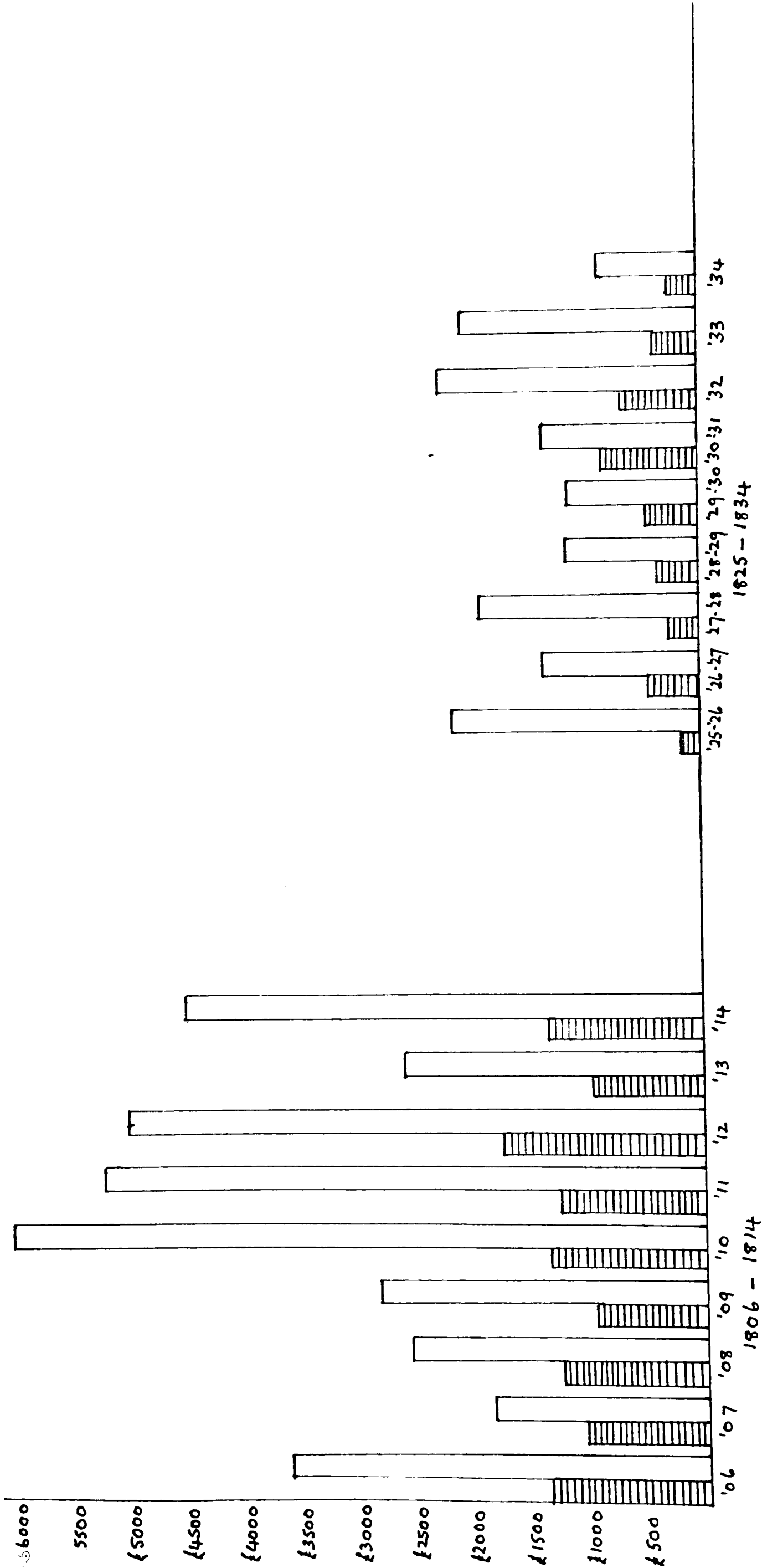
N.B. This does not include sales to the Codrington Estates.



Accounting was erratic between 1825 and 1831, thus:

1825-6	covers	13 months
1826-7	"	11 months
1827-8	"	13 months
1828-9	"	11 months
1829-30	"	15 months
1830-1	"	15 months

GRO, D1610 E16 A6/1-13, A56/4, A56/14-18, A56/20-22



Notes to Chapter 5

- 1 GRO, D1610 A1 King's Shallop Account from 15 May 1740 to 1 Nov. 1741, No. 1.
- 2 GRO, D1610 A1 King's Shallop Account from 1 Nov. 1745 to 31 Mar. 1746, No. 6. King was, in fact, accused of overcharging on freight among other things, by Sir William Codrington; D1610 A1.
- 3 GRO, D1610 A51 Barbuda accounts for 1762.
- 4 In 1797, £400 was paid for the sloop Sam; GRO, D1610 A6/12. The Robert was an American vessel bought for £990 currency 'nearly twenty years ago', GRO, D1610 C23 Hodge to C.B.C., 14 Sept. 1815.
- 5 GRO, D1610 C10 Clarke to W.C., 15 Oct. 1780. This refers to the loss of a small schooner 'which some years ago was built at Barbuda'. There were obviously some years when for one reason or another no boat-building was done. There seems to have been no such activity between 1790 and 1797: in that year S. Athill wrote that they were going to try boat-building again. In the past, he said, they had made a mistake in using green wood. They had been cutting wood on Barbuda for a boat, but they intended to leave it to season; MF375 Athill to C.B.C., 29 May 1797.
- 6 GRO, E17 Lists of Negroes on Barbuda in 1783, 1805, 1814, and 1817.
- 7 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 4 Apr. 1809.
- 8 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 9 July 1817.
- 9 Ibid.
- 10 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 5 Sept. 1818.
- 11 GRO, A56/12. She seems to have been one of the three vessels lost between 1827 and 1833. MF375 Winter to C.B.C., 7 Jan. 1833.
- 12 GRO, D1610 A56/15(i).
- 13 GRO, MF375 Winter to C.B.C., 25 Jan. 1831.
- 14 GRO, MF375 Winter to C.B.C., 7 Jan. 1833.
- 15 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 4 Apr. 1809.
- 16 GRO, MF375 Winter to C.B.C., 7 Jan. 1833.
- 17 GRO, D1610 A6/1-15, A56/4, A56/13-22.
- 18 Ibid. There is some variety in the method of accounting; in the accounts for 1785-98 the expenses of the vessels are given with details of petty cash.
- 19 Ibid.
- 20 Robert F. Marx, Shipwrecks of the Western Hemisphere 1492-1825, 2nd Edition (New York, 1971, reprinted 1975), pp. 264-8, 270-3. During one hurricane in 1780 more than a hundred ships were lost round the coasts of St. Kitts. Ships in these numbers were never likely in the vicinity of Barbuda where there were no harbours for international trade.

- 21 PRO, CO 152/57, Burt to Germain, 10 Jan. 1778. Admiralty Chart of Barbuda, No. 1997.
- 22 Governor Pownall's Map 1787, reproduced in L.M. Penson, The Colonial Agents of the British West Indies (London, 1924).
- 23 PRO, CO 152/57, Burt to Germain, 10 Jan. 1778.
- 24 Coleridge, Six Months in the West Indies, p. 272.
- 25 GRO, D1610 C29 Jarritt to C.B.C., 6 Oct. 1829.
- 26 GRO, D1610 T9 Grant of 1684.
- 27 PRO, CO 7/104, Mackintosh to Newcastle, 20 June 1854.
- 28 GRO, D1610 E16, A6/1-13, A56/4, A56/13-22.
- 29 GRO, D1610 A56/16.
- 30 GRO, D1610 A56/22.
- 31 GRO, D1610 A6/10.
- 32 GRO, MF375 Collins to C.B.C., 1 May 1797. William Collins was then in charge on Barbuda.
- 33 GRO, D1610 A56/4.
- 34 The Sancta Rita, a Spanish brigantine, left Bilbao on 18 June 1776 bound for the Bay of Campechy, with a cargo valued at over £14,700 (Antiguan currency). On the morning of 26 July she was wrecked off Cocoa Point, Barbuda. The crew went ashore and a slave conducted the master and boatswain to the castle where they found Samuel Redhead. He, with 70 slaves, gave help over several days in unloading the brig and in transporting goods and crew to Antigua. It is difficult to ascertain the truth about events on Barbuda after this wreck but the accounts of both sides make amusing reading and provide a good deal of incidental information about life on Barbuda. PRO, CO 152/57, enclosed in Burt to Germain, 24 Oct. 1777.
- 35 PRO, CO 152/57, Burt to Germain, 24 Oct. 1777.
- 36 PRO, CO 152/56, Burt to Germain, 30 July 1777.
- 37 PRO, CO 152/57, Burt to Germain, 24 Oct. 1777.
- 38 Ibid.
- 39 Ibid.
- 40 This point was made the next year when there was another controversial wreck; PRO, CO 152/59, Burt to Germain, 27 Sept. 1779.
- 41 PRO, CO 152/57, Burt to Germain, 10 Jan. 1778.
- 42 Ibid.
- 43 PRO, CO 152/57, Germain to Burt, 15 May 1778.
- 44 This was the Young David, GRO, D1610 E19.
- 45 PRO, CO 152/59, Burt to Germain, 27 Sept. 1779.
- 46 GRO, D1610 C11 Lindsay to W.C., 18 Oct. 1780.
- 47 The amounts subsequently awarded to the Codringtons in the courts varied considerably. In 1780 a half was granted where an agreement had been made with a captain; a third

was awarded in 1782. Between 1809 and 1811 awards ranged from 15 per cent to 40 per cent; but 80 per cent was awarded on the sale of goods from the Frances Peabody in 1830; GRO, D1610 A54, A56/4, A56/19(ii)

48 PRO, CO 152/57, Burt to Germain, 10 Jan. 1778.

49 GRO, D1610 C11 Lindsay to W.C., 18 Oct. 1780.

50 GRO, D1610 C12 Oliver to W.C. 24 Nov. 1780.

51 An unexpected problem occurred in 1813 when the Barbuda, bringing wine from a wrecked ship to St. John's, was seized by H.M. Brig Spider. On this occasion, though, the Barbudan officials had acted within the law. The Customs had been informed of the wreck and of the Barbuda's journey and in 1815 the judge acquitted those involved of any intended breach of the law. If the decision had gone against them the Codringtons would have had to arrange some other method of getting the goods from wrecked ships to Antigua; GRO, D1610 C23 Hodge to C.B.C., 26 Aug. 1813 and 10 Sept. 1815.

52 GRO, MF375 Osborn to C.B.C., 4 Mar. 1827 and 18 Apr. 1827.

53 GRO, D1610 E21 Opinion of Stephen Lushington, 28 June 1827. In 1826 Osborn was worried about boats going from Antigua to help at wrecks on Barbuda. This would have reduced the amount made by the Codringtons, so he instructed Winter to make sure they returned to Antigua with their salvage. In that way the Barbudan boats would be able to make ten trips to the wreck to their one; MF375 Osborn to Winter, 30 Nov. 1826.

54 GRO, D1610 C29 Jarritt, to C.B.C., 22 Jan. 1829.

55 On 2 Aug. 1847, a French ship Le Nouveau Justin went aground at Barbuda. Later the master protested that he had been more or less forced into accepting Barbudan salvage operations. The Foreign Office became involved in this and investigations were carried out by the Governor of the Leewards who concluded that the French allegations were not substantiated but the Barbudans were warned about their behaviour at wrecks; Hall, Five of the Leewards, p. 74.

56 PRO, CO 152/57 Burt to Germain, p. 37., 24 Oct. 1777.

57 See, for example GRO, D1610 A56/4. In 1813, after particularly good work done for the Opossum, Sir Bethell Codrington said he had no objection to the slaves being rewarded in some way, though not with money ('I have no objection to your giving them some Encouragement, or pointing out to me what wd please them'); D1610 C27/3 C.B.C. to James, 5 Jan. 1813.

58 PRO, CO 152/57, Burt to Germain, p. 37, 24 Oct. 1777.

59 GRO, D1610 E19 Statement made by D. Reynolds, 13 Dec. 1779.

60 PRO, CO 152/57, enclosed in Burt to Germain, 24 Oct. 1777.

61 GRO, MF375 James to C.B.C., 12 Aug. 1817.

62 Ibid.

63 GRO, MF375 James to C.B.C., 12 Aug. 1821.



64 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 25 Nov. 1813. H.M.S. Woolwich is the most famous wreck on Barbuda. She was one of 'the old 44 Gun ships' (James to C.B.C. D1610 C24, 2 Oct. 1813) and was accompanying the brig Vine (wrecked at the same time) when she ran on rocks on the north coast of Barbuda in a very severe gale on 11 Sept. 1813. The captain hoped to get her refloated and he sent to the Naval Yard at Antigua for assistance, but when she was surveyed it was decided that the expense involved in this would be greater than her value. No immediate decision was taken however. The crew (about 120 men and boys) were accommodated on Barbuda, the men in the old castle and the officers with Mr. James. They appear, from a contemporary account to have had a good time, the officers hunting with James! In November 1813 James wrote from Antigua that he had sent them another month's supply of bread and noted: 'They will take off a few of our Cattle and Sheep and they are regularly supplied with a pound of fresh meat per man every day since they have been on shore.' All this was, of course, paid for by the Admiralty. Eventually James was offered one third of the value of the stores from the Woolwich if he would transport everything to English Harbour, Antigua. In June 1814 he wrote to say that his task was now virtually complete, but he had not yet been paid. The men had left on 21 Dec. 1813. Of the Woolwich James wrote: 'This ship has given me more trouble than any other I have had to do with, from the size of the Materials which obliged me to be constantly present to prevent accidents.' GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 2 Oct. 1813, 25 Nov. 1813, 22 Jan. 1814, and 27 June 1814. 'Description of Barbuda', by Capt. Greville, in Oliver, History of Antigua, I, cxlviii-ix.

65 PRO, CO. 152/57, p. 37.

66 GRO, MF375 Athill to C.B.C., 4 Apr. 1805.

67 This is commented on particularly by James, for example, GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 25 Nov. 1813. Also C29 Jarritt to C.B.C., 22 Jan. 1829.

68 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 10 Aug. 1812.

69 GRO, MF375 Oliver to W.C., 9 May 1781.

70 See above, note 64.

71 Ibid.

72 PRO, CO 7/104, Mackintosh to Newcastle, 20 June 1854.

73 Hall, Five of the Leewards, p. 75.

74 PRO, CO 7/104, Mackintosh to Newcastle, 20 June 1854.

75 PRO, CO 152/57, p. 37.

76 This refers to Le Nouveau Justin, see above, note 55.

77 A good example of this concerns the Duke William, lost on Barbuda in February 1781, loaded with masts, yards, spars, etc. for Admiral Rodney. Everything from her was saved by those on Barbuda but an ordinary salvage award was impossible because the stores belonged to the Crown. This made no difference to Sir William who resented the fact that the Navy Board were prepared to give him a reward for the work done, but not salvage. Codrington accepted this, but not very

graciously, because he did not want to take out an action against the Crown which might last his life-time; and the expense involved would exceed the value of the reward. He insisted he should have been paid salvage by the owners of the ship (which the government had hired) for goods saved which belonged to the ship. GRO, D1610 C10 Clarke to W.C., 26 Apr. 1781; C14/1 W.C. to Oliver, 4 Feb. 1783, 11 Mar. 1783, and 28 June 1783.

- 78 GRO, D1610 C29 C.B.C. to Jarritt, 3 Mar. 1829.
- 79 GRO, D1610 C27/2 C.B.C. to Martin, 7 Apr. 1810.
- 80 GRO, D1610 C27/1 C.B.C. to James, 15 Jan. 1809.
- 81 PRO, CO 7/89 Higginson to Grey, Jan. 1848.

## SLAVERY ON BARBUDA

Slaves on Barbuda did not lead the life of plantation slaves. They were not tied to the culture of a single crop and in many respects their lives were much less harsh and more varied than those of their contemporaries on sugar estates.<sup>1</sup> It is interesting to discover the consequences of this less exhausting regime. The most obvious result was that the population lived longer and was more stable, and this in turn led to a natural increase. In the next chapter (6) the social background of the slaves on Barbuda will be described, and this will be followed by a more detailed look at the population and the reasons for its increase there, in contrast to most other islands in the Caribbean where numbers could only be maintained by extensive purchases (Chapter 7). The Codrington reaction to this growth in the population will be considered in Chapter 8.

### Chapter 6

#### THE SLAVE SOCIETY ON BARBUDA

##### I General Social Background

Codrington Village, the only settlement of any size on Barbuda, is situated near the lagoon, on its eastern shore. The principal building was the castle which was erected by John Codrington before 1688 and rebuilt by Sir William Codrington (I) after French attacks in the early eighteenth century.<sup>2</sup> Although intended primarily as a fortress it was used principally for stores and as a residence for some of the managers and for less important visitors.<sup>3</sup> It must have been very uncomfortable as the lower rooms where they lived,

were damp.<sup>4</sup> Henri de Ponthieu recommended that some better rooms should be built on the platform of the castle from which point they would have a good view of what was happening in the village.<sup>5</sup> Not all the managers chose to live there. Redhead built himself a house elsewhere,<sup>6</sup> and James lived for some of the time nearby in a 'large barn-like looking house'.<sup>7</sup> By 1813 the castle appeared 'dilapidated',<sup>8</sup> and Liggins described it in 1837 as 'little better than a Ruin'.<sup>9</sup> Near the castle were the buildings associated with the work of the island—stables, tan house, coach-house, turtle-crawl, and the workshops of the various craftsmen.<sup>10</sup>

Most of the slaves lived in the village. There is no detailed description of their houses, but they were built of local wood and thatched with sedge from the sandbank and Palmeto Point.<sup>11</sup> Inside they must have been similar to one at Betty's Hope visited by Lady Georgiana Codrington in 1843. This was small, perhaps eight feet by six, with a floor of beaten earth and containing a bed, a chest of drawers, a sideboard with crockery and glass, a table, and two or three chairs. Most slave quarters seem to have been larger than this, however, usually having two rooms, one used as a kitchen and living room, the other as a bedroom.<sup>12</sup> A suggestion was made to Sir William that good behaviour by senior slaves might be rewarded by building them better houses, but he rejected this idea because they would have had to be regularly maintained.<sup>13</sup> Periodically hurricanes damaged them but there was no shortage of building materials and the occupants could be accommodated at the castle while repairs were being effected.<sup>14</sup> Water came from a spring near their houses and from another in the castle which they were allowed to use.<sup>15</sup>

The quality of the houses was not usually commented on by visitors, but in 1837 Liggins wrote about them very critically noting that he found them inferior to the (former) slaves' dwellings on the Codrington estates in Antigua. Many of them were unthatched and out of the entire number he could only find two in a good condition and a third approaching completion.<sup>16</sup> Liggins, however, was visiting Barbuda after a period of some disturbance and while his remarks may have been accurate for that time, one cannot conclude that the housing was always inferior. A few slaves lived in other parts of the island—on the Highlands tending flocks, or on the coast acting as watchmen,<sup>17</sup> and their houses were built of wood and thatched, like those at the main settlement.<sup>18</sup>

The houses, like those of most slaves, had gardens in which poultry and pigs were reared and some foodstuffs grown<sup>19</sup> but their main grounds were sited in different areas of cleared woodland. One of these areas adjoined the village but two others were some distance away beyond the enclosures which Reynolds said lay half a mile to the east of the castle.<sup>20</sup> He claimed that the grounds had been developed there because the soil was the 'Richest and best' in the island.<sup>21</sup> It is not possible to be certain about the exact extent of each man's holding but the acreage was not limited.<sup>22</sup> In 1824 James maintained that some Barbudans had ten or eleven acres,<sup>23</sup> others had much less.<sup>24</sup> On these grounds the slaves, as in other islands, were expected to grow provisions for themselves, but while elsewhere<sup>25</sup> it was usual to give them time (for example, alternate Saturdays) to do this, on Barbuda this seems not to have been the practice until the late eighteenth century. In 1779 Lindsay

recommended to Sir William that the slaves should be allowed one day a week for the cultivation of their own grounds and this suggestion was adopted.<sup>26</sup> A schedule of work for the slaves for three months in 1797 shows that all hands were employed in their own grounds on Sundays.<sup>27</sup> In the 1820s, Saturday afternoons were used for this purpose and apparently Wednesday afternoons too, and Sunday must presumably have been a free day.<sup>28</sup> There was, of course, no guarantee that the slaves would work in their grounds on these days and there were complaints that in fact they often did not do so.<sup>29</sup>

Although in theory the slaves were expected to grow sufficient to feed themselves, in fact they often had to be provided with food. The weather problems which affected the island's main crops also affected the growth of their ground provisions. In 1764 Samuel Redhead wrote that the weather had been so severe that the slaves could not raise any crops for themselves and food had to be bought for them. He noted that 'it has ever been the case there',<sup>30</sup> and it continued to be the case throughout this period.<sup>31</sup> Yams, eddoes, and potatoes were usually grown and when these failed they were fed on American corn or beans from England.<sup>32</sup> This was the staple diet of slaves throughout the Caribbean, with the addition of salted herrings which provided a little protein.<sup>33</sup>

On Barbuda, however, the slaves also had more fresh food and larger quantities of protein, because fish and meat were available to them. The fish were caught in the lagoon and the sea. By the 1820s it seems to have been established that all Barbudans could fish when they wanted to,<sup>34</sup> but this had not always been the case. In the eighteenth century the

privilege seems to have been reserved for the head slaves until in 1779 Lindsay wrote to Sir William suggesting that this practice should be altered and any fish caught should be generally distributed.<sup>35</sup> In addition they had fresh meat from their own pigs and poultry, and sometimes they were allowed wild hog and goat meat.<sup>36</sup> At Christmas they were often given mess pork and flour.<sup>37</sup> These commodities were all officially sanctioned: but slaves on Barbuda also had plenty of opportunity to poach sheep and cattle and this was their common practice at all times. If caught they were severely punished, but they seem never to have been deterred and the authorities could find no effective means of stopping them.<sup>38</sup> In 1831 Jarritt wrote ruefully to Sir Bethell: 'Barbuda negroes are said not to answer in this island [Antigua]; and the reason is obvious, in Barbuda they ramble through the Woods, all hours of the Night, taking anything that comes in their Way, either Deer, Sheep or Cattle, as required'.<sup>39</sup> However much of a nuisance this was to those in authority, the practice must have had a good effect on the physique of the slaves. Visitors to the island commented on their unusually healthy appearance<sup>40</sup> and Jarritt noted: 'They are the strongest, halest People you ever saw, and yet they would make you believe they were half starved'.<sup>41</sup>

Clothing, of course, was provided of the same quantity and quality for the Barbudan slaves as for those on the family estates on Antigua. Supplies for all the Codrington plantations were sent from England and then despatched to the different concerns.<sup>42</sup> By 1824 adults were receiving six yards of oznaburgs, four yards of blankets, and one cap. Boys, girls, and infants were given smaller amounts.<sup>43</sup> These

allowances were not always sent on time. In 1818, for example, James complained that the slaves had had no clothing since 1815, and in 1821 none since 1818.<sup>44</sup> The sailors had a special uniform<sup>45</sup> and occasionally presents of clothes were made to the senior ones.<sup>46</sup> Presumably Barbudan slaves purchased extra clothing when they could, as other slaves did, with the money they made.

The usual way for slaves to acquire money to spend was by selling surplus crops and stock from their own grounds and gardens. Although there were years when insufficient food was grown to feed their families, there were other years when the crops were so good that some were available for sale. When this happened it was sent to market in Antigua in the island's boats, along with poultry, pigs, fish, guinea-fowl, and turkeys, either belonging to or caught by the slaves.<sup>47</sup> The amounts that could be made by them in this way were not inconsiderable. Winter informed Sir Bethell in January 1833 that since the previous April he himself had paid them £121. 15s. 3d. for poultry and hogs, and he could vouch for the fact that they had opportunities to sell double that amount in St. John's and to vessels that came to Barbuda for the purpose of buying stock. He believed that were 'their stock to be valued from within it would amount to upwards of three thousand dollars'.<sup>48</sup> The sums that could be made obviously varied according to the weather but the management did make it possible for any produce available to be sold. The island's boats went frequently to Antigua, usually two or three times a week in the early 1830s, and room was made on them for the produce the slaves wanted to sell.<sup>49</sup>



There were other ways, too, in which slaves were able to earn money. The sailors, for working at night or on Sundays, were paid an extra allowance;<sup>50</sup> and the grooms were treated in the same way when they accompanied animals to Antigua.<sup>51</sup> Occasionally some special activity was rewarded—as in the case of Old Benny who, in 1787, was paid 8s 3d. for killing a hundred cats.<sup>52</sup>

The fact that there were no shops on Barbuda did not make money valueless to the slaves—but it is difficult to be certain how it was spent. At the end of the eighteenth century Reynolds was said to be dealing in rum with them<sup>53</sup> and probably other managers did the same or sold them (without permission) stock which belonged to the island. Possibly when Barbudans visited Antigua to see the doctor or to buy necessities for their trade they also made purchases on behalf of family or friends.<sup>54</sup>

There is little evidence from Barbuda of slaves purchasing their freedom. This was probably because there was no paid employment available and if they wished to remain on the island they had to stay as slaves. In 1833 one of the daughters of the slave doctor could have had her freedom purchased by a prospective husband, but both her parents pleaded with Winter not to let her be manumitted, as she could be provided for better on Barbuda as a slave than as a free wife, presumably on Antigua.<sup>55</sup> By the 1830s Sir Bethell would probably have been glad to manumit any slaves who wanted to purchase their freedom,<sup>56</sup> but the attitude of the proprietor was different in the eighteenth century. In 1773 it was suggested that Jack Punter, a Mulatto slave who worked as a shoe-maker, might be manumitted. Redhead advised against it,

however, because 'he is a very good Fellow and very useful to you at present'. He felt that Punter, although ruptured, might live for some time if treated fairly and with some indulgence. He concluded: 'I am convinced it will be more for his Interest and Satisfaction to continue as he is than to have his Freedom'.<sup>57</sup> Jack Punter is not listed in 1783 but it seems likely that Joe Punter, aged ten in 1783, was his son and he became a collar and shoe-maker.<sup>58</sup> There was also a Harry Punter, an infant in 1766 and eventually one of the principal sailors, who may have been an elder son.<sup>59</sup> It seems likely therefore that Jack Punter remained on the island with them until his death.

It was easier for slaves on Antigua to consider purchasing their freedom than for those on Barbuda to do so as on Antigua there were opportunities of earning a living which were not available on Barbuda. There were other ways too in which Barbudans were less fortunate than their contemporaries on other islands. The Codringtons made little effort either to educate them or to provide for their religious instruction, though this had been done for some time by certain owners on other islands.<sup>60</sup> The Codrington estates on Antigua, in fact, were remarked on as being the only estates to exclude the Wesleyan missionaries (though the slaves there had apparently been converted to Christianity by them) and to have neither chapels nor schools.<sup>61</sup> That being the case in Antigua, it is not surprising that little was done in this way for Barbudan slaves. There was a chapel though. Apparently a large,thatched building had been fitted up as one (presumably at Codrington in the 1820s) and services were being held there in 1837.<sup>62</sup> Catechists

had been sent to Barbuda in the 1820s, by the Bishop of Barbados, to instruct the children and teach the catechism to the slaves, but they were not allowed to remain on the island for long. By 1831 three catechists in turn had been dismissed, the third because he wanted to marry one of the slaves if her freedom could be procured.<sup>63</sup> By the time Liggins visited the island in 1837 two more had been rejected, apparently because it was felt they were encouraging rebellious attitudes through their contacts in Antigua.<sup>64</sup> Some progress must have been made by these missionaries, however, because in 1837 Liggins noted that about 130 Barbudans attended a service held in the chapel, conducted by the manager.<sup>65</sup>

There is no record of any education being provided for the children, but some could read and write by the time of emancipation. In 1833 Winter wrote to Sir Bethell about the family of Cephas, the doctor. He had fourteen children all of whom (except the youngest) could read, and two or three could write.<sup>66</sup> Possibly the catechists had taught some children, but there seems to have been no formal schooling.

All the official social activities of the slaves were centred at Codrington Village, where the overseers and managers usually lived too. Members of the Codrington family who stayed on Barbuda, however, and their most distinguished guests were probably accommodated in a large house at the Highlands. This was less easy of access but the additional height made it healthier and provided views, so it was a likely site for a residence of better quality.

Highland House is marked on the sketch-maps of Barbuda from the 1780s<sup>67</sup> but the actual date of its construction is

uncertain. It seems most likely that it was built for Sir William Codrington (I). In 1720 he wrote of his desire to end his days at the Highlands and his instructions to plant exotic fruits and an orange orchard at Barbuda must have referred to this site.<sup>68</sup> Its construction in the 1720s or 1730s would fit in with Reynolds's statement in 1787 that one of the outhouses adjoining Highland House had been put up by Mr. Byam as bedrooms.<sup>69</sup> Byam, who died on Barbuda in 1755, probably lived in this house.<sup>70</sup>

Whatever the exact date of its construction it was clearly intended as a gentleman's residence. Dr. D. Watters, who has recently been conducting archaeological investigations there, has unearthed examples of porcelain and overglaze handpainted creamware — which might be expected from a house occupied by wealthy persons.<sup>71</sup> Sir Bethell certainly seems to have stayed there as a young man in 1790-1<sup>72</sup> and possibly friends like Mr. Woodley ('our Quondam Governor')<sup>73</sup> would have been accommodated there. At other times the outhouses were used for sick slaves especially when there was an epidemic.<sup>74</sup> Unfortunately by 1837 it had become little better than a ruin causing Liggins to lament 'that Stone Walls, calculated to stand for Ages yet unborn, should be found in a most delightfully Healthy situation, and without a Window — Door — or particle of a Roof'.<sup>75</sup>

## II Work of the Slaves on Barbuda

The slaves on Barbuda were not tied to the rigorous discipline imposed by the sugar industry<sup>76</sup> and although the work may have been hard for some there seems to have been variety even for those labouring in the fields. Well over half the

working population were employed in the fields.

As on the sugar estates the agricultural labourers on Barbuda were divided into three gangs. Unfortunately the first two slave lists which give names of field workers, those for 1766 and 1783, do not say which slaves were in which gang, and only three of the later lists, those for 1805, 1814, and 1817 give this information.<sup>77</sup> In all three of the later lists the first gang had more members than the other two together, and in each of those years more than twice the number of women to men. The second gang was more evenly divided between the sexes and consisted of boys and girls aged 14 to 8 in 1805, and 18 to 12 in 1814 and 1817. The grass gang contained boys and girls aged 11 to 5 in 1805, 14 to 8 in 1814, and 14 to 9 in 1817. Age does not seem to have been the only factor determining work in a particular group, as there were children of 12 in the second gangs when older children were still in the grass gangs. Similarly some children described as unfit in 1814 and 1817 were older than some of those working. The oldest person in the first gang in all three years was Hannah, aged 63 in 1805. In this year there must have been a shortage of labour, as much younger children were involved then than in the other two.

As there was a variety of crops and occupations on the island there was no fixed pattern of work for the labourers. Fortunately it is possible to reconstruct precisely the routine of the first two gangs in 1797 as a document of that year lists the tasks performed by them in February, March, and April,<sup>78</sup> and this must have been a reasonably typical pattern.

In February, three quarters of the great gang's time

was spent in the fields but the work was varied and included weeding, taking in and tying corn, threshing, making ricks, and preparing land for corn. In addition, on different days they went fishing, raised stones for the masons, drove sheep and took the sloop out of the lagoon. In March about half the working days were spent at tasks in the fields, the rest of the time in driving sheep, repairing and making fences, cutting wood, filling a lime kiln, fishing, cutting wattles, and raising stones. In April rather more than half the time was spent in the fields, mainly weeding (five consecutive days) or making holes for planting corn or yams; the remainder was given to raising stones, repairing fences, and cutting and cording wood. The women did not always have the same work: for example, when the men were raising stones the women had lighter tasks.

The second gang usually had a less physically demanding programme. They helped the first gang to gather and tie corn, but at other times they worked separately. Husking and winnowing corn was one of their main field activities but they did a variety of other tasks for the island's craftsmen. In April only seven days went on field work. Another seven were spent attending the masons with sand, three days were given to helping at the tan pits, and another three to carrying lime from the kiln.

While the first two gangs did the hard physical work, the grass gang and old people performed a variety of easier tasks – drawing water for stock at the different pens, taking care of the tame cattle, watching the provision plantations, picking cotton and carrying grass for the stable.<sup>79</sup>

Although the actual tasks must have varied from month

to month and from one year to another, the pattern of many activities illustrated here must have been continuous throughout the year. Whenever there was a wreck, of course, all the adult men were expected to help; and in the turtle-catching season certain men were drafted to help the regular turtlers.<sup>80</sup>

The work of the first gang must have been physically demanding because not only was it frequently hard in itself but it often involved a long walk to the site. In March 1797, for example, they had work to do both at the Highlands (the opposite side of the island from their homes) and at Coco Point, several miles to the south-east of Codrington.<sup>81</sup> Dennis Reynolds pointed out that when the slaves had to collect firewood for Antigua, they had first to travel to the place where it was to be cut and then they had to cart the wood to the landing stage.<sup>82</sup> Reynolds felt that the island needed more workers to cope with the many different tasks and he stressed this in a letter to Sir William in 1786: 'such an extensive Island as this is where there is so much work to be done on diff't parts must be very laborius to a small Gang of Negroes such as I have here now'.<sup>83</sup> Probably this was true at that time and up to about 1810, but after this date the rise in the population seems to have led to there being too little work for the slaves.<sup>84</sup> All the same, even when there was a shortage of labour, the slaves involved in agricultural work on Barbuda probably had better conditions than their contemporaries on the sugar estates. They were also probably less effectively supervised: there were rarely more than three white men on the island who had many different groups to look after.

The agricultural labourers on Barbuda, however, had few advantages. There was an élite among the slaves and at the top of the hierarchy were the drivers of the great gang—men who were responsible for keeping the labourers at work and maintaining discipline. There were usually two. In 1766 these positions were held by Benny and Scipio, valued respectively at £165 and £90 at the appraisement in 1761.<sup>85</sup> The next list names the drivers as Dickson, a Mustee, and Phill Bear, a black slave, both described as good men (though in Dickson's case, the trust put in him by Reynolds was misplaced).<sup>86</sup> These two men, along with two hunters, were allocated one slave woman to do their washing and another to prepare their food. In 1805 there were three drivers, Uness, Johnny Beazor, and Bernard—all in their forties. After this date it is difficult to be sure whether they acted as drivers or as hunters. In 1814 they are listed with three others under the heading 'Drivers and Hunters' and in 1817 Johnny Beazor and Bernard come under the general category (with two others) 'Head Men and Rangers'. In the subsequent uncategorized slave lists they continue at the top of the lists until their deaths—Bernard before 1828 and Johnny Beazor before 1832. Thus from at least 1805 there was considerable continuity at the top and these trusted slaves, like most of the others, were of Barbudan stock. Johnny Beazor was listed as an infant on the island in 1756 and was a sein-knitter before he became a driver. Uness may have been the Tom Uness listed as a boy in 1761; he certainly was a stable-boy in 1783, described then as a Negro aged about thirty, 'a remarkable cliver man for breaking in wild horses'. Bernard seems to have been a member of the great gang in 1783.



The hunters were, until 1817, at the same level in the hierarchy as the drivers. From 1766 to 1814 they were a clearly distinguished category; after that date they were listed first with the drivers and then in 1817 with the gunners. As Barbuda was mainly a stock-rearing island the hunters were important people and trustworthy slaves were needed. In 1766 there were five of them. Tom Beazor was first in the list. He was valued at £35 in 1746, but by 1761 his value had increased to £180. In 1783 he was still a hunter but placed second to a younger man and Dennis Reynolds surprisingly noted of Beazor, 'little confidence to be put in him'. This list only shows two hunters and the senior was from another prominent Barbudan family—John Bailey. Reynolds commented that he was 'a valuable good man'. Then aged 32, John Bailey remained in this senior position until his death in 1818 aged 66. He was listed under 'Head Men and Rangers' and was first in the whole list; the new category 'Hunters and Gunners' seems to have been of less importance. Three men were included in it of whom two were members of the Bailey family.

When Coleridge visited Barbuda in 1824 he described the huntsmen in some detail: 'they wear a leathern cap, a belt round their shoulders with a long clasp knife stuck in it, and a rude kind of half-boots. They generally possess a horse each, a duck gun and dogs, and I believe have little else to do except to maintain themselves and procure venison whenever it is wanted.'<sup>87</sup> This may have been all they had to do when visitors were on the island but it is likely that they were also responsible for rounding up the cattle and horses when they were needed for sale. Most of the stock were allowed to wander

over the island and could only be caught by men of this sort.

Although Barbuda was principally a stock-rearing island few other men were specifically involved with the care of stock. From 1766 there were usually two to four grooms, and at least one turtler. Some other jobs appear occasionally in the lists. In some years, for example, there were one or two shepherds, feeders of dogs, keepers of wild cattle, or turkey-keepers. At different times there were also men appointed to watch the plantations (seven in 1783) and to draw water (four for the wild cattle in the same year). None of these jobs appeared regularly in the lists though, and these were regarded as menial tasks to be done by the elderly or the young.

The craftsmen must also be included among the élite. In 1766 there were nine classes of skilled workers—blacksmiths, tanners, carpenters, sein-knitters, shoemakers, collarmakers, ropemakers, coopers, and basketmakers—employing a total of 19 men. The carpenters were the largest single group, with five members. In 1783 basketry had ceased to be a trade, the shoemakers were also saddlers, and the ropemakers also made sails. More important, however, was the fact that shipwrights and wheelwrights had been introduced and by 1805 masons had been added too. Owing to the development of these new crafts the total number of skilled workmen rose to 35 in 1814 and 1817. Of these men, seven were shipwrights, the largest number in any group. By the 1820s boat-building was so well established that Coleridge remarked that on Barbuda 'the labor consists in raising provisions and building droghers'.<sup>88</sup>

As far as one can tell, the men employed in these crafts

were properly trained. In 1762, Samuel Redhead informed Sir William that he had brought two sensible mulatto boys from Barbuda (to Antigua) and placed one with a shoemaker and the other with a saddler, so that they could learn their respective trades. The following year he told Sir William that there was no need for him to send out a shoemaker for Barbuda as the mulatto boy could already make a good shoe, and the other was a saddler and harness-maker.<sup>89</sup>

Where the crafts were established the head craftsman taught the trade to apprentices who were frequently members of his own family.

The most striking fact to emerge from a study of the names of craftsmen in the slave lists is the strong family connections within the crafts. It was not unusual for sons to be apprenticed to their fathers and for three generations to be involved in one trade. The Mopps family is one example. Joe Mopps was listed as a carpenter in 1766, 1783, and 1805. His son, Johnny, is named as his apprentice in 1783 and father and son were still working together in 1805, along with Little<sup>90</sup> Joe Mopps, Johnny's son. Old Joe seems to have retired by 1814 but Johnny and Little Joe were still working together in 1817. Old Joe Mopps continued to live on Barbuda and was 88 in 1828, but he had died before the next slave list in 1832.

The Baileys were a similar family. Will Bailey was a shoemaker in 1766 (possibly the boy sent for training by S. Redhead) and was still working as a saddler and shoemaker, or collarmaker and shoemaker until 1817. He had died before the 1821 list. In 1805 Little Will Bailey, presumably his son, aged 32, was working with his father and did so until

1817 when he joined the hunters and gunners.

The Beazors were, amongst other occupations, shipwrights. Daniel valued at £8 in 1746, became a carpenter. In 1783 he was a shipwright and glowingly described by Dennis Reynolds as 'one of the best slaves in the West Indies'. His son, Daniel (aged 14) was apprenticed to him. He is listed as a ship's carpenter in 1805, 1814, and 1817 and was still on the island at the time of emancipation, presumably still working at the same trade. Another shipwright was Abraham Webber who remained in the job from 1783 to 1817 and so probably until his death, listed in 1821. He also had a son working under him from 1814.

All these families were coloured but there were black craftsmen too. Will Tanner was a black slave working as a tanner in 1766. In 1783 he had one son, Quaw, working with him and in 1805, when he was 82, he had two sons, Little Will and Quaw. In 1814 Quaw and Little Will were still working together and in 1817 were joined by Will Tanner Junior. There is family continuity also (though not necessarily to three generations) among the blacksmiths, knitters, shoemakers, saddlers and collarmakers, rope and sail-makers, and wheelrights.

This strong family tradition is an important feature of life on Barbuda and is very unusual amongst slaves in the West Indies in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries where in general there was little chance of a stable family structure developing. It has been possible to discover this amongst the craftsmen because these men often had surnames, and relationships are specifically mentioned in the list of 1783. There is every reason to suppose that the other slaves

had similar families but this cannot be proved as the field workers were usually without surnames. The effects of this family tradition will be discussed more fully in Chapter 7, but besides the benefit of being allowed to have their sons working with them, the craftsmen had other advantages too. They did not, for example, have too strenuous a life<sup>91</sup> and they were not under constant supervision. They were also allowed, when necessary, to go over to Antigua for materials for their work.<sup>92</sup> In addition, the principal craftsmen were given special marks of favour—extra bonuses at Christmas, and gifts when a particular job was completed or when they were ill.<sup>93</sup> These leading slaves were known by name and reputation to the Codringtons. In 1812, S. Martin wrote to Sir Bethell asking if J. Bailey could purchase the freedom of his grand-daughter (one Alice Cook). Codrington replied that the Baileys were 'tried and faithful Servants' and should not be allowed to pay. He gave his full concurrence to Alice Cook's manumission 'free of any Expence whatever'.<sup>94</sup>

The strong family tradition within these crafts suggests, however, that there may have been something of a caste structure among the slaves on Barbuda. For boys born into these families there was a chance of being engaged in an interesting trade—though not all of them had this chance and there were members of these families among the agricultural labourers. For the workers in the gangs, however, or their children, there was little chance of transfer to a trade.

There were not many opportunities for women to do work other than labouring in the fields, but there were some. A few were needed to act as cooks, housemaids, and laundresses

for the white men. In 1766 only one was employed in this way, but by 1783 the number had increased to seven, there were nine in 1805, and ten in 1817. In 1783 two were chosen to look after the hunters and drivers, but this did not occur again. There were sempstresses in 1766 and 1783, but not subsequently. The women chosen for these tasks were usually – but not always – mulattoes. Women also were the drivers of the second and grass gangs and two were sometimes deputed to look after the young children in the fields – presumably those children too young to be included in one of the gangs. Another occupation for women was that of nurse and midwife, but there were never more than two of each and there were no midwives listed in 1783 or 1805. There were slaves who acted as doctors but this will be treated fully elsewhere.<sup>95</sup>

The last group of skilled slaves on Barbuda were the sailors. None were listed in 1766 though there must have been some regular communication between Barbuda and Antigua. In 1783 only two were included by Reynolds. This seems likely to have been a mistake. The leader of the sailors, Humanity, is mentioned in this position in 1782,<sup>96</sup> but is not included in the 1783 list though he remained the chief sailor until his death in 1818.<sup>97</sup> By 1805 fifteen men were listed in this occupation, there were eleven in 1814, and twelve in 1817. These men were treated somewhat differently from other slaves. They seem to have been based on Barbuda but they were paid a regular weekly wage (4s. 1½d. for the ordinary sailors and 8s. 3d. for those in charge)<sup>98</sup> instead of having grounds to work on. The members of the other crafts all seem to have been Barbudan born (with the exception of a ship's carpenter purchased in 1799)<sup>99</sup> but several new recruits for the sailors were specially

purchased. In July 1788 two men, Simon and Will, were bought for the shallops, in 1796 four more sailors were purchased, and three years later another was bought.<sup>100</sup>

The sailors were men in a very responsible position as Barbuda depended entirely on them for the necessary provisions and for the transport of crops, livestock, and other commodities to Antigua. Although based on Barbuda, however, some of them seem to have been used very largely in Antigua when the sugar crop had to be transported to the ocean-going vessels.<sup>101</sup> As a group they do not seem to have been treated in a specially favoured way, but Humanity is mentioned more times in the records than any other individual slave and received more privileges than anyone else.<sup>102</sup>

There are several important features to be noticed about the work of the slaves on Barbuda. One is the variety of occupation available. Even amongst the field workers there was a regular change of routine; and a large number of the island's working population were engaged in other activities. This was not only beneficial in itself but must have led to a gentler atmosphere on the island than was possible to slaves on an estate organized for the production of a single crop. Although special effort might be needed to sow or gather a particular crop on Barbuda there never seems to have been the harassment of workers which was experienced by slaves on sugar estates, where the estate's very existence might depend on efficiency at particular times. Secondly, the fact that their work took so many of the slaves to different parts of the island must have given them a much stronger sense of freedom than they could possibly have had on a sugar estate. Thirdly, an examination of the crafts

practised on Barbuda reveals a strong family tradition which was unusual in the Caribbean at this time. This in turn helped to create a strong tie of affection for the island which manifested itself particularly when the Codringtons attempted to transfer slaves from Barbuda to Antigua.

### III Law and Order

Although conditions in general were better for slaves on Barbuda than in most other places in the Caribbean there were times when they suffered from cruel behaviour by overseers; there were also occasions when they acted rebelliously. For the most part the more violent behaviour occurred at the beginning and end of the period—the years between 1761 and 1821 were free from the threat of really dangerous uprisings. During those years the managers, though varying in the degree and type of authority they exercised, were reasonably humane in their attitude to wrong-doing and were usually supported in this by the Antiguan attorneys and by the Codringtons themselves.

The beginning of the period is, however, marked by violence and cruelty. A series of depositions in 1741 against a former manager of Barbuda, Thomas Beech, show that the slaves had not been fed properly and several individuals had been treated with barbaric severity, apparently without cause.<sup>103</sup> Then in 1745 a serious revolt took place which led to the murder of another manager (Mr. McNish) on 22 December.<sup>104</sup> It is not clear what the grievances against McNish really were. Colonel King, who supported him, described him as a 'Noisey Ratling fellow in his Business, but still humain'.



Nevertheless he had apparently ordered the mutilation of two slaves for sheep and cattle stealing and his conduct towards the slaves seems to have been overbearing. Colonel King believed Sir William's brother was to blame. This young man had been on Barbuda from 5 September to 21 December and, King maintained, by showing sympathy with the slaves and antipathy towards the manager had encouraged them to revolt. The rebellion took place the day after Codrington left the island, though, it was said, with his connivance. With the manager murdered, the slaves occupying the castle and in possession of all the arms and ammunition, King feared he might not regain control. There was the additional danger that the slaves might seek the support of the French, with whom the British were then at war. A show of force by troops from Antigua, however, was sufficient to restore order, and the ringleaders were subsequently burned alive in front of the castle gate.

This incident and its frightening consequences occurred immediately before the lease of the island to Martin and Byam and during this period law and order must have been re-established and maintained. The returns from Barbuda showed a general improvement in profits<sup>105</sup> and Samuel Martin's reputation as an unusually beneficent slave-owner leads one to assume that the methods used must have been humane.<sup>106</sup>

Between 1761 and 1820 there was no serious rebellion, though there were disturbances and the maintenance of order worried those in authority. This is hardly surprising. In 1761 there were 196 slaves on the island, but by 1821 there were 411,<sup>107</sup> and usually there were only three or four white men to control them. Another difficulty lay in the fact that

though some white overseers spent some years on the island there were also frequent changes of personnel,<sup>108</sup> while the slaves were Barbudan born and knew each other and the island well. Several overseers referred to the difficult character of the Barbudan slaves. Samuel Redhead described them as 'very acute',<sup>109</sup> soon able to find out the weak side of a manager. His son, George, in 1779, considered them an 'artful set',<sup>110</sup> probably more difficult for Clarke to manage than those in Antigua. Dennis Reynolds referred to them as 'crafty', noting that their aim was to have frequent changes of white men 'for very devious reasons'.<sup>111</sup>

The Codringtons, as interested property owners, obviously wanted law and order maintained, but in general they were not in favour of severe methods provided other treatment worked. Sir William believed in firm, prompt action: 'Though I condemn Cruelty yet I am an Advocate for proper Punishment for Crimes committed to be immediately inflicted in a judicious and reasonable way, devoid of Passion and violence but suited to the offence; and I am sure that a steady Conduct upon those Principles will ensure both Obedience and respect to the Governor.'<sup>112</sup> Normally, Barbudan slaves were most effectively punished for felony or something equally serious by being sent to work on the Antiguan estates—which they much disliked<sup>113</sup>—but if the crime had been of a very serious nature the ringleaders might be sent for sale,<sup>114</sup> and corporal punishment seems also to have been inflicted then.<sup>115</sup> John James was against whipping as a normal penalty; he found 'a little solitary confinement' was more effective.<sup>116</sup>

All the managers of Barbuda had, in fact, to rely very heavily on the leading slaves for support in keeping order,

not only because of the small number of white men on the island (there were usually only two or three in addition to the manager), but because the white men could not detect misbehaviour on the part of the Barbudans as effectively as one of their own kind.<sup>117</sup> Various privileges were extended to the head men to encourage their loyalty. As in Antigua, they were given extra allowances of food and clothing, and additional bonuses at Christmas.<sup>118</sup> They were also rewarded for particularly helpful services; for example, Humanity was paid £10 in 1782 for apprehending a runaway slave in St. John's, Antigua,<sup>119</sup> and in 1794 Tom Beazor and Jno Beazor (dec'd) were paid £6. 3s. 9d. for detecting those who were killing sheep.<sup>120</sup> In general this policy of trusting the leading slaves must have been successful. There are various references in the correspondence to their loyalty<sup>121</sup> and the evidence points to a fairly well-ordered society.

Nevertheless there was one crime which the slaves committed throughout the period. This was their habit of killing sheep and sometimes cattle too. All the managers in turn complained about it. Dennis Reynolds noted in 1783 above his list of field workers 'are very good Negroes if they will leave off killing sheep'.<sup>122</sup> Occasionally the trouble was more serious than simply poaching. In 1779 R. Clarke wrote to say that some Barbuda men 'in a combination' were detected destroying thirty sheep, and other carcasses had been found. They were not caught immediately, but when they were they 'all behaved very riotous and daringly insolent'.<sup>123</sup> In 1787 another similar incident occurred on Barbuda which involved one of the drivers of the great gang, Dickson, a mulatto in whom Reynolds had placed a good deal of confidence.<sup>124</sup>

Neither the managers nor the Codringtons were able to find an effective method of permanently preventing this habit. Sir William, in particular, was most concerned that the practice should be stopped. 'The Barbuda negroes', he wrote, 'are overfed and underwork'd which makes them riotous and gives them opportunity of doing mischief'.<sup>125</sup> He urged his attorney to encourage Reynolds to fill up their time, have a roll-call morning and evening, and appoint guards to look after the flocks.<sup>126</sup> Although not normally advocating harsh measures, in connection with sheep stealing, which he thought threatened to put an end to the advantage of owning Barbuda, he believed a few acts of severity would not be sufficient — 'the terror of punishment' had to be kept up.<sup>127</sup> To prevent the slaves relapsing into the habit of sheep killing he said that no attention was too great 'nor any correction too severe to intimidate them'.<sup>128</sup> Corporal punishment was not normally used but a comment by Sir William in a letter to Walrond, in 1787, suggests that Dickson and his colleagues were flogged<sup>129</sup> and when Christopher (Bethell) Codrington visited the island in 1791 he implied that this punishment was still being used for sheep stealers, though without good effect.<sup>130</sup> In addition, Sir William was prepared to sanction the sale of the ringleaders and Dickson was sent to Jamaica for this purpose.<sup>131</sup>

Sir William's views, however, that sheep stealing was a danger to the economy, cannot be taken seriously. By 1783, when he made that remark, the number of sheep on Barbuda had already increased to 4,000 (from 356 in 1779) and by 1786, when stiff punishments were being used, to 8,000.<sup>132</sup> At this date he was even expressing anxiety about the island

being over-stocked with sheep<sup>133</sup> and in 1788 he actually told Langford Lovell that it was better that sheep should be 'given to the Negroes upon my Concerns for food rather than be suffer'd to increase to a Nuisance'.<sup>134</sup> It must surely be the case that what really worried him about this offence, and made him sanction harsh punishments, was not that his profits were being threatened but that his property was being, in effect, stolen. This is the attitude of many farmers who may be prepared to give away a surplus but will take legal action against people who take it without asking permission. Harsh treatment did not stop the practice, however. When Sir Bethell was the owner, both James and Jarritt complained about it and took appropriate action against the offenders, sending them and their families to Antigua.<sup>135</sup> Sir Bethell does not seem to have been so concerned about the problem as his uncle, probably because at this time the over-population of Barbuda and the movement towards emancipation gave him greater cause for concern.

It is really not surprising that the methods employed to prevent sheep stealing were not effective as the proprietors and their agents failed to understand the motives behind it. To the Codringtons sheep stealing on Barbuda indicated that the slaves were thieves and they should be punished as thieves. The slaves did not view this activity in the same light. Professor Genovese has pointed out that in slave societies everywhere a subtle distinction was made between taking and stealing—'they stole from each other but merely took from their masters'. When they took and ate property which belonged to their master they 'had only transformed his property from one form into another';<sup>136</sup> and the taking of

food in this way they still further justified by claiming they were underfed, or given a monotonous diet.<sup>137</sup>

Barbudan slaves were not short of food, but without the meat they took their diet would have lacked variety. Sheep stealing, however, was more than a mere taking of food. It represented also a defiance of authority, a relatively mild expression of discontent with their situation. That sheep stealing was the Barbudan slaves' most serious crime between 1761 and 1821 is an indication of their comparative contentment with the regime. There are no records of attempted arson, of wanton destruction of stock or property, or of attacks on overseers, which tended to occur in slave societies where conditions were less congenial: nor were there many attempts to run away.<sup>138</sup>

Apart from this particular habit the behaviour of the slaves was good. Doubtless a wise overseer or manager occasionally turned a blind eye to minor misdemeanours and they were rewarded with loyalty in times of emergency. During the French wars, at the turn of the century, for example, there was no unrest.<sup>139</sup> The slaves, too, willingly accompanied the white men into dangerous conditions when a wrecked ship needed aid.<sup>140</sup> John James, in 1824, described the ways in which he could depend on them:

There are a good many Negroes on the Property who would do anything I ordered, and would run into any danger with me, which I have often experienced in saving lives and property from Wrecks. . . . The Negroes generally speaking, if left to themselves, I could depend on; many a Night have I, surrounded by from 100 to 150, slept by the side of my Horse, in the Woods; - There are but two white Men with myself on the Island, and Frequently leave my Wife and Daughters there without a fastening to the House, there are some good head men on whom I can depend, with these I have only to give an order which is never disobeyed.<sup>141</sup>

After this date, however, the behaviour of the slaves gave cause for concern. Jarritt, in particular, laid great emphasis on their lack of discipline: 'The Barbuda negroes are a bad lot', he wrote, 'insolent, ungovernable and almost outlawed'.<sup>142</sup> Sir Bethell did not agree with a statement that they were bordering on rebellion, but he did concede that 'they have relapsed from that state of obedience which was formerly their so well deserved Character'.<sup>143</sup> He felt that this was partly due to the fact that there had been no resident manager on the island since James took up residence at Clare Hall (Antigua) in 1822, and after his death in 1826 there was no manager at all until Winter's appointment in 1827.<sup>144</sup> Restlessness was caused by other factors, however. One major problem was that the large increase in the island's population meant that there were increasing numbers of young slaves for whom there was insufficient work.<sup>145</sup> They were encouraged in acts of insubordination by news of emancipation spread from Antigua.<sup>146</sup> Throughout the 1820s the managers constantly wrote that though workers were needed on the Antiguan estates, Barbudan slaves could not be persuaded to move there, unless force was used.<sup>147</sup> In 1829, R. Jarritt wrote, 'To talk of removing any of the Negroes now from Barbuda, they would laugh at us. They set us at defiance. And nothing but a Strong Military force could remove them'.<sup>148</sup> If there was no threat of forced removals, however, the slaves were more amenable than those in Antigua,<sup>149</sup> and in 1831 Winter was able to report that they had behaved better at a recent wreck than at any other since his taking over the island.<sup>150</sup>

Unfortunately, in 1832 an incident occurred which led to

trouble. The food allowance for the slaves had been distributed as usual on Friday, 24 August, but the next morning at roll-call, one of the gang said he had not received his and would not work without it. Winter assured him that a member of his family had been given it, but the slave concerned worked himself up into a rage and encouraged the whole gang to mutiny. This disturbance was not put down until soldiers arrived from Antigua. The ringleaders were sent with their families to the Antiguan estates and the island returned to normality, the slaves on Barbuda even promising to work on the Antiguan properties if required.<sup>151</sup>

The deterioration in the normally good relations between slaves and overseers in the 1820s and 1830s was in part due to external circumstances over which no-one had control. It says a good deal for the Codringtons, their employees and their slaves that for the greater part of this period a few white men were able to control an increasing number of slaves without undue severity, and were able to live among them without fear of harm.



Notes to Chapter 6

<sup>1</sup> The best description of life on a sugar plantation is given by Bryan Edwards, The History, Civil and Commercial, of the British West Indies, 5th edition (London, 1819), II, 158-60.

<sup>2</sup> Harlow, Christopher Codrington, pp. 15, 190. GRO, D1610 L2 Case about Barbuda.

<sup>3</sup> GRO, D1610 C13 H. de Ponthieu to W.C., 1780-(1783). Coleridge, Six Months in the West Indies, pp. 265-76.

<sup>4</sup> GRO, D1610 C13 H. de Ponthieu to W.C., 1780-(1783).

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Greville, 'Description of Barbuda', in Oliver, History of Antigua, I, cxlviii-ix. Reynolds appears to have had a house with offices and a kitchen garden near the castle. This information comes from a key to a plan which is unfortunately missing; GRO, D1610 C13.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> GRO, MF375 Liggins to C.B.C., 5 Apr. 1837.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid. H. de Ponthieu also mentions a rope house, a necessary for white people, a pigeon house 'round tower fashion', a carpenter's shop, houses for the first carpenter and principal huntsmen, a belfry, a place where boats were built, a sick house or hospital, a thatched large hog pen, and a pen for tame horned cattle, large enough for 200, where all were milked. It is difficult to be sure where these buildings were exactly located as the plan is missing but it seems likely that they were all in the immediate vicinity of the castle; GRO, D1610 C13.

<sup>11</sup> GRO, D1610 MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Apr. 1786.

<sup>12</sup> GRO, D1610 F43 Lady Georgiana Codrington's Diary of a journey to the West Indies in 1843. F.W. Pitman, 'Slavery on British West India Plantations in the Eighteenth Century', Journal of Negro History, XI (1926), 606-7.

<sup>13</sup> GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 16 Nov. 1784.

<sup>14</sup> GRO, MF375 Timothy Clearkley to W.C., 16 June 1773, D1610 C27/3 C.B.C. to James, 1 Oct. 1811.

<sup>15</sup> GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Mar. 1787.

<sup>16</sup> GRO, MF375 Liggins to C.B.C., 5 Apr. 1837.

<sup>17</sup> GRO, D1610 A4 List of Slaves 1766, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Mar. 1787.

<sup>18</sup> GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Mar. 1787.

<sup>19</sup> Pitman, 'Slavery on British West India Plantations', JNH, XI, 607.

<sup>20</sup> GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Apr. 1786, 1 Mar. 1787. Map of Barbuda, D1610 P17.

<sup>21</sup> GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Apr. 1786.

- 22 GRO, MF375 James to C.B.C., 25 Sept. 1804; D1610 C30 Winter to C.B.C., 10 Apr. 1833.
- 23 James to C.B.C., 7 Sept. 1824, letter formerly at Dodington.
- 24 GRO, D1610 C24 Extract of letter from Jarritt to C.B.C., 8 Dec. 1829.
- 25 Ragatz, The Fall of the Planter Class, p. 27. Sunday was market day on other islands.
- 26 GRO, D1610 C11 Lindsay to W.C., 12 June 1779.
- 27 GRO, MF375 Employment of the Negroes on the Island of Barbuda during the months of February, March and April 1797.
- 28 James to C.B.C., 7 Sept. 1824, letter formerly at Dodington.
- 29 Ibid., GRO D1610 C30 Winter to C.B.C. 10 Apr. 1833.
- 30 GRO, MF375 Redhead to W.C., 28 May 1764.
- 31 See for example, GRO, D1610 C16 Athill to C.B.C., 15 Apr. 1800; James to C.B.C., 7 Sept. 1824, letter formerly at Dodington; GRO, D1610 C29 Jarritt to C.B.C., 30 June 1829; C30 Winter to C.B.C., 10 Apr. 1833.
- 32 GRO, D1610 C20/4 C.B.C.'s notes made on his visit to Antigua in 1790-1.
- 33 Pitman, 'Slavery on British West India Plantations', JNH, XI, 608; M. Craton and J. Walvin, A Jamaican Plantation. The History of Worthy Park 1670-1970 (London and New York, 1970), p. 135. On the Codrington estates all adults received weekly: 30 lbs. of yams, eddoes or potatoes or 12 pints of grain or flour; 1½ lbs. of salted or pickled fish. At Christmas they were given 8 lbs. pork or beef, 8 pints of flour, 2 pints of sugar, 1 pint of rum. Head people received double the amount, mechanics slightly less. Amounts for children varied according to age. Superannuated slaves were given the same amount as mechanics. GRO, MF375 Osborn to C.B.C., 12 May 1824.
- 34 James to C.B.C., 7 Sept. 1824, letter formerly at Dodington.
- 35 GRO, D1610 C11 Lindsay to W.C., 12 June 1779. Barbudan slaves were given no salt fish because they could get fresh fish whenever they liked ('that is when convenient'). Sometimes they were able to 'haul the seine' three or four days together, at other times once every two or three weeks. James to C.B.C., 7 Sept. 1824, letter formerly at Dodington. Also GRO, D1610 C30 Winter to C.B.C., 10 Apr. 1833; in this he speaks of the slaves having so much fish that they corned it and sent it to Antigua for sale.
- 36 James to C.B.C., 7 Sept. 1824, letter formerly at Dodington; GRO, D1610 C30 Winter to C.B.C., 10 Apr. 1833.
- 37 See, for example, GRO, D1610 A6/6, A6/8, A56/11.
- 38 For a full account of this problem see pp. 193-6 of this thesis.

- 39 GRO, MF375 Jarritt to C.B.C., 14 Nov. 1831. The slaves seem to have been ready to eat any kind of meat. In 1783 Sir William suggested that they might be encouraged to eat the wild cats which were a nuisance on Barbuda. Apparently they did so and liked them; D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Reynolds, 16 Aug. 1783, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 29 Dec. 1783.
- 40 GRO, D1610 C20/4 C.B.C.'s notes, 1790-1. MF375 Liggins to C.B.C., 5 Apr. 1837. Though these men were not exactly impartial observers there is no reason to doubt their views about the appearance of the Barbudan slaves. They did not make the same comments about the Codrington slaves on Antigua.
- 41 GRO, D1610 C24 Extract of a letter from Jarritt, 8 Dec. 1829.
- 42 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 2 Dec. 1785.
- 43 GRO, MF375 Osborn to C.B.C., 12 May 1824.
- 44 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 5 Sept. 1818; MF375 James to C.B.C., 16 Nov. 1821.
- 45 See, for example, GRO, D1610 A56/4 (1807-14).
- 46 For example, the principal sailor was given a great coat, two check shirts, and two pairs of duck trousers, GRO, D1610 A6/10.
- 47 James to C.B.C. 7 Sept. 1824, letter formerly at Dodington; GRO, MF375 Winter to C.B.C., 7 Jan. 1833; D1610 C30 Winter to C.B.C., 10 Apr. 1833.
- 48 GRO, MF375 Winter to C.B.C., 7 Jan. 1833.
- 49 Ibid. Also James to C.B.C., 7 Sept. 1824 (formerly at Dodington); GRO, D1610 C30 Winter to C.B.C., 10 Apr. 1833.
- 50 For example, GRO, D1610 A6/6, A6/8, A6/9.
- 51 GRO, D1610 A6/9.
- 52 GRO, D1610 A6/2.
- 53 GRO, D1610 C20/3 C.B.C. to W.C., 26 Feb. 1791.
- 54 There are frequent references in the Accounts to Barbudan slaves visiting Antigua to see the doctor.
- 55 GRO, D1610 C30 Winter to C.B.C., 10 Apr. 1833.
- 56 Only three slaves were manumitted between 1821 and 1832: one in 1828, and 2 in 1832. GRO, D1610 A56/15(i) Third Triennial Return of Slaves 1828; E17 Fourth Triennial Return, 1832.
- 57 GRO, MF375 Redhead to W.C., 7 Feb. 1773.
- 58 GRO, D1610 E17 List of all the Negroes . . . 1783; List of Negroes, 1805. He is mentioned in all the subsequent lists.
- 59 GRO, D1610 A4 A List of Slaves on Barbuda 1766; E17 List of all the Negroes . . . 1783. A6/1 shows that he was in charge of one of the boats.
- 60 Religious instruction and education were actually being provided on the former Codrington plantations in Barbados

before 1760. These estates were being run by the S.P.G. so perhaps it is not surprising, but by the end of the eighteenth century throughout the Caribbean, 'religious instruction was being regularly given [by the Methodists] and thousands of blacks, particularly creoles, had become nominal Christians' (Ragatz). Elsa Goveia points out that by 1804 nearly ten thousand blacks and mulattoes in the Leeward Islands had been converted by the Methodists. Frank J. Klingberg, Codrington Chronical. An Experiment in Anglican Altruism on a Barbados Plantation, 1710-1834, University of California Publications in History, Vol. 37 (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1949), p. 95; Ragatz, Fall of the Planter Class, p. 282; E. Goveia, Slave Society in the British Leeward Islands at the end of the Eighteenth Century (Yale, 1965), p. 298.

61 GRO, D1610 C38 Liggins to C.B.C., 6 Sept. 1832.

62 GRO, MF375 Liggins to C.B.C., 5 Apr. 1837.

63 GRO, MF375 Winter to C.B.C., 6 July 1831.

64 GRO, MF375 Liggins to C.B.C., 5 Apr. 1837. Jarritt had already expressed his opinion: 'The Catechist is nothing more than a Spy in the Island', MF375 Jarritt to C.B.C., 2 Mar. 1833. Liggins obviously disapproved of Jarritt's intolerance in matters of religion. He also regretted that the exclusion of the Wesleyan missionaries from the Codrington estates had been reported in the Gloucester Journal thus providing a weapon for Codrington's political adversaries; D1610 C39 Liggins to C.B.C., 31 Dec. 1833; C38 Liggins to C.B.C., 6 Sept. 1832.

65 GRO, MF375 Liggins to C.B.C., 5 Apr. 1837.

66 GRO, D1610 C30 Winter to C.B.C., 10 Apr. 1833. Coleridge noted that 'at the instance of the Bishop' it had been agreed to build a church, and a school would 'of course be an accompaniment to it', Six Months in the West Indies, p. 276. Incidentally the first Bishop of Barbados (appointed in 1824 and responsible for the eastern colonies in the Caribbean) was the uncle of H.N. Coleridge, author of that book. Burns, History of the British West Indies, p. 640 and n. 3.

67 See map of Barbuda following p. 4.

68 GRO, D1610 C3 W.C. (I) to Bro., 2 Feb. 1720.

69 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Mar. 1787. There was also another wooden building at this site, and two stone out-buildings, one a kitchen and the other stables. Another house, at Castle Hill, 'on the Eastwd Bay' was built by Redhead for storing wreck goods. Water, at first, seems to have been in short supply, but it was remedied when Collins built a large cistern there. MF375 Collins to C.B.C., 1 May 1797.

70 Oliver, History of Antigua, I, 98.

71 David R. Watters, 'Observations on the Historic Sites and Archaeology of Barbuda', pp. 20-24, 40, unpublished article, Dec. 1980.

72 GRO, MF375 Liggins to C.B.C., 5 Apr. 1837. Near the comments on the Highland House, C.B.C. has written: 'Many a Day have I passed in this House'.

- 73 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 1 July 1785. Dr. Athill seems to have stayed there when he was an attorney. This was before the cistern was built and he had to take water with him from Antigua; MF375 Collins to C.B.C., 1 May 1797.
- 74 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C. 1 Mar. 1787.
- 75 GRO, MF375 Liggins to C.B.C., 5 Apr. 1837.
- 76 The effects of this will be considered in Chapter 7.
- 77 GRO, D1610 A4 A List of Slaves on Barbuda 1766; E17 Lists for 1783, 1805, 1814, and 1817. Subsequent lists only give names, with sex, colour, and reputed age. There is no indication as to occupation.
- 78 GRO, MF375 Employment of the Negroes on the Island of Barbuda during the months of February, March, and April 1797.
- 79 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Mar. 1787.
- 80 GRO, D1610 C30 Winter to C.B.C., 9 Apr. 1831; E17 Slave List 1783.
- 81 GRO, D1610 Employment of the Negroes 1797.
- 82 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C. 29 Dec. 1783.
- 83 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Apr. 1786.
- 84 GRO, MF375 Osborn to C.B.C., 30 Apr. 1817, 8 June 1826.
- 85 The sources for all the information on individual slaves, unless specifically stated otherwise, are the slave lists from 1746 to 1832. GRO, E16 Inventory and Appraisement of the Negroes . . . 1746; a List of Negroes . . . belonging to Barbuda, 1756; A4 A List of Slaves on Barbuda . . . 1766; E17 . . . a general list of all the Negroes now on the Island Barbuda with an account of their different Employments etc.; E17 A List of Negroes on the Island of Barbuda . . . 1805; A List of Negroes on the Island of Barbuda 1814, Original Return of Slaves on the Island of Barbuda . . . 1817; PRO, T71/246 Triennial Return of Slaves 1821; T71/248 Triennial Return of Slaves 1824; D1610 A56/15(i) Third Triennial Return of Slaves 1828; E17 Fourth Triennial Return of Slaves 1832. Also D1610 E17 List of Slaves belonging to Barbuda May 1831.
- 86 Dickson seems to have abused his position and encouraged the slaves in misbehaviour, in particular sheep-killing, GRO, D1610 C17 Reynolds to W.C. 24 Mar. 1788. He was sent to Jamaica for sale, but later reported to be a free man there. D1610 C14/2 W.C. to Lovell, 15 Nov. 1790 and note on 20 Nov.; C14/2 W.C. to Lovell, 20 July 1790.
- 87 Coleridge, Six Months in the West Indies, p. 268.
- 88 Ibid., p. 276.
- 89 GRO, MF375 Redhead to W.C., 1 June 1762, 25 Apr. 1763.
- 90 The abbreviation Lt. I have assumed to stand for 'little'.
- 91 GRO, D1610 C11 Lindsay to W.C., 12 June 1779.
- 92 For example GRO D1610 A6/6, 4 Dec. 1790, 'Webber over' (i.e. in Antigua) 'chusing plank'. Paid 8/3 to him. A6/8 29 June 1793 Webber and Daniel, Carpenters, 'over here', paid 8/3. A6/13 10 Jan. 1798, Webber working at the Narrows received 8/3.

- 93 For example, GRO, D1610 A6/2 Daniel Beazor was paid £6. 12s. 0d. 'for attention building the Guinea Hen'. A56/15(i), 24 Nov. 1827, one barrel of flour costing £4. 5s. 6d. was given to D. Beazor for building the sloop Lady Codrington. A56/4, 2 Aug. 1805, four yards of flannel costing £1.12s. 0d. were given to Humanity, and on 17 Nov., £8.2s.0d. was spent on 'three dozen wine given to Humanity when sick'.
- 94 GRO, D1610 C27/3 C.B.C. to Martin, 4 Mar. 1812.
- 95 In Chapter 7, pp. 214-15.
- 96 GRO, D1610 A54, 9 Dec. 1782.
- 97 GRO, D1610 E17.
- 98 For example, GRO, D1610 A56/4 1807, 1808, 1809, 1811, 1813, 1814.
- 99 GRO, D1610 A6/15.
- 100 GRO, D1610 A6/4, A6/11, A6/15.
- 101 GRO, D1610 A6/1-13, A56/4, A56/13-22.
- 102 See Appendix on Humanity.
- 103 GRO, D1610 L9 Depositions against Thomas Beech – Governor or Manager of Barbuda – taken before John Conyers, J.P. of Antigua, 25 Sept. 1741.
- 104 The information about this incident is contained in two letters on MF375. They are dated 29 Mar. 1746 and 19 Sept. 1746; both are from B. King to W.C.
- 105 GRO, D1610 E16 An Account of all the Stock etc. . . sold off the Island of Barbuda since the commencement of the Lease to the 12th. June 1755 . . . E16 Inventory and Reappraisement of the Slaves, Cattle etc. of the Island of Barbuda taken between the 7th. and 17th. May 1761.
- 106 Janet Schaw, Journal of a Lady of Quality; Being the Narrative of a Journey from Scotland to the West Indies, North Carolina, and Portugal in the years 1774 to 1776, ed. Evangeline Walker Andrews, in collaboration with Charles McLean Andrews (New Haven, 1939), pp. 103-5.
- 107 GRO, D1610 E16 Inventory and Reappraisement 1761; PRO, T71/246, Triennial Return of Slaves 1821.
- 108 See Chapter 2, pp. 40-1.
- 109 GRO, MF375 Redhead to W.C., 3 Apr. 1772.
- 110 GRO, MF375 G. Redhead to W.C., June 1779.
- 111 GRO, D1610 C17 Reynolds to W.C., 24 Mar. 1788.
- 112 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 27 Dec. 1787.
- 113 GRO, D1610 C12 Oliver to W.C., 24 Nov. 1780; James to C.B.C., 7 Sept. 1824, formerly at Dodington.
- 114 GRO, D1610 C10 Clarke to W.C., Dec. 1779.
- 115 GRO, D1610 C20/3 C.B.C. to W.C., 9 Mar. 1791. He reported that the slaves were in such a habit of sheep killing that he did not know what to do about it – 'flogging them is doing nothing'.

- 116 James to C.B.C., 7 Sept. 1824, formerly at Dodington.
- 117 GRO, D1610 C17 Reynolds to W.C., 24 Mar. 1788.
- 118 GRO, MF375 Osborn to C.B.C., 12 May 1824; and D1610 A6/7.
- 119 GRO, D1610 A54, 9 Dec. 1782.
- 120 GRO, D1610 A6/7 4th quarter. While these accounts actually cover the years 1791-2 they also include notes at the end about expenses incurred in other years.
- 121 GRO, MF375 Athill to C.B.C., 13 May 1801, in which he refers to the 'trusty upper people'; James to C.B.C. 7 Sept. 1824, at Dodington.
- 122 GRO, D1610 E17 Slave List 1783.
- 123 GRO, D1610 C10 Clarke to W.C., Dec. 1779.
- 124 GRO, D1610 C17 Reynolds to W.C., 24 Mar. 1788.
- 125 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 1 Nov. 1783.
- 126 GRO D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Oliver, 9 Jan. 1783.
- 127 Ibid.
- 128 GRO D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Reynolds, 22 Aug. 1784.
- 129 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Walrond, 24 Dec. 1787. 'The Negroes and Mulatto from Barbuda should be shown in their worst look to the Barbudan Gang that they may see the Example, which is better Warning than all Report.'
- 130 GRO, D1610 C20/3 C.B.C. to W.C., 9 Mar. 1791.
- 131 GRO, D1610 C10 Clarke to W.C., Dec. 1779.
- 132 See Chapter 3, p. 80.
- 133 See Chapter 3, p. 83.
- 134 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 24 Mar. 1788.
- 135 James to C.B.C. 7 Sept. 1824, at Dodington. GRO, MF375 Jarritt to C.B.C., 2 Aug. 1830.
- 136 Eugene D. Genovese, Roll, Jordan, Roll. The World the Slaves Made (London, 1975), p. 602.
- 137 Ibid., pp. 603-4. Even the Barbudans maintained they were half starved. Cf. p. 173.
- 138 The only sign of wanton destruction of property on Barbuda was the occasional killing of more sheep than might be thought necessary for immediate consumption. There was no deliberate maiming or poisoning of stock, whereas this did happen at Betty's Hope. In 1827 cattle which had died unexpectedly were examined and their stomachs were found to contain pounded glass, lead, copper, brass pins, pieces of silver, and a quantity of coarse sand. The man suspected of being responsible for this was a slave who had been transferred from Barbuda for cattle stealing: GRO, MF375 Osborn to C.B.C., 18 Apr. 1827. See also Chapter 8. There were also attempts to poison managers at two of the other Codrington estates on Antigua in 1779 and 1780; D1610 C10 Clarke to W.C., 9 May 1780. Running away seems only to have been tried by a few men, possibly sailors; D1610 A6/7, A6/8.

- 139 GRO, MF375 Athill to C.B.C., 23 Mar. 1797.
- 140 See Chapter 5, especially pp. 156-7.
- 141 James to C.B.C., 7 Sept. 1824, formerly at Dodington. This letter, though not necessarily untrue in its content, may have been written with an eye to publicity. It certainly contains more information about the advantages of Barbuda and the status of slavery than was necessary from a manager to the owner! C.B.C. quoted from it later in a letter to the Gloucester Journal when he was being attacked as a slave-owner; Gloucester Journal, 25 Aug. 1832.
- 142 GRO, D1610 C24 Extract from R. Jarritt's letter to C.B.C., 8 Dec. 1829.
- 143 GRO, D1610 C29 C.B.C. to Jarritt, 16 Dec. 1828.
- 144 GRO, D1610 C29 C.B.C. to Jarritt, 31 Mar. 1829; Jarritt to C.B.C., 22 Oct. 1829.
- 145 GRO, MF375 Osborn to C.B.C., 23 Nov. 1817; D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 10 Feb. 1826.
- 146 GRO, MF375 Winter to C.B.C., 6 July 1831.
- 147 GRO, MF375 Osborn to C.B.C., 8 June 1826; D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 10 Feb. 1826.
- 148 GRO, D1610 C29 Jarritt to C.B.C., 6 Oct. 1829.
- 149 GRO, MF375 Jarritt to C.B.C., 29 Mar. 1829; Winter to C.B.C., 4 June 1831.
- 150 GRO, D1610 C30 Winter to C.B.C., 5 Aug. 1831.
- 151 GRO, MF375 Winter to C.B.C., 26 Sept. 1832.



## Chapter 7

### THE POPULATION

Although the population of Barbuda was small it does nevertheless provide interesting material for the historian of the Caribbean. In recent years some historians have been studying the life of particular plantations in depth and have been able to suggest from these studies general principles which may have governed population growth in the slave population as a whole.<sup>1</sup> Barbuda makes a useful addition to these studies. Unlike most islands in the West Indies at this time, the population of Barbuda increased without bulk purchases of slaves, but on the other hand it did not increase as fast as the population of the Rolle estates on Great Exuma, in the Bahamas, studied by Michael Craton.<sup>2</sup> Nor was the increase steady. This erratic quality is particularly useful because it points to events which, in an environment favourable to growth, nevertheless acted as a deterrent, and therefore helps to establish the essential factors for increase in a slave population.

In 1746, the date of the first relevant Barbudan slave list, there were 172 slaves on Barbuda. Numbers had increased to 190 in 1756, and 196 in 1761,<sup>3</sup> but this was the period of the lease to Martin and Byam and one cannot be sure that any increase was not due simply to the transfer of slaves from their Antiguan estates. Certainly in 1761 the

Codrington attorney purchased 18 slaves who had belonged to the lessees.<sup>4</sup> After 1761, however, there are no recorded bulk purchases of slaves for Barbuda and there appear to have been only eight individuals bought for the island up to 1833—four being the largest number purchased at one time.<sup>5</sup> There were transfers of slaves from Antigua to Barbuda and from Barbuda to Antigua but these are separately listed so that one can be fairly certain that the increases after 1761 were by births to slaves on the island. Between 1761 and 1831—a period of seventy years—the population increased from 196 to 503:

1761	196	
1766	238	
1783	250	(This is a misleading figure. In 1780-1, 41 young slaves were sent from Barbuda to Antigua so the increase must have been higher than the figures suggest between 1766 and 1783, and lower between 1783 and 1805).
1805	312	
1814	367	
1817	392	
1821	411	
1824	423	
1828	467	
1831	503 <sup>6</sup>	

In contrast the populations of the sugar islands were only maintained by constant large imports of new African slaves. Between 1690 and 1820, 800,000 were imported into Jamaica, but in 1820 the slave population was still only about 340,000.<sup>7</sup> In Jamaica, in fact, throughout the eighteenth century there was a natural decrease of about 20 per 1,000 and in the registration period (1817-29 in Jamaica) there was still a decrease of 5 per 1,000.<sup>8</sup> Even in islands such as Barbados, Antigua, St. Kitts, Nevis, and Montserrat which had been settled for a longer time and where sugar cultivation had reached its height slaves were still imported

'merely to keep up their Stock'.<sup>9</sup> There were a very few individual estates where conditions were so favourable that numbers were kept up without recourse to more purchases. Such an estate was the one owned by Colonel Samuel Martin in Antigua,<sup>10</sup> but in general on the sugar estates slave deaths always exceeded births. On estates in Barbados given to the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel by Christopher Codrington in 1710 it was calculated that between 1712 and 1748, in an average year, six deaths and one birth were usual per 100 of the population.<sup>11</sup> Although improvements were made by the Society during the eighteenth century it was not until after 1793 that an increase in the population was the general rule and then it was only slight.<sup>12</sup>

The reasons for the high death rate on the sugar estates are well known. A major cause was the vulnerability of slaves newly arrived from Africa who died during their three-year seasoning period. It was generally recognized that up to a third of the freshly imported slaves would not survive their first three years in Jamaica, and that a majority of all slave deaths would be among the newly arrived.<sup>13</sup> Even with care the losses were high. From 1712 to 1761 the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel had purchased about 450 slaves for their estates in Barbados. After five decades, however, the population was smaller by one third.<sup>14</sup> At Worthy Park, a sugar estate on Jamaica, in 1792-3 the owner invested £13,472 in 225 slaves. By the end of 1794 the number of deaths had risen to ten per cent of the whole population,<sup>15</sup> whereas in the period 1783-91 it had been as low as three per cent.<sup>16</sup>

Another major cause of early deaths was the nature of

the work on a sugar plantation. During crop time, which in a good year would be from January to June, the factory never stopped production so the field hands, who were cutting the cane (one of the hardest jobs on a sugar estate) were working seven days a week throughout the hours of daylight, however hot the days might be. When the crop had been gathered the gangs returned to their usual tasks in the fields, labouring twelve to thirteen hours a day for six days of the week.<sup>17</sup> This physically exhausting work was performed on a diet of root vegetables and salt fish.<sup>18</sup> The combination of hard labour and an inadequate diet led to susceptibility to disease, and epidemics of smallpox, fevers, dysentery, and other illnesses contributed to high mortality rates.<sup>19</sup> Slaves were particularly likely to sicken after periods of drought or intense activity, and those who did not catch any infection had to make up for those who did.<sup>20</sup> On the Worthy Park estate twice as many men as women suffered, which suggests that their more arduous tasks affected their health.<sup>21</sup>

Infant mortality was also high. On the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel's estates in Barbados it was calculated that infants had a fifty per cent chance of living to be five.<sup>22</sup> On Worthy Park in 1794-5 the owner undertook a survey of the infant mortality on his estates over a period of years. Of the 240 resident female slaves 89 had had children—but only 19 of the 89 had managed to keep alive all the children born to them, and 15 of these 19 women had only one child.<sup>23</sup>

Lockjaw, apparently caused by inadequate treatment at childbirth, seems to have caused the deaths of many slave babies within two weeks of birth.<sup>24</sup> Charles Spooner, a

resident in the Leeward Islands in 1788, maintained that this disease caused the death of nearly half the slave children.<sup>25</sup> Where proper medical treatment was provided, or conditions were less unhygienic, mortality among new-born babies seems to have been greatly reduced, as at Worthy Park under Dr. Quier.<sup>26</sup>

Some medical facilities were provided for sick slaves. Most estates had arrangements for a qualified doctor to attend on a regular basis, and some estates, like Worthy Park, had their own.<sup>27</sup> There was usually a sick-house or hospital, and slaves were sometimes trained as medical assistants. Slave women acted as midwives and nurses.<sup>28</sup> The real difficulty, however, was that there were no drugs which effectively combated these diseases and white soldiers and sailors (as well as estate owners and managers) were as likely to die from them as were the slaves.<sup>29</sup> If the work of the slaves had been less injurious to health, however, and their diet had been more nourishing, the slave force would have been less susceptible to disease. This is supported by what happened after 1807 when the slave trade ended. The amelioration policy laid down by the individual island governments, together with the decline in sugar production, improved conditions so that more children were born and there were fewer deaths.<sup>30</sup>

Barbuda seems never to have suffered from high mortality. Unfortunately causes of deaths are not given in the slave lists and between 1761 and 1817, when registration began, the most that one can say is that deaths must have been fewer than births because the population increased throughout the period, and only eight slaves were purchased. In the registration

period (1817-32) numbers of deaths showed no great fluctuations; the range was only from 9.7 per 1,000 per year (between 1821 and 1824) to 10.84 per 1,000 per year (between 1817 and 1821). Many of those dying must have been elderly. Winter, in 1831, commented on the age many of the slaves reached and said that some believed they were older than the age given in the lists. He described one man who had seventy children and grandchildren and 'who is more healthy than I am and takes a great deal of exercise, he is reputed to be ninty [sic] years old.'<sup>31</sup> Infant mortality rates are impossible to determine because still-births and deaths of children under three are not recorded even in the registration period;<sup>32</sup> but the rate of survival must have been reasonably good for the population to have increased so steadily.

The most obvious reason for the much lower death-rate on Barbuda was the fact that there were probably no new African slaves introduced to the island after 1761. Of the eight slaves bought in the late eighteenth century, seven were sailors and one a ship's carpenter,<sup>33</sup> so it seems likely that these were either Creoles bred to a trade, or Africans already seasoned and working. This meant Barbuda was not subject to the very heavy mortality rate caused by large imports of newly arrived Africans.

The second reason for the lower mortality was the type of activity on which the slaves were engaged. The gangs of field labourers may sometimes have worked very hard but they did not have any task so gruelling as the cutting of cane. There was variety of work, too, on Barbuda and it was not always physically demanding. Furthermore, as the population increased the gangs tended to become under-employed and by the

1820s it was difficult to find sufficient work for them. In 1815 Sir Bethell commented: 'if they increase as I have a fair ground to hope they will, they soon will not earn their keep unless some new Mode is struck out'.<sup>34</sup> Fourteen years later Jarritt wrote that '150 Negroes is full as many as the Island requires, and it would be ten times as productive with that Number, as it is now with 470. You would be a great gainer in getting rid of 300 Negroes from there, even if you was to give them away, they are only an expence'.<sup>35</sup>

The importance of work in determining growth or decline of the population is made by Michael Craton in his study of slaves on Great Exuma. As in Barbuda the slaves on the Rolle estates on Great Exuma increased in number. In comparing these estates with those at Worthy Park, Jamaica, Craton says: 'The essential difference between the two populations clearly lay in the nature of the economic system in which each was employed. Worthy Park's system was the "factory-in-a-field" of sugar production, while Exuma's was an almost decayed open plantation system with a negligible "industrial" component.'<sup>36</sup> Work on Barbuda may have been more highly organized than on the Rolle estates but in type it was like that on Great Exuma and not at all like that at Worthy Park.

Whatever the work on Barbuda, however, all the slaves enjoyed a much better diet (see Chapter 6), and the effect on their physique was marked. In 1790, when Christopher (Bethell) Codrington visited Barbuda he noted: 'nothing struck me more upon my first going to Barbuda than the great difference between the Embonpoint of the Negroes there and of those anywhere in Antigua: the former look better fed, stronger and more healthy'.<sup>37</sup> Although there are references

in the records to the slaves being ill,<sup>38</sup> there is no evidence that they were subject to serious epidemics and it seems therefore that the better physical conditions they enjoyed did lead to improved health.

Infant mortality on the island is difficult to estimate because there are no records, as stated already. Nevertheless the fact that the population increased is proof in itself that live births must have exceeded still-births. John Winter, manager in 1830, wrote: 'We do not lose one infant in twenty births',<sup>39</sup> and the next year he wrote: 'our number is above Five hundred, their increase is almost incredible. We have one hundred and four young children born since my first residing in Barbuda, say Jany 1827 and all healthy'.<sup>40</sup> The slave lists between 1817 and 1832 also show a healthy progression of children from one list to the next.<sup>41</sup>

The reputation of Barbuda as a healthy place for the rearing of children led Christopher (Bethell) Codrington to suggest that it would make a 'fine Nursery for Negroes'.<sup>42</sup> He suggested buying children aged twelve to fourteen who should be brought to Barbuda where they would be able to perform the comparatively light tasks connected with growing corn and cotton.<sup>43</sup> He would have transferred these children later to his sugar plantations as Barbuda could not have provided work for many more adults, but whatever his intentions, the plan seems not to have been adopted.<sup>44</sup>

The lower mortality rate on Barbuda seems to have been due more to good social conditions than to markedly efficient medical provision. There was no qualified doctor though there were slaves who specifically looked after those who were ill. In 1783 Charles and Old Sue come in this category.



Charles was described as 'a Negro man about 40 years of Age, not to be trusted'.<sup>45</sup> This does not accord with the view of Henri de Ponthieu who described the slave responsible for medical matters on Barbuda about this time as 'a very careful humane negro Doctor an intelligent man of the sort: but he can neither write nor read'.<sup>46</sup> The estate doctor on Antigua had given him instructions for dealing with fevers and disorders requiring immediate attention and he prescribed numbered medicines to his patients!<sup>47</sup> Old Sue, the other slave involved in caring for the sick, was described as about sixty and 'very carefull'. In 1805 two coloured men, Cephas, aged twenty-six, and Tom Charles, nineteen (possibly the son of Charles, the former doctor) are named as doctors and they seem to have been working in this capacity until the end of the period. In 1832 they came second and third in the whole list of Barbudan slaves and they must, therefore, have been highly regarded.

These slave doctors were clearly competent to cope with routine disorders. Some medicines were sent from England, and in 1791 a consignment was despatched to Barbuda costing £32. 15s. 6d.<sup>48</sup> There was a hospital of sorts at Codrington<sup>49</sup> and in addition the sick were sometimes sent to the Highlands to recuperate.<sup>50</sup> Some specially favoured slaves were given particular care when they were ill,<sup>51</sup> but any Barbudan whose condition required skilled medical attention had to be taken to Antigua.<sup>52</sup> In an emergency the Codrington estate doctor went over to Barbuda.<sup>53</sup>

The favourable social conditions on Barbuda clearly accounted for the smaller mortality rate there. Of possibly greater interest to the historian, however, is the fact that

there were also more births, even during the eighteenth century when the general pattern of life on Caribbean estates militated against slave-breeding. This had not always been the case. In the seventeenth century, estate owners had been in favour of slaves having families and bought sufficient women to achieve a balance between the sexes in order to encourage this.<sup>54</sup> In the eighteenth century, however, this attitude changed. More labour was needed quickly to expand the estates and to supply the increasing demand for sugar, and owners decided it was in their best interests to buy more slaves direct from Africa than to encourage slave-breeding. Slave children had to be supported until they were old enough to work and pregnant and nursing women were less useful in the field. To this end planters bought more men than women. A proportion of three to one woman was usual but sometimes the imbalance was even greater.<sup>55</sup> This was intended to – and did – discourage breeding.

The planters were nevertheless puzzled that there were so few births on their estates. They blamed the slaves themselves for this. Promiscuous relations, venereal disease, and the encouragement of abortions were the reasons they put forward.<sup>56</sup> Such factors did indeed play their part, for they were directly caused by the pattern of slave society. Promiscuity was encouraged by the forced movement of slaves from one estate to another and the larger numbers of men to women, and this in turn led to disease. Those women who were infected were more likely to have abortions and there was little point in bringing a child to birth who only had a one in two chance of survival. The heavy work and poor diet must

also have had an adverse effect on fertility. It was noted, too, by contemporary landowners, as well as by modern historians, that the slaves brought from Africa were less likely to have families than the Creoles. The Africans were prone to be despondent, moody, and pessimistic; the Creoles, in contrast, had come to accept their position and were prepared to have families.<sup>57</sup>

The natural increase in population on Barbuda, against the general background of low birthrates on the majority of other islands is a matter worth attention. With one slight exception—between 1783 and 1793<sup>58</sup>—there was always an increase of births over deaths, though the rate of increase varied, as the following table shows.

1761-6	average annual increase was	42.9	per 1,000
1766-83	" " " "	13.1	" "
1783-1805	" " " "	9.7	" "
1805-14	" " " "	19.6	" "
1814-17	" " " "	22.8	" "

From 1817 to 1831 it is possible to work out a crude birth-rate.

	<u>Crude birth- rate per 1,000 per yr.</u>	<u>Death rate per 1,000 per yr.</u>	<u>Average increase per 1,000 per yr.</u>
1817-21	27.4	10.8	16.6
1821-4	44.6	9.7	34.9
1824-8	29.6	10.6	18.9
1828-31	37.8	10.7	27.1

The most obvious reason for the large number of births on Barbuda must be the fact that Barbudan slaves were probably largely Creole even by the mid-eighteenth century and were therefore not disinclined to breed as were African slaves. Many of the slaves listed in 1761 were on the island in 1746 and may have been born on Barbuda themselves. By the 1780s all the slaves of child-rearing age (except the eight newcomers) were probably Barbudan born. This, together with the fact that adult slaves were not transferred for any

length of time to the Antiguan estates (see the next chapter for a discussion of this) had an additional advantage in that it encouraged the slaves on Barbuda to form stable relationships. In 1787 Dennis Reynolds informed Sir William that 'the Men here in general are most commonly attached to particular Women which is not the case in the other Islands where the Men and Women have more connexions than one'.<sup>59</sup> In 1792 Walrond commented on the same fact (though he drew a different conclusion from it) in a letter to Christopher (Bethell) Codrington: 'A part of the ill conduct of the Barbuda negroes must be owing to long family connections'.<sup>60</sup>

Recent research by Barry Higman and Michael Craton suggests that there is a definite link between nuclear slave families and high fertility.<sup>61</sup> Unfortunately the slave lists on Barbuda do not place the slaves in households, as do the lists for the Rolle estates,<sup>62</sup> so it is not possible to determine which men and women were living together. It is not possible either to give accurate figures as to the size of individual families, nor to say how many stable unions there were. The norm for the island seems to have been a relationship between one man and one woman and the increase in the population supports the view that stable relationships increased fertility.

Another factor encouraging fertility was the more favourable proportion of women to men than was common on a sugar plantation. In 1766 and 1805 numbers were almost equal, otherwise in the years up to 1821 there were more men than women, but not many more.

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
1761	66	59
1766	87	85
1783	98	79
1805	113	114
1814	129	102
1817	130	113
1821	135	157
1824	130	164
1828	140	178
1831	150	194

These figures (with the exception of 1761 where the old and infirm are not separately listed) include all those working on the island; that is not infants or the old and infirm but not necessarily only those of child-bearing age. In the eighteenth century lists, the ages of all slaves are not given so it is not possible to be more accurate, but from 1817 all slaves are listed with their ages. Taking the ages 20 to 44 as the best ages for reproduction, as Craton does,<sup>63</sup> the following statistics emerge:

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>
1817	46	52
1821	51	63
1824	43	55
1828	50	67
1831	57	85

It is perhaps interesting to notice that in 1817 when the total number of men exceeded the total number of women by 17, in the age range most favourable to reproduction there were six more women than men. This might also apply to earlier lists if one were able to treat them in the same way.

These favourable factors not unnaturally help to explain the rather unusual fertility of the slaves on Barbuda and they fit in with the findings of Michael Craton's research on Great Exuma. The slaves there, however, were all black and Craton maintains that the absence of miscegenation was

a reason for increased fertility.<sup>64</sup> This does not appear to have been so on Barbuda. No categorization of colour is given in the slave lists before 1783 when 20 slaves were described as coloured out of a total population of 250. By 1817, however, slightly over one third were coloured and this proportion remained true to the end of the period.

Some mulatto families were amongst the oldest on Barbuda. The Beazors, for example, seem to have been descended from the John Bezor described in the depositions against Thomas Beech in 1741 as 'a Servant on the Island of Barbuda above 20 years and is now Employed as Driver of the Negroes'.<sup>65</sup> According to the evidence, John Bezor must have been on the island since 1720 and presumably all the male Bezors mentioned in the 1746 list were his sons (Will valued at £60, Johnny £50, Tom £35, Robert £20, and Daniel £8). By 1832 there were 29 members of the family still on Barbuda, some coloured and some black. There is no proof that John Bezor had only one 'wife' but he remained on the island for many years so there is proof of some stability. Another white man, Abraham Webber, described as a turtler in the accounts, also settled on the island and established a family.<sup>66</sup> In the 1766 slave list two children, Mary Webber and Abraham Webber are listed as infants. In 1783 young Abraham is described as a mustee aged about twenty. Abraham Webber senior seems to have stayed on the island until his death in November 1785 when the wages due to him were paid to his daughter Mary.<sup>67</sup> In 1832 there were 15 with this surname, all coloured, on Barbuda. The Baileys were another prominent mulatto family. Two boys, John and Will, were listed as infants in 1756; John was described as a mustee in 1783 and Will as a mulatto. In 1832 there were 17 Baileys, all coloured, ranging in age from 57

to 2. Of course all mulatto families were not equally prolific but the evidence from Barbuda seems to show that coloured families could be as fertile as black or white families.

The increase in the population of Barbuda was not steady and the fluctuations indicate that there must have been factors which sometimes inhibited growth. It is important to try to determine what these were. Between 1783 and 1793 the population actually declined—from 250 in 1783 to 249 in 1793,<sup>68</sup> though in the overall period between the slave list of 1783 and the next one in 1805 there was an increase of 9.6 per 1,000, smaller than at any other time but still an increase.

Sir William Codrington was certainly worried about this. Writing to Langford Lovell in February 1785 he said he could not understand why the increase generally was so small 'and more why at Barbuda they have not increas'd greatly, where food, Climate, and Labour are more favourable to increase than at Antigua'.<sup>69</sup> Dennis Reynolds, over the years, suggested a number of reasons for this. Venereal disease was one. He had tried to eradicate it, but without success.<sup>70</sup> He felt that hard work was a possible factor.<sup>71</sup> This was denied by Sir William<sup>72</sup> and in general the evidence points to work being easy on Barbuda, but for the years of Reynolds's management this may not have been true. Whatever faults he may have had Reynolds did work hard and the gang was smaller in his time than later.<sup>73</sup> Reynolds also believed that there were not enough men. In 1787 he wrote that there were 'only 12 or 15 Men that Breed, there have been a few more but they are now grown old and there are a few young fellows from 20

to 30 years of age that never got any children to my knowledge'.<sup>74</sup> He thought that the attachment of the men to one woman inhibited an increase and he recommended the purchase of more men to reduce in-breeding.<sup>75</sup>

Whatever the truth of these statements, however, it seems unlikely that any one of these causes was responsible for the marked drop in the increase between 1783 and 1805. The slaves were infected with venereal disease before 1783,<sup>76</sup> and the population increased after this time without the purchase of new slaves. Reynolds's management may have been a factor in limiting growth but there is no sign that work then was so hard that it was the sole cause. It seems much more likely that the population was suffering from the effects of an unusual transaction effected in 1780-1.

In 1780 Richard Clarke—one of the Codrington attorneys in Antigua—arranged for the transfer of 18 young slaves (aged 8 to 15) from Barbuda to Betty's Hope.<sup>77</sup> Subsequently another twelve were sent to Betty's Hope<sup>78</sup> and a further eleven to the Cotton New Work.<sup>79</sup> The Barbudan accounts were credited with £1,000 for the 30 sent to Betty's Hope and £360 for those sent to the Cotton New Work.<sup>80</sup> Clarke said he had induced the parents to part with their children entirely by persuasion 'and fair promises, such as a little gratuity to themselves and clothing their children as soon as they come over here, with a promise of indulging them of spending the three holidays at Xmas with their parents'.<sup>81</sup> The accounts show that £33 was distributed to the parents of children sent to Betty's Hope; a slave woman, Cranky, was given £2. 9s. 6d. for her children brought to Betty's Hope<sup>82</sup> (where she herself seems to have been working); and £19.16s. 0d. was



distributed among the parents of the eleven children sent to the Cotton New Work.<sup>83</sup>

Although Clarke implied that the parents had been persuaded to part with their children willingly it is difficult to believe they really had any choice in the matter.

Barbudan slaves when asked later if they would be prepared to work on the Antigua estates refused resolutely to do so and only went there under compulsion.<sup>84</sup> John James, years later, seems to have been referring to this incident when he mentioned that Barbudan slaves had pined after being sent to Antigua.<sup>85</sup> There is no record of any earlier transaction of this sort so that Barbudan slaves must have been totally unprepared for such an event. It must have reminded the slaves forcibly that though they might sometimes feel free on Barbuda they were still actually slaves with no final control over the fate of their children. A shock of this sort may well have been the cause of the decline in the birthrate in the following decade. It meant also of course that the island was deprived of children and adolescents, the eldest of whom might have become parents themselves from about 1783 – a point touched on by Reynolds in that year.<sup>86</sup>

Favourable social conditions on Barbuda undoubtedly played a part in the growth of the island's population at this time but were not sufficient on their own. For the birthrate to rise it seems to have been essential for the slaves to have a measure of security about their future, some certainty perhaps that they would have at least a moderate degree of control over the welfare of their children. Until 1780-1, slaves on Barbuda had had this limited security; this was removed then but as no further transfers occurred the birthrate

rose again after 1792 so that by 1805 it was possible for an overall increase to be recorded.

If it is difficult to be sure why the population remained static at the end of the century it is even more difficult to explain the extraordinary rate of increase in the period 1761-6 when there was an overall rise of 42.8 per 1,000 per year, higher than at any time until 1821-4. It might have been a manifestation of delight by the slaves after their return to Codrington rule, but it seems more likely that it was due to favourable conditions created by Colonel Samuel Martin when he rented the island between 1746 and 1761, the main effects of which were felt after 1761. Dennis Reynolds certainly believed that there had been an exceptional number of births then which he thought was due to there being at that time more or less equal numbers of men and women, 'and from thence it must be that at the end of his lease . . . there were 90 Children alive Born of 60 Women (young and old)'.<sup>87</sup> Reynolds's figures are not entirely accurate as the slave list of 1761 shows there were 71 children and 59 women, but they are a useful indication of Martin's policy on Barbuda.

Samuel Martin certainly seems to have tried to improve the quality of the slaves on Barbuda. He claimed in 1756 that their value had been increased in general since 1756 'and yet more by being garbled of all notorious Rogues, Runaways, distemper'd or old people'.<sup>88</sup> Presumably he replaced them with younger and more vigorous slaves. Some may even have been children. This perhaps explains the fact that though one third of the island's population were classed as children in 1761 there was only an increase of

6 in the population between 1756 and 1761. Reynolds was right in thinking there were more or less equal numbers of men and women (there were, in fact, 66 men and 59 women) and if these were mostly young adults it is not surprising that, conditions being otherwise favourable, there should have been a big increase in births in the following years. If slave lists were available for years between 1766 and 1783 they might well have shown continued high numbers of births for a while. The 41 young slaves sent to Antigua in 1780-1 would have been born in the years 1765-8. These increases, although explicable in this way, may have been sufficiently noteworthy for them to be the cause of the myth that Barbuda was used as a stud farm for the breeding of slaves in the mid-eighteenth century. It is a view held by serious scholars as well as by less reliable writers, but there seems to be no evidence for this in the records. It will be more generally considered in the next chapter.

This study of the slave population of Barbuda supports the conclusion reached by Michael Craton 'that slaves were contented in reverse correlation to the intensity of the labor system, and in positive correlation to the degree to which even as slaves, they were able to make a life for themselves.'<sup>89</sup> On Barbuda conditions were in many respects as favourable for slaves as could be found anywhere in the West Indies, but even under such circumstances it seems that the slave population ceased to increase when the security of their offspring was threatened. For slaves to have families it seems to have been essential for them not only to have reasonable working and living conditions but also some certainty that they would have a measure of control over their

children's lives and thus some dignity and control over their own lives too.

Notes to Chapter 7

<sup>1</sup> For example: J. Harry Bennett, Bondsmen and Bishops; Michael Craton and James Walvin, A Jamaican Plantation; Michael Craton, 'Hobbesian or Panglossian? The Two Extremes of Slave Conditions in the British Caribbean, 1783 to 1834', William and Mary Quarterly, XXXV (April 1978), 324-56; B.W. Higman, 'Household Structure and Fertility on Jamaican Slave Plantations: a Nineteenth-century Example', Population Studies, XXVII (1973), 527-50; Frank J. Klingberg, Codrington Chronicle; D.W. Thoms, 'Slavery in the Leeward Islands in the Mid Eighteenth Century: a Reappraisal', Bulletin of Historical Research, XLII (May 1969), 76-85.

<sup>2</sup> Craton, 'Hobbesian or Panglossian?', WMQ, XXXV.

<sup>3</sup> GRO, D1610 E16 Slave Lists of 1746 and 1761. Full details of all slave lists are given in Chapter 6, n. 85. No further reference will be given for them in this chapter, unless the slave list is not an obvious source in the text, as below.

<sup>4</sup> GRO, E16 Slave List for 1761.

<sup>5</sup> GRO, D1610 A6/4, A6/11, A6/15.

<sup>6</sup> The 1832 list gives a lower total (492) than the list of 1831 because a number of slaves had been transferred to Antigua. For this reason the 1831 list is used when increases in the population are being illustrated.

<sup>7</sup> Frank W. Pitman, 'Slavery on British West India Plantations', JNH, XI, 631.

<sup>8</sup> George W. Roberts, The Population of Jamaica (Cambridge, 1957), pp. 40, 245.

<sup>9</sup> Pitman, 'Slavery of British West India Plantations', JNH, XI, 637-8, quoting Charles Spooner's testimony, 1788.

<sup>10</sup> Richard B. Sheridan, 'Samuel Martin, Innovating Sugar Planter of Antigua, 1750-1776' in Agricultural History, XXIV, No. 3 (July 1960) (123-39), 130. Samuel Martin deliberately tried to increase the birth rate by purchasing more or less equal numbers of young men and women slaves. He also took measures to reduce infant mortality.

<sup>11</sup> J. Harry Bennett, Bondsmen and Bishops, p. 53.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 110.

<sup>13</sup> Craton and Walvin, A Jamaican Plantation, p. 131.

<sup>14</sup> Bennett, Bondsmen and Bishops, p. 52.

<sup>15</sup> Craton and Walvin, A Jamaican Plantation, p. 131.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 130.

<sup>17</sup> Ibid., pp. 104-5.

<sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 135.

<sup>19</sup> Pitman, 'Slavery on British West India Plantations', JNH, XI, 642. Roberts, The Population of Jamaica, pp. 173-4.

<sup>20</sup> Bennett, Bondsmen and Bishops, p. 56.

<sup>21</sup> Craton and Walvin, A Jamaican Plantation, p. 132.

- 22 Bennett, Bondsmen and Bishops, p. 53.
- 23 Craton and Walvin, A Jamaican Plantation, p. 134.
- 24 Ragatz, The Fall of the Planter Class, p. 35.
- 25 Pitman, 'Slavery on British West India Plantations', JNH, XI, 643.
- 26 Craton and Walvin, A Jamaican Plantation, p. 132.
- 27 Pitman, 'Slavery on British West India Plantations', JNH, XI, 644. At Worthy Park from 1767 the doctor was a Dr. John Quier who had studied in Leyden and London. He was not only a general practitioner but did research into tropical slave diseases. His career 'spanned 56 years'. Craton and Walvin, A Jamaican Plantation, p. 132.
- 28 Pitman, 'Slavery on British West India Plantations', JNH, XI, 644-5, 599.
- 29 Ragatz, The Fall of the Planter Class, p. 32. Ragatz quotes the fact that in 1796, 19,676 men were sent to the British West Indies. Of these no less than 17,173 died within five years. 'Departure for Caribbean service was viewed almost as a voyage to the grave.'
- 30 Bennett, Bondsmen and Bishops, pp. 110-12; Craton and Walvin, A Jamaican Plantation, pp. 195-201.
- 31 GRO, MF375 Winter to C.B.C., 6 July 1831. In the 1831 list, 15 slaves are put under the heading 'decrease'. Of these, in 1828, 4 were over 80, 4 were between 60 and 70, 3 were between 20 and 30, 2 were aged 3, and 2 cannot be identified with any certainty. Unfortunately it is not possible to construct population pyramids until 1817 as the earlier lists do not give the ages of all the slaves. There are population pyramids for 1817-32 in Lowenthal and Clarke, 'Slave-Breeding in Barbuda', NYAS, CCXCII, 520.
- 32 Roberts, The Population of Jamaica, p. 4.
- 33 See above, n. 5.
- 34 GRO, D1610 C27/4 C.B.C. to Hodge, 19 Nov. 1815.
- 35 GRO, C29 Jarritt to C.B.C., 6 Oct. 1829.
- 36 Craton, 'Hobbesian or Panglossian?', WMQ, XXXV, 349.
- 37 GRO, D1610 C20/2 C.B.C. to W.C., 17 June 1790.
- 38 H. de Ponthieu noted that several slaves on Barbuda suffered from 'Black Scurvy or Leprosy', and the pox. He commented that they had been 'sickly' for some time which he thought was due to their getting very wet in a sudden shower after they had been over-heated at their work; or to their lungs being affected by the dust from Guinea corn which they had been beating with sticks. GRO D1610 C13 H. de Ponthieu to W.C., 1780-(1783). In 1817 J. James reported that the slaves had been much afflicted with bowel complaints, but there had been no loss of life; GRO, MF375 James to C.B.C., 21 Nov. 1817. Winter noted that most of the slaves and overseers had been ill with fever and ague for some time, but were getting over it; GRO, D1610 C30 Winter to C.B.C., 9 Apr. 1831.
- 39 GRO, D1610 D30 Winter to C.B.C., 10 Apr. 1830.

- 40 GRO, MF375 Winter to C.B.C., 6 July 1831.
- 41 The chart in Chapter 8, p. 243 appears to contradict this but the difference in numbers was caused largely by transfers, not deaths.
- 42 GRO, D1610 C20/1 C.B.C. to W.C., 2 Mar. 1790.
- 43 Ibid.
- 44 The question of Barbuda being used in this way is considered more fully in Chapter 8.
- 45 As in Chapter 6, unless stated otherwise information about slaves comes from the Slave Lists and separate notes will not be given.
- 46 GRO, D1610 C13 H. de Ponthieu to W.C., 1780-(1783).
- 47 Ibid.
- 48 GRO, D1610 A59 List of Medicines for Barbuda 1791.
- 49 GRO, D1610 C13 H. de Ponthieu to W.C., 1780-(1783). He thought the hospital was too small and damp.
- 50 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Mar. 1787.
- 51 For example the chief sailor, Humanity. GRO D1610 A56/4; also Harry Punter, another sailor, A6/3.
- 52 Usually there is a simple statement in the accounts as in GRO, D1610 A6/4, 'Pd Violet over [i.e. from Barbuda to Antigua] sick, at different times 16/6'. Occasionally some detail was included as in A6/4, 'Quamin with a swell'd leg, and J. Moss over to the Dr. 6/-'. A not inconsiderable sum was paid for this medical attention. In June 1792 Jonas Blizzard was paid £81. 15s. 0d. 'for medicines and attendance for the Barbuda negroes sent over and the Shallop's crew to 27 Feb. last', D1610 A6/7.
- 53 In June 1788 Samuel and James Athill were paid £127. 8s. 9d. 'for medicines supplied negroes from 20 Sept. 1784 to 10 Oct. 1785 and for 2 trips over when the negroes were very sick', GRO, D1610 A6/3. Sometimes slaves were inoculated against disease, e.g. GRO, D1610 E23 List of Negroes inoculated at Barbuda 1777.
- 54 Pitman, 'Slavery on British West India Plantations', JNH, XI, 629-30.
- 55 Ibid., pp. 630-1. Also Craton and Walvin, A Jamaican Plantation, pp. 126-7.
- 56 See, for example, Pitman, 'Slavery on British West India Plantations', JNH, XI, 638.
- 57 Roberts, The Population of Jamaica, pp. 223-5. Craton, 'Hobbesian or Panglossian?', WMQ, XXXV, 334.
- 58 GRO, D1610 E23, the population for 1792-3 was given as 249.
- 59 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Mar. 1787.
- 60 GRO, MF375 Walrond to C.B.C., 18 Jan. 1792.
- 61 Craton, 'Hobbesian or Panglossian?', WMQ, XXXV, 338-9. Higman, 'Household Structure', PS, XXVII, 548.
- 62 Craton, 'Hobbesian or Panglossian?', WMQ, XXXV, 338.

- 63 Ibid., p. 329.
- 64 Ibid., pp. 342, 345.
- 65 GRO, D1610 L9 Depositions against Thomas Beech.
- 66 GRO, D1610 A4.
- 67 GRO, D1610 A6/1.
- 68 GRO, D1610 E23 Population of Barbuda 1792-3.
- 69 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Lovell, 3 Feb. and 9 May 1785.
- 70 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Mar. 1787.
- 71 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 29 Dec. 1783 and 1 Apr. 1786.
- 72 GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Reynolds, 30 July 1786. Sir William thought the work must be very hard to cause 'sterillity'. 'The hardest working people here breed fast enough and negroes do not work harder, and surely live better at Barbuda at least.'
- 73 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Apr. 1786.
- 74 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Mar. 1787: also 29 Dec. 1783 when he said he also thought there were too few breeding women.
- 75 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Mar. 1787 and 1 Apr. 1786.
- 76 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Mar. 1787. He maintained that the slaves were already infected with it when he came to the island, and this seems to be borne out by de Ponthieu's comments on the 'pox', D1610 C13 1780(-83). He noted that the slaves were able to mask the symptoms for years and did not tell the doctor. Walrond, on the other hand, did not think that venereal complaints were the cause of so few births because 'the constant Examinations by your Negroe Doctor prevents it being common', D1610 C15 Walrond to W.C., 31 July 1785.
- 77 GRO, D1610 C10 Clarke to W.C., 15 Oct. 1780.
- 78 GRO, D1610 C10 Clarke to W.C., 29 June 1781.
- 79 GRO, D1610 A52, 1 Oct.-31 Dec. 1781.
- 80 Ibid. and A5 1781 D.
- 81 GRO, D1610 C10 Clarke to W.C., 15 Oct. 1780.
- 82 GRO, D1610 A5 1781 C Betty's Hope.
- 83 GRO, D1610 A5 1781 C Cotton New Work.
- 84 For example, GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 26 Apr. 1810.
- 85 Ibid.
- 86 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 29 Dec. 1783.
- 87 GRO, MF375 Reynolds to W.C., 1 Apr. 1786.
- 88 GRO, D1610 E16 No. 4. 'A moderate Computation of the increase of Stock upon Barbuda in June 1756, with the Value thereof according to the former Appraisement.'
- 89 Craton, 'Hobbesian or Panglossian?', WMQ, XXXV, 356.



## Chapter 8

### THE EXTENT TO WHICH BARBUDA WAS USED AS A SOURCE OF SLAVES FOR THE CODRINGTON ESTATES ON ANTIGUA

The economy of Barbuda, as has been shown in previous chapters, was closely linked with the Antiguan estates owned by the Codrington family. Livestock, crops, and estate supplies were sent from Barbuda to Antigua and it is not unreasonable to suppose that the labour force on the sugar estates might also have been augmented from Barbuda. Some scholars have, in fact, written of Barbuda not only as a source of labour but as a stud farm for the provision of slaves as well as livestock;<sup>1</sup> and Christopher (Bethell) Codrington himself described the island as a suitable 'nursery for Negroes'.<sup>2</sup> The stud farm theory has been shown by Professor David Lowenthal and Dr. Colin Clarke to be a myth,<sup>3</sup> but as it is one of the most often repeated ideas associated with Barbuda, some comment on it must be included in this chapter. It is also necessary to see how far Christopher (Bethell) Codrington's suggestion that Barbuda should be used as a 'nursery for Negroes' was acted upon and then to determine to what extent the island contributed to the labour needs of the Codrington sugar estates.

It is perhaps not surprising that Barbuda has been suggested as a stud farm for slave-breeding. An island owned by one family, who made a policy of discouraging visitors,

and where the population was known to increase, is a likely subject of such a rumour. In fact Barbudans themselves take pride in this myth which seems to have become part of the folk-lore of the Caribbean.<sup>4</sup> The facts available, however, do not support the theory and the scholars who make the charge have not given references.<sup>5</sup>

The most important fact which might substantiate their claim is the increase in the population of Barbuda, without purchases, at a time when sugar islands could only maintain their population with fresh imports of African slaves. As has been shown in the previous chapter, however, this was a natural increase made possible by the easier social conditions of an island not geared to sugar production. Other islands of similar type also showed similar increases in the population.<sup>6</sup> In Barbuda's history there is only one short period, 1761-6, when the increase was so sudden as to suggest the possibility of deliberately contrived slave-breeding, but this is not confirmed by any other evidence. It seems more likely that the unusual rise in numbers was the result of improvements by Martin and Byam between 1746 and 1761 which would have encouraged a natural increase.<sup>7</sup>

There is, admittedly, a shortage of documents for some periods of Barbuda's history, but within the context of the records at present available there is no sign of deliberate slave-breeding. There is also much evidence to support a theory that there was no such policy. The most obvious is the fact that experienced slave-owners knew that if slaves were moved from one island to another it was essential that they should have a period of seasoning as when slaves arrived in the West Indies from Africa.<sup>8</sup> Deliberate breeding

of slaves on one island for transfer to another was not necessarily, therefore, a practicable proposition. Slaves moved from Barbuda, a non sugar-growing island, to sugar estates on Antigua might not have survived such a change. Sir William Codrington was well aware of this. In a postscript on this subject in a letter to Samuel Redhead he wrote:

Upon reading over my Letter, a Doubt occurs whether to take the Barbuda Negroes almost upon any Terms; for living so long there and having their fill of fresh Provisions and but little Labour, they wou'd not methinks be able to endure hard Labour and sorry Food, this with ye change of Country might throw them into disorders and possibly Occasion the Loss of some.<sup>9</sup>

Both Redhead and Crump, another attorney, advised him to stock his Antiguan estates with new seasoned slaves, when possible.<sup>10</sup> In 1831, Jarritt made the same point in a letter to Sir Bethell Codrington. He wrote: 'Barbuda negroes are said not to answer in this island [Antigua]; and the reason is obvious'. On Barbuda they could 'ramble through the Woods, all the hours of the Night taking anything that comes in their Way'.<sup>11</sup> In Antigua they could not get used to staying in their houses at night, nor could they adapt to the damp, chilly air, very different from that on Barbuda.<sup>12</sup>

The transfer of children in 1780-1 from Barbuda to Antigua (described in the previous chapter) looks at first like corroborative evidence of stud farming, especially as it was treated as a sale in the accounts. Actually, though, this seems to have been a sudden decision as the parents had to be 'induced' to part with their children and the children themselves bribed in some measure.<sup>13</sup> The results, so far as they can be ascertained, confirmed the fears of Sir William. In 1793 the List for Betty's Hope gives only eleven slaves

with the surname Barbuda, although thirty had been sent there,<sup>14</sup> and in 1810 James, referring to an incident (presumably that of 1780-1) when some young Barbudans were drafted to the Antigua estates, wrote: 'I have heard that many of them died, some Girls were sent back, not being able to stand the work in Antigua'.<sup>15</sup> About 20 seem to have returned to Barbuda but in March 1810, in accordance with a demand by Hodge (an Antiguan attorney) these slaves were sent back to Antigua with their families. James commented: 'I am sorry to find that the best of them, a young Man about 22 years Old, is already dead, they left with the greatest reluctance.'<sup>16</sup>

The idea of Barbuda as a stud farm runs totally counter to the actual pattern of society on the island. Unlike most slave societies in the Caribbean at this time, the slaves on Barbuda had formed stable sexual relationships and were organized in families. The sudden removal of the children in 1780-1 seems to have had an immediate adverse effect on the population, and numbers of births dropped.<sup>17</sup> This reaction to the events of 1780-1 leads to the conclusion that stud farming could not have been practised on such a community where family life mattered.

The unusually healthy appearance of the slaves on Barbuda, however, made such an impression on Christopher (Bethell) Codrington on his visit in 1790 that he suggested to Sir William that Barbuda 'would be a fine Nursery for Negroes, who, bought young would come at an easy expense, and who might be fed here, also at little expense'.<sup>18</sup> Unaware then of the problems presented by transfers of slaves he commented in 1790: 'nor do I doubt Children thriving better there [Barbuda] than here [Antigua], who might annually be drafted

when of a proper age and strength into your different Regiments here; they might begin their Career as Field Negroes at the commencement of the crop, which is the time when numbers are most wanted'.<sup>19</sup> He went on to outline another scheme: 'if I bought negroes, I would buy them at the age of 10 or 12 and send them to Barbuda; they would at that age come cheap, would live better and at little expense there, and I doubt not would do well'.<sup>20</sup> Sir William apparently approved of Barbuda being used as a 'nursery for Negroes' but he died soon after the suggestion was made.<sup>21</sup>

The idea was mooted again in 1792 for different reasons. Walrond, believing that bad behaviour on the part of the Barbudans might be due to their 'long family connections', suggested that 'Their families should be broke by sending the Young occasionally here [Antigua]; and they might be replaced by purchases of the Smallest New Ones for which the Island would be an excellent nursery from its plenty and Healthiness. There would be no Cruelty in this, as when young they come here, and are parted from their parents very chearfully'.<sup>22</sup>

Despite these suggestions there is no actual evidence that Barbuda was used in this way. Although Christopher (Bethell) Codrington had made the suggestion he had done so as a young, inexperienced visitor who knew next to nothing of conditions in the West Indies. As an owner, however, he seems to have been conscious of the effect of transfers on the slaves and to have avoided taking any action which would harm them.<sup>23</sup> The problems caused by the French Wars may also have prevented such transfers.<sup>24</sup> The French were active in the area at the end of the eighteenth and beginning of the nineteenth centuries and communication between Caribbean

islands was more hazardous than usual. Also schemes involving purchases of slaves were not sensible undertakings when the abolition of the slave trade was being considered.

Nevertheless there was always an irregular interchange of slaves between the two islands. Barbudan craftsmen were sometimes sent to Antigua, and there are references to young Barbudan slaves being sent there to learn a trade.<sup>25</sup> It seems also to have been usual for Antiguan craftsmen to work on Barbuda occasionally.<sup>26</sup> It is possible that Antiguan slaves who had been ill were sent to Barbuda to recover<sup>27</sup> and certainly some superannuated Antiguan slaves settled on Barbuda.<sup>28</sup> These elderly slaves seem to have had earlier links with the island. Guyam Barbuda, for example, was listed as the driver of a field gang at Betty's Hope in 1793 when he was 35.<sup>29</sup> In 1808 he is described as a watchman.<sup>30</sup> By 1817 he is listed—still at Betty's Hope—under the title 'Aged' but from 1818 to 1827 he is noted as being at Barbuda.<sup>31</sup> His surname suggests he was one of those drafted to Antigua in 1780-1. Another slave, Lamba Barbuda, illustrates the same point. In 1805 she is on the Barbuda list under the heading 'Belonging to Antigua . . .'<sup>32</sup> She seems to have remained in Barbuda until 1818 when she returned to Betty's Hope.<sup>33</sup> Unfortunately there is no evidence to show whether she volunteered to return or whether she was simply drafted back when transfers were sanctioned by Codrington in 1817. It is interesting to observe that although she had previously been listed under 'Old People' or even 'Very old and diseased People', when she returned to Betty's Hope (though still under the same general title) she is described as a gardener in 1819 and 1820, and as the overseers' cook in 1826.<sup>34</sup>

There is no evidence that those slaves who lived on Antigua regarded Barbuda as a haven for their old age, rather the reverse. If given a choice most Antiguan slaves were no more anxious to go Barbuda than Barbudan slaves were to go to Antigua. Christopher (Bethell) Codrington explained this graphically to his uncle: 'Manumitting them is conferring happiness upon them, but, sending them to Barbuda as you mention (tho' it would be something less expensive to you perhaps than keeping of them here) would be sending them to Botany Bay'.<sup>35</sup> Transfers in either direction seem to have been unpopular with the slaves and, as has already been explained, transfer to the Antiguan estates was the most effective method of punishing slaves on Barbuda.<sup>36</sup> There is no evidence, in the eighteenth century, of regular drafting of slaves from Barbuda to work on the Antiguan estates.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century the question of transfers of slaves from Barbuda to work on Antigua was re-opened by the abolition of the slave trade in 1807 which made it much more difficult to purchase slaves. At the same time the Barbudan population was increasing fast. The Antiguan estates were short of labour, while on Barbuda there was too little work for the increasing number of inhabitants.<sup>37</sup> It was clearly in the interests of the proprietor to be able to transfer slaves from Barbuda to Antigua and from the early 1800s the Codrington attorneys in Antigua encouraged Sir Bethell to move his surplus slaves from Barbuda to Antigua.<sup>38</sup> For many years he was reluctant to do so because he did not want to harm them. In a letter to Hodge in June 1809, he wrote: 'In a former letter you threw out an Idea of taking the Negroes from Barbuda with a

view of fixing them on the Plantation in Antigua; But this would be attended with so much hardship towards the Barbuda Negroes that I would sooner lose the Income than resort to it'.<sup>39</sup> He expressed the same view in a letter to James:

'My Antigua Profits would undoubtedly be increased, and I think it probable that those from Barbuda might not be decreased. But what wd be the effect on the Minds of the Negroes? Twere better to forego the Profit than to act with Cruelty.'<sup>40</sup> The slaves themselves were very much against any removal from Barbuda, whether permanent or temporary, and made it clear to James that they would not go to Antigua of their own free-will.<sup>41</sup>

The reluctance of the slaves to leave Barbuda must have had considerable influence on Sir Bethell because there is no evidence of permanent transfers at this stage. He remained concerned, however, about the large numbers on Barbuda who could not be usefully employed there. In January 1809 he wrote:

I have given much of my Attention latterly to this Subject with a view to ascertaining why the Profits from Barbuda have not been in any degree proportionate to the number of Negroes or the quantity of Stock on the Island and whether some plan cannot be hit upon to produce something like an adequate return; for the fact is indisputable that if the Negroes were sent over to Antigua to be employed as Task Gangs they alone would earn considerably more than the whole Profits now arising from the Island, their Earnings there and the Sale of Stock etc inclusive.<sup>42</sup>

He suggested that they might be persuaded to leave Barbuda temporarily to help on the Antiguan estates at times of special need—at crop time or when new cane land was being prepared.<sup>43</sup> 'It strikes me,' he wrote, 'that it might be possible even to make a Pleasure of it by sending them over for a few Weeks, at times when they would be most serviceable.'<sup>44</sup>



There were disadvantages in a plan of this kind. In war-time the slaves might be captured by enemy vessels, and there was always the danger of disease being transmitted to Barbuda when they returned.<sup>45</sup> James objected to the scheme, too, on the grounds that he would never know how many men he might have on Barbuda.<sup>46</sup> Despite these difficulties, though, Sir Bethell remained convinced that this was the best way to make the slaves useful while taking their feelings into account.<sup>47</sup>

Even so no action seems to have been taken until 1817. In that year he obtained exemption from a clause in an Antiguan Act which would have prevented him from moving slaves between Barbuda and Antigua;<sup>48</sup> and from then he seems to have decided that slaves should be transferred to Antigua on a temporary basis when they were needed there.<sup>49</sup> James, knowing that they would object very strongly to this, requested that a positive order should be sent 'for a certain number to be removed, in which case your orders must and shall be put into execution'.<sup>50</sup> In a letter to James in 1818 Codrington made his wishes plain:

I do not wish you to send what are profitable and of use in Barbuda but I beg that any number beyond that, and in all cases where it can be done without apparent hardship, may be made somehow profitable which they will be if sent to my Plantation in Antigua. They may return occasionally to see their Friends or their Friends to see them and I see no hardship whatever in their Removal.<sup>51</sup>

Between 1817 and 1834 ninety slaves were sent from Barbuda to work on the Antiguan estates. Of these twelve returned after a few years<sup>52</sup> so that a total of seventy-eight were long-stay transfers and most of them—fifty-one—were sent after 1828. There is no indication of the composition of

the last two groups as they were transferred to Antigua after the compilation of the 1832 list, but it seems likely that they would have followed the pattern of most of the previous groups consisting mainly of young adult men with some women and children. The following table shows the composition of the groups given in the slave lists from 1817 to 1832.<sup>53</sup>

	<u>Men</u>	<u>Women</u>	<u>Children</u>	<u>Total</u>
1817-21	7 (6 aged 12-19 1 no age given)	-	-	7
1821-4	7 (1 aged 48 1 aged 34 4 aged 20-5 1 aged 17)	5 (1 aged 43 3 aged 24-6 1 aged 16)	3 (aged 13, 9, 7)	15 (to B. Hope)
	6 (5 aged 22-7 1 aged 18)	5 (4 aged 22-4 1 no age given)	5 (aged 13, 11, 9, and 2 infants)	16 (to C. Hall)
1824-8	1 (aged 22)	-	-	1
1828-32	6 (1 aged 46 5 aged 20-7)	1 (aged 29)	6 (5 under 11 1 no age given)	13
Totals	27	11	14	52

These transfers were not effected in the way envisaged by Sir Bethell Codrington. Firstly, of the ninety slaves sent to Antigua, only twelve seem to have returned, so these were in the nature of permanent, not temporary removals. Secondly, the slaves who were transferred did not go willingly. In 1818 James described them as 'very loath' to leave Barbuda.<sup>54</sup> As the slaves seemed to think that he had the power to keep them in Barbuda he had written to Osborn to come and take them off himself 'for altho I do not expect any great opposition, yet I think it but fair as he is to receive

the benefit of their removal that he should also take a share of the trouble should any occur'.<sup>55</sup> It was impossible to persuade the slaves to volunteer and James was reduced to looking out for slaves who were misbehaving in some way so that he could transfer them to Antigua as a punishment. This was the way the first seven were selected (1817-21)<sup>56</sup> and most of those sent to Clare Hall in the second group (1821-4). Some had been found killing sheep, others had been caught stealing material intended for clothing.<sup>57</sup> They seem to have been accompanied to Antigua by their wives and families. It seems likely that the fifteen sent to Betty's Hope between 1821 and 1824 had also been found committing some misdemeanour.

In the mid-1820s the attorneys still seem to have hoped that the Barbudans could be persuaded to settle in Antigua but the reaction of the slaves to their suggestions made them realize that they would only leave if forced to do so. In 1826 James and Osborn both went over to Barbuda in order to persuade some of them to settle on the Antiguan estates. James had ordered the slaves to be mustered and everything went quite well until 'we got Nearly through the Women when they all declared they would not leave the Island unless compelled by force'.<sup>58</sup> Eventually James persuaded the tradesmen, such as masons and carpenters, to assist him in Antigua but on the understanding that they should be allowed to return when their work was done. He hoped some of the young people would join them and would settle when they had made connections.<sup>59</sup> He was disappointed in these hopes as only one male slave was transferred between 1824 and 1828, presumably for some misdemeanour. By 1829 Jarritt was advising

Sir Bethell that 'to talk of removing any of the Negroes now from Barbuda they would laugh at us. They set us at defiance. And nothing but a Strong Military force could remove them'.<sup>60</sup> In March 1834 slaves were needed on the Antiguan estates but they were not sent and Jarritt expressed himself as afraid to take them 'thinking they will be more trouble and plague than profit and that if they should come they will be unmanageable'.<sup>61</sup> Those who were sent at this time seem again to have been those caught in some act of disobedience. In 1830 seven were sent to Antigua after being detected killing cattle,<sup>62</sup> and the next year a man and wife with their five children were transferred having been discovered four times at night in the woods with a gun.<sup>63</sup> Nineteen slaves who were sent to the Windward estates in September 1832 were the ringleaders (with their families) in the uprising of 1832 when the manager, Winter, had to send for troops from Antigua to restore order.<sup>64</sup> Another nineteen seem to have been sent to Antigua before this, presumably for some other misdemeanour.<sup>65</sup>

The removal of these slaves from Barbuda between 1817 and 1832 did not significantly affect labour on the island. In 1809 Hodge had calculated that eighty to a hundred could be moved from Barbuda to Antigua<sup>66</sup> and in 1820 James thought Barbuda would do much better with only half the number of slaves then on the island.<sup>67</sup> There were 411 slaves there in 1821 so he presumably thought that up to two hundred men, women, and children could be moved without detriment. Ten years later it was suggested that three hundred slaves from Barbuda should be sold: 'supposing it possible to obtain for them £50 Sterling each you would by such a proceeding

become possessed of £15,000 and at the same time be released from the heavy expence of maintaining so large a number of useless beings, as well as the Security of your Property being less doubtful'.<sup>68</sup>

The slaves who were transferred to Antigua were not all of one sex and age, so that the loss was spread over the whole community up to forty-five years old. A study of the numbers in each age range, however, does reveal a decline in the most useful members of the society – those aged between twenty and forty – as the chart below shows:

Chart to show the degree of correlation in numbers of slaves in each age-group between: (1) 1817 and 1828  
(2) 1821 and 1831

<u>1817</u>				<u>1828</u>			
0-10 years	126	slaves		11-20 years	111	slaves	
11-20 "	97	"		21-30 "	77	"	
21-30 "	41	"		31-40 "	27	"	
31-40 "	47	"		41-50 "	44	"	
41-50 "	35	"		51-60 "	27	"	
51-60 "	27	"		61-70 "	13	"	
61-70 "	11	"		71-80 "	7	"	

<u>1821</u>				<u>1831</u>			
0-10 years	125	slaves		11-20 years	115	slaves	
11-20 "	101	"		21-30 "	78	"	
21-30 "	57	"		31-40 "	43	"	
31-40 "	28	"		41-50 "	30	"	
41-50 "	50	"		51-60 "	36	"	
51-60 "	25	"		61-70 "	17	"	
61-70 "	14	"		71-80 "	7	"	

The population pyramids in the article by Professor Lowenthal and Dr. Clarke also make this clear.<sup>69</sup> Despite these transfers, however, there still seem to have been sufficient slaves to do the work on Barbuda.

It is not easy to ascertain the effect of the transfers on the slaves themselves. Some were obviously eager to return if given the chance. Of the sixteen listed as sent to Clare Hall in the 1824 list, twelve had returned by 1828.

There is no record of what happened to most of the others, but Elias Webber, aged sixteen in 1817 and sent to Betty's Hope by 1821, was described by Jarritt in 1829 as 'a Notorious bad Character . . . a native of Barbuda, who has persevered to the last'.<sup>70</sup> All the other slaves on Betty's Hope were described as behaving well.<sup>71</sup>

The transfers must have caused some distress to the slaves concerned as illustrated in the case of Guy. This slave lived on Barbuda<sup>72</sup> but was apparently transferred to Antigua—Betty's Hope—along with another slave, Hall, between 1814 and 1817.<sup>73</sup> In the Betty's Hope lists for 1817 and 1818 he is described as a field worker and boiler. In the list for 1826 he was Chief Boiler—the most important slave on a sugar estate,<sup>74</sup> but the next year a tragic series of incidents happened to him. On 5 March he was publicly accused by the slaves of poisoning the cattle on the estate. He was kept closely confined and the cattle which were sick before, died. On 21 April he was freed after being flogged on the orders of four magistrates. Then, curiously, he was again appointed as a cattle-keeper. In eleven days one of the bulls under his care died. Sand and bits of wire were found in its stomach. Guy was again imprisoned, and flogged on 2 June, after which he was kept in confinement.<sup>75</sup> It is difficult to guess the cause of this strange sequence of events. Had Guy, an outsider from Barbuda, become so conceited by his quick promotion to Chief Boiler that he had alienated the other slaves who plotted against him? Or was he simply an innocent victim of the envy of less successful slaves? Or did he still resent his transfer to Antigua?

Whatever the reasons the incident illustrates the human

tensions which affected the lives of slaves particularly when removed to new surroundings.

It is to Sir Bethell Codrington's credit that throughout this period he did take the feelings of the slaves into account. Before 1817 he resisted the idea of transferring slaves to Antigua because of their attachment to Barbuda; after 1817 he neither used force to move them against their will, nor sold them when he could have made a profit. He was anxious, however, to receive as much compensation as possible for the Barbudan slaves at the time of emancipation. This led him to develop again the idea of Barbuda's fitness as a 'Nursery for Negroes'. Writing to the Colonial Secretary he observed that the value of Barbuda lay 'chiefly in its extreme fitness for a nursery for negroes—and that in this respect it was not only a Source of much profit to your Memorialist and his Ancestors, but also (in so far as its supply went) a preventive to the inhumanity of the African Slave Trade'. He went on to say

That, if your Memorialist has not, of late years, transported negroes from Barbuda to his other estates it has been solely on account of their excessive attachment to their native soil, and to the mode of treatment adopted by your Memorialist and his ancestors to them and theirs—an attachment so strong as to make it painful for your memorialist to use the means which would be necessary for their removal.<sup>76</sup>

It is clear that he himself did not actually consider this factor to be the most important attribute of Barbuda as in another statement to the Colonial Secretary (after the passing of the Emancipation Act) he explained that 'the chief Profit has arisen from raising provisions for the neighbouring Isles, supplying them with working Cattle which run wild over the Island'.<sup>77</sup> At the time of emancipation, however, his aim was to obtain

as much compensation as he could. Though he had not actually profited as he would have liked from the high population of Barbuda, which had in fact been a liability rather than an asset, yet he hoped that he might secure special benefit at emancipation from the peculiar advantages Barbuda possessed.

Unfortunately for the Codringtons, Barbuda did not provide the Antiguan estates with the labour they needed. In the eighteenth century when African slaves were easy to obtain this was not a problem and in any case experienced slave-owners and their attorneys recognized that the purchase of new and seasoned Africans was probably easier than transferring slaves from one island to another with a different life-style. This attitude was proved to be right in 1780-1 when the experiment of transferring slaves from Barbuda to Antigua was tried and failed. When it was impossible to obtain Africans, however, the desirability of using surplus slaves from Barbuda was clear to all those in charge of the Codrington properties. Sir Bethell was, however, reluctant to take any measure which might be harmful to the slaves but the rapid increase in the island's population and his anxiety to make Barbuda pay eventually led him to sanction their transfer from Barbuda to Antigua for limited periods. In this he was for the most part thwarted by the Barbudans themselves.

Not surprisingly the slaves preferred to remain on Barbuda. Work on the Antiguan sugar estates held no attraction for slaves used to a much easier discipline and no inducement was offered which was likely to make them want to leave their homes and friends on Barbuda. Nor was the use of force a solution to the problem. Faced with the united



opposition of the slaves the management would have had to call on a considerable contingent of troops from Antigua, and loss of life would not have been in anyone's interest. Thus it seems the only slaves who were transferred to the sugar estates were those who had been found committing some crime. Even then the slaves seem to have been treated fairly. Crimes do not seem to have been invented, and the slaves who were punished were accompanied by their wives and families. Their conditions were not to be compared with those of contemporary English labourers who, found guilty of breaking the law, were transported, without their families, to other continents.

The facts then relating to the transfer of slaves from Barbuda to Antigua bear no relationship to the myth of slave-breeding. There was no deliberately contrived breeding of slaves nor was the island used as a 'nursery for Negroes' in the sense suggested by Sir Bethell Codrington. For many years in fact the owner was prepared to recognize and comply with the wishes of his slaves even though by so doing his own best interests were not being served. In later years he was forced to recognize that in the face of the united opposition of the slaves he was powerless to carry out an unpopular policy.

## Notes to Chapter 8

<sup>1</sup> Professor R.B. Sheridan, Sugar and Slavery, An Economic History of the British West Indies, 1624-1775 (Baltimore, 1974), p. 185; Robert C. West and John P. Augelli, Middle America: Its Lands and Peoples, p. 194. This theory is also expressed in a school text-book recommended by the Cambridge University Local Examinations Syndicate as a reference book for 'O' level examiners of their West India History paper, viz, F.R. Augier, S..C. Gordon, D.G. Hall, and M. Reckord, The Making of the West Indies (London, 1960). p. 161. Barbuda is also frequently described as a stud farm in modern travel books on the Caribbean, for example: Charles Graves, Fourteen Islands in the Sun (London, 1965), p. 167; Mary Slater, The Caribbean Islands (London, 1968), p. 162; George Hunte, The West Indian Islands (London, 1972), pp. 111-13.

<sup>2</sup> GRO, D1610 C20/1 C.B.C. to W.C., 2 Mar. 1790. This point is embellished by James Pope-Hennessey in Sins of the Fathers: A Study of the Atlantic Slave Traders 1441-1807 (London, 1967), p. 105.

<sup>3</sup> David Lowenthal and Colin G. Clarke, 'Slave-Breeding in Barbuda: The Past of a Negro Myth', NYAS, CCXCII.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, p. 511. This point was also made to me by Mr. Mackenzie Frank, a Barbudan studying in this country.

<sup>5</sup> See above n. 1. Professor D.G. Hall and Professor R. Sheridan have, however, informed me that they no longer hold this view. I am grateful to them for letting me know this. It is perhaps not inappropriate to consider how the myth came to be so widely advertised in modern accounts. It is possible that this is due to the book The Codrington Correspondence, 1743-1841, written and published by Robson Lowe (London, 1951). This book is a catalogue of the Codrington letters purchased by Robson Lowe, the stamp-dealer, in the late 1940s. He also made a micro-film of the letters. The catalogue is a useful guide to the letters if used in conjunction with the micro-film but if used on its own can be very misleading; for example, the address of the writer is not always given so a reference to 'this island' may mean Antigua but be incorrectly assumed by a reader to be Barbuda. Also the brief summary given for each letter may contain information about both islands but not clearly distinguished. The letter dated 9 May 1781 (R066, p. 26 in the second impression, dated 1968), for example, has led to Barbuda being described as a sugar-growing island. Sometimes the summary is a bare statement, which by itself gives a totally misleading picture for example in letter number 200, from J.L. Walrond, there is a bald statement - 'Suggests the use of Barbuda as a negro nursery'. It is not impossible that readers may have deduced from this that deliberate slave-breeding was practised on Barbuda. These difficulties would probably not have arisen had the micro-film been available, but for some years its whereabouts were unknown. It turned up again recently at the University of Texas, probably as the result of inquiries made by Mr. Brian Smith, then the Gloucestershire County Archivist, and Professor Lowenthal.

<sup>6</sup> For example, Great Exuma; Craton, 'Hobbesian or Panglossian?', WMQ, XXXV.

<sup>7</sup> See previous chapter, pp. 224-5.

<sup>8</sup> Pitman, 'Slavery on British West India Plantations', JNH, XI, 633. Edward Long pointed out that for a slave to move from one plantation to another within the same island, for example from a high site to a lower one, could affect even Creoles adversely; Edward Long, The History of Jamaica (London, 1774) (new edition, London, 1970), p. 435.

<sup>9</sup> GRO, D1610 C6 W.C. to Redhead, 30 Nov. 1752.

<sup>10</sup> GRO, D1610 C7 Crump to W.C., 13 July 1753.

<sup>11</sup> GRO, MF375 Jarritt to C.B.C., 14 Nov. 1831. He thought, however, that Barbuda slaves might survive a transfer to Rooms, an estate owned by other members of the family about two miles from Betty's Hope. Rooms had a dry, airy position close to the sea and therefore more like Barbuda.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

<sup>13</sup> See Chapter 7, pp. 222-3.

<sup>14</sup> GRO, D1610 E5 List of Slaves on Betty's Hope 1793. It seems reasonable to suppose that the slaves given the surname Barbuda had in fact been transferred from Barbuda. There are too many (in 1793) in the same age range for it to be the name of a family.

<sup>15</sup> GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 26 Apr. 1810.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> See Chapter 7, p. 223.

<sup>18</sup> GRO, D1610 C20/1 C.B.C. to W.C., 2 Mar. 1790.

<sup>19</sup> GRO, D1610 C20/2 C.B.C. to W.C., 17 June 1790.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> GRO, D1610 C20/2 C.B.C. to W.C., 12 Sept. 1790. Sir William died on 11 Mar. 1792.

<sup>22</sup> GRO, MF375 Walrond to C.B.C., 18 Jan. 1792. Though the wording is a little ambiguous the meaning seems to be 'they would come here'. If they were already coming (as the sentence could imply) Walrond's suggestion would have been pre-empted.

<sup>23</sup> See, for example, GRO, D1610 C27/1 C.B.C. to Hodge, 21 June 1809, and also in more detail below.

<sup>24</sup> That Codrington was aware of this as a problem is shown in GRO, D1610 C27/1 C.B.C. to Hodge, 21 June 1809.

<sup>25</sup> GRO, MF375 S. Redhead to W.C., 1 June 1762 and 25 Apr. 1783.

<sup>26</sup> GRO, MF375 Osborn to C.B.C., 30 Apr. 1817.

<sup>27</sup> Certainly Sir William thought that this might be done, though his aim was to encourage slave-breeding rather than improvements in health. GRO, D1610 C14/1 W.C. to Reynolds, 30 July 1786.

<sup>28</sup> Slave Lists for Betty's Hope, GRO, D1610 E6.

<sup>29</sup> GRO, D1610 E5 List of Slaves on Betty's Hope 1793.

- 30 GRO, D1610 E6 List of Slaves on Betty's Hope 1808.
- 31 GRO, D1610 E6 List of Slaves on Betty's Hope 1817, 1818-27.
- 32 GRO, D1610 E17 List of Negroes on Island of Barbuda 1805.
- 33 GRO, D1610 E6 Slave Lists for Betty's Hope.
- 34 Ibid.
- 35 GRO, D1610 C20/2 C.B.C. to W.C., 12 Sept. 1790, in postscript.
- 36 James to C.B.C., 7 Sept. 1824, at Dodington, GRO, MF375 Jarritt to C.B.C., 2 Aug. 1830.
- 37 See, for example, GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 26 Apr. 1810.
- 38 e.g. GRO, D1610 C33 Martin to C.B.C., 7 July 1809; D1610 C27/1 C.B.C. to Hodge, 21 June 1809; MF375 James to C.B.C., 1 May 1818; D1610 C29 Jarritt to C.B.C., 6 Oct. 1829.
- 39 GRO, D1610 C27/2 C.B.C. to Hodge, 21 June 1809.
- 40 GRO, D1610 C27/1 C.B.C. to James, 3 Sept. 1809.
- 41 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 26 Apr. 1810.
- 42 GRO, D1610 C27/1 C.B.C. to James, 15 Jan. 1809.
- 43 GRO, D1610 C27/1 C.B.C. to Hodge, 21 June and 4 Sept. 1809.
- 44 GRO, D1610 C27/1 C.B.C. to James, 3 Sept. 1809.
- 45 GRO, D1610 C27/1 C.B.C. to Hodge, 21 Sept. 1809.
- 46 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 26 Apr. 1810.
- 47 GRO, D1610 C27/4 C.B.C. to Hodge, 19 Nov. 1815 and to James 3 Aug. 1818.
- 48 GRO, MF375 Osborn to C.B.C. 30 Apr. 1817. This privilege was safeguarded again in 1824 when further legislation restricting the movement of slaves was enacted. Lord Bathurst wrote to C.B.C.: 'But with respect to your particular Case, I am happy to tell you that you are quite safe, as it is specially provided that the removal of Slaves from one Island to another, both under the same Government shall not be prohibited. To say the truth I had your Case in view when I took care that this provision should be inserted.' GRO, D1610 E36 Bathurst to C.B.C., 24 June 1824.
- 49 GRO, MF375 James to C.B.C., 14 June 1817.
- 50 Ibid.
- 51 GRO, D1610 C27/4 C.B.C. to James, 3 Aug. 1818.
- 52 Eleven adults returned, there were also three children of whom two seem to have been born in Antigua. Charles (aged about nine) was listed as one of those sent to Clare Hall in 1824, and is one of the three infants brought to Barbuda by 1828. Technically therefore he must be regarded as the twelfth person actually returning to Barbuda. Slave Lists for Barbuda 1824 and 1828. Details as in Chapter 6, n. 85.
- 53 Slave Lists 1817, 1821, 1824, 1828, 1832. No further reference will be given in the notes to Barbudan slave lists if they are the obvious source of information.

- 54 GRO, MF375 James to C.B.C., 1 May 1818.
- 55 Ibid.
- 56 GRO, MF375 James to C.B.C., 15 Oct. 1821.
- 57 James to C.B.C., 7 Sept. 1824, formerly at Dodington House. These included 'two able young Men' with their wives and one child, and three boys aged 10 to 14. 'Four other able Men' who were discovered stealing were sailors.
- 58 GRO, D1610 C24 J. James to C.B.C., 10 Feb. 1826.
- 59 Ibid.
- 60 GRO, D1610 C29 Jarritt to C.B.C., 6 Oct. 1829.
- 61 GRO, D1610 C29 Jarritt to C.B.C., 15 Mar. 1834.
- 62 GRO, MF375 Jarritt to C.B.C., 2 Aug. 1830.
- 63 GRO, MF375 Jarritt to C.B.C., 14 Nov. 1831. Although the slaves mentioned in these two incidents number fourteen, they are presumably the group of thirteen listed in 1832. One of the children may have been a baby and so not counted.
- 64 GRO, MF375 Winter to C.B.C., 26 Sept. 1832.
- 65 Ibid.
- 66 GRO, D1610 C33 Martin to C.B.C., 7 July 1809, in which Martin reported Hodge's suggestion.
- 67 GRO, MF375 James to C.B.C., 7 Aug. 1820.
- 68 GRO, D1610 C37 Liggins to C.B.C., 15 Feb. 1830. It had also been suggested in 1829 that the slave population should be divided in half, and half put on the eastern end of the island. GRO, D1610 C29 Jarritt to C.B.C., 22 Jan. 1829.
- 69 Lowenthal and Clarke, 'Slave-Breeding in Barbuda', NYAS, CCXCII, 520.
- 70 GRO, D1610 C29 Jarritt to C.B.C., 6 Oct. 1829.
- 71 Ibid.
- 72 He is included in the Slave List for Barbuda in 1805.
- 73 The Slave List for Barbuda in 1814 shows a cross by the names of these two slaves and they both turn up later on the Betty's Hope lists.
- 74 Slave Lists for Betty's Hope, GRO, D1610 E6.
- 75 GRO, D1610 E6 Slave List for Betty's Hope 1827.
- 76 GRO, D1610 E36 Copy of Memorial from C.B.C. to the Colonial Secretary, undated (addressed to Mr. Stanley).
- 77 GRO, D1610 E36 Draft of letter from C.B.C. to Mr. Stanley, 1 June 1834.

## CONCLUSION

The history of Barbuda between 1738 and 1833 divides roughly into two distinct periods. The first, from 1738 to 1779, illustrates what can happen to the property of an absentee landowner when those to whom he has delegated authority do not exercise it fairly or efficiently. In the first eight years the lack of effective leadership led to low profits, discontent among the slaves and eventually to outright rebellion and the murder of the manager. Nothing so dramatic occurred between 1761 and 1779 under Redhead's administration, but little was done to improve the island as was clearly noted by the Governor of the Leewards in 1779 when he described Barbuda as still in a state of nature. Increases in the population of the slaves seem to suggest that they were not unhappy under this regime, but the proprietor was dissatisfied with his poor returns.

In 1779 changes were made in the administration which gave the manager more authority, and in Dennis Reynolds Sir William had someone who was prepared to work hard. Improvements in stock-breeding and in the cultivation of crops met with considerable success despite the island's natural disadvantages, and in these years Barbuda always made a profit even though not necessarily large enough to satisfy the proprietor. This progress continued, though with changes in the administration, until the early 1820s when John James, the second notable manager of Barbuda, made his home on Antigua instead of Barbuda. The economy at that time suffered

from disrupting outside influences and internal unrest, and it was unfortunate that this coincided with slack administration. Nevertheless there was no serious rebellion on Barbuda in the years before emancipation.

Both Sir William and Sir Bethell Codrington recognized that Barbuda's value to them was as a complement to their sugar estates on Antigua: thus the management of Barbuda was never separated from the administration of the Antiguan plantations. Both proprietors recognized that as absentees they could be cheated by lazy or unscrupulous employees and they were unremitting in their efforts to overcome this disadvantage. Long letters full of advice, instructions, and criticism (rarely praise!) were despatched, and full reports were expected in reply. Nor were they unprepared to finance developments in Barbuda: Sir William in particular spared neither time, energy, nor money in his efforts to supply the island with the livestock, seed, or equipment that were required. It is a tribute to the energy and conscientiousness of these two men that though Barbuda was a remote island and communications were slow and uncertain, their wishes were often made effective.

For both men, however, the crucial question was whether Barbuda made a profit. After 1779, until the early 1820s, this was usually achieved through sales of livestock, crops, and other commodities; and the estates were regularly sent stock, ground provisions, wood, lime, and other supplies which were credited to the Barbudan account. In addition, the proprietors received handsome, if irregular, amounts from salvage.

Despite these apparent successes, however, the

Codringtons rarely expressed satisfaction with their returns from Barbuda. This was in part because they expected an amount in proportion to the capital invested in stock and slaves, which was rarely achieved. They both tended to blame the managers and attorneys for this. Sir William thought that money was being diverted into the pockets of his employees, Sir Bethell was inclined to think that his instructions were just being ignored. While there may have been some truth in both these views, more substantial reasons for disappointing results were the problems caused by thin, infertile soil and frequent droughts. These difficulties only too often destroyed the hopes of the men working there. The Codringtons were liable to ignore these, while conversely placing confidence in the too sanguine accounts of Barbuda's potential given by men who had no experience of living there. In spite of their protests, when the income from wrecks is taken into account, in addition to the regular supplies sent to the estates and the profits made from outside sales, one is forced to conclude that the Codringtons did better from Barbuda than they were prepared to admit. It is perhaps significant that despite their complaints they did not wish to surrender their lease of the island.

As owners of slaves the Codringtons differed somewhat in attitude. Sir William believed in firm discipline and did not take their feelings into account as his nephew did. Sir Bethell gave much thought to their reactions. He did not force those who were well-behaved to work on the Antiguan estates, nor did he consider selling surplus slaves, though this was suggested to him. He believed in their loyalty even when his attorneys wrote disparagingly about them.



Nevertheless he did not provide a qualified doctor, priest, or teacher for the island, and in these and some other, less important, respects Barbudan slaves were worse off than their contemporaries on Antigua.

For the slaves, however, these were minor matters compared with the positive advantages they possessed on Barbuda. They were not tied to the rigorous discipline of the sugar estates, their work was varied and it often provided opportunities for initiative and sometimes for adventure. They were free to wander over the island and they could add variety to their diet. More important, they were able to develop stable relationships and have children, with some certainty that they would be able to bring them up. Apart from the experiment of 1780-1, they could be confident that their children would remain with them on the island unless they were law-breakers, and some slaves even lived to see their children and grandchildren working alongside them.

The historian cannot be indifferent to the evils of slavery, but on Barbuda it is possible to discern a slave society which was not without dignity. Their conditions were not degrading and the fact that there were so few white overseers meant that the slaves had to be trusted. It is a pity, though, that the records available, while copious, do not provide more information about how the slaves felt. There is no description of festivities, amusements or customs, which could indicate attitudes.

The feelings of the slaves, however, are revealed in two ways. First, there was a natural increase in the population which shows not only a willingness to bear children but a surprising lack of infant mortality: this is surely

evidence of psychological and physical well-being. Secondly, the slaves showed a remarkable attachment to Barbuda itself. The island provided a way of life which suited them and in the 1820s, when the will of the management was clearly to encourage transfers to Antigua, they showed a strong and united desire to remain on the island. This they regarded as the homeland which they would soon inherit.



## Appendix II

### HUMANITY, A WEST INDIAN SLAVE, 1758-1818

One of the most frustrating problems for the historian concerned with slavery is the lack of evidence about individual slaves. As with the deprived in any community, slaves were unable to provide written information about themselves, and their owners or overseers only recorded facts which would be useful for their own purposes, giving the minimum of detail. Slave lists were not compiled with any regularity in the eighteenth century and as the individuals listed usually only had one name—and that often a common one—it is difficult to identify them from list to list. The historian can, therefore, often find useful information about slaves in general, but cannot usually discover sufficient facts about a single individual to write anything of value. In the records relating to Barbuda, however, there are frequent references to one with an unusual name and a responsible job, which makes it possible to identify him reliably. It is an interesting exercise to see how far these references allow an accurate biography of an individual slave to be constructed.

The slave concerned was called Humanity and, from the date when he was first mentioned, in 1782, to the time of his death in 1818 he seems to have been one of the regular sailors on the island, usually captain of the principal sloop. He is first noted in 1782 as the captain of the Forager, and

responsible for apprehending a runaway slave called Jetway in St. John's, Antigua.<sup>1</sup> He was rewarded with the sum of £10. Unfortunately he is not mentioned in the slave list for Barbuda compiled in 1783, when only two sailors are named.<sup>2</sup> Possibly only the slaves actually present on the island were recorded and Humanity and his crew may have been at sea or based on Antigua at the time. This omission is the more unfortunate as this particular list is especially informative, giving interesting comments on the slaves' characters and showing some family relationships. However, in the accounts after this – and in subsequent slave lists – Humanity is regularly mentioned.<sup>3</sup>

The work of the sailors was of paramount importance. Barbuda relied entirely on Antigua for supplies and contacts with the outside world, and it was therefore essential that the sailors, and particularly the captains, should be trustworthy men. Not only did they have to be competent mariners and navigators but they had to be honest and reliable men, able to be trusted with valuable cargoes and mail.

There seem usually to have been two sloops used for communication with Antigua, with a total of up to fifteen sailors. Humanity was the first in the list and had a crew of six to eight slaves. When the sloops were working, all the sailors were paid a regular weekly allowance of 4s. 1½d., and Humanity and the captain of the other vessel were paid 8s. 3d.<sup>4</sup> In addition they were paid if they worked on a Sunday or at night.<sup>5</sup> Medical care was provided<sup>6</sup> and so was some sort of uniform. The accounts show purchases at somewhat irregular intervals but they seem to have been provided with shirts, blue jackets and trousers, and at times these were made on the island.<sup>7</sup>

Humanity himself seems throughout the period—though not always regularly—to have been given special favours. He was given a great coat costing £2. 9s. 6d. in February 1795, and in November, two check shirts costing 14s. 3d. each, and two pairs of duck trousers.<sup>8</sup> He was well looked after when he was unable to work for medical reasons. He was paid his regular sum of 8s. 3d. a week when he was ill for six weeks in 1798,<sup>9</sup> and in 1805 was given special care when he seems to have been seriously ill. On 2 August 1805, four yards of flannel costing £1. 12s. 0d. were provided for him and on 17 November there is an entry of £8. 2s. 0d. for 'three dozen wine given to Humanity when sick'.<sup>10</sup> He seems, too, to have been given his weekly allowance when the crew was not paid for some reason,<sup>11</sup> presumably because the sloop was laid up. Slaves were usually given special provisions at Christmas and the accounts for Barbuda show this to have been usual and for special gifts to be given to the principal slaves.<sup>12</sup> Humanity seems to have been given such presents and to have received them more frequently than other slaves of similar standing on the island. Half a barrel of pork, costing between three and four pounds, was the most normal gift but there were others.<sup>13</sup> In June 1796 a whole barrel of pork costing £8. 5s. 0d. was provided for Humanity and 'the new negroes',<sup>14</sup> in December 1805 he was given a barrel of flour (which cost £4.10s.0d.),<sup>15</sup> and in February 1808 another barrel of flour was bought for the captain of the Barbuda, presumably Humanity.<sup>16</sup> There are occasional money payments in lieu of the pork<sup>17</sup> or for some other specific reason. On 12 November 1795, for example, he was paid £1. 13s. 0d. for 'a parcell of old rope picked up at sea'.<sup>18</sup>

The sailors' usual work consisted of frequent journeys between Barbuda and Antigua but they must also have been involved with the rescue of passengers, crew, and cargoes from ships wrecked off the Barbudan coasts. They were also used in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century for transporting sugar from the Codrington estates to the ocean shipping.<sup>19</sup> In the first quarter of 1813 the principal sloop was so fully engaged in this way that she only visited Barbuda once.<sup>20</sup>

Humanity's work must, therefore, have been full of variety and sometimes of adventure, most of it unknown. One incident, however, is recorded. In 1796, on a journey from Barbuda to Antigua in the Kennet, Humanity mistook a schooner privateer for the ship of an English naval officer who was due to visit Barbuda for health reasons. He realized his mistake too late. The Kennet was captured and her crew might have been taken to the French island of Guadeloupe. Fortunately, however, the privateer was intercepted by an English ship, H.M.S. L'Aimable, and Humanity and five other slaves were removed and taken on board.<sup>21</sup> A record of 28 September 1796 shows the amount—£800—paid for the salvage of Humanity, Will, Primus, Jacob, Othello, and Simon.<sup>22</sup>

There is little further direct evidence about Humanity's activities. He continued to be listed as the first sailor up to the time of his death which is recorded in the list of 1817. There he is described as 'Male, Black, Sixty Years', and in the margin in red ink was noted, 'Died the 28th. April 1818.'<sup>23</sup> There is no record of his funeral in the accounts although in a previous year a sailor's funeral was listed in the expenses.<sup>24</sup> He may have had one son on Barbuda as a

child under one year, bearing his name, is included in the 1805 and subsequent<sup>25</sup> slave lists, but the name need not imply that Humanity was the father. There is no record of other children, but he could have had a large family, on Antigua or Barbuda. Among the slaves, Humanity must have been regarded as a wealthy man. Not only did he receive the money noted in the accounts, but probably he was also given commission by white overseers, and other slaves, for the transport of their goods to Antigua for sale.<sup>26</sup> He might well have been able to afford to purchase his freedom if he had thought it worth his while.

These records do provide some facts about the life of a highly valued slave. His job gave him responsibility over other men's lives and over valuable cargoes, and a chance to exercise considerable maritime skills in varied and sometimes dangerous situations. That he continued so long in this position is an indication that he was both competent and trustworthy. As captain of a sloop, even though a slave, he was in a highly privileged position with opportunities for disloyal activities. The records, however, show no sign of his ever having taken advantage of his position in this way: on the contrary they show he was highly thought of by his owners and their employees. It is impossible to find out, however, how he was regarded by the other slaves and there is no indication of how he himself thought about his life. It is a curious fact that slaves are rarely mentioned by name in the correspondence even though the owners must have known something about them from the lists. Humanity was the principal sailor when Christopher (Bethell) Codrington visited the West Indies in 1790-1 so he



must have met him, but no inquiry was ever made about him and there is no reference to his death in the correspondence available.<sup>27</sup>

Accepting the limitations, it is still possible to learn sufficient about particular slaves to make the exercise worthwhile. At least it shows the variety of life possible within the slave system and indicates that there was some scope for the development of individual initiative. It has to be acknowledged, however, that even when reliable identification is possible and there are sufficient references to a particular slave, one is still frustrated by the gaps in the record. There is almost no reference in these documents to show how individual slaves felt. Only when someone rebelled is there a clue—but for the vast majority who accepted the system there is no way of assessing their attitude to their lives and situation.

#### Notes to Appendix II

<sup>1</sup> GRO, D1610 A54 9 Dec. 1782.

<sup>2</sup> GRO, D1610 E17 Slave List for Barbuda 1783.

<sup>3</sup> i.e. in 1805, 1814, 1817. All GRO, D1610 E17.

<sup>4</sup> See the series of accounts, GRO, D1610 A6/1-15 and A56/4.

<sup>5</sup> e.g. GRO, D1610 A6/5, 11 Dec. 1789, A6/6, 5 July 1790; A6/6, 11 Jan. 1791.

<sup>6</sup> e.g. GRO, D1610 A6/8.

<sup>7</sup> See accounts generally. In the early nineteenth century the provision of uniform seems to have been more regular for a time—between 1807 and 1814 they received at least new jackets each year; GRO, D1610 A56/4. In 1807 and 1812 thread was purchased for making sailors' jackets; A56/4.

<sup>8</sup> GRO, D1610 A6/10.

- 9 GRO, D1610 A6/13.
- 10 GRO, D1610 A56/4.
- 11 e.g. GRO, D1610 A6/9. In the Accounts for the 4th quarter, Humanity was paid each week but not the crew.
- 12 See, for example, GRO, D1610 A6/3.
- 13 e.g., GRO, D1610 A6/4, A6/5, A6/6, A6/7.
- 14 GRO, D1610 A6/11.
- 15 GRO, D1610 A56/4.
- 16 Ibid.
- 17 e.g. GRO, D1610 A6/12.
- 18 GRO, D1610 A6/10.
- 19 GRO, D1610 C16 Athill to C.B.C., 7 June 1799; D1610  
C24 James to C.B.C., Apr. 1809.
- 20 GRO, D1610 C24 James to C.B.C., 30 Apr. 1813.
- 21 GRO, D1610 C16, Athill to C.B.C., 20 Sept. 1796.
- 22 GRO, D1610 A6/11, 28 Sept. 1796.
- 23 GRO, D1610 E17 Slave List 1817.
- 24 GRO, D1610 A56/4, 1812. The funeral expenses came to £9. 3s. 0d.
- 25 Slave Lists 1805-32. For full details see Chapter, 6, n. 85.
- 26 GRO, D1610 C30 Winter to C.B.C., 10 Apr. 1833, also James to C.B.C., 7 Sept. 1824, formerly at Dodington. These letters show the amount of produce the slaves had for sale. There are many references in the correspondence implying that the overseers were making money on the side – presumably selling goods or stock from the island on their own behalf, e.g. see Chapter 2 of this thesis, pp. 46 and 51-2.
- 27 Humanity is occasionally mentioned by name by S. Athill (especially in the account of his capture by privateers, GRO, D1610 C16) but there are no interesting comments about him.

### Appendix III

#### LIST OF THE MANAGERS OF BARBUDA AND ANTIGUAN ATTORNEYS MENTIONED IN THE TEXT 1738-1833

##### Managers (Governors) of Barbuda

Thomas Beech	Dates uncertain but he had left the island by August 1741.
Simon Punter	Dates uncertain but he was manager in 1742 and 1743.
? McNish	Murdered on Barbuda by the slaves in December 1745.
	Between 1761 and 1779 there was a series of managers all supervised by Samuel Redhead who sometimes lived on the island himself (with Sally Bullock, a Barbudan slave).
Dennis Reynolds	Principal overseer 1779-82. Manager 1782-93 (?).
William Collins	Succeeded Reynolds, dismissed 1801.
John James	Manager 1804-26 Attorney (for Barbuda) 1805-26. (Also manager and attorney for Clare Hall, Antigua 1822-6).
John Winter	Manager 1827-36 (in England c. 1828-30). Attorney for Barbuda 1830-6.

##### Attorneys principally mentioned in this thesis (apart from those who were also Managers of Barbuda)

Colonel King	Attorney for Antigua and Barbuda 1740-51 (for Barbuda only until the start of the lease to Martin and Byam 1746).
Samuel Redhead	Manager of Betty's Hope and attorney for Antigua 1751-79, and for Barbuda from the end of the lease in 1761 to 1779.
Richard Oliver	Assistant attorney 1779-81. Attorney 1781-3, for Antigua and Barbuda. He was an ancestor of V.L. Oliver, author of the <u>History of Antigua</u> .
Richard Clarke	Manager of Betty's Hope and attorney for Antigua and Barbuda, 1779-82.

Langford Lovell	Attorney specially responsible for Barbuda, 1783-92.
J.L. Walrond	Manager of Betty's Hope, 1783-97. Attorney responsible for Barbuda, 1792-7.
Samuel Athill	Attorney 1794-1805, specially responsible for Barbuda from 1797 to 1805. Also Manager of Betty's Hope from 1797.
Samuel Martin	Attorney, asked by C.B.C. to advise on Barbuda, 1809 to c. 1811.
Langford Lovell Hodge	Attorney 1805-16.
J. Osborn	Attorney for Antigua 1816-28.
R. Jarritt	Attorney for Antigua 1828-35, and for Barbuda 1828-30.

N.B. Attorney for Antigua means for the Codrington estates on Antigua.

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The most important source is the large collection of manuscripts relating to the West Indian estates of the Codrington family, until October 1980 deposited at the Gloucestershire Record Office, catalogued under the prefix D1610. These consist of title deeds, maps and plans, estate papers, accounts, legal and business documents, and correspondence. In December 1980 they were auctioned at Sotheby's on the instructions of Sir Simon Codrington, but the new owner has still not revealed his name (March 1981). The Record Office at Gloucester has a micro-film of the correspondence and accounts.

#### II

Some of the correspondence (more than 500 letters) was sold to Robson Lowe in the 1950s and these are on the micro-film 375, at the Gloucestershire Record Office.

#### III

A few documents, notably a map of Barbuda in the late 18th Century, and a letter from John James to Sir Bethell Codrington in 1824 were formerly kept at Dodrington. Presumably they were also sold in December 1980.

#### IV

Documents at the Public Record Office.

Those referred to include:

CO 700 MP/8 Antigua, Map of Barbuda 1813

CO 152/30-35, 152/47-106

CO 7/1-37, 7/38, 7/40, 7/89, 7/100

Slave Returns for Antigua, especially 1821 and 1824,

T71 246, T71 248

## V

Reference has also been made to the Library of the U.S.P.G., Tufton Street, London, where there is some information about Barbuda in the early 18th century.

## VI

The Gloucester Journal for the early 1830s.

## VII

Admiralty Charts: No. 1997 Barbuda Island, surveyed by Captain E. Barnett, 1848, published at the Hydrographic Office of the Admiralty, 1850

No. 2600 Mona Passage to Dominica (chiefly from Admiralty surveys and United States Government Charts), with additions and corrections to 1974, published at the Admiralty 1858

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