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**Slavery, War, and Britain's Atlantic Empire: Black Soldiers, Sailors,
and Rebels in the Seven Years' War**

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**Slavery, War, and Britain's Atlantic Empire: Black Soldiers, Sailors,
and Rebels in the Seven Years' War**

by

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Dedication

For my family

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It is to my family that I owe the greatest debt and it is thus to them that I dedicate this work. My parents lined the walls of our home with books and, notwithstanding their ban on books at the dinner table, fostered my love of reading from a young age. As the recipient of two doctorates, the speaker of several languages, and a poet and novelist, my father has ever served as my intellectual inspiration. My mother, an educator and elegant rhetorician, has edited drafts of my essays since middle school and has shaped me into the writer I have become. My siblings are all ambitious and accomplished and we have

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**Slavery, War, and Britain's Atlantic Empire: Black Soldiers, Sailors,
and Rebels in the Seven Years' War**

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This work is a social and cultural history of the participation of enslaved and free Blacks in the Seven Years' War in British America. It is, as well, an intellectual history of the impact of Blacks' wartime actions upon conceptions of race, slavery, and imperial identity in the British Atlantic world. In addition to offering a fresh analysis of the significance of Britain's arming of Blacks in the eighteenth century, it represents the first sustained inquiry into Blacks' experience of this global conflict. It contends that, though their rhetoric might indicate otherwise, neither race nor enslaved status in practice prevented Britons from arming Blacks. In fact, Blacks played the most essential role in martial endeavors precisely where slavery was most fundamental to society. The exigencies of worldwide war transformed a local reliance upon black soldiers for the defense of particular colonies into an imperial dependence upon them for the security of Britain's Atlantic empire. The events of the Seven Years' War convinced many Britons that black soldiers were effective and even indispensable in the empire's tropical

colonies, but they also confirmed that not all Blacks could be trusted with arms. This work examines “Tacky’s revolt,” during which more than a thousand slaves exploited the wartime diffusion of Jamaica’s defensive forces to rebel, as a battle of the Seven Years’ War. The experience of insecurity and insurrection during the conflict caused some Britons to question the imperial value of the institution of slavery and to propose that Blacks be transformed from a source of vulnerability as slaves to the key to the empire’s strength in the southern Atlantic as free subjects. While martial service offered some Blacks a means to gain income, skills, a sense of satisfaction, autonomy, community, and even (though rarely) freedom, the majority of Blacks did not personally benefit from their contributions to the British war effort. Despite the pragmatic martial antislavery rhetoric that flourished postwar, in the end the British armed Blacks to perpetuate slavery, not to eradicate it, and an ever more regimented reliance upon black soldiers became a lasting legacy of the Seven Years’ War.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Following Britain's declaration of war against France in 1756, representatives of the colonies of Georgia and South Carolina reminded the Board of Trade in London that they were menaced "not only from the Enemy from without, but also from an equally dangerous and merciless Enemy within, viz. their Negro Slaves, . . . who would doubtless be glad to purchase their Freedom at any rate or any risque."¹ British colonists in the West Indies, similarly apprehensive that their slaves would seize upon the chaos of war to overthrow their masters, alluded frequently to the dual threat posed by their domestic and foreign foes. In 1738, in the wake of an extensive aborted slave conspiracy and on the brink of war with Spain, Antigua's officials bemoaned the island's weakness and observed that they "cannot form any Shadow of Hope but that in their Present Condition they must fall a Sacrifice to any Intestine Commotion from the Slaves or give themselves up in Case of War at the first appearance of a foreign enemy."² In 1760, when more than one thousand slaves took advantage of the wartime diffusion of Jamaica's defensive forces to rebel, the island's leaders feared that the "warlike Preparations of our Neighbours" augured that the French planned to launch an invasion in hope of profiting

¹ "Representation of the Board of Trade to the King with Regard to the Indians on the back of South Carolina and Georgia," December 24, 1756, CO 5/7, ff. 208-15, The National Archives, Kew, England (hereafter TNA).

² "Humble Petition of your Majesties Council and of the General Assembly of your Majestys Island Antigua," 1738, John Yeamans Letterbooks, Shrimpton Family Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts. On the Antigua slave conspiracy of 1736, see David Barry Gaspar, *Bondmen and Rebels: A Study of Master-Slave Relations in Antigua* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985).

from Jamaica's "intestine Calamities."³ Simultaneously beset by internal and external adversaries, the white residents of Britain's majority slave societies decried their defenseless state at the commencement of each new conflict. As British America served as a battlefield for every eighteenth-century European imperial war, they had frequent occasion to fear for their safety and to express their anxiety.

Historians have taken the apprehension articulated by slaveholders together with the disapproval occasionally voiced by military commanders to mean that prior to the late eighteenth century the British were profoundly ambivalent about arming the enslaved and free Blacks who inhabited their Caribbean and mainland North American colonies. British slaveholders and the political leaders who protected their interests repeatedly described people of African descent as an enemy within and they enacted legislation to restrict slaves' mobility as well as their access to weaponry.⁴ Scholars thus have had good reason to assume that slaveholders and colonial officials were reluctant to arm slaves and that those who resided in majority slave societies in particular vehemently opposed the practice.⁵ Moreover, some military officials questioned the wisdom of

³ "The Speech of His Honor the Lieutenant Governor to the Council and Assembly at the Opening of the Session on Thursday the 18th day of September 1760," enclosed in Lieutenant Governor Henry Moore to the Board of Trade, November 7, 1760, CO 137/32, ff. 33-35, TNA.

⁴ On laws restricting slaves' access to arms, see Jerome S. Handler, "Freedmen and Slaves in the Barbados Militia," *Journal of Caribbean History* 19 (May 1984): 7-8; Elsa V. Goveia, *The West Indian Slave Laws of the Eighteenth Century* (Barbados: Caribbean Universities Press, 1970), 18, 40, 45, 46; and Peter M. Voelz, *Slave and Soldier: The Military Impact of Blacks in the Colonial Americas* (New York: Garland, 1993), 353-57.

⁵ David Brion Davis notes that "slaveholding colonists universally deplored the practice of arming blacks, whether slave or free, and often hoped that a sense of common peril would give force to an understood taboo." David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), 74. Philip D. Morgan and Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy remark that "slaveowner opposition to the arming of slaves was always intense in the Americas." Philip D. Morgan and Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, "Arming Slaves in the American Revolution," in *Arming Slaves from Classical Times to the Modern Age*, ed. Christopher Leslie Brown and Philip D. Morgan (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 182. Andrew O'Shaughnessy observes, "The opposition of white colonists to the

incorporating men of African descent into Britain's armed forces. In a 1757 letter condemning the French practice of employing enslaved Blacks aboard privateers, Rear Admiral Thomas Frankland, commander in chief of the British naval squadron at the Leeward Islands, remarked to Secretary of the Admiralty John Cleveland that he "could not look upon that Race to be proper Instruments for carrying on war among Civilized People."⁶ Sir Jeffery Amherst, commander in chief of the British forces in North America, counseled the senior officer of the 1762 campaign against French Martinique not to employ as soldiers the hundreds of enslaved black West Indians who were to accompany the British army, as he did not "think it can any wise Answer to Arm any of these People."⁷ Slaveholders' voluble distress over their vulnerability and military leaders' occasional expressions of doubt over the advisability of arming Blacks have convinced historians that until the late eighteenth century, the British generally refrained from deploying men of African descent as soldiers.

According to scholars, while the French staffed their colonial militias and the runaway-slave-hunting *maréchaussée* almost entirely with free men of color, and the Spanish formed independent *pardo* and *moreno* militia companies complete with officers of African descent and awarded them special privileges and exemptions in recognition of their fidelity to the crown, until the last decades of the eighteenth century the British refused to entrust their security to Blacks. When the British did arm Blacks, free or enslaved but enslaved in particular, they did so in moments of abject crisis and only with

use of black troops [during the American Revolutionary War] was not an effort to sabotage the British war for America but a consequence of their traditional antipathy toward arming large numbers of blacks." Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 181.

⁶ Frankland's Reply to Mr. Thomas' Letter of 25 February 1757, July 20, 1757, ADM 1/306, TNA.

regret.⁸ These historians consider the American and the French Revolutionary Wars as watershed events during which British officials, due to exigent circumstances, became far more amenable to arming people of African descent than they ever previously had been.⁹

⁷ Sir Jeffrey Amherst to Robert Monckton, November 9, 1761, WO 34/56, ff. 65-68, TNA.

⁸ Though the British did indeed lag behind the French and Spanish in the use of free and enslaved black soldiers, this may be attributed more to the decentralized nature of the British Empire than to any particularly vehement ideological opposition to black soldiers on the part of the British. In British slave societies, colonial assemblies were dominated by slaveholders who preferred to retain their slaves on their plantations, where they produced higher profits in the form of cash crops than they could garner by being hired out to the colony as soldiers. Thus, it was only when planters feared the destruction of their property that they were willing to take the pay cut of arming their slaves to defend it. On the notion that the British were comparatively reluctant to arm Blacks, see O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided*, 174-75 and Voelz, *Slave and Soldier*, 81, 116, 130, 153. On the French arming of Blacks, see Laurent DuBois, "Citizen Soldiers: Emancipation and Military Service in the Revolutionary French Caribbean," in *Arming Slaves from Classical Times to the Modern Age*, ed. Brown and Morgan; John Garrigus, *Before Haiti: Race and Citizenship in French Saint-Domingue* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006); David Geggus, "The Arming of Slaves in the Haitian Revolution," in *Arming Slaves from Classical Times to the Modern Age*, ed. Brown and Morgan; Stewart King, *Blue Coat or Powdered Wig: Free People of Color in Pre-Revolutionary Saint Domingue* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001); and Shelby T. McCloy, *The Negro in the French West Indies* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1966). On the Spanish, see Christon Archer, *The Army in Bourbon Mexico, 1760-1810* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1977); Herbert S. Klein, "The Free Colored Militia of Cuba, 1568-1868," *Caribbean Studies* 6 (1966): 17-27; Allan J. Kuethe, "The Status of the Free Pardo in the Disciplined Militia of New Granada," *Journal of Negro History* 56 (April 1971): 105-17; Jane Landers, "Transforming Bondsmen into Vassals: Arming Slaves in Colonial Spanish America," in *Arming Slaves from Classical Times to the Modern Age*, ed. Brown and Morgan; Matthew Restall, "Black Conquistadors: Armed Africans in Early Spanish America," *The Americas* 57 (October 2000): 171-205; Ben Vinson, "Articulating Space: The Free-Colored Military Establishment in Colonial Mexico from the Conquest to Independence," *Callaloo* 27 (2004): 150-71; Ben Vinson, *Bearing Arms for his Majesty: The Free-Colored Militia in Colonial Mexico* (Stanford, 2001); and Ben Vinson, "Race and Badge: Free-Colored Soldiers in the Colonial Mexican Militia," *The Americas* 56 (April 2000): 471-96. For a general study of black soldiers in the New World, see Voelz, *Slave and Soldier*.

⁹ Morgan and O'Shaughnessy characterize the American Revolution as a time of "radical changes" and a "decisive turning point in the arming of slaves in the Americas." Morgan and O'Shaughnessy, "Arming Slaves in the American Revolution," in *Arming Slaves from Classical Times to the Modern Age*, ed. Brown and Morgan, 182. Sylvia Frey maintains, "The use of slave labor in a military capacity was also common among European powers since the seventeenth century, particularly in the Caribbean and Brazil, where shortages of manpower forced colonial nations to recruit slaves for various military functions. The dangerous expedient of arming slaves was, however, generally eschewed until 1795, when the problem of West Indian defense forced the British to organize black companies." Sylvia Frey, *Water from the Rock: Black Resistance in a Revolutionary Age* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 70. On the participation of Blacks in the American Revolution, see Douglas R. Egerton, *Death or Liberty: African Americans and Revolutionary America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009); Philip S. Foner, *Blacks in the American Revolution* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1975); Frey, *Water from the Rock*; Woody Holton, *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the Making of the Revolution in Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Rhys Isaac, *Landon Carter's Uneasy Kingdom: Revolution and Rebellion on a Virginia Plantation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Sidney Kaplan and Emma Kaplan, *The Black Presence in the Era of the American Revolution* (Amherst: University of

In the standard narrative of Britain's arming of Blacks in the Americas, the Seven Years' War serves merely as a prologue to the age of revolutions which, marking "a sharp break from the past," "led to unrivaled innovation and improvisation in the military roles allowed to enslaved men in the Americas."¹⁰ But historians have yet to trace in detail the earlier history of Blacks' martial efforts on behalf of the British Empire in the Americas. The grand scale of black military participation in these late eighteenth-century struggles could not have occurred without, and thus cannot be fully understood outside the context of, the foundation of black martial service established during the Seven Years' War of the mid-eighteenth century. When considered within this larger context, John Murray, Earl of Dunmore's famous 1775 Proclamation offering freedom and protection to those escaped slaves of American rebels who were willing to take up arms against their former masters does not seem a radical departure from the past, but instead a logical step along Britain's path of increasing dependence upon black soldiers to secure its Atlantic

Massachusetts Press, 1989); Gary Nash, *The Forgotten Fifth: African Americans in the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006); O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided*, 174-81; Robert Olwell, *Masters, Slaves, and Subjects: The Culture of Power in the South Carolina Low Country, 1740-1790* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 226-68; Cassandra Pybus, *Epic Journeys of Freedom: Runaway Slaves of the American Revolution and their Global Quest for Liberty* (Boston: Beacon, 2006); Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961); and Simon Schama, *Rough Crossings: Britain, the Slaves and the American Revolution* (New York: Ecco, 2006). On the participation of Blacks in the French Revolutionary Wars, in addition to the works on the French arming of Blacks listed in note 8, see David Barry Gaspar and David Patrick Geggus, eds., *A Turbulent Time: The French Revolution and the Greater Caribbean* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1997) and David Geggus, *Slavery, War, and Revolution: The British Occupation of Saint Domingue, 1793-1798* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982).

¹⁰ Brown, "The Arming of Slaves in Comparative Perspective," in *Arming Slaves from Classical Times to the Modern Age*, ed. Brown and Morgan, 338. While Morgan and O'Shaughnessy argue that the development of ad hoc black corps during the Seven Years' War served as a precedent for the American Revolution, they underplay the extent and significance of free and enslaved Blacks' service. This is no doubt due to their necessary reliance upon published accounts of the Seven Years' War, which impart only traces of the tale. Morgan and O'Shaughnessy, "Arming Slaves in the American Revolution," in *Arming Slaves from Classical Times to the Modern Age*, ed. Brown and Morgan, 186-87.

empire.¹¹ This path culminated in the development of the British West India regiments, permanent companies of enslaved black soldiers that were formed in the 1790s.¹² British officials' successes and failures in enlisting the aid of people of African descent during the Seven Years' War shaped the realm of possibility open to those who commanded, as well as those who fought, in the decades that followed.

The vast scale of operations during the Seven Years' War occasioned the involvement of an unprecedented number of men of African descent in British military endeavors; it thus served as a moment of experimentation in Britain's recruitment and deployment of enslaved and free black soldiers. But this is not to say that the steps the British took to arm Blacks during the Seven Years' War constituted a drastic divergence from previous practice. Their avowed opposition notwithstanding, the British had relied upon black soldiers to defend their plantation colonies since the seventeenth century. Living amidst black majorities alarmed British inhabitants of slave societies, but it also left them with little choice but to depend upon a select few of the men they feared for their security. Though their rhetoric might on occasion indicate otherwise, neither race nor enslaved status in practice proved a barrier to Britons' arming of people of African descent. In fact, enslaved Blacks played the most essential role in the security of those colonies in which slavery was most fundamental to society and in which armed slaves seemed to pose the gravest threat to their owners. During the Seven Years' War, British metropolitan officials built upon an existing local dependence on Blacks for military

¹¹ On Dunmore's proclamation, see Frey, *Water From the Rock*, 63 and Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution*, 20.

¹² On the British West India Regiments, see Roger Norman Buckley, *Slaves in Red Coats: The British West India Regiments, 1795-1815* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979).

defense when they sought colonial assistance in executing the most expansive offensive campaigns the Americas had yet experienced.

In this first global imperial contest, the British engaged the French, and by 1762 the Spanish as well, in Europe, India, the Philippine archipelago, North America, the West Indies, and West Africa. Though the Seven Years' War occasioned the worldwide deployment of unprecedented numbers of regular soldiers, the British military continued to rely upon colonial assemblies to raise additional corps staffed by local residents.¹³ In the northern colonies of mainland North America, these took the form of multiracial provincial companies, of which enslaved and free black men formed a small component. In the southern mainland colonies, slaves served the British war effort as soldiers alongside white men and as military laborers known as pioneers. In the West Indies, only Barbados was in a position to furnish the British army with substantial numbers of white volunteers. Jamaica and the Leeward Islands instead contributed thousands of enslaved and free Blacks to serve as both armed combatants and pioneers. People of African descent thus played the most central role in the British campaigns of the Seven Years' War in the regions where slavery was most essential to society and where Britons had long relied upon them for their defense. Like white provincials and Native American

¹³ On the increasing level of metropolitan military involvement in the Americas, as well as the enduring need for local assistance, see Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), 67-68, 213-14, 221-31, 454-55 and John Shy, "Armed Force in Colonial North America: New Spain, New France, and Anglo-America," in *Against All Enemies: Interpretations of American Military History from Colonial Times to the Present*, ed. Kenneth J. Hagan and William R. Roberts (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1986), 8-9.

auxiliaries in mainland North America and Indian sepoys in South Asia, enslaved and free black recruits became foot soldiers in Britain's global war for empire.¹⁴

Though people of African descent fought alongside British, French, Spanish, and Native American warriors in the Atlantic theater of the Seven Years' War, we know little of what motivated them to join the fray or how they interpreted their contributions.

Despite the recent upsurge of interest in this first worldwide war, as yet no study has taken as its focus the significance of the Seven Years' War for enslaved and free Blacks in the British Atlantic world.¹⁵ One possible explanation for this lacuna is that most

¹⁴ Commenting upon a British campaign against Manila during the Seven Years' War, which was manned by British regulars, East India Company artillery and infantry, African slave soldiers, and Indian sepoys, P.J. Marshall notes that "the composition of the Manila force may have been an extreme example, but it was indicative of problems facing British commanders all over the world. British troops were likely to be in very short supply and men of all sorts had to be raised to supplement them." P.J. Marshall, *The Making and Unmaking of Empires: Britain, India, and America, c. 1750-1783* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), 61.

¹⁵ A number of articles, however, have examined the participation of people of African descent in the Seven Years' War in particular regions of British North America. See Larry G. Bowman, "Virginia's Use of Blacks in the French and Indian War," *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, 53 (1970): 57-63; Scott Padeni, "The Role of Blacks in New York's Northern Campaigns of the Seven Years' War," *Bulletin of the Fort Ticonderoga Museum* 16 (1999): 153-69; and Daniel E. Walker, "Colony Versus Crown: Raising Black Troops for the British Siege on Havana, 1762," *Journal of Caribbean History* 33 (1999): 74-83. For recent works on the experiences of British regulars and British American provincial soldiers in North America, see Fred Anderson, *A People's Army: Massachusetts Soldiers and Society in the Seven Years' War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1984); Stephen Brumwell, *Redcoats: The British Soldier and War in the Americas, 1755-1763* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2002); Harold Selesky, *War and Society in Colonial Connecticut* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990); James Titus, *The Old Dominion at War: Society, Politics, and Warfare in Late Colonial Virginia* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991); and Peter Way, "Rebellion of the Regulars: Working Soldiers and the Mutiny of 1763-1764," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 57 (October 2000): 761-92. On Native Americans' involvement in the Seven Years' War as well as Pontiac's War that followed, see David Dixon, *Never Come to Peace Again: Pontiac's Uprising and the Fate of the British Empire in North America* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2005); Gregory Evans Dowd, *War Under Heaven: Pontiac, the Indian Nations, and the British Empire* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004); Francis Jennings, *Empire of Fortune: Crowns, Colonies, and Tribes in the Seven Years War in America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1988); Michael McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples, 1724-1774* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992); James Merrell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1999); Jane Merritt, *At the Crossroads: Indians and Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier, 1700-1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Timothy J. Shannon, *Indians and Colonists at the Crossroads of Empire: The Albany Congress of 1754* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000); and Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Republics, and Empires in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-*

scholars of the Seven Years' War in North America have focused their attention upon the mainland colonies, where, given the reigning assumption that the British were traditionally averse to arming Blacks, they may perhaps be excused for supposing that enslaved and free Blacks played only a very minor role in the struggle.¹⁶ The West Indian theater of the conflict, where the British deployed Blacks in the greatest numbers and in regiments of their own, has not received sustained analysis for over half a century.¹⁷ This work is one of the few to fully integrate Britain's military efforts in its Caribbean and mainland North American colonies during the Seven Years' War.¹⁸ In addition to offering a fresh analysis of the extent and significance of Britain's arming of

1815 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991). For recent general histories of the war in North America, see Anderson, *Crucible of War*; Julie Flavell and Stephen Conway, ed., *Britain and America Go to War: The Impact of War and Warfare in Anglo-America, 1754-1815* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004); William M. Fowler, Jr., *Empires at War: The French and Indian War and the Struggle for North America* (New York: Walker & Company, 2005); Warren R. Hofstra, ed., *Cultures in Conflict: The Seven Years' War in North America* (Lanham, Md.: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007); Robert Leckie, *"A Few Acres of Snow": The Saga of the French and Indian Wars* (New York: John Wiley & Sons, 1999); Frank McLynn, *1759: The Year Britain Became Master of the World* (London: Jonathan Cape, 2004); William R. Nester, *The First Global War: Britain, France, and the Fate of North America, 1756-1775* (Westport, Conn.: Praeger, 2001); Tom Pocock, *Battle for Empire: The Very First World War, 1756-63* (London: Michael O' Mara, 1998); and Matt Schumann and Karl Schweizer, *The Seven Years War: A Transatlantic History* (New York: Routledge, 2008).

¹⁶ In explaining why he opted not to include the experiences of enslaved and free Blacks and women in his epic study of the Seven Years' War in North America, Fred Anderson observed, "Once the universalizing rhetoric of rights began to illuminate those elements of society and culture – the subordinated place of slaves and blacks and women, for example – at odds with the emerging political culture, the narrative moment would have arrived to discuss groups that had largely been absent from the story of the imperial war, but who would become more significant to the story of the Revolution." Fred Anderson, "The Seven Years' War: A Provincial's View," *Canadian Journal of History* 35 (December 2000): 504. I hope that by focusing my attention upon people of African descent, I have been able to shed some light upon their mid-eighteenth-century "story of . . . imperial war."

¹⁷ Richard Pares, *War and Trade in the West Indies, 1739-1763* (1936; repr., London: F. Cass, 1963) and Marshall Smelser, *The Campaign for the Sugar Islands, 1759: A Study of Amphibious Warfare* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955) remain the best accounts of the British expeditions in the French Caribbean during the Seven Years' War. On the 1762 British siege of Havana, see Francis Russell Hart, *The Siege of Havana, 1762* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1931) and David Syrett, ed., *The Siege and Capture of Havana, 1762* (London: Navy Records Society, 1970).

¹⁸ While Fred Anderson examines the Seven Years' War in the West Indies as well as in mainland North America, the latter remains the focus of his attention. Anderson, *Crucible of War*. On Britain's martial exploits in both the Caribbean and mainland North America during the American Revolution, see Morgan

men of African descent in the mid-eighteenth century, it represents the first history of enslaved and free Blacks' experience of the Seven Years' War in British America.

People of African descent advanced the British war effort in the Atlantic theater of the Seven Years' War as both laborers and soldiers. It is of course unsurprising that Blacks toiled on behalf of the British army. To afford black workers' contribution to the British war effort its proper significance, however, it is essential to recall that mid-eighteenth-century European-style warfare employed many more laborers than warriors. Siege warfare required the sustained effort of thousands of men and the vast majority of men on the battlefield engaged in manual labor rather than combat. While the courage and intrepidity of musket-toting regulars was touted in the aftermath of victory, commanders knew that neither they nor their arms would have made it to the field of battle without the toil of the auxiliaries. Nor would they have had the batteries, bulwarks, forts, or trenches necessary for their defensive or offensive maneuvers without the efforts of such men. The British army regularly employed North American provincial soldiers – no matter their ethnic background – as pioneers and transport troops in the campaigns in the mainland, thus freeing the better-trained British regulars for battle.¹⁹ As Fred Anderson has eloquently argued, these provincial soldiers claimed equal credit with the

and O'Shaughnessy, "Arming Slaves in the American Revolution," in *Arming Slaves from Classical Times to the Modern Age*, ed. Brown and Morgan and O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided*.

¹⁹ John Campbell, 4th Earl of Loudoun, commander in chief of the British forces in North America, commented in 1757 that "the Troops furnished from the Provinces, are in general, Officers and Soldiers, the lowest dregs of the People, on which no dependence can be had, for the defence of any particular Post by themselves, but where there is a sufficient force of regular Troops to make the Stand, may be usefully employed with an Army in the desert back parts of the Country, . . . by preventing the wearing out the Troops before they come to an Action." Loudoun to the Earl of Holderness and William Pitt, August 16-October 17, 1757, LO 4239A, Loudoun Papers, Huntington Library, San Marino, CA. See also Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 228-29 and John Shy, "Armed Force in Colonial North America: New Spain, New France, and Anglo-America," in *Against All Enemies: Interpretations of American Military History from Colonial Times to the Present*, ed. Hagan and Roberts, 8-9.

British regulars for success in the Seven Years' War – notwithstanding their common deployment as unarmed auxiliaries.²⁰ Thus, whether technically civilians or soldiers, most Blacks, like most men in general, served the army as laborers and as such they helped to ensure the triumph of the British Empire at mid-century. Still, it was black men's service as armed combatants that had the potential to contradict the eighteenth-century conceptions of race and masculinity that buttressed the institution of slavery. Thus, though black laborers proved critical to Britain's mid-century martial success, it is armed black men who often receive particular attention in the pages that follow.

Well aware of their West Indian colonies' military reliance upon men of African descent, mid-eighteenth-century imperial strategists recruited enslaved and free Blacks to staff Britain's expeditions against France and Spain in the Caribbean. British West Indian colonists had depended upon enslaved and free black soldiers for their military defense since the seventeenth-century turn to sugar production and the subsequent Africanization of the labor force. In 1750, 10,000 Whites and 73,000 enslaved Blacks inhabited the Leeward Islands. That same year, Jamaica's 9,000 Whites lived alongside 122,000 slaves. Barbados had the greatest proportion of white inhabitants, with 15,000 Whites, 2,000 free people of color, and 64,000 slaves residing in the island in the 1780s.²¹ Though colonial assemblies passed deficiency acts requiring a minimum proportion of white men to reside on an estate, planters usually opted to pay a fine rather than comply

²⁰ Anderson, *Crucible of War*.

²¹ Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492-1800* (New York: Verso, 1997), 405-6.

with the law.²² Lacking white men, individual planters and colonial officials turned to select enslaved and free Blacks for their security.

In addition to undertaking the manual labor essential to military endeavors, enslaved and free black West Indians served both particular slaveholders and the colonial government as soldiers during imperial wars and slave revolts. Slaves constructed fortifications and served as pioneers for the local militia and the regiments of British regulars stationed in the islands. Free black men served in the island's militia companies and may have independently contracted with planters to guard their estates. Slaveholders armed their slaves to protect their plantations and hired them to the colonial government to staff the ad hoc martial corps raised in times of crisis.²³ In Jamaica, planters and political leaders relied upon the Maroons – free descendants of escaped African slaves who lived in independent communities in the highlands – as a military force. During the first four decades of the eighteenth century, Jamaica's white colonists engaged the Maroons in a bitter guerrilla war, but, despite the aid of numerous enslaved and free black soldiers, they proved unable to pacify them. Finally, in 1739, the Jamaica Assembly signed peace treaties with the two main bands of Maroons. In exchange for recognition of their freedom and land, the Maroons agreed to protect Jamaica's colonists in the event of a foreign invasion or slave insurrection.²⁴ By the mid-eighteenth century,

²² David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1966), 137 and O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided*, 9.

²³ Gaspar, *Bondmen and Rebels*, 114-24; Pares, *War and Trade in the West Indies*, 227-64; and Voelz, *Slave and Soldier*, 23-76, 93-144.

²⁴ On Jamaica's Maroons, see Mavis Campbell, *The Maroons of Jamaica, 1655-1796: A History of Resistance, Collaboration and Betrayal* (Granby, Mass.: Bergin & Garvey Publishers, Inc., 1988); Michael Craton, *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 61-96, 211-23; Alvin O. Thompson, *Flight to Freedom: African Runaways and Maroons in*

few Britons, whether resident in the Caribbean or in London, doubted the necessity of arming enslaved and free Blacks in the West Indies. Even in the wake of the most extensive and damaging slave revolts the British experienced during the eighteenth century, Jamaica's colonists debated not the wisdom of their military reliance upon black soldiers, but instead which particular men of African descent had proven the most advantageous to arm.

In South Carolina, as in the Caribbean, slaves performed military labor and served as armed combatants in the militia as well as in ad hoc corps in times of crisis. South Carolinian slaveholders, however, were not as sanguine as their West Indian counterparts about employing enslaved Blacks as soldiers. By the 1720s, slaves composed two-thirds of South Carolina's non-indigenous population and the majority of the colony's slaves lived in parishes that were more than sixty percent black. By 1760, the population of all but three of South Carolina's rural parishes was seventy percent enslaved.²⁵ As in the West Indies, South Carolina's few white residents found themselves surrounded by slaves. In 1774, upon moving to the Lowcountry plantation that would become his new home, Scotsman George Ogilvie remarked, "I slept last night (for the first time in my life) at least four miles distant from any white Person – like the Tyrant of some Asiatick Isle the only free Man in an island of Slaves."²⁶ South Carolina's black majority had

the Americas (Kingston, Jamaica: University of West Indies Press, 2006); and Philip Wright, "War and Peace with the Maroons, 1730-1739," *Caribbean Quarterly* 16 (1970): 5-27.

²⁵ Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 95. On slavery in South Carolina in the early eighteenth century, see Alan Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670-1717* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002) and Peter Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1974).

²⁶ Quoted in Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 95, 100.

long encouraged colonial officials to turn to black men for their security. Hundreds of armed slaves fought on behalf of the colony in intermittent frontier skirmishes with Spanish Florida as well as in the Tuscarora and Yamasee Indian Wars of the early eighteenth century. Though the 1739 Stono slave rebellion heightened South Carolinians' trepidation about arming slaves, the colony nevertheless continued to rely upon numerous black soldiers.²⁷ Despite vociferously lamenting the likelihood of falling victim to their slaves, during the Seven Years' War, South Carolinians were the mainland colonists most likely to arm them for war.

The slaveholders of the Chesapeake were even more reluctant than their southern neighbors to deploy Blacks as soldiers, though weapons inevitably found their way into enslaved and free black men's hands in times of crisis. In the 1720s, enslaved Blacks constituted about a quarter of the Chesapeake's population. In 1750, only one of Virginia's counties was more than sixty percent black.²⁸ Upon leaving South Carolina for Virginia in 1773, New Englander Josiah Quincy observed, "you see husbandmen, yeoman, and white laborers scattered through the country, instead of herds of negroes and tawny slaves."²⁹ Mid-eighteenth-century Virginia remained a multiracial society where small farms and large plantations coexisted. Colonial officials were thus in a position to

²⁷ Benjamin Quarles notes that, "On December 11, 1740, the assembly ordered 'that the law for encouraging armed Negroes, and for making them useful for the defense of the province be speedily revised'" and that thereafter, "a permanent damper fell on Negro enlistment in the militia." Benjamin Quarles, "The Colonial Militia and Negro Manpower," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 45 (March 1959): 650. Similarly, John Shy maintains that "as the ratio of slaves to whites grew rapidly, and especially after a serious slave insurrection in 1739, Carolinians no longer dared arm Negroes." John Shy, "A New Look at Colonial Militia," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 20 (April 1963): 181. I have found that despite colonial officials' heightened trepidation concerning arming slaves, they nevertheless enlisted enslaved Blacks in the militia during the Seven Years' War. On the arming of Blacks on the border between South Carolina and Spanish Florida, see also Jane Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999) and Wood, *Black Majority*.

²⁸ Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 95, 100.

at least attempt to restrict black men to non-combat roles in Virginia's armed forces. Scores of the Chesapeake's enslaved and free black men served the British regulars and provincials as pioneers, drummers, trumpeters, and officers' servants during the Seven Years' War. Still, the legal restrictions on their armed service notwithstanding, a small number of free black men enlisted as soldiers in the Chesapeake's provincial companies and enslaved and free black support troops took up arms in emergency situations.

Enslaved and free black soldiers composed a small percentage of the northern mainland colonies' multiracial militia and provincial companies during the Seven Years' War. Though a number of slaves enlisted in the armed forces either in service to or in defiance of their owners, northern enslaved Blacks usually served the British military as artisans, laborers, boatmen, and wagon drivers and not as combatants. In 1700, 54,000 Whites and 3,500 Blacks inhabited the mid-Atlantic colonies of Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and New York; by 1770, 556,000 Whites lived alongside 35,000 Blacks. Ninety-two thousand Whites and 1,700 Blacks lived in New England in 1700; by 1770, 581,000 Whites and 15,500 Blacks inhabited the region.³⁰ As they constituted between one and five percent of the population in the mid-Atlantic and New England colonies, Britons resident in the northern colonies had little need to arm slaves or to fear weapons in the hands of either enslaved or free men of African descent. Though numerous black men served as soldiers in the North's provincial forces, the majority of northern people of African descent who contributed to the British war effort did so as craftsmen, laborers, and transport troops.

²⁹ Quoted in Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint*, 100.

³⁰ Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery*, 460.

Though thousands of men of African descent served the British army as both soldiers and laborers on land, it was as sailors aboard private ships of war and naval vessels that most enslaved and free Blacks participated in Britain's waging of the Seven Years' War. Black seamen had long secured berths aboard the British ships that plied the Atlantic and they found increased opportunities for employment in times of war.³¹ Enslaved Blacks built the Royal Navy dockyards at Antigua and Jamaica and cleaned and repaired the naval vessels that sheltered there. Artisans and sailors of African descent constructed, maintained, and manned the ships of war that guarded the British forts on Lake George and Lake Ontario. Both enslaved and free black sailors staffed the privateers and naval vessels that shielded British America from foreign invasion while also safeguarding its trade and thwarting that of its enemies. Mariners of African descent bore small arms and manned great guns in battles on land as well as at sea. Seamen played a central role in the amphibious assaults and sieges of coastal fortifications that proved central to British military strategy in the mid-eighteenth century.³² Despite the

³¹ On black mariners in the eighteenth-century British Atlantic world, see W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997); W. Jeffrey Bolster, "An Inner Diaspora: Black Sailors Making Selves," in *Through a Glass Darkly: Reflections on Personal Identity in Early America*, ed. Ronald Hoffman, Mechal Sobel, and Frederika J. Teute (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 419-48; Emma Christopher, *Slave Ship Sailors and their Captive Cargoes, 1730-1807* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Ira Dye, "Early American Merchant Seafarers," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 120 (October 15, 1976): 331-60; James Farr, *Black Odyssey: The Seafaring Traditions of Afro-Americans* (New York: P. Lang, 1989); Charles Foy, "Seeking Freedom in the Atlantic World, 1713-1783," *Early American Studies* 4 (Spring 2006): 46-77; Michael Jarvis, "Maritime Masters and Seafaring Slaves in Bermuda, 1680-1783," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 59 (July 2002): 585-622; and Julius Scott, "Crisscrossing Empires: Ships, Sailors, and Resistance in the Lesser Antilles in the Eighteenth Century" in *The Lesser Antilles in the Age of European Expansion*, ed. Robert L. Paquette and Stanley L. Engerman (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), 128-43.

³² On Britain's mid-eighteenth-century amphibious assaults, see Julian S. Corbett, *England in the Seven Years War: A Study in Combined Strategy*, v. 1-2 (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1918); Michael Duffy, *Soldiers, Sugar, and Seapower: The British Expeditions to the West Indies and the War Against Revolutionary France* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); and Richard Harding, *Amphibious*

fact that they routinely wielded weapons, few eighteenth-century Britons questioned the place of Blacks in British naval endeavors.³³

Over the course of the Seven Years' War, the exigencies of global war transformed a local reliance upon black soldiers for the defense of particular colonies into an imperial dependence upon black soldiers for the security of Britain's Atlantic empire. Many British imperial strategists and military commanders became convinced of the effectiveness and indispensability of black soldiers, especially in the empire's tropical colonies. It is no coincidence that it was British officials who had fought alongside Blacks during the Seven Years' War's Caribbean campaigns – men like Colonel Archibald Campbell, who became governor of Jamaica in 1781 and General Sir John Vaughn, who commanded the British forces in the West Indies in the early 1790s – who supported the formation of permanent companies of black soldiers in the late eighteenth century.³⁴ In proving themselves loyal and reliable defenders and extenders of empire, Blacks pushed the British Empire further along its path of increasing military reliance upon soldiers of African descent. Though the British had once trailed their French and Spanish rivals in the deployment of black warriors, by the turn of the nineteenth century the British established themselves as the most extensive employers of enslaved black soldiery of all the European powers.

Warfare in the Eighteenth Century: The British Expeditions to the West Indies, 1740-42 (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1991).

³³ Black privateersmen may, however, have caused some measure of concern to eighteenth-century Britons. N.A.M. Rodger contends that as both the British and the French viewed privateers as akin to pirates, “to encourage blacks to engage in this sort of warfare seemed to the British dangerously near to encouraging that general assault upon white society in the [West Indian] islands, a slave rebellion – a prospect equally disastrous for either side. So they reacted fiercely when they took black or mulatto seamen out of privateers.” N.A.M. Rodger, *The Wooden World: An Anatomy of the Georgian Navy* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1986), 160.

The growing British imperial conviction of the worth of black soldiers set the stage for a number of conflicts that would come to the fore during the American and French Revolutionary wars. In the West Indies, where black soldiers had played the most vital role in the British war effort during the Seven Years' War, imperial and colonial officials alike came to describe black soldiers not as anathema or as regrettable necessities, but rather as potent martial weapons. Imperial and colonial leaders disagreed, however, about the ways in which black soldiers should be deployed in the Caribbean. British West Indian colonists did not look kindly upon ceding control over black soldiers to the London ministers and military commanders who had become their enthusiasts. Britons with interests in the West Indies preferred to retain their able-bodied black men for their own defense and not to furnish them to help conquer sugar islands that could become their commercial rivals – a pattern already evident in the reluctance of planters to encourage Jamaica's free black soldiers to participate in the 1762 siege of Havana. When Jamaica's colonists protested the formation of the British West India Regiments in the 1790s, they protested not the arming of slaves, but instead their lack of sovereignty over the permanent corps of enslaved black soldiers active in their region.³⁵

Though both Caribbean and southern mainland colonists continued to describe themselves as beset by internal and external enemies, it was only in the West Indies that colonists came to describe at least some men of African descent as their protectors and not their foes. Unlike their Caribbean counterparts, British colonists in the southern mainland colonies did not bring their rhetoric concerning the arming of people of African

³⁴ Buckley, *Slaves in Red Coats*, 10-19 and O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided*, 178-9.

³⁵ Buckley, *Slaves in Red Coats*, 40-42.

descent into concert with their practice. Southern mainland slaveholders and political leaders lavished no praise on the black men who had helped to secure Britain's conquest of the continent. Thus, when the Americans rebelled against imperial rule in the early 1770s, British imperial and military officials' comfort with the deployment of black soldiers led them to clash with the slaveholders of the southern mainland colonies. Proposals like Lieutenant Colonel Archibald Campbell's to hire 1,400 "Stout Active Negro's" from the British sugar islands to fight against the American rebels on the continent struck fear in the hearts of southern slaveholders.³⁶ Southern colonists greeted with even greater apprehension suggestions such as William Henry Lyttelton's – who, as governor of Jamaica in 1762 had sent almost 2,000 enslaved and free Blacks to assist in the British siege of Havana – that American slaves be encouraged to take up arms against their masters.³⁷ When John Murray, earl of Dunmore and governor of Virginia, offered liberty and arms to slaves who fled their patriot owners, southern slaveholders became convinced that defection from the British Empire was the only means of preserving their lives and livelihoods.³⁸

If the experience of the Seven Years' War persuaded many Britons of the effectiveness of black soldiers, it also confirmed that they could not entrust all slaves with arms. During the war, some enslaved Blacks took advantage of the demography of majority slave societies, not to serve the British Empire, but instead to undermine its military might and its economic mainstay by rebelling. In 1760, more than one thousand

³⁶ Lieutenant Colonel Archibald Campbell to Lord George Germain, January 16, 1776, vol. 4, George Germain Papers, William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, MI.

³⁷ Frey, *Water from the Rock*, 67.

of Jamaica's slaves seized upon the wartime distraction of their masters and dispersal of the island's defensive forces to rebel. A series of uprisings quickly enveloped the island and it took over a year of combined efforts of British regulars and militiamen, Royal Navy seamen, Maroons, and enslaved and free black soldiers before the lieutenant governor could declare the revolts fully suppressed. Aware that the diversion of imperial war prevented the immediate subjugation of the rebels and conscious that the revolts left Jamaica especially exposed to the threat of foreign invasion, British contemporaries understood the 1760 slave uprisings as an episode of the Seven Years' War. That the empire's most lucrative colony was imperiled would have been readily apparent both to imperial ministers and to the readers of British and North American newspapers, which printed accounts of the slave insurrections in Jamaica alongside reports of imperial battles in other exotic locales.

Interestingly, attention to the wartime context of Jamaica's slave unrest reveals that historians have erred in giving credence to slaveholders' interpretation of the 1760 uprisings as the result of a unified, long-planned conspiracy on the part of their slaves as well as to slaveholders' avowals that they were unwilling to arm their slaves. Modern scholars have embraced Jamaican colonial administrator and historian Edward Long's narrative of a vast, island-wide plot because they have found in it a means to celebrate enslaved Blacks' indomitable spirit as well as the African roots of their resistance.³⁹

³⁸ Robert Olwell, "'Domestick Enemies': Slavery and Political Independence in South Carolina, May 1775-March 1776," *Journal of Southern History* 55 (February 1989): 21-48.

³⁹ Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica, Or, general survey of the antient and modern state of that island: with reflections on its situation, settlements, inhabitants* (London, 1774), v. 2, 455-56. For works that perpetuate Long's narrative of the 1760-61 uprisings as a unified revolt of Akan slaves under the leadership of Tacky of St. Mary parish, see Vincent Brown, *The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 129-56; Trevor Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny,*

Historians' investment in relating tales of courageous and committed fighters for freedom may also explain their relative lack of interest in the roles men of African descent played in helping to suppress the revolts.⁴⁰ Redefining the event Long termed "Tacky's revolt" as a battle of the Seven Years' War reveals that Jamaica did not experience a single slave insurrection in 1760. Instead, a number of enslaved Blacks in a single parish took advantage of the wartime diffusion of the island's martial resources to rebel, thereby enabling enslaved and free Blacks throughout the island to capitalize upon the ensuing panic of white Jamaicans – a hysteria that was heightened by wartime newspaper coverage of the crisis. While some slaves chose to initiate insurrections of their own, other people of African descent – both enslaved and free – opted to exploit the unrest to demonstrate their allegiance to the colonial government by serving as its martial allies.

Jamaica's wartime slave revolts affirmed that notwithstanding the aid of loyal black soldiers, the empire's slave societies remained vulnerable to assault from both

and Desire: Thomas Thistlewood and His Slaves in the Anglo-Jamaican World (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 170-74; Richard D. E. Burton, *Afro-Creole: Power, Opposition, and Play in the Caribbean* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 25-28, 48; Michael Craton, *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 125-39; Eugene Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 35, 100; Douglas Hall, *In Miserable Slavery: Thomas Thistlewood in Jamaica, 1750-1786* (London: Macmillan, 1989), 92-114; Michael Mullin, *Africa in America: Slave Acculturation and Resistance in the American South and the British Caribbean, 1736-1831* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 2, 40-43, 201-2, 221; C. Roy Reynolds, "Tacky and the Great Slave Rebellion of 1760," *Jamaica Journal* 6 (June 1972): 5-8; Monica Schuler, "Akan Slave Rebellions in the British Caribbean," in *Caribbean Women: An Anthology of Non-Fiction Writing, 1890-1980*, ed. Veronica Marie Gregs (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 366-92; and Monica Schuler, "Ethnic Slave Rebellions in the Caribbean and the Guianas," *Journal of Social History* 3 (Summer, 1970): 374-85. For an excellent analysis of historians' investment in the existence of slave conspiracies, see Michael Johnson, "Demark Vesey and His Co-Conspirators," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 58 (October 2001): 915-76 as well as the responses to his article, "Forum: The Making of a Slave Conspiracy, Part Two," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 59 (January 2002): 135-202.

⁴⁰ While some historians have mentioned that enslaved and free black soldiers helped subjugate the enslaved rebels, none have addressed the roles they played in any depth. Though scholars have acknowledged that the Jamaican Maroons helped to suppress "Tacky's Revolt," they have tended to become embroiled in the question of whether their doing so constituted collaboration with the colonial

without and within in times of war. The Caribbean and southern mainland North American colonies continued to depend heavily upon regiments of regular soldiers and fleets of naval warships sent from Britain to augment their defenses. Moreover, they refused to contribute white manpower to offensive expeditions, as they feared depleting their already inadequate white populations.⁴¹ Despite the vast wealth they generated, mid-eighteenth-century imperial officials may well have considered the empire's plantation colonies to be wartime encumbrances rather than assets. Privy to repeated representations of slave societies under prolific attack, British imperial strategists and the literate public alike became conscious of the empire's problem of war and slavery. In the published depictions of black soldiers' essential contributions to Britain's Caribbean campaigns, some Britons believed they had found its solution.

Through both their "loyal" and "disloyal" actions during the Seven Years' War, Blacks forced the British to reevaluate the profits and the drawbacks of slavery and what place the institution should be afforded in the newly expanded Atlantic empire. The late eighteenth-century upsurge of British antislavery sentiment has long been the object of historians' scrutiny. Scholars have examined how, when and why slavery became morally abhorrent, abolitionism became politically expedient, and abolition of the slave trade and slavery itself became achievable. While many historians have investigated the pivotal role slaves' actions, notably their insurrections, played in the achievement of

order and betrayal of their freedom-seeking brethren. See, for instance, Campbell, *The Maroons of Jamaica*.

⁴¹ Pares, *War and Trade in the West Indies*, 203-6, 221-22, 227-40 and Gaspar, *Bondmen and Rebels*, 122-24. On the British Caribbean's military dependence in the late eighteenth century, see O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided*, 34-57 and Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, "Recoats and Slaves in the British Caribbean," in *The Lesser Antilles in the Age of European Expansion*, ed. Robert L. Paquette and Stanley L. Engerman (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), 105-27.

British emancipation, most have concentrated their attention upon the first third of the nineteenth century.⁴² By linking published depictions of the actions of people of African descent during the Seven Years' War to the proliferation of antislavery literature in its immediate aftermath, this work explores the role that free and enslaved Blacks played in inspiring this early questioning of slavery.⁴³

The experience of insecurity and insurrection during the war caused some Britons to question the imperial value of the institution of slavery and to propose that Blacks be transformed from a source of vulnerability as slaves to the key to the empire's strength in

⁴² On the influence of Caribbean slaves upon British antislavery, see especially Christopher Leslie Brown, "From Slaves to Subjects: Envisioning an Empire without Slavery, 1772-1834," in *Black Experience and the Empire*, ed. Philip D. Morgan and Sean Hawkins (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 132-39 and Gelien Matthews, *Caribbean Slave Revolts and the British Abolitionist Movement* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006). See also Michael Craton, "Emancipation from Below? The Role of the British West Indies Slaves in the Emancipation Movement, 1816-1834," in *Out of Slavery: Abolition and After*, ed. Jack Hayward (London: Cass, 1985), 110-31; Craton, *Empire, Enslavement and Freedom in the Caribbean* (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 1997), 263-323; Craton, *Testing the Chains*, 254-321; Emilia Viotti da Costa, *Crowns of Glory, Tears of Blood: The Demerara Slave Rebellion of 1823* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); and Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1964), 197-208. For a work that explicitly takes into account the influence of war, insecurity, and slave revolt upon British antislavery, see Claudius Fergus, "War, Revolution and Abolitionism, 1793-1806," in *Capitalism and Antislavery Fifty Years Later: Eric Eustace Williams – A Reassessment of the Man and his Work*, ed. Heather Cateau and S.H.H. Carrington (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), 173-95.

⁴³ Clearly, the actions of free and enslaved Blacks during the war and the press's representations of their actions were not identical. Nevertheless, the published reports of Blacks' actions did offer readers in Britain and North America a sense of their on-the-ground involvement in the conflict as insurgents and soldiers. On the antislavery initiatives of the 1760s and 1770s and the influence of the Seven Years' War on British antislavery, see Christopher Leslie Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 155-258. The final chapter of this work was in large part inspired by Brown's hypothesis that Maurice Morgann, the author of the 1772 *A Plan for the Abolition of Slavery*, may have known of the participation of black soldiers in the West Indian campaigns of the Seven Years' War. Brown, *Moral Capital*, 218. I took Brown's supposition as an invitation to investigate not only what British imperial administrators, but also what the British and British American public may have known of Blacks' actions as rebels and soldiers during the conflict and to analyze the ways in which published representations of Blacks' actions were used to discuss empire and slavery in the wake of the war. While Brown explores Britons' reevaluations of the moral character of their growing empire in the conflict's aftermath, I seek instead to analyze Britons' practical anxiety about the vulnerability of slave colonies and the reassessments of both the institution of slavery and the practice of arming Blacks that developed as a result of this concern. On the Seven Years' War and antislavery, see also Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*, 330-31, 428, 486 and Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution*, 44-48. Though Davis discusses the insecurity of slave societies in

the southern Atlantic as free subjects. Some imperial strategists began to envision people of African descent as akin to the Scottish Highlanders whose military service had also proven vital to Britain's success during the Seven Years' War. Like the once unruly Highlanders, black slaves could be peaceably incorporated into the new British Empire as free subjects whose martial skills would prove useful in conflicts to come.⁴⁴ In the immediate postwar period, those Britons who opposed slavery developed an amoral and pragmatic martial antislavery discourse that they hoped would resonate with the British public. Antislavery writers capitalized upon pervasive discussions of the risks that slave societies faced in times of war to attack the institution by citing the liability that slavery posed an empire at war. Alert to their audience's familiarity with the essential role black soldiers had played in the Caribbean campaigns, postwar antislavery authors contended that those best suited to further strengthen and expand the British Empire in the southern Atlantic were Blacks, and that they would accomplish this best if they were free.

But only a very few mid-eighteenth-century Britons envisioned people of African descent as worthy of the rights of British subjects. As was the case for the Native American allies who had helped the British to conquer North America, the Seven Years' War did not portend a new era of racial fairness for Blacks in the British Empire.⁴⁵ Black men's martial service certainly had the potential to undermine the as yet inchoate

wartime, he does not explicitly address antislavery authors' treatment of or solutions to the problem of war and slavery.

⁴⁴ Brown, "From Slaves to Subjects," in *Black Experience and the Empire*, ed. Morgan and Hawkins, 116. On the Highlanders' martial service, see Colin Calloway, *White People, Indians, and Highlanders: Tribal Peoples and Colonial Encounters in Scotland and America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 88-107 and Linda Colley, *Britons: Forging the Nation, 1707-1837* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1992), 119-20.

conceptions of race and masculinity that undergirded the institution of slavery.⁴⁶ The spectacle of proud, brave, and disciplined black soldiers belied Britons' bifurcated vision of men of African descent as obsequious cowards or barbarous fiends.⁴⁷ Fighting alongside black men may well have influenced white sailors and soldiers to recognize the humanity of their fellow men-at-arms.⁴⁸ But, as black soldiers served for the most part as laborers on torrid beaches or as rangers in the rugged interior of sugar islands, their martial service likely worked to affirm rather than to undermine British conceptions of men of African descent as particularly vigorous, nimble, and capable of arduous toil in tropical climates. British military commanders who had served on the North American continent before venturing to the Caribbean often likened Blacks' exceptional martial skills to those of Native Americans. They described both their black allies and foes and their distinctive ways of war with language similar to that they employed to represent Native American warriors – at once barbarous, skulking, and treacherous and supremely able, agile, and shrewd.⁴⁹ Thus, though enslaved and free black men had proven

⁴⁵ Dowd, *War Under Heaven* and Daniel K. Richter, "Native Americans, the Plan of 1764, and a British Empire That Never Was," in *Cultures and Identities in Colonial British America*, ed. Robert Olwell and Alan Tully (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2006), 269-92.

⁴⁶ On the malleability of British conceptions of race in this period, see Anthony J. Barker, *The African Link: British Attitudes to the Negro in the Era of the Atlantic Slave Trade, 1550-1807* (Totowa, NJ: Frank Cas, 1978) and Roxann Wheeler, *The Complexion of Race: Categories of Difference in Eighteenth-Century British Culture* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000).

⁴⁷ David Brion Davis, *Inhuman Bondage: The Rise and Fall of Slavery in the New World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), 172.

⁴⁸ For instance, Henry Wiencek contends that serving as the commander of black soldiers in the Continental Army influenced George Washington to question the justice of slavery. Henry Wiencek, *An Imperfect God: George Washington, His Slaves, and the Creation of America* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003).

⁴⁹ On the hardening of conceptions of racial difference for North American colonists of European descent and for Native Americans during the Seven Years' War, see Daniel K. Richter, *Facing East From Indian Country: A Native History of Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001) and Peter Silver, *Our Savage Neighbors: How Indian War Transformed Early America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 2008).

themselves courageous and skilled soldiers, they nevertheless seemed to most Britons to be orderable barbarians rather than civilized subjects.⁵⁰

As they had long since grown accustomed to deploying armed black men, black soldiers' martial service in the mid-eighteenth century did little to undercut British slaveholders' conviction of African inferiority. In fact, the wartime slave insurrections in Jamaica helped to harden rather than weaken racial boundaries in the British Caribbean.⁵¹ In the aftermath of the revolts, Jamaican officials enacted new restraints on slaves as well as on the free Blacks who had proven instrumental in quelling the insurrections. In limiting the civil and property rights of free people of color, colonial officials at once bolstered the island's racial hierarchy and ensured that the free black men on whom they relied to defend Jamaica would remain confined to a military underclass. Though they freed a small number of the enslaved Blacks who helped to suppress the rebellions, on the whole colonial officials worked to limit the ways in which men of African descent could profit from their fidelity to Jamaica's colonial order.

The vast majority of enslaved black sailors and soldiers did not personally benefit from their martial service during the Seven Years' War. Though a number of enslaved Blacks likely negotiated with their owners to retain a portion of their wages, on the whole it was slaveholders who profited from slaves' contributions to the British war effort. Neither the American provincial forces nor the Royal Navy as a matter of policy liberated the slaves within their ranks. Still, as officers desperate for recruits often refrained from

⁵⁰ On the military reliance upon particular "martial races" in the nineteenth-century British Empire, see Heather Streets, *Martial Races: The Military, Race and Masculinity in British Imperial Culture, 1857-1914* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2004).

questioning the status of able men, both provincial and ship's companies served as havens for runaway slaves. Maritime service may have provided a more promising path to liberty for enslaved men than did the armed forces. While serving the British army enabled slaves to escape the watchful eyes of their masters, ships carried slaves far from their owners' reach and offered them a chance to refashion themselves as free men in distant ports. If martial service did not guarantee freedom, it nevertheless offered many slaves mobility, independence, and the sense of satisfaction that likely came of contributing to Britain's success at mid-century. Moreover, some enslaved black men may have welcomed the opportunity to exercise the martial skills they had honed in their homelands. Many African-born men were sold to European slave traders after being taken prisoner in the wars that roiled western and central Africa in the early eighteenth century.⁵² Such veterans of African armies may have embraced martial service as a means of exercising the abilities and authority that had been forced to sublimate as slaves.

Many free black men, particularly those in the northern mainland colonies, embraced military service as a valuable means of earning income and gaining status in their communities. Service in both the armed and naval forces offered the prospect of financial gain in the form of wages, booty, and grants of land as well as the opportunity

⁵¹ Interestingly, French Saint-Domingue experienced a similar hardening of racial boundaries in the period following the Seven Years' War. See Garrigus, *Before Haiti*.

⁵² On African slaves' military experience, see John Thornton, "African Dimensions of the Stono Rebellion," *American Historical Review* 96 (1991): 1101-13; John Thornton, "African Soldiers in the Haitian Revolution," *Journal of Caribbean History* 25 (1991): 58-80; John Thornton, "The Coromantees: An African Cultural Group in Colonial North America and the Caribbean," *Journal of Caribbean History* 32 (1998): 161-78; and John Thornton, "War, the State, and Religious Norms in 'Coromantee' Thought: The Ideology of an African American Nation," in *Possible Pasts: Becoming Colonial in Early America*, ed. Robert Blair St. George (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000), 181-200.

to develop valuable skills as craftsmen and mariners. Black men may well have welcomed the opportunity to engage Britain's enemies as members of the diverse martial communities forged in camp, on the docks, and aboard ship. Still, the special perils that wartime service presented to people of African descent prevented many from joining expeditions from which they might never return. While many free black men benefited from serving the British military, others found themselves subject to abuse and exploitation by their allies as well as death, capture, and enslavement by their enemies.

Ironically, it was those men of African descent who proved most vital to the British war effort during the Seven Years' War who were the least likely to benefit from their martial service. The thousands of enslaved black men who served the British in the Caribbean either returned to the plantations that had become their homes or were sold to toil endlessly elsewhere. And, with the removal of the French as an obstacle to British settlement of the trans-Appalachian West and the British acquisition in 1763 of the Caribbean islands of Dominica, Grenada, the Grenadines, Saint Vincent, and Tobago, there were many new places within the British Empire for people of African descent to toil. Both slavery and the slave trade expanded precipitously in the wake of the Seven Years' War as British planters appropriated the virgin soil of these lands and imported thousands of African slaves to cultivate it.⁵³ Thus, though Britons recognized the essential nature of black soldiers' contributions to the triumph of the British Empire, this acknowledgement did not translate into concern for Blacks' welfare. In the end, despite the martial antislavery rhetoric that flourished in the postwar period, the British chose to arm Blacks to perpetuate slavery, not to eradicate it, and an ever more regimented

reliance upon black soldiers became the legacy of the Seven Years' War. In proving themselves loyal and reliable defenders and extenders of empire, Blacks enhanced the prospect of further martial opportunities for their brethren in conflicts to come. But it would not be until Age of Revolutions, when Americans and Britons vied to be regarded as champions of liberty that Blacks would be in a better position to profit from the military service they rendered their republic or, more likely, their king.⁵⁴

⁵³ Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture*, 162.

⁵⁴ Most recent historians agree that it was the British and not the American Patriots who offered the surer path to freedom for slaves during the American Revolution. See, for example, Nash, *The Forgotten Fifth*, Pybus, *Epic Journeys of Freedom*; and Schama, *Rough Crossings*. On the early nineteenth-century political legacy of British and American claims to be the champions of liberty, see Van Gosse, "As a Nation, the English Are Our Friends': The Emergence of African American Politics in the British Atlantic World, 1772-1861," *American Historical Review* 113 (October 2008): 1003-28 and Matthew Mason, "The Battle of the Slaveholding Liberators: Great Britain, the United States, and Slavery in the Early Nineteenth Century," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 59 (July 2002): 665-96.

Chapter 2: “I am Willing to Fight for his Majesty King George”: Black Civilians and Soldiers in the Seven Years’ War in Mainland North America

In August 1757, Peter Rowse, a free black resident of Albany, submitted a brief but compelling proposal to John Campbell, 4th Earl of Loudoun, commander in chief of the British forces in North America. “If Your Lordship Please to grant me leave,” he declared, “I am willing to fight for his Majesty King George.” Rowse admitted he was but a “power Black,” but reiterated his eagerness “to fight for my King.” Moreover, he intimated that he knew of others who shared his desire to champion the British monarch. No doubt hoping Loudoun would see fit to grant him an officer’s commission, Rowse assured Loudoun that he could “raise a thousand men in a little time,” whom he likely intended to draw from New York’s free black community.⁵⁵ Despite Rowse’s manifest allegiance to and ardent wish to bolster the British Empire, there is no evidence among Loudoun’s extant papers that the commander in chief pursued his offer to raise a regiment of black men. It remains unclear why Loudoun opted not to endorse Rowse’s plan; he may have balked at the notion of allotting a black man a position of authority in the British army or cringed when contemplating the repercussions of establishing a proud, independent corps of armed black men. Still, Rowse had good reason to imagine that Loudoun might find his proposal appealing. Rowse would have been well aware of the contributions of Native Americans to the British war effort and may have imagined that a company composed of people of African descent would have been as welcome as

⁵⁵ “Proposal from a Free Black,” Albany, August 1757, LO 4359, Loudoun Papers, Huntington Library, San Marino, CA (hereafter HL).

those comprised of indigenous warriors.⁵⁶ Moreover, Albany served as the staging ground for the northern campaigns of the Seven Years' War and Rowse would repeatedly have witnessed his brethren preparing for battle as the British launched each new expedition against the French. British military officials were desperate for recruits in the early years of the war in North America and black men continually proved themselves able contributors to their empire's cause. Though they did not compose companies of their own, people of African descent advanced the British war effort as both laborers and soldiers throughout the Seven Years' War in mainland North America.

Demography and the relative centrality of the institution of slavery in their region of residence largely determined the opportunities and the perils opened to people of African descent by the imperial conflict. In both southern and northern combat zones, enslaved and free Blacks toiled for the army as artisans, bateaumen, cattle and oxen drivers, teamsters, and pioneers. In the southern colonies, free Blacks served as officers' servants called batmen, drummers, and trumpeters and, admonitions against arming them notwithstanding, a small number of enslaved and free Blacks protected their provinces from foreign invasion and slave uprisings as soldiers. In the northern colonies, where substantial white majorities tempered anxieties over arming Blacks, soldiers of African descent composed a small but essential component of the multiracial provincial forces

⁵⁶ On Native Americans' involvement in the Seven Years' War in mainland North America, see Francis Jennings, *Empire of Fortune: Crowns, Colonies, and Tribes in the Seven Years War in America* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1988); Michael McConnell, *A Country Between: The Upper Ohio Valley and Its Peoples, 1724-1774* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1992); James Merrell, *Into the American Woods: Negotiators on the Pennsylvania Frontier* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1999); Jane Merritt, *At the Crossroads: Indians and Empires on a Mid-Atlantic Frontier, 1700-1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2003); Timothy J. Shannon, *Indians and Colonists at the Crossroads of Empire: The Albany Congress of 1754* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2000); and Richard White, *The Middle*

that these colonies raised to fight alongside British regulars. Many free Blacks voluntarily enlisted and both enslaved and free Blacks served as substitutes for men who opted not to enroll when drafted into the provincial forces. In addition to serving as privates in the provincial forces, northern enslaved and free Blacks staffed the bateau and transport service, which was charged with the essential task of conveying the army's artillery, supplies, and men to various forts and fields of battle.

Contrary to reigning assumptions about war and slavery, which tend to accept that colonial authorities' rhetoric reflected the reality of their reluctance to arm slaves, enslaved men played the most essential role in British military endeavors where slavery was most central to society. Thus, the very colonists who most vociferously bemoaned the likelihood of their falling victim to violence perpetrated by their slaves were in fact the ones who were most likely to arm them for war. Companies comprised of hundreds of armed slaves defended South Carolina. Though Virginia's officials attempted to keep arms from both enslaved and free men of African descent, enslaved pioneers who labored for the army and slaves who accompanied their masters to war took up weapons in the heat of battle. In the northern colonies, it was largely free and not enslaved black men who bore arms on behalf of the British; northern slaves were more likely to serve the army as contractual civilian laborers than as enlisted soldiers or pioneers. In short, where slavery fundamentally shaped British colonial society, slaves naturally played a vital role in colonial military efforts.

Ground: Indians, Republics, and Empires in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

In both the South and the North, the Seven Years' War presented enslaved and free Blacks with opportunities for mobility as well as the threat of being abused, captured, sold, or killed while abroad from their communities. Slaves who served the British army as laborers secured a respite from the plantations and their owners' watchful eyes as well as a considerable measure of independence as they conveyed supplies from one depot to another along backcountry roads and waterways. Free black auxiliaries and soldiers earned wages and, in some cases, grants of land for their service, enabling them to achieve a degree of economic and social advancement as veterans. Enslaved and free black soldiers may well have taken pride in having engaged in battle on behalf of the British Empire. War offered special perils as well as opportunities to people of African descent. While many black men benefited from serving the British army, others found themselves subject to exploitation and mistreatment by British military personnel, as well as death, detainment, and sale by the French and their Canadian and Native American allies.

Slavery, Insecurity, and Anxiety over Armed Blacks in Mainland North America

Throughout the mainland colonies, enslaved and free Blacks' participation in the British war effort proved so expected and unremarkable that it usually went without mention. The historian of Blacks' experience of the Seven Years' War in mainland North America must comb through documents in search of names that commonly indicated African ancestry or offhand observations of an individual's racial status, for muster rolls only rarely recorded such information. For that reason, it is impossible to determine the precise number of black soldiers who served during the conflict. Still, even strict interpretation of the records, which certainly underestimates the rate of involvement

of people of African descent, reveals that enslaved and free Blacks were continually called upon by the mainland colonies to serve the British army as both laborers and soldiers. This mid-eighteenth-century imperial conflict mobilized an unprecedented level of manpower and compelled the provinces to turn time and again to men of lesser means – including those of African descent – to build bateaux, construct forts, clear roads, drive wagon teams, and to meet the annual quotas of soldiers that each new fighting season required.

While most colonists did not think twice about compelling enslaved or hiring free Blacks to labor in the public interest, placing people of African descent in a position to perpetrate violence caused no small measure of concern. Many British colonists perceived enslaved and even free Blacks as more willing to wield arms against them than alongside them in times of war.⁵⁷ This was particularly true of those who resided in the southern colonies, where slaves of African descent constituted a greater proportion of the population, but it was a view shared by inhabitants of the northern colonies as well. On the eve of war, William Shirley, governor of Massachusetts and commander in chief of the British forces in North America prior to Loudoun's tenure, alerted Thomas Robinson, Secretary of State for the Southern Department, that in the southern provinces, "there are full as many Negro Slaves capable of bearing Arms as there are white fighting Men; All

⁵⁷ On Virginians' fear of slave revolt during the Seven Years' War, see Larry G. Bowman, "Virginia's Use of Blacks in the French and Indian War," *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, 53 (1970): 58, 62; John Ferling, "Soldiers for Virginia: Who Served in the French and Indian War?," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 94 (July 1986), 317; Woody Holton, "How the Seven Years' War Turned Americans into (British) Patriots," in *Cultures in Conflict: The Seven Years' War in North America*, ed. Warren R. Hofstra (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2007): 134-35; and James Titus, *The Old Dominion at War: Society, Politics, and Warfare in Late Colonial Virginia* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991), 75-77. On Maryland, see Mark J. Stegmaier, "Maryland's Fear of Insurrection at the Time of Braddock's Defeat," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 71 (Winter 1976): 467-83.

which would be in great Danger of being seduc'd from their Fidelity to their Masters by Promises of liberty, & Lands to settle upon, from a Body of French & their Dependents able to receive & protect them against the English.” Voicing a common fear that slaves might be instigated to rebellion by their Catholic foe, Shirley reminded Robinson that “very dangerous Conspiracies of the Negroes unarm'd, & unsupported by an other Force, to make a general rising against their Masters, have been frequent in these Colonies” and warned that slaves could do far more harm “when Arm'd and disciplin'd by the French.”⁵⁸

Officials in the southern colonies repeatedly described slaves as internal enemies who posed a grave threat to them in wartime. Governor of Virginia Robert Dinwiddie confessed to militia Colonel Charles Carter in 1755 that “the Villany of the Negroes on any Emergency of Gov't is w't I always fear'd” and approved any means necessary to “prevent those Creatures enter'g into Combinat's and wicked Designs ag'st the Subjects.”⁵⁹ Dinwiddie viewed enslaved Blacks not as fellow subjects, but instead as potential conspirators who threatened the lives of true Virginians. Representatives of the provinces of Georgia and South Carolina informed the Board of Trade in 1756 that they were menaced “not only from the Enemy from without, but also from an equally dangerous and merciless Enemy within, viz. their Negro Slaves, which in Carolina amount to forty five thousand, of which sixteen thousand are Males capable of bearing Arms, who would doubtless be glad to purchase their Freedom at any rate or any

⁵⁸ William Shirley to Thomas Robinson, January 24, 1755, ff. 128-41, Francis Parkman Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts (hereafter MHS).

risque.”⁶⁰ Slaves seemed to many Britons latent antagonists who only awaited an auspicious moment or advantageous ally with whom to overthrow their owners.⁶¹

Southerners’ dread of slave revolt grew especially acute following the trouncing of General Edward Braddock’s regular army by a relatively small group of French and Native American warriors on the Monongahela River in July 1755. Upon receiving word of Braddock’s defeat, Governor of Maryland Horatio Sharpe wrote “Circulatory Letters to have the Slaves, Convicts &c well observed & watched” and gave “Orders for the Militia of the several Cities to be prepared to quell it in case any Insurrection should be occasioned by this Stroke.”⁶² Sharpe worried that Maryland’s Catholics would seize upon the ensuing flight of British troops and colonists from the frontier to unite with slaves and convicts to overthrow British rule. Similarly, Dinwiddie feared Virginia’s slaves might take advantage of the panic and precipitate retreat of British defensive forces following their routing. He informed the Earl of Halifax, “I must leave a proper No. [of militiamen] in each Co’ty to protect it from the Combinations of the Negro Slaves, who have been very audacious on the Defeat on the Ohio. These poor Creatures

⁵⁹ Robert Dinwiddie to Charles Carter, July 18, 1755, in *Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie, Lieutenant-Governor of the Colony of Virginia, 1751-1758*, ed. R.A. Brock (Richmond: The Virginia Historical Society, 1884), v. 2, 102.

⁶⁰ “Representation of the Board of Trade to the King with Regard to the Indians on the back of South Carolina and Georgia,” December 24, 1756, CO 5/7, ff. 208-15, The National Archives, Kew, England (hereafter TNA).

⁶¹ Governor of South Carolina William Bull informed Commander-in-Chief Jeffery Amherst in 1760 that “in this Province there are not more than thirty one or thirty two thousand white, and about fifty two thousand black People. Our able Males are one in five and the Negroes being imported for work, one in four at least. Thus our Strength is lessened by an interior Enemy.” William Bull to Jeffery Amherst, May 29, 1760, WO 34/35, ff. 167-68, TNA. For further examples of slaves being labeled interior enemies, see Dinwiddie to the Earl of Halifax, July 23, 1755 and Dinwiddie to Colonel William Fitzhugh, August 30, 1755, in *Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie*, ed. R.A. Brock, v. 2, 113-14, 180; Dinwiddie to Shirley, April 28, 1756, LO 1086, Loudoun Papers, HL; and Governor of South Carolina William Henry Lyttelton to Loudoun, November 5, 1756, WO 34/35, ff. 62-63, TNA.

imagine the Fr. will give them their Freedom. We have too many here, but I hope we shall be able to defeat the Designs of our Enemies and keep these Slaves in proper Subject'n."⁶³ Enslaved Blacks would certainly have known of Braddock's defeat and some may indeed have availed themselves of the atmosphere of confusion and the dispersal of troops to flee or to conspire against their masters. Even if enslaved Blacks were to have done nothing out of the ordinary following Braddock's defeat, however, anxious slaveholders would likely have seen in their behavior some measure of "audaciousness." In 1756, Virginia's Burgesses determined that the Virginia Regiment, which guarded the frontier, would receive forty-five percent of the year's military appropriations, while the remaining fifty-five percent would go to the militia, which controlled the colony's slaves.⁶⁴

Southern colonists maintained that their enslaved population rendered their colonies especially exposed in times of war and necessitated not only the retention of their meager defensive forces within their borders, but also an augmentation of regular troops to preserve their security. Georgia and South Carolina's representatives emphasized to the Board of Trade how "totally incapable they are, without some Assistance, of defending their Settlements from the Ravages and Incursions of a

⁶² Horatio Sharpe to Cecelius Calvert, July 15, 1755, quoted in Stegmaier, "Maryland's Fear of Insurrection at the Time of Braddock's Defeat," 467.

⁶³ Dinwiddie to the Earl of Halifax, July 23, 1755, in *Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie*, ed. R.A. Brock, v. 2, 114. One month after the defeat of Braddock's forces, the Virginia Assembly prohibited "the governor or commander in chief, to lead or march the militia of this colony . . . more than five miles beyond" Virginia's western border. Quoted in Titus, *Old Dominion at War*, 174 n. 3.

⁶⁴ Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), 159-60.

merciless Enemy.”⁶⁵ Bemoaning their vulnerability to attack, officials in the southern provinces routinely refused to comply with orders to provide troops for British offensive expeditions. Governor of South Carolina William Henry Lyttelton wrote Loudoun in 1756 concerning “the number of Negro’s in this province which greatly overbalances that of the whites & who in case of an Attack might prove an Intestine Enemy” and noted that the “Circumstances of Weakness attending this Colony are Considerations which I believe wou’d induce the People to grant an Aid in Money much more chearfully than to furnish recruits.”⁶⁶ Virginians, too, used their relatively small number of white inhabitants as a justification for not contributing men to the campaigns the British planned against the French. The House of Burgesses resolved in 1756 not to provide any men for the intended campaigns against Crown Point and Niagara, as “the small Number of white Inhabitants in this Colony” made it “not only impracticable but very imprudent to send so great a Proportion of them as is demanded of us to so great a Distance and thereby deprive ourselves of their Assistance.”⁶⁷

⁶⁵ “Representation of the Board of Trade to the King with Regard to the Indians on the back of South Carolina and Georgia,” December 24, 1756, CO 5/7, ff. 208-15, TNA.

⁶⁶ William Henry Lyttelton to Loudoun, November 5, 1756, WO 34/35, ff. 62-63, TNA. For further examples of South Carolinians’ proclaiming their dearth of white men and consequent inability to contribute men to the British army, see Lyttelton to Loudoun, October 20, 1757, LO 4675, Loudoun Papers, HL and Speaker of the House Benjamin Smith to Governor Thomas Boone, March 30, 1762, WO 34/35, ff. 221-22, TNA. Georgia officials also proclaimed their weakness due to their lack of white inhabitants. See Governor John Reynolds to Loudoun, July 23, 1756, WO 34/34, ff. 173-76, TNA.

⁶⁷ Virginia General Assembly, “Resolution regarding the Expedition against Crown Point and Niagara,” Williamsburg, March 29, 1756, LO 731, Loudoun Papers, HL. Dinwiddie informed Shirley in 1756 that the Assembly “thought it imprudent to part with any Men as we have too many Negroes in this Dominion.” Dinwiddie to Shirley, April 28, 1756, LO 1086, Loudoun Papers, HL. He later explained to Loudoun that “The Number of our Negroes is 120,156 from that number the Tithables from sixteen and upwards Male and Female 60,078 – this number of Negroes alarms our People much, and are afraid of very bad Consequences if the Militia are ordered to any great Distance from the present Settlements.” Dinwiddie to Loudoun, August 9, 1756, LO 1448, Loudoun Papers, HL. See also Dinwiddie to Henry Fox, May 24, 1756, in *Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie*, ed. R.A. Brock, v. 2, 414.

Their desperation for recruits notwithstanding, British military commanders ceased expecting that the southern colonies would supply troops for the common interest. Furthermore, they conceded that the empire could not reasonably expect the southern provinces to defend themselves from possible foreign invasion without the aid of additional forces to keep the slaves in subjection. Upon sending a regiment of regulars to Charles Town in 1757, Sir Jeffery Amherst, commander in chief of the British forces in North America, informed Lyttelton, “As the Objection your Province has Generally made to raising any considerable Number of men, is on Account of the great Number of Blacks, that they are afraid of their rising, if they should move many of their White men to the Frontiers, That objection is now removed as the additional Force sent is sufficient to keep them in Awe.”⁶⁸ Yielding to South Carolina’s contention that its militia was insufficient to shield against both internal and external enemies, Amherst anticipated that by assuming the task of guarding against slave insurrection, the regulars would thereby free South Carolina’s soldiers to defend its borders against French and Indian incursions.

The perception of slaves as a wellspring of insecurity was so commonly held that Pennsylvanians wielded it to counter the recruitment of white indentured servants into the British regular forces. Pennsylvania’s General Assembly alleged that by enticing away servants, especially at harvest time, “the Purchase, & of course the Importation of Servants will be discourag’d, and the People driven to the Necessity of providing themselves with Negro Slaves, as the Property in them & their Service seems at present more Secure.” A turn from indentured servant to enslaved labor would spell doom for the colony as well as the public interest, Pennsylvania’s assemblymen maintained, as “the

⁶⁸Amherst to Lyttelton, April 24, 1757, WO 34/36, ff. 21-23, TNA.

Growth of the Country by Increase of White Inhabitants will be prevented, the Province weaken'd rather than strengthen'd (as Every Slave may be reckon'd a Domestick Enemy) one great & constant Source of Recruits be in a great Measure cut off, and Pennsylvania soon be unable to afford more Men for the King's Service, than the Slaves Colonies now do."⁶⁹ In its representatives' view, the importation of black slaves and consequent lack of white men of lesser means would rob Pennsylvania of its ability to defend itself or to furnish troops for the empire as a whole.

Southern colonists claimed that while slaves were indeed a fount of insecurity, they were also a source of great wealth. Thus, the very people who rendered their colonies susceptible to assault also produced the export staples and resulting tax revenue that rendered them well worth the extra effort required to preserve them. Hoping for a grant of additional regulars to garrison their colonies, a self-proclaimed group of "Merchants, Traders, Planters, & others, interested in the Trade & prosperity of South Carolina & Georgia" claimed in 1755 that their colonies, "although few in Number as to White People are by the Number of their Negroes of Greater Importance to Great Britain than any Colony on the Continent in respect to the number of Subjects, yet would be in a more dangerous Situation in Case of an Attack than any other, as their whole Domestick Force would be required to keep their Negroes in proper Subjection." The petitioners

⁶⁹ Pennsylvania General Assembly, House of Representatives, "Address to Robert Hunter Morris," February 11, 1756, WO 1/4, f. 51, TNA. See also Pennsylvania Assembly, "Address to Morris," February 11, 1756, LO 819, Loudoun Papers, HL. For the commander in chief's response, see William Shirley to Robert Hunter Morris, February 29, 1756, LO 867, Loudoun Papers, HL. For further assertions that the enlistment of indentured servants would lead to a turn to enslaved labor and thus a weakening of Pennsylvania, see Sir Charles Hardy to the Earl of Halifax, May 7, 1756 and Benjamin Franklin to Sir Everard Fawkener, July 27, 1756, both in Stanley Pargellis, ed., *Military Affairs in North America, 1748-1765, Selected Documents from the Cumberland Papers in Windsor Castle* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1936), 174-75, 185-87.

reasoned that the prosperity their slaves generated for the empire more than compensated for the additional expenditures they necessitated in wartime.⁷⁰

Though they differed in their estimation of enslaved Blacks' value for the British Empire, on the whole British colonists concurred that slaves were a dangerous source of vulnerability in times of war. Colonists throughout the mainland colonies repeatedly described enslaved Blacks not as subjects of the British Empire, but instead as prospective enemies who endangered the lives of those subjects. Their association of enslaved status with African descent led many to consider arming even free Blacks a dangerous proposition. As a result, the governments of many colonies took steps to prevent people of African descent from serving as armed combatants in the Seven Years' War. Despite these attempts, in practice no colony managed to ban Blacks from serving as soldiers of the British Empire.

The Legalities of Arming Blacks during the Seven Years' War

The very colonists who most volubly lamented their vulnerability to the machinations of their slaves were the ones who legislated that they be armed for war. South Carolinians, due to the dearth of white men of lesser means in their province, had little choice but to rely upon enslaved men of African descent for their defense in times of conflict. An Act for the Better Regulating the Militia passed by South Carolina's General Assembly in 1747, which it revived in 1759, delineated the means by which "the male slaves in this Province should be rendered as serviceable as possible in times of war or the invasion of a foreign enemy." Experience as well as demography convinced South

⁷⁰"A Memorial of the Merchants, Traders, Planters, & others, interested in the Trade & prosperity of South Carolina & Georgia," July 1, 1755, LO 5931, Loudoun Papers, HL.

Carolinian officials that select enslaved black men should be relied upon to protect the colony. Since “it hath been found by experience that several negroes and other slaves have, in times of war, behaved themselves with great faithfulness and courage, in repelling the attacks of his Majesty’s enemies, in their descents on this Province, and have thereby demonstrated, that trust and confidence may in some instances be reposed in them,” trustworthy male slaves would be expected to contribute to the common defense not solely as laborers, but also as soldiers.⁷¹

Enslaved Blacks were to be fully incorporated into multiracial militia companies, but they were subject to different regulations than freemen. South Carolina’s Militia Act required that slaveholders submit lists of their male slaves between the ages of sixteen to sixty to their precinct’s militia captain, specifying which had proven themselves the “most faithful and fit for service.” In case of alarm or invasion, owners were to furnish such select slaves with “one sufficient gun, one hatchet, powder-horn and shot-pouch, with ammunition of powder and bullets for twenty rounds, and six spare flints” and send them to “the place of rendezvous of the respective companies in which they are enlisted.” As a cautionary measure, the number of slaves could not exceed one third of the number of white men in each militia company. If judged derelict of duty, enslaved Blacks faced corporal punishment instead of a pecuniary fine and their wages went not to them, but to

⁷¹ “Act of the Assembly of the Province of South Carolina: An Act for the Better Regulating the Militia,” June 13, 1747, in Edward Sandel, ed. *Black Soldiers in the Colonial Militia: Documents from 1639 to 1780* (Roseland, La.: Tabor-Lucas Publications, 1994), 64.

their owners. If they died or became disabled while in service to the public, it was their owners, and not their family members, who received compensation for their loss.⁷²

South Carolina's Assembly compelled enslaved Blacks to serve in the militia without regard to their will, but nevertheless offered some inducement for slaves to face their enemies with ardor. The Militia Act declared free every slave who "shall courageously behave themselves in battle, so as to kill any one of the enemy, or take a prisoner alive, or shall take any of their colours." Those who were not fortunate enough to kill or capture an adversary but nevertheless "manfully behave[d] themselves in fight with the enemy" would be entitled to the annual reward of "a livery coat and pair of breeches made of good red negro cloth, turned up with blue, and a black hat and a pair of black shoes, and shall that day in every year during their lives on which such action shall be performed, be freed and exempted from all person labour and service to their owner or manager." Such incentives were to be made publicly known so as to encourage enslaved Blacks' faithful martial service.⁷³

Of the mainland British colonies, only South Carolina passed legislation in the mid-eighteenth century that called enslaved Blacks to arms in times of crisis. When it was within their power to rely upon white soldiers, southern colonies expressly exempted people of African descent from service as armed combatants. In 1752 as well as in 1756, militia acts enacted by the Virginia Assembly specifically forbade slaves to bear arms and obliged "free mulattoes, negroes and Indians" to report for militia duty unarmed; free

⁷² Owners were to be fined £20 if they failed to submit lists of their male slaves to their precinct's militia captain and £100 for each slave they failed to proffer for service in times of alarm. "Act of the Assembly of the Province of South Carolina: An Act for the Better Regulating the Militia," June 13, 1747, in Sandel, ed. *Black Soldiers in the Colonial Militia: Documents from 1639 to 1780*, 64-68.

men of African or indigenous descent were to “be employed as drummers, trumpeters or pioneers, or in such other servile labor . . . for the better training and exercising the militia, and rendering them more serviceable.”⁷⁴ Maryland’s Militia Act of 1715, which was continued without limit by a 1722 law, stated that “all Negroes and Slaves whatsoever shall be exempted the Duty of Training or other Military Service,” which functioned as a prohibition of their service.⁷⁵ In the mid-eighteenth century, most British colonists in the southern provinces preferred to keep arms from both enslaved and free Blacks.

Conversely, by the eighteenth century, northern colonies’ militia laws tended to dispense with exemptions based upon a subject’s racial status, if they had ever contained them. Massachusetts’ 1707 Act for the Regulating of Free Negroes found that “there are several free negroes and mulattos, able of body, and fit for labour, who are not charged with trainings, watches, and other services required of her Majesty’s subjects, whereof they have share in the benefit” and expressly overturned a prior exception based on race. The 1707 act required all able-bodied free black men ages sixteen to sixty to report for militia duty in their precinct in case of alarm or invasion.⁷⁶ Though they had earlier denied Blacks arms for the safety of their province, by the early eighteenth century

⁷³ “Act of the Assembly of the Province of South Carolina: An Act for the Better Regulating the Militia,” June 13, 1747, in Sandel, ed. *Black Soldiers in the Colonial Militia: Documents from 1639 to 1780*, 67.

⁷⁴ “Act of the General Assembly of Virginia: An Act for the better regulating and training the Militia,” February 27, 1752, in Sandel, ed. *Black Soldiers in the Colonial Militia*, 69. The 1756 militia act, which was continued to 1773, required similar duties of free Blacks, Indians, and Mulattoes. “Act of the General Assembly of Virginia: An Act for the better regulating and training the Militia,” 1756, in Sandel, ed. *Black Soldiers in the Colonial Militia*, 71.

⁷⁵ “Act of the General Assembly of the Province of Maryland: An Act for the ordering and regulating the Militia of this Province, for the better Defence and Security thereof,” June 3, 1715, in Sandel, ed. *Black Soldiers in the Colonial Militia*, 52.

Massachusetts colonists had come to consider Blacks' lack of martial duty as taking unfair advantage of Whites' service.⁷⁷ Neither Rhode Island nor New Jersey officially excluded men of African descent from militia duty. In 1718, Rhode Island required "all male persons" between the ages of sixteen and sixty to bear arms on its behalf and New Jersey's General Assembly passed a series of acts in the 1750s enlisting certain numbers of "freemen and well-affected Indians" as well as slaves who obtained the written permission of their owners for military service during the Seven Years' War.⁷⁸ Only Connecticut's early eighteenth-century militia act excused, and thus in effect barred, "Indians and Negroes" from reporting for militia duty and military watches, but this exemption was flagrantly disregarded in practice during the mid-century conflict.⁷⁹

In fact, militia laws reveal more about what colonial officials in mainland North America hoped to implement than the actual range of martial experiences open to people of African descent in wartime. Without question, Britons considered Protestants of British, Dutch, and German descent the most trustworthy of allies and preferred to deploy them as soldiers whenever possible. However, the need for manpower regularly trumped anxiety about a recruit's ethnic, religious, or even enslaved status during the Seven Years' War. Despite their voluble distress at the danger posed by interior enemies, the

⁷⁶ "Act of the General Court for the Province of Massachusetts Bay: An Act for the regulating of free negroes, &c.," June 12, 1707, in Sandel, ed. *Black Soldiers in the Colonial Militia*, 48.

⁷⁷ Blacks and Indians were exempted from militia trainings by a 1693 law. See "Act of the General Court of the Province of Massachusetts Bay: An Act for Regulating of the Militia," November 22, 1693, in Sandel, ed. *Black Soldiers in the Colonial Militia*, 40.

⁷⁸ "Act of the General Assembly of the Colony of Rhode Island and Providence Plantations," in Sandel, ed. *Black Soldiers in the Colonial Militia*, 53 and "Act of the General Assembly of New Jersey: An Act to encourage the enlisting of Five Hundred Freemen or well-affected Indians, in this Colony of New Jersey, for his Majesty's Service in the present Expedition," 1755, in Sandel, ed. *Black Soldiers in the Colonial Militia*, 70. See also Sandel, ed. *Black Soldiers in the Colonial Militia*, 72, 73, 75, 76, 77.

British armed French Protestants, Irish Catholics, Native Americans, and enslaved and free Blacks throughout the mainland colonies. In the lower South, white colonists deemed both the labor and the arming of select slaves in war a necessity. In the upper South, Britons attempted to keep arms from both enslaved and free Blacks by limiting them to service as officers' servants known as batmen, drummers, trumpeters, and pioneers. Despite such restrictions, a number of people of African descent staffed the southern colonies' militia and provincial companies and, in times of crisis, arms found their way into ostensibly unarmed auxiliaries' hands. In the northern colonies, where white men abounded and Blacks seemed to pose less of a threat to the polity, free black men were often required to bear arms on behalf of their province and, with their owner's permission or in their owner's stead, enslaved Blacks served as soldiers in the provincial forces.

Enslaved and Free Blacks' Martial Service in the Southern Theater

The anxieties of southern colonists and the economic self-interest of slaveholders set constraints upon the ways in which southerners of African descent served the British military during the Seven Years' War. While South Carolinians recruited numerous enslaved and free Blacks to join their defensive forces, those colonists who had other options preferred not to arm black men. Thus, most southern Blacks who contributed to the British war effort labored, but did not bear arms on its behalf. Still, in the heat of combat, even those auxiliaries whom colonial officials had no intention of arming on occasion had muskets foisted upon them.

⁷⁹ "Act of the General Court of the Colony of Connecticut: An Act for Regulating the Militia," 1708 [?], in Sandel, ed. *Black Soldiers in the Colonial Militia*, 47.

Demography and the exigencies of eighteenth-century imperial warfare pushed South Carolina's colonists to rely upon enslaved and free black soldiers despite their avowed apprehensions over arming them. In 1757, Governor of Virginia Robert Dinwiddie held as inflated Governor of North Carolina Arthur Dobbs' claim that "So. Carolina has 64,000 Militia and 40,000 Negroes they can depend on."⁸⁰ Though Dinwiddie believed the numbers to be inaccurate, he did not greet with incredulity the notion that South Carolina's officials counted among their defenders thousands of men of African descent. The colony's black majority had encouraged past colonial officials to turn to black men for its defense; hundreds of armed slaves fought on behalf of the colony in periodic frontier engagements with Spanish Florida as well as in the Tuscarora and Yamasee Indian Wars of the early eighteenth century. Though the 1739 Stono slave rebellion heightened colonial officials' anxiety about arming slaves, South Carolina's lack of white men continued to necessitate the deployment of people of African descent as soldiers.⁸¹

Both enslaved and free black men appear on South Carolina's military muster rolls during the period of the Seven Years' War. "A General Return of the Officers and Men in the Charles Town Regiment of Foot" reveals that Colonel Othniel Beale

⁸⁰ Robert Dinwiddie to Arthur Dobbs, July 1, 1757, in Brock, ed. *Records of Robert Dinwiddie*, v. 2, 661.

⁸¹ Benjamin Quarles notes that, "On December 11, 1740, the assembly ordered 'that the law for encouraging armed Negroes, and for making them useful for the defense of the province be speedily revised'" and that thereafter, "a permanent damper fell on Negro enlistment in the militia." Benjamin Quarles, "The Colonial Militia and Negro Manpower," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, 45 (March 1959): 650. Similarly, John Shy maintains that "as the ratio of slaves to whites grew rapidly, and especially after a serious slave insurrection in 1739, Carolinians no longer dared arm Negroes." John Shy, "A New Look at Colonial Militia," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 20 (April 1963): 181. I have found that despite colonial officials' heightened trepidation concerning arming slaves, they nevertheless enlisted enslaved Blacks in the militia during the Seven Years' War. On the arming of Blacks on the border between South Carolina and Spanish Florida, see also Jane Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida*

commanded five militia companies in 1756, which together consisted of 744 effective private men, 137 alarm men, and 608 slaves. Each militia company enrolled between 100 and 150 enslaved black men alongside an only slightly higher number of white militiamen. Moreover, it is likely that black slaves in reality often outnumbered white privates, as fewer white men joined their companies at musters than were enumerated on the rolls.⁸² Similarly, eight of Craven County's twenty-four militia companies listed slaves on their rolls in 1756; of these, the two militia units of Williamsborough Township as well as those of Waccamaw Neck and Black River tabulated considerably more enslaved black than white militiamen.⁸³ Male members of South Carolina's small free black community also waged war on behalf of their province. Free Blacks Abram Wilson, Humphry Primus, and Samuel Ward served alongside sixty white privates and three alarm men in the fifth company of Colonel Henry Hyrne's Colleton County regiment of foot in 1756.⁸⁴ That same year, Samuel Primus, Tony Portage, Aug[us]t

(Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999) and Peter Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1974).

⁸² Captain Rice Price and five additional white officers, for example, led 164 white privates and 149 black slaves in Charles Town's 4th company. The return notes that "Notwithstanding the Number of Effective Men are said to be Seven Hundred & Forty Four, we have not had on any General Muster Day Four Hundred Men under Arms tho' the Fine for Nonappearance is Five Pounds Currency." "A General Return of the Officers and Men in the Charles Town Regiment of Foot Commanded by Othniel Beale Esq.," July 28, 1756, LO 6724, Loudoun Papers, HL.

⁸³ Williamsborough Township counted 123 white privates and 157 slaves; Waccamaw Neck counted 88 privates and 121 slaves; and Black River counted 139 privates and 260 slaves. "The List of Craven County Regiment under the command of Col. George Pawley, South Carolina," 1756, LO 2511, Loudoun Papers, HL.

⁸⁴ "A Muster Roll of the Regiment of Foot in Colleton County commanded by Colonel Henry Hyrne, South Carolina," [1756], LO 2593, Loudoun Papers, HL. The regiment consisted of 7 companies; only the 5th company's muster roll – that of Will Town District in St. Paul's Parish – included the names of "Free Negroes," who were listed separately from white privates and alarm men.

Fony, Carolina, and Andrew together with forty-four white privates and five alarm men comprised Prince William Parish's second company of the Southern regiment.⁸⁵

Extant records thus confirm that their alarm over the danger posed by armed Blacks notwithstanding, South Carolinians reckoned enslaved and free people of African descent among their protectors during the Seven Years' War. Still, colonial officials appear to have been willing to authorize the arming of enslaved Blacks only under certain conditions and when absolutely necessary. Though it supported the formation of multiracial militia units, South Carolina's General Assembly balked when it came to establishing regiments composed solely of armed slaves. The colony's representatives defeated by a single vote a 1760 motion to arm 500 enslaved Blacks to combat the Cherokee Indians – testimony to the enduring ambivalence of colonial officials regarding the arming of slaves.⁸⁶

Though South Carolina's military officials considered enslaved and free black militiamen capable of bearing arms on behalf of the colony, they treated them differently than white militiamen. South Carolina's muster rolls listed free black soldiers separately from their white counterparts. Those slaves enumerated in militia muster rolls seem to have constituted a class apart from enslaved pioneers, who usually went unlisted, but commanders may nevertheless have more routinely allotted fatigue duty to black soldiers than to white privates. Neither enslaved nor free black men could become officers and black militiamen received less pay – either for themselves or for their owners – than did

⁸⁵ Thomas Wigg, "A Muster Rowle of the Several Companys belonging to the Southern Regiment in Granvil County, South Carolina," 1756, LO 2562, Loudoun Papers, HL. This muster includes six companies of 436 total men, 120 of whom served in two companies in Prince William Parish.

⁸⁶ Quarles, "The Colonial Militia and Negro Manpower," 650.

white privates. At the outset of the Cherokee War, South Carolina's General Assembly planned to draft 1,500 men from the militia for a 1759 expedition; while each private white man drafted from the militia was to earn eight shillings a day, "The Pay of each Negro Man, so rais'd" was "to be seven shillings and six Pence per Day."⁸⁷ Militia duty may have afforded both enslaved and free black men a measure of pride in participating in military exercises. While enslaved Blacks may have welcomed the opportunity for mobility and the respite from plantation labor, it is unlikely that militia service constituted a significant avenue toward social advancement for free Blacks or a route to freedom for those who were enslaved.

While numerous black soldiers staffed South Carolina's military corps, officials of southern colonies with sufficient numbers of white men endeavored to prevent the arming of people of African descent. Despite colonial officials' attempts to ban them from their defensive forces or, failing that, to relegate them to servile positions, black men nonetheless carried arms on behalf of several southern provinces during the Seven Years' War. Small numbers of black militiamen appeared on North Carolina's militia muster rolls in the 1750s.⁸⁸ Virginia's laws limiting free Blacks to the positions of batman, drummer, trumpeter, and pioneer notwithstanding, people of African descent served as armed combatants in the Virginia Regiment. The *Virginia Gazette* of

⁸⁷ Speaker of the House Benjamin Smith to William Henry Lyttelton, October 12, 1759, enclosed in Lyttelton to Amherst, October 16, 1759, WO 34/35, ff. 131-32, TNA.

⁸⁸ Benjamin Quarles notes that "In Granville County, North Carolina, under date of October 8, 1754, a muster roll of Colonel William Eaton's company lists five Negroes and two mulattoes, a roll of Captain John Glover's company lists three Negroes, and that of Captain Osborn Jeffreys lists five Negroes." Quarles, "The Colonial Militia and Negro Manpower," 651. These were more likely free rather than enslaved Black soldiers. A 1766 North Carolina militia law established that "all freemen and servants . . . between the age of Sixteen and Sixty, shall compose the Militia thereof." "Act of the General Assembly of

September 2, 1757 advertised George Williams, a twenty-six-year-old mulatto from Richmond County, and Thomas Morgan, a twenty-six-year-old mulatto from Suffolk, as deserters who had been drafted from their militia companies to serve in the Virginia Regiment.⁸⁹ Historian James Titus finds in his work on Virginia's participation in the Seven Years' War that a July 1756 muster roll of one company of the Virginia Regiment included a soldier of mixed African and indigenous descent; by late 1757, two mulatto soldiers staffed that same company. The muster roll of another company included "a twenty-three-year-old 'planter' from Surry County [who] was identified as a 'Negro.'"⁹⁰ Those free black soldiers who fulfilled their terms of duty by serving for six months or until their unit disbanded earned grants of land in addition to pecuniary compensation.⁹¹ A warrant signed by Governor of Virginia John Murray, 4th Earl of Dunmore in 1773 proclaimed that as Matthew Roberts, a "free Negore," had "served a Soldier in the first

the Province of North Carolina: An Act for establishing a Militia in this Province," in Sandel, ed. *Black Soldiers in the Colonial Militia*, 78.

⁸⁹ Lloyd DeWitt Bockstruck, "Virginia's Colonial Soldiers – A Supplement," *Magazine of Virginia Genealogy*, 31 (May 1993): 93-97. Similarly, William Holmes, a forty-five-year-old mulatto from King William County was advertised as having deserted the Virginia Regiment in 1755. Andrew J. Wahll, ed., *Braddock Road Chronicles, 1755* (Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, 1999), 74.

⁹⁰ Titus remarks, "Since blacks customarily were employed as soldiers only as a last resort, their presence in the provincials suggests true desperation on the part of recruiting officers. And given the racial attitudes of the day, it seems likely that an army that included blacks would have scant appeal to any but the most hopeless whites. The pattern that emerged is this: Virginia's provincial army was heavily seeded with men from the lower end of the socioeconomic scale, a large number of them were immigrants, some had never lived in Virginia, and a few were Negro-Indian half bloods, mulattoes, or blacks." Titus, *Old Dominion at War*, 88.

⁹¹ Barbara Vines Little, "Land Office Warrants Issued for Service in the French and Indian War," *Magazine of Virginia Genealogy*, 31 (August 1993): 184-205. For Governor Dinwiddie's proclamation concerning land grants to soldiers, see Robert Dinwiddie, "A Proclamation for Encouraging Persons to enter into his Majesty's Service for the Defence and Security of this Colony," February 19, 1754, Broad­sides, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond, VA.

Virginia Regt,” he was thus “intitled to 50 acres of Land . . . wheresoever the said Matthew Roberts shale require it.”⁹²

Though some free black men served as armed combatants in the Virginia Regiment, most created roads and fortifications as artificers and pioneers or tended to the horses, baggage, and men of the regiment as batmen. Captain Peter Hog, whose company garrisoned Fort Dinwiddie before clearing roads and constructing a chain of forts along Virginia’s backcountry border, wrote to Colonel George Washington regarding “two Negos & 2 Mullatoes in the Company” who were “Butchers and really Usefull as well as Likely.”⁹³ Washington replied to Hog that he thought it “advisable to detain both Mulatto’s and Negroes in your Company; and employ them as Pioneers and Hatchet-men.”⁹⁴ Washington apparently appreciated the labors of such men, as he wrote Captain John McNeil in July 1756, “You may tell Captain Hogg, that another equally good as the mulatto, will be as agreeable.”⁹⁵ Faced with perennial shortages of recruits, the Virginia Regiment’s officers came to rely upon black men to shoulder the heavy burdens of waging war in the wilderness.⁹⁶

⁹² Barbara Vines Little, “French and Indian War Land Bounty Certificates,” *Magazine of Virginia Genealogy*, 37 (May 1999): 113.

⁹³ Captain Peter Hog to Colonel George Washington, November 29, 1755, in W.W. Abbot, ed., *The Papers of George Washington* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983), Colonial Series, v. 2, 188. For the duties of Hog’s company, see Washington to Hog, September 24, 1755, in Abbot, ed., *Papers of George Washington*, v. 2, 60 and Washington to Hog, July 21, 1756, in Abbot, ed., *Papers of George Washington*, v. 3, 273.

⁹⁴ Washington to Hog, December 27, 1755, in Abbot, ed., *Papers of George Washington*, v. 2, 236. Hog reported to Washington in early 1756 “you will See by the Inclosed Return that the Company wants but one of being Compleat: only the Mulattoes & Negos are Still Included.” Hog to Washington, January 27, 1756, in Abbot, ed., *Papers of George Washington*, v. 2, 299.

⁹⁵ Washington to Captain John McNeil, July 21, 1756, in Abbot, ed., *Papers of George Washington*, v. 3, 276.

⁹⁶ On Virginia’s uses of black laborers to alleviate the toil of white soldiers, see Bowman, “Virginia’s Use of Blacks in the French and Indian War,” *Western Pennsylvania Historical Magazine*, 53 (1970): 60-62.

Those southern slaves who labored on behalf of the British army endured additional labor without earning even the minor perquisites offered to free Blacks. Colonial and military officials throughout the South employed enslaved Blacks to lessen white soldiers' toil. In 1761, Governor of South Carolina William Bull recommended "employing fifty able Negro Men . . . as Pioneers and Hatchet Men for the Army" to compensate for a ranger company's loss of 125 horses to French-allied Indians. Bull hoped a corps of enslaved laborers would prove able substitutes for those rangers who had lost their mounts. Though he was unable to convince Sir Jeffery Amherst that enslaved pioneers could replace rangers, Bull did persuade the commander in chief that slaves, "being able to bear working in the heat, will be very serviceable in making Pens for Cattle or throwing up Entrenchments wherever it is necessary to establish posts in the progress of the Campaign through the Mountains."⁹⁷ Slaves also built the forts that were intended to guard southern colonies against the encroachments of their enemies. "Since Workmanship is so very Dear in these parts because of the Scarcity of White people to Employ to such purposes, & those few that can be got cannot be obliged for any time," Governor John Reynolds of Georgia proposed in 1756 that a cadre of expert engineers and artisan overseers procure and employ 150 enslaved Blacks in the construction of a chain of forts to defend the colony.⁹⁸ Reynolds suggested that the government purchase slaves directly from Africa to serve the public interest, rather than hiring slaves from local slaveholders, which habitually proved costly and inefficient.

⁹⁷ Bull to Amherst, March 13, 1761, WO 34/35, ff. 191-92, TNA and Amherst to Bull, April 6, 1761, WO 34/36, ff. 73-74, TNA.

Enslaved Blacks' military labor proved expensive but indispensable. As a general rule, slaveholders had little interest in parting with the laborers on whom they relied. As Colonel Henry Bouquet learned in South Carolina, "Notwithstanding the general danger of the Province . . . it has never been possible to get a Sufficient number of Negroes upon the Works, tho' they are pay'd at 7S. 6 d. of this Currency per day: Private Interest is always the first point here, and Public Spirit is no more the Second."⁹⁹ Slaveholders' intransigence and a pressing need for manpower forced the British army to pay astronomical rates for the hire of slaves. In spite of the expense, Charles Steuart, who had been charged with the care of a group of Spanish prisoners of war, informed Governor of Virginia Francis Fauquier in 1762 that he planned to outlay nine pence a man per day for "the hire of Negroes carrying their provisions & wood to them."¹⁰⁰ Despite the great value attached to their labor, the South's enslaved black population did not materially benefit from their employment by the British army. Though slaves who labored for the army escaped arduous plantation labor for a time, they spent their days clearing roads, hauling artillery, constructing fortifications, and tending to the daily needs of the army's cattle, horses, oxen, and prisoners, as well as its men. For southern slaves, the army became yet another demanding taskmaster.

⁹⁸ Governor John Reynolds, "Proposal for Forts in Georgia," 1756, WO 34/34, ff. 178-82, TNA. See also Appendix 10 of the Board of Trade's "Report on His Majesty's Colonies and Plantations in America," May 11, 1756, LO 1137, Loudoun Papers, HL.

⁹⁹ Henry Bouquet to Loudoun, October 16, 1757, LO 4649, Loudoun Papers, HL. On the hire of black slaves for military labor in North Carolina, see Arthur Dobbs to Loudoun, July 10, 1756, LO 1305, Loudoun Papers, HL. Similarly, Governor of Virginia Robert Dinwiddie informed Commissary Charles Dick in 1754, "I shall look out for Negro Coopers, tho' I fear Success, as the Owners of such do not care to part with them." Dinwiddie to Charles Dick, December 12, 1754, in Brock, ed. *Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie*, v. 1, 421.

¹⁰⁰ Charles Steuart to Francis Fauquier, November 9, 1762, Charles Steuart Papers, DMS 55.4, John D. Rockefeller, Jr. Library, Williamsburg, VA (hereafter RL).

Enslaved and free black men and women accompanied General Edward Braddock's British forces on their ill-fated expedition against Fort Duquesne in the summer of 1755. Sir John St. Clair, Deputy Quartermaster General, probably hired or impressed people of African descent along with other locals to labor on behalf of the army. George Croghan reported to Governor of Pennsylvania Robert Hunter Morris that upon marching "his Army into Cumberland County to cut the Roads, press Horses, Wagons, etc.," St. Clair had declared that "he would not suffer a Soldier to handle an axe, but by fire and Sword oblige the Inhabitants to do it."¹⁰¹ Such inhabitants likely included free people of African descent, who, in light of the wages and provisions they would collect, may have embraced the opportunity to serve the army as pioneers and camp followers.

Black men served as batmen, or officers' attendants, as well as pioneers for Braddock's army. Prior to departing from Williamsburg, Braddock remarked to Robert Napier, "There are here Numbers of Mulattoes and free Negroes of whom I shall make Bat Men, whom the province are to furnish with pay and Frocks, being resolv'd to allow none out of the Troops."¹⁰² The Virginia Regiment's officers refused to part with their men, so Braddock turned to the colony's free Blacks to tend to the regular officers' baggage and horses.¹⁰³ Individual officers likely recruited additional batmen of African

¹⁰¹ Wahll, ed., *Braddock Road Chronicles*, 138.

¹⁰² Edward Braddock to Robert Napier, March 17, 1755, in Pargellis, ed., *Military Affairs in North America*, 78. Batmen were also recruited from among those privates who were deemed unfit for service. On April 23, 1755, Braddock ordered his officers to "provide themselves as soon as possible with Bat men out of such recruits and Levies, as are unfit to do the Duty of soldier and such men are to be enlisted as can act as Bat men and are to be taken for any Term and to be allowed as effectives." Wahll, ed., *Braddock Road Chronicles*, 153.

¹⁰³ The number of batmen allowed the provincial versus the regular forces later became a point of contention between Dinwiddie and Washington. Miffed that the Virginia Regiment's officers had routinely

descent before their march to Fort Duquesne. Daniel Disney, adjutant of Sir Peter Halkett's regiment and keeper of his orderly book, noted that "As the Officers will be Allowed no baughtmen Or Servts: from the Regts they are to pitch [sic] upon baggage men in the best manner they Can from the Country people, which the Government will pay for at the rate of 3s-6d per week each man And the same allowence of provisions as the Soldiers."¹⁰⁴ Batmen accrued wages and provisions from the British army, which unfortunately meant that they suffered severe shortages of supplies as they slogged through Virginia's backcountry. A British officer noted in June 1755 that "the Huntsmen got us [the officers] Venison almost every day; but the Soldiers and Bast [Bat] Men begun to find themselves on short allowance."¹⁰⁵ In addition to receiving pay and provisions from the army, batmen marched at the front of the line of battle and were subject to the same discipline as private men; moreover, some of them at least were ordered "to have arms."¹⁰⁶

allowed themselves more batmen than did regular officers, Dinwiddie ordered Washington "only to allow two Bat-men to a Company, & two to yourself, if You have a Livery Servt he may be allowed Provisions with the Soldiery;" he further informed Washington that bat men were "obliged to appear in the Ranks." Dinwiddie to Washington, June 1, 1757, in Abbot, ed., *Papers of George Washington*, v. 4, 176. Washington replied to Dinwiddie that as their batmen had been reduced, he hoped Dinwiddie would establish "an allowance for the expence of keeping them, and for affording other allowances of Waggons, &c. to transport the Officers Baggage and necessaries (which hitherto has always been done at their own private cost)." Washington to Dinwiddie, July 10, 1757, in Abbot, ed., *Papers of George Washington*, v. 4, 291. For additional letters discussing batmen, see Dinwiddie to Washington, May 16, 1757, in Brock, ed. *Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie*, v. 2, 626; Dinwiddie to Washington, June 24 and July 18, 1757, in Abbot, ed., *Papers of George Washington*, v. 4, 254, 312; Washington to Dinwiddie, June 10, 1757, in Abbot, ed., *Papers of George Washington*, v. 4, 193; and Washington to Colonel John Stanwix, June 15, 1757, in Abbot, ed., *Papers of George Washington*, v. 4, 216.

¹⁰⁴ "Halkett's Orderly Book," March 31, 1756, in Charles Hamilton, ed., *Braddock's Defeat* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1959), 73.

¹⁰⁵ "Journal of a British Officer," June 20, 1755, in Hamilton, ed., *Braddock's Defeat*, 44.

¹⁰⁶ "Halkett's Orderly Book," July 13, 1755, 121-22 and Wahll, ed., *Braddock Road Chronicles*, 62. Adjutant Disney noted that "When the Long Roll beats all the Tents are to be Struck and Immediatly Loaded & Repair to the Front of the Line where they are to March Constanly And all the Women are to march Constanly in the rear with the provost. Any Battman or Woman Disobaying this Order will be severly punished."

Local free black men likely served as teamsters as well as batmen for Braddock's army. Virginia planter and slaveholder John Carlyle lent his servant Tobey Wilson a wagon and horses so that he might transport baggage and provisions for the British forces. Carlyle later recounted to his brother in England that "Within three days of the unlucky Engagement but Luckely for him as well as me he was ordered back for another load of wine, which saved him his Scalp, & Me My Wagon & horses."¹⁰⁷ Like batmen, teamsters garnered wages and provisions from the British army, but they also endured the campaign's many hardships.¹⁰⁸ Even those teamsters and servants who escaped the final routing of the British forces suffered periodic assaults by Native Americans along the road to Fort Duquesne. Captain Robert Cholmley's batman, who had accompanied his master from Britain to Virginia, recorded in his journal that on June 25, 1755, the camp had been "Alarmed at four in the Morning by some Indiens firing at our Wagonars fetching in their horses and wounded two in three places, and Scalped one man, a Servt to Major Halket."¹⁰⁹ Had there been no Native Americans to fear along the way, the trek across the Virginia backcountry itself would have taken a toll. Robert Orme described hauling the army's baggage over a mountain in which "the ascent and descent were

¹⁰⁷ John Carlyle to George Carlyle, August 10, 1757, Carlyle Family Papers, Transcript TR 61, RL. Wilson, whom Carlyle freed in May 1755, later "hired himself to Drive Col. Washingtons Teame & Wagon at 20£ Virg. Curancy or 16£ Sterling per year." Wilson's racial identity remains unclear from this letter. Carlyle indicated that Wilson was his servant rather than his slave, but he also notes that Wilson gave him "Sum Trouble with a White Woman Servant I had." Whether or not Wilson was himself of African descent, it is likely that many free black men with access to a wagon and team would have seized upon the opportunity to earn money by serving the British army.

¹⁰⁸ "Halkett's Orderly Book," 34, 93.

¹⁰⁹ "Journal of Captain Robert Cholmley's Batman," June 25, 1755, in Hamilton, ed., *Braddock's Defeat*, 23. A British officer noted on June 24, 1755 that "A Wagoner going out next morning to bring in his horses was surpris'd by a party of Indians who Shot him in 4 places in the belley & his Horse in the Neck, he made shift to return to Camp, but after lingering some days he died; ye same morning 4 people more going out to look after their Horses were killed & scalped." "Journal of a British Officer," June 24, 1755, 45.

almost a perpendicular rock; three waggons entirely destroyed, which were replaced from the camp, and many more were shattered.”¹¹⁰ Charlotte Browne, a British widow and hospital matron who accompanied Braddock’s forces by wagon, complained, “The Roads are so Bad that I am almost disjointed.”¹¹¹

The provincial and regular forces likely employed women of African descent to nurse invalid soldiers as well as to cook their food and launder their linens. On June 5, 1755, Charlotte Browne recorded in her journal of the campaign, “We halted this day, all the Nurses Baking Bread and boiling Beef for the March to Morrow.”¹¹² Adjutant Daniel Disney described the collective bargaining of a group of women who had been hired by Braddock’s army to serve as washerwomen for its invalids. Though they had entered what he described as “a Concert . . . not to serve without Exorbitant Wages,” unfortunately for these women, “a greater number of Women” had been “brought Over Then those Alowd by the Government sufficient for washing.” Having more washerwomen than they needed, the army’s officers determined to have “those who Refuse to serve for six pence a day . . . turned out of Camp And others got in their places.”¹¹³ Those women who remained with the army marched at its rear and faced severe punishment if they disregarded its rules.¹¹⁴ Women suffered enemy attacks alongside the army’s men. On July 6, 1755, Captain Robert Cholmley’s batman recorded that “the French Indiens Attacked our Baggage on the March in the Rear and Scalped a

¹¹⁰ Wahl, ed., *Braddock Road Chronicles*, 230.

¹¹¹ Charlotte Browne Diary, June 2, 1755, MSS 5:1 B8162:1, VHS.

¹¹² Charlotte Browne Diary, June 5, 1755, MSS 5:1 B8162:1, VHS.

¹¹³ “Halkett’s Orderly Book,” March 31, 1756, 76-77.

¹¹⁴ Disney recorded that, “all the Women are to march Constanly in the rear with the provost” and “any . . . Woman Disobaying this Order will be severly punished.” Additionally, “Any Soldier Suttler or Woman or

Soldier and a woman” who “belonged to the genll[’s] Cows.”¹¹⁵ They also tolerated indignities that only female camp followers faced. When Braddock determined that “six Wimen a Company should march up the Cuntry with the men,” he also ordered “Doctors to search and see who was Clean and proper” – meaning free from venereal disease.¹¹⁶ This of course implies that women hired to accompany the army often provided services other than cooking, nursing, and washing for its men.¹¹⁷

A party of skilled French and Native American warriors ambushed soldiers, pioneers, batmen, teamsters, and women alike at the Monongahela River in July 1755. Some black men who officially served as auxiliaries found themselves transformed into soldiers on the field of battle. As the army neared Fort Duquesne, Braddock ordered all batmen to carry a firelock. Thus, the army’s black batmen had the means to defend themselves and their fellow soldiers when their enemies began to fire upon them from behind trees in true guerrilla fashion. Amidst the panic and confusion with which the British regulars greeted this unfamiliar manner of assault, a number of black auxiliaries lost their lives.¹¹⁸ Black teamsters may have taken it upon themselves to carry arms and thus may have withstood the firing of their adversaries alongside batmen of African descent.¹¹⁹ Or they may have joined other drivers of wagons, who, according to a British

Any person what ever belonging to the Army who shall be Detected in Stealing plundering or Wasting any of the Provisions shall suffer Death.” “Halkett’s Orderly Book,” July 13 and June 6, 1755, 121-22, 98.

¹¹⁵ “Journal of Captain Robert Cholmley’s Batman,” July 16, 1755, 25.

¹¹⁶ “Journal of Captain Robert Cholmley’s Batman,” May 20, 1755, 15.

¹¹⁷ On female camp followers, see Peter Way, “Venus and Mars: Women and the British-American Army in the Seven Years’ War,” in *Britain and America Go to War: The Impact of War and Warfare in Anglo-America, 1754-1815*, ed. Julie Flavell and Stephen Conway (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004).

¹¹⁸ Bowman, “Virginia’s Use of Blacks in the French and Indian War,” 59.

¹¹⁹ Paul Kopperman advises that “we should not be too quick to disregard the fighting capabilities” of the two hundred “batmen, sutlers, and wagoners” whom he calculated accompanied Braddock’s army. He

officer, “imagined things would turn out badly” and thus dislodged “the gears from their Horses & galloped quite away.”¹²⁰ The army’s black pioneers and female camp followers, lacking both arms and a means of escape, likely suffered capture or death.

The Seven Years’ War also affected the lives of southern people of African descent who did not work directly for the army. Enslaved and free Blacks living in the backcountry suffered capture and death at the hands of French-allied Native Americans. In June 1756, Indians returned “a negro and two young Indians” along with several additional captives to Virginia’s Fort Vause.¹²¹ In his meticulous chronicle of the Seven Years’ War, which he culled from contemporary newspaper reports, Robert Hale recorded in May 1760 that “2 Engl. Negroes” had been captured by the Cherokee Indians in South Carolina and that a month later, Cherokees attacked a plantation, killing “the whole family” except “the owner & 3 Negroes who escaped.”¹²² While Blacks endured the perils of imperial conflict, they also took advantage of the opportunities that an atmosphere of war offered. John Dagworthy notified Colonel George Washington of the intelligence he had gleaned from a white and a black man who had arrived together at Fort Cumberland in 1757. Dagworthy corroborated their reports, noting that “the whiteman have Examin’d upon Oath . . . and the Negro being separately Examin’d

observes that “the volunteers were armed” and, “more important, so were the batmen.” Paul E. Kopperman, *Braddock at the Monongahela* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1977), 31.

¹²⁰ “Journal of a British Officer,” 52.

¹²¹ Joseph Miller, “Augusta Men in the French and Indian War,” *West Virginia Historical Magazine* 3 (January 1903): 142.

¹²² Robert Hale, “Chronicle,” May 2 and June 2, 1760, French and Indian War Collection, Folio v. 4, American Antiquarian Society, Worcester, MA (hereafter AAS). Hale noted in June 1762, “The Cherokees bro’t in the Prisoners to Fort Pr. George according to the articles of the treay, they were 12 whites (all children between 5 & 12 years old) & 4 Negroes.” Hale, “Chronicle,” June 12, 1762, Folio v. 4, French and Indian War Collection, AAS.

confirms wt the other Says.”¹²³ The two informants had recently visited Fort Duquesne and related valuable information concerning the strength of the French forces there.

While it is unclear whether this particular black man benefited from the intelligence he provided to the British army, black informants did profit on other occasions. Having escaped from Fort Duquesne in 1757, a French slave named François gained an audience with Governor Dinwiddie and recounted to him the French army’s designs upon the Virginia frontier. With no British owner to compensate, it was relatively simple for the governor to award François with his freedom for his testimony.¹²⁴ While colonial officials were less likely to manumit slaves of British owners as recompense for the services they rendered to the army, it is probable that people of African descent seized upon the chaos of war to liberate themselves from bondage.

Enslaved and Free Blacks’ Martial Service in the Northern Theater

In May 1758, Captain Volkert Van Vactor impressed thirty-six enslaved Blacks from Albany slaveholders to “Transport provisions & Stores from Albany to Stillwater for His Majesty’s Service.” At the end of their month-long term of service, Van Vactor submitted an account of the wages due him and his “Company of Neagrees in the Battoe Service,” which listed the names of the slaves who comprised his corps alongside those of their owners. Men like John Lansing’s Harrey and Pomp, Widow Beakman’s Tom, Isaac Tenbroike’s Jan, and Jacob Teneyke’s Jack earned three shillings a day conveying

¹²³ John Dagworthy to George Washington, Fort Cumberland, July 10, 1757, in Abbot, ed., *The Papers of George Washington*, v. 4, 294.

¹²⁴ Bowman, “Virginia’s Use of Blacks in the French and Indian War,” 63. In August 1757, Edmond Atkins, the superintendant of Indian affairs in the Southern district, paid £1.15.0 for the “Subsistence of the French Negro Deserter from Fort du Quesne, brought down to the Governor at Williamsburg, he claiming his Freedom named Frank.” Edmond Atkins, “Accounts with the Colony of Virginia,” October 14, 1757, LO 4640, Loudoun Papers, HL.

supplies from Albany, the staging ground for the northern campaigns of the Seven Years' War, up the Hudson River to Stillwater, a stopover en route to Lake Champlain.¹²⁵ Van Vactor's "Company of Neagrees" transported artillery, provisions, and stores for Major General James Abercromby's army of some 16,000 regular and provincial soldiers in preparation for their assault upon the French Fort Carillon, known to the British as Ticonderoga.¹²⁶ Though their wages likely enriched their owners rather than themselves, these enslaved black bateamen may nonetheless have gained some measure of independence as well as satisfaction from participating alongside free men in the most extensive expedition hitherto undertaken in mainland North America.

Whether as provincial soldiers or as civilians, the northern colonies' enslaved and free Blacks served the British army as artisans, bateamen, cattle and oxen drivers, teamsters, and pioneers during the Seven Years' War. Slaves came to be soldiers either as servants or substitutes for their owners or as runaways whose status recruiters opted not to question. Free black men likely joined provincial companies in pursuit of enlistment bonuses and the prospect of regular provisions and wages. In addition to deploying provincial soldiers of all backgrounds to perform transport service tasks, army officials sought the aid of New York's civilians, including those of African descent.

British military officers impressed some enslaved Blacks into service, but they also found

¹²⁵ "Account of Capt. Van Vactors Comp.y of Neagrees in the Battoe service," May 1758, Oversize Box 1, Folder 3, John Bradstreet Papers, AAS. Captain Volkert Van Vactor's last name is alternatively spelled "Vactor," "Veighter," and "Vacktor" in this document. Van Vactor earned eight shillings a day for a total of £8.16.0 for leading his "Company of Neagrees." At three shillings a day for twenty-two days, the wages due the company as a whole were £111.17.0; this was commensurate with what free men engaged in the bateau and transport service earned. The list of impressed slaves included one named Sue; if we can safely assume that "Sue" was a female name, she may have been the extremely rare woman impressed into the bateau and transport service.

¹²⁶ On the 1758 Battle of Ticonderoga, see Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 240-49.

many slaveholders who happily hired their slaves out to the army as a means of accruing income. Though as slaves they did not have the luxury to choose whether or in what capacity they would contribute to the British war effort, enslaved Blacks who toiled on behalf of the military escaped their owners' supervision for sustained periods of time and engaged in activities in which they could deservedly take pride. Moreover, their owners may well have allowed them to retain a portion of the wages they earned, perhaps enabling some to save enough to free themselves or their family members. Those free black civilians with artisanal skills or access to resources like a wagon and team were able to offer their services to the army on their own terms, rather than enlisting in the army, thereby evading some of the harsh discipline and hardships of soldiering. Like their enlisted brethren, free black civilians likely viewed working for the army as a path toward economic and perhaps also social advancement.

In the early years of the war, when colonial recruitment was ineffective compared with what it would later become, British military commanders could spare relatively few provincial soldiers to perform the essential duty of keeping the army well supplied. Thus, though several thousand enslaved and free soldiers staffed the bateau and transport service under the command of Colonel John Bradstreet, his officers also came to rely upon enslaved and free men from the region surrounding Albany and Schenectady, whom they hired to augment their manpower. Jacob Glen, lieutenant colonel of the Schenectady militia, contended in 1755 that the transport service could not afford to part with those local men who had been ordered to muster in Albany. Glen maintained that ordering Schenectady's men to "be in Arms at Albany . . . will Retard ye Kings Business in Making Batoes, Paddle &c. & wagons to Ride & the Stores, and People to Carry the

Stores up to Oswego,” as “Above a Hundred men Are now Daly Employed in S[ai]d Business out of our Town and I think More will be wanted to the Latter End of this Month.”¹²⁷ Commander-in-Chief Jeffery Amherst too considered crucial the contributions of local men to the transport service; he advised Bradstreet in 1759 that, in order to preserve “a Constant Supply of Provisions,” “Men Wanted for these Batteaus” must be obtained “at any rate” from among “the Country people.”¹²⁸ Dependent upon local men to transport the army’s supplies at the outset of the Seven Years’ War, Bradstreet’s officers offered high wages to those who proffered their services – including men of African descent.

Enslaved Blacks conveyed men and supplies by bateau along the Hudson River toward Lake George and the Mohawk River toward Lake Ontario and, depending upon the season, by wagon or sleigh overland between waterways. Military officials impressed some slaves together with their means of transport. In September 1755, Lieutenant Colonel Jacob Glen impressed Jacob Van Schaick’s bateau along with his slave, Cato, to man it; Van Schaick earned £3.5.0 for his vessel and £4 for Cato’s hire.¹²⁹ On occasion, owners accompanied their slaves as they transported supplies for the army. William and Hendrick Hogan and “their Negro” garnered £7.17.0 for each trip they undertook to Oswego in preparation for General William Shirley’s Niagara expedition in late 1755 and early 1756; John Leyjer and “his Negro” likewise earned a sum total of £73.5.6 for their

¹²⁷ Jacob Glen, May 15, 1755, Box 1, Folder 3, Glen Family Papers, New-York Historical Society Library, New York, NY (Hereafter NYHSL).

¹²⁸ Amherst to Bradstreet, August 10, 1759, WO 34/58, f. 33, TNA.

¹²⁹ “Receipt given by Abm. Yates for payment of a Batoe Pressed for Capt. King and Command,” September 8, 1755, Box 1, Folder 5, Schenectady Boxes, NYHSL. For further examples of slaves being impressed into labor, see Abraham Evertse Wendell, Day Books, 1754-60 and 1760-93, NYHSL.

collective labors.¹³⁰ John Van Veghter and “his Negro” transported items such as pork and bread via bateau to the New York regiment in Half Moon in May 1756, where the British forces were readying themselves for an assault upon Crown Point. Slaves also teamed up with free men who were not their owners while employed by the transport service. “Philip Schuyler’s Negro” joined Bastean Diel and John Van Buerns to convey goods to Half Moon; one of these latter two men may or may not have been the unnamed “Serv[an]t” with whom Schuyler’s slave carried six tierces of bread on one particular occasion. Philip Schuyler’s “man” – perhaps the servant who had paired with Schuyler’s slave – in a separate instance accompanied “John Ten Eyck’s negro” to deliver four barrels of pork and three tierces of bread to the camp. Each two-man team, whether composed of enslaved or free men, earned nine shillings for every completed trip to Half Moon.¹³¹

More often, slaves undertook such journeys on their own or in the company of other slaves. The slaves of Patrick Clark, Widow VanVaghter, Mr. DePeyster, and Benjamin Hylton each earned six pence per load of stores they carted from the waterside to an Albany storehouse on behalf of the British army.¹³² Enslaved men also earned

¹³⁰ Visger, Van Eps, and Van Slyck, “Account of Sundry’s Furnished and Services done for the Niagara Expedition under the Command of General Shirley by order of Messrs Erving, Alexander, & Morris,” June 2, 1755 – September 7, 1756, LO 580, Loudoun Papers, HL.

¹³¹ “An Account of Provisions Sent to Half Moon, in Battoes for the New York Regiment & Carriage,” May – June 1756, Slipcase 1, New York State Commissary-General’s Office Account books, NYHSL. This document offers additional examples of slaves transporting military supplies in the company of free men, as do “General Shirley for Sundrys for the Niagara Expedition,” 1755, Box 9, Folder 2, William Alexander Papers, NYHSL and Visger, Van Eps, and Van Slyck, “Account of Sundry’s Furnished and Services done for the Niagara Expedition under the Command of General Shirley by order of Messrs Erving, Alexander, & Morris,” June 2, 1755 – September 7, 1756, LO 580, Loudoun Papers, HL. A tierce was a cask that held forty-two liquid gallons; it was larger than a barrel but smaller than a hogshead.

¹³² Account, February 19 – December 24, 1760, Oversize Manuscript Box 2, Folder 1, Bradstreet Papers, AAS. “Widow VanVaghter’s Negro,” for instance, hauled “15 Load of Stores with his Cart,” earning the widow £0.7.6 through his toil.

wages for undertaking longer excursions. The team composed of “Claas Vandenberg’s Negro & Cornelius Cuyler’s Negro” ferried barrels of flour and pork and tierces of bread to Half Moon seven times in May 1756; in June, Class Vanderburgh’s slave collaborated instead with “Rutger Vanderbergh’s Negro” for three additional journeys.¹³³ Together with varying numbers of unnamed men, John Visger’s enslaved man transported artillery, provisions, and supplies from Schenectady to Little Falls in 1759 and from Schenectady to Oswego in 1761.¹³⁴ “William Nottingham’s Negro” spent the months of May, June, and July of 1760 conveying stores and provisions from Albany to Schenectady on his own. He was paid ten shillings per day – the same rate offered free men – garnering £15 for his owner as well as the autonomy that came of spending months of solitary time on the road.¹³⁵

British military commanders relied upon local black men’s familiarity with the region surrounding Albany to ensure that their missives, draft animals, and men as well as their supplies reached their proper destination. A slave owned by Jacob Van Slyck earned eight shillings each time he rode to Albany to transmit military correspondence.¹³⁶ A 1758 review of the condition of the army’s wagons found that their horses had been

¹³³ “An Account of Provisions Sent to Half Moon, in Battoes for the New York Regiment & Carriage,” May – June 1756, Slipcase 1, New York State Commissary-General’s Office Account books, NYHSL.

¹³⁴ “Account,” May 2, 1759, Box 2, Folder 4, Bradstreet Papers, AAS and “Account of Monies Paid by Colonel John Bradstreet D.Q.M.G. to the hereafter named persons for themselves and others for serving as Batteaumen in Transporting Provisions Artillery and Stores from Schenectady to Oswego for His Majesty’s Service in 1761,” January 1761, Oversize Box 2, Folder 3, Bradstreet Papers, AAS.

¹³⁵ Account, February 19 – December 24, 1760, Oversize Manuscript Box 2, Folder 1, Bradstreet Papers, AAS. For additional examples of slaves undertaking journeys on their own on behalf of the army, see “An Account of Cartage of Provisions for the Expedition against Crown Point,” 1756, Slipcase 1, New York State Commissary-General’s Office Account books, NYHSL; Visger, Van Eps, and Van Slyck, “Account of Sundry’s Furnished and Services done for the Niagara Expedition under the Command of General Shirley by order of Messrs Erving, Alexander, & Morris,” June 2, 1755 – September 7, 1756, LO 580, Loudoun Papers, HL; and Van Slyck, Visger, & Van Eps, Account, 1756, LO 2614, Loudoun Papers, HL.

¹³⁶ Van Slyck, Visger, & Van Eps, Account, 1756, LO 2614, Loudoun Papers, HL.

subject to “ill usage,” which the wagon masters attributed to the fact that “great Numbers have been sent Expresses,” as “any Negro coming in Mr. Scylers Name had orders to get Horses and [they were] given Accordingly.”¹³⁷ In addition to borrowing the army’s horses to deliver messages, local enslaved Blacks hunted for them, as well as for the army’s cattle and oxen, when they lost their way. The slaves of Hedrick Bleeker, Widow Queman, John Roseboom, and Evert Wendell, among others, earned wages for rounding up stray horses and oxen from the forest surrounding Albany. Slaves who searched the woods but located no animals received three shillings a day while those who safely ushered them home earned between two and eight shillings per animal – perhaps based upon how far they had journeyed to guide them back to Albany.¹³⁸ Some slaves made a habit of hunting for lost draft animals. In 1760 “Capt. Hollan’s Negro” gathered twenty-four total oxen over the course of three searches, garnering him over £5, while in 1761 he earned £3.16.0 for delivering nineteen stray oxen to Albany on a single occasion.¹³⁹

Slaves also drove oxen from one army camp to another. A team composed of four free men and “one negro of Hendrick Fonda’s” accompanied twenty-nine oxen from Albany

¹³⁷ Patrick McGee, “Certificate of the Condition of the Kings Waggon Establishment at Albany,” November 10, 1758, AB 970, James Abercromby Papers, HL. Much to the consternation of their fellow soldiers, slaves had access to the army’s supplies as well as its horses. George Demler, in a 1756 report on the state of Oswego, bemoaned the fact that “Mr. Lewis, Commissary, kept the Key [to the storehouse] and sent his Negro and other Servants there daily,” while the fort’s soldiers suffered from severe shortages of bedding, clothing, and provisions. George Demler, “Report on the State of Oswego,” May 28, 1756, LO 1185, Loudoun Papers, HL.

¹³⁸ “Account . . . in full for Grazing his Majesty’s Horses & Oxen also for taking up & Bringing to Albany Horses & Oxen strayed out of His Majesty’s Pastures, &c.” February – December 1760, Oversize Manuscript Box 2, Folder 1, Bradstreet Papers, AAS. This account lists nine slaves who collected horses and oxen on behalf of the army, some of whom did so on several occasions.

¹³⁹ “Account . . . in full for Grazing his Majesty’s Horses & Oxen also for taking up & Bringing to Albany Horses & Oxen strayed out of His Majesty’s Pastures, &c.” February – December 1760, Oversize Manuscript Box 2, Folder 1, Bradstreet Papers, AAS and “Account . . . in full for Grazing his Majesty’s Horses & Oxen, also for Taking up & Bringing to Albany Horses & Oxen strayed out of His Majesty’s Pastures, &c.” 1761, Oversize Manuscript Box 2, Folder 5, Bradstreet Papers, AAS.

to Oswego for the 1756 expedition against Niagara, earning six shillings each per day.¹⁴⁰ Local black men served as guides for the British army's men as well as for its animals. In 1754, risking his personal safety, "a Canada Molatto named Pickott show'd Governor Shirley the way to the River Chaudiere." A British commander reported that "there were a number of Indians hunting after him to put him to death" for what they no doubt deemed Pickott's betrayal.¹⁴¹ To warrant the attention and wrath of French-allied Native Americans, Pickott was likely a man of great import. Whether he was enslaved or free, his knowledge of the Canadian countryside made him a troubling turncoat to the French and an advantageous ally of the British.

Free as well as enslaved civilians of African descent worked for the British army. It is impossible to determine how many free Blacks embraced the opportunity to labor on behalf of the army, as military accounts seldom described the racial background of those free men to whom money was owed. In a rare instance, a 1760 account listed a man who earned three shillings and six pence for carting seven loads of stores from the water's edge to an Albany storehouse as "Marseilis, Negroe." Marseilis was likely a free man, as the account includes only his name and not that of an owner to whom his wages were due.¹⁴² On occasion, a man's name indicated him as being of African descent. For example, Negro Cuff served as a wagon driver in the Albany region in December 1758, when he earned eleven shillings and six pence for a week's labor, as well as during the

¹⁴⁰ Account, August – October 1756, Box 9, Folder 2, William Alexander Papers, NYHSL.

¹⁴¹ Captain John Hamilton to Dr. Silvester Gardiner, December 2, 1754, enclosed in a letter of Governor William Shirley, January 24, 1755, v. 40, f. 152, Parkman Papers, MHS.

¹⁴² Account, February 19 – December 24, 1760, Oversize Manuscript Box 2, Folder 1, Bradstreet Papers, AAS.

spring of 1759, when he received two pounds and six shillings a month.¹⁴³ Like those of Marseilis and unlike those of slaves who were usually listed as possessions of particular men or women, Cuff's accounts listed him as the sole beneficiary of his labors. Free black men, who likely labored in greater numbers than can be readily gleaned from the historical record, received the same wages as others who offered their services to the British army.

Enslaved and free provincial soldiers of all backgrounds toiled alongside hired civilians as bateaumen, teamsters, and pioneers when they were not attending to their more explicitly martial duties. Military commanders detached privates from provincial companies to compose working teams and paid them an additional shilling per day for their manual labor. These detached soldiers aided hired civilians as well as the men enlisted in Colonel John Bradstreet's bateau and transport service in the performance of a range of assignments. They conveyed artillery, provisions, and stores from one military camp to another. They felled trees to clear roads and sawed timber for use in the manufacture of buildings and boats. They constructed barracks, storehouses, and fortifications as well as seagoing vessels of various sizes for navigating streams, rivers, and lakes. They tended to the cattle, horses, and oxen that served the army as both draft animals and sustenance. In addition to completing such tasks, provincial soldiers, including those of African descent, trained for war, guarded encampments, undertook scouting missions, and confronted their adversaries in skirmishes and sieges.

¹⁴³ "Weekly Pay Bill of the Waggon Drivers &c." December 21-27, 1758, Oversize Box 1, Folder 4, Bradstreet Papers, AAS; "A Monthly Pay Bill for the Waggon Masters, Drivers, &c." May 18, 1759, Box 1, Folder 1, Bradstreet Papers, AAS; and "A Monthly Pay Bill for the Waggon Masters, Drivers, &c." June 6, 1759, Box 1, Folder 1, Bradstreet Papers, AAS.

The accounts and muster rolls of the northern colonies' provincial forces, as well as those of the bateau and transport service, are replete with names of men of African descent. Men such as London, Nash, Primos, Thomas, and William, together with many other provincial soldiers whose single first names followed by the designations "negro," "mulatto," or "mustee" appear in the records of the bateau and transport service, were likely enslaved.¹⁴⁴ Casar, whose single name and the fact that he was born in "Guiney" imply that he may have been an enslaved black man, served in Captain John Mayhew's company of Massachusetts provincials in 1759.¹⁴⁵ Black Tom, also probably a slave, served in the Massachusetts forces under Captain John McKeen from June through December 1759, earning three shillings a day for a total of over £20.¹⁴⁶ Soldiers whose first names and surnames were accompanied by the descriptions "negro," "mulatto," or

¹⁴⁴ London, a Connecticut provincial, served as a bateaman and teamster under Ensign Samuel White between May and November 1761. "Account of Money Paid by Capt. George Coventry . . . to the Undermentioned men Drafted from the Connecticut Provincial Troops for & Employed as Teamsters & Battoemen in His Majestys Service Under the Command of Ensign Samuel White," December 1761, Oversize Manuscript Box 2, Folder 6, Bradstreet Papers, AAS. Nash served as a teamster under Captain Robert Kinnear in the bateau and transport service between January and May 1761. He earned two shillings a day for his service. "Account of Monies paid by Lieut. George Coventry . . . to Robert Kinnear & Company for their Service as Waggon drivers, Timber Cutters & Battoemen in his Majestys Service," May, 12, 1761, Oversize Manuscript Box 2, Folder 5, Bradstreet Papers, AAS. Primos, a provincial in Colonel Phineas Lyman's regiment, served as a bateaman and teamster under Conductor of Ox Teams Henry Van Bergen between May and November 1759. "Account of A Detachment from Col. Lymans Provincial Regiment Employed as Teamsters & Battoemen in His Majesty's Service under the Command of Henry Van Bergen Conductor of Ox Teams," December 24, 1759, Oversize Manuscript Box 1, Folder 5, Bradstreet Papers, AAS. Thomas was detached from the New York forces to transport provisions from Oswego Falls to Fort Ontario in October 1761. "Account of Moneys Paid by Col. John Bradstreet D.Q.M. General to the hereafter Named Detachment belonging to the New York Forces Under the Command of Lieut. Barak Snethen," 1761, Box 1, Folder 2, Bradstreet Papers, AAS. William, a Massachusetts provincial, served as a bateaman and team driver under Director of Ox Teams Allen McLean between May and November 1760. "Account of Monies Paid by Lieut. George Coventry . . . to a Detachment of the Massachusetts Troops being drafted for & Employed as Battoemen & Team Drivers in his Majestys Service under the Command of Allen McLean Director," December 3, 1760, Oversize Manuscript Box 2, Folder 2, Bradstreet Papers, AAS.

¹⁴⁵ "List of the . . . Provincial Regiment commanded by Col. John Thomas, raised in the Year 1759," John Thomas Papers, Reel One, MHS.

¹⁴⁶ "Ballances of Capt. John McKeens' Company," Massachusetts Book of Balances, 1759, Oversize Manuscript Box, French and Indian War Collection, AAS.

“mustee” on muster rolls as well as those who went by names like Cuffee Cuffe, Quacko Briggs, Sippio Gates, Pompe Messenger, or Caesar Talbury may have been either enslaved or free men of African descent.¹⁴⁷ Unfortunately for the historian of black soldiers in the Seven Years’ War, documents often lack the information necessary to confirm that a man was of African descent. Denis Daniel served as a private in Captain Jacobus Wynkoop’s company of bateaumen throughout 1756. Though the muster rolls of Wynkoop’s company gave no inkling of his ethnic background, an account in Deputy Quartermaster General Sir John St. Clair’s receipt book noted that Daniel was a “negro.” Had the scribe who penned this account opted not to record his observation of Daniel’s complexion, there would have been no way to identify him as having been of African descent.¹⁴⁸ It may thus be assumed that many more black men served as soldiers than may be gleaned from the historical record.

¹⁴⁷ For Cuffe Cuffe and Pompe Messenger, see *Muster Rolls of New York Provincial Troops, 1755-1764* (New York: New York Historical Society, 1891), 206-7, 284-85, 70-71, 138-39. For Sippio Gates, see Col. William Henshaw, Orderly Book, 1759, Box 4, Item 1, Henshaw Family Papers, AAS. For Quacko Briggs and Caesar Talbury, see Howard M. Chapin, *Rhode Island in the Colonial Wars: A List of Rhode Island Soldiers & Sailors in the Old French & Indian War, 1755-1762* (1918; repr., Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1994), 40, 136.

¹⁴⁸ “Account of the Captain Jacobus Wynkoops Company of Battoemen Commencing the 25th day of June 1756 and ending the 24th day of July following,” October 14, 1756, Oversize Box 1, Folder 1, Bradstreet Papers, AAS; “Account of Jacobus Wynkoop’s Company of Battoemen, Commencing the 25th day of July and ending the 24th day of August following,” October 14, 1756, Oversize Box 1, Folder 1, Bradstreet Papers, AAS; “Account of Jacobus Wynkoop’s Company of Battoemen, Commencing the 25th day of August and ending the 24th day of September following,” October 14, 1756, Oversize Box 1, Folder 1, Bradstreet Papers, AAS; “Account of Jacobus Wynkoop’s Company of Battoemen, Commencing the 25th day of September and ending the 7th day of October following,” October 14, 1756, Oversize Box 1, Folder 1, Bradstreet Papers, AAS; “Account of Captain Jacobus Wynkoop, Company of Battoe-men,” March 18, 1756, Sir John St. Clair’s Receipt Book for Bateau Service in New York, Folio v. 5, French and Indian War Collection, AAS. Similarly, Harold Selesky notes in his study of Connecticut provincial soldiers in the Seven Years’ War: “More black men undoubtedly served, but they are impossible to distinguish by name alone. An advertisement for deserters, for example, described twenty-three-year-old Hezekiah Wright of Norwich as a “molatto,” but the fact that he was a black man is evident nowhere else in the record.” Harold Selesky, *War and Society in Colonial Connecticut* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 174.

Because muster rolls only sporadically offer an indication of a private's racial identity, it is impossible to determine precisely how many black men served as soldiers in the northern colonies' provincial forces. Those men who may be distinguished as having been of African descent made up only a very small percentage of the companies to which they belonged. In 1756, twenty-five recognizably black men appeared on the muster rolls of Connecticut's provincial forces; these men constituted about 1% of the total number of Connecticut troops that year.¹⁴⁹ In a published list of Rhode Island's provincials during the Seven Years' War, twenty-two men have names that signify that they were of African descent. As this list seldom makes mention of a private's complexion, the number of black soldiers in the colony was likely much greater.¹⁵⁰ Some seventy-five New York provincials may be ascertained as likely having been of African descent from a published collection of the colony's muster rolls.¹⁵¹ In a rare instance, black and indigenous troops composed almost a quarter of one Suffolk County, New York company. This, however, was an anomaly explained by the comparatively high proportion of enslaved Blacks who populated the county. In the vast majority of cases, at most a handful of black men staffed any one provincial unit.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁹ Selesky, *War and Society in Colonial Connecticut*, 174. Connecticut counted 128,212 Whites and 3,587 Blacks among its inhabitants in 1756. "Answers returned to the Queries sent the Governor and Company of His Majesty's Colony of Connecticut from the Right Honorable the Lords Commissions for Trade and Plantations," 1762, Miscellaneous Bound Manuscripts, MHS.

¹⁵⁰ Chapin, *List of Rhode Island Soldiers & Sailors in the Old French & Indian War*. A relatively small number of black soldiers in Rhode Island would be unsurprising, however, as when presented with a choice black Rhode Islanders likely opted to serve aboard privateers rather than in the colony's provincial forces. In 1755, Rhode Island had 5,265 enlisted soldiers though it required all able-bodied men, white and black, to keep arms in their homes. Board of Trade, "Report on His Majesty's Colonies and Plantations in America," May 11, 1756, LO 1137, Loudoun Papers, HL.

¹⁵¹ *Muster Rolls of New York Provincial Troops*.

¹⁵² Scott Padani, "The Role of Blacks in New York's Northern Campaigns of the Seven Years' War," *Bulletin of the Fort Ticonderoga Museum* 16 (1999): 157.

The black men who served as provincials in New York tended to be young laborers who had been born in the colony. While New York's identifiably black soldiers ranged from ages sixteen to fifty-two, 34% were teenagers, 45% were in their twenties, 11% were in their thirties, 9% were in their forties, and one man was over fifty years of age. Some came from throughout the Atlantic world, though the majority had not traveled far to become soldiers. Sixty-four percent of these men were recorded as having been born in New York, 11% were from elsewhere in mainland North America, 11% had migrated from the West Indies, 11% hailed from Europe, and 3% had been born in Africa. According to the rolls, 66% of New York's black soldiers were laborers in peacetime, 6% were mariners, 5% were farmers, and 20% were artisans, among them a blacksmith, a blockmaker, a carpenter, a cooper, two cordwainers, a shoemaker, a tanner, two tailors, and three weavers. Of seventy-seven recognizably black men, sixteen were identified on the rolls by only a single name, suggesting that at least 20% of New York's black soldiers were enslaved.¹⁵³

Enslaved Blacks entered the provincial forces as servants or substitutes for free men or as runaways who passed themselves off as free men. Some slaves accompanied their owners to war as menservants. Others enlisted as substitutes for those slaveholders who wanted to avoid being forced to leave their county, and thus their families and businesses or farms, when they were drafted from their militia companies into the provincial forces. A number of slaves became volunteers with the blessing of their owners, who benefited from the bounties and wages they accrued from their service.

¹⁵³ *Muster Rolls of New York Provincial Troops.*

Many slaves likely took advantage of the British military's desperate need for men to flee their masters and present themselves to recruiters as free men.¹⁵⁴

Some slaves enlisted in a northern colony's provincial unit for only a single term while others served successively throughout the Seven Years' War. "Ceasor Neagro" earned £15.4.7 as a soldier in Captain John Burk's company of Massachusetts provincials between April and November 1757.¹⁵⁵ September, a "negro" mariner from Guinea, entered the New York provincial forces in Albany in 1761 and remained in service for at least a year.¹⁵⁶ Benjamin, a "negro" from Bristol, joined Rhode Island's provincial forces following the French siege of Fort William Henry in 1757. Fearing that if Fort William Henry fell, all of New England would follow, Rhode Island swiftly drafted one sixth of its militiamen – some one thousand men – to assist in the fort's defense. Benjamin's owner may have balked at the notion of abandoning his home to march to the aid of New York and may thus have offered Benjamin to serve in his stead. Benjamin remained in service throughout 1757 and enrolled once again in 1761.¹⁵⁷ Dick, described as "a negro," reenlisted in the Massachusetts provincial forces four times and thus served continuously between March 1759 and December 1761; he earned three shillings a day,

¹⁵⁴ Padeni, "Role of Blacks in New York's Northern Campaigns," 156 and Selesky, *War and Society in Colonial Connecticut*, 159.

¹⁵⁵ "Muster Roll of the Company in His Majesty's Service under the Command of John Burk," February 23, 1757, Oversize Manuscript Box, French and Indian War Collection, AAS.

¹⁵⁶ *Muster Rolls of New York Provincial Troops*, 418-19 and Cruger, Robinson, and Livingston, "Accounts of pay to officers and men, and the estates of deceased soldiers, 1760-1764," v. 2, New York State Commissary-General's Office Account books, NYHSL.

¹⁵⁷ Chapin, *List of Rhode Island Soldiers & Sailors in the Old French & Indian War*, 10, 104.

garnering him or his owner some £150 New York currency for his three years of service.¹⁵⁸

Only in rare instances is it possible to determine whether enslaved men enlisted as soldiers at the behest of or in defiance of their owners. Boston Burn likely served as a ranger under the famous Robert Rogers with the knowledge and support of his owner, James Burn of Massachusetts. When he was on a reconnaissance mission against the French Fort Carillon in early 1758, Boston Burn was discovered and held prisoner by the French. Hoping to secure his release, James Burn reported his slave's captivity to the Massachusetts government but it is unclear whether Boston Burn ever returned to his owner.¹⁵⁹ Conversely, Tony Hazard, whom his owner described in a *New-York Mercury* advertisement as being "between an Indian and a Negro," fled his owner, "passed for a free man," and joined the New York provincials.¹⁶⁰

Though slaves were not explicitly offered freedom for their military service, some slaves joined precisely because they viewed the military as an avenue to liberty. One Massachusetts commentator remarked in the aftermath of the Seven Years' War that the

¹⁵⁸ It is of course possible that the five separate enlistments of "Dick, a negro" represent the service of different men, but as there is no overlap in terms of service, I believe it is safe to assume that they refer to the same man. "Balances due to Capt. Flinns' Company," Massachusetts Book of Balances, 1759, Oversize Manuscript Box, French and Indian War Collection, AAS; "Account of Monies Paid by Lieut. George Coventry . . . to John Wilbeck & Company Employed as Waggon Drivers, Wood Cutters & Battoemen in his Majesty's Service," May 11, 1760, Oversize Manuscript Box 2, Folder 1, Bradstreet Papers, AAS; "Account of Monies Paid by Lieut. George Coventry . . . to Philip Rilley Capt. & Company being hired for & Employed as Battoemen & Waggon drivers in his Majesty's Service," December 24, 1760, Oversize Manuscript Box 2, Folder 2, Bradstreet Papers, AAS; "Account of Monies paid by Lieut. George Coventry . . . to Richard O Neal & Company for their Service as Waggon drivers, Timber Cutters & Battoemen in his Majestys Service," May 12, 1761, Oversize Manuscript Box 2, Folder 5, Bradstreet Papers, AAS; and "Account of Monies Paid by Captain George Coventry . . . to Robert Kinnear & Company Being Hired for and Employed as Waggon drivers and Battoemen in his Majestys Service," December 11, 1761, Oversize Manuscript Box 2, Folder 6, Bradstreet Papers, AAS.

¹⁵⁹ Padeni, "Role of Blacks in New York's Northern Campaigns," 165.

number of slaves in the colony had markedly diminished “because in the two preceding wars, many of them were enlisted either into the army or on board vessels of war, with a view to procure their freedom.”¹⁶¹ Despite the fact that servants and slaves could only legally be enlisted with the express permission of their masters, many desperate recruiters opted to ignore any ambiguity regarding the status of able men of African descent. Negro Ben, an enslaved African who later took the surname Dawson, enlisted in Connecticut’s provincial forces “under an expectation of thereby obtaining his freedom, of which however by some means he was disappointed.” It is unclear how Ben, who had changed owners several times after his importation from Africa, came to enroll in the army. What is clear is that instead of obtaining his freedom at the close of his term of service, Ben became the property of a man named Dawson and did not gain his liberty until after his owner’s death.¹⁶² Though Ben was frustrated in his attempt to obtain his freedom, the military nevertheless presented others with the opportunity to escape their owners and to remake themselves with the wages and land bounties they earned as soldiers.

The military may have served as a path to freedom both for runaway slaves and for enslaved men who became soldiers at their owners’ command. Slaves whose masters knew of their service and allowed them to retain a portion of their wages may have been able to accrue enough income to purchase their freedom. Enslaved men who anticipated no such prospect of freedom may have seized upon the relative lack of supervision they experienced as soldiers to liberate themselves from their owners as well as the army. In

¹⁶⁰ *New-York Mercury*, November 24, 1760, quoted in Thomas Agostini, “‘Deserted His Majesty’s Service’: Military Runaways, the British-American Press, and the Problem of Desertion during the Seven Years’ War,” *Journal of Social History* 40 (Summer 2007): 960.

¹⁶¹ Quoted in Quarles, “Colonial Militia and Negro Manpower,” 652.

May 1763, James Richardson of Rhode Island placed an advertisement in a newspaper seeking his slave, who had deserted from the provincial forces earlier that year.¹⁶³

Richardson's slave may not have departed on his own. Those runaway slaves who did not find the military itself a refuge may nonetheless have found companionship in its disaffected men. John Lloyd advertised in seven newspapers that despite having been fastened with an iron collar and chain, his "Negro Man Servant, named CYRUS" had absconded. As Cyrus had previously been seen in the company of two deserters from the British regular forces, Lloyd feared he would once again "consort" with such men.¹⁶⁴ Though it was far from a certain conduit to liberty, the military nonetheless offered some enslaved men new opportunities as well as new collaborators in their quest for freedom.

Free black soldiers, like those of European and indigenous descent, became provincial soldiers by volunteering, by being impressed into service, or by being drafted from their militia company. James Sands, a nineteen-year-old "negro" tanner whose nationality was listed as "Amarican," enlisted in Captain Barnaby Byrn's company of New York provincials in 1760.¹⁶⁵ John Swift was one of fourteen men "inlisted" or "impressed for His Majesty's Service in the intended Expedition against Canada" in 1758.¹⁶⁶ While many young black volunteers lacked prior military training, others came to the provincial forces by way of their local militia units. Francis Matysa, a thirty-nine-year-old cordwainer, William Sisco, a forty-year-old laborer, and Ned Waters, a forty-

¹⁶² Selesky, *War and Society in Colonial Connecticut*, 175.

¹⁶³ Quarles, "Colonial Militia and Negro Manpower," 652.

¹⁶⁴ Quoted in Agostini, "'Deserted His Majesty's Service,'" 970.

¹⁶⁵ *Muster Rolls of New York Provincial Troops*, 300-01.

¹⁶⁶ "Return of the Men inlisted and impressed for His Majesty's Service in the intended Expedition against Canada," April 28, 1758, Miscellaneous Bound MSS, MHS.

five-year-old laborer – all black militiamen in Captain Cornelius Haring’s company – volunteered to join the same New York provincial unit in March 1759.¹⁶⁷ Matysa, Sisco, and Waters likely decided to enroll in the provincial forces together but not all militiamen controlled the terms of their martial service. William Pumpson, a thirty-year-old “mulatto” laborer from Long Island, was “detached” – perhaps with little choice in the matter – from Captain John Weesner’s militia company to serve in the New York provincials in April 1759.¹⁶⁸

Many free black soldiers reenlisted time and again in the northern colonies’ provincial forces. Joshua George, a “mulatto” from North Kingstown, served in three different Rhode Island provincial companies in 1757, 1758, and 1762.¹⁶⁹ Prince Freeman, a “free Negro” from Colchester, first enrolled in Captain Henry Champion’s company of Connecticut provincials in May 1758; he served five additional times before being discharged from duty in 1762.¹⁷⁰ Those free black men who became convinced of the benefits of military service may have persuaded others to join them as soldiers. Samuel Kellogg, listed as a “negro” on a muster roll of Captain Gershom Bulkley’s company of Connecticut provincials in 1758, appeared again without a racial designation on a 1759 muster roll of the same company. Kellogg likely convinced the male members

¹⁶⁷ Muster Rolls, Orange and Ulster Counties, 1759, Box 8, Folder 1, Frederick Ashton De Peyster MSS, NYHSL.

¹⁶⁸ “Muster Roll of the men Raised and Past Muster in the County of Orange for Capt. James Howell’s Company,” April 14, 1759, Muster Rolls, Orange and Ulster Counties, 1759, Box 8, Folder 1, Frederick Ashton De Peyster MSS, NYHSL. Many black soldiers were detached from their local militia units into the New York provincial forces. For myriad examples, see *Muster Rolls of New York Provincial Troops*.
¹⁶⁹ Chapin, *List of Rhode Island Soldiers & Sailors in the Old French & Indian War*, 71.

¹⁷⁰ “A List of Capt. Henry Champion’s Company of Colchester Men,” 1758, Box 1, Folder 9, French and Indian War Papers, Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, CT (hereafter CHS); “A Roll of the 12th Company in the Second Regiment Raised in the Colony of Connecticut,” 1758, Box 1, Folder 9, French and Indian War Papers, CHS; “Abstract of Accounts against Capt. Azeb Fitch’s Company,” 1761, Box 1,

of his family to serve alongside him, as three additional men with his surname appear on the 1759 roll.¹⁷¹ The simultaneous service of family members may not have been uncommon. William Wildey, a forty-eight-year-old “swarthy” laborer from England, served in the New York provincials in 1761 alongside his son, William Wildey, Jr., a seventeen-year-old “negro” laborer who had been born in New Jersey.¹⁷² Similarly, forty-seven-year-old Peter Lucas and his son, twenty-four-year-old Peter Lucas, Jr., both “negro” laborers from Orange County, enlisted in Captain James Howell’s New York provincial company in April 1759.¹⁷³ Free black brothers George, Joseph, and John Bush of Massachusetts all became provincial soldiers during the Seven Years’ War. The Bush family experienced much anguish as a result of their sons’ service; George perished at the Battle of Lake George in 1755, Joseph likely died of disease while in service at Lake George in 1755, and John expired while en route to France following his imprisonment after the capitulation of Fort William Henry in 1757.¹⁷⁴

Not all free black men found the provincial forces hospitable. In July 1759, Prince Storr of Windham County voluntarily enlisted in the Connecticut provincial forces, collected his bounty and advance wages, and marched to Albany to “Invest Canada & Carry Warr onto the Enemies Possessions.” Rather than partake in the intended expedition, however, Storr deserted his company soon after his arrival in

Folder 25, French and Indian War Papers, CHS; and Selesky, *War and Society in Colonial Connecticut*, 177.

¹⁷¹ “Muster Roll of Capt. Bulkley’s Company of Colchester Men,” 1758, Box 1, Folder 8, French and Indian War Papers, CHS and “Muster Roll of the North Military Company in the first Society in Colchester,” 1759, Box 1, Folder 10, French and Indian War Papers, CHS.

¹⁷² “Muster Roll of the men rais’d & pass’d in the County of Albany for Capt. Christopher Yates Company,” May 19, 1761, NYHSL.

¹⁷³ “Muster Roll of the men Raised and Past Muster in the County of Orange for Capt. James Howell’s Company,” April 14, 1759, Box 8, Folder 1, Frederick Ashton De Peyster MSS, NYHSL.

Albany.¹⁷⁵ It seems Storr was not alone in abandoning the provincial corps shortly following enlistment. Commander-in-Chief William Shirley complained in 1755 that the troops “suffered cruelly by Desertion of Battoe Men, after being impress’d and even proceeding part of the Way with us,” as their desertion precipitated a “want of Provisions for any Service.”¹⁷⁶ Storr, like many others, may have found life as a provincial soldier too harsh to bear. Unfortunately, the desertion or death of soldiers meant additional hardship for those who remained in service.

In addition to the ordeal of arduous labor, civilians and soldiers of African descent who toiled on behalf of the British army endured the sickness that ran rampant in the camps and the severity of northern winters. William Shirley lamented in 1755 that “the Troops are so much reduced by Desertion and Sickness, and Absence of Detachments upon Parties and Command.”¹⁷⁷ Henry Hamilton commented in his journal of the siege of Quebec that “Scurvy had layed hold on the Soldiery” and “consumption . . . was prodigious” at the garrison.¹⁷⁸ If black men managed to eschew becoming ill, they could still fall prey to the effects of exposure to the bitter cold. Commander-in-Chief Jeffery Amherst noted in his chronicle of events that on December 3, 1759, “a man of the Royal one of late Prideaux’s and a Negro were frose to death last night” while on board sloops awaiting an opportunity to sail northward from Albany.¹⁷⁹

¹⁷⁴ Padeni, “Role of Blacks in New York’s Northern Campaigns,” 161-63.

¹⁷⁵ “Desertion of Prince Storr,” October 10, 1759, Box 1, Folder 3, French and Indian War Papers, CHS.

¹⁷⁶ William Shirley to Stephen Hopkins, September 9, 1755, William Shirley Papers, MHS.

¹⁷⁷ Shirley to Hopkins, September 9, 1755, Shirley Papers, MHS.

¹⁷⁸ Henry Hamilton, Journal, f. 75, Ms N-2087 (oversize), MHS.

¹⁷⁹ Amherst to William Pitt, December 16, 1759, v. 43, f. 178, Parkman Papers, MHS.

Those men of African descent who survived illness and the elements nevertheless had to contend with attacks by enemy soldiers. In March 1756, William Williams reported to the Earl of Loudoun that “a Negroe belonging to Capt. Lanceys Battoes came running in & informed” him that less than a mile from the German Flats, he had witnessed “six Indians rise up from behind a Log” to ambush a caravan of British bateaux. These French-allied Native Americans “flung their Hatchets & let up a Yell upon which he ran off.”¹⁸⁰ Upon receipt of the black bateaman’s intelligence, Williams sent a party of men to confront the enemy, no doubt with the black bateaman as their guide. Often bateamen were forced to stand their ground and confront the enemy. In 1756, 250 British American bateamen under the command of Captain John Bradstreet were ambushed by 400 Canadians, 100 French regulars, and 100 Native Americans who had been “Waiting some time for an Opportunity to cutt Capt. Bradstreet off with his convoy of Provisions in his Passage to Oswego.” Under heavy fire, a small contingent of the bateamen retreated to an island and from thence repulsed several French attempts to ford the river. Determined to engage their adversaries, the bateamen “quitted the Island and Marched to meet them, & engaged about 400 of them in a Swamp; where, after Maintaining a Sharpe fight with them in the Indian Way upwards of an hour, [Bradstreet] prevail’d on his Men to rush into the Swamp upon them, and drive them precipitately into the River, in which Many of them were kill’d.” From the flotsam of abandoned “Firelocks, Hatchets, and scalping knives,” the British determined that the French had lost over 100 men in the engagement, while the bateamen lost some twenty of their

¹⁸⁰ William Williams to Loudoun, March 27, 1756, LO 973, Loudoun Papers, HL.

crew.¹⁸¹ Due to the persistent risk of enemy assault, those men engaged in transport duty routinely armed themselves. Henry Hamilton remarked that, following the successful conquest of Quebec, “the Wood for the Garrison was brought in on Sleds, drawn by the men who were under the necessity of taking their arms for security.”¹⁸² Though Hamilton was referring to soldiers who opted to carry their muskets while conveying goods, it is likely that civilians who had access to weapons took similar precautions.

In addition to the menace posed by the enemy, men of African descent faced threats from their supposed allies. Tom, an enslaved man owned by sawyer Abraham Evertse Wendell of Albany, often transported lumber and correspondence for the British army during the early years of the Seven Years’ War. While Tom had routinely delivered lumber to private citizens in the Albany area prior to the war, laboring on behalf of the army offered him new liberties while simultaneously subjecting him to new exploitations. The conflict allowed Tom to venture further from Albany than he had before; he undertook several long journeys to Oswego, which released him from Wendell’s supervision for sustained periods of time. Unfortunately, escape from Wendell’s immediate oversight exposed Tom to mistreatment by other authorities. In July 1758, Wendell recorded in his day book, “Last night Captain Brient’s Man beat and brused my negro . . . so that he Lay in the bed not fit to Do Eney thing.” The beating Tom suffered was so severe that spectators had “thought that the negro was dead.” Wendell learned from these witnesses that the captain had suspected Tom of stealing his horse, so he had

¹⁸¹ William Shirley to Henry Fox, July 26, 1756, PRO v. 82, ff. 225-30, Parkman Papers, MHS. For a description of an engagement between British bateaumen and French-allied Indians in which the British did not fare as well, see Jeffery Amherst to William Pitt, June 19, 1759, PRO v. 90, ff. 41-56, Parkman Papers, MHS.

detained and abused him “all night” until “it was Light” when he saw “that it was my horse” and not the captain’s that Tom had in his possession. Tom likely remained bedridden for several months as Wendell himself transported loads of lumber to clients well into 1759.¹⁸³

The imperial conflict could also have a negative impact on the lives of people of African descent who did not themselves work for or join the army. Those slaves whose owners died while serving as soldiers faced potential dislocation and separation from family members. Colonel Ephraim Williams, who died at the Battle of Lake George in 1755, specified in the will he made at an army camp that in the event of his death, his two brothers were to equally divide “the Whole of my Stock & Cattle & Negro Servants on [his] Farm at Stockbridge.”¹⁸⁴ Even if their owners did not die, slaves were forced to take on extra responsibilities in their absence. Daniel Brainerd, Jr. of East Haddam, Connecticut petitioned in 1757 to obtain a release from service, explaining that if he were to join the provincial forces, there would be “No Man but my Negro boy about 14 or 15 years old to take Care” of his wife and four small children.¹⁸⁵ Brainerd, Jr. may have received permission to remain home, but it is likely that many slaves shouldered great burdens while their owners or fellow servants were away.

¹⁸² Henry Hamilton, Journal, f. 75, Ms N-2087 (oversize), MHS.

¹⁸³ Quotes are from Abraham Evertse Wendell, July 24, 1758, Day Book, 1754-60, NYHSL. For Tom’s trips on behalf of the army, see multiple entries in the day book as well as in Wendell, Ledger, 1750-60 and Ledger, 1759-93, NYHSL. Wendell often willingly hired Tom out to the army, but Tom was also on occasion impressed into service, as he was in March 1758, when he and Wendell’s sled were “prest to fetch bords from Sconaday.” Wendell, March 20, 1758, Day Book, 1754-60, NYHSL. When Tom died in November 1762, Wendell purchased a new slave, Jacob, to take his place. Jacob too served the army; for instance, in August 1763, he “went to Lacke George for the King.” Wendell, August 9, 1763, Day Book, 1760-93, NYHSL.

¹⁸⁴ “Will of Colonel Ephraim Williams,” Box 1, Folder 15, Williams Family Papers, NYHSL. On Williams’ death, see Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 118-19.

The chaos of war also exposed enslaved and free black civilians and soldiers to the ubiquitous threat of capture, enslavement, and sale. Most British, French, and Native American commanders regarded captives of African descent as commodities rather than as prisoners of war and few Blacks were redeemed from captivity. Following the fall of Fort William Henry in August 1757, French-allied Native Americans, frustrated that the European-negotiated capitulation denied them the spoils of war they had been promised, attacked the train of paroled British soldiers as they retreated to Fort Edward.¹⁸⁶ Though many British observers of what they deemed a “massacre” depicted France’s indigenous allies as undiscerning, bloodthirsty savages, others noted that they took care to secure the black and Indian soldiers before setting upon those of European descent.¹⁸⁷ Whereas John Dies, who reported that the French-allied Indians “haul’d out all the Negroes, Molattoes & Soldier Indians, Butcher’d & scalp’d them,” saw only malice, Seth Metcalf recalled that they “Pickt out the negrows Melatows and Indiens and Dragd them Away and we Know not what is Become of them.”¹⁸⁸ Colonel Joseph Frye, in his official

¹⁸⁵ Daniel Brainerd, Jr. to Col. Trumble, August 9, 1757, Box 2, Folder 15, French and Indian War Papers, CHS.

¹⁸⁶ On the “massacre” at Fort William Henry, see Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 185-201 and Ian K. Steele, *Betrayals: Fort William Henry and the “Massacre”* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990).

¹⁸⁷ In the aftermath of the siege, the *London Magazine* printed one letter testifying that French-allied Indians “hauled all the Negroes, Mulattoes, and Indian soldiers, out of the ranks, butchering and scalping them” alongside another recounting that “All the English Indians and Negroes in the garrison were seized, and either captivated or slain.” Excerpt from *London Magazine*, 1757, v. 26, 494-96, Folder 6, Fort William Henry Papers, Ms. N-1942, MHS.

¹⁸⁸ John Dies to Mr. Watts, August 12, 1757, LO 6671, Loudoun Papers, HL and Diary and Journal of Seth Metcalf, quoted in Steele, *Betrayals*, 123. Like Dies, an anonymous diarist observed that the French-allied Indians “began to seize on all the negroes and Indians whom they unmercifully dragged over the breast work and scalped.” Anonymous, Journal, 1757, Folder 2, Fort William Henry Papers, Ms. N-1942, MHS. Another witness had it both ways, explaining that the French-allied Indians “Hauled out the Indians & Negroes belonging to the Provincial Regiments; some of whom they were so immensely enraged against, that they fell upon them immediately & cut them to Pieces; others they Led off.” Account of the Siege of Fort William Henry, by one of the Contractors for Provision Clerks, August 3-9, 1757, LO 6660, Loudoun Papers, HL.

narrative of the siege, remarked that the France's Native American allies "took out from our troops, all the Indians and negroes, and Carried them off."¹⁸⁹ Thomas Mante, in his 1772 *History of the late war in North-America*, came to the conclusion that following the siege of Fort William Henry, "the French Indians made slaves of all the English Indians and negroes."¹⁹⁰ Well aware that black and indigenous captives represented a potential financial windfall, it is likely most French-allied Indians opted to retain them for future sale.

Whereas Caesar Cuntea and George Gire, two African-born farmers from Grafton, Massachusetts who served in the same company in 1757, managed to evade capture after the fall of Fort William Henry, other black provincials were not as fortunate. James Bristol, a "mulatto," Canada Cuggo, a "negro," and Jacob Lindse, a "mulatto," were among the soldiers the Massachusetts government catalogued as "Taken at Fort William Henry" who never returned home.¹⁹¹ Also on the list was Caesar, the slave of Jacob Bigelow of Waltham, Massachusetts, who remained enslaved in Montreal until Commander-in-Chief Jeffery Amherst insisted that all captured British slaves be returned following the conquest of Canada in 1760. Jock Lyn, who served as a provincial in the place of his owner, Nathaniel Whittemore of Harvard, Massachusetts, also spent three years as a slave in Canada before returning to Whittemore. Bigelow and Whittemore

¹⁸⁹ Colonel Joseph Frye, "Journal of the Attack of Fort William Henry," August 10, 1757, PRO, v. 71, ff. 137-53, Parkman Papers, MHS. See also, James L. Kochan, ed., "Joseph Frye's Journal and Map of the Siege of Fort William Henry, 1757," *Bulletin of the Fort Ticonderoga Museum*, 15 (1993): 339-61.

¹⁹⁰ Thomas Mante, *History of the late war in North-America, and the islands of the West-Indies* (London, 1772), 95. On the French-allied Indians' treatment of black British soldiers, see Steele, *Betrayals*, 116.

¹⁹¹ "List of Captain Taplin's Company in Colo. Jonathan Bagley's Regiment, Fort William Henry," August 31, 1756, Folder 12, Fort William Henry Papers, Ms. N-1942, MHS; "John Taplin's Co., Fort William Henry," October 12, 1756, Folder 12, Fort William Henry Papers, Ms. N-1942, MHS; "List of those men

each received £8 from the Massachusetts colonial government as recompense for their slaves' three-year absence.¹⁹² Thomas Hinds, a free black soldier at Fort William Henry, also spent three years in captivity and perhaps in enslavement in Canada before being redeemed in 1760. Unlike his enslaved brethren, Hinds himself was likely compensated by the Massachusetts government for his suffering while in detention, as were other free men.¹⁹³

Though captors considered most prisoners of African descent – whether they were legally enslaved or free – as slaves, on occasion a black detainee's special skills or status could trump skin color in determining his treatment. John Bush, a free black Massachusetts provincial, served as a clerk for Captain Joseph Ingersoll's company and as an engraver of powder horns for notable provincial commanders such as Israel Putnam and Robert Rogers. Following his capture at Fort William Henry, his father George Bush, a free black landowner, notified Governor Thomas Pownall that he had “a Son in Captivity in Cannaday,” whom he described as “a melattor Fellow about 30 years of age.” Though George Bush had not “heard from him Sence he was Taken,” he informed Pownall that he had learned from “our men” that his son “was not killed but Carried of by the Indians.” George Bush pleaded with Pownall, “if their be any opportunity to exchange Captives let my son be Remembered.” Perhaps taking note of his unique talent and connections, John Bush's captors treated him as a prisoner of war rather than as a

taken at Fort William Henry,” August 1757, Folder 5, Fort William Henry Papers, Ms. N-1942, MHS; and Steele, *Betrayals*, 140, 188, 189, 192.

¹⁹² Steele, *Betrayals*, 140, 188, 192 and Padeni, “Role of Blacks in New York's Northern Campaigns,” 160-61. Caesar Nero, a New Hampshire provincial in Captain Richard Emery's company, also endured three years of enslavement in Canada before being returned to his owner, Major John Gilman of Exeter. Steele, *Betrayals*, 140, 196.

¹⁹³ Steele, *Betrayals*, 191.

slave. Unfortunately, in doing so, they did him no favor, as Bush died aboard ship while en route to France with his fellow British prisoners of war.¹⁹⁴

While imperial war exposed enslaved and free black civilians and soldiers to myriad perils, it also offered black men valuable opportunities for economic and social advancement. Many black soldiers in the northern colonies' provincial forces served far from their domiciles, offering them the chance to make new contacts and to take advantage of novel economic opportunities. Northern black men participated in battles from Nova Scotia to Cuba, affording them the opportunity to scope out new lands for purchase or new prospects for employment.¹⁹⁵ Even if military service did not lead to new economic endeavors, enslaved and free black men benefited from the wages, and in some cases, the bounties, land grants, and pensions that came of laboring for or enlisting in the British forces. Prince Goodin, a free black Connecticut provincial who was abducted following the siege of Fort William Henry, secured £10 compensation from the Connecticut General Assembly for his suffering while in captivity in Canada. Upon his return to Connecticut, Goodin used this subsidy along with his other military earnings to purchase half an acre of land and a house for his new bride.¹⁹⁶ After serving as a provincial in the Massachusetts forces, Barzillai Lew purchased the freedom of a mulatto woman named Dinah from Major Abraham Blood; Lew may well have used the wages he earned as a soldier to liberate the woman who became his wife.¹⁹⁷

¹⁹⁴ Padeni, "Role of Blacks in New York's Northern Campaigns," 161-63.

¹⁹⁵ Selesky notes that some Connecticut men "volunteered for later campaigns so they could march through northern New York and southern Vermont, regions which were being opened for settlement and to which many wanted to emigrate after the war." Selesky, *War and Society in Colonial Connecticut*, 176.

¹⁹⁶ Padeni, "Role of Blacks in New York's Northern Campaigns," 164.

¹⁹⁷ Glenn A. Knoblock, "*Strong and Brave Fellows*": *New Hampshire's Black Soldiers and Sailors of the American Revolution, 1775-1784* (Jefferson, N.C.: McFarland & Company, Inc., 2003), 278.

Determined to profit from their military service, black veterans employed the legal system to petition for benefits and income that were owed them even long after 1763. George Gire, the African-born provincial from Grafton, Massachusetts who avoided capture at Fort William Henry, appealed to the Massachusetts colonial government for aid in 1779, explaining that he had become incapacitated “by Reason of the hard service in the French war.” The Massachusetts General Court awarded Gire forty shillings a year pension for his service.¹⁹⁸ In December 1757, on the eve of his departure to sea, Scipio Wood, a mulatto private in Captain John Stapp’s company of Connecticut provincials, authorized Benjamin Buell to accept on his behalf the money that was due him for his past year’s military service. Despite Wood’s written authorization, Stapp refused to pay Buell Wood’s wages, bounty, and billeting money. Wood’s short stint as a sailor became a fifteen-year odyssey following his impressment by a British naval vessel. Thus, it was not until 1772 that he was able to return home to petition the Connecticut General Assembly for the income that remained due him. He secured affidavits from Benjamin Buell as well as John Ells, a witness of Buell’s 1757 conversation with Stapp, as evidence to accompany his petition and convinced the Assembly to pay him over £16 from the public treasury.¹⁹⁹ With perseverance and perspicacity, some black soldiers ensured that they benefited financially from their military service in the Seven Years’ War.

¹⁹⁸ Padeni, “Role of Blacks in New York’s Northern Campaigns,” 167.

¹⁹⁹ Scipio Wood, Authorization, December 3, 1757, Box 1, African-American History Collection, William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, MI (hereafter CL); Scipio Wood, “Memorial to Connecticut General Assembly,” May 20, 1772, Box 1, African-American History Collection, CL; John Ells, Deposition, May 26, 1772, Box 1, African-American History Collection, CL; Benjamin Buell, Deposition, June 9, 1772, Box 1, African-American History Collection, CL; Benjamin Payne, Memorandum, June 9, 1772, Box 1,

In addition to offering a means of economic advancement, military service afforded black civilians and soldiers the chance to partake in activities in which they may well have taken pride. Men of African descent labored and fought alongside men of European and indigenous descent to bring triumph to their cause. Whether they conceived of themselves as members of a particular local community, militia unit, or provincial company, or of the British Empire as a whole, men of African descent celebrated victory alongside fellow soldiers and subjects. Contributing to their sense of pride was the fact that their commanders and comrades recognized and celebrated their contributions to their shared success. The indispensability of the bateau and transport service, in which a multitude of men of African descent participated, was universally acknowledged. Commander-in-Chief Jeffery Amherst remarked to Colonel John Bradstreet in 1760 that “the supply for the Whole Troops during the Campaign, must depend on” the “Battoe men.”²⁰⁰ Military officials praised the bateaumen not only for equipping the troops, but also for their flexibility and fighting ability. In 1756, Major General William Shirley supported the recruitment of additional bateaumen, who, “arm’d with Musquets and Hatchets . . . could be serviceable likewise by manning the Whaleboats or other Duty at Land, as his Majesty’s Service might require.” Following the fall of Oswego in 1756, Shirley maintained that bateaumen were so valuable that had Oswego “been reinforc’d with as many of the Battoemen, as the service might have

African-American History Collection, CL; and Benjamin Payne and J. Lawrence, “Order to Pay Scipio Wood,” June 9, 1772, Box 1, African-American History Collection, CL.

²⁰⁰ Amherst to Bradstreet, July 18, 1760, WO 34/58, f. 122, TNA.

requir'd," they likely would "have been sufficient to have protected the place."²⁰¹ In addition to the satisfaction that came of partaking in an effective and crucial service, black soldiers could take pride in on occasion being singled out for commendation. Following the Battle of Lake George in 1755, in which Colonel William Johnson's army of British provincials repelled an assault by a French force bent upon derailing the British campaign against Crown Point, a British provincial noted that during the fierce fighting, "Our Blacks behaved better than the Whites."²⁰²

Having served as soldiers may have afforded some black men special consideration by their communities in the wake of the Seven Years' War. In 1762, C. Roby of Sudbury, Massachusetts penned an anxious missive to the Reverend Samuel Mather. He recounted to the minister that earlier that week he had been summoned from bed to "to go to Concord to release a Molatto Man who was committed to Goal for breach of the Peace, profane Swaring & not paying Costs According to Sentence given." The prisoner had seemed to Roby "a very vile & dangerous fellow" as he stood accused of "throwing down a Gentleman's Son – And taking out his knife & swaring by his Maker he would geld him, which made a great noise & put people in fear of him." Roby explained to Mather, "I committed him to prevent Mischief," but that "the difficulty lyes here it Seems he was a Soldier, which I never Considered, there being Such a Noise of his Crimes & what a Rogue he was." Roby frantically elucidated his predicament: "He being a Soldier complaint was made to his Excellency the Gov.r" Francis Bernard and

²⁰¹ William Shirley to Henry Fox, September 16, 1756, PRO, v. 82, ff. 72-86, Francis Parkman Papers, MHS. For additional comments on the value of bateaumen, see Shirley to James Abercromby, June 27, 1756, LO 1257A, Loudoun Papers, HL.

²⁰² Quoted in Padeni, "Role of Blacks in New York's Northern Campaigns," 158.

“his Excellency was much displeased” with Roby’s treatment of the black veteran. In an attempt to salvage the situation, Roby “released the fellow and gave Security for the Charges my Selfe,” but he feared this action would be insufficient to return him to the governor’s good graces. Thus, he begged Mather to use his influence to smooth things over with Bernard by attributing his misdeed to his “ignorance.”²⁰³ That a local Massachusetts official was sent scurrying to release a mulatto “rogue” from jail in order to redeem his reputation with the governor is remarkable. The mulatto man’s past military service provided him with the connections and the status to absolve him of responsibility for disturbing the peace and assaulting a man of means. Aware of the prominence of his contacts and the special standing that his martial experience afforded him, the black man in question may well have corresponded with his former commanding officer to secure his release. It is possible that other black veterans too used their status to claim community recognition and respect in the aftermath of the Seven Years’ War.

Patterns of Blacks’ Martial Service

Enslaved and free black men had served the mainland colonies as soldiers prior to the Seven Years’ War and would do so again in its wake.²⁰⁴ As many men of African

²⁰³ C. Roby to Rev. Samuel Mather, July 12, 1762, Box 3, Folder 4, Curwen Family Papers, AAS.

²⁰⁴ For example, Caesar Gardner, described in muster rolls as a “Molatto Man,” served as a soldier under Captain Robert Denison in Connecticut’s provincial forces in King George’s War. Joseph Tracy, Jr., perhaps Gardner’s owner or master, signed that he had been paid £6.12.0 for Gardner’s wages in 1753. “Account of Joseph Tracy, Jr.,” Lebanon, August 10, 1753, Box 1, Folder 21, French and Indian War Papers, CHS. For military rolls that list Caesar’s name, see “List of Men whose wages are Bought by Men the Subscriber hereto Simon Lothrop,” New London, January 6, 1750, Box 1, Folder 6, French and Indian War Papers, CHS and “Account of Col. Lothrop’s Soldiers’ Wages,” n.d., Box 1, Folder 15, French and Indian War Papers, CHS. Similarly, Samuel Murdock, testifying that Sol Mustee was “a Servant Man to me,” signed that he had received £44.4.8 for Sol’s 282 days of “Service in Capt. William Whiting’s Company” in the “late intended Expedition against Canada.” “Account of Samuel Murdock,” Lebanon, January 23, 1751, Box 1, Folder 19, French and Indian War Papers, CHS. John Gloster, the slave of Theodore Atkinson, served in the New Hampshire provincial forces at the 1745 siege of Louisbourg, where “his gun was Shot to pieces with a Cannon ball.” Robert Miller, Sr., also a New Hampshire provincial, lost

descent concluded that the benefits often outweighed the drawbacks of military service, numerous black veterans of the Seven Years' War reenlisted when the opportunity presented itself in 1775. Garshom Prince, a slave of Lieutenant Robert Durkee of the Connecticut provincials, accompanied Durkee to war and participated in such notable contests as the Battle of Lake George in 1755 and the siege of Havana in 1762. At the outset of the Revolutionary War, Prince enlisted as a private in Rhode Island's Colored Regiment. Upon being discharged from his unit, Prince fought once more under Durkee's command, in this instance as a soldier in the 1st Independent Company of Pennsylvania. Having fought alongside one another through two wars, both Prince and his owner lost their lives together in the Battle of Wyoming in 1778.²⁰⁵ As a young man, Barzallai Lew, a free black cooper, served for over eight months as a Massachusetts provincial soldier in the Seven Years' War campaigns at Lake George and Lake Champlain. Upon the outbreak of the Revolutionary War, Lew returned to Lake Champlain – this time as a drummer, fifer, and soldier – and visited new spots as well, among them Bunker Hill. Lew fought on behalf of the patriot cause from 1775 to 1777.²⁰⁶

Those black veterans of the Seven Years' War who could not themselves serve in the American Revolution may nonetheless have inspired their family members to enlist.

his arm in the 1745 siege. Cuff Mannis was a New Hampshire laborer "Employed on the Repairs of his majestis garrison at Luisbourg" in 1745. Quoted in Knoblock, "*Strong and Brave Fellows*," 313-14.

²⁰⁵ Padeni, "Role of Blacks in New York's Northern Campaigns," 165-66.

²⁰⁶ Knoblock, "*Strong and Brave Fellows*," 278-79; Padeni, "Role of Blacks in New York's Northern Campaigns," 165; and Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), 11. Other veterans of the Seven Years' War who fought in the American Revolution include Castor (or Caesar) Dickinson, the slave of the famed ranger Captain Robert Rogers who became free sometime after the Seven Years' War; Scipio Martin, a slave of Dr. Joseph Atkinson who became free

Samuel Perham, a New Hampshire free Black who built bateaux in 1755 for the expedition against Crown Point before going on to fight in the Battle of Lake George, may have served as a model for his son Asa, who served in the New Hampshire regiment during the Revolutionary War.²⁰⁷ Similarly, Cuffe Noaks, a free black tanner from New Hampshire who participated in the 1756 expedition against Crown Point, may have encouraged his son, Timothy Nokes to enlist in the Massachusetts forces in 1775.²⁰⁸ Silas Burdoo, who volunteered in 1775 and fought at Lexington and Concord, may have heard stories of his uncle, Moses Burdoo's service in the Seven Years' War.²⁰⁹ Richard Black, a free black man from Maine who died at Valley Forge in 1778, also had an uncle who served in the Seven Years' War.²¹⁰ Family traditions of martial service initiated by eighteenth-century forbears may have endured well beyond the achievement of American independence; a great grandson of Barzillai Lew joined the famed 54th Massachusetts Regiment during the Civil War.²¹¹

Many enslaved and free Blacks in mainland North America were indeed "willing to fight for his Majesty King George" over the course of the Seven Years' War and together with civilians and soldiers of European and indigenous descent, they helped achieve the British conquest of French Canada. Though the contributions of black men proved more vital to the British war effort in the southern theater of the war, it was northern men of African descent who were more likely to benefit from having

in 1760; and Pero Hall, a free black man from Massachusetts. Knoblock, "*Strong and Brave Fellows*," 105-06, 145-46, 268-71.

²⁰⁷ Knoblock, "*Strong and Brave Fellows*," 157-58.

²⁰⁸ Knoblock, "*Strong and Brave Fellows*," 221.

²⁰⁹ Knoblock, "*Strong and Brave Fellows*," 251-52.

²¹⁰ Knoblock, "*Strong and Brave Fellows*," 195-97.

²¹¹ Knoblock, "*Strong and Brave Fellows*," 278-80.

participated in the conflict. The northern colonies welcomed rather than attempted to prohibit the enlistment of black men in their provincial companies and many northern free Blacks embraced martial service as a valuable means of earning income and gaining status in their communities. As the North was the more active theater of the war, northern slaves had greater opportunities to either accrue wages as laborers or soldiers or to flee their owners than did southern slaves. Though hundreds of southern enslaved and free Blacks bore arms and labored on behalf of the British army, they only rarely profited from their efforts during the Seven Years' War.²¹² Thus, those men of African descent whose martial service proved most indispensable to the British war effort during the Seven Years' War were the least likely to personally benefit from it. This pattern was also evident in the West Indies where slavery was most central to British society and slaves consequently played the most significant roles in Britain's military endeavors. Despite their officers deeming them critical to the success of the British campaigns in the Caribbean, black men gained very little from having served their king.

²¹² It was not until the American Revolution that slaves in the southern mainland colonies were able to more substantially benefit from the presence of the British army in their midst. See Sylvia Frey, *Water From the Rock: Black Resistance in a Revolutionary Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991); Woody Holton, *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the Making of the Revolution in Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999); Rhys Isaac, *Landon Carter's Uneasy Kingdom: Revolution and Rebellion on a Virginia Plantation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004); Gary Nash, *The Forgotten Fifth: African Americans in the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge: University of Massachusetts Press, 2006); Robert Olwell, *Masters, Slaves, and Subjects: The Culture of Power in the South Carolina Low Country, 1740-1790* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 226-68; Cassandra Pybus, *Epic Journeys of Freedom: Runaway Slaves of the American Revolution* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006); Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution*; Simon Schama, *Rough Crossings: Britain, the Slaves, and the American Revolution* (London: BBC Books, 2005); and Peter Wood, "'Liberty is Sweet': African-American Freedom Struggles in the Years before White Independence," in *Beyond the American Revolution: Explorations in the History of American Radicalism*, ed. Alfred F. Young (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1993), 149-84.

Chapter 3: “Proper Instruments for Carrying on War”: Black Soldiers and the British Empire in the Seven Years’ War in the West Indies

On the 8th of April, 1762, Thomas Thistlewood, an overseer and slaveowner on the British island of Jamaica, recorded in his diary that he had sent an enslaved man named London to serve “as a Baggage Negroe, for the Partie that is going out.” In May, London’s services were required once again, this time for a mission abroad. Escorted by an enslaved driver named Johnie, London appeared before a body of local commissioners to be appraised before his departure “to go as a Baggage Negroe in the expected Expedition under [Admiral Sir George] Pocock” against the Spanish port of Havana. While London did not, in the end, serve at Havana, the commissioners “sent another in his room,” along with more than a thousand other slaves from the island.²¹³ These enslaved men spent the summer months of 1762 laboring alongside free white and black British and North American soldiers and sailors to lay siege to the Spanish city. At the campaign’s end, military and naval commanders attributed their victory at Havana – a victory that signaled British triumph in the Seven Years’ War as a whole – to their men’s arduous labors as well as to their valor and resolution. They recognized not only the efforts of their enlisted soldiers and sailors, but also those of the several hundred enslaved auxiliaries whom they had hired or purchased from Antigua, Jamaica, St. Christopher, and Martinique. Indeed, in their eyes, the contributions of black men had proven essential to British military success in the West Indies.

²¹³ Thomas Thistlewood, Diary, April 8 and 11, and May 26, 1762, Monson 31/13, Reel M-1594.4, Thistlewood Family Papers (microfilm). Read at the John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Library, Williamsburg, VA.

Men of African descent did not hold as clearly articulated or as celebrated a place in the British war effort at the start of the Seven Years' War in the Caribbean. In a 1757 letter decrying the French enlistment of enslaved Blacks aboard privateers, Rear Admiral Thomas Frankland, commander in chief of the British squadron at the Leeward Islands, remarked to Secretary of the Admiralty John Cleveland that he "could not look upon that Race to be proper Instruments for carrying on war among Civilized People."²¹⁴ But pragmatic need for manpower won out over avowed opposition to the arming of people of African descent in the mid-eighteenth century, as it had throughout the history of European imperial rivalry in the Caribbean. The seventeenth-century turn to sugar production and the ensuing decline in numbers of the white population in the West Indies left British colonists with little choice but to begin to depend upon free and enslaved Blacks for the defense of their Caribbean islands. Free Blacks formed a small but important component of local militias. On Jamaica, when they were not themselves at war with them, Whites relied upon the martial prowess of the Maroons, free descendants of escaped slaves who lived in independent communities in the highlands. Planters hired their slaves out to the government to build the fortifications that lined the coasts and to serve as pioneers for the militia and for the regiments of British regulars stationed on the islands. Government officials and individual planters armed slaves to fight both internal and external enemies in slave revolts and foreign invasions.²¹⁵ Though their rhetoric

²¹⁴ Frankland's Reply to Mr. Thomas' Letter of 25 February 1757, July 20, 1757, ADM 1/306, The National Archives, Kew, England (hereafter TNA).

²¹⁵ David Barry Gaspar, *Bondmen and Rebels: A Study of Master-Slave Relations in Antigua with Implications for Colonial British America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 114-24; Richard Pares, *War and Trade in the West Indies, 1739-1763* (1936; repr., London: F. Cass, 1963), 227-64; and Voelz, *Slave and Soldier*, 23-76, 93-144. On the Jamaica Maroons, see Mavis Campbell, *The Maroons of Jamaica, 1655-1796: A History of Resistance, Collaboration and Betrayal* (Granby, MA: Bergin &

might on occasion indicate otherwise, race did not in practice prove a barrier to Britons' arming of people of African descent in the Caribbean. Mid-eighteenth-century British metropolitan officials built upon an existing local dependence on Blacks for military defense when they sought colonial assistance to execute the most expansive offensive campaigns the West Indies had yet experienced. Like provincials and Native American auxiliaries in mainland North America and Indian sepoys in South Asia, enslaved and free black recruits in the Caribbean became foot soldiers in Britain's global war for empire.²¹⁶

Over the course of the Seven Years' War, British military leaders came to rely more and more heavily upon increasingly numerous black soldiers in the Caribbean. By war's end, none would consider launching an expedition in the West Indies without the aid of thousands of men of African descent. Facing alarming rates of disease and death among white soldiers and a dearth of white men from whom to draw reinforcements, commanders turned instead to the free and enslaved Blacks who constituted the majority of the population of the British West Indies. Men that officers called "baggage negroes," who were also known as "pioneers," cleared paths over rough terrain; landed and hauled artillery, provisions, and stores; and built breastworks and batteries. So-called "shot

Garvey Publishers, Inc., 1988); Michael Craton, *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 61-96, 211-23; Alvin O. Thompson, *Flight to Freedom: African Runaways and Maroons in the Americas* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of West Indies Press, 2006); and Philip Wright, "War and Peace with the Maroons, 1730-1739," *Caribbean Quarterly* 16 (1970): 5-27.

²¹⁶ On the raising of provincial forces and Native American troops in North America, see Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America, 1754-1766* (New York: Vintage Books, 2000), 67-68, 213-14, 221-31, 454-55 and John Shy, "Armed Force in Colonial North America: New Spain, New France, and Anglo-America," in *Against All Enemies: Interpretations of American Military History from Colonial Times to the Present*, ed. Kenneth J. Hagan and William R. Roberts (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1986), 8-9. On the use of sepoys in South Asia, see P.J.

negroes” served as armed rangers who skirmished with their foes among the canes, forests, and peaks of the sugar islands. Both black pioneers and black rangers were critical to the success of the British forces, though the former were employed in greater numbers and more continually than their armed brethren.²¹⁷ In the unsuccessful attempt on the French island of Martinique and the ensuing conquest of French Guadeloupe in 1759, in the triumphant return to Martinique in early 1762, and in the siege of Spanish Havana later that year, black men proved their martial worth and convinced many British officials that they were not only “proper Instruments for carrying on war,” but essential and valuable weapons with which to secure and expand the empire in the southern Atlantic.

* * * * *

Despite a growing reliance upon people of African descent for defensive purposes over the course of the eighteenth century, the British did not officially employ Blacks in an offensive capacity in the Caribbean until the campaigns against Spain in the 1740s.²¹⁸ After the two-month siege of Cartagena in the spring of 1741 ended in the inglorious withdrawal of the severely ill and decimated British forces, the British army hired 500 slaves from Jamaican slaveholders to assist in an expedition against Cuba later that

Marshall, *The Making and Unmaking of Empires: Britain, India, and America, c. 1750-1783* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005).

²¹⁷ While enslaved Blacks labored on behalf of the British army during the West Indian campaigns, in mainland North America the British army regularly employed North American provincial soldiers as pioneers, thus freeing the better-trained British regulars for battle. See Anderson, *Crucible of War*, 228-29 and Shy, “Armed Force in Colonial North America,” in *Against All Enemies*, ed. Hagan and Roberts, 9.

²¹⁸ The British did however deploy free and enslaved Blacks in offensive maneuvers in mainland North American frontier areas such as the border region between British Carolina and Spanish Florida. See Jane Landers, *Black Society in Spanish Florida* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1999) and Peter Wood, *Black Majority: Negroes in Colonial South Carolina from 1670 through the Stono Rebellion* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1974).

year.²¹⁹ Jamaican planter William Beckford informed the island's agent James Knight that only a third of the slaves hired were "Intended for Shot, But all of them will Necessarily in the End be train'd up in the Use of Arms."²²⁰ In an attempt to reassure the apprehensive Knight, Beckford reasoned that in Cuba the slaves would become acquainted not only with arms but also with "the Force of the British nation."²²¹ Beckford's sanguinity proved misplaced for the Cuba expedition ended as the Cartagena attempt did, with disease, death, and disgraceful retreat. Yet, a precedent had been set for the enlistment of black forces for offensive expeditions, a precedent that was embraced and expanded in the Seven Years' War.²²² The campaigns against the Spanish in the early 1740s taught British leaders that extended sieges in the West Indies could be deadly for British troops. Success would require some combination of quick action and the use of auxiliary – meaning black – forces to curtail the effects of the climate and hard labor upon European regulars.

²¹⁹ Martin Bladen to the Duke of Newcastle, June 21, 1740, CO 318/3, ff. 83-84, TNA. Bladen informed Newcastle of the Board of Trade's decision concerning Lord Cathcart's memorial requesting that "five hundred negro men might forthwith be raised in Jamaica, and formed into five companies," to be subsisted, clothed, and transported by Jamaica. The Board agreed that "such a body of Negroes might be of great Utility in the present Expedition," but determined they should be offered voluntarily to the military by their owners, rather than levied as Cathcart had suggested. The Board concurred with Cathcart that "the said Negroes shall share equally with His Majesty's Troops in any Plunder taken from the Enemy."

²²⁰ William Beckford to James Knight, August 19, 1741, Charles Edward Long Papers, f. 120, Add. MSS 12431, British Library, London, England (hereafter BL). See also Pares, *War and Trade in the West Indies*, 254.

²²¹ William Beckford to James Knight, February 10, 1741, Long Papers, ff. 118-19, Add. MSS 12431, BL.

²²² In preparation for the 1762 expedition against Havana, Secretary of State Charles Wyndham, the Earl of Egremont wrote to William Henry Lyttelton, the Governor of Jamaica, "a considerable Number of Slaves having been found extremely usefull in the late War with Spain, in carrying on Attacks, which were then made against their Settlements in the West Indies, I have the King's Commands to Recommend it to you, as a object of the utmost Importance, to provide, if possible, two thousand Slaves at Jamaica to go upon immediate Service, in the same Manner and upon the same Agreement with their Proprietors, that was made in the last War." Earl of Egremont to William Henry Lyttelton, February 1762, CO 137/32, f. 117, TNA.

The British forces' disastrous encounter with both the forbidding terrain and the able black defenders of the French island of Martinique in 1759 reinforced the lessons of the 1740s expeditions against the Spanish West Indies. In preparation for the campaign against Martinique, Major General Peregrine Hopson requested that Barbados contribute 500 white volunteers to the expedition. Once he acquired a battalion of Royal Highlanders, Hopson reassessed the value of the undisciplined few Barbadian recruits who had offered their services. Much to their chagrin, he opted to leave them behind.²²³ Hopson did however agree with the Barbados Council that "five Hundred, Strong, able, Sound and Healthy Negro Men with Hoes, Bills and Basketts" would be far more useful than the cattle he had at first requested to aid in transporting artillery and provisions.²²⁴

²²³ Charles Pinfold to William Pitt, July 10, 1759, CO 152/46, ff. 57-60, TNA. *A Defence of the Conduct of Barbadoes, During the late Expedition to Martinique and Guadeloupe* (London, 1760), 31-57. This is a published response to the charge that Barbados did little to aid His Majesty's Service during the 1759 campaign against Martinique and Guadeloupe. Fewer than 200 Whites volunteered to join the expedition. Pinfold apologized to Pitt for the low number, writing, "I have no power to Order any Man to go out of the Island: All was to be effected by Reward & persuasion, and I am sorry to Say the Ardor of the people was not equal to my wishes or Expectations. In the Early Settlement of the Island Great number of Whites were under the Command of the Planters, and might by Law be compelled to go which I find practiced formerly; But the Case is Different the Negroes supply the place of those Whites." Pinfold to Pitt, July 10, 1759, CO 152/46, ff. 57-60, TNA. The British military force consisted of the 3rd, 4th, 61st, 63rd, 64th, and 65th British regiments, a detachment of the 38th regiment stationed in the West Indies, and the second battalion of the 42nd regiment, the Royal Highlanders. Marshall Smelser, *The Campaign for the Sugar Islands, 1759: A Study of Amphibious Warfare* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1955), 188. This and the 1963 reprint of Pares' 1936 *War and Trade in the West Indies* are still the best accounts of the British expeditions against the French windward and the neutral islands during the Seven Years' War. Despite the recent upsurge in research on this global imperial conflict, most historians have focused their attention upon the war in Europe and on the North American mainland.

²²⁴ Minutes of Barbados Council, January 4, 1759, enclosed in Pinfold to Pitt, July 10, 1759, CO 152/46, ff. 61-72, TNA. The Council determined that the owners of enslaved carpenters should be paid three shillings and a penny half penny per day and those of every other slave one shilling and two pence half penny per day for their hire. Commissioners appraised the slaves upon enlistment and owners were to receive just compensation if their slaves deserted or were killed, wounded, or disabled while acting in the service of the King. One white driver at a salary of 40 pounds a year was to be hired for every 50 slaves. The Council advised the commissioners to first approach those owners who regularly hired out their slaves. Governor Pinfold signed the agreements that promised compensation to slaveowners, but expected that the British and not the Barbados government would shoulder the expense. Pinfold to Pitt, January 17, 1759, CO 152/46, ff. 55-56, TNA. Hopson treated the enlistment of slaves as a contingency expense, drawing bills from the Paymaster General for their recruitment and for payment of the drivers during the expedition.

No law enabled Barbados officials to compel owners to furnish their slaves, but between 300 and 400 black men nevertheless joined the British forces on Martinique in early January of 1759.²²⁵

Lacking adequate pioneers, the British regulars struggled on Martinique as they attempted to haul themselves and their artillery over extraordinarily difficult terrain in the stifling heat while being fiercely fired upon by skilled enemies shielded by canes, grasses, and trees. Brigadier General George Haldane recorded that he, “found the country full of steep hills covered with woods and sugar canes as high as a man . . . with Ravines . . . [t]he banks of . . . [which] are perpendicular in some places. They may be passed by men, but absolutely impassable with Cannons or Carriages of any sort. In these woods were scattered a very great number of their Militia, who are chiefly Mulattoes. They began firing on our army from every quarter in an irregular Indian manner as soon as the day broke, which incommoded us extremely.”²²⁶ In the face of this

Minutes of the Barbados Council, January 10, 1759, CO 152/46, ff. 61-72, TNA. Commodore John Moore agreed to transport and victual the enslaved recruits. John Moore to John Cleveland, January 30, 1759, ADM 1/307, ff. 98-101, TNA.

²²⁵ Pinfold to Pitt, January 17, 1759, CO 152/46, ff. 55-56, TNA. Hopson to Pitt, January 30, 1759, CO 110/1, ff. 63-68, TNA. Richard Gardiner, *An Account of the Expedition to the West Indies, Against Martinico, with the Reduction of Guadelupe, And other the Leeward Islands; Subject to the French King* (London, 1759), 4. *Candid Reflections on the Expedition to Martinico, with an Account of the Taking of Guadelupe by General Barrington* (London, 1759), 3. *A Genuine Account of the Late Secret Expedition to Martinico and Guardaloupe, under Commodore Moore and General Hopson* (London, 1759), 5. The Barbados resident and author of *A Defence of the Conduct of Barbadoes* blamed the deficit of Barbados slaves on insufficient tactical support on the part of the British army. He wrote, “though the Contribution was altogether *voluntary*, upwards of 360 Negroe Men were provided, and embarked on board the Fleet, which sailed upon the 13th; and 40 more followed in a Twenty-gun Ship on the 15th. Nor was there any Doubt but the whole Number would have been provided in a few Days, had there been Ships of War left behind to carry them down to the Army.” *A Defence of the Conduct of Barbadoes*, 30-31. A report of 19 April 1759 listed 393 slaves boarded at Barbados with 27 later returned to the island as unfit for service. Morning Report of the Quarter Master General, April 19, 1759, 38/88, General John Barrington Papers, Add. MSS 73731, BL.

²²⁶ Quoted in John W. Fortescue, “Guadeloupe, 1759” in *The Last Post* (London, 1934), 305-6. For further descriptions of the difficult situation the British found themselves in, see “Journal of an Officer” enclosed in Hopson to Pitt, January 30, 1759, CO 110/1, ff. 59-62, TNA; George Durant, “George Durant’s Journal

ordeal, the British soldiers balked. Though Captain of the Marines Richard Gardiner later condescendingly excoriated Hopson for withdrawing when “lurking Negroes here and there dispersed and scudding from Tree to Tree and Bush to Bush, were all the formidable Enemies the *British* Veterans had to deal with and to oppose,” their mounting casualties served as evidence that the British were in fact unequal to their foes. After a single day on the island, the British troops returned to their ships.²²⁷

As a result of their brief experience on Martinique, the British recognized that they lacked not only sufficient numbers of pioneers to land and haul their baggage, but also rangers capable of countering the adept French guerrillas of African descent. Those British seamen and soldiers who did not impugn the cowardice of their commanders blamed their retreat on the inadequacy of their forces.²²⁸ Haldane noted, “as we had only 300 negroes from Barbadoes, and the Fleet could not spare above 400 men to assist us in drawing the Artillery,” the British troops had proven incapable of making the trek from the beach to Fort-Royal, their intended target.²²⁹ In his 1759 *Candid Reflections on the Expedition to Martinico*, a Lieutenant in the Navy who gave his name only as J.J. berated the British government for dispatching the military without sufficient men to accomplish

of the Expedition to Martinique and Guadeloupe, October 1758-May 1759,” in *Military Miscellany I: Manuscripts from the Seven Years War, the First and Second Sikh Wars and the First World War*, ed. Alan J. Guy, R.N.W. Thomas and Gerard J. DeGroot (Phoenix Mill: Sutton Publishing Limited for the Army Records Society, 1996), 31-32; Gardiner, *Account of the Expedition*, 10-13; and *Genuine Account*, 7-8.

²²⁷ Gardiner, *Account of the Expedition*, 12. Casualty figures range widely. One author gave the numbers as “two Officers and about thirty Soldiers killed, and near eighty wounded.” *Genuine Account*, 8. Another tabulated 150 men killed and wounded. *Candid Reflections*, 17. Gardiner counted 69 dead. Gardiner, *Account of the Expedition*, 12. George Durant recorded that the “loss on our side was bout 60 killed & near 200 wounded.” Durant, “Journal,” 32.

²²⁸ Durant commented in his journal as the fleet departed from Martinique, “affairs began to look mysterious & horridly villainous & the more I saw or Inquired, the greater reasons I found for noble Contempt, just Disapprobation & unavailing Discontent Sorrow & resentment!” Durant, “Journal,” 33. See also Gardiner, *Account of the Expedition*, 11-14.

their task. He disclosed that he had himself been a resident of Martinique and described the French defense as consisting of several thousand disciplined militiamen. He added, “besides there are about 60,000 Blacks on the Island, many of whom are dexterous in Shooting, and all know the Use of small Arms, tho’ not of Artillery.” He suggested that these Blacks, both free and enslaved, “are alert to repair to whatever Appointment the Governor is pleased to assign them,” the former due to their alliances with the white community and the latter owing to generous offers of liberty as recompense for services rendered.²³⁰ After withdrawing ingloriously from Martinique, the British attempted to conquer the neighboring French island of Guadeloupe. There, they managed to prevail only after enlisting the aid of additional pioneers and soldiers of African descent.

On Guadeloupe, as on Martinique, the British faced skilled black adversaries. The French forces entrenched themselves in the hills, and individual planters, notably a woman the British knew as Madame Ducharmey, armed their slaves for war.²³¹ The British soldiers spent the first two months of 1759 attempting to draw their antagonists into open battle, but could not persuade the raiding parties to linger or to leave the relative safety of the canes and forests. The British thus turned their attention to destroying their opponents’ property and shelter. They set ablaze the woods and the cane fields, houses, and sugar works of Guadeloupe’s plantations.²³² Meanwhile, “from the

²²⁹ Quoted in Fortescue, “Guadeloupe, 1759,” 308. Seamen were routinely recruited to draw cannon alongside pioneers.

²³⁰ *Candid Reflections*, 6.

²³¹ On the encounters between the British soldiers and Madame Ducharmey’s slaves, see Gardiner, *Account of the Expedition*, 32, 36-37 and Fortescue, “Guadeloupe, 1759,” 315.

²³² On these skirmishes and the destruction of Guadeloupe’s plantations, see “Journal of an Officer,” enclosed in Hopson to Pitt, January 30, 1759, CO 110/1, ff. 59-62, TNA; Hopson to Pitt, January 30, 1759, CO 110/1, ff. 63-68, TNA; Barrington to Pitt, March 2, 1759, CO 110/1, ff. 100-7, TNA; Durant, “Journal,” 40-43; and Gardiner, *Account of the Expedition*, 35-37.

constant Fatigues they endured, by being perpetually harassed, without coming to any general Engagement, which the Enemy always avoided, and by being exposed to intense Heat from Day to Day,” the troops “began to yield to the Disorders of the Climate, and the Hospitals were crowded with Sick and Wounded.”²³³

In an attempt to augment the strength of the British forces and deplete that of their foes, Commodore John Moore penned a proclamation he hoped to distribute to the black inhabitants of Guadeloupe in order to “slacken the Zeal of those People to the French Interest.” He assured free Blacks and Mulattoes that their liberty and possessions would be respected and promised “Ten Acres of the Conquered Lands to them & to their Children for ever” if they yielded and became “true British Subjects.” To all enslaved Blacks and Mulattoes who submitted to the British army and did “any considerable service towards the compleat reduction of this Island,” Moore offered the somewhat vague “reasonable rewards as their services merit”²³⁴ He may have envisioned rewarding those slaves who provided intelligence or served as guides with monetary awards or their freedom – both common forms of compensation for select loyal slaves in the British West Indies. Despite its potential to deprive the French of their skilled rangers and to strengthen the British forces, Moore remained unable to convince Hopson to issue this proclamation, most likely due to its incendiary appeal and fairly generous pledges to the

²³³ Gardiner, *Account of the Expedition*, 39. For further accounts of the seamen’s and soldiers’ illness, see *Candid Reflections*, 27; Fortescue, “Guadeloupe, 1759,” 315; George Haldane to William Barrington, March 3, 1759, 35/4, Barrington Papers, Add. MSS 73730, BL; and John Barrington to William Barrington, March 3, 1759, 35/5, Barrington Papers, Add. MSS 73730, BL.

²³⁴ Moore also addressed the Protestant inhabitants of Guadeloupe, pledging to protect the persons and property of all French Protestants who surrendered to the army and became liege subjects of the British monarch. Proclamation, February 14, 1759, enclosed in Moore to Pitt, March 6, 1759, CO 110/1, ff. 125-26, TNA.

enslaved black residents of Guadeloupe.²³⁵ Hopson instead authorized the distribution of a second version of the manifesto, which made no offers to slaves but guaranteed the protection of the persons and property of all free people, including Blacks and Mulattoes, who surrendered to the British army.²³⁶

Rather than attempt to acquire acclimatized conscripts from among the French, Hopson appealed to Antigua Governor George Thomas for enslaved pioneers as well as “Men, Whites & Blacks” to serve as armed rangers. Thomas reported to Secretary of State William Pitt on February 28th, 1759 that the Antigua Council and Assembly had “voted Three hundred Negroes, as the Quota of this Island” and that they were then “preparing a Bill to raise them in an equitable proportion out of the Number possess’d by each Inhabitant.”²³⁷ Thomas could not convince Antigua legislators to pass a law requiring owners to contribute slaves to the army, possibly owing to “the accounts which have been brought from Guadaloup & propagate here, concerning the Ill Usage & Neglect of the Barbadoes Negroes, who it is said are already reduced from three hundred to one hundred & fifty.”²³⁸ Those Antigua slaveholders who were willing to risk their

²³⁵ Though they lacked orders commanding them to do so, British officers may have taken it upon themselves to offer incentives to the enslaved Blacks of Guadeloupe. Peter Debrisay, the officer in charge of Fort Royal on Guadeloupe, rewarded an enslaved Black who informed him of a planned French ambush of black British pioneers with his freedom as well as 40 shillings. Peter Debrisay to John Barrington, March 21, 1759, 38/45, Barrington Papers, Add. MSS 73730, BL.

²³⁶ Proclamation, February 14, 1759, enclosed in Moore to Pitt, March 6, 1759, CO 110/1, ff. 127-28, TNA. The *Boston Evening-Post* reported on 2 April 1759 that the General and Commodore had informed “all free negroes, molattoes, &c.” of Guadeloupe in February that if within twelve days they “brought in their arms,” surrendered, and swore to obey the British king, they “should have their freedom and privileges confirmed.” It is unclear how successful this proclamation was in appealing to the free Blacks of Guadeloupe. Moore, writing to Pitt in early March, indicated that he had from the start been unconvinced that the second version of the manifesto would have any impact, so it seems safe to say it had little.

²³⁷ Thomas to Pitt, February 28, 1759, CO 152/46, ff. 172-73, TNA.

²³⁸ Thomas to Barrington, March 7, 1759, 38/23, Barrington Papers, Add. MSS 73730, BL. These rumors may have exaggerated the death rate of the Barbados slaves, though probably not their mistreatment. Of

slaves' lives volunteered them to the army in return for assurances of compensation if they died, deserted, or returned disabled.²³⁹

As for enlisting white volunteers to staff the six companies Hopson had requested, Thomas professed to Pitt in late February 1759, "I almost despair of Success," because "so many of the lower Class of People are already engaged on board Our numerous Privateers."²⁴⁰ Thomas was right to despair where Whites were concerned. By late March he notified Major General John Barrington that he had gathered only eighty white men and "not such men as I could wish." He trusted "the number of able Negroes will however make some Amends, and I hope will prove a Seasonable and an usefull Reinforcement, as a Body of Rangers."²⁴¹ These "able Negroes" were enslaved Blacks who Thomas contended would better serve the army as armed guerrillas than as drudges. Furthermore, he maintained they would prove superior soldiers than white West Indians. Thomas remarked to Barrington in early April, "I think able nimble Negroes fitter for this kind of War than the White Rabble of these Islands, especially if the Negroes are well fed, encouraged, and well treated by their Officers."²⁴² This was of course a warning to Barrington that the slaveholders of Antigua and the Leeward Islands would not suffer

393 slaves boarded at Barbados, a report of 19 April 1759 listed 58 dead, 50 sick, and 20 missing. Morning Report of the Quarter Master General, April 19, 1759, 38/88, Barrington Papers, Add. MSS 73731, BL.

²³⁹ Thomas to Barrington, March 3, 1759, 38/20, Barrington Papers, Add. MSS 73730, BL. Thomas wrote that "the conditions are nothing extraordinary; for the Renter of Estates here are always oblig'd to make good the Losses by Death at the Expiration of the Lease; and as to Desertion, it is not practicable, for any length of time, in these small & well cultivated Islands." Thomas to Barrington, March 22, 1759, 38/48, Barrington Papers, Add. MSS 73730, BL.

²⁴⁰ Thomas to Pitt, February 28, 1759, CO 152/46, ff. 172-73, TNA. The Antigua Council did not, in the end, pass a law requiring slaveholders to contribute specific quotas of slaves to the army. Antigua slaveholders instead were asked to volunteer their slaves to the army in return for compensation for those killed or wounded, as well as those who deserted to the enemy or died of disease. Thomas to Barrington, March 3, 1759, 38/20, Barrington Papers, Add. MSS 73730, BL.

²⁴¹ Thomas to Barrington, March 22, 1759, 38/48, Barrington Papers, Add. MSS 73730, BL.

²⁴² Thomas to Barrington, April 5, 1759, 38/69, Barrington Papers, Add. MSS 73731, BL.

their slaves to be mistreated as those from Barbados had allegedly been. But it was also a commendation of the martial abilities of men of African descent and an endorsement of trusting black slaves – perhaps even above “White Rabble” – with arms.

Thomas’ endorsement of black soldiers reflected the prevailing assumption that people of African descent, whether due to natural fitness or acquired ability, were more proficient at waging war in the tropical heat and treacherous terrain of the Caribbean islands than their European counterparts. By mid-April 1759, in addition to the 300 or so enslaved pioneers from Antigua, Thomas had raised and dispatched six companies – a total of 610 armed men – from Antigua and St. Christopher to join the British forces on Guadeloupe. He informed Pitt, “there are not in the Six Company’s more than One hundred & Fifty White Men . . . but I think it no Less, as a number of active able Negro’s will be of equal or of more Service in a Country so Strong by Nature, from it’s almost inaccessible Mountains, violent Torrents and deep Gulleys.”²⁴³ A week later Thomas reported that “two Companys more of White & Black volunteers from Nevis & Montserrat, the Eight Companys amounting in the Whole to Eight hundred Effective Men” had reached Guadeloupe.²⁴⁴

²⁴³ Thomas to Pitt, April 21, 1759, CO 152/46, ff. 176-77, TNA. Thomas had informed Barrington in late March that Antigua had raised 271 “fine able Negroes” and 83 white men. Thomas to Barrington, March 31, 1759, 38/63, Barrington Papers, Add. MSS 73730, BL. Samuel Verchild reported to Barrington that two companies of volunteers and “195 negroes” were en route to Guadeloupe from St. Christopher and that the island had also sent a quartermaster to “attend to the care of the negroes.” Samuel Verchild to Barrington, April 2, 1759, 38/64, Barrington Papers, Add. MSS 73731, BL.

²⁴⁴ Thomas to Pitt, April 27, 1759, CO 152/46, ff. 178-79, TNA. Dr. Thomas Brooke wrote to Barrington from Montserrat, “they have already raised here forty able bodied whites and are taking proper steps to raise immediately one Hundred Blacks and ten more whites.” Thomas Brooke to Barrington, April 8, 1759, 38/76, Barrington Papers, Add. MSS 73731, BL. Barrington had requested 400 men from Barbados, but due to Hopson’s earlier humiliation of the Barbados volunteers, Governor Pinfold was unable to recruit any Whites willing to join Barrington. Colonel William Downing informed Barrington from Barbados that “the Scheme of raising a Number of Men in this Island for the Service of the Expedition will take very little Effect. The People here have conceived a great prejudice against it, which it wou’d be next to impossible

Hopson, along with hundreds of his men, died of fevers and fluxes before the reinforcement from the Leeward Islands could arrive. In late February 1759, a month before his own fatal affliction, Hopson informed London that fifteen hundred men lay ill and unfit for duty, “occasioned by the very great heat and fatigue that the Troops undergo which is unavoidable, there being so many out Posts necessary to be maintained, and the labour of carrying the Provisions up to them so great that it harasses them very much; the few Negroes we have here not being Sufficient for that and the other Services for the reparation of the Fort which they must be employed in.”²⁴⁵ After Hopson’s death, Brigadier General Haldane expressed his lack of envy of Major General John Barrington, Hopson’s successor. He recommended, “I hope your Grace and the nation will not expect great things from my friend Barrington . . . Who has the misfortune to come to the Command of an Army tore to pieces by sickness and in a climate where a European is soon rendered incapable of action.”²⁴⁶

Barrington, who shared Haldane’s conviction of the limitations of European regulars and Thomas’ faith in the skill of armed West Indian rangers, eagerly anticipated the arrival of the Leeward Islands recruits.²⁴⁷ He declared to Pitt, “This reinforcement

to remove.” William Downing to Barrington, April 7, 1759, 38/72, Barrington Papers, Add. MSS 73731, BL. The correspondence does not indicate any attempt to recruit black men from Barbados. Barrington to Pitt, March 2, 1759, CO 110/1, ff. 100-7, TNA; Barrington to Pitt, March 6, 1759, CO 110/1, ff. 116-18, TNA; Pinfold to Barrington, March 15, 1759, 38/37, Barrington Papers, Add. MSS 73730, BL; Pinfold to Barrington, April 6, 1759, 38/70, Barrington Papers, Add. MSS 73731, BL; Pinfold to Pitt, July 10, 1759, CO 152/46, ff. 57-60, TNA; and *Defence of the Conduct of Barbadoes*, 62-63.

²⁴⁵ Hopson to Pitt, January 30, 1759, CO 110/1, ff. 63-68, TNA.

²⁴⁶ Haldane wrote, “the Army is in a sickly condition, we not having more than twenty-five hundred men fit for duty, which after putting proper garrisons into Fort Royal and Fort Lewis, those will be reduced to twelve hundred at most.” Quoted in Fortescue, “Guadeloupe, 1759,” 315. Barrington reported to Pitt that there were 1,649 more sick and he had only 2,796 men fit for duty when he took command. Barrington to Pitt, March 2, 1759, CO 110/1, ff. 100-7, TNA.

²⁴⁷ Barrington informed his brother, Secretary at War Viscount William Barrington, “it is Impossible in this Burning Country to give working Parties for the repair of the Fort to fetch Provisions to furnish the out

will be of the greatest Service to us in carrying on the Attack on the other Side of the Island, by going into the Woods and Mountains, where the King's Troops cannot Act."²⁴⁸ The enslaved black soldiers from Antigua and the Leeward Islands did not disappoint. Though the majority of its members had been called to action without regard to their will, the predominantly black group of men known collectively as the "Antigua Volunteers" served ably as scouts, policemen, and armed combatants. General John Clavering relied upon them to "see if the River Feri is passable," to garrison conquered posts, and to "keep the Country in order."²⁴⁹ Robert Skene informed Barrington that the "black hussars . . . are extremely serviceable to me in taking up Sailors who . . . go up & down the country moroading," which reveals that British commanders did not hesitate to deploy armed black men to corral unruly white men.²⁵⁰ News of the Antigua volunteers' successful exploits traveled to the British islands, such that Samuel Verchild wrote to Barrington hoping the reinforcements he had sent from St. Christopher "have done every thing that may induce your Excellency to give them the praise you have done to the Forces sent to you from Antigua."²⁵¹

The enslaved black and few white soldiers of the Antigua volunteers assailed the French at a number of their installations, took possession of a battery at Goyave, and

posts and Camp duties without filling the Hospital." He attempted to describe the "difficulty of Marching and Encamping an Army in this Country and Climate and Supplying it with provisions." He remarked, "this a West Indian Can Conceive but not an European who Could little Imagine that it took up 120 negres very near a day to Carry up four days provisions about a mile from the Shipping for one Post of about 450 Men, besides of these we have but 250 for the many necessary Calls of the Army which to be well Served would at a very moderate Calculation take above three times the Number and many more were they to Carry our tents upon a March." Barrington to Viscount William Barrington, March 3, 1759, 35/5, Barrington Papers, Add. MSS 73730, BL.

²⁴⁸ Barrington to Pitt, March 2, 1759, CO 110/1, ff. 100-7, TNA.

²⁴⁹ John Clavering to Barrington, April 18, 1759, 38/87, Barrington Papers, Add. MSS 73731, BL.

²⁵⁰ Robert Skene to Barrington, May 4, 1759, not numbered, Barrington Papers, Add. MSS 73731, BL.

played an instrumental role in defeating the French forces at St. Marie's in the final battle of the campaign.²⁵² To circle to the rear of their adversaries at St. Marie's the Antigua volunteers followed "roads the Enemy thought impracticable, and consequently had guarded with very little Care."²⁵³ When the rest of the British troops attacked and the French began to quit their entrenchments, the Antigua volunteers were waiting. They resolved upon "an Immediate Attack in Front, which was accordingly executed with a spirited Vivacity, notwithstanding an incessant Fire, both of [French] Cannon, and small Arms." Following this fight, the French "abandoned their Artillery, and went off in so much Confusion, as never afterward to appear in a Body to make Resistance."²⁵⁴

Though these enslaved black soldiers had not entered the fray of their own accord, it was

²⁵¹ Samuel Verchild to Barrington, April 19, 1759, 38/89, Barrington Papers, Add. MSS 73731, BL.

²⁵² Barrington to Pitt, May 9, 1759, CO 110/1, ff. 129-38, TNA; *Candid Reflections*, 41-42; and Gardiner, *Account of the Expedition*, 56.

²⁵³ Gardiner, *Account of the Expedition*, 56.

²⁵⁴ *Candid Reflections*, 43-44. The next morning, the British forces entered Capesterre, the site of the richest of Guadeloupe's plantations, where they were greeted by 870 slaves who promptly surrendered to them. The governor and the rest of the inhabitants of the island, led by the planters of Capesterre, and perhaps also their slaves who shared a common fear for the safety of their homes, kin, and property, capitulated soon after. Barrington to Pitt, May 9, 1759, CO 110/1, ff. 129-38, TNA. *Candid Reflections*, 44. On 1 and 2 May 1759, Guadeloupe's governor and the military on the one hand, and its inhabitants on the other, negotiated two different capitulations with Barrington and Moore. The capitulation of the governor stated "that all negroes who were enlisted, and continued 'til the last day of the Attack, in the Companies of Bologne, Petite, Dumoliere, and Ruby, agreeable to the List, that will be given in, of them, shall have their freedom at the Expence of the Colony, as by agreement. Granted, upon condition that they are immediately sent off the Island." Articles of Capitulation with the French Governor of Guadeloupe, May 1, 1759, CO 110/1, ff.146-55, TNA. The capitulation of the inhabitants ensured that the liberty of free Blacks would be protected and it stipulated that free Blacks who were taken prisoner were to be treated as prisoners of war, and not as slaves. It also allowed owners to honor their promises to free those slaves who had aided in the defense of the island, but it required those newly freed men to leave the island. Capitulation of the Inhabitants of Guadeloupe, May 2, 1759, CO 110/1, ff. 156-67, TNA. In agreeing not to enslave black prisoners of war, Barrington and Moore may have been following the promises of Moore's proclamation of 14 February 1759, even though that offer had expired twelve days after issuance. Or, they may have been following official British naval policy, which compelled respect for the freedom of free black mariners captured aboard privateers. In 1757, Admiral Thomas Frankland suggested that all Blacks taken from French privateers be indiscriminately sold, rather than returning free black sailors to the French islands, where they would serve once more as privateers. Though Antigua Governor George Thomas refused to sanction his proposal, Frankland pursued it anyway. Frankland's Reply to Thomas' Letter of 25

universally acknowledged that they had served honorably, and they may well have been proud of the part they played in hastening the British conquest of Guadeloupe in early May 1759. Those who were interested in more material rewards may also have been pleased. The Antigua volunteers received £5 currency for every unarmed and £10 currency for every armed French Black they captured; one account listed £380 sterling as compensation to the Antigua volunteers for having taken thirty-nine French Blacks with arms and thirty-six without.²⁵⁵

Like their armed brethren, those enslaved Blacks who served the army as pioneers proved essential to the British triumph in Guadeloupe. Unlike their armed counterparts, however, they received little praise. Though service abroad did remove slaves from the dreaded sugar plantations for a time, it did not offer them a reprieve from arduous labor. These men hauled cannons and supplies over rugged terrain under a blazing sun, cared for ailing soldiers and most likely buried the many who expired, worked for the commissary of provisions, and tended to the cattle. Those who were skilled in carpentry and masonry built breastworks and batteries for battle and repaired captured French forts in its wake.²⁵⁶ At best, accompanying the army presented enslaved Blacks with opportunities to commune with slaves from different provenances, to elude the authority of tyrannical masters, and perhaps even to escape bondage. Some may have gained a sense of satisfaction from contributing to a victorious martial cause. At the close of the

February 1757, July 20, 1757, ADM 1/306, TNA. Thus, there were two traditions respecting black captives from which Barrington and Moore selected when negotiating the capitulation of Guadeloupe.

²⁵⁵ George Durant to William Barrington, February 14, 1761, T 1/409, ff. 173-74, TNA. The French slaves taken at Guadeloupe either became the slaves of British officials or were sold. See T 1/409, ff. 165-66, 171-72, and 284-85, TNA; T 1/413, ff. 417-20 and 421-22, TNA; T 1/415, ff. 43-44, TNA; and T 1/429, ff. 307-310, TNA.

campaign, however, those who had not died or absconded were returned to the plantations.²⁵⁷

Though British officers certainly commented upon the necessity of the enslaved pioneers' labors, this acknowledgement of their contributions did not translate into concern for their welfare. In fact, British officials valued these laborers of African descent precisely because they died in the place of European regulars, whose lives they treasured more. British commanders in the West Indies, stymied by the transportation logistics and military tactics necessitated by the arduous terrain of the sugar islands, as well as by the appalling death rates of their white comrades, turned to men they believed to be better suited to warfare in the Caribbean. They considered black men, due to their hardier constitutions, to be both more impervious to disease and more capable of transporting artillery, provisions, and stores in tropical climates than white men. Where heavily accoutered and unseasoned white regulars failed, black guerrillas accustomed to the climate and landscape of the West Indies, succeeded. The conquest of Guadeloupe, which transpired with the support of over a thousand men of African descent, reaffirmed these assumptions about the value of black pioneers and rangers.

The lessons of the British victory at Guadeloupe seemed clear to those commanders who had achieved it. Major General John Barrington wrote to his brother, Secretary at War Viscount William Barrington, with "one piece of advice to Ministers." After witnessing the decimation of the British forces on Martinique and Guadeloupe, the general counseled, "that when ever they have to mind to make Conquests in this part of

²⁵⁶ Morning Report of the Quarter Master General, April 19, 1759, 38/88, Barrington Papers, Add. MSS 73731, BL.

the world that they should raise the troops for them here as I am fully convinced Europeans Can not stand this Climate at any Season of the year.”²⁵⁸ Well aware of the difficulty of recruiting white soldiers in the Caribbean, in calling for the deployment of seasoned West Indians Barrington was, in essence, urging British officials to rely more heavily upon men of African descent. As recipients of correspondence that repeatedly conveyed the vital contributions of black pioneers and rangers to the British efforts in the West Indies, many of the King’s ministers came to embrace Barrington’s recommendation.

Despite the Antigua volunteers’ loyal service, not everyone was readily convinced of the wisdom of arming slaves. When the British returned for a second attempt against Martinique in 1762, they followed the example of those who had conquered Guadeloupe and hired hundreds of enslaved men from their owners on Barbados and the Leeward Islands. They did not, however, arm these enslaved recruits. Sir Jeffery Amherst, commander in chief of the British forces in North America, advised Major General Robert Monckton, commander in chief of the expedition, not to employ as soldiers the slaves who were to accompany him to Martinique. These black men were hired “for the Service of Drawing the Artillery” or “other Labouring Works of the Camp,” and Amherst

²⁵⁷ See note 238 for rates of death and desertion among the enslaved pioneers from Barbados.

²⁵⁸ John Barrington to William Barrington, March 3, 1759, 35/5, Barrington Papers, Add. MSS 73730, BL. It seems that the Secretary at War relayed his brother’s advice to the Secretary of State, as Pitt later informed Major General Barrington that the King approved of his recruitment of “Inhabitants & Negroes from the Islands,” observing that “such Light Troops cannot fail to be of the greatest Utility, . . . [by] distress[ing] the Enemy, by making Incursions into the Country, and breaking up, & destroying their Settlements, which Operation they will, from being inured to the Climate, be better fitted to carry on, than the regular Forces.” William Pitt to John Barrington, May 20, 1759, 35/13, Barrington Papers, Add. MSS 73732, BL.

did not “think it can any wise Answer to Arm any of these People.”²⁵⁹ While all were convinced of the indispensability of enslaved Blacks’ labor, some commanders preferred to arm Whites when they had a choice.

Thanks to Hopson’s demise, white Barbadians were more willing to contribute to the second expedition against Martinique than they had been to the first.²⁶⁰ Five hundred white Barbadians offered themselves as volunteers for the campaign, obviating the need to arm people of African descent.²⁶¹ Rear Admiral Georges Brydges Rodney, commander in chief of the naval forces arrayed against Martinique, made the racial demarcation clear when he reassured Amherst that the Blacks he was gathering would “be of Great Use in drawing Cannon, &c &c and the Whites may be employed as Rangers, they being Inured to the Climate and Good Marks Men.”²⁶² Like the

²⁵⁹ Sir Jeffrey Amherst to Robert Monckton, November 9, 1761, WO 34/56, ff. 65-68, TNA. Amherst, based in New York, was not personally familiar with the conditions facing the British forces in the West Indies and often ignored the recommendations of those stationed there. In particular, he did not seem to think that the “Heat is much greater than in these parts” and refused to follow their advice concerning the best seasons for campaigns. Amherst to Lord Rollo, August 5, 1761, WO 34/56, ff. 33-35, TNA and Amherst to Governor Campbell Dalrymple, August 5, 1761, WO 34/56, f. 32, TNA. Thus, it is unsurprising that he would scoff at the utility or necessity of arming slaves.

²⁶⁰ See notes 223 and 244.

²⁶¹ Pinfold to Pitt, October 28, 1761, CO 152/46, ff. 102-3, TNA; Sir James Douglas to Pitt, November 4, 1761, CO 166/2, ff. 65-66, TNA; Dalrymple to Pitt, November 16, 1761, CO 110/2, ff. 11-13, TNA; Dalrymple to the Earl of Egremont, December 6, 1761, CO 110/2, ff. 18-19, TNA; and Robert Monckton to Egremont, December 31, 1761, CO 166/2, ff. 13-14, TNA. Governor Thomas was unable to send any white volunteers from Antigua or the Leeward Islands, though he did send a detachment from the 38th regiment. Thomas to Georges Brydges Rodney, December 4, 1761, PRO 30/20/8, ff. 392-93, TNA. Rodney was not happy about this. See Rodney to Thomas, December 15, 1761, PRO 30/20/8, ff. 393-94, TNA. The Barbados Volunteers joined 19 regular regiments, including 2 battalions of the 42nd regiment, the Royal Highlanders and a battalion of the Royal Americans; 2 companies of North American Rangers; and detachments from the Royal Artillery and the Marines. Horatio Gates, “Orderly Book: Expedition to Martinique, 15 November 1761 – 18 January 1762,” 18 January 1762, Reel 18, Horatio Gates Papers, Library of the New-York Historical Society, New York, NY (hereafter NYHS) and General Return of the Troops Ordered on the Expedition under the Command of His Excellency Major General Monckton, 1761, WO 34/56, f. 92, TNA. Rodney claimed the entire force consisted of 14,000 men. Rodney to Thomas Pellham Holles, Duke of Newcastle, January 21, 1762, ff. 430-32, Newcastle Papers, v. 258, Add. MSS 32933, BL.

²⁶² Rodney to Amherst, December 4, 1761, PRO 30/20/8, ff. 19-20, TNA. In a proclamation to the troops prior to landing at Martinique, they were reassured by the news that Monckton, “Attentive to the Welfare of

commanders themselves, the “Act to Assist His Majesty’s Forces” passed by the Barbados Assembly in October 1761 differentiated between those men who could be armed and those who could not. While the racial status of the armed volunteers remained unspecified by the act, none were to be enlisted within their ranks but freemen, who, given Barbados’ relatively small free black population, were likely Whites.²⁶³ In order to augment their number, the act stipulated that debtors might be taken from the jails and unemployed stragglers might be seized from the streets and impressed into service. As for the “slaves contributed to work,” they were to be treated “in the same manner as all persons Employed in an Army to do work, and not to bear arms.”²⁶⁴ It seems that Governor Charles Pinfold and the legislators of Barbados did not share Antigua Governor Thomas’ preference for arming black slaves over “white rabble.”

All, however, agreed that enslaved Blacks’ labor would prove essential to success at Martinique. Thanks to the “Act to Assist His Majesty’s Forces,” Barbados officials could compel owners to furnish their slaves and Monckton received all 600 enslaved pioneers he had requested.²⁶⁵ Though Rodney had asked for 1,000 enslaved men from

the Troops,” had “contracted for . . . a Great Number of Negroes to Draw the Canon” and that “nothing has been neglected, that can in any Shape contribute either to their Health, ease, or conveniency, of the Soldiers.” Gates, “Orderly Book: Expedition to Martinique,” January 7, 1762, Reel 18, Horatio Gates Papers, NYHS.

²⁶³ An Act to Assist His Majesty’s Forces, October 7, 1761, enclosed in Pinfold to Pitt, October 28, 1761, CO 152/46, ff. 108-9, TNA. Two thousand free Blacks inhabited Barbados in the 1780s. Robin Blackburn, *The Making of New World Slavery: From the Baroque to the Modern, 1492-1800* (New York: Verso, 1997), 406. On Barbados’ relatively small free black population before the turn of the nineteenth century, see Jerome S. Handler and Arnold A Sio, “Barbados,” in *Neither Slave Nor Free: The Freedman of African Descent in the Slave Societies of the New World*, eds. David W. Cohen and Jack P. Greene (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972), 215.

²⁶⁴ An Act to Assist His Majesty’s Forces, October 7, 1761, enclosed in Pinfold to Pitt, October 28, 1761, CO 152/46, ff. 108-9, TNA.

²⁶⁵ An Act to Assist His Majesty’s Forces, October 7, 1761, enclosed in Pinfold to Pitt, October 28, 1761, CO 152/46, ff. 108-9, TNA. Every owner of 30 or more slaves was required to provide one for the army. For every hundred additional slaves owned, the slaveholder was obligated to supply another slave for His

the Leeward Islands, initially only 300 pioneers joined from Antigua. Rodney expressed his disappointment at not receiving the full complement he had requested for he considered Blacks “absolutely necessary for the Ease of the Troops in this Climate.” He thus entreated Thomas to “again exert your Influence for increasing the Number of Negroes, already granted by the Island as one of the most essential Points towards this most important Service.”²⁶⁶ Despite Rodney’s desire for additional black auxiliaries, he was unwilling to recruit any from the conquered island of Guadeloupe, fearing “they would Desert to the Enemy and be of Great Disservice.”²⁶⁷ If some British commanders feared the black inhabitants of the British Islands were not their staunch compatriots, they were unwilling to bank on the disloyalty of the slaves of their erstwhile enemies. In the

Majesty’s Service. All slaves were to be “provided with a back’d Bill, a Hoe fixed and a Baskett, and Cloath’d with a good Jacket, a pair of Trouzes, and a Hat or Monmouth Cap.” Owners were to be paid one shilling and ten pence half penny per day for the hire of each slave and were promised compensation in case of death, desertion, or disablement. Owners who neglected to furnish their slaves were to be fined 20 pounds per slave and the expense of outfitting those slaves who appeared without the required equipment would be deducted from the cost of their hire. The Act specified a six-month term of service for both armed free volunteers and enslaved pioneers. For the number of slaves raised by Barbados, see Pinfold to Pitt, October 28, 1761, CO 152/46, ff. 102-3, TNA; Douglas to Pitt, November 4, 1761, CO 166/2, ff. 65-66, TNA; Rodney to Thomas, November 22, 1761, PRO 30/20/8, f. 10, TNA; Dalrymple to Egremont, December 6, 1761, CO 110/2, ff. 18-19, TNA; Monckton to Amherst, December 30, 1761, WO 34/55, ff. 42-43, TNA; and Monckton to Egremont, December 31, 1761, CO 166/2, ff. 13-14, TNA.

²⁶⁶ For Rodney’s request for 1,000 and receipt of 300 enslaved Blacks from Antigua, see Rodney to Thomas, November 22, 1761, PRO 30/20/8, f. 10, TNA; Julian Legge to Amherst, November 29, 1761, WO 34/55, f. 39, TNA; Thomas to Rodney, December 4, 1761, PRO 30/20/8, ff. 392-93, TNA; and Rodney to Thomas, December 15, 1761, PRO 30/20/8, ff. 393-94, TNA. For the quote, see Rodney to Thomas, December 15, 1761, PRO 30/20/8, ff. 393-94, TNA.

²⁶⁷ Rodney to Amherst, December 4, 1761, PRO 30/20/8, ff. 19-20, TNA and WO 34/55, ff. 265-66, TNA. This was an instance in which Amherst listened to his commanders in the West Indies. Although he had at first ordered Governor Campbell Dalrymple to enlist slaves from Guadeloupe, Amherst later concurred with Rodney that this might be unwise. See Amherst to Dalrymple, October 9, 1761, WO 34/56, f. 40, TNA and Amherst to Rodney, January 1, 1762, WO 34/56, f. 108, TNA. It seems that the distrust of Blacks from the French West Indies did not extend to those the British might employ as guides. Dalrymple recommended that the commanders of the Martinique expedition rely upon information from “deserted Negroes who will not Scrouple to become good Guides on the promise of liberty or other recompenses.” As a start, he informed Sir James Douglas that he had sent from Guadeloupe three guides with Lieutenant Governor Robert Melville to the rendezvous point at Barbados, one of whom was a “Mulatto who had worked at Fort Royal & was well acquainted thereabouts.” Dalrymple to Douglas, October 10, 1761, CO 110/2, ff. 14-17, TNA.

end, British military officials did not need to take a chance on the Blacks of Guadeloupe, whom Amherst had become convinced “cannot be Confided on, so Much as the Others.”²⁶⁸ Thomas presumably acted upon Rodney’s appeal for more enslaved pioneers, for by 21 January 1762 Rodney was able to report to Thomas Pelham Holles, Duke of Newcastle, that he had landed “1500 Blacks from the Different Islands” on Martinique “to assist in any Laborious Work.”²⁶⁹

On Martinique in 1762, as on that island and Guadeloupe in 1759, enslaved pioneers helped to land the artillery, military stores, and provisions from the ships and to haul them across beaches, through forests, and up the steep sides of mountains and ravines. They accomplished this while suffering frequent attacks by parties composed of French “grenadiers, free booters, negroes and mulattoes.”²⁷⁰ Slaves from the British islands built the batteries that covered the soldiers’ assault on the hills above Fort-Royal, the capture of which led to the conquest of the island as a whole on the 14th of February 1762.²⁷¹ Just as they had on Guadeloupe, black men proved themselves to be, in Admiral Rodney’s words, “of great use.”²⁷²

²⁶⁸ Amherst to Monckton, January 1, 1762, WO 34/56, ff. 117-18, TNA.

²⁶⁹ Rodney to Newcastle, January 21, 1762, ff. 430-32, Newcastle Papers, v. 258, Add. MSS 32933, BL. Some of these enslaved Blacks came from St. Christopher. Rodney to the President of St. Christopher, February 17, 1762, PRO 30/20/8, f. 66, TNA.

²⁷⁰ Journal of Richard Humphrys, 28th Foot, 1757-1762, Blechynden Papers, vol. 85, Add. MSS 45662, f. 47, BL. See also Monckton to Egremont, January 20, 1762, CO 166/2, ff. 17-20, TNA. Campbell had warned Douglas that the “coulour’d tribe, in all probability will be used, as irregulars to Annoy & Molest the Advanced parties, Camp, & Convoy of provisions.” Dalrymple to Douglas, October 10, 1761, CO 110/2, ff. 14-17, TNA.

²⁷¹ “Journal of the Operations of the Army in the Island of Martinico From the 16th January to 5th February Inclusive [1762],” in *Military Affairs in North America, 1748-1765: Selected Documents from the Cumberland Papers in Windsor Castle*, ed. Stanley Pargellis (New York: D. Appleton-Century Company, 1936), 451; Journal of Richard Humphrys, Blechynden Papers, vol. 85, Add. MSS 45662, ff. 47-48, BL; Monckton to Egremont, January 20, 1762, CO 166/2, ff. 17-20, TNA; and Monckton to Egremont, February 9, 1762, CO 166/2, ff. 24-36, TNA. For further information concerning the military and naval maneuvers of the 1762 British expedition against Martinique, see: Gates, “Orderly Book: Expedition to

Convinced of the worth of black soldiers and pioneers in the Caribbean, British government officials worked to cultivate their loyalty and good will, so that they might rely upon their services in future campaigns. Building upon the expertise and intelligence garnered from previous West Indian campaigns, Secretary of State for the Southern Department Charles Wyndham, the Earl of Egremont, issued a series of directives early in 1762 concerning the expedition against Spanish Havana that was to commence later that year.²⁷³ One of these called for the establishment of a corps of 500 armed free black soldiers from Jamaica. Another enjoined Admiral Sir George Pocock, the commander in chief of the British squadron, and George Keppel, 3rd Earl of Albemarle, the commander in chief of the armed forces at Havana, to hire 2,000 slaves from Jamaican slaveholders

Martinique,” Reel 18, Horatio Gates Papers, NYHS; Henry Hamilton, Journal, 1755-62, MS N-2087(OS), Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA (hereafter MHS); CO 166/2, ff. 1-64, TNA; Georges Brydes Rodney, Order Book, October 1761 – April 1763, PRO 30/20/2, ff. 1-131, TNA; PRO 30/20/8, ff. 47-54, 57-58, 64, 67, 74, 77, and 78, TNA; and WO 34/55, ff. 45-46, 51, 53-59, 69-71, 73-75, and 86-87, TNA. The Capitulation of Martinique did not offer as generous terms to the black population as had the Capitulation of Guadeloupe. Though the French asked that all free Negroes and Mulattoes captured by the British be treated as prisoners of war, the British asserted that “all Negroes taken in Arms are deemed Slaves.” The British agreed to respect the right of slaveowners to free those slaves who had been promised liberty in return for their service in defense of Martinique, and did not stipulate that they had to leave the island. Perhaps this is because they gathered the majority of them as booty before their owners could free them. Capitulation of Martinique, February 14, 1762, enclosed in Monckton to Pitt, February 27, 1762, CO 166/2, ff. 57-64, TNA.

²⁷² Rodney to the President of St. Christopher, February 17, 1762, PRO 30/20/8, f. 66, TNA. Rodney wrote to “return to you my Thanks for the Supply of Negroes furnished by the Island of St. Kitts, upon the present important Occasion.”

²⁷³ For British and North American accounts of the siege of Havana, see Francis Browne to Jeremiah Browne, October 26, 1762, Richard and Francis Browne Papers, William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, MI (hereafter CL); John Graham, *Extracts from the Journal of the Rev. John Graham of the First Connecticut Regiment, Colonel Lyman, from September 25th to October 19th, 1762, at the Siege of Havana* (New York: Society of Colonial Wars in the State of New York, 1896); “An Authentic Journal of the Siege of Havana. By an Officer [1762],” in *The Capture of Havana in 1762, By the Forces of George III. Being Two Authentic reports of the Siege and Capture of Havana by the Combined Forces of Great Britain and the American Colonies*, ed. Edward Everett Hale (Cambridge, MA: Press of the Co-operative Printing Society, 1898); William Howe, Account of the Siege of Havana from 7 June 1762, July 14, 1762, Howe Brothers Papers, CL; Journal of Richard Humphrys, Blechynden Papers, vol. 85, Add. MSS 45662, BL; Charles Knowles, *Narrative and Remarks on the Siege of Havana, and Isle of Cuba [1761-62]*, Add. MSS 23678, BL; Patrick Mackellar, *A Correct Journal of the Landing His Majesty's Forces on the Island of Cuba, and of the Siege and Surrender of the Havannah* (London, 1762); and Israel Putnam, “Orderly Book

to serve as pioneers.²⁷⁴ Pocock and Albemarle's orders further instructed that "the Corps of Negros to be raised in Jamaica should have an equal Share in all Booty, gained from the Enemy, in common with Our Regular Troops." Not only armed free black soldiers were to have their share, for Albemarle was instructed to "take Care, that, in such Dispositions, a proper Regard be had to All Pioneers, Peasants, or Negros, working to clear ground, assisting at the Sieges, or otherwise employed in any Military Service."²⁷⁵

Despite the offer of perquisites equivalent to those offered white soldiers, few free Blacks from Jamaica agreed to serve abroad on behalf of the British. Secretary of State Egremont, having judged that "a certain Proportion of free Negroes . . . would greatly contribute to the Success of the Enterprize," dispatched Major Thomas Alexander Fuller to Jamaica to raise and command the regiment of free Blacks and authorized him to charge the expense of recruiting, clothing, equipping, and feeding them to the British Army.²⁷⁶ The Jamaica Council determined that the free black privates should "receive the King's pay" and "five Shillings per Week Currency as Subsistance Money" and set

of the Havana Expedition" in *The Two Putnams, Israel and Rufus, in the Havana Expedition 1762 and in the Mississippi River Exploration 1772-73* (Hartford: Connecticut Historical Society, 1931).

²⁷⁴ Secret Orders to Albemarle, February 15, 1762, CO 117/1, TNA. Regarding the number of enslaved Blacks, see Lyttelton to Board of Trade, May 12, 1762, CO 137/32, ff.114-16, TNA. The complete force was to consist of 16,000 men, including the 22nd, 34th, 56th, and 72nd regiments from England, 4,000 regulars and provincials from North America, and those men who had survived the conquests of Martinique and the Neutral Islands. David Syrett, ed., *The Siege and Capture of Havana, 1762* (London: Navy Records Society, 1970), xiii, xiv.

²⁷⁵ Draft of Separate Instructions to the Earl of Albemarle, February 18, 1762, CO 117/1, TNA.

²⁷⁶ Egremont to Lyttelton, January 1762, CO 137/61, ff. 50-52, TNA. Proposed Establishment of a Regiment under the Command of Major Fuller, undated, CO 117/1, TNA. As of December 1755, Jamaica could count on 600-700 able free Blacks and Mulattoes to aid in the defense of the colony. Present State of Jamaica with Governor Knowles' opinion of what is wanting for its further Defence, December 13, 1755, Long Papers, Add. MSS 12431, BL. Equipping the corps of free Blacks included arming them. Albemarle brought five hundred stand of arms with him to the West Indies for their use. SP 44/193, f. 83, TNA in Syrett, *Siege of Havana*, 38, note 2.

their term of service as one year.²⁷⁷ Notwithstanding these offers, few free Blacks enlisted. Dissatisfied with the smallness of the corps, in late May Albemarle informed Egremont that he suspected there had been “strange Management in the raising of the Corps of Free Negroes.”²⁷⁸ Admiral Sir James Douglas, the British naval officer in charge of transporting the free black corps to Havana, along with several Jamaican legislators blamed Jamaica Governor William Henry Lyttelton for the failure to staff the complete regiment. They accused Lyttelton of selling the officers’ commissions for a hefty profit instead of giving them to men who could successfully convince free black men to enlist. Douglas wrote to Pocock in early May, “the Regiment of Free Negroes will not be raised in time, for the intention of His Majesty in giving the Commissions to persons that could raise them, is perverted & given to those that can buy.”²⁷⁹ When enumerating their complaints against Lyttelton’s administration in November 1762, members of the Jamaica Assembly asserted that the companies of free Blacks intended

²⁷⁷ Minutes of the Jamaica Council, April 5, 1762, CO 140/42, TNA. This was in accordance with what Egremont had ordered. He had informed Lyttelton that the officers and effective men were “to be subsisted by the Governor upon the footing which the troops of Jamaica are paid, till Lord Albemarle arrives. The expense of levy, subsistence, clothing, etc. to be defrayed by Lord Albemarle as a contingent charge.” Egremont to Lyttelton, January 1762, CO 137/61, ff. 56-57, TNA.

²⁷⁸ Albemarle to Egremont, May 27, 1762, CO 117/1, TNA. By Fuller’s last letter to Albemarle, only 50 free Blacks had enlisted to serve at Havana.

²⁷⁹ Douglas to Pocock, May 5, 1762, ADM 1/237, f. 34, TNA. Douglas wrote to Lyttelton, “I flatter myself that You will be able to remove the Obstacles towards raising the Regiment of Five hundred free Negroes, who may be of such great Service on this Expedition.” Douglas to Lyttelton, April 18, 1762, William Henry Lyttelton Papers, CL. Douglas sent a copy of this letter to the Jamaica Council. Minutes of the Jamaica Council, April 20, 1762, CO 140/42, TNA. If he was not referring to Lyttelton’s selling of commissions, the “obstacles” to which Douglas referred may have been the Jamaica government’s refusal to act without assurance in person from an army representative that the hire of slaves and that all expenses incurred in raising and transporting free and enslaved Blacks to Havana would be covered. See Lyttelton to Albemarle, May 4, 1762, enclosed in Albemarle’s May 27, 1762 letter to Egremont, CO 117/1, TNA. In the end, Lyttelton finally agreed to vouch for the British Army to expedite the process of raising the corps of free Blacks and the enslaved pioneers. See Douglas to Pocock, May 7, 1762, in Syrett, *Siege of Havana*, 113. By the time he heard the news, Albemarle had already sent a blistering letter and Mr. Durant, the Paymaster General, to Lyttelton in Jamaica. Albemarle to Lyttelton, May 18, 1762, Lyttelton Papers, CL.

for service at Havana might have been filled “had not the Officers Commissions been disposed of for particular premiums to Persons unqualified to raise them.”²⁸⁰

As it was likely that soldiers of African descent who ventured abroad would never return, both free black Jamaicans and the planters who employed them had reservations about their potential participation in the Havana expedition. Refusing to accept responsibility for Jamaica’s failure to recruit free Blacks for the campaign against Cuba, Lyttelton defended his efforts to incensed British officials.²⁸¹ He informed them that he had offered free Blacks an additional bounty, had asked the colonels of the militia and the superintendents of the Maroon towns to encourage free Blacks to enlist, and had offered commissions to officers who had led regiments of free Blacks against rebel slaves in the slave revolts of 1760.²⁸² Lyttelton accounted for the free Blacks’ lack of interest as follows: “as most of them have beneficial Trades and find a Comfortable maintenance

²⁸⁰ Copy of the Journal of the House of Assembly, November 19, 1762, enclosed in Lyttelton to the Board of Trade, January 12, 1763, CO 137/33, ff. 9-12, TNA. See also Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica (hereafter JAJ), November 19 and 20, 1762, CO 140/40, ff. 382-83, TNA. For the testimonies of men who attempted to secure these commissions, see JAJ, August 12, 1766, CO 140/40, ff. 620-23, TNA.

²⁸¹ Lyttelton admitted in a private letter to George Grenville that he had sold six of the eighteen commissions, but claimed that he had returned the money to those who had paid him and had given the other twelve out without charge. Lyttelton to George Grenville, January 11, 1763, Grenville Family Papers, Box 22, f. 64, Stowe Grenville Collection, Huntington Library, San Marino, CA (hereafter HL).

²⁸² Lyttelton to Board of Trade, May 12, 1762, CO 137/32, ff. 114-16, TNA. Lyttelton to Egremont, January 11, 1763, CO 137/61, ff. 149-50, TNA. On the Jamaica slave revolts of 1760, also known as Tacky’s revolt, see Trevor Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire: Thomas Thistlewood and His Slaves in the Anglo-Jamaican World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 170-74; Craton, *Testing the Chains*, 125-39; and Douglas Hall, *In Miserable Slavery: Thomas Thistlewood in Jamaica, 1750-1786* (London: Macmillan Publishers, 1989), 92-114. Lyttelton was responding to two letters from Egremont conveying the King’s disappointment at the failure of the corps of free Blacks. In one of these, Egremont wrote, “His Majesty, however, does not doubt but that you exerted every Means in your Power to carry His Commands into execution, particularly by the Appointment of the most proper Persons to be Officers in the Corps, for which I transmitted Blank Commissions to You.” Egremont to Lyttelton, October 2, 1762, CO 137/61, ff. 129-30, TNA. Egremont may have been letting Lyttelton know that he had been accused of putting his own interests before those of His Majesty’s Service. See also Egremont to Lyttelton, August 7, 1762, CO 137/61, ff. 124-26, TNA.

here with their Wives & families it is extremely difficult to prevail with them to enlist.”²⁸³ Free Blacks realized that, in enlisting to serve abroad, they would be risking being parted from their homes forever. Many would have been familiar with the common practice of enslaving any person of African descent captured aboard a ship or in the wake of battle.²⁸⁴ Lyttelton maintained that Jamaican planters too had much to lose if the free Blacks they relied upon for the defense of their plantations failed to return from Havana. He remarked that free Blacks “are found so serviceable in quiet times from the Trades they exercise, & in case of any commotion among the Slaves, from the attachment they have to the white people, that I found but few persons here dispos’d to excite them to quit this country & go upon a Service from which many of them were likely never to return.”²⁸⁵ With the potential risks outweighing the gains, few free Blacks took part in the campaign against Havana.

Notwithstanding the hazards, one company of at least 139 free Blacks did volunteer their services, and though they joined the expedition later than expected, they served at Havana until well after the majority of the British and North American troops

²⁸³ Lyttelton to Board of Trade, May 12, 1762, CO 137/32, ff.114-16, TNA.

²⁸⁴ Lyttelton attempted to allay free Blacks’ fears by promising that “in case any of them, who shall enlist under the said Major Fuller, shall be taken prisoners, the Commander in Chief of the intended Expedition will enlist, & require that all such as shall have produc’d Certificates to their freedom to the said Major shall be exchange’d, & set at liberty in the same manner as His Majesty’s white Subjects, being Soldiers in the same Army, shall be.” Apparently, most free Blacks remained unconvinced that their freedom would be respected. Lyttelton to each Colonel of the Foot Militia & to Captain Makay of the Rangers, May 5, 1762, enclosed in Lyttelton to Egremont, January 11, 1763, CO 137/61, ff. 152-53, TNA.

²⁸⁵ Lyttelton to Egremont, January 11, 1763, CO 137/61, ff. 149-50, TNA. Captain Hugh Makay of the Rangers informed the free Blacks under his command of the opportunity to enlist to serve at Havana, “but they all happen to be so engag’d in the care of Gentlemen’s Estates that they cannot in honour think of quitting their different trusts on so short a notice.” Hugh Makay to Lyttelton, May 2, 1762, enclosed in Lyttelton to Egremont, January 11, 1763, CO 137/61, ff. 159-60, TNA. The recent rebellions of slaves may have made Jamaican planters particularly unwilling to part with free Blacks. A Jamaica assemblyman made it clear to Lyttelton that “the Free Negroes were the best barrier the People here had against their

had departed.²⁸⁶ Despite delays due to inadequate transports and provisions as well as contrary winds, in a June 3rd letter Sir James Douglas, the British naval officer in charge of transporting both the enslaved and free Blacks to Havana, reported to Lyttelton: “On Sunday the *Alcide* will be ready to receive the Officers and Recruits of Major Fullers Company.”²⁸⁷ The *Alcide* and her convoy of four transports sailed for Havana on the 11th of June and by the 17th Albemarle asked Pocock to “land Captain [David] Goreham’s company of free Negroes & Mulatto’s to reinforce Colonel [William] Howes Corps” at Chorera, on the western side of Havana.²⁸⁸ Upon the arrival of thirty-four free Blacks from Jamaica, Howe told Pocock that he and his men “shall be glad of the rest.”²⁸⁹

The Jamaican free Blacks, in company with the grenadiers, light infantry, and marines under Howe’s command, built redoubts and batteries, cut off the city’s supplies of fresh food and water, and aided the seamen in the transport of drinking water from the Chorera River to the parched forces who were besieging the Moro Castle, the forbidding Spanish fort that guarded both the city and the mouth of the harbor on its eastern side.

Slaves, & that if many of them were carried off the Island it wou’d be very hurtfull to it.” Lyttelton to Grenville, January 11, 1763, Grenville Family Papers, Box 22, f. 64, Stowe Grenville Collection, HL.

²⁸⁶ In mid-July, a month before the surrender of Havana, a return of the British forces at Havana listed Major Fuller’s Corps as consisting of eight commissioned officers, seven non-commissioned officers, 101 men fit for duty, and thirty-eight sick present. General Return of His Majesty’s Forces Under the Command of Lieutenant General the Earl of Albemarle, July 17, 1762, CO 117/1, TNA. In July, the total number of private men arrayed against Havana consisted of 5,553 effective, 4,056 sick present, 807 sick absent, 75 taken prisoner, and 533 on command. By 16 August, Capt. Goreham’s company was listed as “originally 70 Free Negroes – reduced.” Weekly State of the Army under the Command of Lt. Gen. Earl of Albemarle on the Island of Cuba, August 16, 1762, WO 34/55, ff. 192-93, TNA.

²⁸⁷ Douglas to Lyttelton, June 3, 1762, Lyttelton Papers, CL. On delays in acquiring transports, see April 2, 5, and 24 and May 3, 7, and 31, 1762, Lyttelton Papers, CL. An order for £1000 Sterling worth of provisions for the free Black Corps was filed on 16 June, after the free black regiment had sailed. See John Patterson LS to Great Britain, Navy, Victualling Office, June 16, 1762, James Douglas Papers, CL.

²⁸⁸ Albemarle to Pocock, June 17, 1762, PO 950, Sir George Pocock Papers, HL. The departure of the *Alcide* was pushed back until the 11th. See Douglas to Lyttelton, June 8, 1762, Lyttelton Papers, CL and Logbook, June 11, 1762, Slip Case N, Douglas Papers, CL. Albemarle had to repeat his order to ensure that all the free Blacks were landed. See Albemarle to Pocock, June 29, 1762, PO 954, Pocock Papers, HL.

²⁸⁹ William Howe to Pocock, June 17, 1762, PO 816, Pocock Papers, HL.

Detachments of soldiers scoured the countryside for cattle and fresh vegetables with which to feed the British forces and skirmished when they encountered Spanish “inhabitants, peasants & Negroes.”²⁹⁰ Howe posted “those [free Blacks] with arms . . . towards the rear that we may not be insulted by any rascally inhabitants that way.”²⁹¹ He planned to “make the best use of their disguise we are able,” likely meaning the Jamaican free black soldiers could use the color of their skin to confuse the Spanish, who did not expect armed people of African descent to be fighting on behalf of the British. Howe worried British soldiers might themselves mistake Jamaican free Blacks for Cubans and thus recognized that “when they go with our troops it will be necessary they should have some other garb.”²⁹² By the end of July, after the Moro Castle was in British hands, the free Blacks along with the rest of the forces to the west of Havana erected batteries to assault La Punta fort. The fall of La Punta fort to the British forced the capitulation of the city on the 13th of August. After helping to achieve its conquest, the free black soldiers from Jamaica remained in service at Havana until the expiration of their year-long term in April 1763.²⁹³

In 1766, when testifying before the Jamaica Assembly that despite his qualifications he had failed to secure a commission to command a company of free Blacks at Havana, John Brodbelt reported “that the few men who were enlisted, and did

²⁹⁰ Howe to Pocock, June 16, 1762, PO 815; Howe to Pocock, June 17, 1762, PO 816; Howe to Pocock, June 18, 1762, PO 817; Howe to Pocock, June 19, 1762, PO 818; Howe to Pocock, June 26, 1762, PO 819; Howe to Pocock, June 20, 1762, PO 820; Howe to Pocock, June 24, 1762, PO 821; Howe to Pocock, June 29, 1762, PO 822; Howe to Pocock, July 3, 1762, PO 823; and Howe to Pocock, July 12, 1762, PO 824, all Pocock Papers, HL. For the quote, see Howe to Pocock, June 17, 1762, PO 816, Pocock Papers, HL.

²⁹¹ Howe to Pocock, June 17, 1762, PO 816, Pocock Papers, HL.

²⁹² Howe to Pocock, June 18, 1762, PO 817, Pocock Papers, HL.

²⁹³ Instructions to William Keppel, December 25, 1762, CO 117/1, TNA; Minutes of the Jamaica Council, March 14, 1763, CO 140/42, TNA; and Keppel to Egremont, April 29, 1763, CO 117/1, TNA.

go on the expedition, were of great use, and behaved extremely well.” He maintained that “as a great mortality and sickness prevailed among the regular troops at that siege, and as these men were inured to the climate and expert in arms,” if all 500 free Blacks had served at Havana, “they must have been of very essential use.” In the end, he asserted, “the service must be presumed to have suffered for the want of them.”²⁹⁴ Free black Jamaicans’ valuable contributions to the siege of Havana served as evidence of Lyttelton’s mismanagement of the governance of Jamaica; it became a mark of his failure to serve both the island and the Crown that more of these skilled and effective armed Blacks did not serve at Havana. Those free Blacks who survived the traumas of the extended siege earned both acclaim and a share of the booty taken from the Spanish city equal to that received by their white counterparts.²⁹⁵

The enslaved pioneers of Jamaica served as long and as capably as their free brethren but they too joined the campaign long after and in lesser numbers than its commanders in chief desired. Jamaican officials had as much difficulty raising and dispatching the corps of enslaved pioneers as they did the corps of free Blacks. Despite receiving orders to form a body of enslaved pioneers in February 1762, the Jamaica Assembly waited until the 18th of April to pass an “Act for providing Two Thousand Negroes for the immediate Service of his Majesty.” The officials of Jamaica may have been distracted by a rumor that a combined French and Spanish squadron was planning to

²⁹⁴ JAJ, August 12, 1766, CO 140/40, f. 622.

²⁹⁵ Draft of Separate Instructions to the Earl of Albemarle, February 18, 1762, CO 117/1, TNA. Private soldiers and sailors were entitled to 9/15ths of the total booty. Division of Booty or Prize Money between the Army and the Navy, June 5, 1762, enclosed in Albemarle to Egremont, October 11, 1762, CO 117/1, TNA. Each private soldier earned £4.1s.8 ½ d. Sonia Keppel, *Three Brothers at Havana, 1762* (Salisbury, Great Britain: M. Russell, 1981), 79. Although I have found no records indicating that the Jamaican free

attack the island and may have hoped to retain their able-bodied black men to aid in the island's defense.²⁹⁶ Indeed, Albemarle remarked to Major General Robert Monckton on the 21st of April that "the alarms we are under from some unfavourable reports about Jamaica makes me think it possible we may be disappointed in the slaves which we expected to get from that island." He went on to propose to the man who had led the British army to victory against Martinique that "as this is an article of the most serious nature, upon which (considering the violent heats) the health of the soldiery and even the success of the expedition may greatly depend, I must recommend it to you very strongly to consider if by any means we can be furnished with a number of blacks from Martinique, which I mean should be paid for in the same manner as those taken from our own island."²⁹⁷ Albemarle proved unable to hire any slaves from the inhabitants of Martinique, but he did purchase "near 100 Blacks" from the newly conquered island. To further increase the number of pioneers on the expedition, he bought from Antigua and hired from St. Christopher 500 more enslaved Blacks. He explained this unorthodox move and the added expense to Egremont on the 27th of May: "The great Utility of the Slaves to Major General Monckton's Army at the Reduction of Martinique, (I believe he

Blacks actually received their share of the Spanish treasure, I have also found no records of complaints that they did not obtain what had been promised them.

²⁹⁶ On the fears of a planned French and Spanish invasion of Jamaica, see Lyttelton to Rodney, January 24, 1762, PRO 30/20/8, ff. 117-18, TNA; Lyttelton to Egremont, January 26, 1762, CO 137/61, ff. 58-59, TNA; JAJ, February 4-17, 1762, CO 104/40, ff. 323-34, TNA; Lyttelton to Egremont, February 27, 1762, CO 137/61, ff. 68-70; Rodney to Arthur Forrest, March 4, 1762, PRO 30/20/8, ff. 83-84, TNA; Rodney to Lyttelton, March 4, 1762, PRO 30/20/8, ff. 84-85, TNA; Rodney to Monckton, March 9, 1762, PRO 30/20/8, ff. 88-89, TNA; Rodney to Monckton, March 14, 1762, PRO 30/20/8, ff. 91-92, TNA; and Rodney to Forrest, March 23, 1762, PRO 30/20/8, ff. 98-99, TNA.

²⁹⁷ Albemarle to Monckton, April 21, 1762, in Syrett, *Siege of Havana*, 94. On 27 April Albemarle wrote to Pocock that he did "not expect any [Blacks] from Jamaica if their fright continues." Worried that he would not be able to procure enough at Martinique, he sent "an intelligent field officer to Governor Thomas [of Antigua] to raise as many Negroes as possible *at any price* as I cannot do without them." Albemarle to Pocock, April 27, 1762, PO 943, Pocock Papers, HL.

had near 3000 from His Majesty's Islands), and the great Uncertainty of my Receiving any from Jamaica, as that Island has been so much alarmed for some Time past, induced me to take every Measure I could think of to procure a Number that I might be sure of some Assistance to the Troops, as the Soldiers and Sailors cannot possibly work in this Country.²⁹⁸ Albemarle inflated the number of enslaved pioneers who had labored at Martinique but he did not exaggerate their essential contributions to that island's conquest. Despite having acquired some 600 slaves from the Leeward Islands, Albemarle continued to place unrelenting pressure upon Jamaica to fulfill their promise to provide 2,000 enslaved auxiliaries for the expedition against Havana.

Jamaican officials took longer than the campaign's military commanders desired to dispatch the enslaved pioneers, but this does not seem to have been due to reluctance on their part to offer the island's slaves for military service.²⁹⁹ By the 8th of April, 1762, Sir James Douglas had arrived from the Leeward Islands with a squadron to protect

²⁹⁸ Albemarle to Egremont, May 27, 1762, CO 117/1, TNA. Monckton to Egremont, May 22, 1762, CO 166/2, ff. 95-96, TNA. Mackellar mentions labor performed by "500 Blacks purchased by Lord Albemarle, at Martinico and Antigua, for that purpose." Mackellar, *Correct Journal*, 6. Albemarle issued warrants to pay for the purchase of 97 slaves from Martinique and 273 slaves from Antigua and the subsistence and hire of 97 slaves from St. Christopher. George Keppel, Earl of Albemarle, "Book of Warrants," May 4 and 5, 1762 and September 15 and 20, 1762, in *Documentos Inéditos Sobre La Toma De La Habana Por Los Ingleses en 1762*, ed. Juan Pérez de la Riva (La Habana: Biblioteca Nacional José Martí, 1963), 43, 45, 58, 59. The discrepancy in the numbers may be due to St. Christopher slaves dying or deserting over the course of the siege, and thus being ineligible for subsistence or pay for their hire in September. Pocock sent ships to gather the slaves from Antigua and St. Christopher and they joined the fleet in late May as it proceeded from Martinique to Havana. Pocock to Cleveland, May 26, 1762, Sir George Pocock Letterbook, HM 100, HL and Rodney to Cleveland, May 27, 1762, PRO 30/20/8, ff. 153-56, TNA.

²⁹⁹ If Jamaican slaveholders were indeed reluctant to send their slaves to Havana, this may have been due to their concern that they were being underpaid, and not because they feared what their slaves might learn there. Slaveholders were aware that they were to be paid at a lower rate for their slaves' hire than had the slaveowners who had contributed their slaves for the expeditions against Martinique and Guadeloupe. Lyttelton informed Egremont that "the Sum to be paid by the Crown for the Hire of them is only one Ryal (or five pence Sterling per diem) which is less (I am inform'd) by two thirds than the Island of Antigua and the other Windward Islands furnish'd their Slaves for, to go upon the expedition to Martinico." Lyttelton to Egremont, May 12, 1762, CO 137/61, ff. 116-17, TNA.

Jamaica and the fear of impending foreign attack abated.³⁰⁰ On the 13th, the island's lawmakers began to discuss the recruitment and dispatch of the regiment of enslaved pioneers. Following the law that had authorized both armed and unarmed Jamaican slaves to accompany the 1741 expedition against Cuba, they inquired whether the slaves from Jamaica were to be employed as soldiers or as pioneers. As the home government had expected to have the full complement of 500 armed free Blacks, the slaves were to be unarmed. When Jamaican legislators learned the slaves were to be sent with commissioners rather than officers, they asked Lyttelton to ensure that if any slaves were to be regimented in future endeavors, officers from Jamaica would be appointed to command them, "as the gentlemen of this island are well acquainted with the management and disposition of slaves and the granting such commissions to them, will greatly contribute to render their service more effectual, and induce the inhabitants to furnish them with more cheerfulness."³⁰¹ In insisting that Jamaicans lead any future regiments of slaves, legislators may have been responding to reports of the mistreatment of slaves on former campaigns or to Douglas' urging that experienced supervisors accompany the slaves – or they may simply have wanted their own countrymen to benefit from what could be quite lucrative military commissions.³⁰² Once the dread of imminent

³⁰⁰ Douglas to Lyttelton, April 8, 1762, Lyttelton Papers, CL.

³⁰¹ JAJ, April 15, 1762, CO 140/40, f. 338, TNA. Daniel E. Walker has argued that Jamaican lawmakers were unwilling to send their slaves to Havana for fear of placing them in circumstances where they might learn how better to fight their masters. He cites this exchange between Lyttelton and the Jamaica Assembly as evidence that the gentry were reticent to arm their slaves. I contend that Jamaican planters were quite willing to arm slaves if doing so served their interests and that Jamaican legislators were more worried about controlling the commissions of any officers who were to accompany the slaves than they were about training their slaves for war. See Daniel E. Walker, "Colony Versus Crown: Raising Black Troops for the British Siege on Havana, 1762," *Journal of Caribbean History* 33 (1999): 77.

³⁰² Having served at Martinique, Douglas informed Lyttelton and the Assembly that 1,500 Blacks had labored as pioneers on that expedition, "but as some of them did not send overseers & drivers with them, their intention was much frustrated, for want of such, for it must be people used to Command Negroes only

foreign invasion had subsided, lawmakers seemed more concerned that slaveholders be compensated and slaves be well supervised, than apprehensive that 2,000 of the island's enslaved Blacks were about to do battle. By April 18th, "An Act for Providing Two Thousand Negroes for the Immediate Service of his Majesty" had become law.³⁰³

Weeks of delay ensued as slaveholders awaited official assurance from Albemarle himself that they would be paid for their slaves' daily hire and compensation "for all and every Negroe or Negroes who may be killed, lost or rendered useless in the Expedition or shall not be returned to his Owner within twelve Months after the passing of this Act."³⁰⁴ Ultimately, Lyttelton agreed to vouch for the British army to Jamaican slaveowners and by May the commissioners finally began to gather the slaves from the different parishes

that is most proper for that purpose." Douglas to Lyttelton, April 18, 1762, Lyttelton Papers, CL and Jamaica Council Minutes, April 20, 1762, CO 140/42, TNA.

³⁰³ Lawmakers agreed to compel Jamaican slaveholders to furnish their slaves "notwithstanding the great distresses your faithful Subjects property in this Island labour under from the late Rebellions of Slaves within this Island and from the various heavy taxes to which your faithful Subjects in this Island and the produce thereof is subject both in this Island and Great Britain." Lawmakers set specific quotas of slaves from each parish and appointed commissioners to assemble, appraise, and transport the slaves from their respective parishes to the embarkation points. They determined that anyone who neglected to furnish his or her allotted quota of slaves would incur a penalty of £50 per slave, and that each owner would receive seven pence half penny per day and compensation not to exceed £70 for each slave who was killed or wounded or who deserted. An Act for Providing Two Thousand Negroes for the Immediate Service of his Majesty, April 18, 1762, enclosed in Lyttelton to the Board of Trade, May 12, 1762, CO 137/32, ff. 119-22, TNA.

³⁰⁴ An Act for Providing Two Thousand Negroes for the Immediate Service of his Majesty, April 18, 1762, enclosed in Lyttelton to the Board of Trade, May 12, 1762, CO 137/32, ff. 119-22, TNA. See also Lyttelton to Albemarle, May 4, 1762, enclosed in Albemarle to Egremont, May 27, 1762, CO 117/1, TNA. Walker contends the Jamaica legislators inserted the proviso that Albemarle himself had to affirm that the slaveholders would be paid into the law in order to derail the collection of the slaves. It is likely, however, that lawmakers simply wanted to ensure that owners would be paid in a timely manner. See Walker, "Colony Versus Crown," 77-78. Though he was no friend of the Assembly Lyttelton nevertheless defended the legislators' actions, explaining to Albemarle that they included this proviso "conformable to what had been done by a former Assembly" and because "they prefer'd such a mode of payment to that which they judg'd wou'd be more slow, viz. the obtaining an Order from the Treasury in consequence of the Secretary of State's Letter to me, when the several Accounts & Vouchers shou'd be sent home & have been allow'd of by the Board." Lyttelton to Albemarle, May 29, 1762, enclosed in Lyttelton to Egremont, January 11, 1763, CO 137/61, ff. 155-56, TNA.

of the island.³⁰⁵ Though the first small group of Jamaican slaves joined the expedition in late May when Douglas met Pocock and the British fleet off San Domingue's Cape St. Nicholas, others arrived at later stages of the campaign.³⁰⁶ After the first rendezvous with Pocock, Douglas returned to Jamaica to gather the rest of the enslaved pioneers. Difficulty assembling transports and provisions meant further delays, so that Douglas was forced to dispatch small contingents of the corps of enslaved pioneers in waves as he procured the means for them to journey to Havana.³⁰⁷ At the end of May, Lyttelton informed Albemarle that "the want of Transports oblig'd me to keep a large body of Negroes from six to seven hundred for near a fortnight in [Spanish] Town and Kingston,

³⁰⁵ Lyttelton to Albemarle, May 6, 1762, enclosed in Lyttelton to Egremont, January 11, 1763, CO 137/61, f. 153, TNA; Douglas to Pocock, May 7, 1762, in Syrett, *Siege of Havana*, 113; and Egremont to Lyttelton, August 7, 1762, CO 137/61, ff. 124-26, TNA.

³⁰⁶ Douglas reported to Pocock that "the Negroes come in slowly, having only received 87, but we shall not stay for them." Douglas to Pocock, May 11, 1762, in Syrett, *Siege of Havana*, 117. Albemarle reported to Egremont that due to the various obstacles to enlisting the Jamaica slaves, Douglas arrived with only 30 slaves when he first met the fleet on 23 May. Albemarle to Egremont, May 27, 1762, CO 117/1, TNA. Douglas had informed Lyttelton that he had the capability of embarking at least 600 slaves on the various ships of war, since he was lacking separate transports. It seems that many fewer slaves than 600 were ready to embark by the time Douglas left the island on 12 May. Douglas to Lyttelton, May 7, 1762, Lyttelton Papers, CL and Log Book, May 12, 1762, Douglas Papers, CL.

³⁰⁷ On 14 May, Lyttelton told Capt Lampriere that 108 enslaved Blacks were ready to embark from Passage Fort. Lyttelton to Lampriere, May 14, 1762, enclosed in Lyttelton to Egremont, January 11, 1763, CO 137/61, ff. 154-55. On 16 May, Lyttelton reassured Pocock that "the Sutherland and other ships at Port Royal are full of Negroes for you, and I have many more waiting to be embarked when transports can be got ready for them." Lyttelton to Pocock, 16 May 1762, PO 871, Pocock Papers, HL. See also Lyttelton to Albemarle, May 16, 1762, enclosed in Lyttelton to Egremont, January 11, 1763, CO 137/61, f. 155, TNA. The Sutherland had arrived by the 17th at Havana but it is unclear how many slaves it carried. Howe to Pocock, June 17, 1762, PO 816, Pocock Papers, HL. Forty slaves arrived at Havana on 10 June in the supply ship Cerberus. A Journal of the Proceedings of his Majesty's Ship Namur, together with his Majesty's Fleet under the Command of Sir George Pocock, June 10, 1762, ADM 50/21, TNA and Pocock to Albemarle, June 12, 1762, in Syrett, *Siege of Havana*, 187. On 11 June Douglas dispatched the Sloop Alcide with four transports and the next day the Glasgow sailed from Jamaica with two additional transports, with "900 Negroes rais'd for the Expedition" on board. Douglas to Cleveland, June 25, 1762, ADM 1/307, ff. 363-64, TNA and Douglas, Log Book, June 11 and 12, 1762, Douglas Papers, CL. Pocock noted in his journal that on 28 June, "His Majesty's Ship Alcide arrived from Jamaica, and brought with her a victualler & 3 Transports with Negroes for the use of the Camp." Pocock, Journal of the Proceedings of his Majesty's Ship Namur, June 28, 1762, ADM 50/21, TNA. The Alcide and her transports also carried the free black troops. Douglas to Lyttelton, June 3, 1762, Lyttelton Papers, CL.

whom it has been very difficult to find lodging & subsistence for.”³⁰⁸ As securing transports had been the navy’s responsibility, Lyttelton eschewed blame for the slaves’ late arrival at Havana.³⁰⁹ Distressed by each new missive from Havana asking when the enslaved pioneers would arrive and worried that he would suffer reprisals for not delivering them in a timely fashion, Douglas determined to leave several hundred slaves behind rather than wait for them to journey from the westernmost parishes to the eastern ports of the island.³¹⁰ Douglas may not have considered the slaves worth waiting for. He had earlier written to Pocock that he hoped the campaign would not be delayed on account of the slaves, “for as I have been on three different expeditions, with Negroes attending them, the last at Martinico confirmed me in the opinion of their being of very

³⁰⁸ Lyttelton to Albemarle, May 29, 1762, enclosed in Lyttelton to Egremont, January 11, 1763, CO 137/61, ff. 155-56, TNA.

³⁰⁹ The Jamaica Assembly did, however, accuse Lyttelton of mismanaging the transportation and embarkation of the slaves. They maintained that “notwithstanding our alacrity in raising the number of negroes required by his majesty, the service for which they were intended was greatly impeded, by his excellency’s particular order for marching the leeward negroes across the country, and by his general neglect of the proper measures for their accommodation and embarkation.” JAJ, November 19, 1762, CO 140/40, f. 382, TNA. In fact, some slaves did die before reaching Jamaica’s shore. George Brooks and Catherine Smith petitioned the assembly for redress for three of the slaves they had contributed to the expedition who died before arriving at their appointed port of embarkation. JAJ, October 13, 1763, CO 140/40, f. 389, TNA and JAJ, November 25, 1763, CO 104/40, f. 426, TNA.

³¹⁰ On Albemarle and Pocock’s urgency regarding the slaves, see Albemarle to Lyttelton, May 18, 1762 and Pocock to Lyttelton, May 19, 1762, Lyttelton Papers, CL. On 15 June, Lyttelton informed the Board of Trade that Jamaica had upheld its end of the deal by delivering “fourteen hundred [slaves] and upwards to join Lord Albemarle.” Unfortunately, he continued, he “was obliged to order four hundred more to be redelivered to their owners” after receiving a letter from Douglas citing “obstacles not to be removed” to their embarkation. He explained that the “obstacles” could not have been inadequate transports, for he had authorized their impressment, but he did not venture a guess as to what they might instead have been. Lyttelton to Board of Trade, June 15, 1762, CO 137/32, ff. 153-55, TNA. Douglas was aware that he had sufficient transports for the slaves as of 31 May, but they needed to be watered and victualed before the slaves could embark, and Douglas may not have wanted to wait. Douglas to Lyttelton, May 31, 1762, Lyttelton Papers, CL. Douglas asked Lyttelton on June 2nd to return the “700 negroes that are not come from their respective parishes” to their masters, as they were journeying from the most distant western parishes and “they will not come time enough.” Douglas to Lyttelton, June 2, 1762, Lyttelton Papers, CL. In the end, 375 slaves were returned to their owners. Lyttelton to Albemarle, June 5, 1762, enclosed in Lyttelton to Egremont, January 11, 1763, CO 137/61, f. 157, TNA.

little utility, therefore would be for going on without them.”³¹¹ Douglas may have been alone in deeming the slaves unnecessary to the siege’s success.³¹² While he may well have believed their labors to be inessential, he may also have hoped that by dismissing the slaves’ importance he could diminish the magnitude of his failure to punctually convey them to Havana. In late June, Douglas sailed from Jamaica with a convoy of merchant ships and stopped off Havana to deliver the last of the enslaved pioneers. As of mid-July, all of the enslaved pioneers, some 1,400 men, had joined the expedition.³¹³

Over the course of the campaign, black and white soldiers, sailors and pioneers together performed the arduous labors that made possible the siege of the Spanish city. On June 30th, Chief Engineer Patrick Mackellar remarked that the “day was chiefly taken up in carrying ammunition and carriages to the several batteries to provide for their opening next morning, which was done by the soldiers and 500 Blacks purchased by Lord Albemarle, at Martineco and Antigua, for that purpose.”³¹⁴ Detachments of soldiers, sailors, and pioneers also filled and transported casks of water from the Chorera River on the western side of the city to the besieging troops in the east, which lacked a fresh water source. They constructed batteries with fascines they had made and bags they had filled with soil when they could find it, but more often with debris from the ships, as

³¹¹ Douglas to Pocock, May 5, 1762, ADM 1/237, f.34, TNA.

³¹² Lyttelton wrote he was “truly concern’d there are any obstacles to prevent the Negroes which are on the road from being of use” and that he hoped those already in town could be embarked, “as I think it a great loss to the Service that such a considerable number . . . shou’d not go upon the expedition.” Albemarle to Douglas, June 4, 1762, enclosed in Lyttelton to Egremont, January 11, 1763, CO 137/61, f. 157, TNA.

³¹³ Lyttelton to Board of Trade, June 15, 1762, CO 137/32, ff. 153-55, TNA. Log Book, June 24 and 25 and July 12, 1762, Douglas Papers, CL. A report made after the siege’s end listed 1,245 slaves as having embarked at Kingston. Report on the Jamaica Negroes, February 13, 1763, CO 142/42, TNA. However, enslaved Blacks departed from Port Royal and Spanish Town as well. Lyttelton counted 1,400 total slaves sent from Jamaica to Havana. Lyttelton to Board of Trade, June 15, 1762, CO 137/32, ff. 153-55, TNA.

³¹⁴ Mackellar, *Correct Journal*, 6.

the Moro Castle was encircled by bare rock. On the 24th of July, Mackellar noted that “there was a party of 600 Negroes ordered this day for fascine making, and to be continued upon that service, but they seldom amounted to above half, or even a third of that number, occasioned by sickness, and other pressing duties.”³¹⁵ As more and more pioneers, soldiers, and sailors fell ill, enslaved pioneers tended to their care.³¹⁶

Each new day of their labors, the surviving soldiers, sailors, and pioneers watched helplessly as their comrades succumbed to malaria and to yellow fever due to the combined effects of heat, fatigue, dehydration, lack of adequate nourishment, and abysmal sanitation. As their numbers rapidly diminished, those already at work could not have greeted the arrival of successive groups of enslaved pioneers with greater relief. Major General William Keppel, Albemarle’s brother, who earlier commented that “the more Negroes we have the better,” remarked to Pocock the day after one of their transports anchored at Havana that “the arrival of the Negroes is very apropos as they were much wanted.”³¹⁷ With the aid of the black West Indians, the British were able to storm and take the Moro Castle and by mid-August they had forced the capitulation of the city.³¹⁸

³¹⁵ Mackellar, *Correct Journal*, 12.

³¹⁶ For enslaved pioneers’ hospital duty, see Putnam, “Orderly Book of the Havana Expedition,” 66, 88.

³¹⁷ Keppel to Pocock, June 18, 1762, PO 896, Pocock Papers, HL and Keppel to Pocock, June 29, 1762, PO 902, Pocock Papers, HL. Albemarle earlier had written to Pocock, “I wish the Americans were arrived we want them much & Gov. Lyttelton’s Blacks.” Albemarle to Pocock, June 17, 1762, PO 950, Pocock Papers, HL.

³¹⁸ As a result of the capitulation of Havana, Richard Humphys, a soldier in the 28th Regiment of Foot, recorded in his journal that “all Ships in the harbour all money and effects what ever belonging to the King of Spain, all the artillery, Arms, Ammunition, and naval Stores without reserve and all the Catholick King’s Slaves” were “to be delivered up to Sir George Pocock and Lord Albemarle.” Journal of Richard Humphys, Blechynden Papers, vol. 85, Add. MSS 32933, f. 62, BL. The British confiscated at least 5 Blacks, 84 Mulattoes and one Indian from the Spanish, presumably slaves owned by the Cuban colonial government. An Account of Blacks and Malatoes taken from the Spaniards now on board the Ships in Havana Harbour, September 16, 1762, CO 117/2, TNA. They had listed 94 Negroes led by 2 Officers as

The enslaved pioneers purchased from Antigua and Martinique and those hired from St. Christopher and Jamaica continued to labor at Havana until December 1762, when Albemarle left control of the conquered city in the hands of William Keppel.³¹⁹ While those he had hired were to be returned to their owners as soon as possible, Albemarle notified his brother that “the Negroes that were bought for the Crown at Antigua are when a Peace is concluded (unless you receive his Majesty’s orders to the Contrary) to be sent to some of the British Colonies to be dispos’d of as it would be a hardship to sell them to the Spaniards contrary to their own Inclinations.” Albemarle may have been loath to deliver these slaves into the hands of the Spanish, whom the British considered notoriously brutal, or perhaps he presumed that the enslaved Blacks who had helped to achieve the British conquest had themselves come to view the Spanish as their enemies. He had no such regard for the “Inclinations” of the “French Slaves Bought at Martinico” whom he directed “may be Disposed of here to the Best Advantage.”³²⁰ Contrary to orders, some North American provincial officers smuggled

part of the garrison of the Moro Castle at its capitulation. State of the Garrison of Fort Moro when taken by Storm the 30th July 1762, enclosed in Albemarle to Egremont, August 21, 1762, CO 117/1, TNA.

³¹⁹ For enslaved pioneers’ labors after the siege’s end, see Pocock to Albemarle, September 28, 1762, PO 981, Pocock Papers, HL and Putnam, “Orderly Book of the Havana Expedition,” 61, 66, 71, 88, 97.

³²⁰ Instructions to the Honourable William Keppel Major General and Commander in Chief of all and singular his Majesty’s Forces, Governour of the City of Havana and of all the Forts, Castles, & Garrisons under the Dominion of his Majesty upon the Island of Cuba, December 25, 1762, CO 117/1, TNA. Albemarle informed Keppel that he had already paid the owners of the slaves from St. Christopher for their hire and asked him to send them home when the British detachment from Guadeloupe returned to their garrison. Instructions to Keppel, December 25, 1762, CO 117/1, TNA. On September 14th, the *Ferret* and three transports were sent from Havana with Guadeloupe troops and St. Christopher slaves. Pocock to Rodney, September 14, 1762, Pocock Letterbook, HM 1000, HL. On November 16th, the *Pembroke* was ordered to transport the slaves from Antigua and the other islands home. Keppel to Cleveland, November 16, 1762, ADM 1/237, ff. 143-48, TNA. Capt. John Wheelock of the *Pembroke* received £1,636.4s.8d. for the subsistence and pay of the 97 St. Christopher slaves he was to convey back to their masters. Albemarle, “Book of Warrants,” December 24, 1762, in *Documentos Inéditos*, 119. Albemarle told Keppel that he had ordered transports to carry the Jamaica slaves back to their masters and as soon as the convoy was ready, they should be accompanied by Mr. Durant, the Deputy Pay Master General, and his clerk, Jonathan Garton, who together carried £50,000 “to settle the Accounts of the Corps of Free Negroes” and “to pay the

slaves from Havana to New York at the close of the siege. British officials intervened in the provincial officers' efforts to personally profit from the conquest; they confiscated and sold the kidnapped slaves, ensuring the institution of the army would benefit from these enslaved men rather than a select few of its officers.³²¹ The commanders of the Havana campaign gave no consideration to liberating or by any other means rewarding the enslaved men whom they had deemed critical to the siege's success. No extant records indicate that Albemarle, as he had been instructed, gave "a proper Regard . . . to All Pioneers, Peasants, or Negros" when it came time to distribute the treasure garnered from the conquest.³²² If Albemarle did indeed allocate any funds to the enslaved pioneers, they likely went to their owners instead of to the men whose labor proved essential to the British triumph at Havana.

Some slaves managed to take their futures into their own hands by absconding to the Spanish, perhaps in hopes of receiving their freedom in return for information concerning the strength and strategies of the British forces. Their word seems to have been trusted; Governor of Havana Don Juan de Prado recorded the information gleaned from deserters of several nationalities in his journal, including that of "a negro who passed from the enemy," by whom the Spanish were "assured of the truth of what the

Hire" of the slaves. Instructions to Keppel, December 25, 1762, CO 117/1, TNA. Albemarle, "Book of Warrants," December 24, 1762, in *Documentos Inéditos*, 124. Disputes arose when owners of the "considerable number" of slaves who did not return expected to be paid not only their value, but also the sum of their hire. The Attorney General of Jamaica found that the British Army did indeed owe the owners of lost slaves for their hire, as they did not publicize when they had ceased benefiting the army. Minutes of the Jamaica Council, March 14, 1763, CO 142/42, TNA.

³²¹ Keppel reported to Amherst that they had taken "some of the King's Negroes." These were likely Spanish slaves acquired from the capitulation rather than slaves purchased from Antigua or Martinique to serve the British. Keppel asked that they be sold at New York and that the proceeds from their sale be given to the Paymaster General. Keppel to Amherst, March 16, 1763, WO 34/55, ff. 294-95, TNA.

³²² Draft of Separate Instructions to the Earl of Albemarle, February 18, 1762, CO 117/1, TNA.

before mentioned deserters have informed.”³²³ Other enslaved Blacks died alongside scores of British and North American participants in the deadly siege.³²⁴ Of 1,245 slaves who had embarked at Kingston, 759 returned to their owners, had fallen ill, or had been sold at Havana and 486 had died, had deserted the British army, or had been taken prisoner by the Spanish.³²⁵

In the wake of their successful service during the Seven Years’ War, free and enslaved Blacks held a clearer, more openly acknowledged place within the military establishment of the British Empire. Veterans of the West Indian campaigns could now envision and repeatedly proposed defensive and offensive military roles for both free and enslaved Blacks. When General George Haldane, who had fought alongside black West Indian recruits in the conquest of Guadeloupe in 1759, arrived in Jamaica to assume his post as governor later that year, he recommended to the Secretary at War the expanded enlistment of free Mulattoes. He remarked that he was “the more willing to recommend this Scheme, as there are necessary Duties in this Country which is certain Death to an European, and can be done without any danger or difficulty by the Mulattoes. Besides in my Opinion the Service will be benefited in every respect, as it is known that the best

³²³ Diary of Don Juan de Prado, June 25, 1762, Francis Russell Hart Collection, MHS, translation of a transcription held by the Library of Congress. Not all of the slaves who deserted from the British ranks made it safely to the Spanish side. Israel Putnam recorded in his orderly book that “any officer that Has Lost a Martinico Negroe is Desired to Send to ye main Guard Where one is Confined Supposed to have Ran away.” Putnam, “Orderly Book of the Expedition,” 81.

³²⁴ The British army listed 5,366 men as having died between 7 June and 18 October 1762. Of these, 4,708 died from disease. General return of officers, sergeants, drummers, rank and file killed, died by wounds, died by sickness, deserted, and missing from the 7 June to 18 October, October 18, 1762, in Syrett, *Siege of Havana*, 305.

³²⁵ Report on the Jamaica Negroes, February 13, 1763, CO 142/42, TNA. Edward Long counted 800 slaves who did not return from Havana. Edward Long, *The history of Jamaica, Or, general survey of the antient and modern state of that island: with reflections on its situation, settlements, inhabitants*, v. 2 (London, 1774), 432.

Militia for the defence of this Island is those very free Mulattoes.”³²⁶ When the North American colonists rose against their erstwhile compatriots, Lieutenant Colonel Archibald Campbell, who had served alongside Haldane in Martinique and Guadeloupe in 1759, wrote to Lord George Germain in January 1776 with a proposal. He offered to lead a regiment of 1,400 “Stout Active Negro’s,” who were to be hired from the British sugar islands and sent to fight against the American rebels on the continent. These troops were to be commanded by white officers and, Campbell argued, would “contribute to ease the Soldier, from many dutys, both discouraging and prejudicial to the health of those which ought to be nurs’d & Reserv’d for More Active & Spirited Services, Battle and Attack.” He assured Germain that there would be no lack of recruits, as he had “lately seen many Gentlemen of Large Estates of property in the different West India Islands, who Expressed their Surprise . . . that Government have made no application to the West India Colonies, for a Body of their Negroes on this Occasion.”³²⁷ Evidently, the ad hoc black West Indian corps that had first been raised for the expedition against Cartagena in 1741 had become conventional over the course of the Seven Years’ War.

Though Campbell was clearly attempting to recreate in 1776 the regiments of enslaved pioneers who had contributed to the British victory at Martinique in 1762, he was willing to entrust his enslaved black privates with greater responsibility and thus to

³²⁶ George Haldane to the Secretary at War, July 20, 1759, WO 1/869, ff. 73-74, TNA.

³²⁷ Campbell to Germain, January 16, 1776, vol. 4, George Germain Papers, CL. For another proposal to arm Blacks in the American Revolution that seems to have built on the precedents set in the Seven Years’ War, see Scheme for raising one Regiment of Mulattoes, and another of free Negroes, to serve in the West Indies, as Light Infantry for three Years, or during the War, January 1779, CO 318/3, ff. 418-21, TNA. The author of this plan hoped to form three regiments of armed free Blacks from Jamaica “to be paid, Clothed, and Armed by Great Britain on the same footing as her regular Troops.” He declared, “whether they may be wanted outwardly, or serve but for the protection of the Island, so many less men will be wanted from Europe, and of course so many lives saved to the mother country.”

show them greater recognition than had the commanders at Martinique. He suggested that the privates “be pay’d, Cloathed, Armed & Accoutred in the same manner as any other Reg’t in the Service” and expected them to act more like the armed black rangers from Antigua and Jamaica had in the last war, than as pioneers. He claimed that “with a little Attention” the enslaved black soldiers would be “as well disciplin’d at least as the best Troops that are to oppose them.” Rather than simply sell or return these slaves to their owners at the end of the war, as Albemarle had advised be done after the enslaved pioneers’ service at Havana, Campbell recommended that “every Negro in the sd. Reg’t who shall distinguish himself during the War, shall receive his Freedom, & if he is rendered unfit for Service a small pension of £4 a year during Life.”³²⁸ Germain rejected Campbell’s proposal but two decades later General Sir John Vaughan, a veteran of the 1762 conquest of Martinique, oversaw the formation of the first regular regiments staffed by Blacks, the immediate precursors of the British West India regiments, standing companies of enslaved black soldiers that were instituted in the 1790s.³²⁹

The military participation of free and enslaved Blacks in the Seven Years’ War persuaded many British commanders that Blacks could and should be relied upon to

³²⁸ Campbell to Germain, January 16, 1776, vol. 4, George Germain Papers, CL. During the imperial crisis of the 1760s and 1770s, slavery became politicized as Britons and Americans vied for the “moral capital” that came of antislavery. Though enslaved black soldiers had not been offered freedom by the British Empire during the Seven Years’ War, come the American Revolution, Britons and Americans competing for the title of champion of liberty had little choice but to offer freedom to enslaved soldiers of African descent. See Christopher Leslie Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Chapel Hill, 2006).

³²⁹ Roger Norman Buckley, *Slaves in Red Coats: The British West India Regiments, 1795-1815* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979), 10-19. In January 1795, when commanding at St. Lucia, Vaughan proposed that the British “arm and train a regiment of negroes, obtaining men either from the various islands, if the local government would grant them, or if that were not practicable, to import them” to fight the French. Laurent DuBois, “Citizen Soldiers: Emancipation and Military Service in the Revolutionary French Caribbean,” in *Arming Slaves from Classical Times to the Modern Age*, ed. Christopher Leslie Brown and Philip D. Morgan (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 241.

bolster the empire's might. In proving themselves loyal and reliable defenders and extenders of empire, Blacks enhanced the prospect of further martial opportunities for their brethren in conflicts to come. Black soldiers convinced the British of their utility and utter indispensability, especially in tropical colonies, and in doing so they pushed the empire for which they had fought and labored further along its path of increasing military dependence upon soldiers of African descent. Though the British had once trailed their imperial rivals in the deployment of warriors of African descent, the exigencies of global war transformed local into imperial military practice and by the turn of the nineteenth century the British established themselves as the most extensive employers of enslaved black soldiery of all the European powers. As a result of the events of the Seven Years' War, many British military officials began to bring their rhetoric concerning the arming people of African descent into concert with their practice as they came to describe black soldiers not as anathema or as regrettable necessities, but rather as potent weapons to wield when expanding the British Empire in the southern hemisphere. Long considered absolutely essential to the prosperity of the British Empire as enslaved labor, Blacks, as both free and enslaved soldiers, began to be supposed critical to its security and longevity as well.

Chapter 4: Sailing on Behalf of Britain: Black Artificers, Privateersmen, and Navy Seamen in the Atlantic

In 1823, William Blue penned two petitions in defense of his business ferrying passengers and goods across the waters of New South Wales' Sydney Cove. In an effort to characterize himself as an upstanding citizen, the eighty-nine-year-old free black man emphasized his status as a veteran of Britain's late-eighteenth-century imperial wars. He boasted that he "was at Quebeck with General Wolf when he was killed" in 1759 and "went as a Marreen" in an expedition that conquered Belle Isle in 1761 before proceeding to serve as a loyalist soldier in the American Revolutionary War. While he eventually served the British Army, it was likely as a Royal Navy seaman that Blue first entered His Majesty's service. Navy personnel trawling for recruits in Blue's home colony of New York often ignored the enslaved status of young, able black men. It is probable that Blue escaped slavery by joining the over 13,000 seamen and marines who conquered Quebec and with it the continent of North America. Blue's enlistment as a navy seaman in the Seven Years' War initiated a global odyssey that ushered him throughout the Atlantic world before depositing him in New South Wales, where he lived out his days as a boatman. Perhaps due to the bond they shared as veterans of the British military, Blue enjoyed the patronage of New South Wales' Governor Lachlan Macquarie, from whom he secured grants of 160 acres of land for his boat launches. Blue's maritime martial service provided him with the skills and the connections to create, expand, and preserve his own business.³³⁰

³³⁰ Cassandra Pybus, "Billy Blue: An African American Journey through Empire in the Long Eighteenth Century," *Early American Studies* 5 (Fall 2007): 257-62, 281-83.

Though thousands of black men served as armed combatants and unarmed auxiliaries in the British army during the Seven Years' War, it was as naval artificers and seamen as well as sailors aboard privateers – private armed vessels commissioned to act on behalf of the British government – that most men of African descent contributed to the British war effort at mid-century.³³¹ Men of African descent had constructed vessels and plied coastal and ocean waters ever since men first began to sail the Atlantic. As the Royal Navy and privateering expanded over the course of the eighteenth century, increasing numbers of black men performed their maritime trades on behalf of the British Empire. By the mid-eighteenth century, black men's presence in British dockyards and aboard British ships of war had become commonplace.³³²

The British navy grew in size and strength during each of the wars of the early eighteenth century, precipitating an ever-increasing demand for ships and seamen.

³³¹ As few eighteenth-century muster rolls indicated a sailor's race, there is no means of tabulating the precise number of black men who served in the Royal Navy during the Seven Years' War. N.A.M. Rodger, *The Wooden World: An Anatomy of the Georgian Navy* (New York: W.W. Norton & Co., 1986), 159. See Vincent Carretta, *Equiano, the African* (2005; repr., New York: Penguin, 2006), 74 for Carretta's attempts to trace Olaudah Equiano's naval service.

³³² Richard Pares asserted in 1937 that the practice of "employing free negroes and even slaves . . . was not common among the English privateers and almost unheard-of in the Royal Navy." Richard Pares, "The Manning of the Navy in the West Indies, 1702-63," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 20 (1937), 31-32. N.A.M. Rodger and subsequent historians have disagreed, finding that "in America and the West Indies there were many black seamen, slave and free, and they were evidently quite common in the Navy." N.A.M. Rodger, *The Wooden World*, 159. On black mariners in the eighteenth-century British Atlantic world, see W. Jeffrey Bolster, *Black Jacks: African American Seamen in the Age of Sail* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997); W. Jeffrey Bolster, "An Inner Diaspora: Black Sailors Making Selves," in *Through a Glass Darkly: Reflections on Personal Identity in Early America*, ed. Ronald Hoffman, Mechal Sobel, and Frederika J. Teute (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 419-48; Emma Christopher, *Slave Ship Sailors and their Captive Cargoes, 1730-1807* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2006); Ira Dye, "Early American Merchant Seafarers," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 120 (October 15, 1976): 331-60; James Farr, *Black Odyssey: The Seafaring Traditions of Afro-Americans* (New York: P. Lang, 1989); Charles Foy, "Seeking Freedom in the Atlantic World, 1713-1783," *Early American Studies* 4 (Spring 2006): 46-77; Michael Jarvis, "Maritime Masters and Seafaring Slaves in Bermuda, 1680-1783," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 59 (July 2002): 585-622; and Julius Scott, "Crisscrossing Empires: Ships, Sailors, and Resistance in the Lesser Antilles in the Eighteenth Century" in *The Lesser Antilles in the Age of European Expansion*, ed. Robert L. Paquette and Stanley L. Engerman (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 1996), 128-43.

During the War of the Spanish Succession, or Queen Anne's War as it was known in North America, the Royal Navy consisted of 48,000 mariners; by 1747, 58,000 seamen sailed on behalf of Britain.³³³ In peacetime the navy reduced its rolls, so manning its extant as well as its new and bigger ships became one of the Admiralty's chief concerns upon each new declaration of war. Between 1753 and 1762, the number of British naval vessels swelled from seventy-three to 305 ships.³³⁴ On the eve of the Seven Years' War, 10,000 sailors staffed His Majesty's ships; by 1760, the Royal Navy enlisted 85,000 seamen.³³⁵

The Royal Navy faced stiff competition from privateers and merchantmen for mariners in times of war.³³⁶ Many owners of merchant vessels secured privateering commissions to chase and capture enemy boats in the name of the British monarch. As seamen were needed to board and then steer captured prizes to port, privateers employed between fifty and seventy men even on small ships like schooners and sloops – far more mariners than merchant vessels did in times of peace. In wartime, merchant vessels too carried an augmented complement of men for protection from seizure by privateers.³³⁷ Between 1746 and 1762, the number of ships departing New York's harbor increased

³³³ N.A.M. Rodger, *The Command of the Ocean: A Naval History of Britain, 1649-1815* (London: Allen Lane, 2004), 319.

³³⁴ Charles Foy, "Ports of Slavery, Ports of Freedom: How Slaves Used Northern Seaports' Maritime Industry to Escape and Create Trans-Atlantic Identities, 1713-1783" (PhD dissertation, Rutgers University, 2008), 237.

³³⁵ Rodger, *The Wooden World*, 149.

³³⁶ On eighteenth-century privateering, see J.S. Bromley, *Corsairs and Navies, 1660-1760* (London: Hambledon Press, 1987) and Carl Swanson, *Predators and Prizes: American Privateering and Imperial Warfare, 1739-1748* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1991). On merchant sailors, see Peter Earle, *Sailors: English Merchant Seamen, 1650-1775* (London: Methuen, 1998) and Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates, and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

³³⁷ Carl Swanson, "American Privateering and Imperial Warfare, 1739-1748," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 42 (July 1985): 365.

381% due to the port's status as the center of privateering in the mainland British American colonies. Likewise, the number of seamen staffing New York's vessels grew from 775 to 3,552 in that period.³³⁸ The owners of New York's ships vied with owners of vessels in seaports throughout mainland North America and the Caribbean as well as with the British navy for mariners.

A heightened demand for new ships and fierce competition for seamen presented both enslaved and free black men with myriad opportunities for employment in times of war. Shipwrights, blacksmiths, carpenters, and sailmakers, who were always needed to refit existing ships, were called upon to construct and outfit a seemingly unending stream of new vessels. Seamen had their pick of berths aboard merchant ships, navy boats, or privateers. In wartime, merchantmen were forced to pay astronomical wages to lure sailors from the naval vessels and privateers that presented the enticing prospect of booty secured from captured enemy ships. In addition to financial gain, serving aboard a naval vessel or privateer offered exciting opportunities to engage in battle on the high seas and to aid in the conquest of the enemy's seaside towns as well as its ships. Maritime martial service enabled black men to develop new or hone existing skills as craftsmen and mariners, to earn money, to travel to distant lands, and, for some, to escape the bonds of slavery.

While maritime martial service offered black artificers and sailors exceptional opportunities to refashion their lives, it also placed them in perilous situations. Black artisans and sailors, like their brethren of European descent, endured the elements, disease, malnutrition, and enemy assault. However, the association of blackness with

³³⁸ Charles Foy, "Seeking Freedom in the Atlantic World, 1713-1783," 66-67.

enslavement meant that men of African descent faced additional hazards. British, French, and Spanish ship captains usually considered black seamen – whether legally enslaved or free – as booty when they captured the vessels black men helped to navigate. In addition to threats from their enemies, black maritime artificers and seamen faced abuse, exploitation, and impressment into service by their allies.

Despite the risks, scores of black men built ships and sailed the seas on behalf of the British Empire during the Seven Years' War. While enslaved and impressed men had little say over the terms of their service, even many of these black men ultimately embraced practicing their trade and earning valuable wages alongside a crew that evaluated them on the basis of skill more often than skin color. Like William Blue, in the aftermath of the conflict many men of African descent utilized the skills and contacts they had developed in service to the empire to support themselves and their families. Their maritime martial service enabled many black men – among them Britain's early black writers, Briton Hammon and Olaudah Equiano – not only to achieve some measure of independence, but also to assert their status as loyal subjects who had helped to achieve their empire's success at mid-century.

Naval Artificers and Laborers: English Harbour, Antigua and Port Royal, Jamaica

In 1765, Samuel Stuard, a forty-year-old enslaved blacksmith employed at Jamaica's Port Royal naval dockyard, wrote to the Navy Board in London to ask for his freedom. Stuard recounted that he “was Born in the said Island in His Majestys Service in which he has continued all his Life” and that he had held his current position of “Foreman of the Second Fire in the Smiths Shop . . . all the Peace before the late War” as well as throughout that conflict. Stuard evidently took pride in his “good Behaviour” as

well as his having been “always Diligent To his Calling” and depicted his “Long Faithfull Servitude as a Vassall to His Majestys” as the means of his rebirth. Having once been called Coffee, he “had Obtain’d the Liberty of His Officers to be Baptized By the name of Samuel Stuard.” In addition to the “Knowledge of a Christian,” Stuard received “Instruct[ion] in Reading and began to learn to Write” – no doubt under the tutelage of the same naval officers who had supported his conversion. The Navy Board found Stuard’s request for “his Liberty like another Man” compelling and ordered that he be freed and employed “in future on the terms of other Negroes hired for his Majesty’s Service.”³³⁹ The British navy thus played an ambivalent role in Stuard’s life, as it did in the lives of many slaves in the era of the Seven Years’ War: it was an enslaver and emancipator, an unrelenting taskmaster and a rousing teacher.

Enslaved men of African descent had played an integral role in the construction and daily operation of the Royal Navy dockyards at English Harbour, Antigua and Port Royal, Jamaica since they opened in the early eighteenth century. Black artificers and laborers built, maintained, and staffed the yards’ wharves, storehouses, barracks, and hospitals and refit, loaded, and unloaded the ships that docked there. While the British navy owned several slaves, known as King’s Negroes, its officers hired additional black craftsmen and laborers from local slaveholders to work at the yards in times of war.³⁴⁰

³³⁹ “Petition of Samuel Stuard,” 1765, ADM 106/1143, f. 144, The National Archives, Kew, England (hereafter TNA).

³⁴⁰ On slaves’ labor at English Harbour, see David Barry Gaspar, *Bondmen and Rebels: A Study of Master-Slave Relations in Antigua* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985), 116-17; Desmond V. Nicholson, *The Story of English Harbour, Antigua, West Indies* (St. John’s, Antigua: Antigua and Barbuda Historical & Archaeological Society, 1991) 7-8; and Richard Pares, *War and Trade in the West Indies, 1739-1763* (1936; repr., London: F. Cass, 1963), 274. On the military service of “King’s Negroes,” see Andrew Jackson O’Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 45.

During periods of conflict, the number of ships that composed the Leeward Islands and Jamaica squadrons increased and the regular employees of the yards proved unable to promptly clean and refit them all. The navy thus relied upon the labor of enslaved men, who constituted the workforce most readily available in Britain's Caribbean slave societies.

In an effort to economize, British naval officers stationed in the West Indies usually preferred to deploy the ship's crew in addition to the dockyard's small permanent staff when a ship needed maintenance. In 1754, Admiral Thomas Cotes of the Jamaica squadron remarked to Secretary of the Admiralty John Cleveland that "the Repairs of the Ships here have been carried on with all possible Frugality," which meant that "no Carpenters or Labourers have been hired from the Shore."³⁴¹ The expense of hiring slaves could only be justified in cases of emergency, as when the *Fox* man-of-war became lodged upon an outcropping of rock five miles off Jamaica's Portland point during a 1751 hurricane. Jamaican colonist William Dunn and three of his slaves rowed two canoes to the ship to see if they could be of assistance. Dunn later attested to Admiral Cotes that he and his slaves had been detained by the *Fox*'s captain for three days and that "his Canoes & Negroes were constantly employed in carrying Men, Sails and other Things to the Shore and one whole Night his Negroes were employed in pumping a Spanish Sloop that was then attending the said Ship." Dunn complained that though "he with his Canoes and Negroes were a means of saving the Lives of nineteen of His Majesty's Seamen by carrying them" to safety, he had not been reimbursed for the

loss of one of his canoes or of his “Negroe named Harry by a Disorder he contracted in the said Service.” He averred that he “upon the whole over & above his own Labour & that of his Slaves & the Hire of his Canoes sustained Damage at least to the Amount of £124.18.9,” including £60 for Harry.³⁴²

Though naval officers usually attempted to avoid the expense of hiring local workmen, following the declaration of war with France, Admiral Cotes saw no alternative but to resort to enlisting the aid of supplementary artisans and laborers. In January 1757, he informed Cleveland that “the present Establishment of Artificers in His Majesty’s yard at Port Royall in Jamaica is so small, that it will be impossible to keep His Majesty’s Ships on that Station in Time of War either clean or in repair” and thus asked Cleveland to approve an “Addition of Workmen” at the yard. Cotes planned to hire twenty white shipwrights and two white smiths as well as twenty black caulkers, two black sawyers, and thirty black laborers. He observed that “the Negroes may be either hired, or bought and the Shipwrights we shall get by Degrees from the Merchant Ships.”³⁴³

As in Jamaica, the naval officers of the Leeward Islands station attempted to minimize costs by hiring additional enslaved artisans and laborers only on particular occasions. In June 1757, John Robinson, English Harbour’s Naval Officer, informed the Navy Board that he had been “obliged to hire Negroes” to unload two storeships that had

³⁴¹ Thomas Cotes to John Cleveland, December 12, 1754, ADM 1/235, TNA. Cotes remarked the following month that not only would “hiring Carpenters or Labourers . . . be a great Additional Expence,” but “they would not doe half the work our Men doe.” Cotes to Cleveland, January 22, 1755, ADM 1/235, TNA.

³⁴² “Petition of William Dunn of the Parish of Vere in the Island of Jamaica to the Honorable Thomas Cotes” September 13, 1753, enclosed in Cotes to Cleveland, September 14, 1753, ADM 1/235, TNA. See also “Affidavit of Captain Faulkner,” November 13, 1751, enclosed in Cotes to Cleveland, September 14, 1753, ADM 1/235, TNA.

recently arrived in Antigua, but promised that they would “be discharged as soon as the Stores can be secured.”³⁴⁴ Following a wave of illness in 1758 that proved “fatal to some of the Shipwrights & Seamen,” Commodore John Moore was “obliged to hire Negroes to heave down the Roebuck & Bonetta.”³⁴⁵ When the *Falkland* sprang a leak in 1761, Captain Francis Drake at first employed his crew in pumping the water from its hold but, as he later reported to Admiral George Brydges Rodney, “As my People worked very hard all day and were quite jaded going to Harder Labour (the pump) all night, I employed 24 Blacks for that purpose.”³⁴⁶ Peter Alsop of the Office of the Ordnance at Antigua notified Admiral Rodney in 1762 that he had engaged “Negroe Labourers to Transport the Powder from the Magazines in the Country and Embark the Same on board [rented] Sloops,” which would then carry it to Rodney’s ships anchored in St. John’s Road, Antigua.³⁴⁷

The sporadic engagement of enslaved workers proved insufficient to meet the wartime demands of the Leeward Islands squadron and English Harbour’s regular complement of artificers and laborers expanded over the course of the Seven Years’ War.

³⁴³ Cotes to Cleveland, January 13, 1757, ADM 1/235, TNA.

³⁴⁴ John Robinson to the Navy Board, June 3, 1757, ADM 106/1119, ff. 196-200, TNA. Rear Admiral Thomas Frankland of the Leeward Island Squadron had ordered Robinson to “hire a Number of Negroes sufficient for the above Services taking care they are kept no longer than is absolutely necessary & no more paid for their hire than the usual price given at Island.” “Copies of Orders Received from Thomas Frankland Esq. Rear Admiral of the White & Commander in Chief of His Majesty’s Ships & Vessels employed & to be employed at Barbados & the Leeward Islands by Mr. John Robinson, His Majesty’s Naval Officer at English Harbour, Antigua,” February 17, 1757, ADM 106/1119, f. 197, TNA.

³⁴⁵ Moore to Cleveland, November 13, 1758, ADM 1/307, ff. 98-101, TNA. Naval Officer John Robinson reported to the Navy Board that following an outbreak of “Bilious Fever . . . 35 Labourers [were] hired to heave down the Roebuck & Bonetta Sloop, their people being so Sickly that these Services could not be complied with without such additional help.” John Robinson to the Navy Board, October 30, 1758, ADM 106/1120, f. 79, TNA.

³⁴⁶ Captain Francis Drake to Admiral George Brydges Rodney, December 17, 1761, PRO 30/20/8, f. 41, TNA.

³⁴⁷ Peter Alsop to Rodney, March 23, 1762, PRO 30/20/8, f. 102, TNA.

John Robinson informed the Navy Board in June 1757 that one shipwright, one sawyer, two smiths, and three warders were the total “number of People borne on the Yard at present besides myself & Clerk exclusive of the Negroes hired on particular occasions.”³⁴⁸ Commodore John Moore found the dockyard’s small staff inadequate to the needs of his wartime fleet. He notified Secretary of the Admiralty John Cleveland in March 1758 that as a result of English Harbour’s “Scarcity of Workmen some of the Ships have taken up the greatest Part of their Time in refitting,” thus keeping them from the essential duties of cruising for enemy vessels and protecting the West Indian trade. Moore had hoped to augment the then “Five Shipwrights & three Smiths established in the Yard,” but encountered “great Difficulty” when attempting to hire “Artificers of any Sort” and could “procure but very few.”³⁴⁹ Despite Moore’s alleged “difficulty” in locating workers, by October 1758 English Harbour employed twenty-three shipwrights, sixteen carpenters, seven caulkers, nine sailmakers, two sawyers, and six smiths as well as twenty laborers, three sentinels, four watchmen, and two servants.³⁵⁰ Though it is

³⁴⁸ Robinson to the Navy Board, June 3, 1757, ADM 106/1119, ff. 196-200, TNA. Rear Admiral Thomas Frankland of the Leeward Islands squadron had ordered Robinson to “hire a Number of Negroes sufficient for the above Services taking care they are kept no longer than is absolutely necessary & no more paid for their hire than the usual price given at Island.” “Copies of Orders Received from Thomas Frankland Esq. Rear Admiral of the White & Commander in Chief of His Majesty’s Ships & Vessels employed & to be employed at Barbados & the Leeward Islands by Mr. John Robinson, His Majesty’s Naval Officer at English Harbour, Antigua,” February 17, 1757, ADM 106/1119, f. 197, TNA.

³⁴⁹ John Moore to John Cleveland, March 7, 1758, ADM 1/307, ff. 59-62, TNA. This was an increase from the “but three Artificers belonging to the Yard, without Labourers, Watchmen, or any Person to assist the Naval Officer in looking after the Stores & Yard” that Moore found in his 1757 review of the condition of English Harbour. Moore to Cleveland, September 6, 1757, ADM 1/307, ff. 19-22, TNA.

³⁵⁰ John Robinson to the Navy Board, October 30, 1758, ADM 106/1120, f. 79, TNA.

unclear how many of these men were of African descent, given the trouble Moore professed he faced engaging workers, it is likely that a majority were enslaved.³⁵¹

Despite the fact that the naval dockyards demanded backbreaking toil under often dreadful conditions, those slaves employed there may have found them a welcome alternative to the sugar plantation or even the urban craftsman's shop. Enslaved artisans and laborers likely judged themselves fortunate in having eluded the immediate supervision and arbitrary will of their owners. Still, enslaved workers at the dockyards were supervised by white naval officers as well as white artificers who had been deployed from Britain.³⁵² Slaves thus continued to be subject to the particular whims and prejudices of white men, though the culture of the Royal Navy likely precluded the kinds of excesses that West Indian slaveholders tolerated. Though the enslaved men who labored at naval dockyards assuredly endured discrimination and exploitation, they also likely basked in the opportunity to practice a trade and be judged on the merit of their skills.

Black artificers and laborers spent the bulk of their time cleaning and refitting the naval vessels docked at the West Indian yards. At English Harbour in July 1757, a "Negro Smith" named Joe earned three pounds and ten shillings a month for "Repairing Iron Work" for His Majesty's ships, though his wages were likely paid directly to his owner. The navy paid the respective owners of Abraham, Chance, Norwich, Johnny, and

³⁵¹ Rear Admiral Thomas Frankland remarked of English Harbour in 1757 that "when I arrived those [artificers] Borne were mostly new Negroes, which I discharged & few or none proper offered themselves in lieu." Frankland to Cleveland, November 19, 1757, ADM 1/306, TNA.

³⁵² Douglas to Cleveland, September 13, 1760, ADM 1/307, ff. 266-67, TNA; Andrew Anderson to Rodney, July 17, 1762, PRO 30/20/8, f. 210, TNA; William Barkham to Rodney, January 13, 1763, PRO 30/20/8, f. 366, TNA; and Anthony Routh, John Williams, William Gibson, and James Thomas to Rodney, June 30, 1763, PRO 30/20/8, f. 411, TNA.

Will three pounds a month for their carpentry work making masts and bowsprits. John Chester, Cudjoe, Lewis Brown, and Tom Burton, “all negro shipwrights and carpenters,” constructed the platform and storeroom of the *Antigua* sloop, earning them each four pounds a month.³⁵³ Each naval vessel in need of repair employed a certain number of craftsmen and laborers. As captains were routinely ordered to victual all “Black Artificers as shall be employed in refitting and Cleaning” their ship, these men certainly ate and may also have slept on board.³⁵⁴ Refitting a vessel could take months and often longer if the repair crew needed to venture abroad in search of supplies. In late 1753, the carpenter of the *Wager* went ashore at Jamaica and “into the Woods with three White Men and four of the Kings Negroes to Cutt Knees and Timber to repair her.”³⁵⁵ Unfortunately, though they “Cutt down many Trees . . . none proved fitt for repairing the Ship” and so the team of artificers and laborers departed for “the uninhabited Bays of Hispaniola” in search of suitable lumber.³⁵⁶

Though the maintenance of the ships was their primary concern, the enslaved craftsmen and laborers employed by the West Indian naval dockyards did far more than

³⁵³ John Robinson, “A List of People born on the Books of this His Majesty’s Yard together with that of the People who are hired with a distinct Account of what they are at present severally Employed on English Harbor, Antigua,” July 26, 1757, ADM 1/306, TNA. Also at work on the *Antigua* sloop were Edward Daniel at four pounds a month, Glasgow at five shillings a day, and Philander at two shillings and six pence a day.

³⁵⁴ Rodney, “Order to Captain Campbell,” March 1, 1762, PRO 30/20/2, f. 177, TNA. See also Rodney, “Order to Captain Laforey,” December 1, 1761, PRO 30/20/2, f. 23; Rodney, “Order to Captain Boyd,” March 30, 1762, PRO 30/20/2, f. 182; and Commodore Richard Swanton, Journal, September 21, 1763, ADM 50/21, TNA.

³⁵⁵ Cotes to Cleveland, October 19, 1753, ADM 1/235, TNA.

³⁵⁶ Cotes to Cleveland, November 15, 1753, ADM 1/235, TNA. This was not the only occasion that slaves sought timber for the use of His Majesty’s ships. Admiral Thomas Frankland criticized Captain Thomas Pye for having purchased wood from the French inhabitants of Dominica “Notwithstanding a very considerable number of Able Bodied Negroes, were then on board his Majesty’s said Ships who might have been Employed on that Service.” “Heads of Rear Admiral Thomas Frankland’s Complaint against Capt.

attend to ailing vessels. During the Seven Years' War, Port Royal's artisans and workers repaired its wharves and constructed a hospital to house invalid seamen and soldiers.³⁵⁷ Those at English Harbour built a new hospital, wharf, and storehouses and repaired the blacksmith's shop.³⁵⁸ Enslaved men unloaded the vessels that arrived from Britain replete with naval stores for the ships and provisions for their men.³⁵⁹ Slaves performed more menial tasks as well. In July 1757, Tuba, Glassgow, and Hercules cleared English Harbour's "Yard of Rubbish," Scipio and Dick traveled to St. John's "to fetch Blocks for the Antigua" sloop, and December blew "the Bellows in the Smiths Shop."³⁶⁰

While many more enslaved men than women labored at the naval dockyards, black women did find employment at the navy's hospitals. A 1756 report decrying the inexperience of the employees of Cobbs Cross Hospital at English Harbour noted that "None appeared as Nurses but three Negro Women, two of Which said they were employ'd as Cooks, the 3rd Ingenuously Acknowledged She had been Sent for in the Morning and Never was at the Hospital before."³⁶¹ Despite their alleged lack of skill, enslaved nurses continued to staff the navy's hospitals, much to the chagrin of several

Thomas Pye late Captain of his Majesty's ship the Advice & Commander in Chief of his Majesty's Ships & Vessels Employed at Barbadoes & the Leeward Islands," December 9, 1757, ADM 1/306, TNA.

³⁵⁷ Cotes to Cleveland, July 30, 1754, ADM 1/235, TNA; Cotes to Cleveland, January 22, 1755, ADM 1/235, TNA; Cotes to Cleveland, February 28, 1755, ADM 1/235, TNA; Cotes to Cleveland, June 25, 1755, ADM 1/235, TNA; Cotes to Cleveland, February 14, 1757, ADM 1/235, TNA; Cotes to Cleveland, May 26, 1758, ADM 1/235, TNA; and Cotes to Cleveland, September 10, 1758, ADM 1/235, TNA.

³⁵⁸ Moore to Cleveland, September 6, 1757, ADM 1/307, ff. 19-22, TNA; Moore to Cleveland, June 5, 1758, ADM 1/307, ff. 65-68, TNA; Sir James Douglas to Cleveland, October 10, 1760, ADM 1/307, ff. 272-73, TNA; Douglas to Cleveland, November 21, 1760, ADM 1/307, ff. 276-79, TNA; and Douglas to Cleveland, February 6, 1761, ADM 1/307, ff. 293-96, TNA.

³⁵⁹ Robinson to the Navy Board, June 3, 1757, ADM 106/1119, ff. 196-200, TNA.

³⁶⁰ Robinson, "A List of People born on the Books of this His Majesty's Yard together with that of the People who are hired with a distinct Account of what they are at present severally Employed on English Harbor, Antigua," July 26, 1757, ADM 1/306, TNA.

³⁶¹ "Report on Cobbs Cross Hospital," September 22, 1756, enclosed in Frankland to Cleveland, September 27, 1756, ADM 1/306, TNA.

white naval officers. The resident surgeon of the hospital at English Harbour complained to Commodore Robert Swanton in 1763 of “the Ignorance, Stupidity, and Negligence of the Negroe Nurses at the Hospital” and requested that Swanton “order them to be Discharg’d and . . . hire in their Room some of the Recovered Men.” Swanton objected to the surgeon’s proposal, averring that he could “by no means approve of the Alteration he proposes with Respect to the Nurses at the Hospital” – either because he disagreed with the surgeon’s evaluation of the nurses’ job performance or because he had more pressing needs for the recuperated seamen.³⁶²

Though the naval dockyards offered some benefits to the slaves who labored there, they did not offer a respite from unhealthy living conditions or the tropical diseases that thrived in the midst of them. Harry was certainly not the only enslaved man to fall prey to a “disorder” contracted following proximity with navy seamen.³⁶³ Upon Admiral George Brydges Rodney’s arrival in the West Indies, Governor Charles Pinfold of Barbados wished him good health despite widespread “Accounts” that “English Harbour is . . . both disagreeable & Sickly.”³⁶⁴ After suffering from a “white flux” contracted at

³⁶² Robert Swanton, Journal, September 11-12, 1763, ADM 50/21, TNA. Admiral George Brydges Rodney noted in 1762 that the resident surgeon of the naval hospital in Barbados found “that the Negro Women at present employed therein as Nurses, are very Negligent and so Sleepy & Indolent in the discharge of their Duty, as to be very improper Persons to take Care of the Sick.” Rodney hoped that Barbados, with its relatively substantial population of white residents, could easily furnish “such White Nurses as shall be sufficient to take proper Care of the Sick & it may be necessary from Time to Time to send there from on board His Majesty’s Ships for the Recovery of their Health.” Rodney to Messrs Neale and Coverdale, Agent Victuallers, August 25, 1762, PRO 30/20/8, f. 250, TNA. See also Edward Clarke to Rodney, August 23, 1762, PRO 30/20/8, f. 247, TNA. Enslaved women likely also sold goods to the invalid seamen at the navy’s hospitals. In May 1756, Admiral Frankland urged Doctor Maxwell, who represented those in charge of caring for the ill sailors at Antigua, “to be particularly careful that no Rum is brought to the Hospital, by Negroes or other people.” Frankland to Doctor Maxwell, May 12, 1756, ADM 1/306, TNA.

³⁶³ “Petition of William Dunn of the Parish of Vere in the Island of Jamaica to the Honorable Thomas Cotes,” September 13, 1753, enclosed in Cotes to Cleveland, September 14, 1753, ADM 1/235, TNA.

³⁶⁴ Governor Charles Pinfold to Rodney, May 31, 1762, PRO 30/20/8, f. 166, TNA.

English Harbour in 1756, Royal Navy seaman Edward Thompson wrote that it was “uncommonly unwholesome” and “one of the most infernal places on the face of the globe.”³⁶⁵ Rear Admiral Thomas Frankland observed to Secretary of the Admiralty John Cleveland in 1757 that taking shelter during the hurricane season “in English Harbor is certain Death to the Major part of [the squadron’s] Companys as then is the rainy Season when the Yellow Fever runs through them incredibly” and “they Die as surely as they Catch it.”³⁶⁶ Making matters worse was the deplorable state of the housing at English Harbour, which Frankland described as “the most confined & sickly Hutts imaginable, flat roofed, & always leaking built against the side of a Rock, & spewing forth Nitrous Juices” and situated “in an Alley which is a stranger to Wind, Air or Sunshine.”³⁶⁷ In July 1757 alone, four shipwrights expired from a “Bilious Fever” that plagued the dockyard’s staff.³⁶⁸

Those enslaved men who did not dwell in English Harbour’s “sickly Hutts” likely inhabited the *Kinsale* hulk, an old vessel permanently docked at the yard. Sir James Douglas informed Secretary of the Admiralty Cleveland in 1760 that his predecessor Commodore Moore, “being in want of seamen,” had “distributed [the hulk’s sailors] to such Ships of the Squadron, that were most in Want of Men, and in Order to Supply their places an equal Number of Negroes were hired, some of which have been Employed on board the Hulk these Eighteen Months past.”³⁶⁹ The slaves of naval officers as well as

³⁶⁵ Edward Thompson, *Sailor’s letters: Written to his select friends in England, during his voyages and travels in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America, from the year 1754 to 1759*. 2d ed. (London, 1767), v. 2, 22.

³⁶⁶ Frankland to Cleveland, April 28, 1757, ADM 1/306, TNA.

³⁶⁷ Frankland to Cleveland, November 19, 1757, ADM 1/306, TNA.

³⁶⁸ Robinson to the Navy Board, October 30, 1758, ADM 106/1120, f. 79, TNA.

³⁶⁹ Douglas to Cleveland, November 29, 1760, ADM 1/307, ff. 280-81, TNA. Douglas informed Cleveland that the slaves’ “Owners have not received the least pay for their hire, & as the Naval Officer here has not

local slaveholders labored aboard the *Kinsale* hulk. When Richard Ette, the hulk's boatswain, received permission to return to England to recover his health in 1762, he asked that his "two Negroe Men belonging to the Hulk" be discharged from their duty, as he had "been Obliged to Sell Them to Pay [his] Debts."³⁷⁰ Evidently, several of the enslaved men who lodged aboard the *Kinsale* hulk proved themselves indispensable. William McFunn urged Admiral Rodney in 1762 to pay "Mr. John Bright who has Eleven Negroes in the Hulk, and presses hard either for their payment or Discharge." McFunn feared that if Rodney did not recompense Bright for his slaves' hire, Bright would "make application . . . for their Discharge." McFunn begged Rodney not to authorize the release of Bright's slaves from the *Kinsale*, "as they are of the best, belonging to her Harbour Duty, and it would be very difficult to procure others equally good to supply their Places."³⁷¹ Living and working together either in the huts or aboard the *Kinsale* hulk at English Harbour likely allowed the enslaved men employed there to forge a community that helped them endure their labors.

While slaveholders may have permitted their slaves to retain a portion of their wages, it was generally slaveholders and not slaves who benefited from their employment at English Harbour and Port Royal. Slaveholders netted £1,400 for three months' wages

received any Order for their payment, nor no advise on this head, beg their Lordships will be pleased to Signify their directions to the Commissioners of the Navy, to give Orders for their being payed here, by the Naval officer every Six Months, otherwise their Proprietors will not suffer them to Continue any longer in the Service."

³⁷⁰ Richard Ette to Rodney, July 14, 1762, PRO 30/20/8, f. 202, TNA. See also Ette to Rodney, July 8, 1762, PRO 30/20/8, f. 200, TNA and Rodney to Ette, July 12, 1762, PRO 30/20/8, f. 201, TNA.

³⁷¹ William McFunn to Rodney, July 16, 1762, PRO 30/20/8, ff. 227-28, TNA. For further information on the *Kinsale* hulk negroes, see McFunn to Rodney, July 11, 1762, PRO 30/20/8, ff. 216-17, TNA and Richard Swanton, Journal, August 9 and October 2, 1763, ADM 50/21, TNA.

of the black workers at English Harbour in 1763.³⁷² The hiring of slaves to the naval dockyards proved so lucrative that it became a point of competition and contention among white men. When the Antigua Council censured Rear Admiral Thomas Frankland for sending the *Edinburgh* ship-of-war to Jamaica to refit in 1757, Frankland accused its president of in truth lamenting a loss of profit rather than Antigua's vulnerability to France. Frankland commented to Secretary of the Admiralty Cleveland that had the *Edinburgh* been refit at Antigua "there would have been money to be picked up for caulking her, as Mr. president has a Gang of Negroes who work the greatest part of the year" for one shilling and six pence a day, "but when Caulkers are wanted for the King's ships have always been lett @ 7/6: p. Diem."³⁷³ Frankland accused not only resident Antiguans, but also naval officers of profiting from the apparently endemic practice of overcharging the navy for the hire of slaves. In 1757, Frankland charged Captain Thomas Pye with "permitting the Hiring of Artificers For his Majesty's Service at Low Wages and Charging and Receiving in many Cases, more than double the Sum paid, particularly in the Repairs of the Careening Wharff where many incapable Negroes were Employed and charged to the King at very exorbitant Sums."³⁷⁴ He further charged Pye with having accepted money from Williams Arthur, the storekeeper at English Harbour,

³⁷² N. Hunt, Andrew Anderson, and William Barkham to Rodney, April 30, 1763, PRO 30/20/8, f. 399, TNA. The white artificers employed at English Harbour earned £2,000 for their toil during the same period. In November 1762, Admiral Rodney issued a payment of "£2,000 Sterling . . . for the Pay of the Black Artificers, Labourers, & Caulking Lists from the 1st July to the 31st December next." Rodney to the Respective Officers of the Yard at English Harbour, November 7, 1762, PRO 30/20/8, ff. 297-99, TNA.

³⁷³ Frankland to Cleveland, July 20, 1757, ADM 1/306, TNA.

³⁷⁴ "Heads of Rear Admiral Thomas Frankland's Complaint against Capt. Thomas Pye late Captain of his Majesty's ship the *Advice* & Commander in Chief of his Majesty's Ships & Vessels Employed at Barbadoes & the Leeward Islands," December 9, 1757, ADM 1/306, TNA. Frankland accused Pye of approving "Bills for Negro Caulkers hired for his Majesty's Ships at Seven shillings & six pence per day each Negro when the same cou'd have been procured at Five shilling per day." He alleged that Pye was pocketing a portion of the wages the navy ostensibly owed to slaveholders.

to turn a blind eye when Arthur “discharge[d] from off the yards Books an Able Negro Artificer named Charles Castle” and “Enter[ed] thereon in his stead a new Negro named Ronter, as also to Continue on the said yards Establishment as Carpenters Four Negroes the said Williams Arthur’s property whom I was obliged to discharge for Want of Ability to do the Duty for which they were paid.”³⁷⁵ Williams Arthur later defended the abilities of his enslaved carpenters and caulkers, remarking to the Navy Board that he had purchased three of them “on my first arrival in Antigua, from the then acting Storekeeper, and who were then actually in the same employ, and had been so for a great while before.” He avowed that “these Negroes are as capable of performing their duty as many of the white Artificers Mr. Frankland has Entered since his Arrival.”³⁷⁶ No matter their true abilities, Frankland dismissed John Lewis, Michael Glasgow, Charles Cassada, and John Router and hired white artificers in their stead.³⁷⁷

³⁷⁵ “Heads of Rear Admiral Thomas Frankland’s Complaint against Capt. Thomas Pye late Captain of his Majesty’s ship the Advice & Commander in Chief of his Majesty’s Ships & Vessels Employed at Barbadoes & the Leeward Islands,” December 9, 1757, ADM 1/306, TNA.

³⁷⁶ Williams Arthur to the Navy Board, January 23, 1756, ADM 106/1118, f. 5, TNA. Arthur informed the Navy Board that Frankland had taken other steps to undermine his authority at English Harbour. Though his “Predecessors and myself were allow’d a proper Boat with Negro Attendants to carry me on Board any of His Majesty’s Ships that might be in this Harbour,” he claimed that “Mr. Frankland hath not only deprived me of the Kings Negroes from this Island without my knowledge or concurrence and employs the others in a manner that deprives me entirely of receiving any Advantage from them, how much soever His Majesty’s Service many demand it.” Arthur to the Navy Board, March 6, 1756, ADM 106/1118, f. 6, TNA. He later alleged that “tho’ the Commodore has complained to your Honourable board that I employ’d Negro Carpenters, unfit even as labourers at the Careening Wharf; Yet he has actually placed a Negro belonging to said Stanley, in the Yard as Carpenter, who never handled a Tool before his Entry.” Arthur to the Navy Board, July 24, 1756, ADM 106/1118, f. 17, TNA.

³⁷⁷ “Order from Thomas Frankland to Williams Arthur, His Majesty’s Naval Officer at Antigua,” January 3, 1756, ADM 106/1118, f. 3, TNA. Naval officers continued to suspect that English Harbour’s officers were benefiting from the hire of their slaves. Sir James Douglas reported to Cleveland in 1760 that “there has been such abuses in the Yard at English harbour that it requires the Constant Attendance of an Officer there to keep the Officers to their duty; the acting storekeeper has Suffer’d stores to be stole without inquiring after them, Caulkers and labourers employed not capable of their duty.” Douglas to Cleveland, July 25, 1760, ADM 1/307, ff. 245-46, TNA.

The positions of black artificers and laborers at the naval dockyards were also prey to forces greater than their particular employers. In the wake of the Seven Years' War, the Admiralty withdrew many of the ships that had been stationed in the West Indies and issued orders to decrease the number of artificers and laborers employed at English Harbour and Port Royal. In late 1762, Admiral Rodney, noting that "in all probability a Peace is near at Hand," instructed the officers at English Harbour to "discharge all the Labourers, except 30 which, with those belonging to the [*Kinsale*] Hulk, I think sufficient for this Yard" and warned them "not to enter any other Artificers than what are at present employed."³⁷⁸ Hired slaves may have been among the first to lose their jobs. Admiral Rodney informed Secretary of the Admiralty Cleveland in 1763 that he had "given Orders to the Officers of His Majesty's Yard at Antigua, to Discharge all Black Artificers whatever, and their Lordships may depend that I will cause all the Oeconomy possible to be used at that Yard, and the Expence thereof curtailed."³⁷⁹ Despite Rodney's claim, some enslaved men likely retained their positions at English Harbour. In July 1763, Rodney's successor, Rear Admiral Richard Tyrrell discharged among others "All the Black House Carpenters," in August he "made a further reduction of this Yard of 55 Artificers Chiefly Blacks," and come October, he instructed the naval officers at English Harbour to "Discharge all the Labourers and Artificers hired in this

³⁷⁸ Rodney to Cleveland, November 7, 1762, PRO 30/20/8, ff. 297-99, TNA. Rodney further commanded that "when His Majesty's Service forces not require the present Number employed, you are to ease the Government of the Expence as much as possible by discharging all Artificers but such as are absolutely necessary to carry on the Service."

³⁷⁹ Rodney to Cleveland, January 22, 1763, ADM 1/307, ff. 505-7, TNA. See also Rodney to Cleveland, January 22, 1763, PRO 30/20/8, ff. 352-53, TNA and Rodney to Captain Francis Drake, June 4, 1763, PRO 30/20/8, f. 405, TNA.

Country” save one. Still, the slaves who belonged to the *Kinsale* hulk remained, as Tyrrell instructed that they “do the Labourers Duty &c. of the Yard.”³⁸⁰

In the period of peace that followed the Seven Years’ War, the Royal Navy’s West Indian dockyards reverted to the pattern they had followed prior to the conflict. Naval officers attempted to limit expenses by restricting the hire of local workers, but found that the dockyards’ few artificers and slaves could not attend to all the duties required by the squadrons, even in times of peace. After having reduced it to a skeleton crew, Rear Admiral Tyrrell found English Harbour’s staff inadequate. He noted in his journal in December 1763 that as several ships had “been detained a long time in the Harbour for want of a Sufficient Number of Artificers to fit them for the Sea,” seven white and three black shipwrights, seven white and six black carpenters, one white and four black sawyers, one white and two black smiths, ten black laborers, and five sailmakers “would be absolutely Necessary to Carry on the Works” at English Harbour. He ordered the yard’s naval officer “to hire them and so soon as the Ships were Refitted to Discharge them.”³⁸¹ In the aftermath of the Seven Years’ War, enslaved craftsmen and laborers continued to find employment at the naval dockyards, albeit in the more limited and sporadic fashion that characterized peacetime.

The Seven Years’ War increased the demand and thus the opportunity for enslaved men to labor at English Harbour and Port Royal. Employment at the Royal Navy dockyards offered slaves a means not only to elude the direct supervision of their owners and to be valued for the skillful practice of their trades, but also to escape slavery.

³⁸⁰ Rear Admiral Richard Tyrrell, Journal, July 30, August 9, and October 2, 1763, ADM 50/21, TNA.

³⁸¹ Richard Tyrrell, Journal, December 6, 1763, ADM 50/21, TNA.

Slaveholders may have allowed those enslaved men hired out to the yards to retain a portion of their wages, thereby enabling them to save enough money to eventually purchase their freedom. Those slaves not afforded such a long-term prospect of liberty may have sought a more immediate solution. Laboring at the dockyards put slaves in close proximity to scores of undermanned merchant ships, privateers, and naval vessels whose captains were happy to ignore the enslaved status of a man with maritime skills. In response to complaints from Antiguan planters and politicians, Admiral Rodney issued an order to the Leeward Islands squadron in 1761 “not to Enter on Board His Majesty’s Ship under your Command any Negro, or Person whatsoever of that Complexion, unless . . . you have convincing proof of their being Freeman, and you are to give directions to your Officers that they be particularly careful that no Slaves secret themselves on Board.”³⁸² Despite such instructions, enslaved men continued to find berths aboard vessels, especially in times of war, when competition for seamen reached a fever pitch.

Black Privateersmen and Navy Seamen in the Atlantic

Men of African descent manned as well as maintained the vessels that defended the British American colonies during the Seven Years’ War. Whether they served aboard naval vessels or privateers, black sailors pursued and attacked enemy vessels and thus helped to safeguard the British Atlantic merchant trade and thwart that of their foes. In addition to engaging their opponents in the open ocean, black navy seamen transported soldiers and military supplies throughout the Atlantic world and engaged in amphibious assaults against fortified posts from Louisbourg to Havana. Maritime martial service

³⁸² Rodney, “Order to the respective Captains of the Squadron,” December 4, 1761, PRO 30/20/8, f. 27, TNA.

offered black sailors adventure, a sense of pride, and financial gain in the form of wages or a share of the plunder taken from captured vessels or conquered cities. For those who were enslaved, a berth aboard a naval vessel or privateer could be a route to freedom. But maritime martial service did not prove a boon to all mariners of African descent. Sailing aboard a naval ship or privateer in times of war exposed both enslaved and free black men to exploitation by their alleged allies and capture and sale at the hands of their adversaries. For those black men who had a say in the matter, the potential benefits of maritime martial service often seemed to outweigh the risks and a multitude of black mariners sailed on behalf of Britain during the Seven Years' War.

On December 23, 1758, the *Duke of Cumberland*, a British privateer commanded by Captain James Lilley, cleared New York's harbor and set a course for the Caribbean. The crew – among them “Neice a Negro” and “Ben a Negro” – spent their days attending to the needs of the ship as well as practicing the use of the great guns and small arms they would employ if they were fortunate enough to encounter a French vessel. For two months the *Duke of Cumberland* chased ship after ship, each of which revealed itself to be a friend upon closer examination. Finally, on the 18th of February the men of the *Duke of Cumberland* “descryed three Sail to Windward” and “gave Chace” to what turned out to be three French merchant vessels that had separated from their convoy after leaving Saint-Domingue. In the brief engagement between the enemy ships the *Duke of Cumberland* “had her Fore Mast shot through” and endured significant damage to her rigging but nevertheless managed to force the three French ships to surrender. The *Duke of Cumberland*'s crew suffered only two casualties: one man was “wounded in his right Arm” during the engagement while another “fell from on the Dolphin and was drowned”

after boarding the French prize. As they were owed a share of the three prize ships' cargo, Neice, Ben, and their mates must have been elated to find that they were "loaded with Sugars and Coffee."³⁸³

Numerous free and enslaved black seamen found berths aboard privateers during the Seven Years' War. In 1757, Scipio Atwood, Manuel Blair, Cuff Godfrey, Joseph Hull, and Amos Tillinghast – all "colored" mariners – served aboard the privateer *George* of Newport, Rhode Island.³⁸⁴ That same year, twenty-three of the sixty-two men who manned the privateer *Tyger* of New York were described on its muster roll as "black."³⁸⁵ Slaveholders resident in port cities hired their slaves out to privateers to collect their share of any captured cargo. Though slaveholders likely pocketed the vast majority of their slaves' earnings, privateering offered such steep profits that slaves may have been able to benefit from their labor in some cases. In 1758, Fortune, the slave of Cornelius Wykoop, made £100 in a single voyage aboard a privateer; Fortune may well have negotiated with Wykoop to retain for his own use a portion of such a hefty sum.³⁸⁶ While most enslaved sailors of African descent had little say in the matter, others, both free and enslaved, chose to become privateersmen. The prospect of quick financial gain and the excitement of engaging one's enemy in battle on the high seas likely drew black

³⁸³ "Log Book of the Private Ship of War, Duke of Cumberland," December 23, 1758 and May 12 and February 18, 1759, Naval History Society Collection, f. 956, Library of the New-York Historical Society, New York, NY (hereafter NYHSL). The French merchant ships were the *Dolphin*, the *Eagle*, and the *Grand Joseph*.

³⁸⁴ Howard M. Chapin, *Rhode Island in the Colonial Wars: A List of Rhode Island Soldiers & Sailors in the Old French & Indian War, 1755-1762* (1918; repr., Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1994), 29, 36, 71, 85, 140. In 1758, six different seamen of African descent manned the *George*. Chapin, *Rhode Island in the Colonial Wars*, 72, 98, 104, 133. These black seamen sailed alongside many sailors of indigenous descent.

³⁸⁵ Twenty-four additional members of the crew were identified as "brown." Foy, "Seeking Freedom in the Atlantic World, 1713-1783," 68.

mariners to privateering. Those enslaved men who did not have their masters' permission to set sail used privateering as a path to freedom. Ralph, whose erstwhile owner James Campbell "expected" that he was "on board some of the Privateers," and the slave of Edmund Matthews, who his former master was convinced had tried to "go out in some of the Privateers," were only two of many enslaved men who fled their owners by becoming privateersmen during the Seven Years' War.³⁸⁷

Those who opted to serve aboard a privateer may have been attracted as much by the relatively democratic culture of privateering as by the possibility of freedom, adventure, and plunder. Neice and Ben, the two black sailors who belonged to the crew of the *Duke of Cumberland*, fell ill along with several of their crewmembers not long after capturing the three French merchant ships. By May 1759, twenty of the seventy-nine men aboard the *Duke of Cumberland* were sick and incapable of service. The ailing crew "expressed their unwillingness to go and cruize off the River St. Lawrence" to Captain James Lilley. They promised Lilley "they would every one of them go out with [him] in the Ship the next Cruize or pay and allow six pounds out of their prize money to get a Man in the Room of him that should neglect or refuse to go, in Case [he] immediately returned to New York." Lilley, who himself was ill, opted to follow the wishes of his crew. He noted in his journal that "in case of an Engagement I shall be destitute of a sufficient Number of Hands to Work and fight," not only due to illness, but

³⁸⁶ Foy, "Seeking Freedom in the Atlantic World, 1713-1783," 67.

³⁸⁷ *New-York Gazette*, December 18, 1758 and *New-York Gazette*, March 6, 1758, quoted in Foy, "Seeking Freedom in the Atlantic World, 1713-1783," 68.

also a potential mutiny if Lilley pressed his men to continue the voyage. Therefore, he determined “to break up the Cruize by proceeding for New York as fast as possible.”³⁸⁸

Privateering proved so appealing to seamen that naval officers continually complained that they had no success in recruiting or retaining men when they had the option of instead joining a privateer’s crew.³⁸⁹ In 1757, Admiral Thomas Frankland of the Leeward Islands station found that “the ships of the Squadron are short of Complement, & the Spirit of Privateering too prevalent, to get a Vessell manned.”³⁹⁰ That same year, Rear Admiral Sir Charles Hardy of the North American station complained to John Campbell, 4th Earl of Loudoun, commander in chief of the British forces in North America, that “Sailors both from the Men of War and Transports had deserted in order to get on board the Privateers, from the great profit they make there, of [New York] alone, having brought in Prizes to the value of about two hundred thousand Pounds Sterling.”³⁹¹ Privateers offered black seamen the chance to join a relatively egalitarian crew in the thrilling pursuit of adventure and fortune.

³⁸⁸ “Log Book of the Private Ship of War, Duke of Cumberland,” May 12 and 15, 1759, Naval History Society Collection, f. 956, NYHSL. The Duke of Cumberland made a second voyage between December 22, 1759 and June 29, 1760, during which they captured two prizes. This cruise also ended at the crew’s behest. Lilley recorded that “the Ship’s Company in general came aft to me and requested me to go for York, alledging that they were in general bare of Cloaths and seeming greatly dissatisfyed to Stay out any longer.” “Log Book of the Private Ship of War, Duke of Cumberland,” June 25, 1760, Naval History Society Collection, f. 956, NYHSL.

³⁸⁹ On the manning of naval vessels during the Seven Years’ War, see Stephen F. Gradish, *The Manning of the British Navy during the Seven Years’ War* (London: Royal Historical Society, 1980); Pares, “The Manning of the Navy in the West Indies, 1702-63,” 31-60; and Rodger, *The Wooden World*, 145-204.

³⁹⁰ Admiral Thomas Frankland to Secretary of the Admiralty John Cleveland, June 16, 1757, ADM 1/306, TNA. Commodore Moore found that “the great Premiums, the English Privateers give to Men, frequently occasion Desertions amongst ours.” Moore to Cleveland, September 5, 1758, ADM 1/307, ff. 81-82, TNA. On the competition from merchant ships, which offered “from Twenty five to Thirty Guineas a Man and Twenty Gallons of Rum for the Run to England” from the West Indies, “which seldom exceeds two Months and is such a Temptation that few Men can withstand,” see Admiral Thomas Cotes to Secretary of the Admiralty John Cleveland, April 20, 1759, ADM 1/235, TNA.

³⁹¹ Hardy and Loudoun resorted to force to round up the men who had deserted His Majesty’s ships. Loudoun reported to Secretary of State William Pitt, “I immediately surrounded the Town with three

Despite the manifold attractions of privateering, some black sailors may have preferred to serve aboard naval vessels. Of course, as the Royal Navy impressed both enslaved and free men into service, many black men had little say in the matter. After the loss of “thirty of her best Seamen by a Malignant Fever” with “a much greater number at the Hospital,” Admiral Colvill impressed several enslaved men into service aboard the *Northumberland*. Colvill commented to Secretary of the Admiralty John Cleveland, “These Negroe Slaves shared the same Fate with such freeborn White Men, as we could pick up at a very critical time, for his Majesty’s Service.”³⁹² Even those men impressed into service may have found the Royal Navy a relatively hospitable workplace. Though navy seamen earned smaller shares of prizes than those who manned privateers, service aboard a naval vessel did present seamen with the opportunity to combat and capture enemy vessels. Moreover, the British navy offered its mariners better quality food, care and pensions in case of illness or injury, and a level of protection from predators that privateer captains could not match.³⁹³

Enslaved mariners in particular had reason to favor naval service over privateering. Loath to part with able seamen once they had become members of their crew, British naval officers on occasion refused to return enslaved men to their owners.

Battalions, to prevent their making their escape, whilst [Hardy] employed the Sailors in taking up the Deserters, who finding themselves overpowered, made no resistance, and the whole was finished by six in the morning, without any disturbance; and he got back his deserters, and I believe some additional strength to the Ships of War; without going into this measure we could not have sail’d for want of Seamen.” Earl of Loudoun to Secretary of State William Pitt, May 30, 1757, ff. 21-25, Francis Parkman Papers, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, Massachusetts (hereafter MHS).

³⁹² In response to Cleveland’s query, Colvill sent him a document regarding the “true State of the Negroes” aboard the *Northumberland*. (Unfortunately, this document was not enclosed with Colvill’s letter.) Cleveland may have requested such a report after receiving a complaint from the impressed slaves’ owners. Colvill hoped “the Wages accruing to them would be deemed a full Equivalent for their Service” and noted that two had fallen ill during their time aboard his ship. Colvill to Cleveland, October 29, 1762, ADM 1/482, f. 244, TNA.

In 1758, the Admiralty declined to hand William Stephens, an enslaved mariner from Maryland who had voluntarily joined the British navy, over to a slaveholder who claimed him as his property. That same year, William Castillo had the misfortune to encounter his erstwhile owner, a merchant sea captain from Boston from whom he had absconded to join the navy, in Portsmouth, England. Castillo implored the Admiralty to help him when his former master confined him in an iron collar aboard his ship and threatened to sell him in Barbados. Declaring that “the laws of this country admit of no badges of slavery,” the lords of the Admiralty demanded Castillo’s release. Moreover, they made it clear that the Royal Navy’s protection should be extended to other fugitive slaves as well, as they advised Admiral Francis Holburne that “the Lords hope and expect whenever he discovers any attempt of this kind he should prevent it.”³⁹⁴ Not all British naval officers shared the Admiralty’s position on slavery, however, and the British navy had a more ambivalent record when it came to guarding the liberty of black sailors beyond Britain’s shores.

Despite the Admiralty’s view that slavery did not befit the Royal Navy, many British naval officers, not least those who themselves owned slaves, continued to respect the rights of slaveholders. Naval officers stationed in the Caribbean and North America often employed their slaves aboard their ships, thus benefiting from their wages as well as their labor. Captain Hervey of the *Dragon* relied upon “a faithful negro that is lent me” – no doubt by a fellow naval officer – to deliver a message to Admiral George

³⁹³ Bolster, *Black Jacks*, 31.

³⁹⁴ Bolster, *Black Jacks*, 32 and Rodger, *The Wooden World*, 160-61.

Brydges Rodney in 1762.³⁹⁵ Upon learning in 1762 that “there is a Negro on board His Majesty’s Ship under your Command the Property of Lieut. Wallace,” Admiral Rodney ordered Captain McCleverty of the *Norwich* man-of-war to “discharge the said Negro to his proper Master.”³⁹⁶ British naval officers respected the rights of their slaveholding fellow officers as long as they did not employ their slaves to the detriment of His Majesty’s service. Admiral Thomas Frankland admonished Captain Thomas Pye for “Rating Negro Boys his own Slaves as Petty Officers & Able Seamen . . . who were totally incapable of doing the Duty for which they were Rated.”³⁹⁷ Some naval leaders took advantage of their offices to extend their slaveholding. Captain Arthur Forrest put a number of slaves from French Guadeloupe to work upon his Jamaica sugar plantation following the British conquest of the island in 1759.³⁹⁸ Rear Admiral Sir James Douglas staffed his private sloops with black seamen seized from captured prize vessels, some of whom may have been free prior to their ship’s surrender to the Royal Navy.³⁹⁹

Manning either a British privateer or naval vessel exposed sailors of African descent to capture if their ship fell into the hands of their foes. Whereas white sailors were either exchanged for other prisoners of war, ransomed, or simply dropped off at the nearest port, most European ship captains regarded black men, whether enslaved or free,

³⁹⁵ Captain A. Hervey to Rodney, February 12, 1762, PRO 30/20/8, f. 67, TNA.

³⁹⁶ Rodney, “Order to Captain McCleverty,” February 23, 1762, PRO 30/20/2, f. 136, TNA.

³⁹⁷ “Heads of Rear Admiral Thomas Frankland’s Complaint against Capt. Thomas Pye late Captain of his Majesty’s ship the *Advice* & Commander in Chief of his Majesty’s Ships & Vessels Employed at Barbadoes & the Leeward Islands,” December 9, 1757, ADM 1/306, TNA.

³⁹⁸ Edward Long, *History of Jamaica, Or, general survey of the antient and modern state of that island: with reflections on its situation, settlements, inhabitants* (London, 1774), v. 2, 452-53. Forrest had also employed his slaves on his ships. Wager, also known as Apongo, sailed with Forrest before becoming one of the leaders of the 1760 Westmoreland parish slave revolt. Thomas Thistlewood Diary, December 20, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers(microfilm). Read at the John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Library, Williamsburg, VA.

as property and thus potentially as booty if they were on board a vessel taken as a prize.⁴⁰⁰ As slaves proved an expensive commodity to maintain and were liable to a “great Mortality” the longer they remained on the ships that had brought them from Africa, many captains sold them as quickly as possible and often prior to bringing their prize cases before an Admiralty court.⁴⁰¹ Privateer and naval captains routinely subjected the black seamen they seized to a similar fate. In 1760, Captain James Lilley sent the *Saint Jacques*, a French privateer “laden with Sugars & some Indigo,” to a New York Admiralty court to be assessed following its surrender to the *Duke of Cumberland*. But the *Saint Jacques* sailed to New York without one of its crew members, as Captain James Lilley retained on board and soon sold to a Spanish ship captain “the Negro Boy we took in the Polacca for 50£ York currency.”⁴⁰² As captains deemed any man of African descent who could not prove his freedom a slave, black seamen, no matter their true legal status, were often summarily sold by their captors.

³⁹⁹ Rodger, *The Wooden World*, 159-60.

⁴⁰⁰ Pares, “The Manning of the Navy in the West Indies, 1702-63,” 32, n. 1 and Rodger, *The Wooden World*, 159-60. For a brief account of the saga endured by a British general’s white servants after being captured by a French privateer, see John Watts to Lau. Maclean, July 19, 1762, John Watts Letterbook, NYHSL.

⁴⁰¹ Frankland to Cleveland, [November 1755?], ADM 1/306, TNA. Frankland submitted a note explaining the slaves’ sale along with a list of the prize ships from which they had been taken; among the ships were the *Alcion*, which carried 530 slaves, and the *Snow*, which carried 308 slaves, both of which had been destined for Saint-Domingue. See “A List of French Ships Detain’d by the Squadron of His Majesty’s Ships under the command of Thomas Frankland,” October 1755, ADM 1/306, TNA. See also Frankland to Cleveland, February 25, 1756, ADM 1/306, TNA for more on the sale of these slaves. In a similar case, Admiral Thomas Cotes of the Jamaica station informed Secretary of the Admiralty John Cleveland in 1756 that he had “sold all the Negroes by the Desire of the Captors, and deposited the Money in safe Hands, as the maintaining 1200 would have been a very great Expence to the Crown and so many of them must have dyed by being stowed so close, and so long kept on board, many of them having been on board from ten to twelve Months before they were seized and the Negroes and White Men very sickly.” Cotes to Cleveland, April 5, 1756, ADM 1/235, TNA. For additional examples of slave ships seized as prizes, see “A List of French Ships Detain’d by the Squadron of His Majesty’s Ships under the command of Thomas Frankland,” March 20 – June 27, 1756, ADM 1/306, TNA and “A List of French Ships and Vessels taken and English Vessels Retaken in the Leeward Islands Station,” June 28, 1756 – May 27, 1757, ADM 1/306, TNA.

The justice and wisdom of selling black mariners seized from prize ships remained a subject of debate among British officials during the Seven Years' War. In 1757, Admiral Thomas Frankland blamed British colonial leaders in the Leeward Islands, who had "settled with the Governor of Martinique to return all Free Negroes and Mulattoes that shall be taken in Privateers," for enabling "the Enemy . . . to fill out so great a number of Privateers."⁴⁰³ He griped to Secretary of the Admiralty John Cleveland that "in the Last Privateer we took, there were thirty four of the woolly race, out of a Complement of Eighty."⁴⁰⁴ Frustrated at apprehending the same mariners time and again, Frankland proposed "a Scheme" to Antigua Governor George Thomas "of sending the Captains, Pilots, Lieutenants, & Creol[e]s married or settled on Martinique to England & selling all Mulattoes & Negroes indiscriminately." Fearing the French would impose a similar exile upon the men they detained from British vessels and thereby frighten away the New England merchant traders who provisioned the West Indies, Thomas refused to approve Frankland's proposal. In defiance of Thomas' directive concerning captured black seamen, Frankland professed to Cleveland: "I have nevertheless sold all those taken by the men of war & shall Continue to do it whenever I meet with them."⁴⁰⁵ Frankland

⁴⁰² "Log Book of the Private Ship of War, Duke of Cumberland," March 28, April 7, and April 29, 1760, Naval History Society Collection, f. 956, NYHSL.

⁴⁰³ "Rear Admiral Frankland's Reply to the Extract of a Letter from Mr. Thomas, Governor of Antigua to the Board of Trade dated the Twenty Fifth of February 1757," July 20, 1757, ADM 1/306, TNA.

⁴⁰⁴ Frankland to Cleveland, April 28, 1757, ADM 1/306, TNA.

⁴⁰⁵ "Rear Admiral Frankland's Reply to the Extract of a Letter from Mr. Thomas, Governor of Antigua to the Board of Trade dated the Twenty Fifth of February 1757," July 20, 1757, ADM 1/306, TNA. Commodore Moore later listed "the too frequent Exchange of Prisoners between [Antigua] and Martinique" as "One great Reason of the Enemy's continuing to fitt out such a Number of Privateers in these Seas." Though he was "sensible some Objections will be made to it by the North American Traders, who may be apprehensive of the same Fate when they are taken," Moore too proposed sending prisoners to Europe instead of returning them to the French islands. Unlike Frankland, he did not call for the indiscriminate sale of black sailors. Moore to Cleveland, November 1759, ADM 1/307, ff. 188-91, TNA. For additional complaints concerning former detainees returning to man new privateers, see Moore to Cleveland,

faced no repercussions from the Admiralty for doing so and individual naval officers continued to determine the destiny of the black mariners they detained.

The particular prejudices of a naval officer likely played a role in whether he opted to respect the liberty of the free black seamen he captured. It is fairly unsurprising that Admiral Thomas Frankland, who averred to Secretary of the Admiralty John Cleveland in 1757 that he “could not look upon that Race to be proper Instruments for carrying on war among Civilized People,” had no compunction about selling free men of African descent.⁴⁰⁶ Likewise, Sir James Douglas, who became convinced that “the inhumanity’s Committed by the Privateers are done by the free Negroes & Mulattoes,” resolved in 1760 to “take all Methods I can to prevent it on our Side, which is by having them sold when ever they come into our possession.” Douglas seemed willing to expose the free black seamen aboard British ships to a similar fate, as he remarked to the governor of French Martinique that he would be “Extreamly glad that you are resolved to do the same by any of Ours that are brought to Martinique.”⁴⁰⁷ Though it is unlikely that many naval officers shared Douglas’ flippant disregard for the liberty of the free black seamen aboard His Majesty’s ships, he and Frankland were likely not alone in routinely ignoring the rights of those free men of African descent they took from foreign vessels.

The fate of captured black sailors remained a contentious issue between adversaries as well as among allies during the Seven Years’ War. Though British naval officers often sold the black mariners they seized in prize ships, they nevertheless

December 20, 1759, ADM 1/307, ff. 194-95, TNA; Moore to Cleveland, March 20, 1760, ADM 1/307, ff. 207-8, TNA; Douglas to Cleveland, June 4, 1760, ADM 1/307, ff. 239-40, TNA; Douglas to Cleveland, July 25, 1760, ADM 1/307, ff. 257-58, TNA; and Rodney to the Commissioners of the Sick and Hurt, July 24, 1762, PRO 30/20/8, ff. 208-9, TNA.

⁴⁰⁶ Frankland’s Reply to Mr. Thomas’ Letter of 25 February 1757, July 20, 1757, ADM 1/306, TNA.

typically expected foreign governments to respect the freedom of those black seamen who manned British ships. When five British sailors protested their incarceration aboard a Spanish naval vessel, Commodore Augustus Keppel of the Jamaica station took up their case. The men, among them Quashy, a “Negro,” informed Keppel that they had been imprisoned following the surrender of their Jamaican merchant ship to a Spanish guarda-costa three years earlier. Their captors carried them from Cartagena to Cádiz and subsequently sentenced them to labor aboard the *Princessa* man of war “all day long with Irons on our Legs, and all Night in the Stocks.” Emphasizing their loyalty to their rightful monarch, they begged Keppel to “Clear us, as some of us has got our Wives and Familys in Jamaica, and our whole Desire is to serve Our King, and be freed from the Cruelty of this People.”⁴⁰⁸ Keppel decried the “Method practiced by the Spaniards in this part of the World,” which he charged was “to make Slaves of all they find upon illicit Trade” and demanded that the commander of the Havana squadron release the five “British Subjects.”⁴⁰⁹ At no point did Keppel question Quashy’s status as a British subject or doubt his right to be liberated from coerced service to a foreign monarch.

Though British naval officers on occasion insisted that the freedom of their black seamen be respected, they reserved the right to sell those they seized in prize vessels.

When the governor of Dutch Curaçao voiced his opposition to the fact that “the Negroes

⁴⁰⁷ Douglas to the Governor of Martinique, December 17, 1760, ADM 1/307, ff. 291-92, TNA.

⁴⁰⁸ “Petition of Five English Prisoners on board of the *Princessa*, Spanish Man of War,” July 1, 1763, enclosed in Keppel to Cleveland, July 9, 1763, ADM 1/237, f. 224, TNA.

⁴⁰⁹ Keppel to Cleveland, July 9, 1763, ADM 1/237, ff. 219-20, TNA. Keppel to Don Joseph De Sappian, July 3, 1763, enclosed in Keppel to Cleveland, July 9, 1763, ADM 1/237, f. 221, TNA. Quashy was called “Jochin” aboard the *Princessa*. See “Names of the 5 Englishmen detained on board the Princess, Spanish Ship of War,” July 3, 1763, enclosed in Keppel to Cleveland, July 9, 1763, ADM 1/237, f. 222, TNA. For the Spanish defense of the British petitioners’ detainment, see Joseph Sappian to Keppel, July 3, 1763, enclosed in Keppel to Cleveland, July 9, 1763, ADM 1/237, f. 223, TNA.

& Mulattoes inhabitants of Curacoa whether free or slaves were . . . sent elsewhere in order to be sold” after being detained by British naval officers, Rear Admiral Sir James Douglas defended his men’s jurisdiction over the fate of seamen taken in Dutch ships engaged in the illegal trade of French goods.⁴¹⁰ He informed Jamaica Governor William Henry Lyttelton that “the Whites and Freemen are either set at liberty, or disposed of by the Commanding Officer, as he Judges the Circumstances of the Capture may require, for putting a stop to a practice, committed by some of the Subjects of Neutral Powers, so pernicious to this Nation engaged in so Just a War, and at the same time, not to give the state they belong to, any Just cause of Complaint.”⁴¹¹ Unsatisfied by Douglas’ defense, Lyttelton turned to then Attorney General of Jamaica Edward Long to determine whether the navy’s sale of the Dutch mariners had been legal. Long concluded that because their names did not appear in the condemned vessels’ muster rolls, it would be impossible to verify the true identities of the black men seized from the Dutch prize ships as well as safe to assume that they were enslaved. Long attested that they had been condemned lawfully, as “slaves are reputed in this part of the world meerly as merchandize, and as

⁴¹⁰ Governor William Henry Lyttelton to the Earl of Egremont, May 12, 1762, CO 137/61, ff. 88-91, TNA. For the correspondence between Lyttelton and Governor Bosvelt of Curaçao, see “Letter from Bosvelt, the Governor of Curacoa to Lyttelton,” April 5, 1762, enclosed in Lyttelton to Egremont, May 10, 1762, CO 137/61, ff. 86-87 and Lyttelton to Bosvelt, May 10, 1762, enclosed in Lyttelton to Egremont, May 12, 1762, CO 137/61, ff. 114-15, TNA. For a list of the free black sailors the governor of Curaçao alleged had been illegally sold, see “List of Mulattoes and Negroes sent from the Governor of Curacoa to Governor Lyttelton,” enclosed in Lyttelton to Egremont, May 10, 1762, CO 137/61, ff. 84-85, TNA. For a list of the captured Dutch vessels, see “A List of Vessels belonging to Curacoa which have been taken since the Commencement of the French War having on board Mulattoes, Negroe or other Slaves,” May 5, 1762, CO 137/61, ff. 80-81, TNA. For an account of an engagement in 1759 between a British privateer and a French privateer manned by “near 100 stout Fellows, Dutch free Negroes included,” see *The naval chronicle: or, voyages, travels, expeditions, remarkable exploits and atchievements, of the most celebrated English navigators* (London, 1760), v. 3, 365-67. For additional information on Dutch free black sailors in the Atlantic, see Farr, *Black Odyssey*, 16-17 and Scott, “Crisscrossing Empires: Ships, Sailors, and Resistance in the Lesser Antilles in the Eighteenth Century,” 133-34.

such are attached to the vessel in which they are seized, in the same degree as the rest of the lading.”⁴¹² Though the justice of selling slaves seemed beyond dispute, some British officials remained troubled that free black men had been “reputed . . . as merchandize” alongside slaves.⁴¹³

Maritime martial service remained a hazardous enterprise even for those black navy seamen who managed to elude capture by an enemy vessel. Mariners engaged in naval battles at sea as well as on land, leading in some cases to injury and death. In a 1758 engagement off the shores of Guadeloupe that lasted from the early afternoon well into the night, three French vessels volleyed “square Bits of Iron, old rusty Nails, and in short every thing that could lend to the Destruction of Men” at the navy seamen of the *Buckingham* man of war. The British mariners responded with repeated broadsides, “a noble Dose of great Guns & small Arms,” and “hand Grenades & swivels to excellent Purpose.” The British ultimately won the day, though their captain was among the numerous casualties; he lost three fingers and was for a time blinded by blood flowing from a cut above his eye following an “unlucky Broadside” that sent splinters flying into the air and “made some Slaughter on [the *Buckingham*’s] Quarter Deck.” Despite the mayhem, their captain boasted that “our Men were very cool, took good Aim, were under

⁴¹¹ Douglas to Lyttelton, April 29, 1762, enclosed in Lyttelton to Egremont, May 12, 1762, CO 137/61, ff. 108-9, TNA.

⁴¹² Long himself unconsciously prevaricated on whether enslaved men were in truth property or people. In an early draft of his report to Lyttelton, Long used the pronoun “who” when referring to the black detainees and only later crossed it out and replaced it with “which.” Edward Long to Lyttelton, May 8, 1762, “Papers relating to the Island of Jamaica, 1662-1791,” Add. Mss. 22677, ff. 67-68, British Library, London, England. For the version of the letter that Long sent to Lyttelton, see Long to Lyttelton, May 8, 1762, enclosed in Lyttelton to Egremont, May 10, 1762, CO 137/61, ff. 82-83, TNA.

⁴¹³ Douglas ultimately agreed to “order to be delivered what subjects of [Curaçao] are here under my power, and which I think ought not to be detain’d,” eventually returning six men to the island. Douglas to Lyttelton, April 29, 1762, enclosed in Lyttelton to Egremont, May 12, 1762, CO 137/61, ff. 108-9, TNA

very good Discipline, and fought with a free English Spirit,” at one point “cheerfully promis[ing]” to “do their utmost” and giving “Three Cheers.”⁴¹⁴ Though such battles endangered the lives of black seamen, they also offered them the opportunity to face their foes courageously alongside their fellow seamen and to take deserved pride in their collective triumphs.

In fact, some mariners eagerly anticipated combating their enemies.⁴¹⁵ As a young slave to naval Lieutenant Michael Henry Pascal during the Seven Years’ War, Olaudah Equiano was disappointed time and again while hoping to “be gratified in seeing an engagement, which I had so long wished for in vain.” He learned “many of the manoeuvres of the ship” while cruising off the coast of France and “was several times made to fire the guns” in preparation for battle. Finally, in 1759, Equiano’s ship, the *Namur*, and its fellow British men of war caught up to seven French vessels after a night-long pursuit through the Straits of Gibraltar westward into the Atlantic. When the *Namur* drew alongside the French commander’s vessel, an engagement “commenced with great fury on both sides” and Equiano was “frequently stunned with the thundering of the great guns, whose dreadful contents hurried many of my companions into awful eternity.” Equiano worked furiously to keep the guns of the middle deck supplied with powder,

and Lyttelton to Bosvelt, May 10, 1762, enclosed in Lyttelton to Egremont, May 12, 1762, CO 137/61, ff. 114-15, TNA.

⁴¹⁴ Captain Tyrell to Moore, November 9, 1758, enclosed in Moore to Cleveland, November 13, 1758, ADM 1/307, ff. 102-5, TNA.

⁴¹⁵ Edward Thompson and his fellow navy seamen spent eight months blockading the French fleet at Brest “with all the ease and composure you can conceive men to have, whose most ardent wishes are to try their strength with their foe.” When the French squadron finally emerged to meet the British in battle, Thompson remarked upon the “joy this news gave our scurvy spirits, what an alteration it made when we had the most sanguine hopes of being revenged on a fleet, that had kept us at sea eight months, and every day wishing them to come out.” “Fired with the truest British courage,” the navy seamen finally achieved the victorious action they had long awaited. Thompson, *Sailor’s letters*, 112, 125, 126.

notwithstanding “the shot and splinters” that “flew thick about me during the whole fight” and bearing witness to “our men fall so thick about me.” Equiano’s job was an important and dangerous one, as in transporting the powder “through nearly the whole length of the ship,” he was “very much exposed to the enemy’s shots.” He greeted the prospect of death with equanimity “and went through the whole of my duty with alacrity,” nevertheless holding out “the hope, if I survived the battle, of relating it and the dangers I had escaped . . . when I returned to London.” Equiano likely felt no small sense of satisfaction when, after forcing the French ships to submit, he and his fellow navy seamen celebrated their triumph “with loud huzzas and acclamations.”⁴¹⁶

In addition to combating enemy vessels at sea, black mariners engaged in amphibious assaults upon enemy colonies alongside British and North American soldiers.⁴¹⁷ British naval officers relied upon the expertise and experience of local black mariners to guide their vessels to their intended West Indian targets. “Upon the Information of some Negroes, who promised to conduct the Troops in flat-bottom Boats by Night,” Major General John Barrington “formed . . . a Design for surprizing” and assaulting three Guadeloupe port towns during the British campaign against the French island in 1759.⁴¹⁸ In 1762, Secretary of State Egremont advised the governor of the

⁴¹⁶ Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, Or Gustavus Vassa, the African*, ed. Vincent Carretta (1789; New York: Penguin Books, 1995), 71, 70, 83, 84, 83.

⁴¹⁷ On Britain’s mid-eighteenth-century amphibious assaults, see Julian S. Corbett, *England in the Seven Years War: A Study in Combined Strategy*, v. 1-2 (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1918); Michael Duffy, *Soldiers, Sugar, and Seapower: The British Expeditions to the West Indies and the War Against Revolutionary France* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987); and Richard Harding, *Amphibious Warfare in the Eighteenth Century: The British Expeditions to the West Indies, 1740-42* (Suffolk: Boydell Press, 1991).

⁴¹⁸ Unfortunately, “the Night proved so bad, and the Negro Conductors were so frightened, that they run several of the Boats on the Shoals, of which the Coast is full” and Barrington was forced to revise his strategy. *The naval chronicle*, v. 3, 341-2.

Bahamas, William Shirley, to “collect as many good Pilots, as you can, well skilled in their Profession, and capable of taking Care of Ships of War thro’ the old Bahama Streights, for which Service, you may assure them, that they shall be amply rewarded.”⁴¹⁹ Johnno, “a free Negro Man esteem’d the second Best Pilot in these Islands,” was one of the ten navigators selected by Shirley in 1762 to guide the vast British fleet through the treacherous straits for a surprise assault upon Spanish Havana.⁴²⁰ Though in the end Johnno did not conduct the British squadron to Havana, he nevertheless earned two dollars a day for the time he spent in His Majesty’s service.⁴²¹

Navy seamen conveyed the British forces and their supplies to such sites as Louisbourg, Martinique, and Havana and then assisted the soldiers as they prepared to besiege their enemies’ fortresses.⁴²² Sailors transported soldiers, pioneers (including slaves from the British and conquered French West Indian islands), provisions, artillery, and military stores to their destinations.⁴²³ Upon their arrival, the ships of war bombarded the enemy’s coastal entrenchments until their guns fell silent, thus enabling them, and subsequently the soldiers, to safely disembark.⁴²⁴ Marines and navy seamen

⁴¹⁹ Egremont to Governor William Shirley, January 12, 1762, CO 117/1, TNA.

⁴²⁰ Shirley to Admiral Sir George Pocock, March 29, 1762, ADM 1/237, ff. 41-43, TNA.

⁴²¹ Pocock to Cleveland, June 14, 1762, ADM 1/237, ff. 54-58, TNA. For further information about the Providence pilots, see “Orders from Sir George Pocock to Sir James Douglas,” April 26, 1762, ADM 1/237, ff. 27-28, TNA; Shirley to Captain Lancelot Holmes, March 28, 1762, ADM 1/237, ff. 44-45, TNA; Holmes to Shirley, March 26, 1762, ADM 1/237, ff. 46-47, TNA; Holmes to Pocock, May 20, 1762, ADM 1/237, ff. 48-50, TNA; John Gambier to Pocock, March 30, 1762, ADM 1/237, f. 51, TNA; Pocock to Gambier, June 28, 1762, Sir George Pocock Letterbook, HM 1000, The Huntington Library, San Marino, CA (hereafter HL); Pocock to Shirley, July 31, 1762, Pocock Letterbook, HM 1000, HL; and Pocock to Gambier, September 22, 1762, Pocock Letterbook, HM 1000, HL.

⁴²² The participation of enslaved and free black sailors and soldiers in the British amphibious assaults against French Guadeloupe and Martinique and Spanish Cuba are treated more extensively in Chapter 3.

⁴²³ See, for example, Commodore John Moore, Journal, May 5, 1758 – May 4, 1759 and Moore, Journal, May 4, 1759 – September 7, 1759, ADM 50/22, TNA.

⁴²⁴ For instance, during the 1762 expedition against Martinique, the ships of war “attacked all the Enemy’s Forts from Point Negro to the Cas de Pilote after silencing all their Batterys” and then “landed before

often went ashore to take possession of the coastal fortifications their opponents had abandoned.⁴²⁵ Navy seamen then rowed the British soldiers to shore and assisted the pioneers in hauling their arms, provisions, and supplies to the field of battle. At the siege of Louisbourg in 1758, navy seamen braved enemy fire as well as “a violent Surf” that smashed their boats “in pieces” to land the troops.⁴²⁶ Admiral George Brydges Rodney boasted in 1762 of the “eager & chearful Activity of the Officers and Seamen; who contributed everything in their Power towards the Reduction of [Martinique], and made no Difficulties in transporting Numbers of the heaviest Mortars & Ships Cannon, up the steepest Mountains at a very considerable Distance, from the Sea, and a Cross the Enemy’s line of fire.”⁴²⁷ At Havana, scores of sailors remained “constantly . . . on Shore . . . to assist the Army in Landing their Cannon and Ordnance Stores of all kinds, or Manning Batteries, making Fascines, and Supplying the Army with Water.”⁴²⁸

Night the whole Army consisting of 14000 Men without their Losing a Man.” Rodney to Captain Ourry, January 23, 1762, PRO 30/20/8, ff. 50-51, TNA.

⁴²⁵ For the marines and seamen’s actions ashore at Martinique, for example, see Douglas to Rodney, January 11, 1762, PRO 30/20/8, f. 48, TNA.

⁴²⁶ “Journal of the Siege of Louisbourg,” June 8, 1758, LO 5844, Loudoun Papers, HL and *An Authentic Account of the Reduction of Louisbourg, In June and July 1758, by a Spectator* (London, 1758), 14. See also, Extract of a Letter from [Thomas Bull?] to John Calcraft, [between 27 July and 19 August 1758], enclosed in Calcraft to Loudoun, August 19, 1758, LO 6975, Loudoun Papers, HL and Henry Hamilton, Journal, Ms N-2087(os), ff. 26-28, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA (hereafter MHS).

⁴²⁷ Rodney to Cleveland, February 10, 1762, ADM 1/307, ff. 427-28, TNA. See also Rodney to Major General Robert Monckton, January 31, 1762, PRO 30/20/8, f. 54, TNA and Rodney to the Lords of the Admiralty, July 22, 1762, ADM 1/307, ff. 484-85, TNA.

⁴²⁸ Pocock added, “We have Landed Cannon that have been desired, of different Calibres, from the Ships of War, two Mortars from the Thunder Bomb on the East side and two from the Grenado on this side; with Old Cables made up for erecting Defences, and Old Canvass for making Sand Bags, with Ammunition and every other Assistance in our power, and the utmost Cordiality and Harmony subsists between the two Corps.” Pocock to Cleveland, June 14, 1762, ADM 1/237, ff. 54-58, TNA. Commodore Augustus Keppel mourned the fact that “the surf runs so high that I am obliged to Land the seamen Workers five miles from the place we work at” and they thus were forced to haul the stores long distances once ashore. Keppel to Pocock, June 29, 1762, PO 902, Pocock Papers, HL. The seamen cleared a road to ease their transport of provisions and supplies to the troops. Colonel William Howe to Pocock, June 17, 1762, PO 816, Pocock Papers, HL. For additional information on navy seamen’s labors at the siege of Havana, see “Journal of the Proceedings of His Majesty’s Ship Namur, together with His Majesty’s Fleet under the Command of Sir

In addition to ensuring that the army's soldiers and supplies made it safely to the battlefield, navy seamen conducted clandestine marine operations against their adversaries. At Martinique in 1762, "two Flat Bottomed Boats manned and armed, & three Pinnaces manned and armed" rowed upriver "in Order to cut off the Enemy's retreat . . . or any Supplys sent from thence to the Fort."⁴²⁹ In 1758, 600 navy seamen undertook a daring nighttime raid on the two French ships of war they had blockaded in Louisbourg's harbor. Two boats from each of the British ships of war, "manned only with their proper Crews, and armed with Musquets and Bayonets, Cutlasses, Pistols, and Pole-Axes, . . . paddled into the Harbour of Louisbourg, unperceived either by the Island Battery they were obliged to come very near to, or by the two Men of War that rode at Anchor at no great Distance from them." The navy seamen remained silent until they reached the French vessels when, "no longer able to contain themselves," they "gave loud Cheers as they were pulling up along-side, and with the most intrepid Activity, armed some with Muskets, Bayonets and Cutlasses, other with Pistols, Cutlasses and Pole-axes, followed their brave Leaders and boarded the Ships in an Instant with great Spirit, on each Bow, Quarter and Gang-way." "After very little Resistance from the terrified Crews," the British seamen took possession of the ships but soon found themselves the targets of "a most furious Fire of Cannon, Mortars and Muskets" from the French garrison and shoreline fortifications. The seamen, loath to relinquish their prizes, set one ship ablaze while towing the other "off triumphantly in the midst of a formidable Fire

George Pocock," February 19, 1762 – January 18, 1763, ADM 50/21, TNA as well as Tim Clayton, *Tars: The Men Who Made Britain Rule The Waves* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 2007), 236-301.

⁴²⁹ The navy seamen took "Two days provisions and Grog" with them in their boats. Rodney, "Order to Captain O'Bryen," February 3, 1762, PRO 30/20/2, f. 120, TNA.

from the mortified Enemy.” Faced with the prospect of British ships of war entering the harbor to cannonade his city, the French governor of Louisbourg indicated his readiness to concede to the British the following day.⁴³⁰

Navy seamen bore arms ashore as well as on the water.⁴³¹ At the siege of Louisbourg, 400 British sailors “were sent on Shore, and erected by the next Morning a very strong Battery of 5 pieces of Cannon,” which they then manned.⁴³² Mariners from the ships of war also built and staffed the entrenchments arrayed against the Spanish city of Havana. Commodore Augustus Keppel notified Admiral Sir George Pocock of plans to “open the new four gun 32 pounders to morrow & man it with seamen” and Colonel William Howe thought “half a dozen Gunners Mates with about thirty seamen will be sufficient to work the guns” at another newly established battery.⁴³³ Howe asked Pocock for additional sailors to man a bulwark on Havana’s western side, as he believed “500 seamen posted between the Marine Redoubt (in the front of their encampment) and the

⁴³⁰ *An Authentic Account of the Reduction of Louisbourg*, 44-48 and *The naval chronicle*, 280. For Equiano’s account of this naval operation, see Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative*, 74. Thomas Bull informed John Calcraft, “Our Ships Boats the Night before the Surrender undertook & executed a very daring Action. They in the Night assaulted the two remaining French Ships, took one & burn’d the other with the Loss of 8 Men only. They made 200 French Prisoners.” Extract of a Letter from [Thomas Bull?] to John Calcraft, [between 27 July and 19 August 1758], enclosed in Calcraft to Loudoun, August 19, 1758, LO 6975, Loudoun Papers, HL. See also David Sanders, *Diary*, July 25, 1758, MHS. For further information on the 1758 siege of Louisbourg, see A. J. B. Johnston, *Endgame 1758: The Promise, the Glory, and the Despair of Louisbourg’s Last Decade* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2007).

⁴³¹ In addition to bearing arms on shore during amphibious assaults of enemy colonies, navy seamen – no doubt including many seamen of African descent – served as soldiers against rebellious slaves during the Westmoreland slave revolt in Jamaica in 1760. See Admiral Charles Holmes to Cleveland, June 11, 1760, ADM 1/236, ff. 41-42, TNA; Holmes to Cleveland, July 25, 1760, ADM 1/236, ff. 52-55, TNA; and Holmes to Cleveland, March 18, 1761, ADM 1/236, ff. 191-98, TNA.

⁴³² *An Authentic Account of the Reduction of Louisbourg*, 40. See also, *The naval chronicle*, 279.

⁴³³ Keppel to Pocock, n.d., PO 934, Pocock Papers, HL and Howe to Pocock, July 12, 1762, PO 824, Pocock Papers, HL. Howe also requested “a couple of Gunners Mates to stow [the powder] in the magazine as they understand these matters better than our Grenadiers, they will be very usefull,” adding that “there are many small things necessary for carrying powder & the management of it that they will know & bring with them.” Howe to Pocock, July 12, 1762, PO 824, Pocock Papers, HL.

great redoubt will be a means of checking the Spanish pride.”⁴³⁴ Pocock boasted to Secretary of the Admiralty John Cleveland that “the Seamen have performed extremely well at the Batteries” and that “they do not abate in Courage and Constancy in all Things they are Ordered to undertake, and shew a noble Ardour to Conquer” notwithstanding that they began to “fall down in great Numbers by Sickness.”⁴³⁵ Navy seamen may well have taken pride in the essential role they played in conquering their enemies’ colonies, but they took great risks when they left the relative safety of their ships to perform their duties on shore.

Navy seamen’s arduous labors and armed actions during amphibious assaults exposed them to illness, imprisonment, and death. Admiral Pocock lamented the fact that the “Sickness amongst the Soldiers and Seamen encreased daily” at Havana, which he attributed to the “violent Heats and great Damps in the Night, together with the great Fatigue of Work it was absolutely necessary for them to Undergo.”⁴³⁶ Two months after the Spanish surrendered, Pocock calculated that the fleet had lost 800 seamen and 500 marines during the siege, only eighty-six of whom were killed in battle. As 2,673 seamen and 601 marines remained ill, Pocock expected the death toll only to rise.⁴³⁷ Though disease proved a grave threat, their adversaries also posed a danger to British mariners ashore. Seamen serving as sentries at Havana sometimes wandered into enemy territory, putting themselves at risk for capture. Though “one with some difficulty was recovered from some Spaniards who must have taken him, had the Officer at the fortified house not

⁴³⁴ Howe to Pocock, June 20, 1762, PO 820, Pocock Papers, HL.

⁴³⁵ Pocock to Cleveland, July 17, 1762, ADM 1/237, ff. 62-63, TNA.

⁴³⁶ Pocock to Cleveland, August 16, 1762, ADM 1/237, ff. 64-66, TNA.

⁴³⁷ Pocock to Cleveland, October 9, 1762, ADM 1/237, ff. 74-79, TNA.

sent a guard forward,” three other navy seamen who “were taken with a Midshipman yesterday near a mile in our front” could not be retrieved by Colonel Howe.⁴³⁸ Rumors of the imprisoned sailors’ mistreatment by their captors reached Admiral Pocock, who wrote to the governor of Havana in protest. Governor Juan De Prado denied that the imprisoned British seamen had been “barbarously treated” as Pocock alleged, though he did admit that “a Capt. of one of your small Vessels was killed near the Chorrera by a Party of Volunteers who seized the Boat in which He went with some Seamen.”

Notwithstanding “the Rules of War & the Limits to which its Operations ought to reach,” imprisonment by his enemies could lead to a sailor’s torture or even death.⁴³⁹ A French deserter from Louisbourg informed the British that his compatriots “had hanged 3 or 4 Seamen . . . belonging to the Transports,” whom they had captured early in the siege. Despite this warning, “more of the Transports Men were taken off by the Vigilance of some lurking Indians near the Shore in Gabreuse Bay” one day after the informant revealed the fate of their mates.⁴⁴⁰

As navy seamen engaged in amphibious assaults served as combat troops on shore, they necessarily faced the prospect of being killed in action. Those navy seamen who bombarded their foes from batteries became the primary target of their enemies’ fire. After assisting his master in the “landing of all the materials necessary for carrying on the siege” of Belle-Île, an island in France’s Quiberon Bay, a curious Olaudah Equiano paid a visit to a battery that the British had constructed “but a very few yards from the walls of

⁴³⁸ Howe to Pocock, June 18, 1762, PO 817, Pocock Papers, HL and Howe to Pocock, June 19, 1762, PO 818, Pocock Papers, HL.

⁴³⁹ Juan De Prado to Pocock, June 18, 1762, PO 804, Pocock Papers, HL.

⁴⁴⁰ *An Authentic Account of the Reduction of Louisbourg*, 39.

the citadel.” When a shell exploded “within nine or ten yards” of him, Equiano took shelter behind a boulder to elude its “fury.” When he emerged, Equiano remarked upon the “great quantities of stones and dirt” the shell had thrown “to a considerable distance,” leaving a gaping hole in the earth. Having narrowly escaped the bursting shell, Equiano remained in danger from enemy fire; he recalled that one shot in particular “hissed close by me, and struck a rock at a little distance, which it shattered to pieces.”⁴⁴¹ In both this account and in his depiction of his role in the sea fight between the *Namur* and its French foes, Equiano underscored the perils as well as the thrill of engaging one’s enemy in battle. Though in the heat of the moment fear likely outweighed excitement, surviving the skirmish allowed navy seamen to tell – with proper embellishments – their tales.

Those sailors of African descent who participated in the naval and amphibious conflicts of the Seven Years’ War lived in constant danger of capture and sale as well as illness, injury, and death. They remained at sea for months on end, furiously pursuing each new vessel on the horizon in the often elusive hope of an engagement that would offer excitement as well as financial gain. They combated their adversaries from aboard their ships as well as on shore during amphibious assaults, engaging in grueling labor more often than gunplay as they lay siege to enemy fortresses. The collective sense of satisfaction that came of helping to achieve the conquest of enemy vessels and colonies together with their share of their foes’ confiscated treasure may have done much to offset the hazards and exertions of maritime martial service.⁴⁴² The days of shared idleness,

⁴⁴¹ Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative*, 89.

⁴⁴² Though private seamen earned a paltry £3 18s. each as their share of the booty taken at Havana. Clayton, *Tars*, 296. See also “Division of Booty or Prize Money between the Army and Navy as settled by

toil, and triumph transformed a ship's crew into a community; the fact that all aboard were engaged in the collective pursuit of victory over a common enemy no doubt assisted and hastened this process. Thus, seamen of African descent gained not only wages, skills, and experience from their maritime martial service, but also a community. Black sailors' wartime service cemented their membership in their ship's crew and, by extension, the empire for which it sailed.

“Almost an Englishman”: The Maritime Martial Service of Briton Hammon and Olaudah Equiano

Veteran seamen capitalized upon the thirst of the British and North American public for accounts of Britain's victorious campaigns to recount their personal experiences of the Seven Years' War.⁴⁴³ Mariners published accounts of their participation in the epic naval encounters of the conflict that celebrated the achievements of their particular officers and mates as well as the British Empire as a whole. Two black mariners – Briton Hammon and Olaudah Equiano – regaled their British and North American audiences with stories of their wartime maritime experiences and the roles they had played in ushering in the victory of the British Empire at midcentury. While Hammon's 1760 narrative emerged at the height of the Seven Years' War and on the heels of Britain's conquest of Canada, Equiano's 1789 text appeared after Britain had lost authority over much of the continent it had mastered in the mid-eighteenth-century. Still, the Seven Years' War continued to symbolize the glory and triumph of the British

Sir George Pocock and the Earl of Albemarle On Board the *Namur* 5 June 1762 in Obedience to His Majesty's Instructions," enclosed in Albemarle to Egremont, October 11, 1762, CO 117/1, TNA.

⁴⁴³ On British public patriotic discourse during the Seven Years' War, see M. John Cardwell, *Arts and Arms: Literature, Politics and Patriotism During the Seven Years' War* (New York: Manchester University Press, 2004); Marie Peters, *Pitt and Popularity: The Patriot Minister and Public Opinion in London During the Seven Years War* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980); and Kathleen Wilson, *The Sense of the People:*

Empire, and both men communicated with an audience familiar with its heroes, setbacks, and successes. Publishing at a time when the status of people of African descent within the British Empire remained subject to debate, both Hammon and Equiano emphasized their wartime bravery, loyalty, and service to lay claim to a British identity and to assert their status as steadfast subjects of their king.

Seizing upon Britain's triumph over the French in North America, Briton Hammon, a black mariner from Boston, shaped his 1760 account of the almost thirteen years he spent away from his home and master to resonate with his fervently patriotic audience.⁴⁴⁴ With the permission of Major General John Winslow, who may have been his owner as well as his master, Hammon departed Boston in 1747 as a sailor aboard a merchant vessel engaged in the logwood trade.⁴⁴⁵ When his ship ran aground off the coast of Florida, Hammon was the only member of the crew to escape death at the hands of a group of indigenous inhabitants who, no doubt, hoped to sell him. Hammon managed to escape his captors with the help of a Spanish ship captain, who spirited him away to Havana. His indigenous captors pursued Hammon to Havana, but they relinquished their claim on him when the city's governor paid them ten dollars, in effect making Hammon the governor's slave. Hammon had served the governor in his castle

Politics, Culture and Imperialism in England, 1715-1785 (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 137-205.

⁴⁴⁴ On the circumstances surrounding the wartime publication of Hammon's text, see Robert Desrochers, Jr., "Surprising Deliverance?": Slavery and Freedom, Language and Identity in the *Narrative* of Briton Hammon, "A Negro Man," in *Genius in Bondage: Literature of the Early Black Atlantic*, ed. Vincent Carretta and Philip Gould (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2001), 154, 157, 163-66.

⁴⁴⁵ On the debate over whether Hammon was an enslaved or free man, see Vincent Carretta, ed., *Unchained Voices: An Anthology of Black Authors in the English-Speaking World of the Eighteenth Century* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 24 n. 3 and Karen A. Weyler, "Race, Redemption, and Captivity in the Narratives of Briton Hammon and John Marrant," in *Genius in Bondage: Literature of the Early Black Atlantic*, ed. Vincent Carretta and Philip Gould, 51 n. 11.

for a year when he was pressed into service aboard a Spanish ship of war. For “refusing to serve on board” a foreign king’s naval vessel, Hammon suffered nearly five years of imprisonment in a “close Dungeon.”⁴⁴⁶ Hammon made several attempts to inform Havana’s governor of his plight but it was not until a Boston merchant captain notified the governor of Hammon’s whereabouts that Hammon was finally released.

Despite the protection the Spanish governor had extended him and the “Liberty” he had “to walk about the City and do Work for my self,” Hammon nevertheless “endeavour’d three Times to make my Escape” from Havana.⁴⁴⁷ On one unsuccessful occasion a British naval officer refused to offend the Spanish governor by sheltering Hammon aboard his ship; on another Hammon was prevented from boarding a Jamaica sloop by the castle’s guard. Having twice failed to flee his Spanish detention, Hammon was forced to endure the ignominy of carrying the Spanish Catholic “Bishop from the Castle, thro’ the Country, to confirm the old People, baptize Children, &c.” Hammon emphasized his allegiance with the Protestants of his native New England when he noted that the bishop’s sedan chair was “lin’d with crimson Velvet” and that he “receives large Sums of Money” for performing such rituals.⁴⁴⁸ Finally, a British naval lieutenant agreed “with all his Heart” to accept Hammon on board his vessel and abjectly “refus’d . . . to deliver up any *Englishmen* under *English* Colours” – even a possibly enslaved man of African descent – to those Spaniards who demanded Hammon’s return. Hammon

⁴⁴⁶ Briton Hammon, *A Narrative of the Uncommon Sufferings, and Surprizing Deliverance of Briton Hammon, A Negro Man* (Boston, 1760), 8.

⁴⁴⁷ Hammon, *Narrative of the Uncommon Sufferings*, 10, 9.

⁴⁴⁸ Hammon, *Narrative of the Uncommon Sufferings*, 10.

described his savior as a “true *Englishman*,” implying of course that the British captain who had earlier denied Hammon refuge had been less than “true.”⁴⁴⁹

Hammon repaid the British navy for having liberated him from the Spanish with wartime service aboard its vessels. Hammon staffed four different ships of war during the early years of the Seven Years’ War. When his last ship, the 74-gun *Hercules*, encountered a French 84-gun ship at sea, “a very smart Engagement” commenced. This was a particularly bloody battle, as “70 of our Hands were Kill’d and Wounded, the Captain lost his Leg,” and Hammon “was Wounded in the Head by a small Shot.” Though the *Hercules* did not succeed in capturing the French vessel, Hammon secured an honorable discharge from the navy for “being disabled in the Arm, and render’d incapable of Service.” He was “honorably paid the Wages due” him and given a bed at Greenwich Hospital, where he “stay’d and soon recovered.”⁴⁵⁰ Despite his release from naval service, Hammon was not done serving his king. He became the cook on a British privateer before securing a berth aboard a merchant vessel bound for Boston, his home. Coincidentally – or, as Hammon might have had it, providentially – Hammon’s Boston master happened to be a passenger on board that very vessel; when the two were reunited, Hammon was “so overcome” that he “could not speak to him for some Time.”⁴⁵¹

Hammon attributed his deliverance from “many Dangers” to “Divine Goodness,” but it was ship captains who served as the vehicles of his liberation from Indian and Spanish captivity and, finally, of his return to his “own Native Land.”⁴⁵² Though Spanish

⁴⁴⁹ Hammon, *Narrative of the Uncommon Sufferings*, 11.

⁴⁵⁰ Hammon, *Narrative of the Uncommon Sufferings*, 11-12.

⁴⁵¹ Hammon, *Narrative of the Uncommon Sufferings*, 13.

⁴⁵² Hammon, *Narrative of the Uncommon Sufferings*, 14.

as well as British men served as his protectors, it was only the “true” British officers whose kindness he extolled. Hammon highlighted episodes from his odyssey that evinced the generosity and integrity of the English, the corruption and despotism of the Spanish, and his unceasing devotion to his master and empire. A British naval officer offered him refuge aboard his ship of war, thereby freeing Hammon from Spanish Catholic captivity and affirming his Englishness. His reunion with his master, an esteemed officer in the Massachusetts provincial forces, and his naval service during the Seven Years’ War identified him as both a faithful servant and a loyal subject of the British king.

As it did for Briton Hammon, Olaudah Equiano’s wartime naval service established his identity as an Englishman. As the slave of a naval officer, Equiano spent much of his youth aboard ships of war. Whether Equiano was, as he avowed, a native of West Africa or instead of North America, naval vessels served as his school and his introduction to the culture of the British Atlantic.⁴⁵³ As he became a skilled mariner, he also became literate, cosmopolitan, and conversant in Christian scripture. But it was his naval service during the Seven Years’ War in particular that Equiano pointed to when claiming that he had at length become “almost an Englishman.” Following over three years spent aboard ships of war he declared, “From the various scenes I have beheld on

⁴⁵³ On the controversy surrounding Equiano’s birthplace, see Alexander X. Byrd, “Eboe, Country, Nation, and Gustavus Vassa’s *Interesting Narrative*,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 63 (January 2006): 123-48; Vincent Carretta, *Equiano, the African: Biography of a Self-Made Man* (New York: Penguin, 2006); Vincent Carretta, “Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa? New Light on an Eighteenth-Century Question of Identity,” *Slavery and Abolition* 20 (December 1999): 96-105; Paul Lovejoy, “Autobiography and Memory: Gustavus Vassa, alias Olaudah Equiano, the African,” *Slavery and Abolition* 27 (2006): 317-47; and James H. Sweet, “Mistaken Identities? Olaudah Equiano, Domingo Álvares, and the Methodological Challenges of Studying the African Diaspora,” *American Historical Review* 114 (April 2009): 279-306.

ship-board, I soon grew a stranger to terror of every kind, and was, in that respect at least, almost an Englishman.”⁴⁵⁴ Equiano’s maritime martial service exposed him to the dangers and thrill of combat and his courage under fire allowed him to avow an affiliation with the British, who prided themselves on their valor.

During his time in the British navy, Equiano enjoyed the companionship of his fellow sailors and the acknowledgement and favor of his officers. In his early years aboard ship, Equiano and the “number of boys on board” ship “were always together, and a great part of [their] time was spent in play.”⁴⁵⁵ Equiano forged close connections with two men in particular, Dick Baker and Daniel Queen, who became both his tutors and his friends. Equiano found himself in the company of famous men, among them the “good and gallant” Colonel James Wolfe, whom Equiano remarked “often honoured me, as well as other boys, with marks of his notice; and saved me once a flogging for fighting with a young gentleman.”⁴⁵⁶ In addition to Wolfe, the revered martyr of the 1759 conquest of Quebec, Equiano noted that he fought alongside Admiral Edward Boscawen, who was esteemed for his service at Porto Bello and Cartagena during King George’s War as well as for taking Louisbourg during the Seven Years’ War. Like William Blue, the New South Wales boatman and veteran of Britain’s late-eighteenth-century wars, Equiano highlighted his connection with Britain’s military heroes both to bask in their reflected radiance and to bond with his readers in their shared veneration of the empire’s champions.

⁴⁵⁴ Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative*, 77.

⁴⁵⁵ Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative*, 70.

⁴⁵⁶ Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative*, 73.

Unlike Hammon, whose devotion to his master seemed only to reinforce his fidelity to Britain, over the course of the Seven Years' War Equiano came to believe it was Britain and not his particular owner that demanded his allegiance. At the height of the sea fight in which he supplied the *Namur*'s guns with powder, Equiano noticed that his master, Lieutenant Michael Henry Pascal, had been wounded. Equiano "saw him carried down to the surgeon" but despite being "alarmed for him" and "wish[ing] to assist him," opted to remain on deck rather than rush to his owner's side. Remarking, "I dared not leave my post," Equiano chose to serve the needs of his ship over those of his particular master.⁴⁵⁷ At the close of the Seven Years' War, Equiano and his fellow seamen greeted the news of peace "with loud huzzas, and every other demonstration of gladness." Equiano had good reason to be joyful, for he understood Britain's deliverance from war to signal his own liberation. He "thought now of nothing but being freed, and working for myself" and believed that Pascal owed him his freedom since, despite having been served faithfully for "many years," Pascal had "taken all my wages and prize-money."⁴⁵⁸ Such a notion was supported by his shipmates; his friend Daniel Queen told him that "when our ship is paid off," Equiano "was as free as himself or any other man on board."⁴⁵⁹ Equiano interpreted his maritime martial service as having justly earned him his liberty. His time aboard British ships of war had transformed him into a freedom-loving, if not a free-born, Englishman.

In the end, like the vast majority of the enslaved men of African descent who contributed to the British war effort in the Seven Years' War, Equiano did not receive his

⁴⁵⁷ Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative*, 83.

⁴⁵⁸ Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative*, 91, 93.

freedom for his martial service. In helping to ensure that Britain ruled the waves, some enslaved and free black artificers, privateersmen, and navy seamen managed to personally benefit from the wages and prize money they earned as well as from the valuable skills and contacts they developed during their wartime service. While some enslaved black artificers and sailors may have been able to negotiate with their owners to retain a portion of their wages to purchase their liberty, others likely seized upon privateers' and navy ships' desperate need for men to simply flee their masters. Black artificers and mariners found a place in the communities forged on the docks and aboard ship and mourned Britain's defeats and celebrated its triumphs alongside their mates. Service aboard a privateer or navy vessel offered black men greater mobility and opportunity for social advancement than did service to the British army, but black sailors, like black soldiers, remained subject to abuse, exploitation, capture, and enslavement. Despite such special hardships, a very select few black artificers and sailors managed to use their maritime martial service to argue for their membership in the empire whose victory they had helped to achieve during the Seven Years' War.

⁴⁵⁹ Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative*, 92.

Chapter 5: The Bounties of Wartime Insecurity: Slave Unrest and its Suppression in Jamaica during the Seven Years' War

An extensive series of slave insurrections involving well over a thousand people of African descent roiled Jamaica for a year and a half beginning in early 1760, just as the Caribbean had become a central theater of the Seven Years' War. With their military resources stretched across the globe, the British left their West Indian slave societies exposed to the simultaneous threat of servile revolt and foreign invasion. Well aware of the prospect of impending French attack, hundreds of Jamaica's enslaved Blacks noted the distraction of their owners and the diffusion of the island's defensive forces among the coast and plantations and chose to rebel. Those Blacks who did not rebel found themselves in a better bargaining position than they had been prior to the chaos of wartime insurrection, as people of African descent proved instrumental in quelling the uprisings and defending against possible French or Spanish assault. Companies of armed enslaved and free Blacks used the revolts to assert their allegiance to the colonial government in exchange for recognition of and perquisites for their services. They were joined by the Jamaican Maroons, free descendants of escaped slaves who lived in independent communities in the highlands. Believing Blacks better suited to tropical guerrilla warfare than Whites, colonial authorities assigned the task of pursuing the rebels into the woods to the island's black soldiers, thus enabling the latter to take credit for felling the insurrections' leaders and to demonstrate their centrality to Jamaica's defense.

Adopting the term coined by Jamaican colonial administrator and historian Edward Long, modern scholars know the widespread slave unrest of the early 1760s as "Tacky's revolt." In his 1774 *History of Jamaica*, Long applied the name of a single

slave from St. Mary parish to the myriad acts of autonomy and aggression perpetrated by enslaved Blacks across the island.⁴⁶⁰ In relating the multivalent series of events as a unified ethnic insurrection of African-born Akan warriors, Long rendered the most extensive slave-initiated violence in eighteenth-century British America intelligible and potentially preventable.⁴⁶¹ His contention that the various conspiracies and revolts were part of an integrated Akan plot enabled Long to blame the agitation on a minority of particularly bellicose slaves, thereby averting any sustained inquiry into the brutality that undergirded the institution of slavery in the British West Indies. Such a narrative suited Long's purposes, but historians' adoption of it has served to obscure the full range of enslaved and free Blacks' actions in what contemporaries understood to be a battle of the Seven Years' War.⁴⁶²

⁴⁶⁰ Edward Long avowed that the plots discovered in Kingston and in the parishes of Clarendon, St. Dorothy, St. James, St. John, and St. Thomas in the East, as well as the actual revolts of slaves in St. Mary and Westmoreland parishes "shew the great extent of the conspiracy, the strict correspondence which had been carried on by the Coromantins in every quarter of the island, and their almost incredible secrecy in the forming their plan of insurrection; for it appeared in evidence, that the first eruption in St. Mary's, was a matter preconcerted, and known to all chief men in the different districts; and the secret was probably confided to some hundreds, for several months before the blow was struck." Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica, Or, general survey of the antient and modern state of that island: with reflections on its situation, settlements, inhabitants* (London, 1774), v. 2, 455-56.

⁴⁶¹ Long believed Jamaica could prevent future slave unrest by banning the importation of Akan slaves into the island, an action the Jamaica Assembly considered taking but ultimately failed to enact. Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 470-71.

⁴⁶² For works that perpetuate Long's narrative of the 1760-61 uprisings as a unified revolt of Akan slaves under the leadership of Tacky of St. Mary parish, see Vincent Brown, *The Reaper's Garden: Death and Power in the World of Atlantic Slavery* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), 129-56; Trevor Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire: Thomas Thistlewood and His Slaves in the Anglo-Jamaican World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 170-74; Richard D. E. Burton, *Afro-Creole: Power, Opposition, and Play in the Caribbean* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1997), 25-28, 48; Michael Craton, *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 125-39; Eugene Genovese, *From Rebellion to Revolution: Afro-American Slave Revolts in the Making of the Modern World* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1979), 35, 100; Douglas Hall, *In Miserable Slavery: Thomas Thistlewood in Jamaica, 1750-1786* (London: Macmillan, 1989), 92-114; Michael Mullin, *Africa in America: Slave Acculturation and Resistance in the American South and the British Caribbean, 1736-1831* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 2, 40-43, 201-2, 221; C. Roy Reynolds, "Tacky and the Great Slave Rebellion of 1760," *Jamaica Journal* 6 (June 1972): 5-8; Monica Schuler, "Akan Slave Rebellions in the British Caribbean," in *Caribbean Women: An Anthology of Non-*

Attention to the context of global imperial war reveals that Jamaica did not experience a single slave rebellion in 1760, as the name “Tacky’s revolt” implies and as Jamaica’s politicians and planters at the time believed. While many rebels likely did, as Long contended, utilize force to affirm ethnic and religious affiliations and authorities of African origin, they did not do so as part of a predetermined, island-wide plan. Instead, enslaved Blacks in St. Mary parish opportunistically seized upon the wartime diffusion of the island’s military strength to revolt, thereby enabling people of African descent to exploit the ensuing anxiety and fear that radiated throughout white Jamaican society – a frenzy fueled by British and North American newspaper accounts – in varying ways and to distinct ends. While some enslaved Blacks, notably those of Westmoreland parish, opted to initiate uprisings of their own, others joined Jamaica’s Maroons and free Blacks and Mulattoes in capitalizing upon and even fostering the panic to attain valuable perquisites as martial allies of the island’s slaveholders. Leaving aside the question of whether the revolts were indeed perpetrated in the main by Akan slaves, this chapter takes as its focus the opportunities opened to both enslaved rebels and those black

Fiction Writing, 1890-1980, ed. Veronica Marie Greys (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 2005), 366-92; and Monica Schuler, “Ethnic Slave Rebellions in the Caribbean and the Guianas,” *Journal of Social History* 3 (Summer, 1970): 374-85. Carl A. Lane, in a brief response to Reynolds’ 1972 piece in the *Jamaica Journal*, is alone in questioning whether “all the revolts were the product of a single conspiracy organized and executed by a slave named Tacky.” Carl A. Lane, “Concerning Jamaica’s 1760 Slave Rebellion,” *Jamaica Journal* 7 (December 1973): 2-4. Scholars have acknowledged the role the Jamaican Maroons played in suppressing “Tacky’s Revolt” but have tended to become embroiled in the question of whether their doing so constituted collaboration with the colonial order and betrayal of their freedom-seeking brethren. On the Jamaican Maroons, see Mavis Campbell, *The Maroons of Jamaica, 1655-1796: A History of Resistance, Collaboration and Betrayal* (Granby, Mass.: Bergin & Garvey, 1988); Craton, *Testing the Chains*, 61-96, 211-23; Richard Price, ed., *Maroon Societies: Rebel Slave Communities in the Americas* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979); Alvin O. Thompson, *Flight to Freedom: African Runaways and Maroons in the Americas* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of West Indies Press, 2006), 307-9; and Philip Wright, “War and Peace with the Maroons, 1730-1739,” *Caribbean Quarterly* 16 (1970): 5-27. Few historians do more than mention that the Jamaica slave rebellions of 1760-61 occurred during the Seven Years’ War. See Brown, *The Reaper’s Garden*, 148, 152-56 and Craton, *Testing the Chains*, 125, 127.

soldiers who opposed them – including slaves, Maroons, and free Blacks and Mulattoes – by the context of the Seven Years' War and the influence of their encounters upon Jamaica's racial hierarchy in its aftermath.

Lacking enough white troops to simultaneously protect them from internal and external enemies, individual planters and colonial authorities struggled to determine which people of African descent could be trusted to defend Jamaica in its time of crisis. The wartime experience of insurrection and insecurity ushered in new opportunities for enslaved and free Blacks and Maroons to demonstrate their adherence to the colonial order, but white leaders' convictions concerning which group had proven the most reliable ultimately worked to the detriment of all of Jamaica's people of African descent. Blaming the slave revolts on a negligence of security, the Jamaica Assembly passed a series of acts in late 1760 intended to disallow the mobility and religious and military authority slaves had seized for themselves during the rebellion. Interestingly, an official acknowledgement of Jamaica's growing military reliance upon enslaved and free soldiers of African descent accompanied and indeed underwrote these acts. Colonial authorities' recognition of enslaved and free Blacks' and Maroons' service in suppressing the mid-century slave insurrections did not lead to increased rights for loyal people of African descent in the island. In fact, in addition to enacting new restraints on slaves, colonial authorities curtailed the mobility and property rights of free Blacks and Mulattoes in a calculated attempt to confine them to a military underclass that they might unleash against future slave rebels or potentially against the Maroons, whose martial authority in Jamaica had been made disconcertingly apparent by the events of 1760-61. Troubled by the hazards and expense of employing enslaved soldiers and threatened by what they

judged to be the Maroons' impudent awareness and exploitation of the essential role they had played in subduing the rebels, white leaders sought to depend instead upon the enslaved and free black and mulatto soldiers they deemed more governable. Thus, in their actions as both insurrectionists and loyal defenders of empire during the Seven Years' War, Jamaica's enslaved and free Blacks encouraged the British to increase their military reliance upon men of African descent in the Caribbean, but colonial authorities remained determined to delimit the civil or political rights that might otherwise have come of Blacks' right to exercise violence on behalf of empire.⁴⁶³

* * * * *

On April 19, 1760, Admiral Thomas Cotes, commander of the British naval squadron based in Jamaica, reported to Secretary of the Admiralty John Cleveland that on “the 7th of this Month a dangerous rebellion of the Negroes broke out in St. Mary's on the North Side of the Island which greatly alarmed the Inhabitants.”⁴⁶⁴ London officials and readers of British and North American newspapers learned that the initial uprising involved some ninety slaves from the plantations of Ballard's Valley, Esher, Frontier, Trinity, and Whitehall led by Tacky and Jamaica, two Akan slaves of Ballard Beckford's Frontier Estate who had “long been concerting a Rebellion with three other Chieftains of their Country, who were each of them to have an Estate for his good Services.” The rebel vanguard assembled at Trinity estate near midnight on Easter Monday night and from thence marched to Port Maria where they killed the fort's sole sentinel and armed

⁴⁶³ French Saint-Domingue experienced a similar hardening of racial boundaries following the Seven Years' War. See John Garrigus, *Before Haiti: Race and Citizenship in French Saint-Domingue* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006).

themselves with the forty small arms, gunpowder, and musket balls they found there. They further provisioned themselves at a store before returning to their plantations to ransack them for still more weapons, bringing the number of insurgents armed with guns to fifty. The rebels then proceeded from plantation to plantation gathering recruits, killing white men, and setting fire to canes and sugar works before stopping at eleven o'clock in the morning "to regale themselves, in the Road to Ballard's Valley, where [planter Zachary] Bayly (who in the mean Time had, with great Celerity, collected near 130 Whites and Blacks) attacked them, killed eight, and took four, the rest retreating into the Woods, where they rendezvoused."⁴⁶⁵

Zachary Bayly's hastily assembled crew of armed white men and their slaves proved unable to halt the growing insurgent army, which now consisted of several hundred men.⁴⁶⁶ White Jamaicans thus called upon all the military resources of the island's eastern parishes to contain the contagion of revolt: the island's regular soldiers and militia as well as its Maroons and enslaved and free black rangers. Immediately

⁴⁶⁴ Admiral Thomas Cotes to Secretary of the Admiralty John Cleveland, April 19, 1760, ADM 1/235, The National Archives, Kew, England (hereafter TNA).

⁴⁶⁵ *British Magazine*, v. 1, issue 7, 1760, 443-44; *Gentleman's Magazine*, v. 30, July 1760, 307-8; *London Chronicle*, June 28-July 1, 1760; *London Evening-Post*, June 29-July 1, 1760; *London Magazine*, v. 29, July 1760, 366-67; *New-York Mercury*, June 16, 1760; and *Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 5, 1760. These accounts tabulated eleven white men killed in the initial foray of the insurgents. On June 9, 1760, the *Boston Evening-Post* announced that it had received "advice of an insurrection of about 300 negroes . . . in the parish of St. Mary's, . . . who killed several people; but by the activity of the planters and some faithful Creole negroes, twelve of them were killed, one taken, and the rest dispersed in the woods." *Boston Evening-Post*, June 9, 1760 and *New-Hampshire Gazette*, June 13, 1760. See also *Gentleman's Magazine*, v. 30, June 1760, 294; *London Chronicle*, June 21-24 and June 24-26, 1760; and *London Evening-Post*, June 24-26 and July 31-August 2, 1760. Edward Long noted that by the time of the confrontation between Bayly's party, which he described as "70 or 80 horse," and the insurgents, the latter numbered "about four hundred." Long remarked that in this initial engagement, the militia found it "adviseable, for the major part to stand their ground on the reserve, while their servants, and some others well armed, advanced into the wood close to the rebels, several of whom they killed; a Mulatto man was said to have slain three with his own hand." Edward Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 449-50.

⁴⁶⁶ One likely inflated report tallied one thousand "resolute and determined" slave rebels in St. Mary parish. *London Chronicle*, June 28-July 1, 1760.

upon receiving word of the uprising, Lieutenant Governor Henry Moore dispatched two detachments consisting of three officers and sixty privates each from the 49th and 74th regiments to St. Mary parish. He then called up the horse and foot militia of neighboring parishes to guard against potential slave unrest, but found that “many of the Private Men had the Insolence to tell their Officers that they would not Appear under Arms, and should be ready to pay the fine of Ten Shillings . . . for their nonappearance.” In the face of “So Unnatural a Behaviour in a time of Public Calamity, joyn’d to so much Insensibility of the Danger with which the whole Country was threatened,” Moore had “recourse to the only Means left of Compelling them to do their Duty, which was by Proclaiming Martial Law.” In addition to enlisting the aid of the regulars and the reluctant militia, Moore sent expresses to the superintendants of the Windward Maroon towns “with Orders to March Immediately with a Company from each place to their Relief.”⁴⁶⁷ In requesting that the Maroons help suppress the incipient insurrection, Moore was expecting them to abide by the terms of the treaties they had signed with the colonial government in 1739. Following decades of intermittent guerrilla warfare with Jamaican colonists, the two main bands of escaped slaves and their descendants – the Windward Maroons, who inhabited the Blue Mountains of eastern Jamaica, and the Leeward Maroons, who resided in the Cockpit Country of western Jamaica – had agreed to serve the colonial government as a military force in exchange for recognition of their freedom

⁴⁶⁷ Jamaica Council Minutes, April 10, 1760, enclosed in Lieutenant Governor Henry Moore to the Board of Trade, April 19, 1760, CO 137/32, ff. 3-6, TNA. The Windward Maroon towns were Crawford Town, Nanny Town, and Scott’s Hall.

and land.⁴⁶⁸ In an effort to confine the disorder to St. Mary parish, Moore sent regular troops to its borders to “cut off the Communication of the Rebels with the other parts of the Country and prevent any Assistance coming to them” and deployed both the Leeward and Windward Maroons “in Scouring the Woods where the [rebels] had Secreted themselves.”⁴⁶⁹

While British regulars “lined the Outside of the Wood where the Rebels were posted” and white militiamen patrolled the plantations to prevent additional slaves from rising, colonial officials entrusted the task of discovering the rebels in their “lurking holes” and “advanc[ing] and surround[ing] them” to the Maroons, “volunteer Mulattoes and Negroes,” and trusted enslaved soldiers.⁴⁷⁰ A series of skirmishes followed the initial encounter at Ballard’s Valley, including one in which the rebels “were advantageously posted, in a rocky Gully between two steep Hills.” Using the mountainous terrain to their advantage, the rebels “ascended one Hill, where they were immediately attacked very briskly for an Hour” by a detachment of Maroons and Captain William Hynes’ “party of stout Negroes” until the rebels again dispersed into the forested interior of the island. In

⁴⁶⁸ On the terms of the 1739 treaty, see Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 344-46. On the Maroons’ and other free Blacks’ work as policemen in the British West Indies, see n. 3, above, and Peter M. Voelz, *Slave and Soldier: The Military Impact of Blacks in the Colonial Americas* (New York: Garland, 1993). Long calculated the total population of the Maroons in 1749 to be about 664 people and noted that their numbers had not increased significantly by 1774. Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 349.

⁴⁶⁹ Jamaica Council Minutes, April 17, 1760, enclosed in Moore to the Board of Trade, April 19, 1760, CO 137/32, ff. 3-6, TNA. Moore informed the Board of Trade of the revolt’s outbreak (which he dated to the 8th of April) and the steps the island had taken to crush it, optimistically reassuring them that “the last letters I receiv’d from St. Mary’s give Acct.s of this Rebellion being totally suppress’d” and that “the number of white People which they murdered does not exceed sixteen & this was done on the first day of the Insurrection.” Moore to the Board of Trade, April 19, 1760, CO 137/32, ff. 1-2, TNA. See also Moore to Secretary of State William Pitt, April 19, 1760, CO 137/60, ff. 294-95, TNA.

⁴⁷⁰ *British Magazine*, v. 1, issue 7, 1760, 443-44; *Gentleman’s Magazine*, v. 30, July 1760, 307-8; *London Chronicle*, June 28-July 1, 1760; *London Evening-Post*, June 29-July 1, 1760; *London Magazine*, v. 29, July 1760, 366-67; *New-York Mercury*, June 16, 1760; and *Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 5, 1760. *Boston*

a later engagement, the Maroons “came up with the Rebels . . . in a rocky Valley, whom they attacked with great Impetuosity, totally routed them, killed their Leaders, Tacky and Jamaica, and took all their Baggage and Stores.”⁴⁷¹ Edward Long later narrated Tacky’s fall in dramatic fashion, recounting that after the Maroons forced the majority of the rebel band to give way, “Tacky, their leader, having separated from the rest, was closely pursued by lieut. Davy of the *Marons*, who fired at him whilst they were both running a[t] full speed, and shot him dead.” The forces arrayed against the insurgents decapitated Tacky and displayed his head on a highway near Spanish Town as a threat to any slaves who may have considered allying with the rebels.⁴⁷² If Jamaica’s black soldiers, with their “great Impetuosity,” skilled marksmanship, and talent for guerrilla warfare did not rout the rebels, then planters and political authorities hoped that a combination of terror tactics and the insurgents’ “want of Provisions” would suffice.⁴⁷³ Unfortunately for

Evening-Post, July 7, 1760; *London Magazine*, v. 29, July 1760, 379; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, July 11, 1760; and *New-York Gazette*, June 30, 1760.

⁴⁷¹ *British Magazine*, v. 1, issue 7, 1760, 443-44; *Gentleman’s Magazine*, v. 30, July 1760, 307-8; *London Chronicle*, June 28-July 1, 1760; *London Evening-Post*, June 29-July 1, 1760; *London Magazine*, v. 29, July 1760, 366-67; *New-York Mercury*, June 16, 1760; and *Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 5, 1760. The *London Evening-Post* of July 31-August 2, 1760 reported that the Maroons received “seventeen Doubloons” for the seventeen ears they secured as trophies from the slain rebels.

⁴⁷² Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 457. The ceremonial torture and public execution of rebel prisoners, which involved the whipping, hanging, and burning and gibbeting alive of those men and women condemned to die, occurred in Kingston, Spanish Town, and on plantations throughout St. Mary parish. For printed descriptions of some such events, see *Boston Evening-Post*, August 11, 1760; *London Chronicle*, July 24-26, 1760, September 2-4, 1760, September 20-23, 1760, and September 25-27, 1760; *London Evening-Post*, July 19-22, 1760, July 31-August 2, 1760, August 26-28, 1760, September 2-4, 1760, and September 25-27, 1760; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, August 15, 1760; *New-York Mercury*, July 28, 1760; and *Pennsylvania Gazette*, September 4, 1760. For Westmoreland parish slaveholder Thomas Thistlewood’s observations’ of rebel slaves’ torture and execution, see Thomas Thistlewood, *Diary*, June 4, 19, and 29, July 17, August 3, September 2 and 30, and December 28, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers (microfilm). Read at the John D. Rockefeller, Jr., Library, Williamsburg, VA. For a discussion of the symbolic uses made of the dying and the dead during the Jamaica slave revolts of 1760-61, see Brown, *The Reaper’s Garden*, 129-56.

⁴⁷³ *British Magazine*, v. 1, issue 7, 1760, 443-44; *Gentleman’s Magazine*, v. 30, July 1760, 307-8; *London Chronicle*, June 28-July 1, 1760; *London Evening-Post*, June 29-July 1, 1760; *London Magazine*, v. 29, July 1760, 366-67; *New-York Mercury*, June 16, 1760; and *Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 5, 1760.

Jamaica's white leaders, they could no more rely upon the rebels' lack of provisions to bring a close to the revolt than they could their lack of resolve.

St. Mary parish's slave rebels had chosen both the site and timing of their rebellion wisely. As Edward Long later noted, the parish on Jamaica's northeastern shore "was but thinly peopled with Whites, contained extensive deep woods, and plenty of provisions." Despite its lack of white settlement, in 1761 St. Mary parish was home to over 9,000 enslaved Blacks, whom the small number of militiamen and planters had to supervise while at the same time pursuing those who had already rebelled across the "hill, mountain, dale, and valley" that Long observed composed the "whole of this parish."⁴⁷⁴ Those rebel slaves who had not yet been captured or killed ensconced themselves in the forest and mountains in an effort to remain alive and out of the reach of those acting on behalf of the colonial order.⁴⁷⁵ They were aided in their attempt by the context of global imperial war and the necessary dispersal of the island's depleted forces among the coasts, plantations, and mountainous interior. Jamaica's two regiments of regular troops lacked five companies of men who had been deployed to the Mosquito Shore as well as the West African coast – no doubt to garrison the slave forts of Goree and Senegal, which the British had taken from the French in December 1758.⁴⁷⁶ The British squadron stationed

⁴⁷⁴ Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 447, 79, 74. In 1774 Long described St. Mary parish as "in its infancy" as "not one-fourth of it is brought into cultivation." Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 78-79. In 1763, Jamaica's governor estimated that 15,000 Whites, 4,000 free Blacks and Mulattoes, and 146,464 slaves inhabited the island. He counted 5,398 militiamen, of whom 830 were free Blacks and Mulattoes. William Henry Lyttelton, "Report on the Island of Jamaica," 1763, Folder 18, Grenville Family Papers, Stowe Grenville Collection, Huntington Library, San Marino, CA (hereafter HL).

⁴⁷⁵ Moore reported to Pitt on May 21, 1760 that "most of the Rebels in Saint Mary's have been either kill'd or taken and Parties from the Negroe Towns are now out after the few that remain of them who have secreted themselves in the Woods." Moore to Pitt, May 21, 1760, CO 137/60, f. 300, TNA.

⁴⁷⁶ Journals of the Assembly of Jamaica (hereafter JAJ), December 9, 1760, CO 140/40, f. 237, TNA. See also JAJ, December 15, 1760, CO 140/40, f. 244, TNA. Observing that enslaved Blacks often timed their rebellions to coincide with troop redeployments, David Geggus notes that "Tackey's Rebellion of 1760 . . .

in Jamaica consisted of seven ships of the line and nine frigates – too few ships and seamen to successfully attend to the wartime duties of cruising for enemy vessels and convoying the merchant trade back to Britain while simultaneously assisting in the suppression of slave revolt.⁴⁷⁷ Due to the shortage of ships, no naval vessel was continuously stationed on Jamaica’s northeastern shore – a fact which would not have eluded the rebel slaves of St. Mary parish.⁴⁷⁸ Britain’s global conflict with France attenuated Jamaica’s defensive forces while concurrently augmenting the island’s need for them. In May 1759, the British conquered French Guadeloupe and the residents of Jamaica anticipated that the French would launch a reprisal against them from nearby Saint-Domingue. In the face of both ongoing servile unrest and the prospect of French attack, Lieutenant Governor Moore warned the Jamaica Assembly in September 1760 that “the warlike preparations carrying on by our neighbours, not only require our most serious consideration but point out the dangers to which we may be subjected to without

followed by just over a year the dispatch of militia and military forces to occupy the French colony of Guadeloupe.” David Geggus, “The Enigma of Jamaica in the 1790s: New Light on the Causes of Slave Rebellions,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 44 (April 1987), 295. Andrew O’Shaughnessy avers that “Tacky’s revolt of 1760, one of the largest and bloodiest of the century, broke out after the reduction of troops in Jamaica for service in Guadeloupe.” Andrew Jackson O’Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 53. Although regular forces were detached to Central America and West Africa, I have found no evidence that Jamaica sent troops to aid in the conquest or garrison of Guadeloupe in 1760. On the 1759 British expeditions against French Martinique and Guadeloupe, see Chapter 3.

⁴⁷⁷ Lyttelton to the Board of Trade, January 26, 1762, CO 137/32, ff. 98-99, TNA. See also Lyttelton to Secretary of State Charles Wyndham, Earl of Egremont, January 26, 1762, CO 137/61, ff. 58-59, TNA. Due to “the Insurrection of the Slaves, wherein the Safety of the Island was represented to depend upon the Detention of the Convoys,” British Admiral Charles Holmes delayed the naval convoy of merchant ships from Jamaica until September 1760. Admiral Charles Holmes to Secretary of the Admiralty John Cleveland, May 22, 1760, ADM 1/236, ff. 37-38, TNA; Holmes to Cleveland, July 25, 1760, ADM 1/236, ff. 52-55, TNA; and Holmes to Cleveland, March 18, 1761, ADM 1/236, ff. 191-98, TNA.

⁴⁷⁸ In the wake of the St. Mary parish revolt, a group of Jamaica planters and merchants petitioned to have a naval vessel posted at Port Antonio in the northeastern corner of the island. Intimating that the only use of a ship of the line in that port would be to awe slaves, Holmes balked at the notion of making “the Squadron a Machine to operate and Serve [the gentlemen of Jamaica] in every way” and refused to comply with the petitioners’ request. Holmes to Cleveland, March 18, 1761, ADM 1/236, ff. 191-98, TNA.

proper precaution; and our present difficulties, although great in themselves should never prevent a constant attention being given, to every measure, which could render ineffectual the Attempts of a powerful enemy.”⁴⁷⁹ Given the very real possibility of foreign invasion, Jamaica could not concentrate its diminished defenses solely upon subduing its slaves.

Conscious that they faced enemies both from without and within, Jamaica’s colonists feared both that the French or Spanish would exploit their preoccupation with their rebel slaves and that slaves beyond St. Mary parish would take advantage of the obligatory diffusion of the island’s defenses to rebel. That Jamaica was imperiled would not have been lost on its inhabitants or on the readers of British and North American newspapers, which printed accounts of the slave uprising in Jamaica alongside reports of imperial battles in other exotic locales. The *Boston Evening-Post* voiced the pervasive fear that the French would take advantage of the insurrection to invade Jamaica, noting that “the prayer of the people of Jamaica, amidst the confusion occasioned by the Negroes, is, that the inhabitants of Martineco may not think of making an attempt on their island.”⁴⁸⁰ In the midst of the subsequent slave uprising in his parish of Westmoreland, overseer and slaveholder Thomas Thistlewood recorded having heard that “in Trinidad,

⁴⁷⁹JAJ, September 18, 1760, CO 140/40, ff. 161-62, TNA. The Assembly’s response to Moore’s speech may be found at JAJ, September 24, 1760, CO 140/40, f. 168, TNA.

⁴⁸⁰ *Boston Evening-Post*, October 20, 1760. In early 1762, the British intercepted a cache of French letters that seemed to indicate that the French and Spanish were planning a joint assault upon Jamaica. One Saint-Domingue letter-writer, who “hourly expected” the arrival of the ships that composed “the expedition from Brest which is intended for Jamaica,” mentioned the news that “the Negro’s of that Island have revolted.” “Extract of Letters found in the St. Devote, a French Schooner taken the 17th of January 1762,” enclosed in Lyttelton to Egremont, January 26, 1762, CO 137/61, ff. 60-61, TNA.

they are overjoy'd to hear the News [of the slave rebellion] and Say now is the time to take Jamaica."⁴⁸¹

Their hysteria heightened by the context of imperial war, Jamaica's planters regarded their slaves with intense suspicion and interpreted each new event as evidence of an extensive and ongoing conspiracy of Akan slaves to wrest control of the island from their owners. In June 1760, several British and North American newspapers printed an April 19th report testifying that "the Coromantee negroes, about Kingston, have been very audacious since the account came of the insurrection in St. Mary's" and that snipers had fired upon white passersby from "some negro huts," instigating a search and the ominous seizure of "a sword of an extraordinary size and weight, the hilt covered with black velvet, and studded with brass nails, and under the velvet a parrots red feather; which, it seems, is with the Coromantees, the banner of war."⁴⁸² Newspapers abetted the transmission of accounts that had already been disseminating among Jamaica's colonists. In early June, Thistlewood recorded in his diary a rumor that prominently featured an African sword as an announcement of war. He noted that "All the Negroes in the Island, it is said, was to have rose at Whitsuntide, but by Mistake, those in St. Maries rose at Easter" and that "Fire was to have been Sett to the Towns in many Places at once, and all the Whites who Come to help Extinguish them, were to be Murdered in the Confusion, whilst the Estates engag'd their Overseers, &c. at the Same time." That "a Negroe

⁴⁸¹ Thistlewood Diary, July 12, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

⁴⁸² *Boston Evening-Post*, June 16, 1760; *London Chronicle*, June 28-July 1, 1760; *London Evening-Post*, June 29-July 1, 1760; *New-York Mercury*, June 16, 1760; and *Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 5, 1760. For additional reports of slaves' plans to revolt in Kingston, see *Boston Evening-Post*, July 28, 1760; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, August 1, 1760; and *New-York Mercury*, July 28, 1760. See also Long, *History of Jamaica*, v.2, 455. Eighteenth-century Britons called those Akan-speaking slaves they imported from the

Carrying the Wooden Stick adorned with Parrots' Feathers (being the Signal off war in Some Port of guinea) was discover'd by a Capt. of a Guinea Man, who saw it Carrying in Procession at Spring Path," seemed to confirm that African slaves throughout the island had together schemed against their owners.⁴⁸³ Reports of a unified, island-wide conspiracy of Akan slaves continued to circulate throughout the spring and summer of 1760. In July, the *Boston Evening-Post* published a May 10th letter in which "a Gentleman on the island of Jamaica" affirmed that "most people here think this affair of the rebellion of the Negroes was to have been general, for they had elected their King and Queen; her Majesty has since been burnt at Kingston."⁴⁸⁴ Jamaica's planters interpreted both their discovery of the sword they deemed a declaration of war and their Akan slaves' election of leaders as proof of a "grand enterprize, whose object was no other than the entire extirpation of the white inhabitants" and "the partition of the island into small principalities in the African mode, to be distributed among their leaders and head men."⁴⁸⁵

Colonists' mounting conviction that the slave revolt that had occurred in St. Mary parish was part of an integrated, island-wide Akan conspiracy fueled the detection of

Gold Coast of Africa "Coromantees." See John Thornton, "The Coromantees: An African Cultural Group in Colonial North America and the Caribbean," *Journal of Caribbean History* 39 (1998): 161-78.

⁴⁸³ Thistlewood Diary, June 7, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

⁴⁸⁴ *Boston Evening-Post*, July 28, 1760. Though the letter-writer correctly identified Cubbah, a woman whom Edward Long alleged "had sat in state under a canopy, with a sort of robe on her shoulders, and a crown upon her head" as one whom Kingston's Akan slaves had elevated to a respected rank, he was mistaken as to her fate. The wily woman was "seized, and ordered for transportation" but rather than consign herself to exile, she "prevail[ed] on the captain of the transport to put her ashore again in the leeward part of the island," where she no doubt knew several hundred slaves had since risen in rebellion against their masters. "She continued there for some time undiscovered" before she "at length was taken up, and executed." Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 455. For the Jamaica Assembly's investigation into and report on the fate of "the supposed Queen of Kingston," see JAJ, December 5, 1760, CO 140/40, f. 233 and JAJ, December 6, 1760, CO 140/40, f. 234, TNA.

⁴⁸⁵ Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 447.

plots throughout Jamaica.⁴⁸⁶ In late July 1760, the *London Evening-Post* printed a letter from Jamaica dated the 8th of May relating “an Account of the Negroes having left three Estates at Manchioneal, and gone into the Woods.” Though the author “hope[d] it will not be so bad as is reported,” to the besieged planters and political leaders of Jamaica, the slaves of St. Thomas in the East appeared determined to take full advantage of the concentration of the island’s troops upon the St. Mary rebels and potential coastal invaders.⁴⁸⁷ On June 9, 1760, Lieutenant Governor Moore notified the Board of Trade that “the Insurrection in the Parish of Saint Mary’s was no sooner happily quell’d, but another broke out at Manchioneal in the Parish of Saint Thomas in the East.”⁴⁸⁸ Though the slaves of the parish may never in fact have intended to take up arms against their masters, white leaders became convinced that “one of the deepest laid Conspiracies was timely discover’d.”⁴⁸⁹ Moore dispatched a detachment of Kingston troopers and forty marines to St. Thomas in the East to help the parish’s militia “protect that part of the Country from the Ravage which was intended to be committed there.”⁴⁹⁰ In late

⁴⁸⁶ In late May, Moore informed Secretary of State William Pitt that he had planned to lift martial law but had “received fresh Advices of another Insurrection in Westmoreland, which oblig’d me to recall the Orders given and to continue the Martial Law, that I might send speedy assistance to that part of the Country.” He reassured Pitt that “a Disturbance on the Estates of the late Mr. Richard Beckford . . . by the fears of the People were improv’d into an Insurrection of all the Negroes in that part” and that in fact, “Every thing is quiet [in Westmoreland], and appears to be so in the other Parts of the Island.” Despite the tranquility that Moore attested reigned throughout Jamaica, he avowed that he was “fully persuaded that the Insurrection began in St. Mary’s was intended to be general, by some discoveries which have been lately made, and from the quantity of hidden Arms which have been found.” Moore to Pitt, May 21, 1760, CO 137/60, f. 300, TNA.

⁴⁸⁷ *London Evening-Post*, July 31-August 2, 1760. See also *Boston Evening-Post*, July 21, 1760.

⁴⁸⁸ Moore to the Board of Trade, June 9, 1760, CO 137/32, ff. 7-8, TNA.

⁴⁸⁹ Moore to the Board of Trade, July 24, 1760, CO 137/32, ff. 21-22, TNA.

⁴⁹⁰ Moore reported to the Council that “If this force had prov’d insufficient they were to have been supported by a Company of the 49th Regiment from Portland and by the Company of Militia from Manchioneal, the Officers of both which Corps had received orders for that purpose.” Jamaica Council Minutes, July 14, 1760, enclosed in Moore to the Board of Trade, July 24, 1760, CO 137/32, ff. 23-24, TNA.

September 1760, the *London Chronicle* and *London Evening-Post* recounted that the “troopers secured thirty Conspirators, of which twelve were hanged, one of whom, . . . having said he would kill ten white men, had his Arms broken before Execution; five were burned alive, one sentenced to be hanged, but respited . . . ; three whipped under the Gallows, and nine acquitted.” The Maroons too played a role in the rooting out of real or potential slave conspirators; a party from Nanny Town “shot dead in the Woods” an enslaved man named Pompey, “who was one of the Ringleaders in the late intended Insurrection of the Negroes in St. Thomas in the East” and later “fixed [his head] up at Morant Bay.”⁴⁹¹

As colonial authorities struggled to contain the threat posed by the island’s slaves, they exacerbated the defenseless conditions that likely had encouraged the slaves of St. Mary parish to rebel. In addition to disorders in Kingston and St. Thomas in the East, planters and political leaders became convinced of the threat posed by slave conspiracies in the parishes of Clarendon, St. Dorothy, and St. John, “which were intended to have been carried into immediate Execution, but were happily frustrated by the Vigilance of the Officers in those Quarters, and several Negroes who had attempted to raise Seditions there, had been taken up and executed.” Jamaica’s already thin defensive forces became further diluted with each new rumor of revolt. “Notwithstanding there had been no attempts to raise any disturbances by the Negroes of Saint Thomas in the Vale,” which bordered St. Mary parish, Lieutenant Governor Moore “judg’d it proper for the Public

⁴⁹¹ *London Chronicle*, September 25-27, 1760 and *London Evening-Post*, September 25-27, 1760. See also *Pennsylvania Gazette*, September 4, 1760. Admiral Charles Holmes reported to Secretary of the Admiralty John Cleveland that “the two Chiefs of the Rebels in St. Thomas in the East were destroyed Viz. Akim in a fit of Despair had hanged himself and Pompey was shot dead by a Party sent out to catch him.” Holmes to Cleveland, July 25, 1760, ADM 1/236, ff. 60-61, TNA.

Security to have some Troops sent into that Quarter.” He further ensured “that the Company of Black Granadiers from [Spanish] Town were Station’d at the River head in the same Parish, which effectually prevented any communication of the Negroes in Saint John’s with those of Saint Thomas in the Vale, and had orders to keep parties constantly out in the Woods between those two Parishes.”⁴⁹² As they seemed to unearth conspiracy after conspiracy, colonists found ample evidence to persuade them that Jamaica’s enslaved African warriors had indeed organized an island-wide revolt in hope of effecting “a total massacre of all the Whites,” thereby rendering Jamaica “a Negro colony.” Especially alarming was the rumor that the rebel slaves’ “plan was intended to be executed immediately after the departure of the fleet for England,” which appeared to illustrate slaves’ attentiveness to the disposition of Jamaica’s frail defenses.⁴⁹³ Regrettably for the colonists’ sake, their conviction of the existence of a collective Akan slave conspiracy and their consequent dispatch of defensive forces to suppress suspected plots in the island’s eastern parishes may have emboldened the rebel slaves of the western parish of Westmoreland.

The enslaved insurgents of Westmoreland parish exploited the diffusion of Jamaica’s military strength that resulted both from the context of the Seven Years’ War

⁴⁹² Jamaica Council Minutes, July 14, 1760, enclosed in Moore to the Board of Trade, July 24, 1760, CO 137/32, ff. 23-24, TNA. For newspaper reports of intended insurrections and executions of slaves in these parishes, see *London Evening-Post*, September 25-27, 1760 and *Pennsylvania Gazette*, September 4, 1760.

⁴⁹³ *British Magazine*, 1760, v. 1, issue 8, 504; *London Chronicle*, August 23-26, 1760; and *London Magazine*, v. 29, August 1760, 436. For additional suppositions that Jamaica’s slaves had planned an island-wide revolt, see *Boston Evening-Post*, July 28, 1760; *London Chronicle*, September 6-9, 1760; *London Evening-Post*, September 6-9, 1760; and *New-Hampshire Gazette*, August 1, 1760. Thistlewood recorded in his diary: “It is said, Wag[e]r and his wife had a Quarrill in the Negroe ground, the Sunday they began, and that She threatened to discover the Plot, was the Occasion of beginning that Evening, otherways not to have been till the Shipping had Sail’d.” Thistlewood Diary, July 12, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

and from the fear that spread throughout white Jamaican society following the slave uprising in St. Mary parish. On June 11, 1760, British Admiral Charles Holmes informed Secretary of the Admiralty John Cleveland that in late May, “the Slaves began a fresh Insurrection, in Westmoreland, much more formidable than the first, and the whole Island remained in great Terror and Consternation for some time, having had more Evidence than before, of their Disobedience & Revolt being intended to be Universal.”⁴⁹⁴ The *London Evening-Post* printed a letter from Savanna-la-Mar, the principal town of the parish, whose author interpreted the Westmoreland revolt as “but a Continuation of the first, which, notwithstanding the many Executions, was never thoroughly quelled.” According to the missive, all had seemed quiet when the rebellion “broke out with redoubled Fury, and the Number that joined were very considerable.”⁴⁹⁵ The

⁴⁹⁴ Holmes to Cleveland, June 11, 1760, ADM 1/236, ff. 41-42, TNA. For further evidence of Holmes’ conviction that the revolt was “general over the Whole Island,” see Holmes to Cleveland, July 25, 1760, ADM 1/236, ff. 52-55, TNA. Lieutenant Governor Moore reported to the Board of Trade that “several Estates in Westmoreland rose in Rebellion, killed about twelve white People and committed great ravages there, and put all that part of the Country into the utmost confusion; their numbers were much greater than those concern’d in the two former Insurrections.” Moore to the Board of Trade, June 9, 1760, CO 137/32, ff. 7-8, TNA. Moore considered the disorders in St. Mary and St. Thomas in the East parishes “the two former Insurrections.”

⁴⁹⁵ *London Evening-Post*, August 26-28, 1760. In his first report to the Board of Trade, Lieutenant Governor Moore counted 600 rebels but later amended the tally to “no . . . less than Nine hundred or more than Ten hundred and fifty.” Moore to the Board of Trade, June 9, 1760, CO 137/32, ff. 7-8, TNA and Moore to the Board of Trade, July 24, 1760, CO 137/32, ff. 23-24, TNA. “A List of White People killed since the Commencement of the Rebellion in Westmoreland, 25 May 1760 and Rebels kill’d and taken” that Holmes received from Moore on June 27, 1760 calculated 22 Whites killed and 843 rebel slaves, of whom 135 had been killed and 208 taken. “A List of White People killed since the Commencement of the Rebellion in Westmoreland, 25 May 1760 and Rebels kill’d and taken,” enclosed in Holmes to Cleveland, July 25, 1760, ADM 1/236, ff. 60-61, TNA. These reports may have underestimated the total number of insurgents in Westmoreland, as “Many Owners and Agents of Plantations with a view of secreting their Negroes from Punishment have made false returns of their Absentees which has made it impossible to obtain a true List of all who were engaged in the Westmoreland Rebellion.” Moore to the Board of Trade, July 24, 1760, CO 137/32, ff. 23-24, TNA. Early newspapers accounts informed readers that “a second insurrection of the Negroes had been attempted in Westmoreland and Hanover parishes, 6 or 700 having got together and murdered 8 or 10 white people.” *Boston Evening-Post*, July 14, 1760; *British Magazine*, 1760, v. 1, issue 8, 501; *Gentleman’s Magazine*, v. 30, August 1760, 392; *London Chronicle*, August 16-19, 1760; *New-York Gazette*, July 7, 1760; and *New-York Mercury*, July 7, 1760. Later reports counted 900 or 1,200 rebel slaves in Westmoreland parish. See *Boston Evening-Post*, July 28, 1760; *New-Hampshire*

Westmoreland uprising began the night of May 25th when the slaves of naval Captain Arthur Forrest's Mais Mure plantation rose, killing the estate's attorney and overseer, leaving a visiting merchant ship's captain "Sadly Chopp'd," and sending two remaining Whites scurrying to the bay for aid."⁴⁹⁶ Slaves from the neighboring plantations of the Delve, Moreland, Old Hope, and New Hope soon joined the initial rebel cadre; together the several hundred insurgents killed numerous white men, "set fire to buildings and cane-pieces, did a variety of other mischief, and then withdrew into the woods."⁴⁹⁷ As in St. Mary parish, the cultivation of Westmoreland was in its initial stages, leaving extensive swamps, mountains, and forests into which rebels and runaways could retreat. In 1761, the few Whites who inhabited the parish lived alongside over 15,000 enslaved Blacks.⁴⁹⁸

Thomas Thistlewood recorded in his diary the "Strange Various reports with Tumults & Confusion" that followed the outbreak of the insurrection.⁴⁹⁹ With the rebels at his doorstep, Thistlewood armed his slaves to help him and John Groves, Egypt

Gazette, August 1, 1760; *New-York Gazette*, July 21, 1760; *New-York Mercury*, July 21, 1760; and *Pennsylvania Gazette*, July 17, 1760.

⁴⁹⁶ Thistlewood Diary, May 26, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers; Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 452; and *London Evening-Post*, August 16-19 and August 26-28, 1760. Busy attending to his wartime naval duties, Forrest was absent from his plantation at the time. According to "A List of White People killed since the Commencement of the Rebellion in Westmoreland, 25 May 1760 and Rebels kill'd and taken," the insurgents killed four whites at Forrest's estate. "A List of White People killed since the Commencement of the Rebellion in Westmoreland, 25 May 1760 and Rebels kill'd and taken," enclosed in Holmes to Cleveland, July 25, 1760, ADM 1/236, ff. 60-61, TNA.

⁴⁹⁷ "A List of White People killed since the Commencement of the Rebellion in Westmoreland, 25 May 1760 and Rebels kill'd and taken," enclosed in Holmes to Cleveland, July 25, 1760, ADM 1/236, ff. 60-61, TNA and Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 453.

⁴⁹⁸ Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 202-6.

⁴⁹⁹ Thistlewood Diary, May 26, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

estate's sole other white resident, protect the plantation.⁵⁰⁰ He did this despite his suspicion that several of Egypt's slaves "were in the Plot" and his perception that his slaves responded to news of successive uprisings and the rebel slaves' martial success by becoming "greatly Elevated."⁵⁰¹ If Thistlewood reflected upon the implications of his diary entries, recent events must have taken on an ominous cast, including that on May 22nd, "2 of Capt. Forest's Negroes at our Negroe houses" had "Come to See Jackie" and that at nine o'clock on the night of the 25th, he had "heard a blast of a horn at our Negroe houses." Thistlewood remembered that Lewie had been at Forrest's estate just prior to the revolt's outbreak and noticed that "Coffee & Job [were] also very outrageous." He thus concluded that Egypt's slaves were "Certainly very ready [to rise] if they durst."⁵⁰² Nevertheless, when he received word that "Some Negroes Came with a Shout, and fired 4 or 5 gunns, and began to tear the great house in pieces" at neighboring Jacobsfield, Thistlewood "arm'd our Negroes and kept a Strikt guard and a Sharp lookout; all afternoon and Night, being in dreadfull apprehensions."⁵⁰³ Fortunately for Thistlewood,

⁵⁰⁰ Thistlewood recorded in his diary that he had his slaves keep a nightly armed watch from the beginning of the insurrection continuously through early July 1760. Thistlewood Diary, May 26-July 6, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

⁵⁰¹ Thistlewood Diary, May 28 and 29, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

⁵⁰² Thistlewood Diary, May 22, 25, and 28, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers. In addition, John Groves recounted to Thistlewood that some field slaves had warned him he "would be dead in Egypt." Thistlewood Diary, May 28, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers. Thistlewood later recalled that "at the beginning of the Rebellion, a Shaved head amongst the Negroes was the Signal of War. The very day our Jackie, Job, Achilles, Quosheba, Rosanna, &c. had their heads, remarkably Shaved: Quosheba's Brother fell in the Rebellion: he had feasted away Some time before." Thistlewood Diary, October 19, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

⁵⁰³ Thistlewood Diary, May 29, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

the vast majority of Egypt's slaves opted not to join the insurgents.⁵⁰⁴ Slaves from several nearby plantations however did, and the rebel army grew in size and strength.⁵⁰⁵

The rebellion of their slaves sent Westmoreland's planters into a state of panic; after they "removed most of their families in this and the neighbouring parishes, from the country to the seaports," the men remained "continually under arms."⁵⁰⁶ Thistlewood noted the "Frequent Alarms fired" and "Vast Numbers of dispatches passing" and that "Vast Numbers of people, belonging to the Troops, Militia, &c. Call[ed]" as colonists

⁵⁰⁴ Thistlewood reported to local officials that of Egypt's 123 slaves, only "a Negroe fellow named Achilles of the Papah Country, ran the 2d Instant." Thistlewood Diary, June 19, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers. In all, five slaves absented themselves from the estate for weeks or even months over the course of the Westmoreland revolt, but it is unclear whether they joined the rebel army in their time away from the plantation. Achilles left Egypt after threatening driver Daniel that "if he did not take Care he would Cutt his head off in the Bush" and remained out until he came home of his "own Accord" six months later. Thistlewood Diary, June 2 and December 6, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers. Beginning on June 4, 1760, Abraham served as a guide for a detachment of the militia but once done with his duty, opted not to return to Egypt until August 22nd. He left without permission again almost immediately, but was quickly apprehended and secured in the bilboes. Thistlewood Diary, June 4, August 22 and 25, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers. Quaw ran away on July 30th and was returned to Thistlewood by a neighbor on September 12th. Thistlewood Diary, July 30 and September 12, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers. Whether or not they had indeed joined the revolt, Thistlewood availed himself of the opportunity to have Abraham and Quaw transported off the island with those rebel slaves not sentenced to death. Thistlewood Diary, September 30, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers. Maurice, after receiving a ticket from Thistlewood on June 22, 1760, simply remained away from Egypt until he was returned to Egypt by a neighboring planter on July 14th. He ran away again on the 18th and remained out until he was apprehended in the Salt Savanna on August 7th. Thistlewood Diary, June 23, July 14 and August 7, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers. Thistlewood first recorded Quacoo missing on June 30th. Two enslaved drivers sighted him in the company of several runaways on August 26th, but were unable to apprehend him. He remained at liberty throughout 1760. Thistlewood Diary, August 26, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

⁵⁰⁵ "A List of White People killed since the Commencement of the Rebellion in Westmoreland, 25 May 1760 and Rebels kill'd and taken," enclosed in Holmes to Cleveland, July 25, 1760, ADM 1/236, ff. 60-61, TNA. See also Thistlewood Diary, May 28, 30, and 31, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

⁵⁰⁶ *Boston Evening-Post*, July 28, 1760. Admiral Holmes agreed to "give the best Accommodation on board of the Ships, to all the Ladies and the Wounded, who might Stand in Need of their Protection & Succor." Holmes to Cleveland, June 11, 1760, ADM 1/236, ff. 41-42, TNA. The exodus included "Multitudes of Negroes Carrying goods down to the Bay." Thistlewood Diary, May 30, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

struggled to determine how best to check the revolt's progress.⁵⁰⁷ Parties composed of regulars, militiamen, marines, sailors, Maroons, and enslaved and free black rangers passed through Egypt en route to patrol plantations and engage rebel slaves in battle or to return to the bay with prisoners of war. When they sought provisions or rest, they stopped at Egypt and supplied Thistlewood with the latest reports of the rebel army, which proved to be "formidable" indeed.⁵⁰⁸

Accounts of early engagements emphasized the ineffectiveness of the white troops and the military prowess of those skilled soldiers of African descent whom they faced and upon whom they relied. Thistlewood learned from Colonel James Barclay that in their initial confrontation with the rebels, the militia "had but bad Success, being defeated and Several of our People Killed."⁵⁰⁹ Edward Long later delivered a harsh indictment of the incompetent militia, whom he judged "badly disciplined," as they were "thrown into the utmost confusion and routed" after having been "struck with terror at the dismal yells, and the multitude of their assailants."⁵¹⁰ The rebel warriors alarmed their antagonists not simply due to their mounting numbers and their fierce battle cries, but also because they showed themselves to be adept adversaries. The *London Chronicle* and *London Evening-Post* depicted the Westmoreland rebels, who numbered at least six

⁵⁰⁷ Thistlewood Diary, May 26, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers. Colonists especially feared the revolt might spread beyond Westmoreland parish. Lieutenant Governor Moore reported to the Jamaica Council that while they were busy attempting to quell the revolt in Westmoreland, "An Attempt was made by the Slaves of several Estates in Hanover and Saint James, to rise and joyn those allready in Rebellion. Their Plot was discovered the day before it was to be carried into Execution and the Principal Persons concern'd in it were taken up and Executed." Jamaica Council Minutes, July 14, 1760, enclosed in Moore to the Board of Trade, July 24, 1760, CO 137/32, ff. 23-24, TNA.

⁵⁰⁸ Holmes to Cleveland, June 11, 1760, ADM 1/236, ff. 41-42, TNA.

⁵⁰⁹ Thistlewood Diary, May 29, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

hundred, as using the same military procedures British regulars may have employed to defend themselves; articles recounted that the well-organized insurgents had “thrown up a fortification, and placed some Guns upon it” and were “sending out scouting Parties for Provisions.”⁵¹¹ Long related that among the slaves who had initiated the revolt “were several French Negroes, who had been taken prisoners at Guadaloupe, and, being sent to Jamaica for sale, were purchased by capt. [Arthur] Forrest.” Long alleged that “these men were the more dangerous as they had been in arms at Guadaloupe, and seen something of military operations; in which they acquired so much skill.” According to Long, these French slaves led their brethren in the building of “a strong breast-work across a road, flanked by a rocky hill; within this work they erected their huts, and sat down in a sort of encampment.”⁵¹² Those enslaved Blacks whom Forrest had secured from French Guadeloupe were not the only rebel slaves with military experience.⁵¹³ Thistlewood remarked that the rebel leader Apongo, called Wager in Jamaica, had been sold as a slave in the island six or seven years earlier, after having been taken prisoner

⁵¹⁰ Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 453. See also, Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 1, 138. For a newspaper account of this battle, see *London Evening-Post*, August 26-28, 1760.

⁵¹¹ *London Chronicle*, September 2-4, 1760 and *London Evening-Post*, September 2-4, 1760.

⁵¹² Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 452-53. Lieutenant Governor Moore applied similarly begrudging language to the fortifications built by the rebel slaves when he reported to the Jamaica Council that the colonial forces had finally “dispers’d them and drove them from the place they had pitch’d on for their head Quarters and which they had began to fortify after their manner.” Jamaica Council Minutes, July 14, 1760, enclosed in Moore to the Board of Trade, July 24, 1760, CO 137/32, ff. 23-24, TNA.

⁵¹³ The majority of Jamaica’s African-born rebel slaves likely acquired their martial skills in their homeland. Long remarked that “no small number” of the slaves imported from Africa to Jamaica “had been warriors in Afric[a]” and that Akan slaves in particular were “practiced in the use of arms from their youth in their own country.” Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 442, 456. Thistlewood noted that the “Rebell Aguy was a huntr for his King in guinea” and that “Simon was one of the Said King’s Captain’s.” Thistlewood Diary, December 4, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers. For further references to Aguy, see Thistlewood Diary, August 1, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers. For further references to Simon, see Thistlewood Diary, August 30 and September 21, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3 and January 24, June 3, and June 19, 1761, Monson 31/12, Reel M-1594.4, Thistlewood Family Papers.

while hunting in Africa. Prior to his capture, he had been “a prince in guinea, tributary to the King of dorme,” who had “Conquer’d all the Country for 100 Miles round him,” and as such had paid an official visit to the “governour of Cape Coast Castle, attended by a guard of 100 Men, well arm’d.”⁵¹⁴ Following his enslavement, Apongo sailed with Forrest in the *Wager*, where he apparently earned his new name.⁵¹⁵ Apongo likely experienced British imperial warfare firsthand while aboard this ship of the line – experience which may have proven useful in combating the forces arrayed against the enslaved insurgents.⁵¹⁶ Whatever their provenance, the rebel slaves’ skilled deployment of a combination of conventional and guerrilla tactics stymied their initial opponents.

Only the arrival of a strong reinforcement of men, among them a detachment of the Leeward Maroons commanded by their leader, Cudjoe, and at least one company of black shot rangers, “Restored the Government & People, to their Spirits” following their early loss to the insurgent army. Though the rebel slaves had in the initial battle with their white foes “sustained the Charge of a party of Militia, routed them, & took possession of their Arms,” in the second engagement, the now interracial colonial forces “attacked the Slaves, who were strongly Entrenched, And after a Smart fire, of two hours,

⁵¹⁴ Thistlewood Diary, December 4, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers. Thistlewood added that the Governor of Cape Coast Castle whom Apongo had visited was none other than “the late Mr. Jno. Cope my employer’s Father,” and after having become Forrest’s property, Apongo “used when a Slave Sometimes to go to Strathbogie to See Mr. Cope, who had a Table Set out, a Cloth laid, &c. for him; and would have purchas’d him & Sent him home had Capt Forest Come to the Island.”

⁵¹⁵ Thistlewood Diary, December 20, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

⁵¹⁶ Admiral Holmes noted on July 8th that he “Had Advice that Great Numbers of the Slaves daily surrendered in Westmoreland and that a Party had brought in Wager the Chief of the Insurgents & who had been the principal Person on Capt. Forrest’s Estate.” “A List of White People killed since the Commencement of the Rebellion in Westmoreland, 25 May 1760 and Rebels kill’d and taken,” enclosed in Holmes to Cleveland, July 25, 1760, ADM 1/236, ff. 60-61, TNA. For further references to Apongo, or Wager, see Thistlewood Diary, June 11; July 3, 12, and 29; August 3; and December 20, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers and *Pennsylvania Gazette*, September 4, 1760.

drove them with precipitation and loss, from their Lodgements.”⁵¹⁷ Thistlewood learned from a militiaman wounded in the “very Smart” fray that the enslaved insurgents “had fortified themselves with palisades and a dry Wall, but we took it” and that “Col. Cudjoe’s Negroes behaved with great bravery.”⁵¹⁸ Long extolled the Maroons’ martial expertise and valor in the affair, noting that while the white militiamen and regulars rested on their laurels after dislodging the rebels from their entrenchment, the Maroons “penetrated the wood at the foot of the hill, and ascending to it on the opposite side, and spreading themselves, suddenly assaulted the rebels in flank, who were instantly routed, and a great number killed, or taken prisoners.”⁵¹⁹ Though the militiaman who served as Thistlewood’s source testified that “the Black Shot from hanover &c. had not much resolution,” Long lavished praise upon a black soldier who had fought alongside the white militia and regulars and the Jamaican Maroons.⁵²⁰ Using language usually reserved for British regulars, he remarked that “a Mulatto man behaved with great bravery in this action; he leaped on the breast-work, and assaulted the rebels sword in hand.” Long also considered an enslaved black ranger whose owner had been killed at the uprising on Forrest’s estate worthy of commendation, for he “gave proof of his fidelity and regard to his master, whose death he revenged by killing one of the rebels, and other services, for which he was afterwards rewarded with his freedom, and an annuity for life, by the assembly.”⁵²¹

⁵¹⁷ Holmes to Cleveland, June 11, 1760, ADM 1/236, ff. 41-42, TNA. According to Holmes, “In this, and Other little Affairs, [the rebels] have lost About 130 of their Number.”

⁵¹⁸ Thistlewood Diary, June 2, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

⁵¹⁹ Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 454.

⁵²⁰ Thistlewood Diary, June 2, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

⁵²¹ Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 454. In December 1760, the Jamaica Assembly found that Jemmy, a slave who belonged to the deceased attorney of Forrest’s estate, “was very faithful as a guide to the

Though Jamaica's colonists often optimistically proclaimed that complete victory over the rebels was nigh, the island's officials lacked the military might and the resolve to swiftly vanquish them.⁵²² Following the loss of their fortified post, the remaining rebel slaves separated into smaller bands and sought shelter in the woods of Westmoreland and the neighboring parishes of Clarendon, Hanover, St. Elizabeth, and St. James. While Admiral Charles Holmes and other colonial officials "were in daily Expectation of having the whole reduced to Obedience" after ousting the rebels from their stronghold, they soon learned that "the Insurrection would be a Work of time," for "it is much easier to Vanquish & Rout them in the Field, or in a Collective Body Entrenched, than to Grub them out of the Woods."⁵²³ For a year and a half following the uprising on Forrest's

regulars, in conducting them to the rebels, and that he shot one of the rebels, and did other very considerable services to the public, in the late rebellion." The Assembly thus determined that Jemmy, "for such his faithful services, be rewarded with his freedom, and that he have an annuity of five pounds per annum for his life, and also, that a silver badge, of the value of forty shillings, be given him, to be made circular, with the name of the negro, and the words, 'Freedom for being Honest' on one side, and the words, 'By the Country' with the date of the year, on the other side; and that the representative of the said John Smith be paid the sum of £70 for his freedom." JAJ, December 10, 1760, CO 140/40, f. 238, TNA. Jemmy may well have been the slave that Long singled out for commendation for his bravery in the battle in which the interracial colonial forces dislodged the Westmoreland rebels from their fortification.

⁵²² In October 1760 newspapers began to proclaim that "the Negro rebellion in the island of Jamaica, is entirely suppressed," but a month later they conceded that it "was not then entirely suppressed," and in February 1761, they printed a letter from a Jamaica planter who wailed, "God only knows when there will be an end to this rebellion." *Boston Evening-Post*, October 11 and November 24, 1760 and February 9, 1761. See also *Boston Evening-Post*, September 1, 1760; *British Magazine*, 1760, v. 1, issue 9, 557; *London Chronicle*, August 23-26, September 2-4, September 6-9, September 20-23, and September 25-27, 1760 and February 5-7, 1761; *London Evening-Post*, September 2-4, 1760 and February 5-7 and February 7-10, 1761; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, February 13, 1761; *New-York Gazette*, February 16, 1761; *New-York Mercury*, August 11, 1760; and *Pennsylvania Gazette*, September 4, 1760. A letter printed by several North American newspapers in early 1761 bemoaned the fact that the rebels had "a parcel of sensible resolute Negroes for their leaders," and complained that "the number of rebellious negroes is encreasing very fast," and that the people of Jamaica "are in a bad situation, as they have not men to send after them." *Boston Evening-Post*, February 9, 1761; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, February 13, 1761; and *New-York Gazette*, February 16, 1761. Subsequent reports of the 1760-61 Jamaica revolt are in *Boston Evening-Post*, April 13 and April 20, 1761; *Gentleman's Magazine*, v. 31, July 1761, 329; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, April 17, 1761.

⁵²³ Holmes to Cleveland, July 25, 1760, ADM 1/236, ff. 52-55, TNA.

estate, Westmoreland's enslaved insurgents raided plantations for provisions and engaged in sporadic battles with the forces sent to suppress them.⁵²⁴

Jamaica lacked a sufficient number of white men to quell the revolt completely and those few who did partake in the pursuit of the rebel slaves proved ineffective or unwilling soldiers. Three companies of regulars and some 400 marines and seamen from the Jamaica squadron's ships fought alongside the militia and the Maroons in Westmoreland and its neighboring parishes.⁵²⁵ Admiral Holmes later complained that his men had been employed to subdue slaves, remarking that "the Brisk and Impetuous Attacks of Seamen should be Confined to their own Element, Except in Cases of real Extremity." He contended that "the Regular Troops" and not seamen were "the best Internal Security of the Island . . . provided they are well used, well Accommodated, and kept in good Humour," implying of course that they had not been.⁵²⁶ Whoever was to blame, the regular troops proved inadequate and the seamen showed themselves averse to policing slaves. Furthermore, Jamaica's white men soon grew weary of militia service. Lieutenant Governor Moore reported to the Board of Trade in November 1760 that he had hoped to lift martial law in the leeward parishes of the island in late August, but was "ashamed to say that the Obstinacy and Infatuation of the People in that part of the Country were so great, that notwithstanding many of them had suffer'd extreamly, and the danger was still near them, there was no possibility of getting them to do their Duty,

⁵²⁴ For accounts of various engagements between the enslaved insurgents and the colonial forces, see Thistlewood Diary, June 4, 6, 7, 9, 11, 19 and 25; July 1, 2, and 3; August 16; September 23; and November 5, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3 and January 24; March 15; April 13; May 19; June 4 and 19; September 27; and October 3, 1761, Monson 31/12, Reel M-1594.4, Thistlewood Family Papers.

⁵²⁵ Moore to the Board of Trade, June 9, 1760, CO 137/32, ff. 7-8, TNA; Holmes to Cleveland, June 11, 1760, ADM 1/236, ff. 41-42, TNA; and Jamaica Council Minutes, July 14, 1760, enclosed in Moore to the Board of Trade, July 24, 1760, CO 137/32, ff. 23-24, TNA.

and the moment the Power ceased which compell'd them to appear under Arms, they laid them down."⁵²⁷

Lacking effective white soldiers, island officials and individual planters turned to those men who had proven themselves both steadfast and adept at the guerrilla tactics required to root out the rebels. "A List of White People killed since the Commencement of the Rebellion in Westmoreland, 25 May 1760 and Rebels kill'd and taken" that Lieutenant Governor Moore sent to Admiral Holmes in late June noted that companies composed of black soldiers such as "Capt. Furry & Quashy & their Party," the "Cambleton and Orange Bay Black Shot," and "Woodcock's Sam & a black Party" had together killed fifty-three rebel slaves and taken eighty-five prisoners in just a month's time.⁵²⁸ Jamaica's colonists continued to pay detachments of Maroons and corps of enslaved and free black soldiers to scour the woods in search of rebel bands well into 1761.

Colonial authorities depended heavily upon the Maroons to capture or kill the enslaved insurgents who remained concealed in the mountainous interior of the island. Units usually composed of twelve men and led by a Maroon captain spent weeks and sometimes an entire month on patrol in the forests of Jamaica. In addition to a daily salary, the Maroons received a ten-shilling bonus for each rebel or runaway slave they

⁵²⁶ Holmes to Cleveland, March 18, 1761, ADM 1/236, ff. 191-98, TNA.

⁵²⁷ Moore was thus compelled to reinstate martial law, "in order to strengthen the hands of the Officers in those parts" and planned to continue it "till the Rebellion is cut up by the roots." Moore to the Board of Trade, November 7, 1760, CO 137/32, ff. 31-32, TNA. See also Moore to the Board of Trade, August 20, 1760, CO 137/32, ff. 25-26, TNA.

⁵²⁸ "A List of White People killed since the Commencement of the Rebellion in Westmoreland, 25 May 1760 and Rebels kill'd and taken", enclosed in Holmes to Cleveland, July 25, 1760, ADM 1/236, ff. 60-61, TNA. The list tallied a total of 135 rebels killed and 208 rebels taken.

apprehended or killed.⁵²⁹ In December 1760, the Jamaica Assembly authorized the payment of £228 to the Windward Maroons “for their pay whilst employed in parties, during the late rebellion in St. Mary’s” and St. Thomas in the East and estimated that the “charge of the parties fitted out from the leeward negro towns, for the like service, will amount to a much larger sum.”⁵³⁰ Companies composed of Maroons became a regular presence in the parishes plagued with outlying insurgents. As he had purchased tobacco from and served grog to them on occasion prior to the outbreak of revolt, Thistlewood was already familiar with some of the Leeward Maroons.⁵³¹ After the slaves of Westmoreland rebelled, he had occasion to mention the Maroons more frequently in his journal than he had in the past. Thistlewood noted when “A strong Party of Cudjoe’s Negroes went by to Leeward” and recorded the rumor that “Capt. Furre kill’d Wagr &c.

⁵²⁹ Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 346. Captains received two shillings and six pence per day for their services while “shotsmen” received seven and a half pence per day. JAJ, December 3, 1760, CO 140/40, ff. 226-28, TNA. See also JAJ, December 9, 1760, CO 140/40, f. 236, TNA.

⁵³⁰ The accompanying account lists the payment due to twenty-three separate parties of Windward Maroons who did service in St. Mary and St. Thomas in the East between April and October 1760. JAJ, December 3, 1760, CO 140/40, ff. 226-28, TNA. See also JAJ, December 9, 1760, CO 140/40, f. 236, TNA. In October 1760, the Assembly ordered the Receiver-General to pay the Maroons of Trelawny and Accompong Towns £450 “in such proportions as they are entitled to by, ‘An act to encourage Colonel Cudjoe, and captain Quaw, and the several negroes under their command, in Trelawny and Crawford Towns, and all other towns of rebellious negroes, who submitted to terms, to pursue and take up runaway slaves, and such negroes as continue in rebellion. . .,’ for their services in the capture and destruction of the negroes in rebellion; and that they be also desired to settle and transmit to the receiver-general, the account of what monies were due and paid to them and what shall at that time happen to remain unpaid.” JAJ, October 11, 1760, CO 140/40, f. 181, TNA. See also Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 461. The Assembly also agreed to compensate Charles Swigle some £60 for his expenses in having “commanded several parties of the maroon negroes against the rebels” despite his having submitted his request long after the Assembly had ceased considering petitions for remuneration for services rendered during the 1760-61 revolts. JAJ, December 9, 1763, CO 140/40, ff. 433-34, TNA. The Assembly paid Swigle for “the party under his command at Manchioneal, in the late rebellion, he being there upon a necessary point of duty, and his party being the maroon negroes.” JAJ, December 13, 1763, CO 140/40, f. 435, TNA.

⁵³¹ Thistlewood Diary, October 2, 1759, Monson 31/10 and February 1, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers. See Burnard, *Mastery, Tyranny, and Desire*, 23 for Thistlewood’s earlier remarks upon the Leeward Maroons.

&c.” in an engagement between the Maroons and a band of rebel slaves.⁵³² He marked the instances when he gave the “Son of Capt. Acompong Some dinner and punch” and when Colonel Cudjoe, who, Thistlewood observed, “has a prodigious hump in his Shoulder or back,” “din’d at Egypt” in company with fellow Maroon Captain Quaw and several white militiamen.⁵³³ Thistlewood and his neighbors ascribed to the Maroons not only the martial skill required to subdue the parishes’ rebel slaves, but also a prescient knowledge of the rebel slaves’ intentions. Thistlewood commented in late June, a month after the outbreak of revolt on Captain Arthur Forrest’s estate, that “It is Said Col. Cudjoe went to Col. Barclay & the gentlemen of this Parish a good While ago to warn them of this that has happened.”⁵³⁴ In planters’ and political leaders’ estimation, the Maroons had proven themselves valuable allies in the battle to control the slaves of Jamaica. In return for their military services and evident commitment to the terms of the treaties they had signed with the colonial government in 1739, the Maroons received monetary compensation as well as renewed respect for their military prowess and their free and independent status in Jamaica.

Besides the Maroons, Jamaica’s planters and political leaders relied upon free as well as enslaved black soldiers to help bring the slave revolts of 1760-61 to a close. While on occasion free Blacks and Mulattoes formed their own units, they were often mixed with Whites in parties of “rangers” or with enslaved Blacks in parties of “black shot.” While enslaved Blacks served alternatively as “baggage negroes” – support troops who carried arms and provisions, cleared brush, and provided other labor-intensive

⁵³² Thistlewood Diary, June 7 and 11, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

⁵³³ Thistlewood Diary, July 7 and 20, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

services for their companies – or as armed soldiers, free Blacks were inevitably armed. In October 1760, Captain William Hynes, who had led a party of “stout negroes” against the St. Mary rebels back in April, proposed to the Jamaica Assembly that a company composed of a hundred free Blacks and Mulattoes be enlisted to aid in the suppression of the island’s enduring insurgent bands.⁵³⁵ Hynes offered to “beat up for volunteers” and expected to enlist all one hundred private men in that manner, but asked Lieutenant Governor Moore to “draft, out of the companies of free negroes and mulattoes, a number to make up the deficiency” if one should arise. Hynes requested white officers to help lead the troops and that his men “be furnished with guns, pistols, and cartouch-boxes, from the arsenal, and also with powder and ball from the magazine.” He asked that “each of the party receive thirty shillings from the receiver-general, to provide themselves with necessaries before they march” and that he and his men “receive the sum of twenty pounds for every negro killed, taken or drove in.” In order to prove that the rebels had indeed been eliminated by his party, he pledged that “all negroes now in rebellion, which shall be killed by him or his party, shall have their heads cut off, and be brought to the first settlement, and there left.”⁵³⁶ The Assembly approved Hynes’s scheme as well as one to draft from the militia regiments of several parishes of “a party of thirty white and black shot, with fifteen baggage-negroes . . . to attend them,” to be stationed in “such frontier places” as Moore thought proper. These seven companies of thirty rangers and fifteen pioneers – together 315 men – were each to be “furnished with a proper stock of

⁵³⁴ Thistlewood Diary, June 19, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

⁵³⁵ *British Magazine*, v. 1, issue 7, 1760, 443-44; *Gentleman’s Magazine*, v. 30, July 1760, 307-8; *London Chronicle*, June 28-July 1, 1760; *London Evening-Post*, June 29-July 1, 1760; *London Magazine*, v. 29, July 1760, 366-67; *New-York Mercury*, June 16, 1760; and *Pennsylvania Gazette*, June 5, 1760.

provisions, ready packed up, so that they may be able to take the woods in pursuit of the rebels, upon the first notice of their being near them.” The Assembly hoped that the rangers and pioneers would “greatly assist and support Mr. Hynes and his party, and be conducive to the total suppression of the present rebellion.”⁵³⁷

The free Blacks and Mulattoes who served under Captain William Hynes may have been disappointed by the compensation they received for their martial service. Hynes successfully enlisted at least fifty-four free black and mulatto privates in “Kingston, Spanish-Town, and other places,” providing them with “meat, drink, and other necessaries,” including green jackets to serve as their uniforms.⁵³⁸ He and his men spent the following four months on patrol in the leeward parishes of the island “in search of the rebels” until “at last, after a tedious pursuit, [they] surprized them in their haunt.”⁵³⁹ Their venture garnered the private men a total of £240, which amounted to three pounds and sixteen shillings each as “rewards for killing, taking, and driving in twelve rebellious negroes.”⁵⁴⁰ This, however, did not prove substantial enough

⁵³⁶ JAJ, October 2, 1760, CO 140/40, f. 177, TNA. See JAJ, October 3, 1760, f. 178, TNA for the Assembly’s approval of Hynes’s proposal.

⁵³⁷ JAJ, October 7, 1760, CO 140/40, ff. 179-80, TNA. Moore approved of the Assembly’s plan, “part of which had already been carried into execution” and pledged “that he would give immediate directions, for the other part thereof also to be carried into execution.”

⁵³⁸ For the figure of fifty-four private men in Hynes’s party, see JAJ, November 20, 1760, CO 140/40, f. 289, TNA. The Assembly at first balked at paying £75 “for green jackets, for the use of the rangers,” in addition to £88 for “disbursements on heading of the rangers,” but was convinced by Robert Dallas that Hynes deserved all the compensation he could get, as he had “contracted a severe fit of sickness, from the colds and fatigue he underwent in the country’s service, and that his cure will be a work of time, and will be attended with great expence,” making it impossible for him to continue his trade as a millwright. JAJ, April 2 and 3, 1761, CO 140/40, ff. 253-56, TNA. The Assembly eventually allotted Hynes £562 “for monies disbursed by him, for the use of the rangers under his command,” £400 of which was awarded to him alone “as a reward for his services.” JAJ, April 4, 1761, CO 140/40, f. 257, TNA.

⁵³⁹ Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 461. In April 1761, two North American newspapers printed a January 24th letter from Kingston testifying that “On Tuesday arrived from Westmoreland, Captain Hyndes, with a party of free negroes and mulattoes. Every thing remains quiet at present in that, as also in every other parish in the island.” *Boston Evening-Post*, April 20, 1761 and *Pennsylvania Gazette*, April 9, 1761.

⁵⁴⁰ JAJ, April 3, 1761, CO 140/40, ff. 255-56, TNA.

remuneration for “Stephen Johnson Hilliar, John Brivet, William Freeman, William Bonny, and James Bonner, free mulattoes and negroes,” who submitted a petition to the Assembly in April 1761. Their appeal attested that they had served under Hynes’s command until “the said negroes, then in rebellion . . . were totally reduced and taken” and that “by the long absence of the petitioners from their own private affairs, the petitioners have sustained great loss, and are now reduced to the lowest state of poverty.” Thus, they asked the Assembly for redress.⁵⁴¹ The Assembly learned from Brigadier General Norwood Witter that “the people in the party, behaved extremely well, and were very active in the service upon which they were sent” and allocated each free black or mulatto enlisted man an additional £8 for his assistance in felling rebel slaves.⁵⁴² The free black and mulatto soldiers who composed Hynes’s company may have felt slighted upon learning that the Assembly had awarded their white officers £150 each and had singled out the sole white sergeant of the unit as deserving of £20, while the company’s five black sergeants received the same allotment as the private men.⁵⁴³ Despite their reliance upon black and mulatto soldiers for the island’s defense, the island’s authorities clearly did not feel compelled to recompense them fairly for their services.

In addition to being enlisted by direct order of the Assembly and Lieutenant Governor, free as well as enslaved Blacks were recruited on the parish and plantation level by local officials and individual planters to pursue rebels and runaways. In early 1762, Richard Stark received a letter from militia Colonel John Kennion ordering him to

⁵⁴¹ JAJ, April 3, 1761, CO 140/40, ff. 255-56, TNA. All of the petitioners were recruited by Hynes from Spanish Town. See JAJ, November 20, 1761, CO 140/40, f. 289-90, TNA.

⁵⁴² JAJ, November 20, 1761, CO 140/40, f. 289-90, TNA. See also JAJ, October 21, 1761, CO 140/40, f. 268.

appear for duty at Bath in St. Thomas in the East, where he was to assume command of a party to “go out against the runaway negroes.”⁵⁴⁴ Kennion directed Stark to draft “one sergeant, six able white men well armed, together with all the able free mulattoes and negroes” from his Port Morant militia company, each of whom was to be accoutered with “twelve balls, a powder-horn, and their own baggage; and each, besides their fire-lock, to be armed with a cutlass, sword, or hanger.” Stark later learned that his interracial unit would consist of “3 officers, 4 sergeants, 24 privates, 20 free mulattoes, and negroes, 6 black shot, [and] 24 baggage-negroes.”⁵⁴⁵ Enslaved Blacks served as black shot rangers or as pioneers in both official companies composed largely of free militiamen and in unofficial parties comprised of servants and slaves organized by local planters to defend their estates from menacing rebels or runaways. In December 1760, the Assembly resolved that “the several slaves sent out against the rebels in the late rebellions, shall receive the same rewards as the maroon negroes do, for killing or taking rebellious slaves.”⁵⁴⁶ In keeping with this directive, the Assembly awarded Quashey, Harry, Quamino, and Whon £10 each and allotted a mulatto slave named George Pickering, an unnamed slave owned by John Shickle, and another slave named Harry £5 each for their “great service to the public, in the late rebellion, by killing and taking the rebels.” Besides pecuniary rewards, each of them was to “have a silver badge, not

⁵⁴³ JAJ, November 20, 1761, CO 140/40, f. 289-90, TNA. Besides free black and mulatto soldiers, the roll of officers and private men enlisted in Captain Hynes’s party included five Maroons and at least two slaves.

⁵⁴⁴ JAJ, November 6, 1762, CO 140/40, f. 370-71, TNA. The company was ordered out in response to a “complaint,” which “had been made to colonel John Kennion, then commanding officer of the militia in said parish, by some of the inhabitants at the town of Bath, and places adjacent, that a great number of runaway negroes infested said place, and were very insolent and troublesome.” JAJ, November 4, 1762, CO 140/40, f. 368, TNA.

⁵⁴⁵ JAJ, November 6, 1762, CO 140/40, f. 370-71, TNA.

⁵⁴⁶ JAJ, December 8, 1760, CO 140/40, ff. 234-35, TNA. See also Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 463.

exceeding thirty shillings, to be made square, with the negroes and mulatto's name on one side, and the words, 'By the country' with the date of the year, on the other."⁵⁴⁷ In 1761, three slaves named Quashy, York, and Anthony joined a volunteer unit composed of their owners and overseers who together "destroyed and took a party of rebels, commanded by Damon, near One-Eye, in the parish of Clarendon." The group departed "in the night, and the way they had to go was long, and through a woody and difficult country," but fortunately for them, they "came to a hut inhabited by a negro watchman of Mr. Samuel Booth's, whom they carried with them as a guide." "With his assistance," the party "very soon came up with the rebels, whom they attacked," killing two, wounding one, and taking two enslaved insurgents prisoner. Quashy, York, and Anthony and Cambridge, their guide, each received £5 and "a thirty-shilling silver badge with their names on it" as recompense for their services.⁵⁴⁸

As they served as their hosts and their slaves on occasion joined their ranks, slaveholders would have been well aware of the contributions of armed Blacks to the effort to suppress the enslaved insurgents. Thomas Thistlewood observed that "it was Foot's Quacoo, who formerly work'd here, that Shot Forest's Abraham, at Breadnut hill, and kill'd another of the Rebels also" and that "12 or 14 Black Shot" had prevented a rebel band from incinerating a nearby planter's sugar works.⁵⁴⁹ In November 1760, he remarked that "Just dark in the Evening Mr. Forsythe Came here with 20 Rangers (Mulattos & Negroes) besides 6 or 8 baggage Negroes, & some Negroe Boys."

⁵⁴⁷ JAJ, December 9, 1760, CO 140/40, f. 236, TNA.

⁵⁴⁸ JAJ, November 28, 1761, CO 140/40, f. 300-06, TNA. See also JAJ, November 25, 1761, CO 140/40, f. 293, TNA and Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 456-57.

Thistlewood served them “Stew’d fish, 2 broil’d Fowls, Some Crabbs, &c. for Supper” as well as “good punch and porter” and noticed that “The 2 Whites Supp’d at a Second Table.” He said of their less-segregated sleeping arrangements that while militia Lieutenant Forsythe rested in one room, the “Two White People that were with him & all the Rangers, &c. laid in the NE Room of the great house.”⁵⁵⁰ In the morning, “Mr. Forsythe and the Rangers Set forward for the Salt Savana Morass” in search of rebels and runaways, taking Egypt’s “Daniel, Mr. Say’s Negroe man and Wench, for guides.”⁵⁵¹ From time to time, Thistlewood, his white neighbors, and a select number of their drivers and other skilled slaves would together venture armed into the countryside to hunt for lurking rebels and runaways. In one instance, “Mulatto davie, Sharper and Cooper davie & our Daniel” as well as “Mason Quoshe, Carpenter Robin & dorsut” accompanied their owners into the nearby morass. Though they detained “no Body,” they did discover evidence of a runaway camp in the form of “an abundance of Barbecoes to sleep in, Springes to Catch ducks, &c., and Crabbs lately Stopp’d.” While the white men retired, in the afternoon “the Black Shot all went out again” on their own and continued to do so for the next five days. They had some success, for Thistlewood recorded that “Our Black partie . . . brought home 3 Negroe men, they Catch’d in the Salt Savana Island.” He

⁵⁴⁹ Thistlewood Diary, June 23 and October 23, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

⁵⁵⁰ After providing them with rum, Thistlewood complained that the drunk and thus rowdy rangers “attempted to break open the Negroe house doors to Come at the girls,” obliging him “to get out of Bed, take my pistols and go to get them, which Soon effected, but they fought after, one amongst another till about Midnight.” Thistlewood Diary, November 18, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

⁵⁵¹ Thistlewood Diary, November 19, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers. On November 21st, Thistlewood mentioned that “Daniel Came home, discharg’d by the Party.” Thistlewood Diary, November 21, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

“served them a quart of Rice & 2 herrings each, & a Bottle of Rum among them” as payment for their services.⁵⁵²

Given their military reliance upon them, slaveholders likely found troubling that some enslaved Blacks used for their own ends the mobility and relative freedom that came of aiding in the search for and subjugation of rebel slaves. Beginning on June 4, 1760, Abraham, one of Egypt plantation’s slaves, served as a guide for Lieutenant Forsythe and his militia company “to show them the Near way to Mr. Crawford’s.”⁵⁵³ The following day, Thistlewood noted, “Abraham not return’d from Capt. Forsithe” and on the 7th he reported that “Mr. Bevil, one of the Officers belonging the Company he guided, told me he very believes he was kill’d, on Thursday’s engagement: but Cannot be positive” and complained that “Mr. Antrobus, & Capt. Forsithe prest him.”⁵⁵⁴ Two days later, Thistlewood learned that Abraham had in fact survived the battle and that the officers who had pressed him were not keeping a close eye on him, for Abraham “pass’d thro’ the Estate yesterday and to day, but would not Come to me” at which behavior Thistlewood declared, “he dearly loves a lazy life.”⁵⁵⁵ Thistlewood continued to mark Abraham absent in his journal until August 22nd, when Abraham returned to Egypt bearing a note from John Cope, Thistlewood’s employer and a major in the militia.⁵⁵⁶ It

⁵⁵² Thistlewood Diary, September 1, 3, 4, and 6, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers. For additional mention of armed Blacks’ contributions to the effort to suppress the slave revolt, see Thistlewood Diary, June 25, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3 and March 16 and October 3, 1761, Monson 31/12, Reel M-1594.4, Thistlewood Family Papers. For another occasion in which Thistlewood and his slaves, “Arm’d with 5 guns, Cutlasses, &c.” sought runaways, see Thistlewood Diary, August 9, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

⁵⁵³ Thistlewood Diary, June 4, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

⁵⁵⁴ Thistlewood Diary, June 5 and 7, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

⁵⁵⁵ Thistlewood Diary, June 9, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

⁵⁵⁶ Thistlewood Diary, June 16 and 23; July 7, 21, and 28; and August 22, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

is unclear whether Abraham remained in service to the militia in his time away from Egypt, but it is apparent that he had no intention of returning to the estate for good, for three days later Thistlewood observed that he was “wanting” and that enslaved drivers “Mason Quashe & Daniel brought home Abraham, whom they found helping to hawl the Sean at the hope Barcadier.” No longer taking any chances, Thistlewood “Secured him in the Bilboes,” where Abraham remained until September 30th, when Thistlewood sent him “down to the Bay in the large Canoe, to Mr. Maylor, to be transported with the Rebels” off of the island.⁵⁵⁷ Abraham had seized the opportunity of guiding the militia and used it to prolong his absence from Egypt. Though his actions while away from Egypt cannot readily be traced, it is plain that he managed to elude Thistlewood’s and perhaps other white men’s control for almost three months for which he was, in the end, severely punished.

While Abraham failed in his attempt to transform his service to the militia into liberty for himself, several slaves who demonstrated their loyalty to the colonial order managed to secure their freedom as well as pecuniary rewards – at no small cost to the colonial government. Some slaves accomplished this by informing their owners that their fellow slaves were intending to revolt, thus convincing planters and local officials that they had enabled them to thwart the plotters’ schemes. In the Vale of Luidas in the parish of St. Catherine, a head slave named Foster claimed he had been “applied to by two negroes of the Coromantee country, chief in the conspiracy” “to break open the house at Laugher’s plantation, seize the arms, and, having killed the white people, to set the house

⁵⁵⁷ Thistlewood Diary, August 25 and September 30, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers. A sean is a seine, or fishing net, and a barcadier is a jetty.

on fire, and proceed in the same manner through the estates in the Vale.” Rather than join the cabal, Foster engaged fellow slaves Pembroke and George to help him apprehend and present the alleged conspirators to “Mr. Taylor, the overseer.” Foster relayed to Taylor “the whole conversation” he had had with the plotters, including “the meaning of the Coromantee negroes words,” whereby “the whole scheme was frustrated, the chief conspirators executed, and other two, who turned evidences, shipped off.” Foster deployed his language skills and his position as “a principal man among the negroes” to persuade his overseer that “had he joined in the conspiracy, his Influence Among the Coromantee negroes would, in all probability have caused a total insurrection among them.”⁵⁵⁸ For their services, the Assembly deemed Foster, Pembroke, and George entitled to their freedom, £5 a year each for the rest of their lives, and a circular silver badge worth forty shillings “with the name of each negro, and the words, ‘Freedom, for being honest,’ on one side, and the words, ‘By the country,’ on the other.”⁵⁵⁹ In addition to the cost of their pensions and badges, the Assembly spent some £500 to purchase the freedom of at least eight slaves in the parishes of St. Catherine, St. Dorothy, St. James, St. Mary, and St. Thomas in the East as recompense for having unearthed slave conspiracies.⁵⁶⁰

Other slaves earned their liberty and an annuity for defending their plantations and notifying Whites once revolts had actually begun. Yankee, a slave on William

⁵⁵⁸ JAJ, December 5, 1760, CO 140/40, ff. 231-33, TNA.

⁵⁵⁹ JAJ, December 8, 1760, CO 140/40, ff. 234-35, TNA.

⁵⁶⁰ In addition to Foster, Pembroke and George in St. Catherine parish, they included Moll and her son, Quaco in St. Dorothy, Will in St. James, London in St. Mary, and Cuffee in St. Thomas in the East. JAJ, December 5, 1760, CO 140/40, ff. 231-33 and JAJ, December 8, 1760, CO 140/40, ff. 234-35, TNA. See also Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 455. For Thistlewood’s references to slaves who informed Whites of

Beckford's Esher plantation in St. Mary parish, proved "very active in endeavouring to defend the house against the rebels, and to assist the white people" when many of the slaves of his estate joined the rebel cause. "Finding that they were overpowered," Yankee fled to Lieutenant Governor Moore's estate "and there, with Blackwell, a negro belonging to the said Mr. Moore, concerted measures for alarming the neighbouring plantations, and assisting the white people." Yankee, Blackwall, and another slave named Mulatto Billy together proceeded to be "particularly active in suppressing the rebellion;" the Assembly approvingly noted that "mulatto Billy, with his own hand, killed three rebel negroes."⁵⁶¹ Like Foster, Pembroke, and George in St. Catherine parish, Yankee, Blackwall, and Mulatto Billy received their freedom, a £5 annuity, and a forty-shilling badge for their services.⁵⁶² In Westmoreland parish, an enslaved man named Jack Pearson gave "immediate notice of the rebellion having broke out on the plantation of Arthur Forrest" to neighboring planter Jacob Johnson, one of the men who petitioned the Assembly on his behalf, thus enabling Johnson to not only "save himself, and a numerous family" but also to extend the alarm to "several families that night, before the rebels had time to extend their bloody massacres," without which "many more of his majesty's subjects would undoubtedly have lost their lives." Pearson's assistance did not end the night of the uprising at Forrest's estate, for he "did, with great willingness and

slave conspiracies, see Thistlewood Diary, July 12 and September 30, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

⁵⁶¹ JAJ, December 5, 1760, CO 140/40, ff. 231-33, TNA. Edward Long wrote that Yankee "behaved on the occasion with signal gallantry" and that in addition to defending Esher estate, he and "another faithful Negroe, concerted measures for giving immediate notice to all the plantations in the neighbourhood, and procuring auxiliaries for the white inhabitants." Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 449.

⁵⁶² JAJ, December 8, 1760, CO 140/40, ff. 234-35, TNA.

activity, pursue the rebels; and . . . did kill and take many” of them.⁵⁶³ The Assembly awarded Pearson his liberty for his myriad contributions to the defense of Jamaica.⁵⁶⁴ Ten additional slaves received like reward from the Assembly for defending their plantations, informing neighboring Whites of the outbreak of revolt, and performing various other services to combat the rebel slaves.⁵⁶⁵ Jamaica’s political leaders earmarked almost £1,000 to publicly honor and purchase the freedom of these slaves “as an encouragement to others, to behave with the same honesty and fidelity on the like occasions.”⁵⁶⁶

Even with the aid of the Maroons and numerous free and enslaved Blacks, the colonial forces of Jamaica had difficulty entirely quelling the slave revolts that had begun in St. Mary and Westmoreland parishes. In the end, much to their dismay, planters and political officials were obliged to treat with and accept the negotiated surrender of some

⁵⁶³ JAJ, October 18, 1763, CO 140/40, f. 392, TNA.

⁵⁶⁴ JAJ, October 19, 1763, CO 140/40, f. 393-94, TNA.

⁵⁶⁵ These included Billy and Philip, of Esher estate, who “brought the first account to his honor the lieutenant-governor, of the said rebellion; that they came down to this town, by one of the clock the day after the rebellion broke out; by means whereof, timely assistance was sent from Spanish Town, and many estates preserved from destruction,” and Nero, Congo Molly, and Beckford, of Forrest’s estate, who “made their escapes from the rebels, and alarmed sundry estates in the neighbourhood; by means whereof several white peoples’ lives were saved, and the negroes of three estates prevented from rising.” JAJ, December 5, 1760, CO 140/40, ff. 231-33 and JAJ, December 8, 1760, CO 140/40, ff. 234-35, TNA. See also Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 450, 452. Jack, who “had, in a remarkable manner, distinguished himself in the service of [St. Mary] parish, at other times, as well as during the late rebellion” and Cato, a slave of Captain Forrest’s in Westmoreland parish who “did, in the rebellion in the year 1760, preserve the lives of Alexander Crawford, esquire, a member of this house, and his family” also received their freedom. JAJ, October 30, 1761, CO 140/40, ff. 277-78; JAJ, November 19, 1761, ff. 287-88; and JAJ, October 18, 1764, CO 140/40, f. 465, TNA. So too did Luke and Cuffee, two slaves of St. Elizabeth parish who were “tempted by one of the rebels to join with him” but instead of taking him up on his offer, recruited the help of a free mulatto man named George, and together the three men “went and shot the said rebel, and brought his head home to Mr. Royal, and also took from said rebel his gun, cutlass, and ammunition.” JAJ, December 7, 1761, CO 140/40, f. 311, TNA. “Jemmy, a negro man belonging to Mr. Smith, who was killed at the estate of Captain Forrest, was very faithful as a guide to the regulars, in conducting them to the rebels, and that he shot one of the rebels, and did other very considerable services to the public, in the late rebellion,” for which he, too, was granted his liberty. JAJ, December 10, 1760, CO 140/40, f. 238, TNA. See also Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 454.

of the rebel leaders as the only certain way to fully suppress the insurrections.⁵⁶⁷

Although the colonial government offered no formal pardon to the rebels, individual officials took it upon themselves to parley with the insurgents. Edward Long wrote of “a congress” held between a group of the St. Mary rebels and a Mr. Gordon “in whose honour they reposed implicit confidence.” The rebel slaves “expressed their readiness to surrender upon the condition of being transported off the island, instead of being put to death” and Gordon “promised to exert his endeavours with the lieutenant governor.” In the end, “the lieutenant governor’s consent was obtained; but under appearance of a difficulty, to make it the more desirable; and, upon intimation of it at the next private congress, they one and all submitted, and were shipped off, pursuant to the stipulation.”⁵⁶⁸ In Westmoreland parish, Brigadier General Norwood Witter “ordered it to be made known, that application for mercy would be made by him, in favour of all those who should surrender themselves immediately, that they might not suffer either death or torture.” In response to Witter’s offer, “many of the rebels came in directly, and were afterwards, by orders of the commanding officer, instrumental in bringing in others with whom they were connected.”⁵⁶⁹ Thomas Thistlewood disapproved of Witter’s actions, surmising that he must have been bribed by the rebel slaves’ owners to agree to

⁵⁶⁶ JAJ, October 18, 1764, CO 140/40, f. 465, TNA.

⁵⁶⁷ In a prescient September 1760 *London Evening-Post* article, a “Gentleman lately come from Jamaica,” fearing that “the great Number of executions would have a contrary Effect to that intended,” observed that “it might perhaps be better (as by the last Accounts the Rebellion is not at an End, there being many Negroes still hid in the Woods) to have no more Executions, but to try a more mild Way with them, by publishing a Pardon to such as will come in, in a limited Time; and who might easily be divided among the other Colonies, without any Danger to them.” *London Evening-Post*, September 27-30, 1760. For newspaper reports of rebels surrendering to the colonial forces, see *Boston Evening-Post*, September 1, 1760 and *Pennsylvania Gazette*, September 4, 1760.

⁵⁶⁸ Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 458.

⁵⁶⁹ JAJ, December 4, 1760, CO 140/40, f. 229, TNA.

reprieve them from death and mentioning with approbation that unlike the more pliable Witter, “Col. Spragg’s off’d with the heads of all the Rebell’s who fall into his hands immediately.”⁵⁷⁰ Thistlewood’s diary reveals that those rebel slaves who submitted to Witter did indeed aid in the capture and killing of their brethren. On August 21, 1760, Thistlewood noted that “Yesterday in the Evening Major Cope and Several Troopers Went to Savana la Mar, with Forest’s Fortune, & Several more of Forest’s, Campbell’s & old Tho. Williams’ Negroes, (Such as were Notorious, but had come in of themselves, and had Ticketts from Col. Witter).”⁵⁷¹ Though the rebel slaves who had surrendered to Witter kept their side of the bargain by helping to suppress the revolt they had begun, Jamaican officials did their utmost to renege on Witter’s promise to commute their sentences from death to transportation off of Jamaica. Yet, despite officials’ best efforts to find a means of legally executing the erstwhile rebels, in the end Jamaica’s attorney general found that the pardon Witter had offered them could not be lawfully revoked, and at least fifteen men were reprieved from death and deported.⁵⁷² The Assembly struggled to have the last word, officially avowing “that brigadier-general Witter’s treating with the

⁵⁷⁰ Thistlewood Diary, September 27 and July 17, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers. He noted that “Capt. Forest’s Fortune, (a principal offender) Came in to Col. Witter, who gave him a Ticket home to Maismore,” calling Witter’s deed “policy or something else.” Thistlewood Diary, July 17, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

⁵⁷¹ Thistlewood Diary, August 21, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

⁵⁷² The rebel slaves were named Blackberry, Peter, Primus, Davy, Bristol, Leicester, Prince, Jonathan, Robin, Adjaquao, Isaac, Tackey, Quamina, alias Gubbee, Jack, and Boatswain. For the Assembly’s communication with Lieutenant Governor Moore and the attorney general regarding Witter’s negotiation with the erstwhile rebels, see JAJ, December 4 and 5, 1760, CO 140/40, f. 229-33 and JAJ, December 17, 1760, CO 140/40, f. 246, TNA. Thistlewood mentioned in October 1760 that “It is Said the Negroes are now in the Fort, which Col. Witter Reprieved: and it is hoped [they] will be executed.” Thistlewood Diary, October 6, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

rebels, while they were in rebellion, and under arms, was an impolitic measure, but that it appears to the house he did it with good intentions.”⁵⁷³

Finally, in late 1761, Lieutenant Governor Henry Moore declared the insurrections quelled, by which time Jamaicans counted some 400 rebel slaves killed in action or lost to suicide, one hundred subjected to various tortures and executed, and 500 exiled to the Bay of Honduras, an infamous destination for black criminals. On their own side, they calculated sixty Whites and sixty free Blacks killed and £100,000 worth of damage to the island, a figure that did not include lost trade.⁵⁷⁴ In light of the spectacular losses suffered by the colony as a result of the rebellions, Jamaican colonists likely began to ponder how better to secure their slave society in times of war. Given the martial skill and determination displayed by both Jamaica’s rebel slaves and the combatants of African descent who ultimately overcame them, they may well have wondered how better to harness this resource to ensure their future security. Colonial officials’ reflections upon the roles played by black soldiers in the slave revolts of 1760-61 would have profound repercussions for slaves, Maroons, and free Blacks and Mulattoes in the decades to follow.

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In March 1762, when Jamaica daily expected a joint French and Spanish invasion of its shores, the *London Chronicle* printed an article regarding the “Importance and

⁵⁷³ JAJ, December 17, 1760, CO 140/40, f. 246, TNA.

⁵⁷⁴ Long, *The History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 462. Contributing to the expense was the Assembly’s decision to compensate owners of rebel slaves who were executed or killed in battle £40 per lost slave. JAJ, November 19, 1760, CO 140/40, f. 215, TNA. For a petition of several Westmoreland slaveholders, including Captain Arthur Forrest, for redress for the losses they suffered during the slave rebellion, see JAJ, November 14, 1760, CO 140/40, f. 210-11, TNA. Moore proclaimed “the total suppression of the late

defenceless State of Jamaica.” Its author cited the recently quelled insurrections in Jamaica to contend that “the men who would rob us of Jamaica are already there, and want only arms and ammunition, with a few good officers and men to head and conduct them” and surmised that “the only chance this nation hath of preserving [Jamaica], if attacked, seems to be that of preventing the enemy from effecting a landing.” The writer lamented that the number of absentee planters in Jamaica had increased as a result of the wartime revolts and castigated those who had “deserted” the island in “this time of great danger.”⁵⁷⁵ Newspaper editorialists and colonial authorities alike realized the implications of the recent slave uprisings for Jamaica’s wartime security. Governor William Henry Lyttelton assured the Board of Trade in January 1762 that he would do his “utmost to defeat the design of the enemy, should their forces be employ’d against this Island,” but informed them that Jamaica “is at present in a state of extreme weakness.” He reminded the Board that the “insurrection of the Negroes has been but lately quell’d” and decried the island’s dearth of regular troops, the dilapidated state of its fortifications, and, their recent experience combating rebel slaves notwithstanding, the “ill train’d” state of its militia.⁵⁷⁶ The message to London was clear: Jamaica’s deficient defensive forces had barely been able to suppress the recent slave unrest; should France or Spain initiate an assault, Jamaica would likely fall into their hands.

Rebellion” on October 12, 1761, though sporadic skirmishes with outlying rebels continued after that date. JAJ, October 12, 1761, CO 140/40, f. 261, TNA.

⁵⁷⁵ *London Chronicle*, March 4-6, 1762. Thistlewood noted on August 16th that “it is Said a Thousand People are allready gone off, upon account of the Negroes Rebelling.” Thistlewood Diary, August 16, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers. For another article lamenting the military weakness of Jamaica, see *London Chronicle*, July 15-17, 1760.

⁵⁷⁶ Lyttelton to the Board of Trade, January 26, 1762, CO 137/32, ff. 98-99, TNA. See also Lyttelton to Secretary of State Charles Wyndham, Earl of Egremont, January 26, 1762, CO 137/61, ff. 58-59, TNA.

Following the 1760-61 slave revolts, Jamaica's authorities cast about for someone to blame for the "defenceless state" of their island as they took steps to solidify its strength. Noting that the uprisings had begun on the estates of absentee planters, they attempted to impose stiffer penalties on those who did not retain on their estates the number of white servants required by deficiency laws. They passed stronger militia laws to prevent those white men who did reside in Jamaica from evading their duty to defend it and they repeatedly petitioned the British Crown for additional regiments of regular troops.⁵⁷⁷ As they had failed to secure Jamaica in the past, many knew such measures would not be enough to defend the island's Whites from their internal and external enemies in the future. Having witnessed the formidable military skills of both "disloyal" and "loyal" people of African descent in the late slave rebellions, colonial officials enacted policies and initiated proposals in an effort to ensure that henceforth, black Jamaicans employ their military prowess not on their own behalf, but solely in service to the colonial order.

Taking to heart rumors that their Akan slaves had vowed to "wage perpetual war against their enemies," Jamaica's planters and political officials remained convinced that their troubles had not ended with the suppression of the 1760-61 insurrections.⁵⁷⁸

Thomas Thistlewood repeated a proverb often cited in the aftermath of the uprisings:

⁵⁷⁷ See, for instance, the Jamaica Assembly's "address to the King concerning the need for more troops, as evinced by the late rebellion," which noted in defense of the proposed strengthening of Jamaica's deficiency law "that many gentlemen of large properties in this island, are non-residents, whose influence over their slaves, if resident, would, in all probability, contribute greatly to the prevention of such mischiefs, arising from rebellious conspiracies and insurrections" and argued for the need for additional regiments by commenting that "the insufficiency of the number the regular troops in this island hath, by fatal experience, in the late dangerous rebellions, been fully evinced." JAJ, December 15, 1760, CO 140/40, f. 244, TNA.

⁵⁷⁸ Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 473.

“One thousand seven hundred and Sixty Three, Jamaica no more, an Island Shall be (not for the Whites).”⁵⁷⁹ Such dire predictions of future peril were in no doubt fueled by the admonitions of condemned rebel slaves like Cardiff, “who was burnt at the Bay,” but before expiring informed the spectators “that Multitudes of Negroes had took Swear that if they failed of Success in this Rebellion, to rise again the Same day two years, and advised them to be upon their guard.”⁵⁸⁰ The reports of revolt that continued to circulate among white Jamaicans likely exacerbated their anxiety. In April 1763, Governor Lyttelton attempted to tour the island but “was obliged to return [to Spanish Town] having . . . received accounts that two Plantations in the Parishes of Westmoreland and Hanover had been attack’d and three or four White Persons slain by parties of Negroes which are the remains of those that were in Rebellion during the Administration of Lieutenant Governor Moore.”⁵⁸¹ Despite official claims that the rebellions had been fully suppressed, white Jamaicans remained apprehensive about the threat posed by their slaves.

In an effort to prevent future uprisings, Jamaica’s officials passed a series of acts meant to curtail slaves’ mobility and access to arms as well as their ability to assemble or to practice obeah.⁵⁸² These measures had but limited success. Thomas Thistlewood

⁵⁷⁹ Thistlewood Diary, September 24, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

⁵⁸⁰ Thistlewood Diary, September 2, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers. On December 4, 1760, Thistlewood recorded that Crawford’s Tacky had been overheard saying, “I was not in the last Rebellion, but in this the Buckrah Shall See Something.” Thistlewood reminded himself that “In the last Rebellion Apongo Said, Crawford’s Tackie, promis’d bringing him a great Body of Choice hands.” Thistlewood Diary, December 4, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

⁵⁸¹ Lyttelton to the Board of Trade, April 12, 1763, CO 137/33, ff. 28-29, TNA.

⁵⁸² JAJ, December 6, 1760, CO 140/40, f. 234 and JAJ, December 16, 1760, CO 140/40, f. 245, TNA. This legislation was entitled, “An Act to Remedy the Evils arising from Irregular Assemblies of Slaves and to prevent their possessing Arms and Ammunition and going from Place to Place without Tickets, and for preventing the Practice of Obeah, and to restrain Overseers from Leaving the Estates under their Care on

noted during the thick of the Westmoreland revolt, “Negroes begin to ride and Walk about in the Night again, without Ticketts” and again four months later, “But one Negroe come to me for a Ticket, the rest go without, no person questioning them! 500 Negroes in the Road to Leeward every Sunday with plantanes, &c., few have Ticketts.”⁵⁸³ Yet, although he did adhere to the requirement that slaves be issued passes to trade provisions on Sundays, neither Thistlewood nor his neighbors abided by the restrictions on the arming of slaves. Planters repeatedly armed their slaves and sent them out on their own to hunt game, seek rebels and runaways, and to defend their plantations from possible assault. Such local practices did not cease with the passage of legislation for the better governance of slaves, nor could they, for slaveholders continued to depend on the allegiance and military contributions of their slaves. Upon learning in November 1762 that “the French or Spaniards . . . took 15 (Some Say 20 others 27) Negroes, Men,

certain Days and to oblige all free Negroes Mulatoes or Indians to Register their Names in the vestry Books of the respective Parishes of this Island, and to carry about them the Certificate and wear the Badge of their Freedom and to prevent any Captain Master or SuperCargoe of any Vessell bringing back Slaves Transported of the Island.” “Sir Mathew Lamb’s Report upon Ten Acts passed in Jamaica in October, November and December 1760,” November 4, 1761, CO 137/32, ff. 78-81. See also, “Sir Mathew Lamb’s Report upon Twenty five Acts passed in Jamaica between October 1761 and April 1762,” November 8, 1762, CO 137/33, ff. 17-19, TNA and Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 463. The Assembly also attempted to better monitor the slaves’ market in Kingston by appointing and paying guards “to prevent, as much as possible, any disorders or disturbances amongst them, and to frustrate and defeat any of their evil purposes or designs.” JAJ, October 14, 1761, CO 140/40, f. 265, TNA. On the purported role of obeah and obeahmen in the 1760-61 revolts, see Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 416-7, 451, 465, 473.

⁵⁸³ Thistlewood Diary, July 27 and November 9, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers. Thistlewood mentioned with likely some envy of French policy that “It is Said 6000 Negroes rebell’d in Hispaniola, and that the French there have made a Law for them to be hang’d up immediately, when off their owner Land without a Ticket.” Thistlewood Diary, December 20, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers. Perhaps in an additional effort to curtail the communication of slaves, when Thistlewood discovered “Driver Johnie drumming at the Negroe house last Night,” he “Flogg’d him for it.” Thistlewood Diary, December 23, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers. Thistlewood may have been especially vigilant because Johnie was drumming so close to a holiday, a time when Whites expected slave disorders. In fact, just weeks before Thistlewood mentioned that “Mr. Cope shew’d me an Order from the governour to Col. Barclay, that the Militia must Patrole (horse & Foot) Christmas Week & the Preceding & Subsequent Weeks, to allow no Meetings of Negroes and no Negroe to be off his Plantation without a Tickett.” Thistlewood Diary, December 11, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

Women, and Children Clear off, besides Some Fishermen, &c.” from Colonel James Barclay’s estate, and that the Spaniards had “robbed Bluefields lately,” Thistlewood once again armed his slaves to defend Egypt.⁵⁸⁴ Thistlewood and Barclay agreed to pool their resources to protect their plantations from the threat of foreign attack. Thistlewood recorded that “the Col. agreed to Send 2 hands every Night to watch at Cabretto Bridge, and we 2. Begin to Night. I Sent Cubbina & dago, and Col. Barclay 2, one of his and one of our Watch at a Time, have each a gun, which (should the Enemy appear) They are to fire, and then run each home, to give notice, &c.” Armed enslaved drivers continued to patrol Cabarita Bridge for the remainder of the year.⁵⁸⁵ Jamaica’s slaveholders had little choice but to persist in entrusting their security to select enslaved men.

Indeed, writing in the wake of Jamaica’s slave revolts and the Seven Years’ War, Edward Long reasoned that in the event of a foreign invasion of Jamaica, the best “means of preventing a dangerous revolt, as well as of preserving the property of the island to its natural owners” would be to free and arm a certain proportion of the island’s “sensible, able, and trusty” slaves. He warned that if Jamaica’s slaves were to accept the “alluring promises of freedom” that would assuredly be offered by the island’s invaders, they “would not only strengthen the enemy’s forces, but exceedingly weaken our defence, by the services and intelligence to be gained from such a body of deserters, well acquainted with the country and the condition of their masters.” In order to ensure that Jamaica’s slaves serve their masters as opposed to the intruders, Long recommended making it

⁵⁸⁴ Thistlewood Diary, November 2 and 28, 1762, Monson 31/13, Reel M-1594.4, Thistlewood Family Papers.

⁵⁸⁵ Thistlewood Diary, November 28–December 26, 1762, Monson 31/13, Reel M-1594.4, Thistlewood Family Papers.

worth the slaves' while to remain loyal to their owners. He advised that "a certain number of them might be set free, and properly armed; and an assurance given, under sanction of the public faith, that, in the event of their gallant and honest behaviour, they should receive a further reward." Long proposed that 10,000 of Jamaica's 55,000 able male slaves, preferably "tradesmen, drivers, and other head men," be selected to serve the country and maintained they would be "extremely serviceable, more particularly in nocturnal surprises, harassing skirmishes, and ambuscading."⁵⁸⁶

Though many enslaved soldiers had ably defended Jamaica against its internal and external enemies during the Seven Years' War, colonial officials remained troubled by the potential costs of depending upon slaves for their security. Stories proliferated of seemingly loyal slaves who had betrayed their owners' confidence when entrusted with arms during the late rebellions. In one instance, twelve Akan slaves "whom their master, from too good an opinion of their fidelity, had imprudently armed at their own earnest intreaty," "deserted to their countrymen" when their owner sent them "in quest of a small detached band of rebels."⁵⁸⁷ Arming slaves could prove costly in terms of expenditures as well as security, making them a problematic military resource for the colonial government. Unwilling to part with their laborers, many slaveholders had refused to furnish enslaved men to join the companies sent in pursuit of rebel slaves.⁵⁸⁸ Those slaveholders who did supply their requisite quota of slaves required reimbursement in the

⁵⁸⁶ Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 1, 133-35.

⁵⁸⁷ Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 456. For a similar story of armed slaves betraying their owner's trust, see Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 452.

⁵⁸⁸ Lieutenant Governor Moore complained to the Assembly in November 1761 that "no penalty is laid on persons refusing or neglecting to send their proportion of slaves, required by the late act entitled, 'An act for raising and fitting out parties, &c' the officers have not only been put to very great difficulties in fitting

event of the death or disablement of their property. Zachary Bayly received £80 for “a negro man slave, named Galbo” who “was sent out against the rebels, in the late rebellion in St. Mary’s, and was shot in one of the engagements with the rebels.”⁵⁸⁹ Likewise, Sir Alexander Grant collected £70 from the government after Creole Charles, his enslaved wainman and boiler, was “killed in action” upon being “sent out as one of an armed party . . . against the rebellious negroes of Tacky’s gang.”⁵⁹⁰ Disbursements to slaveholders as well as to slaves who faithfully protected the island proved prohibitive. After mid-century, Jamaica’s white leaders continued their limited reliance upon enslaved soldiers, only fully embracing the large-scale arming of slaves in times of crisis.

Cognizant of the drawbacks of arming slaves and yet knowing that they would never be able to muster enough white men to defend against forthcoming foreign assaults or slave revolts, Jamaica’s authorities devised ways to ensure that those free men of African descent who had subdued the rebel slaves in 1760-61 would be available and willing to perform such tasks again in future. In an effort to determine “the merits of the king’s negroes who acted against the negroes in rebellion at leeward, and what further reward they should receive,” Jamaican officials investigated the conduct of the Maroons during the revolt and found that military commanders agreed that they had done “their duty well.” One captain testified that the Maroons “did good service during the late rebellion, having in one action in which he was present, killed twelve or fifteen

out parties, but have lost frequent opportunities of serving the country, by the delays which these neglects have occasioned.” JAJ, November 11, 1761, CO 140/40, f. 283, TNA.

⁵⁸⁹ JAJ, December 9, 1760, CO 140/40, f. 236, TNA.

⁵⁹⁰ JAJ, December 5, 1761, CO 140/40, f. 310, TNA. For further examples of compensation being made to owners of slaves killed in engagements with the rebels, see JAJ, November 4, 1761, CO 140/40, f. 279, TNA and JAJ, November 12, 1761, CO 140/40, f. 284, TNA.

negroes.”⁵⁹¹ Long avowed that the Maroons had “been very serviceable, particularly the leeward parties, in suppressing several insurrections” and “were the principal instruments employed in suppressing [the 1760-61] insurrection.” Moreover, he contended that the Maroons helped prevent revolts, as “the seeds of rebellion were in a great measure rendered abortive, by the activity of the Marons, who scoured the woods, and apprehended all straggling and vagabond slaves, that from time to time deserted from their owners.”⁵⁹²

Because they deemed the Maroons’ martial assistance essential, Jamaican authorities likely found worrisome the independence and self-assurance with which the Maroons had negotiated on their own behalf during the late rebellions. Over the course of their inquiry into the Maroons’ conduct, the Assembly learned that in Westmoreland parish, the Maroons “were somewhat discontented and mutinous,” which their informant attributed to “the want of being regularly paid, and from a suspicion that there was a preference given to the slave shot.” The witness testified “that they afterwards went out, sometimes upon parties, and behaved well, but seemed discontented for want of their money, and at other times refused to go out against the rebels.” In one particular instance, three Westmoreland planters had been forced to “give the [Maroons] twenty shillings per head for all the negroes they had killed in the late rebellion, over and above what they had received” from the Assembly to encourage them to engage the rebel slaves who had threatened their plantations.⁵⁹³ Long recounted a similar situation in St. Mary

⁵⁹¹ JAJ, November 6, 1761, CO 140/40, f. 281 and JAJ, November 12, 1761, CO 140/40, f. 284, TNA.

⁵⁹² Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 347, 445, 447.

⁵⁹³ The Assembly agreed in this instance to reimburse the planters the £115 they had paid the Maroons. JAJ, November 12, 1761, CO 140/40, f. 284, TNA.

parish in which the Scott's Hall Maroons, "under pretence that some arrears were due to them, and that they had not been regularly paid their head-money allowed by law, for every run-away taken up, . . . refused to proceed against the rebels, unless a collection was immediately made for them." A group of desperate planters "submitted to comply with this extraordinary demand, rather than delay the service." Upon receiving their payment, the Maroons "marched, and had one engagement with the rebels, in which they killed a few."⁵⁹⁴ Confident that the colonists deemed their military services indispensable, the Maroons demanded the compensation that was legally due them as well as a bit extra if they found they could wrangle it. Jamaica's planters and political leaders may well have been discomfited at finding themselves obliged to comply with what they deemed the Maroons' "pretenses" and "extraordinary demands." In an effort to stem what they considered a "dangerous practice," the Assembly resolved not to compensate private citizens for payments they made to the Maroons.⁵⁹⁵

Jamaica's white leaders may have found equally disturbing the rumors that the 1760-61 insurrectionists had been inspired by the example of the free and proud Maroons. Long listed as one of the causes for the slave rebellions "a remote hope of some Negroes, who, having heard of the freedom granted to the Marons after their obstinate resistance of several years, expected, perhaps, that by a course of successful opposition they might obtain the like terms in the end, and a distinct settlement in some quarter of the island."⁵⁹⁶ Long's postulation was likely based upon reports such as one

⁵⁹⁴ Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 451.

⁵⁹⁵ JAJ, November 12, 1761, CO 140/40, f. 284, TNA.

⁵⁹⁶ Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 444. Long added that "A principal inducement to the formation of this scheme of conquest was, the happy circumstance of the *Marons*; who, they observed, had acquired very

Thomas Thistlewood heard from a neighbor in 1760. Thistlewood recorded in his diary that “the Rebels give out they will kill all the Negroes they Can, and Soon as dry [Weather] Comes, fire all the Plantations they Can, till they force the Whites to give them Free like Cudjoe’s Negroes.”⁵⁹⁷ The island’s planters and political officials likely found disquieting both that they could not completely control the Maroons upon whom they relied and that their slaves were well aware of this state of affairs. Also perturbing may have been the possibility that armed rebels could be mistaken for Maroons, and thus be afforded an undeserved leniency. Thistlewood noted an instance in which Thomas Torrent suspected that “Two Negroes with guns” who arrived at his plantation were only “pretending to be Cudjoes people.” He “order’d one off them to be Siez’d, upon which he resisted, Kill’d one off Mr. Torrents dogs with his Cutlass, snap’t his piece at Mr. Torrent, and made his escape from 4 Armed Negroes.”⁵⁹⁸ The Maroons thus served as valuable allies, but also ones whose very existence served to subvert the racial order that white Jamaicans counted upon them to enforce.

Despite their concerns about the Maroons’ autonomy and the example they set for discontented slaves, Jamaican colonists continued to depend upon them as the first line of defense against rebellious slaves. The Assembly repeatedly renewed acts to encourage the Maroons to pursue rebel and runaway slaves.⁵⁹⁹ In early 1763, a group of Westmoreland planters feared that a series of offensive actions by a band of armed rebels augured “some Conspiracy among our Plantation Negroes may be in agitation.” Colonel

comfortable settlements, and a life of freedom and ease, by dint of their prowess.” Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 447-48.

⁵⁹⁷ Thistlewood Diary, August 1, 1760, Monson 31/11, Reel M-1594.3, Thistlewood Family Papers.

⁵⁹⁸ Thistlewood Diary, March 16, 1761, Monson 31/12, Reel M-1594.4, Thistlewood Family Papers.

William Lewis wrote to Governor Lyttelton informing him that ten days earlier he had “sent an Express to [Superintendent Jonathan] Scot[t] desiring him to send me all the Shot Negroes he could possibly raise from Trelawny Town,” but that as yet he had “not received a single Negroe.” Lewis complained that “their not coming entirely frustrates the Plan I had formed for putting an end to these Disturbances,” fretting, “I hope your Letter to Mr. Scot will bring him and all the Maroons down to our Assistance or I know not what we shall do.” Lewis later learned from Scott that “some of the Trelawny Town Negroes absolutely refused coming to Westmorland as there was some Arrearage of what has been promised to be paid them.” In an echo of the pattern that had been established during the 1760-61 rebellions, “in order to remove every occasion of their Discontent,” Lewis “raised £62 by a Voluntary Subscription to pay those Negroes what Mr. Scot said was due to them” so “the Country might not lose their Service.”⁶⁰⁰

Faced with what they no doubt considered impertinent and exorbitant demands, some planters and political leaders began to suspect that the Maroons’ objectives no longer aligned with their own. In late 1765, a fresh insurrection of slaves led by Blackwall, “who had been tried formerly on suspicion of being concerned in the rebellion of 1760, and acquitted for want of sufficient evidence,” began in St. Mary parish.⁶⁰¹ The parish’s planters speedily suppressed the revolt and interrogated captured rebels, some of

⁵⁹⁹ See, for instance, JAJ, September 30, 1762, CO 140/40, f. 345-46; JAJ, October 18, 1763, CO 140/40, f. 392; JAJ, November 3, 1763, CO 140/40, f. 402; and JAJ, October 31, 1764, CO 140/40, f. 479, TNA.

⁶⁰⁰ Jamaica Council Minutes, April 5, 1763, CO 140/42, TNA. Lyttelton informed the Board of Trade that in response to “accounts that two Plantations in the Parishes of Westmoreland and Hanover had been attack’d and three or four White Persons slain by parties of Negroes,” in addition to calling for the enforcement of the Militia Acts and the laws for the governance of slaves, he had “sent Orders for the March of the King’s Free Negroes.” Lyttelton to the Board of Trade, April 12, 1763, CO 137/33, ff. 28-29, TNA.

⁶⁰¹ Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 465.

whom alleged that “the Negroes at Scots Hall were to have joined them.”⁶⁰² Planter Zachary Bayly investigated the conspirators’ claim that the “Maroon Negroes were concerned, with our Slaves, in conspiring the late Insurrections” and informed Governor William Henry Lyttelton that none of the interviewers of the slaves “give the least Credit to what was said on that Subject.”⁶⁰³ Edward Long later commented that most Jamaican colonists found the “insinuations that the *Marons* were in the secret” incredible, as “it appeared not at all likely that the *Marons*, who had always received the highest encouragement from the legislature and private persons, would hazard the loss of their liberty and lives, by a treasonable breach of the treaty; and upon uncertain issue of an intestine war.” Long repeated the widely-held supposition that the enslaved rebels’ allegations against the Maroons were “the result of a deep-laid policy, to stir up jealousy and difference between the *Marons* and white people.” Though they did not believe that the Maroons could actually be truly in league with the slaves, some white leaders speculated that the Maroons had indeed conspired with the slaves “from a wicked design of embroiling the Coromantins in fresh rebellion, in the suppression of which they might reap a considerable emolument, as they had heretofore experienced, by killing or taking prisoners.”⁶⁰⁴ The Maroons’ conduct during the slave revolts of the early 1760s renewed white Jamaicans’ respect for their military prowess, but also led them to question the

⁶⁰² Simon Taylor to Chaloner Arcedeckne, December 9, 1765, Vanneck-Arc/3A/1765/18, Reel 1, *Plantation Life in the Caribbean, Part I: Jamaica, c. 1765-1848*, The Taylor and Vanneck-Arcedeckne Papers from Cambridge University Library and the Institute of Commonwealth Studies, University of London. Microfilm read at the Benson Latin American Collection, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX.

⁶⁰³ When Bayly questioned the condemned slaves himself, he found “that there was not the least colour of a charge against the Cotta Wood or Maroon negroes.” Zachary Bayly to William Henry Lyttelton, December 1765, William Henry Lyttelton Papers, William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, MI.

⁶⁰⁴ Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 468-69.

wisdom of relying upon men they had come to perceive as costly, unruly, and potentially disruptive to the island's racial hierarchy.⁶⁰⁵

Disquiet over the Maroons' fierce autonomy and financial ultimatums as well as concern about the model of independent black freedom they presented to slaves may have inspired calls to groom a different population of free Blacks as a more malleable police force for Jamaica. Long maintained that a corps of free Blacks and Mulattoes akin to the French runaway-slave-hunting *maréchaussée* would "form a proper counter-balance to the Maron Negroes; whose insolence, during formidable insurrections, has been most insufferable." He avowed that "the best way of securing the allegiance of these irregular people must be by preserving the treaty with them inviolate: and, at the same time, awing them into the conservation of it on their part by such a powerful equipoise, composed of men dissimilar from them in complexion, but equal in hardiness and vigour."⁶⁰⁶

Disturbed by the Maroons' independence, in the wake of the 1760-61 insurrections colonial officials took steps to develop the free black and mulatto population of Jamaica as an alternative and perhaps more governable military underclass who could serve both to monitor the island's slaves and to offset the power of the Maroons.

⁶⁰⁵ By 1776, Jamaica Governor Basil Keith declared to Secretary of State Lord George Germain that the Maroons' "conduct in the late Insurrection of the Slaves sufficiently proved that they are not to be depended upon." Keith to Germain, August 6, 1776, CO 137/71, f. 230, TNA, quoted in Mullin, *Africa in America*, 49.

⁶⁰⁶ Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 334-35. On the French arming of Blacks, see Laurent DuBois, "Citizen Soldiers: Emancipation and Military Service in the Revolutionary French Caribbean," in *Arming Slaves from Classical Times to the Modern Age*, ed. Christopher Leslie Brown and Philip D. Morgan (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006); Garrigus, *Before Haiti*; David Geggus, "The Arming of Slaves in the Haitian Revolution," in *Arming Slaves from Classical Times to the Modern Age*, ed. Brown and Morgan; Stewart King, *Blue Coat or Powdered Wig: Free People of Color in Pre-Revolutionary Saint Domingue* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2001); and Shelby T. McCloy, *The Negro in the French West Indies* (Lexington: University of Kentucky Press, 1966).

Free Blacks and Mulattoes had proven themselves reliable and skilled defenders of Jamaica during the 1760-61 slave rebellions. Indeed, planters and political leaders considered free Blacks so vital to Jamaica's defense that they were loath to part with them when the British Army attempted to raise a company of 500 free black soldiers for the expedition against Havana in 1762. Only 139 of the requested 500 free Blacks helped lay siege to the Spanish city, instigating a spate of transatlantic recriminations over whom to blame for Jamaica's dereliction of duty. Governor William Henry Lyttelton defended his efforts to raise the corps of free Blacks to George Grenville, alleging that Speaker of the Assembly Charles Price had been "an Enemy to the undertaking of raising the Regiment," for he considered free Blacks to be "the best barrier the People here had against their Slaves, & that if many of them were carried off the Island it wou'd be very hurtfull to it."⁶⁰⁷ Lyttelton contended to Secretary of State, Charles Wyndham, the Earl of Egremont, that "had it been the inclination of the Gentry here to serve & encourage the Free Negroes to inlist, I shou'd probably have sent more than one Company to the Havannah." He informed Egremont that he had been repeatedly warned by the island's military commanders that the plan to export Jamaica's valuable free black soldiers was "impracticable" as "the Inhabitants in general were averse to it." Lyttelton observed that Jamaica's free Blacks "are found so serviceable in quiet times from the Trades they exercise, & in case of any commotion among the Slaves, from the attachment they have

⁶⁰⁷ Lyttelton to George Grenville, January 11, 1763, Box 22, Folder 64, Stowe Grenville Collection, HL. Lyttelton told Grenville that he had given military commissions to the officers of a "body of Free Negroes that were incorporated by [Lieutenant Governor Henry Moore] & were particularly serviceable at that time in defending the property of the White People there & assisting to reduce the Slaves, for which reason I wish'd to engage them to inlist in the intended Regiment, as being Men allready in some measure aguerried," but the officers "declined accepting them." He suggested to Grenville that Moore had

to the white people, that I found but few persons here dispos'd to excite them to quit this country & go upon a Service from which many of them were likely never to return."⁶⁰⁸ Nor were free Blacks themselves willing to risk the possibility of enslavement by leaving Jamaica "as the majority of the free People are Tradesmen, and get a tolerable Livelihood and have Families and small habitations of their own, therefore wou'd not chuse to leave them for any Uncertainty."⁶⁰⁹ Over the course of the 1760-61 revolts, white Jamaicans had come to depend upon free Blacks and Mulattoes as defenders of their individual estates and the island as a whole.

Colonial officials' recognition of their reliance upon free black soldiers encouraged them to restrict rather than expand free Blacks' civil and political rights. In the aftermath of the rebellions, the Jamaica Assembly passed legislation requiring "all free Negroes Mulatoes or Indians to Register their Names in the vestry Books of the respective Parishes of this Island, and to carry about them the Certificate and wear the Badge of their Freedom."⁶¹⁰ Beyond striving for the better identification and regulation of the free black population, the Assembly also sought to limit free Blacks' right to inherit property or to protect that which they already owned. Whereas prior to 1761, the Assembly had awarded those Mulattoes who were the beneficiaries of private acts

discouraged the free Blacks' enlistment for the expedition in an attempt to retain them as defenders of his plantation and parish.

⁶⁰⁸ Lyttelton to Egremont, January 11, 1763, CO 137/61, ff. 149-50, TNA.

⁶⁰⁹ The Commanding Officer of the Kingston Regiment of Militia to Lyttelton, April 8, 1762, enclosed in Lyttelton to Egremont, January 11, 1763, CO 137/61, ff. 161-62, TNA.

⁶¹⁰ "Sir Mathew Lamb's Report upon Ten Acts passed in Jamaica in October, November and December 1760," November 4, 1761, CO 137/32, ff. 78-81, TNA. See also "Sir Mathew Lamb's Report upon Twenty five Acts passed in Jamaica between October 1761 and April 1762," November 8, 1762, CO 137/33, ff. 17-19, TNA and Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 321 and 463. As a result of this legislation, William Donaldson, the secretary to the governor of Jamaica, received compensation for affixing the governor's seal to 2,671 certificates of freedom for free Blacks in late 1761. JAJ, April 3, 1761, CO 140/40, f. 256; JAJ, April 4, 1761, CO 140/40, f. 257; and JAJ, November 4, 1761, CO 140/40, f. 279, TNA.

affording them the same privileges as Whites the right to testify in civil as well as criminal proceedings, after 1761 the Assembly denied such petitioners the privilege of defending their property in civil suits.⁶¹¹ In October 1761, just as Lieutenant Governor Henry Moore declared the total suppression of the slave rebellions, the Assembly appointed a committee “to bring in a bill to prevent the inconveniencies and mischiefs that may arise, from gifts and devises to mulattoes and negroes” – chief among them the subversion of the island’s racial order. The committee’s members spent the following year researching the extent of the property white Jamaicans had bequeathed to their illegitimate black or mulatto children and drawing up legislation to limit such inheritances to £2,000 currency.⁶¹² The resulting “Act to prevent the Inconveniencies arising from Exorbitant Grants and Devises made by White Persons to Negroes and the Issue of Negroes and to Restrain and Limit such Grants and Devises” took “away the Right of Persons in Giving and Disposing of their own Estates and Properties according to their own Wills and Intentions.”⁶¹³ It thus necessitated a defense of the Assembly’s authority to restrict the rights of its citizens in the name of preserving Jamaica’s racial hierarchy.

Edward Long spent several pages of his 1774 *History of Jamaica* defending the legislation limiting the inheritances of illegitimate Blacks and Mulattoes as a means of discouraging miscegenation and encouraging in its stead marriage and procreation among Whites, but it is evident that he and others saw a benefit to the military as well as the

⁶¹¹ Samuel J. Hurwitz and Edith F. Hurwitz, “A Token of Freedom: Private Bill Legislation for Free Negroes in Eighteenth-Century Jamaica,” *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd series, 24 (July 1967): 430.

⁶¹² JAJ, October 23, 1761, CO 140/40, f. 273; JAJ, December 17, 1761, CO 140/40, ff. 315-16; JAJ, September 30, 1762, CO 140/40, ff. 344-45; and JAJ, November 16, 1762, CO 140/40, ff. 376-77, TNA.

moral order in Jamaica by constraining free Blacks' property rights.⁶¹⁴ Lovell Stanhope, Jamaica's agent in London, penned a strong defense of the act, arguing that in addition to preserving the racial hierarchy in Jamaica, impeding free Blacks' accumulation of property would enable the island to retain them as useful defenders of the country. Stanhope observed that "it would be unfit that [a free Black] should bear Office either Civil or Military, since it would be impossible for him to enforce Obedience in such Offices with White People." Yet, the inability of free Blacks to hold civil or military office meant that "such Mulattoes as have large Estates, being exempt, by their Fortune, from serving in a low Station in the defence of their Country, and incapable by Law of serving in a higher" would inevitably become "useless Members of Society" from a military standpoint. Stanhope maintained that if free Blacks' "Fortunes are not large, it will be their Interest to remain upon the Island where they can make more Interest of it" while "experience has shewn" that wealthy free Blacks "will haste to a Country where Riches make all Colours equal."⁶¹⁵ Thus, it would be in Jamaica's best interest to limit the ability of free Blacks to become wealthy and either desert the island or remain within it without military efficacy. In order to retain its free black population as a martial

⁶¹³ "Sir Mathew Lamb's Report upon Twenty five Acts passed in Jamaica between October 1761 and April 1762," November 8, 1762, CO 137/33, ff. 17-19, TNA.

⁶¹⁴ Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 323-27.

⁶¹⁵ "Reasons in Support of the Bill to restrain exorbitant Grants to Negroes &c and Answers to the Protest of three of the Members of the Council in Jamaica," enclosed in Lovell Stanhope to the Board of Trade, June 13, 1763, CO 137/33, ff. 34-43, TNA. Similarly, Long observed in his treatise that many wealthy white fathers of black children sent their offspring to England to be educated, where, rather than "being taught any mechanic art, whereby they might become useful to the island, and enabled to support themselves," they instead received an education that rendered it impossible for them to accept the legal restrictions Jamaica placed upon them. Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 322, 328-29. Long remarked that such wealthy "Mulatto offspring desert and impoverish" Jamaica and maintained that it would be better for the island if some means could be established of retaining free Blacks as a more serviceable population. Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 332.

resource, the Jamaica Assembly needed to do all in its power to restrict free Blacks' access to property and wealth.

Sufficiently disenfranchised, free Blacks and Mulattoes could constitute the military class that colonial authorities so desperately desired to police Jamaica's slaves and otherwise uphold its racial hierarchy. Edward Long noticed that the "lower class of [Mulattoes], who remain in the island, are a hardy race, capable of undergoing equal fatigue with the Blacks, above whom (in point of due policy) they ought to hold some degree of distinction." He imagined Mulattoes as "the centre of connexion between two extremes" of white and black, "producing a regular establishment of three ranks of men, dependent on each other, and rising in a proper climax of subordination, in which the Whites would hold the highest place."⁶¹⁶ Remarking that he could "foresee no mischief that can arise from the enfranchisement of every Mulatto child," Long suggested that mulatto slaves might eventually be emancipated and educated to serve as a third caste of free tradesmen, landowners, and, importantly, soldiers. Following an apprenticeship in a trade, a mulatto man would be "regimented in his district" and "when on militia or other public duty, paid the same subsistence per day, or week, that is now allowed to the Marons." Implying that a free mulatto militia would liberate Jamaica from its dual dependence upon the Maroons and British regulars, Long asserted that "the expediency must be seen of having (as in the French island) such a corps of active men, ready to scour the woods upon all occasions; a service, in which the regulars are by no means equal to them."⁶¹⁷

⁶¹⁶ Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 332-33.

⁶¹⁷ Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 2, 333-34.

Though he did not suppose Jamaica was ready to implement his plan for the emancipation of mulatto slaves, Long did advocate the immediate creation of a permanent free black and mulatto militia to be deployed in the interior of the island against rebellious and runaway slaves. He suggested that 500 able free black men between ages fifteen and forty-five be selected by lot every three years to serve in small platoons in “the most remote and unfrequented parts of the island.” Their “constant duty” would be to search for “fugitive slaves” and “to suppress all cabals or assemblies of Negroes, and by this means quash in embryo the seeds of sedition and rebellion.”⁶¹⁸ Long conceived of these black rangers as irregular troops and as such directed that they be “perfected as marksmen, by being taught to fire at various elevations, as well as at point blank distance from heights and up hill” and “instructed in the nature of bush-fighting, and in the proper manner of cleaning and taking care of their arms.”⁶¹⁹ He recommended that they, like the Maroons they were meant to replace, receive a bounty for each runaway slave they apprehended.⁶²⁰ Additionally, the free black soldiers would be clothed, armed, accoutered, housed, and paid by the public, but unlike for white militiamen, their martial service would not be optional. Long recognized that some might object to the notion of compulsory military service for free men, especially those with trades and families to attend to, and he allowed that it might be politic to attempt to complete the free black corps with volunteers as opposed to draftees.⁶²¹ But Long added

⁶¹⁸ Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 1, 146, 140.

⁶¹⁹ Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 1, 147.

⁶²⁰ Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 1, 153.

⁶²¹ Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 1, 150. Long no doubt knew that a 1730 act of the Jamaica Assembly enabling the government to draft free Blacks “to go upon all emergencies in pursuance after rebellious negros, at the command of any magistrate, or military officer” had been called “inequitable” by the

this supposition as an afterthought. He envisioned free black soldiers as the solution to Jamaica's insecurity because he imagined they could be ordered to serve the island in ways that had proven unsuccessful with the Whites and Maroons of Jamaica. He proposed that they serve as soldiers without regard to their will and noted that their "commanding officer should have it in his power to lock them up at nights, to prevent disorders and irregularity," but, in an attempt to ensure that their exploitation be for the benefit of the public and not any particular private good, counseled that any officer who employed the free black soldiers on a plantation, pen, or pasture ground be suitably punished.⁶²² Precisely because they had come to consider free Blacks and Mulattoes beneficial and dependable allies, Jamaica's authorities circumscribed their liberty and mobility in the name of the public good.

* * * * *

Though over a thousand enslaved Blacks seized upon the opportunities created by the Seven Years' War to rebel against their owners, they likely did not do so as part of a unified, ethnic plan to seize the island, as apprehensive white Jamaicans at the time believed. Edward Long perpetuated the notion that an integrated Akan conspiracy underlay the slave agitation of the 1760s because it suited his objective of attributing the unrest to a minority of especially belligerent slaves rather the brutality of slaveholders. Attention to the context of global imperial war reveals an alternative narrative of the insurrections as well as the full range of Blacks' actions in the face of white Jamaicans' wartime hysteria. Simultaneously beset by internal and external enemies, white

Board of Trade and had been subsequently disallowed by an Order in Council. Hurwitz and Hurwitz, "A Token of Freedom," 428.

Jamaicans saw themselves as the victims of a belligerent and steadfast minority of their slaves; in their panic, they unearthed evidence of their Akan slaves' betrayal in parishes throughout the island. Individual enslaved and free Blacks exploited both the wartime attenuation of Jamaica's martial strength and the anxiety of white Jamaicans to assert their military authority in the island, in many cases opting to bolster rather than assail the colonial order.

In showing themselves to be skilled and determined soldiers during the mid-century insurrections, both rebel slaves and those black soldiers who subdued them cemented Jamaica's military reliance upon men of African descent. But Jamaican officials learned from the crisis that some black soldiers were a more reliable police force for the island than others. Uncertain of their fidelity and certain of their expense, political leaders continued to regard slaves as appropriately armed only in times of crisis. Colonial authorities began to view the Maroons as excessively demanding, dangerously independent, and potentially disruptive to the racial hierarchy they were attempting to buttress in the aftermath of the slave revolts and the Seven Years' War. Considering free Blacks and Mulattoes a more malleable choice, political leaders took steps to ensure their martial contributions to the island by curbing their ability to advance themselves through the accumulation of property and wealth. Yet, Jamaican officials had no intention of enabling free Blacks and Mulattoes to benefit substantially from their right to wield violence on behalf of the colonial order. Having ascertained from their experience with the Maroons that the military could be means to power for free people of African descent,

⁶²² Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 1, 147, 154.

Jamaica's authorities took care to guarantee that free Blacks' martial service would not enable them to escape the confines of their caste.

Chapter 6: The British Empire's "Sable Arm": Black Rebels and Soldiers in the Seven Years' War and Postwar Antislavery

"Black Sons of Hydra"

In 1746, the anonymous author of *An essay concerning slavery, and the danger Jamaica is expos'd to from the too great number of slaves* warned that if drastic measures were not immediately taken, Britain would soon lose control of its richest colony, spelling ruin for the empire in the Caribbean. Writing near the close of an Anglo-Spanish war that had exposed Jamaica to the depredations of privateers and the threat of wholesale invasion, the author could rest assured that his admonitions would not be dismissed as hyperbolic. He decried the defenseless state of the island, which he described as "so insecure, that the Inhabitants are not only alarm'd by every trifling Armament of the Enemy, but under the greatest Apprehensions frequently from their own Slaves" and declared Jamaica's vulnerability to attacks from both without and within "a Matter of publick Concern."⁶²³ Attributing Jamaica's insecurity to its enslaved black majority, he exhorted Parliament to bypass its planters, who had proven incapable of regulating themselves, and pass legislation to ban the further importation of slaves into Jamaica and to better discipline and exploit those who already inhabited the island.⁶²⁴

The author proposed that the same black men who presently threatened to wrench Jamaica from Britain's grasp could, if given the right incentives, be depended upon to serve both as steadfast defenders of Jamaica and as stalwart assailants of the French and Spanish in the Caribbean. In crafting his argument, he drew explicit lessons from the

⁶²³ *An essay concerning slavery, and the danger Jamaica is expos'd to from the too great number of slaves* (London, 1746), ii.

⁶²⁴ *Essay concerning slavery*, iii-viii.

actions of black rebels in the Antigua slave conspiracy of 1736 and Jamaica's Maroon War of the 1730s, and implicit ones from the participation of black soldiers in the British siege of Spanish Cuba in 1741.⁶²⁵ He maintained that slaves would rebel whenever they saw an opportunity to recover their liberty and that only an augmented free population would be able to keep the enslaved majority in submission. Recognizing that "white Men enough cannot, at least immediately be got," he recommended that skilled and head slaves be freed and given land in order to align their interests with those of slaveholders.⁶²⁶ By relegating all slaves to field work and creating a third caste of free black tradesmen and landowners, Britain would be "'sowing Hydra's Teeth, from which arm'd Men should rise up for the Service of the Kingdom.'"⁶²⁷ These regimented "black Sons of Hydra" would serve as an effective defensive force against rebel slaves, to whom they would have no allegiance, as well as foreign invaders, from whom they would need to safeguard their liberty as well as their land.⁶²⁸ Such a disciplined cadre of free black soldiers would enable British regulars and navy seamen, who presently were forced to

⁶²⁵ *Essay concerning slavery*, iv, 56, viii-ix, 49. On the Antigua slave conspiracy, see David Barry Gaspar, *Bondmen and Rebels: A Study of Master-Slave Relations in Antigua* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985). On the Jamaica Maroon Wars, see Mavis Campbell, *The Maroons of Jamaica, 1655-1796: A History of Resistance, Collaboration and Betrayal* (Granby, MA: Bergin & Garvey, 1988); Michael Craton, *Testing the Chains: Resistance to Slavery in the British West Indies* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1982), 61-96, 211-23; Alvin O. Thompson, *Flight to Freedom: African Runaways and Maroons in the Americas* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of West Indies Press, 2006); and Philip Wright, "War and Peace with the Maroons, 1730-1739," *Caribbean Quarterly* 16 (1970): 5-27. After the two-month siege of Cartagena in the spring of 1741 ended in the inglorious withdrawal of the severely ill and decimated British forces, the British army hired 500 slaves from Jamaican slaveholders to serve in the expedition against Cuba later that year. Martin Bladen to the Duke of Newcastle, June 21, 1740, CO 318/3, ff. 83-84, The National Archives, Kew, England. See also Richard Pares, *War and Trade in the West Indies, 1739-1763* (1936; repr., London: Cass, 1963), 254.

⁶²⁶ *Essay concerning slavery*, iv.

⁶²⁷ *Essay concerning slavery*, 55. The author was referring to the Greek myth of Jason and the Argonauts, in which Jason battles an army of men sown from the teeth of the Hydra in order to obtain the Golden Fleece.

⁶²⁸ *Essay concerning slavery*, 56.

guard Jamaica, to undertake more decisive engagements elsewhere. Instead of being dependent upon the mother country for its defense, Jamaica would be in a position to furnish detachments from its free black corps for offensive expeditions.⁶²⁹ In emancipating elite slaves, Jamaica would convert its natural enemies into allies, thereby transforming itself from an encumbrance to an asset to the British Empire in times of war.

The anonymous author of *An essay concerning slavery* avowed, “I cou’d wish with all my Heart, that Slavery was abolish’d entirely,” but he contented himself with calling only for a cessation of the slave trade and the gradual emancipation of a talented tenth of Jamaica’s slaves in order to shore up the island’s defenses. He emphasized that his antipathy to slavery was rooted not simply in “a moral View,” but “a political one too” and asserted that sustaining the institution of slavery as it then existed in the sugar islands was not in the best interest of the British Empire.⁶³⁰ He made explicit use of the predicament that societies with enslaved black majorities faced in wartime to argue for the institution’s reform, if not its eradication, and in doing so he anticipated the amoral and pragmatic martial antislavery that would flourish in the aftermath of the Seven Years’ War. In the battles of this first global imperial contest, and in the participation of people of African descent within them, mid-eighteenth-century British antislavery writers found the solution to their empire’s problem of war and slavery: the transformation of some, but by no means all, Blacks from a source of vulnerability as slaves to the key to the British Empire’s strength in the southern Atlantic as free subjects.

⁶²⁹ *Essay concerning slavery*, viii-ix, 49.

⁶³⁰ *Essay concerning slavery*, v. Section I of the treatise argues “That Slavery, as it is now practis’d in America, is against the Law of God and Nature,” while Section II purports “That the Sugar Colonies must be ruined, if Slavery is not put upon a better Footing.” *Essay concerning slavery*, 5-16, 17-27. These two

While many historians have investigated the pivotal role slaves' actions, notably their insurrections, played in the achievement of British emancipation, most have concentrated their attention upon the early nineteenth century. By linking published depictions of the actions of people of African descent during the Seven Years' War to the proliferation of antislavery literature in its immediate aftermath, this chapter explores the role that free and enslaved Blacks played in inspiring this early questioning of slavery.⁶³¹

Published representations of Blacks' actions during the Seven Years' War caused Britons to reconsider the imperial value of the institution of slavery and to propose new imperial roles for people of African descent.⁶³² Over the course of the conflict, the

essays are book ended by imagined dialogues between an "officer" and a "planter" regarding the nature of slavery in Jamaica. *Essay concerning slavery*, 1-5, 28-67.

⁶³¹ On the influence of Caribbean slaves upon British antislavery, see especially Christopher Leslie Brown, "From Slaves to Subjects: Envisioning an Empire without Slavery, 1772-1834," in *Black Experience and the Empire*, ed. Philip D. Morgan and Sean Hawkins (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 132-39 and Gelien Matthews, *Caribbean Slave Revolts and the British Abolitionist Movement* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2006). See also Michael Craton, "Emancipation from Below? The Role of the British West Indies Slaves in the Emancipation Movement, 1816-1834," in *Out of Slavery: Abolition and After*, ed. Jack Hayward (London: Cass, 1985), 110-31; Michael Craton, *Empire, Enslavement and Freedom in the Caribbean* (Princeton: Markus Wiener, 1997), 263-323; Craton, *Testing the Chains*, 254-321; Emilia Viotti da Costa, *Crowns of Glory, Tears of Blood: The Demerara Slave Rebellion of 1823* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1994); and Eric Williams, *Capitalism and Slavery* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1964), 197-208. For a work that explicitly takes into account the influence of war, insecurity, and slave revolt upon British antislavery, see Claudius Fergus, "War, Revolution and Abolitionism, 1793-1806," in *Capitalism and Antislavery Fifty Years Later: Eric Eustace Williams – A Reassessment of the Man and his Work*, ed. Heather Cateau and S.H.H. Carrington (New York: Peter Lang, 2000), 173-95.

⁶³² Clearly, the actions of free and enslaved Blacks during the war and the press's representations of their actions were not identical. Nevertheless, the published reports of Blacks' actions did offer readers in Britain and North America a sense of their on-the-ground involvement in the conflict as insurgents and soldiers. On the antislavery initiatives of the 1760s and 1770s and the influence of the Seven Years' War on British antislavery, see Christopher Leslie Brown, *Moral Capital: Foundations of British Abolitionism* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2006), 155-258. This chapter was in large part inspired by Brown's hypothesis that Maurice Morgann, the author of the 1772 *A Plan for the Abolition of Slavery*, may have known of the participation of black soldiers in the West Indian campaigns of the Seven Years' War. Brown, *Moral Capital*, 218. I took Brown's supposition as an invitation to investigate not only what British imperial administrators, but also what the British and British American public may have known of Blacks' actions as rebels and soldiers during the conflict and to analyze the ways in which published representations of Blacks' actions were used to discuss empire and slavery in the wake of the war. While Brown explores Britons' reevaluations of the moral character of their growing empire in the conflict's aftermath, I seek instead to analyze Britons' practical anxiety about the vulnerability of slave colonies and the reassessments of both the institution of slavery and the practice of arming Blacks that developed as a

British engaged the French, and by 1762 the Spanish as well, in Europe, India, the Philippine archipelago, North America, the West Indies, and West Africa. Faced with the task of conducting a worldwide war, British metropolitan officials sought colonial assistance in executing military campaigns; in the Caribbean theater of the conflict that help came in the form of soldiers of African descent. During the war, some enslaved Blacks took advantage of the demography of majority slave societies, not to serve the British Empire, but instead to undermine its military might and its economic mainstay by rebelling. Through both their “loyal” and “disloyal” actions during the war, Blacks forced Britons to recognize their centrality to the security as well as the prosperity of the empire.

Ironically, Blacks’ martial actions during the Seven Years’ War inspired proposals to arm Blacks both as a first step toward eventual abolition and as a means of perpetuating Britain’s empire of slavery in the Caribbean. Postwar antislavery authors capitalized upon pervasive reports of assaults upon plantation colonies and of servile unrest and, in their literature at the conflict’s close, they attacked slavery by citing the liability that the institution posed an empire at war. Seizing upon the well-publicized contributions of large numbers of free and enslaved Blacks to the British war effort in the West Indies, they reasoned that those best suited to achieve the further strengthening and expansion of the British Empire into the southern hemisphere were Blacks, and that they would accomplish this best if they were free. Like the anonymous author of the 1746 *An*

result of this concern. On the Seven Years’ War and antislavery, see also David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1966), 330-31, 428, 486 and David Brion Davis, *The Problem of Slavery in the Age of Revolution, 1770-1823* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1975), 44-48. Though Davis discusses the insecurity of slave societies in wartime, he does not explicitly address antislavery authors’ treatment of or solutions to the problem of war and slavery.

essay concerning slavery, they expressed their heartfelt desire for the demise of slavery, but offered the liberation of a select portion of the enslaved population as an expedient, short-term solution to the empire's problem of war and slavery. The postwar period's amoral and pragmatic martial antislavery rhetoric proved so ambiguous, however, that it was echoed by none other than the vehemently proslavery Edward Long, who suggested that a select few Blacks in Jamaica be freed and armed not to undermine slavery, but instead to preserve it. Long, like his antislavery contemporaries, wrestled with the implications of the increasingly vital military roles that Blacks had come to play during the war-torn eighteenth century. That writers with diametrically opposed designs for slavery's future could promote such similar policies underscores both the influence and the limits of black West Indians' agency in the mid-eighteenth-century British Empire.

Black Slaves, Rebels, and Soldiers in the Seven Years' War

During the Seven Years' War, slave societies faced the possibility of assault from both external and internal enemies. Privateers and invading armies laid crops and buildings to waste and captured and carried off slaves. Slaves took advantage of the chaos of war to flee or to revolt against their distracted masters. For those who did not themselves experience the disquiet that came of simultaneously confronting foreign and domestic foes, news reports recounting privateers' and navy seamen's success in raiding coastal plantations and kidnapping slaves, invading armies' destruction of towns and fields, and slaves' rebellious conduct exposed the British and British North American literate public to the unique difficulties that slave societies faced in times of war. In particular, published accounts of the British conquests of French Guadeloupe in 1759 and of French Martinique and Spanish Havana in 1762, as well as the Jamaica slave

rebellions of 1760-1761, supplied their readers with detailed descriptions of slave societies under attack.

Readers learned that privateers accrued plunder not only by capturing enemy vessels on the high seas, but also by descending upon seaside estates in order to kidnap slaves to sell for profit. Privateers accomplished such ventures individually, but greater gain came from exploiting invasions of enemy colonies by naval squadrons and regular armies.⁶³³ When British troops landed on the shores of French Guadeloupe in February 1759, British privateersmen like Captain Reid and Captain Amory of Antigua were close upon their heels. Readers of the *Post* learned that Reid “took a Load of Sugar, and fill’d his Deck with Negroes from off the Island of Guadaloupe” and Amory kidnapped “about 100 more” slaves.⁶³⁴ Two weeks later, the paper recounted that “English Privateers continue to plunder that Island of Negroes, Cattle, &c.” and that Reid had returned from his second visit to Guadeloupe with “50 Head of Cattle and several Negroes,” and was presently on his third voyage to the island in hope of acquiring still more booty.⁶³⁵

During such assaults, soldiers and navy seamen joined privateersmen in pursuit of pillage and thus in capturing slaves, looting estates and towns, and setting fire to cane

⁶³³ A *Boston Evening-Post* report of September 14, 1761 told of a French privateer that had been patrolling the waters off South Carolina and “had not yet taken any vessel, but had got 20 negroes from our coasts.” Additional accounts of slaves being stolen by privateers in individual ventures may be found at *Boston Evening-Post*, August 30 and September 27, 1762 and May 23, 1763; *London Magazine*, or, *Gentleman’s Monthly Intelligencer*, v. 29, March 1760, 161-62; *New-York Gazette*, May 16, 1763; *New-York Mercury*, August 16, 1762; *Newport Mercury*, August 24, 1762; *South-Carolina Gazette*, August 14-21, 1762; and *The Universal Museum*, or, *Gentleman’s and Ladies Polite Magazine of History, Politicks, and Literature*, v. 1, issue 10, 1762. Sometimes runaway slaves assisted such incursions. A report from South Carolina in the *Boston Evening-Post* of August 28, 1758 related that a “French privateer had some Carolina Run-aways on board, who were to serve them as pilots on a design of plundering some plantations near Port-Royal of their Negroes, &c.”

⁶³⁴ *Boston Evening-Post*, March 12, 1759.

fields.⁶³⁶ A February 1759 letter published in several newspapers informed readers, ““Our Fleet is still at Guadaloupe, where they have taken the Forts, burnt the Town, and destroyed most part of the Country”” and promised, ““the rest of the French Islands, if not entirely subdued, will be laid to waste to all intents and purposes.””⁶³⁷ Newspapers portrayed French planters of Guadeloupe as suffering in the face of famine and the decampment and detainment of their slaves. Reports from the West Indies noted “that the Inhabitants were put to the utmost Distress for the want of Provisions, all their Communications having been cut off; that the Negroes were continually running away off the Island in Canoes, &c. and that one in particular foundered with 18 or 20 fine slaves in her, who all perished; and another was taken with as many on board: That it was thought upwards of 500 French Negroes were sent to Jamaica by our People, since they first landed; and near as great a Number carried off by the Privateers.”⁶³⁸ While British

⁶³⁵ *Boston Evening-Post*, March 26, 1759. The *South-Carolina Gazette* reported on March 24, 1759 that “our privateers continue plundering, and are almost every day bringing in negroes, cattle, &c. into all the islands.” See also *London Evening-Post*, May 26-29, 1759.

⁶³⁶ Navy seamen also raided plantations and captured slaves in lieu of full-scale invasions. When a British fleet sailed from England in early 1759 for the Caribbean, the *New-York Mercury* assumed that its destination was French Martinique. Believing the squadron to lack sufficient troops to conquer the populous and well-defended island, the paper surmised that the squadron intended to “land by Surprize, in different Parts at the Back of the Island, destroy some Plantations, and perhaps carry off some of the Negroes, and that is all.” *New-York Gazette*, February 26, 1759 and *New-York Mercury*, February 19, 1759. Sir James Douglas and his men-of-war took “fifty Negroes off” Martinique prior to the British invasion of the island in 1762. *Manchester Mercury*, January 12, 1762.

⁶³⁷ *Boston Evening-Post*, March 19, 1759; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, March 23, 1759; and *New-York Gazette*, March 12, 1759. For further reports of towns and plantations being destroyed by invading armies, see *Gentleman’s Magazine*, v. 29, 1759, 142, 273, 535; *London Chronicle, or Universal Evening Post*, March 6-8, March 8-10, May 19-21, and June 14-16, 1759; *London Evening-Post*, March 6-8, March 8-10, and June 14-16, 1759; *London Magazine*, v. 28, 1759, 146, 448, 584; *New-York Gazette*, March 12 and May 28, 1759; *New-York Mercury*, March 3 and May 21, 1759; and *South-Carolina Gazette*, April 7-14, 1759.

⁶³⁸ *Boston Evening-Post*, May 28, 1759 and *New-Hampshire Gazette*, June 1, 1759. A letter from Guadeloupe printed by the *London Chronicle* and the *London Evening-Post* in their June 26-28, 1759 editions noted that “Our island privateers have . . . carried off about 5000 negroes, and the produce of the plantations near the shore.”

planters likely rejoiced at their competitors' ruin, they may well have greeted such reports with some measure of trepidation.⁶³⁹

British slaveholders may have been especially worried by the role that French Blacks played in aiding the British assaults upon the French Caribbean islands. The steady surrender of French slaves to the British on Guadeloupe sapped the island's militia of much of its strength. Captured or escaped French slaves provided guidance to the invading army, including particular information about the strength and disposition of French defensive forces.⁶⁴⁰ Readers of several London newspapers learned that "upon the information of some negroes, who promised to conduct the troops in flat-bottom boats by night," the British forces on Guadeloupe had planned and executed an attack in the region of Grandterre.⁶⁴¹ From both French Blacks and confiscated missives, the British discovered that the French lacked supplies and were therefore unable to feed themselves

⁶³⁹ In addition to reporting on the events of the British conquests of French Guadeloupe in 1759 and French Martinique in 1762, the *London Magazine* published "A Short Account of the British Colonies, in the Islands of America, commonly called the West-Indies" in 1758 and 1759, which recounted the devastating consequences of multiple foreign invasions of Caribbean islands dating from the late 17th century. See *London Magazine*, v. 27, 1758, 454 and v. 28, 1759, 135, 188-90, 239.

⁶⁴⁰ The *New-York Mercury* informed readers on April 16, 1759 that "four or five negroes came in almost every day . . . and reported that all the French regulars in the island amounted to no more than 120 men." The *Boston Evening-Post* reported on May 21, 1759 that a merchant ship's captain had imparted "that the Day before he left Antigua a Sloop arrived there from Guadaloupe, with upwards of 100 Negroes, who had deserted: One of them could talk some English, he reports that the French and English had had a Skirmish with the Loss of 400 Frenchmen: That it was very cold in the Mountains, the French very sickly, short of Provisions, and a Desertion of Regulars and Negroes daily." The *New-York Mercury* reported on March 5, 1759 that "A sensible negroe boy which captain Mullins took at Martinico, says that about 14 or 15 Englishmen were killed, and two taken prisoners, and that about as many Frenchmen were killed, and a great many wounded" at a skirmish on that island in early 1759. French slaves were not always rewarded for the help they offered; the *London Evening-Post* recounted on May 26-29, 1759 that "the Negroes daily come over. Several hundred have already submitted, all of whom have been sold for the Benefit of the Publick by the Particular Orders of the General." See also *Boston Evening-Post*, March 19 and April 23, 1759; *London Magazine*, v. 28, June 1759, 319; *New-York Gazette*, March 12 and May 21, 1759; *New-York Mercury*, March 5 and March 12, 1759; and *South-Carolina Gazette*, February 17-24, 1759. Similar desertions of French Blacks occurred during the 1762 siege of Martinique. See *Boston Evening-Post*, February 8, 1762.

⁶⁴¹ *Gentleman's Magazine*, v. 29, June 1759, 273; *London Chronicle*, June 14-16, 1759; *London Evening-Post*, June 14-16, 1759; and *London Magazine*, v. 28, June 1759, 317.

or their slaves. In an intercepted letter to the General of the French Islands, the Governor of Martinique fretted that “masters are unable to support their slaves, who are perishing thro’ hunger” and demanded “ought we not to be apprehensive of dreadful consequences from slaves who are half-starved, and to whom all bondage is equal?”⁶⁴² Facing the further mutiny of their slaves and perhaps outright revolt, those French planters who could not flee Guadeloupe surrendered to the British in the hope that their property would thereby be secured.⁶⁴³ On the cusp of the British invasion of French Martinique in 1762, the *London Chronicle* and the *Manchester Mercury* correctly predicted that, rather than suffer what their neighbors on Guadeloupe had endured in 1759, “the Planters [of Martinique] will be inclined to submit for the Preservation of their Estates.”⁶⁴⁴ The British had every reason to fear their Caribbean compatriots would experience similar perils or, to avoid such a fate, would opt quickly to capitulate if their colonies were attacked.

⁶⁴² *London Chronicle*, June 23-26, 1759; *London Magazine*, v. 28, June 1759, 341; *New-York Gazette*, May 21, 1759; and *South-Carolina Gazette*, May 19-21, 1759. On the plight of the French planters in the face of the reputed “insolence of the Negroes,” see also *Boston Evening-Post*, May 21, 1759; *London Chronicle*, May 26-29, 1759; *London Evening-Post*, May 26-29, 1759; *New-York Mercury*, May 14, 1759; and *South-Carolina Gazette*, May 12-19, 1759.

⁶⁴³ The *London Evening-Post* informed readers on May 29-31, 1759 that “the French Negroes at Guadaloup had mutinied” and “that the Inhabitants were in such Want of Arms, Ammunition, and Provisions, that an Account of its Surrender was hourly expected.” The *New-York Mercury* reported on May 21, 1759 that “Captain Lawrance on his Way home stopped at Statia, where Numbers of Frenchmen had arrived from Guadaloupe, having made their Escape with many of their Negros, who all agreed that the whole Island would be obliged to surrender in a few Days.” The *New-York Gazette* of May 21, 1759 related information gleaned from “a French Family . . . come in from Guadaloupe” to Montserrat who “said they were in the greatest Distresses there for want of Provisions, being obliged to live on what Horses, Dogs, &c. they had there; that they had sent off great Numbers of their Negroes, having nothing to support them.”

⁶⁴⁴ *London Chronicle*, March 13-16, 1762 and *Manchester Mercury*, March 23, 1762. The *London Evening-Post* recounted on March 25-27, 1762 that “the Planters who were in Place vehemently interceded with the Governor to give up [Fort Royal] to the English.” See also *London Chronicle*, April 1-3, 1762 and *South-Carolina Gazette*, March 16, 1762.

Though neither the French nor the Spanish succeeded in invading the British West Indian islands during the Seven Years' War, British planters nevertheless endured frequent alarms from both their foreign adversaries and their slaves.⁶⁴⁵ Newspapers informed their readers of anticipated French and Spanish assaults upon the British islands as well as of servile unrest throughout the Americas.⁶⁴⁶ Between 1756 and 1763, accounts of slave conspiracies or actual revolts at British Antigua, Bermuda, Jamaica, and Nevis, Danish Santa Croix, and Dutch Berbice and Surinam circulated throughout the British Atlantic world.⁶⁴⁷ Such reports illustrated the determination and skill of rebel slaves, as well as the havoc they could wreak in colonies that had difficulty mustering the manpower to subdue them. Accounts in several British and North American newspapers of a 1761 slave conspiracy involving six to seven hundred enslaved men and women in

⁶⁴⁵ For example, following the British declaration of war against Spain, the *Manchester Mercury* reported on February 23, 1762 that "many People seem to be under great Apprehensions, that Jamaica will be in imminent Danger, should the French and Spaniards join and make an Attack on that valuable Island." Jamaica enacted an embargo and martial law after the *Pembroke* man-of-war captured a French schooner carrying "several letters to the Secretary of State in France," signifying the strength of the French and Spanish in the Caribbean as well as their intention to "make a Descent upon this island." *Manchester Mercury*, April 27, 1762. Only the arrival of Sir James Douglas with a fleet of navy warships eased Jamaica planters' fears, though they were not allotted as many vessels or men for their protection as they would have liked, as orders from Britain insisted that "all the ships and troops in the West-Indies were to hold themselves in readiness to proceed upon another very important expedition," the British siege of Havana. *New-York Gazette*, May 10, 1762 and *South-Carolina Gazette*, April 10-17, 1762. See also *Boston Evening-Post*, May 31, 1762; *Gentleman's Magazine*, v. 32, April 1762, 155-56; *London Chronicle*, March 4-6, March 23-25, April 24-27, and June 26-29, 1762; *London Evening-Post*, March 23-25, March 25-27, April 20-22, April 24-27, and April 29-May 1, 1762; *London Magazine*, v. 31, July 1762, 397; *New-York Gazette*, April 19, June 14, and June 28, 1762; and *South-Carolina Gazette*, March 20-27, April 3-10, and June 12-19, 1762.

⁶⁴⁶ On newspaper reports of servile unrest in this period, see G. Basker, "'The Next Insurrection': Johnson, Race, and Rebellion," *The Age of Johnson* 11 (2000): 37-51 and Mark J. Stegmaier, "Maryland's Fear of Insurrection at the Time of Braddock's Defeat," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 71 (Winter 1976): 467-83.

⁶⁴⁷ For a report of the Antigua plot, see *New-York Mercury*, May 31, 1762. For Nevis, see *London Chronicle*, September 22-24, 1761 and *London Magazine*, v. 30, Sept 1761, 504. For Santa Croix, see *London Chronicle*, May 27-29, 1760. For Berbice and Surinam, see *Boston Evening-Post*, June 15, 1761 and May 2, 1763; *London Chronicle*, February 21-24, 1761; *London Magazine*, v. 33, June 1763, 335 and July 1763, 393-94, 404; *New York-Gazette*, June 22, 1761; *New-York Mercury*, September 12, 1763; and *Universal Museum*, v. 3, issue 1, 1764. For an alleged slave conspiracy in Jamaica in 1763, see *Boston*

Bermuda emphasized that it had been orchestrated by “very sensible fellows, very much in credit with all the white people that knew them, and capable of managing most sort of business,” who “had judiciously concerted every part of this plot.” Articles alleged that instigators throughout the island had collected arms and ammunition and had “appointed captains and other officers, and allotted them their proper stations.” Had their plan not been discovered, readers were led to believe the resolute and disciplined rebel slaves would surely have taken control of the entire island.⁶⁴⁸

While the slaves of Antigua, Bermuda, and Nevis remained merely a theoretical threat, beginning in April 1760, a series of slave uprisings in Jamaica jeopardized British control of its most lucrative sugar island, rendering tangible to Britons the “danger Jamaica is expos’d to from the too great number of slaves.”⁶⁴⁹ Between June 1760 and July 1761, British and American newspapers provided their readers with updates on the dire and seemingly interminable situation in Jamaica.⁶⁵⁰ On June 9, 1760, the *Boston Evening-Post* announced that it had received “advice of an insurrection of about 300 negroes . . . in the parish of St. Mary’s, . . . who killed several people; but by the activity of the planters and some faithful Creole negroes, twelve of them were killed, one taken,

Evening-Post, May 30, 1763; *London Magazine*, v. 33, July 1763, 391; *New-York Gazette*, June 6, 1763; and *New-York Mercury*, June 6, 1763.

⁶⁴⁸ *London Chronicle*, February 6-9, 1762 and *London Magazine*, v. 31, February 1762, 87-88 and v. 31, March 1762, 165. See also *Boston Evening-Post*, June 14, 1762; *London Evening-Post*, March 13-16, 1762; *New-London Summary*, June 11, 1762; and *New-York Mercury*, June 7, 1762. On the 1761 Bermuda slave conspiracy, see Virginia Bernhard, “Bids for Freedom: Slave Resistance and Rebellion Plots in Bermuda, 1656-1761,” *Slavery and Abolition* 17 (December 1996), 198-202 and Clarence Maxwell, “Enslaved Merchants, Enslaved Merchant-Mariners, and the Bermuda Conspiracy of 1761,” *Early American Studies* (Spring 2009): 140-78.

⁶⁴⁹ On the Jamaica slave rebellions of 1760, see Chapter 5.

⁶⁵⁰ Interestingly, the *South-Carolina Gazette* reported no information concerning the Jamaica slave revolts of 1760-61.

and the rest dispersed in the woods.”⁶⁵¹ More detailed accounts of the revolt in St. Mary’s parish followed, whereby readers of British and North American periodicals learned that the growing cadre of enslaved rebels had inflicted significant damage upon the island’s plantations prior to taking refuge in its forested interior. Readers may well have remarked upon the juggernaut that was this slave army, as well as the haphazard and ineffectual initial response of Jamaica’s planters who, despite resorting to arming their trusted slaves, managed to kill or detain only a small fraction of the rebels.⁶⁵²

British colonists’ reliance upon the martial skill of soldiers of African descent would have been readily apparent to readers of newspaper accounts of the Jamaica slave insurrection. Published reports highlighted the roles that the Jamaican Maroons and armed free and enslaved black soldiers played in pursuing, capturing, and killing the rebel slaves.⁶⁵³ These early accounts expressed optimism that the rebellion would soon be crushed. It was anticipated that the Maroons and “volunteer Mulattoes and Negroes” would soon discover the rebels in their “lurking holes” and “advance and surround them.”⁶⁵⁴ If Jamaica’s black soldiers, with their talent for irregular warfare and their “great Impetuosity,” did not rout the rebels, then planters hoped that the rebels’ “want of

⁶⁵¹ *Boston Evening-Post*, June 9, 1760 and *New-Hampshire Gazette*, June 13, 1760. See also *Gentleman’s Magazine*, v. 30, June 1760, 294; *London Chronicle*, June 21-24 and June 24-26, 1760; and *London Evening-Post*, June 24-26, 1760.

⁶⁵² *British Magazine*, v. 1, issue 7, 1760, 443-44; *Gentleman’s Magazine*, v. 30, July 1760, 307-8; *London Chronicle*, June 28-July 1, 1760; *London Evening-Post*, June 29-July 1, 1760; *London Magazine*, v. 29, July 1760, 366-67; and *New-York Mercury*, June 16, 1760.

⁶⁵³ *British Magazine*, v. 1, issue 7, 1760, 443-44; *Gentleman’s Magazine*, v. 30, July 1760, 307-8; *London Chronicle*, June 28-July 1, 1760; *London Evening-Post*, June 29-July 1, 1760; *London Magazine*, v. 29, July 1760, 366-67; and *New-York Mercury*, June 16, 1760.

⁶⁵⁴ *Boston Evening-Post*, July 7, 1760; *London Magazine*, v. 29, July 1760, 379; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, July 11, 1760; and *New-York Gazette*, June 30, 1760.

Provisions” would undo them.⁶⁵⁵ Reports emphasizing the rebel slaves’ tenacity and military efficacy, including details of the fortifications they constructed and the scouting parties they dispatched to gather supplies, belied these expectations.⁶⁵⁶

Consumers of British and North American newspapers learned that Jamaica’s colonists could neither swiftly subdue the enslaved insurgents nor contain the contagion of revolt. Newspapers recounted the existence of slave conspiracies in several eastern parishes and in early July, word came that several hundred slaves in the western parish of Westmoreland had risen against their masters.⁶⁵⁷ As the island lacked the military might to vanquish them, rebel slaves continued their raids upon Jamaica’s plantations well into 1761. Though in October 1760 newspapers began to proclaim that “the Negro rebellion in the island of Jamaica, is entirely suppressed,” a month later they conceded that it “was not then entirely suppressed,” and in February 1761, they printed a letter from a Jamaica planter who wailed, “God only knows when there will be an end to this rebellion.”⁶⁵⁸

Bemoaning the fact that the rebels had “a parcel of sensible resolute Negroes for their

⁶⁵⁵ *British Magazine*, v. 1, issue 7, 1760, 443-44; *Gentleman’s Magazine*, v. 30, July 1760, 307-8; *London Chronicle*, June 28-July 1, 1760; *London Evening-Post*, June 29-July 1, 1760; *London Magazine*, v. 29, July 1760, 366-67; and *New-York Mercury*, June 16, 1760.

⁶⁵⁶ *London Chronicle*, September 2-4, 1760 and *London Evening-Post*, September 2-4 and September 27-30, 1760.

⁶⁵⁷ On reports of slave unrest in the island’s eastern parishes, see *Boston Evening-Post*, June 16 and July 28, 1760; *London Chronicle*, June 28-July 1 and September 25-27, 1760; *London Evening-Post*, June 29-July 1 and September 25-27, 1760; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, August 1, 1760; and *New-York Mercury*, June 16 and July 28, 1760. For accounts of slave unrest in Jamaica’s western parishes, see *Boston Evening-Post*, July 14, July 28, and August 11, 1760; *British Magazine*, 1760, v. 1, issue 8, 501; *Gentleman’s Magazine*, v. 30, August 1760, 392; *London Chronicle*, August 16-19, 1760; *London Evening-Post*, August 16-19 and August 26-28, 1760; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, August 1 and August 15, 1760; *New-York Gazette*, July 7 and July 21, 1760; and *New-York Mercury*, July 7 and July 21, 1760.

⁶⁵⁸ *Boston Evening-Post*, October 11 and November 24, 1760 and February 9, 1761. See also *Boston Evening-Post*, September 1, 1760; *British Magazine*, 1760, v. 1, issue 9, 557; *London Chronicle*, August 23-26, September 2-4, September 6-9, September 20-23, and September 25-27, 1760 and February 5-7, 1761; *London Evening-Post*, September 2-4, 1760 and February 5-7 and February 7-10, 1761; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, February 13, 1761; *New-York Gazette*, February 16, 1761; and *New-York Mercury*, August 11, 1760.

leaders,” the letter-writer complained that “the number of rebellious negroes is encreasing very fast,” and that the people of Jamaica “are in a bad situation, as they have not men to send after them.”⁶⁵⁹ Lacking white men, island officials and planters paid detachments of Maroons as well as ad hoc corps of enslaved and free black soldiers to scour the woods in search of the remaining rebel bands.⁶⁶⁰ By October 1761, when Jamaica’s lieutenant governor finally declared the revolts quelled, the island had experienced over £100,000 worth of damage as well as the loss of sixty Whites, sixty free Blacks, and more than a thousand slaves.⁶⁶¹ In light of the spectacular losses suffered by the colony as a result of the insurrections, Britons meditated upon how best to secure their slave societies in times of war. Given the martial skill and determination displayed by both Jamaica’s rebel slaves and the combatants of African descent who ultimately overcame them, Britons began to ponder how better to harness this resource to empower the empire in the Caribbean.⁶⁶²

The knowledge that the British had come to rely upon soldiers of African descent in offensive as well as defensive maneuvers in the Caribbean spurred public recognition

⁶⁵⁹ *Boston Evening-Post*, February 9, 1761; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, February 13, 1761; and *New-York Gazette*, February 16, 1761. Further reports of the 1760-61 Jamaica revolt are in *Boston Evening-Post*, April 13 and April 20, 1761; *Gentleman’s Magazine*, v. 31, July 1761, 329; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, April 17, 1761.

⁶⁶⁰ For additional information concerning Jamaica’s deployment of black soldiers against the rebels, see *London Chronicle*, September 25-27, 1760 and *London Evening-Post*, July 31-August 2 and September 25-27, 1760.

⁶⁶¹ Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica*, v. 2 (London, 1774), 462. See also Craton, *Testing the Chains*, 138.

⁶⁶² In June 1761, newspapers reported that “the Dutch Governor of Surinam, finding himself unable to reduce the rebellious Negroes of that colony by force, hath wisely followed the example of Governor Trelawney at Jamaica, and concluded an amicable treaty with them.” *Boston Evening-Post*, June 15, 1761 and *New-York Gazette*, June 22, 1761. Given the pivotal role the Jamaica Maroons had played in suppressing the slave revolt of 1760-61, it is unsurprising that Britons would have deemed such a treaty wise.

and perhaps approval of the expanding martial role of Blacks in the British Empire.⁶⁶³ Those who followed reports of the Seven Years' War in the West Indies would have noticed that "400 able Negroes" from Barbados accompanied the British army to assault French Martinique in January 1759.⁶⁶⁴ Upon landing on Martinique, the British forces encountered a terrain "full of ambushes," and "saw no enemy to fight with, and yet bullets were flying about them, from every leaf and bough they came near." Fearing that "if they proceeded further, they might all be cut to pieces," and in light of the fact that "they were eat up by insects, and scorched to death by an insupportable heat," they concluded that "there was no prospect of succeeding in the attempt they were upon."⁶⁶⁵ The British troops thus withdrew from Martinique and set their sights instead upon French Guadeloupe.

Recognizing that they lacked the manpower necessary to triumph at Guadeloupe, British military officials called upon the Leeward Islands to supply them with seasoned rangers accustomed to the climate, terrain, and ways of war of the West Indies. Accounts from Antigua testified that "about 150 volunteer Negroes, to serve in the expedition against Guadeloupe, were offered yesterday at the court-house, most of whom are stout active men, and expert in the use of the fire-lock; and Tuesday next is appointed for

⁶⁶³ On the participation of enslaved and free black soldiers in the Caribbean campaigns of the Seven Years' War, see Chapter 3.

⁶⁶⁴ *New-Hampshire Gazette*, March 2, 1759; *New-York Gazette*, February 19, 1759; and *New-York Mercury*, February 19, 1759. The *New-York Mercury* of March 12, 1759 counted "500 Negroes" among "the Army, at the Time they sailed from Barbados." These enslaved men were intended to serve the army as pioneers. See also *Gentleman's Magazine*, v. 29, November 1759, 533-34; *London Chronicle*, June 23-26, 1759; *London Magazine*, v. 31, January 1762, 25-27; and *South-Carolina Gazette*, February 1-17 and May 21-26, 1759.

⁶⁶⁵ *London Chronicle*, June 23-26, 1759; *London Magazine*, v. 28, July 1759, 363; *New-York Mercury*, May 21, 1759; and *South-Carolina Gazette*, May 21-26, 1759. See also *Gentleman's Magazine*, v. 29, March 1759, 142; *London Chronicle*, March 6-8 and March 8-10, 1759; *London Evening-Post*, March 8-10, 1759; and *London Magazine*, v. 31, February 1762, 82-83.

appraising the rest that may be offered.”⁶⁶⁶ Later, newspapers related that “400 Volunteers, had sailed from Antigua” to join the army in Guadeloupe and “that several Gentlemen, at St. Christophers, were putting themselves at the Head of their Negroes, in order to go and join His Majesty’s Forces; and it was expected their Example would be followed by the other Islands.”⁶⁶⁷ In the end, readers learned that “300 Negroes, and 100 Whitemen, had joined our People at Guadaloupe from Antigua, as had about 300 Whites and Blacks from St. Christophers” and that “a Company of Volunteers (100 Men) white and black, were raised at Montserrat, for the Assistance of our Troops.”⁶⁶⁸ Accounts of skirmishes involving the “Antigua Voluntiers” emphasized that they had “acquired great Honour, by their brave and gallant Behavior,” which “was universally acknowledged.”⁶⁶⁹ After the British successfully conquered Guadeloupe with the help of the predominately black West Indian troops, the *London Magazine* recounted that the behavior of the “men from the Leeward Islands . . . in action was never found fault with, or deemed to be

⁶⁶⁶ *New-Hampshire Gazette*, April 27, 1759; *New-York Gazette*, April 16, 1759; and *South-Carolina Gazette*, April 7-14, 1759. For Major General Peregrine Hopson’s request that six companies be raised in the Leeward Islands and Antigua Governor George Thomas’ proclamation that such slaves would be transported and victualled at the expense of the army and that “his Majesty should stand engaged for the payment for such slaves sent upon the expedition, as should die, desert, or not be actually returned to their respective proprietors,” see *Boston Evening-Post*, April 23, 1759 and *Gentleman’s Magazine*, v. 29, May 1759, 241.

⁶⁶⁷ *Boston Evening-Post*, April 30, 1759; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, May 4, 1759; *New-York Gazette*, April 23, 1759; and *New-York Mercury*, April 23, 1759.

⁶⁶⁸ *New-York Gazette*, May 14 and May 21, 1759. See also *Boston Evening-Post*, May 21, 1759; *London Evening-Post*, May 17-19, 1759; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, May 18, 1759; *New-York Mercury*, May 7, 1759; and *South-Carolina Gazette*, May 12-19, 1759.

⁶⁶⁹ *Boston Evening-Post*, May 21, 1759; *New-Hampshire Gazette*, May 25, 1759; *New-York Gazette*, May 14, 1759; and *New-York Mercury*, May 14, 1759. See also *London Chronicle*, May 26-29, 1759; *London Magazine*, v. 28, June 1759, 317-18 and *South-Carolina Gazette*, May 12-19, 1759. These accounts acknowledged that the “Antigua Voluntiers” were composed of soldiers of African descent, as reports of casualties affirmed, “we lost 4 or 5 Negroes.” For further details of the contributions of the Antigua volunteers to the conquest of Guadeloupe, see *Gentleman’s Magazine*, v. 29, June 1759, 273-74; *London Chronicle*, June 14-16, 1759; and *London Evening-Post*, June 14-16, 1759.

inferior to that of regular troops” and lamented that the army had not had their assistance when it had made its initial attempt upon Martinique.⁶⁷⁰

Just as they had during the conquest of Guadeloupe in 1759, soldiers of African descent proved themselves invaluable during the siege of Spanish Havana in 1762. Readers of newspapers learned that “Barbadoes, Antigua, Nevis, Montserrat, and St. Christophers, sen[t] 1500 Negroes to serve as Pioneers” and that Sir James Douglas “carried with him 2500 slaves, and 150 free Negroes, as bush cutters, rangers, &c.” from Jamaica to serve in the campaign against Havana.⁶⁷¹ Chief Engineer Patrick Mackellar’s journal of the expedition, which was published in its entirety by British and North American newspapers before being issued as a pamphlet in two separate editions in 1762, made clear the hardships of the campaign as well as the integral part black West Indian

⁶⁷⁰ *London Magazine*, v. 31, January 1762, 27. Soldiers of African descent assisted the British in their triumphant return to Martinique in 1762. In February 1762, newspapers reported that “a great number of negroes for the service are raised in Antigua, St. Kitts, and Barbados” for “the intended expedition against Martinico.” *Boston Evening Post*, February 1, 1762 and *New-Hampshire Gazette*, February 5, 1762. See also *New-Hampshire Gazette*, January 8, 1762; *New-York Mercury*, February 8, 1762; and *South-Carolina Gazette*, January 2-9 and January 30-February 6, 1762. The *New-York Gazette* testified on February 22, 1762 that “about 370 Negroes” had sailed from Antigua alone “to serve in the Expedition.” The *London Evening-Post* of March 13-16, 1762 counted “600 Negroes” among “his Majesty’s Troops employed in the Reduction of Martinico.” The addition of the black West Indian soldiers enabled the British to amass a far greater armament than they had for their first visit to the island. In the face of this daunting force and fearing for the safety of their plantations, the French planters of Martinique surrendered with far greater alacrity than had their compatriots on Guadeloupe. See note 644.

⁶⁷¹ *Manchester Mercury*, July 6, 1762; *Boston Evening-Post*, July 5, 1762; and *New-York Gazette*, June 28, 1762. The August 14-17, 1762 *London Chronicle* and the August 17-19, 1762 *London Evening-Post* counted “2500 slaves and 1500 free Negroes, as bush-cutters, rangers, &c.” as Jamaica’s contribution to the siege. It was reported that “upwards of 400 Negroes sailed from Antigua, to serve in the expedition under the Earl of Albemarle.” *Boston Evening-Post*, June 28, 1762; *London Chronicle*, August 14-17, 1762; *London Evening-Post*, August 17-19, 1762; and *New-York Gazette*, June 21, 1762. The *South Carolina Gazette* informed its readers that the British forces arrayed against Havana consisted of 15,000 regular troops and “5000 Volunteers and Negroes, from the several Islands.” *South-Carolina Gazette*, June 12-19, 1762. See also, *Manchester Mercury*, August 24, 1762. For additional accounts of the enslaved Jamaicans sent to Havana, see *Boston Evening-Post*, June 28, July 19, and August 23, 1762; *New-York Gazette*, June 14 and July 12, 1762; *New-York Mercury*, June 21 and July 12, 1762; and *South-Carolina Gazette*, July 3-10 and July 24, 1762.

soldiers played within it.⁶⁷² In light of the tropical diseases which ultimately decimated the British army, the contributions of the black West Indian recruits to the siege proved all the more essential.⁶⁷³ In its account of the victory at Havana, which signaled the triumph of the British in the Seven Years' War as a whole, the *London Magazine* enumerated Jamaica's furnishing of over 2,000 slaves to the expedition among the "Circumstances, which manifestly contributed to our Success at Cuba."⁶⁷⁴

Narratives of the British West Indian expeditions published in the wake of the war extolled free and enslaved black soldiers' role in their success. Thomas Mante, in his 1772 *History of the late war in North-America*, delineated the "Antigua volunteers'" actions on Guadeloupe and affirmed the necessity of employing seasoned irregular troops like them against the skilled armed Blacks and amid the treacherous terrain of the French sugar islands. He noted that "the regular troops of the enemy" on Martinique "were not, indeed, very formidable; but the militia and mulattoes were numerous, well armed, and well skilled in the only kind of war which could be carried on in a country like this, . . . covered with hills, and broken by gullies, and every height intrenched, which could

⁶⁷² *Gentleman's Magazine*, v. 32, September 1762, 410, 464; *London Chronicle*, September 11-14 and September 30-October 2, 1762; *London Evening-Post*, September 11-14 and September 30-October 2, 1762; *London Magazine*, v. 31, September 1762, 492-496 and October 1762, 537-47; *Manchester Mercury*, September 14 and 28, 1762; *New-York Mercury*, December 6, 1762; and *Universal Museum*, v. 1, issues 9 and 10, 1762. See also, Patrick Mackellar, *A Correct Journal of the Landing His Majesty's Forces on the Island of Cuba, and of the Siege and Surrender of the Havannah* (London, 1762).

⁶⁷³ The British army listed 5,366 men as having died between 7 June and 18 October 1762. Of these, 4,708 died from disease. General return of officers, sergeants, drummers, rank and file killed, died by wounds, died by sickness, deserted, and missing from the 7 June to 18 October, October 18, 1762, in David Syrett, *The Siege and Capture of Havana, 1762* (London, 1970), 305. The *Boston Evening-Post* noted on December 13, 1762 that "out of a detachment of 212 Men from the Colony of Rhode Island, that were at the siege of the Havannah, only 100 have return'd alive; the remainder, except 2 kill'd by the enemy, died of Sickness." For additional reports on the sickness plaguing the British forces in Havana, see *London Chronicle*, September 11-14, September 30-October 2, and October 2-5, 1762; *London Evening-Post*, September 23-25 and September 30-October 2, 1762; and *South-Carolina Gazette*, July 31-August 6, August 21-28, and August 28-September 4, 1762.

thereby be made to retard the progress of an army.”⁶⁷⁵ Mante recounted that the French “natives” of Guadeloupe strove to take advantage of the tropical climate and “endeavoured as much as possible to harass the [British] troops in small parties, and carry on their defence in flying platoons. Inured, themselves, to the climate, they had little to apprehend from its scorching heat; and were, besides, encouraged to bear it from the influence they well knew it must have on an European constitution.”⁶⁷⁶ Descriptions such as these made a convincing case that the British Empire would do well to take still greater advantage of the acclimatization and guerrilla warfare techniques of its black West Indian subjects.⁶⁷⁷

Accounts of the siege of Havana illustrated the particular travails of the black West Indian recruits together with those of the white soldiers and sailors they labored alongside. Mante maintained that the enslaved West Indians’ labors had been vital to the success at Havana. He asserted, “it would have been absolutely impossible to carry on these batteries without the assistance of the negroes” and pointed out that “these poor fellows . . . proved extremely useful in carrying ammunition to the several batteries”⁶⁷⁸

When in 1766 Lieutenant Philip Orsbridge published his series of engravings celebrating

⁶⁷⁴ *London Magazine*, v. 31, December 1762, 639-40.

⁶⁷⁵ Thomas Mante, *The History of the late war in North-America, and the Islands of the West Indies* (London, 1772), 186, 188, 356.

⁶⁷⁶ Mante, *History of the late war*, 177-78.

⁶⁷⁷ That the West Indian planters might prove an obstacle to such a pursuit became clear with Mante’s depiction of the preparation for the siege of Havana. Mante recounted that the British army had requested “five hundred negroes accustomed to arms, who were to be regimented with proper officers” from Jamaica, but that the order “was not fully complied with, owing to a misunderstanding between some leading people in the island and the Governor.” Mante, *History of the late war*, 409, 431. That Jamaica contributed only one instead of the requisite five companies of free black soldiers to the British campaign appeared to observers as proof of its lack of patriotic fervor. Because at the time they were to raise these troops, “the governor and the inhabitants of Jamaica were alarmed at the arrival of M. de Blenac’s squadron” at Saint-Domingue, Jamaicans likely preferred to retain their skilled black soldiers to defend their island. Mante, *History of the late war*, 409.

“Britannia’s Triumph in the Year 1762,” he paid graphic and textual tribute to Blacks’ contributions to the siege. His seventh plate in particular, “a Perspective View, between Six and Seven o’Clock in the Evening, on the 30th of June, 1762,” lauded the shared toils of officers and men, of soldiers and sailors, and of Blacks and Whites. Orsbridge portrayed “the extraordinary Diligence, Activity and Conduct, both of the Men and the Officers, in landing . . . all . . . Necessaries for the Use of an Army in such Circumstances.” Orsbridge specifically praised George Keppel, 3rd Earl of Albemarle for his foresight in purchasing and carrying with him “500 Blacks from Martinico and Antigua” and asked his readers to inspect the image closely in order to “see Soldiers, Seamen and Negroes drawing Cannon and carrying Stores to the new erected Batteries with an eagerness that resolved to outdo each other.”⁶⁷⁹ In this commemoration of Britain’s martial and imperial success, Orsbridge depicted a military community united across rank and race by its efforts to hasten the victory of its shared sovereign and empire. Such representations likely heightened public awareness and acceptance of the role free and enslaved Blacks played in ensuring the triumph and expansion of the British Empire at mid-century.⁶⁸⁰

⁶⁷⁸ Mante, *History of the late war*, 424-25.

⁶⁷⁹ Philip Orsbridge, *Britannia’s Triumph in the Year 1762, Being a Series of Twelve Capital Prints Representing the Operations of His Majesty’s Fleet and Army Employed in the Attack and Conquest of the Havannah* (London, 1766). See also Philip Orsbridge, *Explanations of the first three views of the situation of his Majesty’s ships and squadrons, on the expedition of the Havannah, by way of journal* (London, 1762?), Broad-sides, New-York Historical Society (hereafter NYHS) and *A Continuation of the explanation of the views of the situation and different attacks of his Majesty’s ships and squadrons at the siege of the Havannah* (London, 1762?), Broad-sides, NYHS. Orsbridge commanded a detachment of seamen ashore at the siege of Havana. His engraved prints served as the basis for Dominic Serres’ subsequent oil paintings depicting the siege of Havana. Syrett, *Siege of Havana*, 222.

⁶⁸⁰ For additional histories of the Seven Years’ War published in the 1760s and 1770s that depict the participation of soldiers of African descent, see John Entick, *The general history of the late war: containing it’s rise, progress and event, in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America* (London, 1763-64); *Impartial history of the late glorious war, from it’s commencement to it’s conclusion* (Manchester, 1764); *The naval chronicle:*

The Antislavery Response to the Seven Years' War

During the Seven Years' War and in its wake, many Britons came to the conclusion that limits should be placed upon African slavery in order to better secure the empire in the Caribbean. In 1758, the *London Magazine* remarked upon the folly of West Indian planters' dependence upon enslaved black labor and recommended that penniless white orphans be transported from Great Britain to the Caribbean colonies, for "such children, by being early inured to the climate, would themselves . . . become able and good servants" and "their posterity," being "bred up to hard labour," would be "as much seasoned to the sun, and at least as hardy, as any negroes that can be found in Africa." Moreover, "such servants, instead of being dangerous to the island, as black slaves must always be, even tho' born in it" would "secure the island against any invasion" and "be of great service in every future war, both as seamen and soldiers, for invading the enemy."⁶⁸¹ The authors of many of the myriad proposals for the settlement of the newly acquired British colonies of Florida and the Ceded Islands of Dominica, Grenada, St. Vincent, and Tobago submitted strategies to populate them with Whites, notably Mediterranean peoples such as Greeks or Minorcans, whom they believed better adapted

or voyages, travels, expeditions, remarkable exploits and achievements, of the most celebrated English navigators (London, 1760); and John Wright, *A complete history of the late war, or annual register, of its rise, progress, and events, in Europe, Asia, Africa, and America* (Dublin, 1774). For contemporary histories of the West Indies that discuss the contributions of black soldiers to the Caribbean campaigns, see George Frere, *A short history of Barbados, from its first discovery and settlement to the present time* (London, 1768); Edward Long, *The History of Jamaica* (London, 1774); and Mr. Wynne, *A General History of the British Empire in America: Containing, An Historical, Political, and Commercial View of the English Settlements* (London, 1770). For two black sailors' accounts of their naval service during the Seven Years' War, see Olaudah Equiano, *The Interest Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African* (London, 1789) and Briton Hammon, *A Narrative of Uncommon Sufferings, and Surprising Deliverance of Briton Hammon, a Negro Man* (Boston, 1760).

⁶⁸¹ *London Magazine*, v. 28, August 1758, 396. For further recommendations that African slavery be limited in the Caribbean, see *London Magazine*, v. 27, October 1757, 499 and v. 28, April 1758, 168 and May 1758, 234.

than Britons to the climate of the West Indies. Rather than follow the pattern of the older sugar islands, they hoped to ensure the safety of the new tropical territories by limiting the size of landholdings and offering incentives such as free coastal land to poor white settlers in return for obligatory military duty. These imperial strategists hoped to avoid the insecurity that came of African slavery by instituting instead a white yeomanry who, in addition to their own provisions, would produce products such as cocoa, coffee, cotton, and indigo for the empire. Though they hoped to prevent the new provinces from becoming majority slave societies, none of these imperial strategists proposed that slavery be abolished in the older colonies and all of them imagined that the labor of some enslaved Africans would prove necessary in the new territories, especially in the onerous initial stages of their settlement.⁶⁸²

Though some imperial strategists saw indigent Whites as the solution to the problem of war and slavery, the participation of people of African descent in the battles of the Seven Years' War convinced others that Blacks could and should be relied upon to bolster the empire's might. In 1772, Maurice Morgann published *A Plan for the*

⁶⁸² See in particular, "Some Hints for the better Settlements of the ceded Islands, William Petty, 2nd Earl of Shelburne Papers, v. 48, ff. 567-73, William L. Clements Library. See also Sir William Young, *Considerations which may tend to promote the settlement of our new West-India colonies, by encouraging individuals to embark in the undertaking* (London, 1764); and, all within the Shelburne Papers at the Clements Library: "Estimate of the Expence of settling Twenty Thousand Acres of Land in East Florida with Seventy five Greek Families," v. 48, ff. 393-97; John Harvey, "Thoughts concerning the sake of Lands in the West India Islands," v. 48, ff. 187-92; "Hints relative to the settling of our New Acquisitions in America," v. 48, ff. 407-11; "Hints respecting the Settlement of Florida," v. 48, ff. 51-62; "Propositions for settling the New Sugar Islands Roughly thrown together," v. 48, ff. 71-73; and "Thoughts concerning the Colonys," v. 48, ff. 74-76. For postwar proslavery pamphlets that discussed the insecurity that came of African slavery, see William Knox, *Three tracts respecting the conversion and instruction of the free indians, and negroe slaves in the colonies* (London, 1768?); Arthur Lee, *An essay in vindication of the continental colonies of America* (London, 1764); and Samuel Martin, *An essay upon plantership*, 4th ed. (London, 1765).

Abolition of Slavery in the West Indies, which he had composed in 1763.⁶⁸³ Morgann, who served as private secretary to William Petty, 2nd Earl of Shelburne, the president of the Board of Trade in 1763 and Secretary of State for the Southern department in 1766, had helped to sift through the proposals for peopling the territories acquired by the Peace of Paris and ultimately penned one of his own. As “every acquisition of unsettled land may be considered as a fair field for the exertion of genius and of patriotism,” he called upon British officials to be innovative and to “furnish our most southern colony on the Continent of America with a race of people, whose constitutions are best adapted by nature to labour in that country, and to sustain the heats of the climate.”⁶⁸⁴ He suggested that male and female children be purchased in Africa, educated in Great Britain until the age of sixteen, and then transported to Florida to cultivate their own land. These black residents of Florida would be free and would enjoy all the rights and obligations of British subjectship, including, importantly, the defense of their colony and the empire of which it was a part.⁶⁸⁵

Morgann maintained that “colonies of free Negroes united in a common interest, perfectly and affectionately attached and dependent, such as, well regimented and disciplined, might act in hot climates with unabated vigour” could “shake the power of Spain to its foundations.”⁶⁸⁶ With New France all but vanquished, Morgann set his sights upon the assets of Britain’s remaining imperial rival, Spain. Having witnessed the crucial

⁶⁸³ *A Plan for the Abolition of Slavery in the West Indies* (London, 1772). While the pamphlet was published anonymously, Christopher Brown makes a convincing case for Morgann’s authorship. For Brown’s discussion of Morgann and his pamphlet, see Brown, *Moral Capital*, 213-20.

⁶⁸⁴ *Plan for the Abolition of Slavery*, 4.

⁶⁸⁵ *Plan for the Abolition of Slavery*, 16-17.

⁶⁸⁶ *Plan for the Abolition of Slavery*, 28.

role that free and enslaved Blacks played in the Caribbean theater of the late war, Morgann reasoned that those best suited to achieve the further empowerment and expansion of the British Empire into the southern Atlantic were Blacks, and he contended that they would accomplish this best if they were free. He envisioned a time when free white and black Britons would occupy the climatic zones most appropriate to their constitutions and, united by a common mother country, would “talk the same language, read the same books, profess the same religion, and be fashioned by the same laws.”⁶⁸⁷ Free black Britons would act as the “sable arm” of the British empire, enabling it, “no longer weakened and disgraced by slavery or restrained by climate but rising upon the sure foundations of equality and justice” to “stretch forth, with irresistible power. . . through every region of the Torrid Zone.”⁶⁸⁸

Perhaps recalling the devastating slave rebellions in Jamaica, Morgann warned that continued reliance upon African slavery could only beget catastrophe for the British in the Americas. He predicted an impending time “when the blacks of the southern colonies shall be numerous enough to throw off at once the yoke of tyranny to revenge their wrongs in the blood of their oppressors, and carry terror and destruction to the more northern settlements.” The ensuing hemispheric race war would inevitably result in Blacks’ exacting the “most horrible cruelties, and the most furious revenge” upon Whites.⁶⁸⁹ Morgann was not the only opponent of slavery to raise the specter of slave

⁶⁸⁷ *Plan for the Abolition of Slavery*, 25.

⁶⁸⁸ *Plan for the Abolition of Slavery*, 27.

⁶⁸⁹ *Plan for the Abolition of Slavery*, 14, 15. Morgann hoped that Florida would serve as a place where slaveholders could send their manumitted slaves and as a beacon for Blacks everywhere. He maintained that “the settlement of Florida by free blacks, would, in its consequences, remove all the causes from which we might predict any insurrections on the continent” and that “this regulation may, in process of time,

revolt in the era of the Seven Years' War. J. Philmore, in his 1760 *Two Dialogues on the Man-Trade* refused to accept that the brutal subjugation of enslaved Africans in the West Indies was a necessary evil and declared that "all the black men now in our plantations, who are by unjust force deprived of their liberty, and held in slavery, as they have none upon earth to appeal to, may lawfully repel that force with force, and to recover their liberty, destroy their oppressors."⁶⁹⁰ A writer who called himself "Philo-Britannious" reminded readers of the *London Chronicle* in 1762 that the "merciless masters" of the "hundred thousand" slaves who inhabited Jamaica "know only too well the cruelties they have practiced upon those miserable wretches, to expect any other than betraying them to an enemy, or cutting their throats; and of this there hath been such recent experience, by an open rebellion of the Negroes in various parts of Jamaica for many months." He lamented that "the men who would rob us of Jamaica are already there, and want only arms and ammunition, with a few good officers and men to head and conduct them, all which may be transported in a swift sailing frigate, that cannot easily be taken."⁶⁹¹ In his 1767 *A caution to Great Britain and her colonies, in a short representation of the calamitous state of the enslaved Negroes in the British dominions*, Anthony Benezet mourned the "continual apprehensions and dangers, and frequent alarms, to which the Whites are necessarily exposed from so great an encrease of a People, that, by their Bondage and Oppressions, become natural enemies, yet, at the same time, are filling the

extend itself over the neighbouring colonies in America, and, by degrees, over the islands themselves; and that thereby all slavery will be at length compleatly extirpated." *Plan for the Abolition of Slavery*, 16.

⁶⁹⁰ J. Philmore, *Two Dialogues on the Man-Trade* (London, 1760), 54. Philmore had the events of the war in mind when writing his tract, as he used the fact that Britons had not enslaved French prisoners of war as a means of nullifying the argument that African slaves were merely prisoners of just war and as such, justly enslaved. Philmore, *Two Dialogues*, 28-29.

places and eating the bread of those who would be the Support and Security of the Country.”⁶⁹² Advocates of antislavery writing in the period of the Seven Years’ War would have known that admonitions concerning the insecurity of slave societies would have special resonance for their audiences.

As did their contemporaries, Edmund Burke, William Burke, and James Ramsay emphasized the insecurity that came of slavery in their mid-century writings. In the preface to their 1757 *An account of the European settlements in America*, as well as its subsequent five editions, Edmund and William Burke remarked that as a result of the “present war,” the “affairs of America have lately engaged a great deal of the public attention.”⁶⁹³ They urged their countrymen to remedy the weaknesses that had been exposed by the imperial conflict, the most important of which was the vulnerability of the sugar islands. They reminded their readers that in the West Indies enslaved Blacks vastly outnumbered Whites and informed them that “this disproportion shews so clearly at the first glance how much the colonies are endangered, both from within and without; how much exposed to the assaults of a foreign enemy, and to the insurrection of their own slaves (which latter circumstance in all our islands keeps the people in perpetual

⁶⁹¹ *London Chronicle*, March 4-6, 1762. For other meditations on the danger posed to Jamaica from its slaves, see *Gentleman’s Magazine*, v. 32, April 1762, 155-56 and *London Chronicle*, July 15-17, 1760.

⁶⁹² Anthony Benezet, *A caution to Great Britain and her colonies, in a short representation of the calamitous state of the enslaved Negroes in the British dominions* (London, 1767), 5. For further discussion of the insecurity that comes of slavery, see Anthony Benezet, *Observations on the Inslaving, importing and purchasing of Negroes* (Germantown, 1759), 7 and Anthony Benezet, *A Short Account of that Part of Africa, Inhabited by the Negroes*, 2nd ed. (Philadelphia, 1762), 79. Benezet too had the events of the war in mind when writing, for he invited those readers who had suffered raids by Native Americans to identify with the family members of African slaves. He asked them, “in the present war, how many of our poor Country Men are dragged to Bondage and sold for Slaves; how many mourn, a Husband, a Wife, a Child, a Parent or some near Relation taken from them.” Benezet, *Observations*, 2.

⁶⁹³ Edmund Burke and William Burke, *An account of the European Settlements in America*, 5th ed. (London, 1765), i. The work was published in six expanding editions in 1757, 1758, 1760, 1762, 1765, and 1777.

apprehensions), that it may be a just cause of surprize, that no measures whatsoever are taken to correct this dangerous irregularity.”⁶⁹⁴ James Ramsay reiterated the Burkes’ caution concerning the precarious state of the Caribbean colonies when he wrote in his 1784 *Essay on the treatment and conversion of African slaves in the British sugar colonies*: “[The British] are in dread of insurrections in time of peace, and in time of war are exposed to every sort of depredation For at these times the slaves, far from adding to their strength, weaken and diminish it. But if all the inhabitants were free, and had property and families to fight for, what should they have to fear, who could draw out full 8000 hardy men, habituated to the climate, and, within five hours, have them ranged in order against any enemy that might assail them.”⁶⁹⁵ These authors blamed the planters’ greed and lack of industry for their heavy reliance upon enslaved labor and the consequent lack of Whites resident in the West Indies.⁶⁹⁶ Their dependence upon slaves not only exposed the island colonies to attack and revolt in times of war, it deprived the British Empire of the prosperity and security that only free men could furnish.

Edmund Burke, William Burke, and James Ramsay advised that the West Indies be populated with industrious free men who could serve as purchasers of British goods and as tropics-seasoned soldiers against the French and Spanish in the region. While these authors admitted that Whites could do the job, they also suggested that it would be

⁶⁹⁴ Burke and Burke, *Account of the European Settlements*, 45, 117.

⁶⁹⁵ James Ramsay, *An essay on the treatment and conversion of African slaves in the British sugar colonies* (Dublin, 1784), 98-99. I have included Ramsay’s work in this study because he began writing it in 1768 and continued work on it throughout the early 1770s before finally publishing it in 1784. See Brown, *Moral Capital*, 229-30.

⁶⁹⁶ The Burkes noted that the “laws and ordnances to oblige them to keep a certain number of white servants in some proportion to their blacks” were “in most places . . . a dead letter” and that “their avarice in these particulars make them blind to the hazards to which they expose the sum total of their affairs.”

more beneficial to the empire if Blacks were relied upon to accomplish these colonial tasks. Banking on their audience's familiarity with free and enslaved Blacks' participation in the late war, they contended that Blacks would contribute more to the British Empire as free men than as slaves and outlined plans for liberating a select few as an initial step toward total emancipation in the island colonies. Not unlike the anonymous author of the 1746 *An essay concerning slavery*, the Burkes and Ramsay suggested that the population that currently placed the island colonies in their state of weakness and military dependence upon the mother country could become the key to their self-reliance.

As part of their proposal for what they called "a sort of enfranchisement of mulattoes and negroes," Edmund and William Burke recommended that mulattoes and trustworthy creole Blacks be given land and employment as a means toward independence, and indicated that such freedmen could serve as armed defenders of their colonies. Freeing these enslaved Blacks, they wrote, "will add to the demand for our goods, and the colony will be strengthened by the addition of so many men, who will have an interest of their own to fight for."⁶⁹⁷ They closed their proposal with the warning that "the alarms we are under at the news of any petty armament in the West-Indies is a demonstrative proof of the weakness of our condition there" and bemoaned the likely opposition of West Indian planters to "the only possible means of securing their own possessions from danger," namely the liberation of even some of their slaves. No doubt alluding to the complete extirpation of slavery, the Burkes hoped that "the apparent and

Burke and Burke, *Account of the European Settlements*, 117-18. See also Ramsay, *Essay on the treatment and conversion of slaves*, 88-94, 99-101.

dangerous progress of the French” would “animate us to enterprise some regulations, in a strain of policy far superior to any thing I have ventured to hint, for the interest of the commerce, and the honour of the councils, of the British nation.”⁶⁹⁸

James Ramsay maintained that emancipated slaves “would become more useful, more profitable subjects, and might even be trusted with arms, in defence of the colony in which they have an interest.”⁶⁹⁹ Reminding his readers that enslaved Blacks had already “in their present state been at different times trusted with arms; corps of them have been formed, and on all occasions have discovered an alacrity that promised every possible exertion,” Ramsay avowed that a force of armed freedmen would provide the sugar islands with a “security from foreign attacks that no protection from Europe can afford them.”⁷⁰⁰ He envisioned the gradual emancipation that would occur as the result of voluntary manumissions of all enslaved Blacks by their masters as the future solution to the problem of war and slavery. He offered a more expedient solution for the present. He proposed that all mulattoes be freed at the age of thirty and that children of mulatto women be free from birth. He noted that, “By these means, the number of free citizens would insensibly increase in the colonies, and add to their security and strength. A new rank of citizens, placed between the black and white races, would be established. They would naturally attach themselves to the white race, as the more honourable relation, and so become a barrier against the designs of the black.”⁷⁰¹ Free mulattoes would serve as a buffer caste between Whites and enslaved Blacks until such a time when all Blacks

⁶⁹⁷ Burke and Burke, *Account of the European Settlements*, 131.

⁶⁹⁸ Burke and Burke, *Account of the European Settlements*, 132-33.

⁶⁹⁹ Ramsay, *Essay on the treatment and conversion of slaves*, 110.

⁷⁰⁰ Ramsay, *Essay on the treatment and conversion of slaves*, 109, 250.

would be free. Ramsay hoped his contention that free Blacks would offer superior prosperity and security to the British Empire would be judged “an argument against slavery, which applies equally to the interest of the master, and the advantage of the public” and as such, “would gain a fair hearing.”⁷⁰²

The British Empire’s “Sable Arm”

As insurgents against as well as loyal foot soldiers of empire during the Seven Years’ War, people of African descent proved themselves vital to the security of the British Empire in the Caribbean. Seizing upon reservations about African slavery that were born of the wartime actions of free and enslaved Blacks, opponents of slavery developed an amoral and pragmatic martial antislavery discourse that they hoped would fall upon receptive ears. Advocates of antislavery proposed that enslaved Blacks be gradually freed and thereby transformed from potentially fearsome enemies into fierce defenders and extenders of the empire in the southern Atlantic. Portending slave revolt proved perilous, however, as proslavery forces came to attack antislavery writers for inciting insurrection. When Anthony Benezet sent newspaper clippings “pointing out the great danger of Insurrection from Slaves” to Granville Sharp in late 1772, he avowed to Sharp that he had “always, in what I have published carefully avoided speaking on that head, least it should occasion a complaint, as tho’ we were making the Negroes acquainted with their Strength and terrifying the Inhabitants.”⁷⁰³ Particularly following the Haitian Revolution, abolitionists refrained from mentioning slaves’ active opposition

⁷⁰¹ Ramsay, *Essay on the treatment and conversion of slaves*, 248.

⁷⁰² Ramsay, *Essay on the treatment and conversion of slaves*, 107.

⁷⁰³ Anthony Benezet to Granville Sharp, November 8, 1772, Copies of Letters Received, 1768-1773, Granville Sharp Papers, Read at the NYHS.

to their oppression and practical antislavery arguments concerning the insecurity of slave societies did not resurface with any potency until the nineteenth century. In the late eighteenth century, British officials did not embrace the contention that slavery should be abolished to strengthen the empire in the Caribbean. Efforts to populate the new tropical colonies with free men of any hue failed and slavery expanded precipitously as planters appropriated their virgin soil and imported thousands of African slaves to cultivate it with sugar.

The military participation of free and enslaved Blacks in the Seven Years' War did, however, persuade even fervently proslavery Britons that Blacks should be relied upon to defend the West Indian colonies. In his 1774 *History of Jamaica*, Edward Long presented a detailed narrative of the slave revolts of 1760 and 1761 that emphasized the martial prowess of the rebel slaves as well as the Maroons and free and enslaved black rangers who subdued them. Concerned that the Maroons' "insolence, during formidable insurrections has been most insufferable," he proposed that the only means of retaining the essential allegiance of these "principal instruments . . . in suppressing . . . insurrection" would be to counterbalance them with "a powerful equipoise, composed of men dissimilar from them in complexion and manners, but equal in hardiness and vigour."⁷⁰⁴ Long advocated the creation of a permanent mulatto militia to be deployed in the interior of the island against runaway and insurgent slaves and declared with words that echoed those of his antislavery contemporaries that mulattoes should "form the centre of connexion between the two extremes" of white and black, "producing a regular establishment of three ranks of men, dependent on each other, and rising in a proper

climax of subordination, in which the Whites would hold the highest place.”⁷⁰⁵

Remarking that he could “foresee no mischief that can arise from the enfranchisement of every Mulatto child,” Long suggested something akin to mid-eighteenth-century antislavery authors’ proposition that elite slaves be emancipated to serve as a third caste of free black tradesmen, landowners, and soldiers. Rather than envisioning the enfranchisement of mulattoes as a preliminary step toward universal black freedom, however, Long viewed the measure as an essential means to a decidedly proslavery end. Increasingly in the eighteenth century and culminating with the institution of the British West India Regiments, British officials came to view arming Blacks as the only practical means of safeguarding their empire of slavery in the Caribbean.⁷⁰⁶ The British armed Blacks to perpetuate slavery, not to eradicate it, and an ever more regimented reliance upon black soldiers became the proslavery solution to the problem of war, insurrection, and slavery in the West Indies.

⁷⁰⁴ Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 1, 334; v. 2, 445; and v. 1, 335.

⁷⁰⁵ Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 1, 333. Long also advised that in times of emergency, 10,000 of Jamaica’s 55,000 male slaves be “set free, and properly armed; and an assurance given, under sanction of the public faith, that, in the event of their gallant and honest behaviour, they should receive a further reward.” He alleged the “more sensible, able and trusty” slaves, “consisting principally of tradesmen, drivers, and other head men” would prove “extremely serviceable, more particularly in nocturnal surprises, harassing skirmishes, and ambuscading.” Long, *History of Jamaica*, v. 1, 134-35.

⁷⁰⁶ On the arming of Blacks in the American Revolutionary War, see Philip D. Morgan and Andrew Jackson O’Shaughnessy, “Arming Slaves in the American Revolution,” in *Arming Slaves from Classical Times to the Modern Age*, ed. Christopher Leslie Brown and Philip D. Morgan (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 180-208. On the British West India Regiments, see Roger Norman Buckley, *Slaves in Red Coats: The British West India Regiments, 1795-1815* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979).

Conclusion

In 1775, James Madison confessed to a friend that he feared the repercussions of an enemy's "tampering with the slaves" of Virginia. He observed, "that is the only part in which this Colony is vulnerable . . . we shall fall like Achilles by the hand of one that knows that secret."⁷⁰⁷ As a result of their experience of the global imperial conflict that had ended only twelve years earlier, Britons throughout the Empire would have been well aware of the "secret" vulnerability of Virginia and its fellow slave societies. Given enslaved and free Blacks' well-publicized actions as soldiers, sailors, and rebels during the Seven Years' War, Britons realized that the people of African descent who inhabited the Empire's plantation provinces could serve either as powerful allies or formidable foes in the developing conflict between Britain and its rebellious American colonies. The experience of the Seven Years' War influenced Britons' and Americans' perceptions of and recruitment of black soldiers during the American Revolution, which in turn helped to shape African Americans' sense of whether the British Empire or the emerging American republic offered them the more promising path to liberty.

During the Seven Years' War, British imperial officials and military commanders built upon an existing local dependence on black soldiers for military defense when they sought recruits for the most extensive offensive campaigns they had ever orchestrated. Britons resident in majority slave societies had long relied upon armed black men to protect their colonies from the threats posed by internal as well as external enemies. In the West Indies, thousands of enslaved and free black men joined Britain's expeditions

⁷⁰⁷ Quoted in Cassandra Pybus, *Epic Journeys of Freedom: Runaway Slaves of the American Revolution and Their Global Quest for Liberty* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2006), 8.

against France and Spain. In the southern mainland colonies, some enslaved and free Blacks became militiamen and provincial soldiers while a multitude served as pioneers for the British forces. In the northern mainland colonies, enslaved and free black men fought alongside men of European and indigenous descent in provincial companies and toiled on behalf of the army as hired civilian laborers. Throughout the British Atlantic world, sailors of African descent manned the British naval vessels and privateers that protected the British American colonies and their trade.

Blacks' martial service during the Seven Years' War illustrates that though eighteenth-century British slaveholders routinely decried the likelihood of their falling victim to the slaves they deemed domestic enemies, they also routinely armed them in times of war. In fact, men of African descent undertook the most essential martial roles where slavery most profoundly shaped society and, thus, precisely where armed slaves seemed to pose the gravest threat to the colonial order. In Britain's slave societies, enslaved Blacks performed all manner of skilled and unskilled labor, including that required for the waging of war. That this is a revelation is likely due to the rhetoric of southern mainland American slaveholders during the American Revolution, which has profoundly shaped our understanding of Britain's arming of Blacks.

It is evident that the perceptions of southern mainland British American colonists have distorted our sense of Britain's deployment of black soldiers in the eighteenth century. Scholars have taken the views expressed by revolutionary-era Virginians and South Carolinians regarding the arming of slaves as representative of those of most eighteenth-century British slaveholders. In truth, southern mainland slaveholders were singular in the vehemence with which they opposed the arming of Blacks in the late

1700s. Over the course of the eighteenth century, British slaveholders in the Caribbean and in the southern mainland colonies each brought their rhetoric regarding the arming of Blacks into line with their practice, but they did so in opposite ways. Many West Indian colonists came to describe the soldiers of African descent upon whom they had long relied as their adept and skilled protectors rather than as their inveterate enemies.

Conversely, southern mainland colonists endeavored to cease arming the men of African descent whom they continued to mistrust. During the Seven Years' War, imperial officials and military commanders adopted the views and practices of Caribbean rather than mainland North American slaveholders regarding the arming of Blacks. Thus, southern mainland American slaveholders' growing hostility toward black soldiers made them exceptional rather than typical within the late-eighteenth-century British Atlantic Empire.

As a result of Blacks' successful martial service during the Seven Years' War, many British imperial officials and military commanders became convinced that black soldiers were valuable and indeed essential to the waging of war in the southern regions of British America. During the American Revolution, British imperial officials' growing comfort with the deployment of black soldiers led them to clash with those southern mainland American slaveholders who increasingly viewed them as anathema. Southern mainland colonists were aghast at proposals like the one Lieutenant Colonel Archibald Campbell, a veteran of the British campaigns against French Guadeloupe and Martinique during the Seven Years' War, sent to Lord George Germain in 1776. Campbell recommended that 1,400 "Stout Active Negro's" be hired from the British West Indies to fight against the American rebels on the mainland. He emphasized that "one good effect"

of the presence of such a corps “in any of the Enemys Collonys” would be the desertion of rebel slaveholders’ slaves “on whose labour their Existence so much depends.” He reminded Germain that the British “owed the taking of Guadaloup” in 1759 to the desertion of French slaves “more then to all our Attacks.”⁷⁰⁸ When men like William Henry Lyttelton, former governor of Jamaica and South Carolina and a member of the House of Commons, advocated encouraging the slaves of American rebels to take up arms against their masters and John Murray, Earl of Dunmore and governor of Virginia, enacted such a scheme, southern slaveholders determined that defection from the British Empire was the only means of securing their safety and property.⁷⁰⁹

Though, in the wake of the Seven Years’ War, many British imperial and military officials had come to recognize the value of black soldiers, it was black men themselves who instigated the transformation of proposals to arm Blacks into policy during the American Revolution. In 1774, Abigail Adams informed her husband that a group of enslaved Bostonians had drawn up “a petition to the Governor, telling him they would fight for him provided he would arm them and engage to liberate them if he conquered.” In 1775, a group of slaves informed Dunmore that they were willing to abscond from their owners and “take up arms,” prompting Dunmore to notify London of his intention “to arm all my own Negroes, and receive all others that will come to me whom I shall declare free.”⁷¹⁰ Cognizant of Blacks’ effective martial service during the Seven Years’

⁷⁰⁸ Lieutenant Colonel Archibald Campbell to Lord George Germain, January 16, 1776, vol. 4, George Germain Papers, William L. Clements Library, Ann Arbor, MI.

⁷⁰⁹ Sylvia Frey, *Water from the Rock: Black Resistance in a Revolutionary Age* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1991), 67 and Robert Olwell, “‘Domestick Enemies’: Slavery and Political Independence in South Carolina, May 1775-March 1776,” *Journal of Southern History* 55 (February 1989): 21-48.

⁷¹⁰ Quoted in Gary Nash, *The Forgotten Fifth: African Americans in the Age of Revolution* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2006), 25-26.

War, when black men offered themselves as soldiers in the 1770s, British officials often proved receptive to their willingness “to fight for his Majesty King George.”⁷¹¹

Just as they had during the Seven Years’ War, people of African descent seized upon the opportunities opened to them by the conflict between Britain and its mainland American colonies. Following traditions of black martial service that had been established during the mid-century imperial war, northern Blacks often sought to enlist in locally-raised companies of the American forces during the American Revolutionary War.⁷¹² However, the fears of southern American slaveholders severely limited Blacks’ opportunities for service in the Continental Army.⁷¹³ Finding only meager opportunities for liberty among the Americans, enslaved Blacks escaped to the invading British army in droves, thus instigating what historian Gary Nash has called “the greatest slave rebellion in North American history.”⁷¹⁴ British commanders proved more amenable than their American counterparts to deploying black men as soldiers, and former slaves staffed Dunmore’s “Ethiopian Regiment” as well as units that fought in Charleston and Savannah. By the close of the war, the British counted among their forces several hundred black soldiers in the mainland and tens of thousands more in the Caribbean.⁷¹⁵ Hundreds of mainland North American slaves secured their freedom through their martial

⁷¹¹ “Proposal from a Free Black,” Albany, August 1757, LO 4359, Loudoun Papers, Huntington Library, San Marino, CA.

⁷¹² Benjamin Quarles, *The Negro in the American Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1961), 56.

⁷¹³ On American Patriots’ opposition toward the deployment of black soldiers, see Philip D. Morgan and Andrew Jackson O’Shaughnessy, “Arming Slaves in the American Revolution,” in *Arming Slaves from Classical Times to the Modern Age*, ed. Christopher Leslie Brown and Philip D. Morgan (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2006), 192-94.

⁷¹⁴ Nash, *The Forgotten Fifth*, 23.

⁷¹⁵ Morgan and O’Shaughnessy, “Arming Slaves in the American Revolution,” in *Arming Slaves from Classical Times to the Modern Age*, ed. Brown and Morgan, 189-92, 194-98.

service, as London officials refused to return those who had fought on behalf of Britain to their owners.⁷¹⁶

Building upon foundations laid during the Seven Years' War, British officials deployed soldiers of African descent in novel ways during the American Revolutionary War. In creating three professional corps of free black soldiers in 1778, Governor Archibald Campbell continued Jamaica's military reliance upon the free black and mulatto men who had helped suppress the 1760 slave rebellions. As George Keppel, 3rd Earl of Albemarle had for the 1762 British siege of Havana, Brigadier General Edward Mathew obtained thousands of enslaved soldiers from multiple locations to secure St. Lucia in 1778. However, rather than sell the slaves at the close of the campaign as Albemarle had, Mathew instead retained them as soldiers, thereby establishing the first permanent black army regiment in the British West Indies.⁷¹⁷ The events of the American Revolutionary War thus confirmed Britain's reliance upon black soldiers and set direct precedents for the institution of the British West India Regiments in the 1790s.⁷¹⁸

British imperial and military officials' embrace of black soldiers following the Seven Years' War led to conflicts with Caribbean as well as southern mainland American slaveholders. Though British West Indian colonists were far more sanguine about arming Blacks than their mainland counterparts, they had no interest in ceding sovereignty over their black soldiers to London ministers and military commanders. Whereas imperial

⁷¹⁶ Nash, *The Forgotten Fifth*, 41.

⁷¹⁷ Andrew Jackson O'Shaughnessy, *An Empire Divided: The American Revolution and the British Caribbean* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2000), 176-77, 180-81.

officials sought black soldiers to staff offensive expeditions and to garrison conquered colonies, Caribbean slaveholders preferred to retain their able-bodied black men for their own defense rather than contribute them to aid in the capture of sugar islands that could become their commercial rivals. When Jamaica's colonists opposed the formation of the British West India Regiments in the 1790s, they protested not the arming of slaves, but instead their lack of control over the permanent corps of enslaved black soldiers active in their region.⁷¹⁹

By the end of the eighteenth century, Britain's military dependence upon black soldiers for the security of its Atlantic empire had been firmly established. While they found themselves on opposite trajectories with regard to the arming of Blacks, the majority of both Britons and Americans nevertheless supported the institution of slavery. Following the Seven Years' War, Britons and those Britons who became Americans eagerly sought land and slaves to cultivate the virgin soil of the Ceded Islands and the trans-Appalachian West. Even as the actions of black soldiers, sailors, and rebels during the Seven Years' War convinced some Britons that slavery should be abolished, during the late eighteenth century Britain armed Blacks to maintain rather than to eradicate slavery. Only a tiny minority of black soldiers and sailors managed to profit from their service to the king while hundreds of thousands of people of African descent became the victims of the precipitous postwar expansion of slavery and the Atlantic slave trade. If, however, they only managed to plant the seeds of antislavery in the eighteenth century, come the early nineteenth century, black soldiers, sailors, and rebels would set in motion

⁷¹⁸ On the British West India regiments, see Roger Norman Buckley, *Slaves in Red Coats: The British West India Regiments, 1795-1815* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1979).

both the abolition of the slave trade and the emancipation of Britain's and America's slaves.

⁷¹⁹ Buckley, *Slaves in Red Coats*, 40-42.

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