

CHAPTER 5

THE SECOND GENERATION

By the 'second generation' of Anguillians, we mean those born here or arriving here during the 30 year period 1681-1710. These joined the members of the first generation, 1650-1680, who continued to live into and beyond that period. In addition to the landless homesteaders from St Christopher, or St Kitts, attracted to Anguilla in the first wave of settlement, others continued to straggle onto the island over the balance of the century. They came from a variety of sources and for a number of reasons.

Some of the new arrivals came from among the St Kitts-based Sir Tobias Bridge's Regiment, disbanded after the Treaty of Breda in 1667. In order to encourage the men to settle in the islands, instead of all returning to England, land was allotted to two companies of the King's regular troop in the West Indies in proportion to each person's rank. The amount of land that each soldier received depended on his rank in the regiment. The Captain General and Governor-in-Chief, Sir Charles Wheeler,¹ received detailed instructions from London on how much land the men were to be awarded in the Leeward Islands.²

¹ Sometimes spelled "Wheler" in the correspondence.

² CO.153/1, folio 27: Sir Charles Wheeler's Instructions.

Private	35
Corporal or	50
Sergeant	79
Ensign	160
Lieutenant	200
Captain	400

Table 1: Land entitlement of the decommissioned men of Sir Tobias Bridge's Regiment, CO.153/1.

No deputy governor of Anguilla, right up to the last one, William Richardson who served from 1805 to 1825, was ever appointed to his office by a patent, or ever received one penny from the Crown or from local government in payment for his service. Anguillian deputy governors were all forced to make their own revenue by selling Crown land and pocketing the customs duties and powder money. Until close to the end of Anguilla's separate existence in 1825, there was no Treasurer appointed for Anguilla. There was no system for accounting for public revenue or its expenditure. No public works or buildings were built throughout this early period of life in Anguilla. The one public building we know from the eighteenth century is the court house at Crocus Hill. This was no more than the private home of a deceased governor, perhaps deputy governor Benjamin Gumbs and subsequently deputy governor William Richardson, turned over to public use sometime after 1825 until it was destroyed by hurricane in 1950.³

³ Governor Richardson's manager Mr Zagers acquired a part of his estate in due course. His acquisition, just west of the old courthouse, was known as "Zagers' land" and is now mistakenly spelled "Sachassas" instead of "Zagers'."

We see from table 1 that a Captain was to be awarded the most land, four hundred acres. An ensign got one hundred and sixty acres. A private could claim no more than thirty five acres. Most of the men obtained land in St Kitts. We know from a patent that survives in the Anguilla archives that at least one officer settled in Anguilla. In the year 1673, six years after the regiment was disbanded, deputy governor Abraham Howell gave Ensign Thomas Rumney a grant of 'Blown Point Plantation', no doubt in exchange for a payment. This document is the earliest Anguillian land title to have survived. This fact alone makes it worth reproducing in full. But, additionally it sheds valuable light on social conditions on the island at the time. It reads:

Abraham Howell, Deputy Governor and Commander in Chief over all His Majesty's Forces, Officers and Soldiers in Anguilla:

(LS) Whereas his Sacred Majesty Charles the Second, By the grace of God of England Scotland France and Ireland with the territories and dominions thereto belonging, King, Defender of the Faith, has by his Letters Patent under the Great Seal of England bearing date the 10th day of [. . .] 1671, Reposing special trust hath authorised and empowered and commissioned his servant William Stapleton to be Captain General and Chief Governor of all His Majesty's Leeward Islands in America as by his Commission may more at large appear and Whereas His Excellency hath commissioned and empowered me Capt Abraham Howell Deputy Governor

and Commander in Chief as above said to give, grant, sell and assign over grants or patents for lands situate, lying and being in the Island of Anguilla aforesaid as to me shall seem meet and convenient, Provided always it be not prejudicial to any former grants or patents

THEREFORE KNOW YE that I the said Abraham Howell for diverse considerations me hereunto moving have given and granted and by these presents do give and grant unto Ensign Thomas Rumney a certain parcel of land or plantation situate, lying and being in a place that is known and called by the name of Blown Point

Plantation it being in breadth two and thirty men's land, that is to say all what land is at head and foot in the same breadth, at the head bounded with the rocks and at the foot joining with the Rendezvous Pond with all and every of the appurtenances thereto belonging or appertaining, to have and may hold, all former grants excepted, to him the said Ensign Thomas Rumney his heirs and assigns for ever the above specified land yielding and paying unto our dread Sovereign all such taxes according to the custom of the country.

Given under my hand and seal this 18th day of July anno. 1673.

Abraham Howell (LS)

The name 'Blown Point' Plantation was subsequently to evolve into Blowing Point. The original spelling in this patent has an authentic ring to it. To this day, the residents refer to their village as "Blown Point". The plantation is described as being thirty two men's land in breadth. The exact meaning of this description is not clear. We only know that the plantation bounded at the

head (presumably the east) with the sea rocks and at the foot (presumably the west) with Rendezvous Pond. If this was a regimental grant, and if it conformed with the instructions given to the Governor, then thirty two men's land would be close to 160 acres. Deputy governor Abraham Howell does not make it clear whether the land was granted in accordance with Wheeler's instructions from London or whether it was a purely commercial transaction. It seems unlikely it was a regimental grant. It may well be that Ensign Romney sold his regimental grant of 160 acres of land in another island and was using some of the proceeds to purchase a smaller and cheaper parcel of land in Anguilla.

Three years later, in 1676, preserved in the St Kitts Archives, is another patent to land given by Abraham Howell.⁴ He records a grant of land in The Valley Division he made ten years previously in 1666, the year he was informally elected deputy governor by his fellows, to Humphrey Lynch. The patent reads,

*By the Deputy Governor
Anguilla*

These may certifie whom it doth or may concern that in the year 1666, I being then chosen by the inhabitants of this island to be Governor & Commander in Chief under his Sacred Majesty until Commission from a higher power did appear upon said island, I did by virtue of said

⁴ Photographed by Martha Burrows and transcribed by Heather Nielson in 2005.

power give and grant to Humphrey Lynch & to his heirs forever all former grants only excepted a certain parcel of land lying and being in the new Valley Division beginning at the head line joyning with the southernmost corner of the land which Walter Perkins did dwell upon & so running to the sea side & to the borders [of] the neighbouring plantations in breadth be it more or less . .

[Given] under my hand this 7th of Xber 1676.

Signed: Abraham Howell

From these two patents, it becomes apparent that one of the principal benefits of government in Anguilla was having some recognised authority to confirm title to land by those that had settled it. Granting titles to land was one of the main functions of a deputy governor, and doubtless one of his principal sources of revenue.

There are several other early land title documents that can still be seen in the Anguilla Archives. Some are in badly damaged condition, but most are substantially intact. After Humphrey Lynch's 1676 patent, the third in time to have survived is Abraham Howell's 1684 certificate of a grant to John Lake of a parcel of Crown land at 'Stoney Valley'. This is just thirty-four years after the settlement of 1650. The first part is the certificate from the deputy governor while the second part is a certificate from Anguilla's only recognised land surveyor of the time, Richard Gallway. It reads:

These may certify all or whom it may or doth concern that there was given and granted unto John Lake and to

his heirs for ever a certain parcel of waste or King's land in the Stony Valley of this island that is to say thirty men's land in breadth and in length five hundred geometrical paces beginning at the head line running South East, bounded on the South West with the land granted to John Burrose with an additional grant Northwards to ye neighbouring plantations be it more or less.

This I certify under my hand 8 October 1684.

(sd) Abraham Howell (LS)

Anguilla Island

These are to certify whom it may concern that by order I have surveyed and laid out for John Lake thirty men's land in the Stony Valley beginning at the head line and running five hundred geometrical paces South East, bounded on the South West with the land granted unto John Burrose all which I do hereby certify as witness my hand the 21st of [. . .]

(sd) Richard Gallwey

The area of land that Abraham Howell transferred to John Lake is described as being thirty men's land in breadth, and five hundred geometrical paces long. The modern equivalent of these dimensions is lost to us. Both parcels lie to the north-east of the estate of John Burrose. The name Stoney Valley crops up repeatedly and was the early name of the area we now know as Stoney Ground. From this patent and the several other surviving land titles that deal with land in the same area, we learn that Stoney

Ground was one of the first areas of settlement in Anguilla.

The title document that Thomas Romney received can be described as a 'patent' as it transfers the fee simple to him with the word 'forever'. John Lake's document calls itself a certificate, and as such it is not a true title document. It does not convey the fee simple to him, it merely certifies that someone else, either the Governor-in-Chief or the deputy governor has given him a patent to the land. A patent to land from the Governor-in-Chief or the deputy governor was at this time the best title that a settler could hope to receive to his land. A 'patent' or 'letters patent' was a form of fee simple title that was long recognised in England. It is a declaration by an officer of the State as to the ownership of a particular lot of land. In England, under the feudal system, a landowner owed duties and services to his lord in exchange for holding his land. He could lose his land if he failed to perform the requisite services. This was most unsatisfactory to land owners. As early as in section 62 of the Magna Carta (1215), the barons of England forced King John to grant them patents to their land, raising their land ownership close to the high level found at that time only in the County of Kent. This limited right of land ownership in England created by the feudal system was one of the moving factors in people emigrating to the

Americas. They were determined to really own their land. None of the feudal tenures applied to land held by patent. Obtaining a patent from the local governor in Anguilla achieved one of the main aims of settlers in the West Indies, owing your own land.⁵

Certificates such as Lake's were in common use when the deputy governor was not authorised by the Captain General and Governor-in-Chief to issue a land patent. A certificate only certified that the named person was in peaceful occupation of the land, it did not vest title in the land holder. It was not a true title document, as a patent was. The deputy governor of Anguilla was seldom authorised to issue a patent, and most of the time when we see him granting land we can assume that he was acting on his own initiative, and in consideration of a fee paid to him. John Lake's certificate has survived only because it was produced and copied for use as an exhibit in litigation in the year 1775, some ninety four years after it was issued. It was filed away in the Secretary's Office, now the Registry of Deeds, where it can still be seen.

The name Lake features in Anguilla from the earliest period of settlement. The family name survives today as one of the most common in Anguilla. The Lakes were among the first wave of immigrants and

⁵ As a point of reference, the first patent granted in New York went to Killian Van Rensselaer. It was dated 1630. This advantageous form of land title continued to be used in the USA after the Revolution. They then became re-titled as 'land patents': <http://www.truth.tc/information/HistoryOfTheLandPatent.html>.

homesteaders. It is not certain who the first Anguillian Lake was, nor to which St Kitts or Nevis Lake family he was related. The likelihood is that the Anguilla Lakes are all descended from Captain Jacob Lake of Nevis. We first see Jacob arriving in Nevis in 1628.⁶ He travelled back to England on occasion, probably reporting to the proprietors. We next see him aged 30 shipping on the Peter Bonaventure on 3rd April 1635 at Gravesend "*bound for the Barbadoes*", and from there to Nevis. Jacob Lake was Sir Thomas Warner's deputy in Nevis. He served as deputy governor of Nevis between 1641 and his death in 1649. He was buried at Lowlands St Thomas' Church in that island. His damaged tombstone survives there. It is preserved embedded in the wall of the little church at Lowlands. The epitaph reads:⁷

*Here lies the mirror of each martial mind
Religion who confirmed and refined
In all his actions who was fortunate
An Atlas to support the weight of state
This island's safeguard and his foe's decrease
The flower of arms and the tower of peace
Now Nevis mourn reading this epitaph
Here Jacob resteth and here lies your staff
Here lyeth the body
of Captain Jacob Lake Esquire*

⁶ Vere Langford Oliver, Caribbeana, Volume II (London: Mitchell Hughes) page 4.

⁷ Taken from FH Watkins, A Handbook of the Leeward Islands (1924).

*Late Governor of this island Nevis
who departed this life October 1649*

The fourth oldest surviving document dealing with land in Anguilla in the seventeenth century is Thomas Connor's 1688 certificate from deputy governor Abraham Howell. This is thirty-eight years after the original settlement of 1650. The certificate reads:

Anguilla. Dimensions for Mr Thomas Connor to have his Land Patented, it lying and being situate in the Valley Division of the above mentioned Island and being in two parcels.

Ye first, bounding north with the common path and Daniel Bryan, east with the land of Mrs Ruth Howell and Richard Welch, west with the land that did formerly belong to Owin Carty, now in the possession of Mary Rowane⁸, running south to the extent of the neighbouring plantation.

Ye second, lying in Stony Valley at the head line of John Harrigan bounding north west to the other neighbouring plantations, bounding on the north east side with the land that did formerly belong to Da[. . .] now in the possession of Captain George Leonard, on the south [. . .] side with the land of Daniel Bryan, all which land contains by estimation forty acres be it more or less, all which land he is in possession of as his rights did appear before me.

*This is to certify under my hand
this 12th day of J[. . .]
(sd) Abraham Howell*

⁸ ie, Mary Ruan.

Thomas Connor's certificate is interesting for a number of reasons. It is another example of an informal 'certificate' issued by the deputy governor for land in Anguilla. It appears from the wording on the first lines that it was prepared with a view to his applying to the Governor-in-Chief for a land patent. That he never got a better title is evident as the certificate continued to be produced as proof of title long after it was made. Also of interest is that the certificate applies to two parcels of land in the Valley Division.

The location of Thomas Connor's first parcel of land is not mentioned other than that it is in The Valley Division. It is said to be bound on the north with the common path and Daniel Bryan's land. On the east lay the lands of Ruth Howell and Richard Welch. On the west was the land formerly belonging to Owin Carty and now possessed by Mary Ruan. These names are of interest to Anguillians. Owin Carty is the first Carty to appear in the Anguillan records. Mary Ruan is the first Ruan mentioned. As it is an Irish name, we may speculate that she may have married one of the Wild Irish who landed in Anguilla that year. Ruth Howell who is also mentioned was one of Abraham Howell's relatives and thus a member of the leading family of Anguilla.

Connor's second parcel is stated in the certificate to be located in Stoney Ground. It was described as being

bound by lands of John Harrigan, Daniel Bryan and Captain George Leonard. It is said to be about forty acres in size. These Irish names Harrigan and Bryan are interesting to Anguillians. Maybe they were some of the Wild Irish that descended on Anguilla in the year 1688. The Wild Irish were neither all expelled nor left of their own accord. Their names and blood lines still continue to flourish in Anguilla today.

Connor's 1688 title document is another example of an informal 'certificate' seen issued by the deputy governor for land in Anguilla. This is the last official document that survives from the period when Abraham Howell served as the deputy governor of Anguilla. He was to live for many more years, and to continue to play a significant role in the history of Anguilla in the first decades of the eighteenth century. Shortly after executing the certificate, he was removed from office for some unknown reason. He seems to have fallen out of favour with Governor-in-Chief, Christopher Codrington Sr. Codrington appointed George Leonard to be deputy governor of Anguilla and captain of the island militia in his place.

The fifth seventeenth century title document preserved in Anguilla's archives is a patent of 1698. It is made by deputy governor George Leonard. Here we learn that Governor Codrington Sr appointed him deputy

governor of Anguilla. In it, he grants Jacob Howell, Abraham Howell's son, title to land at Blowing Point. The patent reads:

By the Honourable Captain George Leonard, Deputy Governor of his Majesty's Island of Anguilla.

*By virtue of full power and authority unto me in that behalf derived from his Excellency Christopher Codrington [. . .] Captain General and Governor in Chief in and over all his Majesty's Caribbean Leeward Islands in America I do by these present letters patent give and grant unto Jacob Howell of this island, planter, and to his heirs, former grants excepted, a certain parcel of land upon this island being at Blown Poynte, bounded northwards with the land or plantation formerly possessed by and belonging to John Harris late of this island deceased and now in the possession and occupation of William Thomas, bounded on the South side with the land or plantation which did properly belong to John Green and now in the possession of Peter Edny, bounded Eastwards with the land or plantation formerly belonging and in the possession of Lewis Jones or other neighbouring plantations, bounded Westwards to other plantations or the pond, he the said Jacob Howell at all time and times hereafter paying all such dues and duties as shall be due unto our lawful sovereign Lord the King and his Deputies upon this island
In confirmation I have hereunto annexed my hand and seal in Anguilla, August 18th 1698.*

(sd) George Leonard (LS)

Jacob Howell's patent is of interest for a number of reasons. We have seen that Abraham Howell was

elected by the Anguillians to be their deputy governor. His position was subsequently recognised by Sir William Stapleton, the Governor-in-Chief of the Leeward Islands, in 1672. Leonard makes no such claim in this patent to be elected by the Anguillians. The only authority he asserts is his appointment by the Governor-in-Chief. It is likely, however, that he was, after Abraham Howell, the most influential and powerful of the island's inhabitants. Otherwise, Codrington would not have appointed him to replace Abraham Howell. His appointment was not by the usual formal Leeward Island method of a patent or commission from the King. Leonard makes no claim to holding any patent even from the Governor-in-Chief. He would mention such a patent if he had one. From this, it is apparent that Leonard's appointment was as informal as Howell's was.

By this 1698 patent, George Leonard grants a plantation at Blowing Point to Jacob Howell. It is described as bound on the north by the plantations of William Thomas and Peter Edney. On the east it was bounded by plantations of Lewis Jones and others. On the south it was bounded by a pond. There are two possible ponds. One is Blowing Point Pond, while the other is Rendezvous Pond. Which it was is uncertain. Later endorsements describe Jacob Howell's plantation as lying east of Rendezvous Pond, so that is possibly it.

Jacob Howell did not keep this plantation long. The following year, 1699, we see him transferring title to the famous Tortola Quaker, Abednigo Pickering, at that time still living in Anguilla. Blowing Point and Rendezvous after 1707, the date of Thomas Chalkley's first visit, was likely all Quaker land. The deeds show it subsequently being owned by another Quaker, John Farrington and his wife, and later, in 1749, by Solomon Romney.

Early in the eighteenth century, in 1704, we see the first Anguillian patent to be given by the Governor-in-Chief himself. It is for three parcels of land to Edward Lake of Shoal Bay. Edward Lake was likely one of Captain Jacob Lake's children or grandchildren. He is at that time in St Kitts where he receives the patent directly from the hand of Christopher Codrington Jr. In the patent, the Governor describes Edward Lake as a 'gentleman'. This was not a title lightly bestowed at the time. Edward Lake of Anguilla was not some shoeless semi-brigand, or Codrington would never use the title 'gentleman' to describe him. Quite how Edward Lake managed this elevation is not known, unless he was a child of the eminent Jacob Lake. How he came into the money required to purchase from the Governor-in-Chief a patent to such extensive lands is lost to us, but was likely part of his inheritance.

Edward Lake's 1704 patent deals with three separate parcels of land. The first is described with these words:

... do give grant and confirm unto our trusty and well beloved subject Edward Lake of our said Island Anguilla, Gentleman, and to his heirs and assigns forever a certain plantation or parcel of land lying and being in Spring Division on said island bounding to the westward with the land of Jeremiah Richardson and William Roberts, south with the land of Robert Lockrum and Mr Thomas Call deceased now in the possession of Mrs Ann Hackett, north and west with the land of Joan Lake and John Lake.

Jeremiah Richardson who is named on the west boundary is only the second of the named Richardsons that we meet in Anguilla. The first was Captain Richard Richardson, a member of Abraham Howell's first Council in 1672. Like the Lakes and the Howells, it is likely that the Richardsons were in the first wave of immigrants to arrive in 1650. Richard Richardson Jr, or 'Little Dick', was Jeremiah's nephew. In 1752 we see Edward Payne transferring 'Little Dick's Plantation' to Daniel Derrick.⁹ William Roberts is the first named member of the Roberts family. They subsequently came to own the lands where North Hill Village now is.¹⁰ The family produced Anguilla's seventh deputy governor, Benjamin Roberts, in the year

⁹ Anguilla Archives: David Derrick's 1752 deed to Little Dick's Plantation.

¹⁰ The Roberts Estate at North Hill subsequently became Owen land when Sara Roberts married John Owen, and, unlike her, her brothers died childless.

1768. He served until his death in 1771. Robert Lockrum is only remembered today as the eponymous owner of the plantation lying between Blowing Point Village and Little Harbour, still known as Lockrum's. Thomas Call was the owner of Cauls Pond. The land around the pond is still known by his name. This first plantation granted by Governor Codrington to Edward Lake thus lay to the north of Cauls Pond and to the east of Little Dix.

The second parcel of land is described as follows:

And a parcel of land known by the name of Waters' Land belonging to Mrs Ann Hackett eastwards bounding with a path known by the name of Shoal Bay Path.

Quite how the Governor comes to be giving away a parcel of land belonging to someone else, Ann Hackett, is not certain. The possibility is that, as was usual at that time, Mrs Hackett and her husband before her were merely given a short-term grant by the deputy governor, or occupied the land without any title to it, as had Mr Waters. This is the likely meaning of the expressions 'land in the occupation of' or 'land possessed by'. Such persons occupied the land in question, erecting a shack to live in, cultivated a vegetable garden, and tethered or let loose their goats or sheep, without any formal claim of title to the land. Until someone with a better title came along, there was no one with authority to put them off the land, save by use of force.

The patent describes the parcel as lying to the west of the 'Shoal Bay Path'. This path holds special significance for Anguillians. The modern Shoal Bay Road now follows the line of the old Amerindian path that led from Bad Cox to Shoal Bay beach. The road's winding route indicates that it follows the exact path worn smooth by generations of Amerindians. They walked this route from their inland cassava plantations to their religious ceremonial site, and never-failing source of potable water, the Fountain Cavern. Subsequent Anguillians wore the path even smoother, rolling barrels and carrying buckets to the spring in time of drought. The land we now know as Wattices was owned by the long forgotten homesteader, Mr Waters. Who he was, and what his full name was, does not appear.

The third and final piece of land conveyed by Governor Codrington to Edward Lake is Hazard Hill Plantation. It is described this way:

Also another parcel of land in the Valley Division of said island known by the name of Hazard Hill running from the headline about SSW to a parcel of land formerly belonging to Captain Richard Huntington, bounding westwards with land which did belong to Mr John Merryweather, eastward with John Richardson Senior.

The name of Hazard Hill is still with us, but the memories of the former neighbours Richard Huntington and John Merryweather are not preserved in the

landscape. We saw John Mereweather as a member of Abraham Howell's first Council of 1672, but he disappears after that date. John Richardson Sr was one of the first Anguillians. He was probably a brother of Richard Richardson Sr, of Abraham Howell's first Council, the father of Richard Richardson Jr, 'Little Dick', after whom the neighbouring Little Dix Village is named. Another John Richardson, probably the son, was to become Anguilla's third deputy governor in 1735. He remained in office until his death in 1741.

On 17 April 1704 Governor Codrington granted another patent to land in Spring Division in Anguilla. This patent was for several parcels of land and was in favour of Bezaliel Rogers. It begins,

St. Christophers

Anne, By the Grace of God, of England, Scotland, France and Ireland, Queen and Sovereign Lady of all her Ma'ties plantations and Colonies, Defender of the Faith, etc.

To all to whom these presents shall come, greeting. Know ye that we of our especial grace certain knowledge and mere motion, with the advice and consent of our trusty and well beloved, Christopher Codrington, Captain General and Governor in Chief of all our Leeward Caribbee Islands in America, that we may give all due encouragement for settling our island of Anguilla in order to preserve its Sovereignty over that, and the rest of the neighbouring islands, commonly called the Virgin Islands, have given, granted and confirmed, and

by these presents for us our heirs and successors, do give you and confirm unto our trusty and well beloved subject Bezaluel Rogers, of the said island, and to his heirs and assigns forever, the several pieces or parcels of land hereafter mentioned,

No purchase price is mentioned, but we can be sure that Codrington was not making this grant out of concern solely for the settling of Anguilla. Rogers paid a healthy price for the grants about to be made to him. This was how a Governor was expected to earn his living out of his appointment.

The first parcel lay to the west of Great Sile Bay Pond and ran to the west of the Savanna estate, southward to the Sprat Hole, the location of which is not known, and bound on the south by the sea. The second smaller parcel lay to the east of Chalvilles. A third small parcel, also in Spring Division, lay to the south of land owned by Captain Abraham Howell. A fourth small parcel in the same Division was bound on the south with the old Common Path, which is probably now the island main road. A fifth parcel of land was bound on the north with land of Cornelius Murphy known as Island Harbour and on the south by a path known as the Old Goat Ground Path. A fifth parcel was known as French Man's Ground, and was bound on the east with Savanna Bay.¹¹ Bezaluel Rogers was no newcomer to Anguilla. He was a wealthy

¹¹ This patent is preserved in the Anguilla Record of Deeds, 1792-1803, kept in the St Kitts Archives in Basseterre, and transcribed in 2005 by Heather Nielson.

man by Anguillian standards, and all the above parcels either bordered or lay near to his already extensive holdings.

There is one other very early land title worth looking at this point. By this 1708 deed Abraham Howell sells a small parcel of land to David Derrick. It is significant as being the earliest preserved land title document in Anguilla that is written in the conventional language of a deed of conveyance. Up to this point we have seen 'certificates', 'grants' and 'patents'. This is the first true deed of conveyance. In it, Abraham Howell explains how he comes to claim the land as his own. It is as strange a tale of expropriation and oppression as one can imagine. It reads:

Anguilla. Know all men by these presents that I, Abraham Howell, of the said Island in the year 1696 did take out a patent for a parcel of land known by the name of Valentine Blake which plantation is bounded on the [north] by the land which Mr Thomas Bushel was formerly in possession of and now in the possession of Samuel Floyd, and finding a parcel of land between said Blake's and Bushel which was formerly in the possession of Lieutenant Thorn [. . .] now deceased, and the deceased's sons laying claim to said land, but caring nothing of a right to appear, so that said land doth wholly and properly belong to myself in case no other person for the time to come doth not bring any right to appear for said land which shall contradict the right which is claimed by the deceased Leo and Thomas Derrick's sons, then I the above named Abraham Howell

in consideration of the sum of one pound four shillings current money of this island to me in hand paid by David Derrick of the said island, planter, do by these presents sell, like as by these presents have been bargained sold and made over, all my right title and interest of a certain parcel of land aforesaid to be included in the bounds and limits of my plantation, it being forty geometrical paces in breadth by information, and bounding eastwardly with the land formerly possessed by Mr John Merryweather deceased now in the possession of Sam Floyd [. . .] him the said David Derrick to his heirs and assigns for ever to have and to hold possess and enjoy with all and singular the appurtenances thereto belonging or in any way appertaining. Furthermore, I the above named Abraham Howell by these presents bind myself my heirs and assigns never to trouble nor molest him the said David Derrick his heirs or assigns in the quiet occupation and possession of the said land.

In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and fixed my seal the twenty seventh day July in the year of our Lord 1708.

*Signed sealed and delivered] (sd) Abraham
Howell (LS)*

in the presence of]

(sd) John Howell

(sd) John Armstrong

The twists and turns in the logic of the argument in this document are difficult to follow. Howell seems to be saying that the parcel of land in question lies between his Valentine Blake Plantation and the plantation of Thomas

Bushell which was his northern boundary line.¹² The parcel was previously owned by Lieut Edward Thorne.¹³ Thorne was now deceased and his heirs were laying claim to it. As we shall see in more detail in a later chapter, Thorne was a Barbados planter and officer in the Barbados militia. He assisted Christopher Codrington Sr in defending the Leeward Islands in the Wars with the French. On 30 September 1689 he evacuated all the Anguillians to Antigua after the French set the Wild Irish upon them for the second time the year before. It is possible that Governor Codrington granted Thorne this lot of land in Anguilla as a reward. That deprived Abraham Howell of an expected fee, and would not please him. As we have seen, Howell was removed from office as deputy governor of Anguilla by Governor Codrington in the same year.

It would appear from this deed that Howell was determined not to allow Thorne's patent to stick. To strengthen his claim to be able to disinherit Thorne's heirs, he throws in the suggestion that the heirs of Leo Derrick and Thomas Derrick also claim to own the land in question. By this conveyance to David Derrick, he takes

¹² Bushell, we know from Governor Stapleton, was a member of Howell's Council in 1680. See Chapter 4: [The First Generation](#).

¹³ Lieutenant Edward Thorne was an officer in the Barbados militia that came to the aid of the Leeward Islands during the Anglo-French War of 1688-1697. We shall see more of him in Chapter 6: [War and the Settlers](#). A lieutenant was a gentleman's commissioned rank. It fell between a captain and an ensign, which was the lowest commissioned rank. An ensign was followed by the non-commissioned ranks of sergeant, corporal and private.

on a questionable right to be able to extinguish the claim of the heirs of Edward Thorne on the argument that they remained in Barbados after their father's death and did not come to Anguilla to take up the title.

We may note that Abraham Howell claims in this conveyance to be a 'captain' at this time. The captaincy in question is not a naval title. It relates to the local Anguilla militia to which all adult men were obliged to belong for the defence of the island in case of enemy attack. During times of war, the senior planters commanded the local militia with the honorary rank of captain. These honorary titles were frequently retained after peace was declared. The deed was made while the long Wars of Queen Ann (1702-1713) were still raging, and it would appear that the old ex-deputy governor continued to be a captain in the island militia.

David Derrick's 1708 conveyance is of exceptional interest for another reason. Abraham Howell takes the opportunity of this conveyance of Edward Thorne's land to recite the circumstances of his acquisition in 1696 of Valentine Blake's Plantation. Not that, in strict conveyancing terms, that recital has any place in a deed to an unrelated parcel of land. However, we are grateful for its inclusion and the small window it throws on Anguillian affairs in the seventeenth century.

Valentine Blake appears to have owned the plantation at some unspecified time before 1700. We know nothing about Valentine Blake except that he was dead by 1696. It is possible that he was one of the original band of persons who came to Anguilla with Abraham Howell in 1650. He was in his time a major planter by Anguilla's standards. He owned one of the most fertile plantations in all of The Valley. He died without heirs sometime previous to 1696, thus enabling the deputy governor to give himself a patent to it.

Valentine Blake's Plantation was the original name of the present Wallblake estate in The Valley, the most famous plantation in Anguilla. 'Val', then as now, is the accepted nickname for Valentine. It is not surprising that the name Valentine Blake became shortened to 'Val Blake'.

The evolution of Val Blake into Wallblake occurred because of a well-known linguistic feature.¹⁴ The 'unvoiced bilabial fricative' sound has existed for a long time in colloquial English. It is still common among the Londoners known as Cockneys. It is widespread among Anguillians today, especially those of Blowing Point. The sound of the unvoiced bilabial fricative is a cross between a 'w' and a 'v'. During the nineteenth century, it was used indifferently where we would now distinguish a 'w' from a

¹⁴ Anthony Burgess, Language Made Plain (1975), p.41.

'v' sound. Both of the letters 'w' and 'v' have only recently come to enjoy clearly separate identities in English. It is not unusual to hear persons from Blowing Point speaking about going to 'The Walley', or that they feel 'werry well'. So, it is not surprising that eventually, long after the original owner died and his true name forgotten, the Anguillians pronounced the name of his plantation as 'Wall Blake'. The name eventually came to be spelled that way, joined together as one word.

There is an alternative theory that a later William Blake gave his name to the estate. The 'i' in Will is thought to have changed to 'a' through time and usage. This is not a likely explanation. Valentine Blake's name appears repeatedly in the earliest records. No one named 'Will' Blake ever lived in Anguilla until a William Blake¹⁵ shows up in passing, witnessing a document in the year 1828 for the first time. There is no evidence that any William Blake ever owned Valentine Blake's Plantation. By the time that William Blake comes into the picture, the place name Wallblake Estate featured repeatedly in the deeds.

Most of the names that appear in the above documents will be very familiar to Anguillians today. There are Lakes living in every quarter of the island.

¹⁵ The Blakes are a large Irish-West Indian family. Their roots lay in Montserrat and St Kitts from the earliest years of the settlement. The family name survives in those islands to the present day, though it has long died out in Anguilla.

Howells are now found only in St Martin and Nevis. One comes across Floyd occasionally, but only as a first name. It was originally only an alternative spelling for Lloyd. Derrick and Leonard are rarely found as surnames in Anguilla. They are more common in Antigua, St Martin and Tortola. Harris, Connor, Carty, Rowane, Rumney, and Harragin are common names in Anguilla. They are now spelled Ruan, Romney and Harrigan respectively. The name Bryan is still found. The Romneys to this day are concentrated in Blowing Point, where the name is still pronounced 'Rumney'.

The earliest list of the names of the Anguillians that we have was the one made in 1716 by Abraham Howell. These were the men of the first and second generation of Anguillians, ie, those born between 1650 and 1710. Howell sent the list to Governor Hamilton who, in turn, dispatched¹⁶ it on to London. From it, we know the names of 89 planters. We have the numbers of their women, children and slaves, but not their names.¹⁷ In 1716 there were 534 free persons and 820 slaves in Anguilla. Some 514 of the latter were described as 'working negroes'. Only George Leonard and John Richardson possessed 30 or more slaves. This indicates they were the most successful planters of their day.

¹⁶ CO.152/11, No 56: Hamilton to the Committee on 3 October 1716, enclosure: The 1716 List of the Inhabitants of Anguilla.

¹⁷ Chapter 10: Crab Island Revisited.

Those with 20 or more slaves included John Rogers, the widow Deborah Gumbs, Bezaliel Howell, Thomas Howell, Thomas Coakley, Christopher Hodge, and Thomas Rogers. These seven homesteaders constituted the power elite of the second generation of Anguillians. The majority of the remaining Anguillian slaveholders owned at most only three or four slaves. From the relatively small sizes of their households, we can deduce that they were all still cotton planters and small-stock keepers. They were not yet growing sugar cane, which required more intensive labour. Some of them were traders and smugglers, with little need for large households.

We know very little about the life of these early Anguillians. In the second decade of the eighteenth century, the 1720s, Anguilla was coming to the end of a long and severe drought. Crops failed repeatedly, and the farmers were on the verge of starvation. Few documents written by the second generation of the islanders have survived to tell us anything about their lives. We have to rely on the reports of others. Governor-in-Chief Daniel Parke described¹⁸ conditions in Anguilla in a dispatch of 1709. The life he described was one of extreme poverty and hardship. It was probably no exaggeration. He wrote:

¹⁸ Cited by Bryan Dyde, Out of the Crowded Vagueness (2005).

The island kept no records whatever and no ministerial officer, deputy secretary or Council. Indeed, there is a deputy governor, but they regard him not. They live like wild people without order or good government and have neither divine nor lawyer among them. They take each other's word in marriage. They think themselves Christian because they are descended from such. But, I have got a parson to go to them lately out of charity to make Christians out of them.

The parson in question clearly did not expect a rich living in Anguilla.¹⁹ The hard life that Governor Parke described was not to improve for almost another 300 years.

Similar conditions were described²⁰ by Governor-in-Chief John Hart eighteen years later in 1724 when he reports on an examination he made of the islands under his command including Anguilla. Anguilla was at this time administratively considered a part of the Virgin Islands, so that his general comments about the Virgin Islands apply equally to Anguilla. He wrote:

The first island that I visited was Anguilla, which I found to be a poor and barren place, and the inhabitants in their houses, clothing and diet bore all the marks of poverty. Nor is it capable of any further improvement. The like may be said of Spanish Town.²¹

And upon enquiring how they first came to settle these miserable islands I found that the first inhabitants

¹⁹ This may be the Parson Nelson whom we have previously seen George MacDonnah describing as the first parson of Anguilla. Parson Nelson taught school during the Wars of Queen Ann at the little church on the Glebe Land at The Valley, where St Mary's Anglican Church now stands. See Chapter 4: The First Generation.

²⁰ CO.152/14, folio 302: Hart to the Committee on 12 July 1724.

²¹ The early name for Virgin Gorda.

were such as had fled from Barbados and the greater islands of this government for debt or to avoid the punishment for their crimes, and have since been increased by pirates who have come in upon Acts of Grace and are married and settled there, whose posterity not knowing the world, remain there and cultivate the ground for a wretched subsistence; and yet on my arrival amongst them I found a very fierce contention for property, and they having no form of justice, I appointed six Justices of the Peace, a Secretary and Provost Marshal, and have given some Commissions to Officers of the Militia to put them under some military discipline.

Although I could get no positive proof that the inhabitants of these Virgin Islands (especially at Tortola and Spanish Town) aid and assists the pirates who frequently come amongst them, yet there is a strong presumption that they hold correspondence with them and furnish them with provisions, which I shall endeavour to prevent in the future.

This is one of the most important sources of social conditions in Anguilla in the early eighteenth century. There being no surviving Anguillian diaries or journals, we must mainly rely on these official reports to London. If Governor Hart is accurately reporting what the Anguillians told him about how they came to be in Anguilla, we see that they were emigrants from Barbados and the other major islands of the government, ie, Antigua and St Kitts. They were either running away from their debts or to avoid punishment for their crimes. You may well think that the more recent immigrants to Anguilla continue to

fall in this description. Some of the earliest small farmers were ex-pirates who had been amnestied under the laws called “Acts of Grace”. All these types had married Anguillian women and settled into the community. This, too, is not an unfamiliar development to us in Anguilla today.

We will see in later Chapters how the long drought of 1680-1725 caused the Anguillians to seek desperate solutions. Some abandoned Anguilla and the British islands to become Danes in St Croix²² or French in St Martin. Others attempted to take Crab Island²³ away from the Spanish in Puerto Rico and the Danes of St Thomas, both of whom claimed it.

We end with the Quakers. The Quakers, or ‘Religious Society of Friends’ as they called themselves, were a fundamentalist Christian sect. They were prominent in Anguilla during the period 1700-1735. They were persecuted in England during this period. Large numbers of them sought refuge both on the mainland and island colonies in the Americas. We know a little about those of them who came to Anguilla thanks to the writings of the Quaker missionary, Thomas Chalkley (1675-1741). He was a trader who on his visits to the West Indies preached at Quaker meetings. In his memoirs, first

²² See Chapter 15: The Settlement of St Croix.

²³ See Chapter 9: The Lure of Crab.

published in 1751, but written many years before, he gave an account of his several visits to the island and his interaction with the inhabitants.²⁴ His first visit was in 1707. He died at Tortola in 1741 on his fourth and final visit to the Virgin Islands. He described how on his 1707 voyage he visited Quaker meetings in Barbados, Antigua, Montserrat and Nevis. He continued:

We sailed to an island called Anguilla, and were civilly treated there by the generality of the people; as also by the governor, George Leonard, at whose house we had meetings. I remember that after one meeting the governor went into his porch, and took the bible and opened it, and said, "By this book, if people believe the holy Scriptures, I am able to convince the world, and prove, that the people called Quakers are the people of God, and that they follow the example and doctrine of Christ, and the practices of the Apostles and primitive Christians, nearer than any people in the world;" ie, generally speaking.

At this island several people were heartily convinced, and confessed to the truth, among whom a meeting was settled. Here was never a Friend before, as the inhabitants said. I entreat the Lord Jehovah to preserve the sincere-hearted among them in his holy fear whiles they remain in this world; and not them only, but all that love and fear him, in all kindreds and nations, and amongst people of all professions whatsoever. This in the universal spirit of God's love, is the desire of my soul. From Anguilla we went to Nevis, and to Antigua . .

²⁴ Thomas Chalkley, The Journal of Thomas Chalkley (1751).

Chalkley did not return to Anguilla for another twenty-three years, until the year 1730. He wrote then,

This voyage we were on our passage about thirty-three days before we arrived at Barbadoes, when after doing my business, and visiting Friends' meetings about five weeks, we put to sea on the 10th of the twelfth month, and sailed along to leeward of divers islands, till we came to Anguilla, where we landed in expectation to get salt, but at this time there was not any to be had there. We came to an anchor here in the night, hoping to get to a harbour before it was dark; but it soon being very dark, and coming into shoal water, we saw a large rock, and came to by the side of it, in about five or six fathom water, taking it to be a ship, and when it was day we saw our mistake, and that instead of a vessel, we were too nigh a rock, and the wind coming about, tailed our ship towards it so near, that we were sensible of touching twice. I ordered the men to heave a little farther ahead and so we lay clear till morning. When morning came, of which we were glad, several boats, with a cable, came to us, and the people advised us to put a spring on our cable, and cut it, that she might cast the right way, which accordingly we did, and it had the desired effect, so that we soon got into a very fine harbour, it being about a mile off. Many thanks were given by many of the people for this deliverance to the Almighty. George Leonard, the governor of this island, heard in the morning that a vessel was on the rocks, and the people were running with saws and axes in order to break her up, if she could be got off. The governor seeing them, sent a lieutenant with orders that, let her belong to what nation soever, they should help to get or off, if it could be, and if she was likely to be made a wreck, he charged them at their peril not to meddle with her, nor any thing belonging to

her, until they had first come to terms with the master, which is worthy to be recorded.

We stayed several days before we could get our anchor, for after we were in the harbour, it blew very hard for four or five days, so that with our four oars we could not row our boat ahead, but watching for a calm one night, our people went out and got it, and then we went to the principal road or harbour in the island, called Croaker's Bay, the name of that we came from was Rendezvous-bay, where lived a very kind friend of ours named John Rumney, who, with his wife and family, treated us with great love, and courteously received us into their house, and he went with me to the governor's, who was my old acquaintance and friend, who, with much love and tenderness, when he knew me, took me in his arms, and embraced me, and lovingly saluted me with a kiss of charity, and thanked God for our deliverance and that he had lived to see me once more, (I having been there some years before). He was seventy odd years of age, as I remember, and had eighty odd who called him father, they living much on roots and pulse, are very healthy in this island. I was there nine days, and had seven meetings with the people. The longer I stayed the larger the meetings were, so that I had some difficulty to leave them. Through the grace and gift of God I was helped to preach the gospel of Christ freely, and they received it both freely and thankfully, divers, if not all; for their hearts and mine were very open one to another, the holy Lord's name be praised forever.

The 3rd of the first month Ezra Worthington died, and the 4th in the afternoon, he was buried on the plantation of John Rumney, near his house. The governor and his son-in-law were at the burial, where I told them that he was an inoffensive, innocent, sober

young man, and that death was to be the end of us here, putting them in mind to remember their latter end. After I had done speaking, the governor said that death was a debt due to nature, and that we must all pay it, and blessed is the man that in time truly prepares for it. This was a good expression for a man in his post, and worthy of my notice, as I thought.

I was at one meeting, where was the governor and his daughter, with divers of the best and soberest people of this island. It was a satisfactory meeting, which ended in prayer. And, when I arose from my knees I found the governor on one side, and his daughter on the other side of me, both on their knees, a posture in which people are too seldom found in this degenerate age of the world.

On the 10th of the first month, we departed from the island of Anguilla, with a pleasant gale, and had fair weather and winds for several days.

Chalkley's writing is a pious work, and consequently of limited interest as a source of social information. It remains, however, one of the few narratives that have survived to describe any activity of these early Anguillians, and is fascinating for that reason alone. Governor Walter Hamilton reported to London eleven years earlier in 1719 as the long drought was at its height that deputy governor George Leonard and several Anguillians emigrated to Antigua.²⁵ It is evident that, once conditions in Anguilla improved with the lifting of the long drought, Leonard and, presumably, the other propertied

²⁵ CO.152/12.4, No 155: Hamilton to the Commissioners on 20.7.1719 with answers to their queries of 8.8.1718.

Anguillians who had moved to Antigua with him, began again to reside at least part of the year in Anguilla.

Three years after his departure in January 1731, Chalkley visited Anguilla for the third and final time. He again found George Leonard at his home in Anguilla when he landed. He described his arrival in early February 1734 with these words:

From St Christopher we set sail for the island of Anguilla, and had a meeting at the governor's house on the first day. We stayed at Anguilla three days, and there took on board some bags of cotton on freight, and sailed from thence the 10th of the second month. The governor of the island, whose name was George Leonard, told me that he should live and die in our principles, saving that he must defend his people. But, he did not consider that his defence might destroy both him and them, and that such defence was directly contrary to Christ's doctrine and practice.

A remarkable and dismal passage he related to me, that, some days before, a vessel came from the island of Saltitudas, (which went there to take in salt) the people going on shore. The master told him that there lay at the landing the heads of above twenty men on one side of the path, and the quarters of them on the other, which so surprised them, that they made the best of their way to Anguilla, where they related this dismal story, and supposed the slain to be Britons, by their appearances, and that they were destroyed by the Spaniards, who are known to be cruel to them.

The Saltitudas island referred to is uncertain. It may be the small Salt Island near to Tortola where for many

years until recently a salt picking industry was carried on. Salt was a valuable product in the days before refrigeration when meat, particular turtle meat, would be salted and preserved in large quantities for the use of the sailors on board ship in the crossing of the Atlantic.

Thomas Chalkley died the following year at Tortola. He was on his way to Anguilla when he contracted a fatal fever and passed away. Over the following years, most of his Quaker converts left Anguilla and moved to Tortola, then a thriving Quaker community. Eventually, most of them disappeared, emigrating presumably to Pennsylvania, the centre of Quaker practice in the Americas.