

CHAPTER 7

ANGUILLA AND THE GOVERNMENT OF THE LEEWARD ISLANDS

The first permanent English settlement in the Leeward Islands, we recall, was that established in St Christopher, or St Kitts, by **Thomas Warner** in the year 1623. In 1625, he returned to St Kitts from England as Sir Thomas, with provisions and additional settlers. He also brought with him a commission in which the islands of St Kitts, Nevis, Barbuda, Montserrat and Antigua were taken under royal protection and given over to his custody as the King's lieutenant. These islands, together with Anguilla and Sombrero, were later included in the Carlisle Grant of 1627, but Warner was confirmed as deputy governor of St Kitts.¹ The **Earl of Carlisle** did not himself live in the West Indies. The central government of the English Caribbean was established under his deputy at Barbados where it remained until 1671.

Thomas Cromwell's Colonial Board of forty three members implemented his policies in the West Indies during the Commonwealth period. It and its Royal successors appointed Governors and gave them their instructions. London expected the Governors to send detailed reports on the conditions of the islands, the state of the islands' defences, enforcement of the Navigation

¹ FH Watkins, Handbook of the Leeward Islands (1924) p.67.

Acts, estimates of population, statistics of shipping, and accounts of revenue. They were expected to report on all other matters that might affect revenue or foreign policy.

With the restoration of the monarchy in 1660, the Board was superseded by separate Committees for Trade and for Foreign Plantations. These two Committees worked together. Each consisted of twenty eight members who were Privy Councillors. They included ex-officials of the colonies, planters and merchants. Their function was mainly advisory. They heard evidence and made reports for the guidance of the Privy Council. In 1675, after numerous changes in the form and title of the English governing body, a more enduring arrangement was arrived at. The Privy Council Committee dealing with the colonies received a permanent secretary with a proper clerical staff and facilities for preserving archives. This Committee, styled the Lords of Trade, operated for twenty years. It laid the foundation for what was eventually to become the Colonial Office.

Shortly after the Treaty of Breda, St Kitts, Nevis, Montserrat, Antigua "*and all the other Leeward Islands*" were separated from Barbados. The description 'leeward' and 'windward' derive from the days of sailing ships. The origin is Spanish. They divided the islands of the West Indies into 'las islas barlovento' and 'las islas sotovento', or those to windward and those to leeward of Hispaniola,

their seat of government. The trade winds blow all year long from the east, varying only to arrive from the south-east in the summer and from the north-east during the winter months. Cuba and Jamaica lay to the west of Hispaniola, or down-wind, while Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands lay to the east of Hispaniola, or upwind. The Spaniards named them accordingly. The English adopted the description. With their seat of colonial government in Barbados, English ships entering the Caribbean, usually at Dominica, tacked to windward to arrive at Barbados. St Lucia, St Vincent and Grenada became known to the English as the 'Windward Islands'. If, when the English fleet crossed the Atlantic, they turned to the north to St Kitts, they were sailing with the wind and therefore to the lee. They described the islands that stretched from Dominica to the Virgin Islands as the 'Leeward Islands'. The Dutch also adopted the same system. Their seat of government lay in Curacao. That island, together with Aruba and Bonaire, lies to the lee for Dutch sailing ships entering the Caribbean Sea from the Atlantic Ocean. The Dutch named the so-called ABC Islands the Dutch Leeward Islands. By contrast, St Maarten, Saba, and St Eustatius lie to the east or windward of Curacao. They became known to the Dutch as the Dutch or Netherlands Antilles Windward Islands. Hence the Dutch Windward Islands lie in the middle of the English Leeward Islands. Dominica has changed from

the Leeward Islands to the Windward Islands. The French first ceded Dominica to the British by the Treaty of Paris of 1763. After a number of contests in the intervening years, it was confirmed as British by the 1783 Treaty of Versailles. It formally joined the Leeward Caribbee Islands Government in 1833. That relationship lasted for over one hundred years. It withdrew from the Leeward Islands and joined the Windward Islands administration in 1940.

King Charles II recognised that the Leeward colonists needed their own administration. From 1670, the Leeward Islands became a separate government with their own Governor. In that year, the King commissioned² **Sir Charles Wheler** as Captain General and Governor-in-Chief of His Majesty's Leeward Caribbee Islands. Wheler possessed much the same powers over the new colony of the Leeward Islands as those previously granted to Lord Willoughby for the whole of the Caribbean. In addition, he could call on two companies of soldiers, to be paid out of a four and a half percent duty levied on the produce of the islands. He held a further commission authorizing him to appoint deputy governors for each of the islands. His instructions were to proceed to Nevis, the richest island in the colony. There he was to fill up the Council with men of good estate, and to return an annual census and a

² CO.1/26, No 8, folio 42: Sir Charles Wheler's Commission.

copy of all the laws in force, and all that might be enacted in the future by the islands' councils, as well as complete lists of imports and exports, and detailed accounts of the King's revenue. In May 1671, Wheler set sail to assume the government. After a brief administration, he incurred the displeasure of the Council for Foreign Plantations and was recalled in December. The main complaint against him was the dilatory and disadvantageous manner in which he reclaimed the English part of St Kitts from the French pursuant to the terms of the Treaty of Breda. He agreed to time limits and other conditions unfavourable to the English. There were other complaints against him that did not help his cause. One of them with a direct connection with Anguilla is dealt with in the chapter on piracy.³

Several of the other Governors-in-Chief of the Leeward Islands during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were equally colourful men. Those of the seventeenth century were:

| | |
|-----------|---------------------------|
| 1660-1666 | Francis Lord Willoughby |
| 1667-1668 | Henry Lord Willoughby |
| 1670-1671 | Sir Charles Wheler |
| 1672-1685 | Sir William Stapleton |
| 1685-1689 | Sir Nathaniel Johnson |
| 1689-1698 | Christopher Codrington Sr |
| 1698 | William Burt (acting) |
| 1698-1699 | Edward Fox (acting) |

³ Chapter 8: The Buccaneers and Anguilla.

| | |
|-----------|---------------------------|
| 1699-1704 | Christopher Codrington Jr |
|-----------|---------------------------|

Table 1: Governors-in-Chief of the Leeward Islands during the seventeenth century⁴.

In 1672, the Committee for Foreign Plantations chose Colonel **William Stapleton**, to succeed Wheler. Stapleton was an Irish Catholic soldier of fortune who came to the West Indies during the 1666-1667 Second Anglo-Dutch War and settled in Montserrat. He led the troops in a failed attack on the French in St Kitts, after which he was appointed deputy governor of Montserrat. He was a fiery and quick tempered man. He once drew his sword on one of his deputy governors and thrust at him several times. He wrote⁵ another man who accused him of lies and injustice, “*Were I near you, I would dash your teeth and your words down your throat.*” His instructions were to live in St Kitts, but he did not find conditions in that island congenial. He married into the Russell family, the wealthiest in Nevis, and preferred to make that island his home and headquarters. He acquired large properties in the four main islands of the Colony, and was knighted in 1679. As Governor he worked energetically to build up the sugar industry in the four islands. Under his management, the Leeward Islands planters quickly recouped their wartime losses.

⁴ For a list of the Governors-in-Chief of the eighteenth century, see Chapter 16: Government Comes to Anguilla.

⁵ Calendars of State Papers, 1681-1685, p.581.

When Stapleton died in 1685, **James II** shook the Leeward Island gentry by appointing an outsider, **Sir Nathaniel Johnson** to be Governor-in-Chief. Johnson was a home-bred civil servant. He was sent out to enforce the King's orders and to break down the powerful colonial cliques that developed under Stapleton. He moved his seat of power from Nevis to Antigua. There, he soon established a large sugar estate. He did not join the Leeward Islands planter class. Instead, he invited the discontented small-farmers to help him overthrow the large planter class from their accustomed positions of power in the local Councils and Assemblies. He challenged the validity of existing land titles. He proposed to issue new patents that required the payment of a quit-rent⁶ to the King. After the Glorious Revolution of 1689 in England, he continued to support the Jacobites and as a result was forced to resign.

General **Christopher Codrington Sr** was appointed in 1689 in his place. Codrington was a seasoned planter/politician of Antigua and a spirited but autocratic leader. His government occurred at a time of much disturbance and disquiet throughout the Leeward Islands. The Nine Years War broke out in 1689 and lasted until 1697. Codrington was so rich that he subsidized military campaigns out of his own pocket. He

⁶ A 'quit-rent' was a small rent paid by a freeholder or copyholder in lieu of services which might be required of them.

failed in his plans to conquer Guadeloupe and Martinique and to resettle the whole of St Kitts, mainly due to the jealousy and opposition of his colleagues.

When he died in 1698, he was succeeded by his son, **Christopher Codrington Jr**, Oxford scholar and London socialite. He governed during the period 1700 to 1704. His departure from England, where he was serving in the army as a lieutenant-colonel, was delayed for two years while his salary was being discussed. He finally arrived in September 1700.

One of the powers of the Governor-in-Chief, as we have seen, was to appoint deputy governors in each of the islands. Anguilla as Southey wrote was not colonized under any public encouragement. By this he means that neither the King nor the Governor-in-Chief commissioned anyone to take possession of the island of Anguilla for the English Crown. Once the island was settled, and the colony recovered from the Indian attack of 1656, some attempt was made to govern it. The first settlers on Anguilla having come from St Kitts, the island was at first governed, if only nominally, from that island.

In 1660, only four years after the Carib raid, **Francis Lord Willoughby of Parham** was Lieutenant General and Governor of the Caribbee Islands. He appointed Colonel **William Watts** of St Kitts to be deputy governor of the islands of St Kitts and Anguilla. By his

Commission⁷, Watts specifically had power to choose councillors and to convene Assemblies. He appointed no Council for Anguilla that we know of. Watts was killed in St Kitts fighting the French in 1667. His successor was commissioned deputy governor of St Kitts, but not of Anguilla. By that date, the settlers elected **Abraham Howell** to be deputy governor in Anguilla. That first experiment at appointing a Christophonian, as they were called at the time, or a Kittitian as we say today, to be lieutenant governor of Anguilla was not repeated until 1727.

Anguilla was served by only two resident deputy governors during the long period of 1650 to 1735: Abraham Howell and George Leonard. In a document now lost, but quoted by **Dr Samuel B Jones**,⁸ Howell recorded that he was elected in 1666 "*by the inhabitants to be the deputy governor until some lawfully constituted authority should take the burden of office.*" He claimed⁹ in his 1673 patent to Ensign **Thomas Romney** that he was more formally appointed deputy governor by Governor Stapleton sometime in 1672. Howell's name repeatedly crops up in the Governors' reports to the Committee for Trade and Foreign Plantations as deputy governor of Anguilla until about the year 1689, after which he appears

⁷ Calendars of State Papers, 1660, para 490: Watts Commission from Lord Willoughby dated 27 October 1660.

⁸ Samuel B Jones, Annals of Anguilla (1936).

⁹ Chapter 5: The Second Generation.

only as a private citizen. His commission was probably revoked by Governor Codrington in 1689, when he appointed George Leonard to be deputy governor of Anguilla in Howell's place.

Codrington may have removed Howell's appointment as deputy governor of Anguilla because of Howell's stubborn and repeated efforts starting in 1683 to remove the Anguillians to the greener pastures of Crab Island when their lands in Anguilla were devastated by drought. We shall see more of this exploit when we come to look¹⁰ at Anguilla and its relationship with Crab Island.

Alternatively, Governor Codrington's displeasure with Abraham Howell may have been connected with the 1688 attack by the Wild Irish and the subsequent short evacuation of the entire Anguillian population to Antigua. As we shall see in another chapter¹¹ that deals with war and the Anguillian settlers, Codrington attempted to persuade the Anguillians to abandon their island and to remain permanently settled in Antigua. He claimed to be acting out of concern for the safety of the Anguillians. They were too few to resist any invasion of the French if they remained in Anguilla.

His real plan was to increase the population of Antigua and to strengthen its defences by adding the

¹⁰ Chapter 9: The Lure of Crab.

¹¹ Chapter 6: War and the Settlers.

population of Anguilla to its numbers. The Anguillians refused to give in to this pressure. When they felt that conditions were safe, the vast majority left Antigua and returned to live in Anguilla. Abraham Howell was their leader. He may have displeased Codrington by refusing to keep his people in Antigua, and paid the price for the stubbornness of the Anguillians in returning to their island. George Leonard was more amenable to Governor Codrington. He did not return to live in Anguilla permanently, although we see that he was on the island, respected by his people, on the occasions of the visits of the Quaker missionary **Thomas Chalkley**. Leonard found conditions in Antigua more congenial than those in Anguilla, and he lived in Antigua for long periods of time working his cotton plantation there while officially the deputy governor of Anguilla. Indeed, the title of 'deputy governor of Anguilla' appears to have been his reward for complying with Codrington's wishes. He continued to be officially recognised as Anguilla's deputy governor right up to his death in 1735. Howell also continued to be described intermittently in the surviving Anguillian documents as deputy governor right up to the year 1695. After his official removal in the year 1688, this was no more than a courtesy title extended to him by grateful Anguillians in spite of Governor Codrington's displeasure.

Eleven years after Willoughby's appointment of Watts to be lieutenant governor of Anguilla, Wheler's dispatch¹² of 1671 to the Committee for Foreign Plantations reflected a view of the necessity for government in Anguilla similar to that of Stapleton. In every island under his government, he said, there was a Council, which he would complete to a full complement of twelve counsellors, except Anguilla and Barbuda.

Five years later, in 1676, Stapleton reported¹³ that there was nominally a Council of twelve in each island. Only in Nevis was the population large enough to provide such a number of suitable councillors. From this remark, it is apparent that it was not only Anguilla and Barbuda that experienced difficulty finding a full complement of counsellors. The correspondence from the various deputy governors in other islands over the years is full of excuses for not being able to fill up the Council. Two years later, in 1678, Stapleton reported¹⁴ that in Anguilla, Statia, Saba and Tortola there were no counsellors at all, only the deputy governor in Anguilla. In a dispatch¹⁵ of 1680, he amplified on the position in Anguilla. He listed the public officers of the islands in his colony of the

¹² CO 1/27: Wheler to the Committee [query].

¹³ CO 153/2, folio 139: Stapleton to the Committee on 22 November 1676: Answers to the Enquiries of the Committee.

¹⁴ CO 153/2, folio 265: Stapleton to the Committee on 24 January 1678: State of the Leeward Islands.

¹⁵ CO.1/45, No 33: Stapleton to the Committee on 18 May 1680. See Chapter 4: The First Generation.

Leeward Islands. Howell, he wrote, was deputy governor, judge, and justice of the peace in Anguilla. There were no other members of Council. The secretary was Thomas Bushell. The provost marshal was anyone appointed by the deputy governor to carry out his orders which were very few, there being little business on the island.

Conditions in Anguilla were particularly dangerous during the seventeenth century. John Oldmixon, in referring to the Wild Irish attack of 1688, repeated the old adage that one would think that such a poor people as this should be safe from attack, as it would not be worth anyone's while to attack them.¹⁶ He concluded that the Wild Irish, in attacking the Anguillians and taking away the little they possessed, must have thought that it was impossible for anyone else to have been poorer than they themselves were. This analysis sets the foundation for the attitude of the British authorities to any question of government for Anguilla for the next two hundred and fifty years.

The dispatches from Governors Hart, Mathew and Stapleton quoted above describe quite well the lack of organised government in Anguilla during the seventeenth century. With drought in the 1680s, and settlers emigrating to the Virgin Islands, and with the Nine Years'

¹⁶ See Chapter 6.

War in the 1690s, government did not improve from the conditions described. Anguilla remained a frontier settlement until well into the next century.

The common law of England was brought into effect in the Colony of the Leeward Islands only in 1705. This was done by the Common Law (Declaration of Application) Act which came into force on 20 June 1705, an enactment of the General Assembly of the Leeward Islands. Each Island sent elected representatives to this General Assembly which was summoned by the Governor-in-Chief under instructions from London to pass harmonising legislation for all the Leeward Islands. The General Assembly met for the first time in 1684 and irregularly thereafter until 1711.

Laws made by the Assemblies in other islands did not apply to Anguilla. The Council of Anguilla, when it was eventually constituted in the next century, acted as legislature, judiciary and executive, a situation to the advantage of the senior planters and merchants and no-one else. It was in the 1730's and 40's that deputy governor **John Richardson** and his successors, **Arthur Hodge** and **John Welch**, presided over the dawning of Anguilla's golden age. This came in the second half of the eighteenth century, when a combination of improved weather, sugarcane and cotton cultivation, inter-island trade, privateering and smuggling produced sufficient

wealth to support a Council and courts. With a Council and courts came and their related laws, customs duties and bailiffs that were all absent during the previous century. However, neither during the seventeenth nor the eighteenth century did Anguilla have an Assembly to enact local laws.

Between 1667 and 1727, the deputy governor of Anguilla reported directly to the Governor in Antigua. In 1727, the deputy governors of Anguilla and the Virgin Islands were both placed by Governor Hart under the supervision of **Francis Phips**. Phips was a public-spirited planter in St Christopher or St Kitts, as it was called¹⁷ by then. With the resignation of Phips from the St Kitts Council, the experiment came to an end. It was not to be revived until the collapse of the Anguilla Council in 1825 and the replacement of direct rule from St Kitts.

By 1727, under an ageing and increasingly absent deputy governor, **George Leonard**, government in Anguilla was at a low stage. The settlers were essentially left to fend for themselves without any forms of constitutional government. The arrangement whereby deputy governor Phips would visit Anguilla from time to time to conduct the affairs of government hardly appears

¹⁷ It is sometimes said that St Christopher became known as St Kitts after the Christopher Codringtons, father and son, who were apparently both familiarly referred to as 'Kit'. However, as we see from the letter from Francis Sampson to his brother John, the nick-name had already taken as early as 1666. Both names are correct, and then as now are used interchangeably to describe the island.

to have been an improvement to the previous situation. It was still essentially absentee government with the added aggravation that the new lieutenant governor was not a native and did not reside on the island.

No record of the date of George Leonard's appointment as deputy governor has been found. It is likely that he was appointed by Codrington Sr as early as 1689. He served until about 1735 in which year he probably died. The date of his death and the place of his burial, as with that of Abraham Howell, are not known. The uncertainty of the dates of appointment of the two earliest Anguillian deputy governors contrasts with the certainty of the dates of appointment of the deputy governors of the larger and richer islands of the Leewards. The reason for the uncertainty is that the deputy governor of Anguilla was not appointed by the Governor under a patent which was recorded and preserved. The deputy governor of Anguilla was, from the beginning until the end, informally appointed by the Governor. He governed by the force of his personality rather than by the rule of any law. This situation lasted until 1825, when government of Anguilla was assumed by the St Kitts Council and Assembly. From that date, laws passed in the St Kitts Assembly applied to Anguilla. Local government ordinances were made by the Vestry of Anguilla under the Vestry Act of the St Kitts Assembly.

The St Kitts-appointed Magistrate chaired the Vestry until its eventual abolition and replacement by the executive power of the Magistrate, acting as Warden of Anguilla. He represented the government of St Kitts in Anguilla. This situation lasted until the Anguilla Revolution of 1967 forced out the Warden and the several police officers who represented government in Anguilla. From that date, the locally elected members of the Anguilla Council, later the Executive Council, governed.

Leonard in his youth, like Abraham Howell, was one of the earliest of Anguilla's long tradition of sea-going traders. The sloops that he and Abraham Howell owned and traded in through the islands were small, between two and thirty five tons. We know this from the weights of the vessels recorded¹⁸ in Antigua as trading with Anguilla at this time. The Customs Office in Antigua was diligent in recording the name of each vessel, its captain, its weight, where it was registered, and its cargo. If we sift through these lists we can find the ships that were arriving from or departing for Anguilla. Those for the period 1704-1720 include:

| Date | Vessel | Master | Burthen | Registered | General cargo |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| 1704 12 Jun | Sloop Rose | Simon Rogers | 10 tons | Nevis | Cottonwool, hammocks |
| 18 Aug | Sloop Recovery | Peter Lynch | 15 tons | Antigua | Cotton, cocoa |
| 1706 18 Jan | Sloop Merit | Charles Keagan | 8 tons | Antigua | Livestock |
| 24 Jan | Sloop Lark | Samuel | 35 tons | Bermuda | Coconuts |

¹⁸ CO.157/1: The Antigua lists of Shipping, 1704-1720.

| | | | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|----------------|---------|----------------|---------------------------|
| | | Skinner | | | |
| 1707 22 Sep | Sloop Great Britain | James Atkinson | 15 tons | Antigua | Cotton, yams |
| 31 Dec | Sloop Elizabeth and Mary | Paul Rowan | 14 tons | St Christopher | Cotton, hammocks |
| 1708 20 Jan | Sloop Great Britain | James Atkinson | 15 tons | Antigua | Yams |
| 25 Mar | Sloop Caesar | John Trott | 28 tons | Antigua | Yams |
| 4 Apr | Sloop Ann | John Kenny | 14 tons | Antigua | Yams |
| 17 May | Sloop Content | R Richardson | 10 tons | Antigua | Yams, livestock, hammocks |
| 2 Sep | Sloop Content | R Richardson | 10 tons | Antigua | Hammocks, livestock |
| 22 Sep | Sloop Content | R Richardson | 10 tons | Antigua | Hammocks, livestock |

Table 2: Antigua: An account of the imports made by sundry vessels to this island from Anguilla between 6th June 1704 and 25 December 1715: CO.157/1.

| Date | Vessel | Master | Burthen | Registered | General cargo |
|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|---------|------------|---------------|
| 1708 7 Jan | Sloop Great Britain | James Atkinson | 15 tons | Antigua | |
| 3 Mar | Sloop Great Britain | James Atkinson | 15 tons | Antigua | |
| 9 Sep | Sloop Content | Richard Richardson | 10 tons | Antigua | |

Table 3: Antigua: An account of the ladings of what vessels were in the several harbours of this island [bound for Anguilla] from 25 December 1707 to 25 September 1708: CO.157/1.

| Date | Name | Place | Master | Burthen | Registered | Cargo |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|----------|-----------------|----------------------------|------------|------------------------------|
| 1712 26 Oct | Sloop Sea Flower | Anguilla | John Downing | 2 tons 0 guns, 4 men | Nevis | Cotton, stock, hammocks |
| 15 Nov | Sloop Sea Flower | Anguilla | William Downing | 2 tons 0 guns, 4 men | Nevis | Hammocks, turtle |
| 5 Dec | Sloop Elizabeth and Ann | Antigua | John Kenny | 15 tons 0 guns 6 men | Antigua | Livestock |
| 1713 16 March | Two Mast Sloop Sea Flower | Anguilla | Hugh Fleming | 5 tons 0 guns, 9 men | Nevis | Livestock, hammocks |
| 1714 11 May | Sloop Susanna and Mary | Anguilla | William Downing | 5 tons 0 guns, 5 men | Antigua | Hammocks, livestock, tobacco |
| 6 Jul | Sloop Sea Flower | Anguilla | William Beal | 2 tons 0 guns, 3 men | Nevis | Hammocks, livestock |
| 1715 4 Jul | Sloop Elizabeth and Sarah | Anguilla | John Downing | 5 tons 0 guns, 4 men | Nevis | Hammocks, livestock |
| 7 Jul | Sloop Content | Antigua | Florentius Cox | 10 tons 0 guns, | Antigua | Hammocks |

| | | | | | | |
|--------|------------|----------|--------------|-----------------------|-------|----------------------|
| | | | | 5 men | | |
| 17 Oct | Sloop Mary | Anguilla | Thomas Hodge | 5 tons, 0 guns, 5 men | Nevis | Provisions, hammocks |

Table 4: Antigua: Account of the ladings of what vessels have arrived to this island together with their numbers of men and guns [from Anguilla] from 1st November 1712 to 25th December 1715: CO.157/1.

| Date cleared | Name | Of what place | Tons | From | Captain | Cargo | Quality |
|----------------|----------|---------------|------------------|----------|-----------------|-------|-----------------|
| 1718 18 Jun | Defyance | Antigua | 3 tons 0 guns | Anguilla | John Noah | | Two-masted boat |
| 1719 27 Jun | Dolphin | Antigua | 9 tons 0 guns | Anguilla | John Jenkins | | boat |
| 3 Jul | Defyance | Antigua | 3 tons 0 guns | Anguilla | John Noah | | |
| 6 Oct | Defyance | Antigua | 3 tons 0 guns | Anguilla | Francis Kegenor | | Sloop |
| 11 Oct | Hopewell | Anguilla | 6 tons 0 guns | Anguilla | William Beal | | boat |
| 15 Oct | Hopewell | Anguilla | 6 tons 0 guns | Anguilla | William Beal | | Sloop |
| 13 Nov | Phoenix | Anguilla | 5 tons 0 guns | Anguilla | John Norton | | Sloop |
| 26 Dec | Defyance | Antigua | 3 tons 0 guns | Anguilla | John Thompson | | boat |
| 1720 5 Jan | Defyance | Antigua | 3 tons | Anguilla | John Thompson | | boat |
| 8 Jan | Eagle | Antigua | 8 tons 0 guns | Anguilla | John Thompson | | boat |

Table 5: Antigua: A list of all ships and vessels that have cleared at the Naval Office in His Majesty's Island of Antigua [bound for Anguilla] from 25th March 1718 to 25th March 1720: CO.157/1.

The names of the sloop captains in Table 2 that are familiar to us as being Anguillian names include, **Paul Ruan** in 1707 and **Richard Richardson** in 1708. Table 4 provides us with **John Downing** and **William Downing**, **Hugh Fleming**, and **Thomas Hodge**. Their cargo included cotton-wool, hammocks,¹⁹ coconuts and yams. In his youth, George Leonard carried similar freight in his

¹⁹ The hammocks would not only have been for the Navy. Few households in Anguilla and elsewhere could afford wooden beds. Many of the poorer houses used only hammocks.

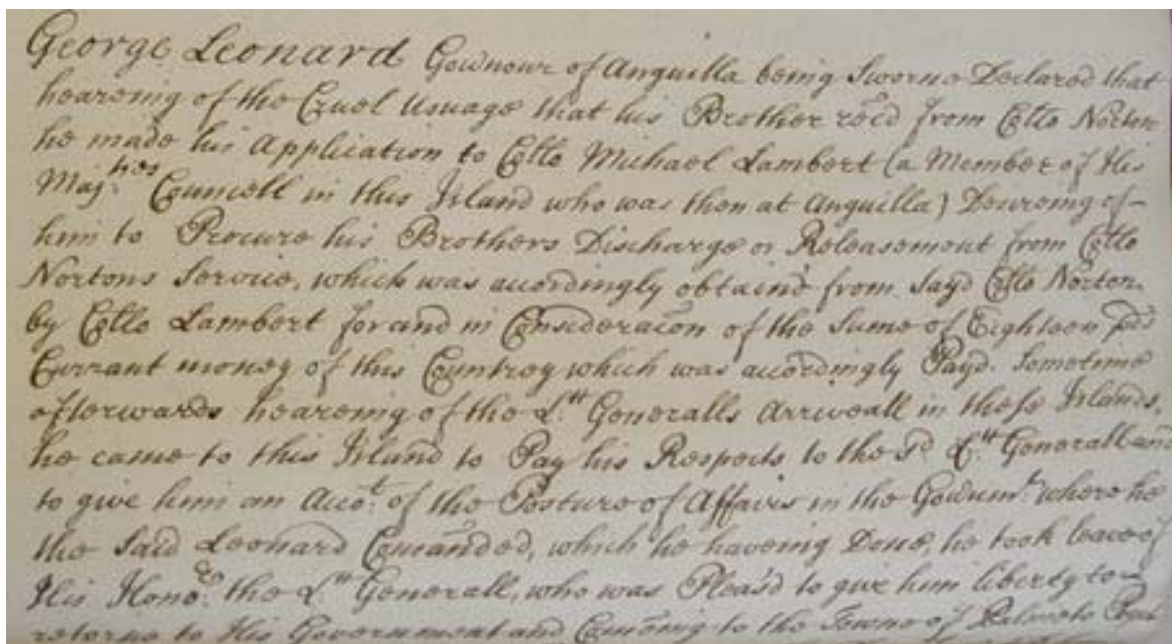
sloop. A little turtle, hardwood stakes for fencing, and dressed and undressed lumber and dyewoods would occasionally appear in his freight. Much-needed Dutch-made goods, ie, clothing and crockery, and general hardware and other dry goods, were smuggled from the Dutch and Danish islands to the French and English islands around Anguilla. Leonard knew all the bays and reefs of all the islands about. He acted as pilot to Royal Navy ships in the waters around. Codrington was able to say of him that he was the best pilot in all the islands.

We have the record²⁰ of only one of Leonard's escapades from the early period when he was at the peak of his prowess. Deputy governor **James Norton** of St Kitts was tried in disciplinary proceedings before Governor Codrington Jr and the Council at Old Road in 1700, and dismissed from office.

From the transcript of the trial, we learn that Norton forced **Philip Leonard**, George Leonard's brother, into indentured service on his sugar estate in St Kitts. Philip Leonard endured the usual conditions of near slavery involved in indentured servitude. His evidence at the trial was that Norton forced him to work in the fields as a slave, almost naked and half-starved. Once or twice a week he was tied to the pillory and whipped. Norton caused pickle of beef brine to be put on his whip marks

²⁰ CO.152/4, No 13, folio 33: Codrington to the Committee on 14 January 1701, Enclosure: Proceedings of the Enquiry Held on 6 December 1700.

and sores, to add to the torture. Eventually, George Leonard was able to purchase his release, but not on amicable terms. On a later date, deputy governor Leonard visited St Kitts to make his report to the Governor-in-Chief on the state of his Government in Anguilla. On his leaving, Norton jeered at him for running away from him.



George Leonard Governour of Anguilla being Sworne Declared that
hearing of the Cruel Usage that his Brother recd from C^{te} Norton
he made his Application to C^{te} Michael Lambert (a Member of His
Maj^{ty} Council in this Island who was then at Anguilla) Desiring of
him to Procure his Brothers Discharge or Release from C^{te}
Nortons Service, which was accordingly obtained from Sayd C^{te} Norton
by C^{te} Lambert for and in Consideration of the Sum of Eighteen P^{cs}
Current money of this Countrey which was accordingly Paid. Sometime
afterwards hearing of the S^{rs} Generalls Arrivall in these Islands,
he came to this Island to Pay his Respects to the S^{rs} Generall and
to give him an Acc^t of the Posture of Affairs in the Govern^{mt} where he
the said Leonard Comanded, which he having Done, he took leave of
His Hon^{or} the S^{rs} Generall, who was Pleas'd to give him Liberty to
returne to his Government and Coming to the Towne of Belmst P^{ca}

1. An extract from the testimony of deputy governor George Leonard in the trial of deputy governor James Norton: CO.152/4. (UK National Archives®)

When he answered that other business called him home, Norton swore at him and struck him on his side with his cane. Norton threatened to run him through with his sword, cut off his ears and send him home. These threats and assault were Norton's undoing. On Leonard's complaint, Codrington and his senior members of council determined the proceedings against Norton. The council

took evidence from George and Philip concerning the incident. Norton testified in his defence and was represented by counsel. But, he was convicted and removed from his office. The relevant extracts from the transcript of evidence make interesting reading:

St. Christophers. At a meeting of His Excellency Christopher Codrington Esq, Captain General and Governor in Chief in and over His Majesty's Leeward Caribbee Islands in America, together with the Members of His Majesty's Council of this Island at Old Road on Tuesday the tenth of December anno domini 1700

Present:

His Excellency the General

The Hon Colonel Edward Fox, Lt Governor

The Hon Colonel Roger Elrington, Lt Governor of Nevis

William Moad

John Mc Arthur

William Willott

His Excellency and Council being sat (and Colonel Norton present) George Leonard Governor of Anguilla and his brother appearing as witnesses against Colonel Norton were sworn to answer the truth to such questions as His Excellency and Council should demand of them.

***Philip Leonard** being upon oath declared that Colonel Norton came on board of a frigate where he had him pressed for England in His Majesty's service sometime past and persuaded the said Leonard not to go*

to England for the cold would kill him: upon which the said Leonard did tell the said Colonel Norton he would give him a year's service to take him on shore which Colonel Norton said he could not accept of, but told him he should go on shore, and he would take care to send him to his brother (who was governor of Anguilla).

To which the said Leonard complied, and went to Colonel Norton's house. Afterwards the said Colonel Norton tendered to said Leonard certain Indentures of Servitude to sign for the term of three years, which he refused to do and thereupon the said Colonel Norton did threaten that if he refused so to do he would break his bones, calling him bloody son of a whore, and bloody son of a bitch upon which menacing the said Leonard did sign the said Indenture of Servitude.

And after, he was bound he was forced to work in the fields as a slave without any clothes, except only a [. . .] shirt, a pair of drawers and a waistcoat, and for his diet only a small bit of beef and cassava bread for four and twenty hours' time, and once or twice every week the said Colonel Norton did cause the said Leonard to be whipped in the pillory till the blood came, and caused the pickle of brine to be put on his sores.

***George Leonard** Governor of Anguilla being sworn declared that hearing of the cruel usage that his brother received from Colonel Norton, he made his*

application to Colonel Michael Lambert (a member of His Majesty's Council in this Island who was then at Anguilla) desiring him to procure his brother's discharge or releasement from Colonel Norton's service; which was accordingly obtained from said Colonel Norton by Colonel Lambert for and in consideration of the sum of eighteen pounds current money of this country which was accordingly paid.

Sometime afterward, hearing of the said Lieutenant General's arrived in these Islands he came to this Island to pay his respects to the said Lieutenant General and to give him an account of the posture of affairs in the government where he the said Leonard commanded, which he having done, he took leave of His Honour the Lieutenant General, who was pleased to give him liberty to return to his government.

And coming to the town of Palmetto Point in order to go home, one Mr Biskott came to this deponent and told him [. . .]²¹ this deponent made answer he was not, but that some other occasion called him home, upon which Colonel Norton did swear God damn him, he lied like a son of a whore, and at the same time gave this deponent a fulch on the side with his cane and swore he would run him through, that he would cut of his ears and send him home, and further Colonel Norton told him this

²¹ Two lines of the transcript are lost in the binding of the copy in the Colonial Office records.

deponent Captain Perry had sent him a message which made him follow the deponent to Basseterre, adding withal that he had escaped a scowring, for if he had come up with him he would have laid him down with his pistols.

Written in the margin of the above deposition in the Colonial Office files at the National Archives at Kew Gardens in what appears to be Codrington's own handwriting is this further comment, made for the information of the Board of Trade:

There are one hundred men on Anguilla. This Leonard is an honourable old sloop man, and, being now retired to that island and having the best cotton plantation there, was made governor by my father. He is the best pilot in all the islands and very useful by reason of the experience he has to the King's ships in these parts.

Many years later, in 1735, Governor **William Mathew** described²² George Leonard as being full four-score years old, ie, over eighty years of age. He was even then still serving as deputy governor of Anguilla. He was born in or shortly before 1655, and by 1735 was long past his prime. He was nearly 50 years old when he left the sea to work his cotton grounds. He invested his savings not only in Anguilla but also in land in Antigua and Tortola, in all three of which islands he held

²² CO 152/21 No 86, folio 100: Mathew to the Committee on 20 July 1734.

plantations. He is last mentioned in the surviving Anguillian records in the year 1717. From about that year he spent increasing periods of time in Antigua. By 1719, drought conditions in Anguilla seem to have made it impossible for him to make a living in Anguilla. In June 1720, Governor **Walter Hamilton** reported²³ that he and several of the major Anguillian planters migrated from Anguilla to Antigua. The records show him living in Antigua up to at least 1735. The likelihood is that his children moved with him to reside in Antigua and were brought up there. His sons and grandsons were educated in England like the other children of the major planters of that time. With better prospects open to them than Anguilla could afford, the Leonard family eventually disappear from Anguilla, some to reside in Antigua and others in St Martin and Tortola. The family name did not last for long even in Antigua. The 1753 census²⁴ of Antigua shows only the following Anguillian names recorded as residing in that island:

| Family | Men | Women | Boys | Girls |
|--------------------|-----|-------|------|-------|
| Catherine Carty | | 1 | | |
| Margaret Carty | | 1 | | |
| Samuel Carty | 1 | | | |
| James Coakley | 1 | 1 | | 1 |
| Lucy Gibbons | | 1 | 1 | |
| Dr John Richardson | 2 | 2 | | 3 |
| Mary Roberts | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| George Roberts | 1 | | | |
| Edward Welch | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |

²³ CO.152/13: Hamilton to the Committee on 14 June 1720 [query].

²⁴ CO.152/27: A List of the Inhabitants of Antigua.

| | | | | |
|---------------|---|--|--|--|
| James Welch | 1 | | | |
| Richard Welch | 1 | | | |

Table 2: List of the inhabitants of Antigua, 1753:
CO.152/27.

Table 2 indicates that by the 1750s, the Leonards were no longer resident in Antigua. The likelihood is that by that date they emigrated to more promising lands. Leonard, like Howell before him, gave many years of service in the undoubtedly unprofitable and burdensome position as deputy governor of Anguilla. Howell appears to have spent all his years in Anguilla. Leonard alternated residence between Anguilla, Tortola and Antigua. The likelihood is that he died in one of those three islands in about 1735, as in that year **John Richardson** replaced him as deputy governor.

Absentee governorship was not conducive to good government. Nor would Leonard's advancing age have made government of Anguilla any easier. In 1727, as we have seen, the government of the Virgin Islands and Anguilla was placed under Francis Phips, a planter of St Kitts, in an attempt to control the unruly settlers. There was still no Assembly elected to make laws for Anguilla.²⁵ In the absence of an Assembly to enact laws for good government as in the other islands, a deputy governor of Anguilla needs must rely on his personal standing in the

²⁵ The first Assembly for Anguilla was not elected until after the Anguilla Revolution of 1967. This gives Anguilla the distinction of being the last territory in the West Indies to which all the trappings of government have come.

local community, not to mention his physical prowess, to have been able at that time to maintain his authority. As Governor **John Hart** wrote²⁶ in 1724 of the deputy governor of Anguilla, “*If his cudgel happens to be one whit less than a sturdy subject’s, good night, Governor.*”

Ten years later, in 1734, the system of government was not improved. Governor William Mathew again used²⁷ a familiar metaphor when writing of the island. He obviously read the earlier correspondence. He wrote,

I know not what to do with the inhabitants of Anguilla . . . They live like so many bandits, in open defiance of the laws of God and man . . . As for being under government, they are out of all notion of that. From time to time deputy governors from among themselves have been appointed by His Majesty’s Chief Governor of these islands, but they have no authority over them but what they are able to enforce with a cudgel. He that is at Anguilla now writes that he cannot nor will not continue such among such reprobates any longer.

We know from Thomas Chalkley that the deputy governor in question was George Leonard. We know from the appointment of John Richardson to succeed him in 1735

²⁶ CO.152/14: Hart to the Committee [query].

²⁷ CO.152/21, No 79, folio 88: Mathew to the Committee on 17 June 1734.

that George Leonard must have died shortly after Governor Mathew wrote this dispatch.

To summarise, in their administration of the Leeward Islands, each deputy governor was, at least in theory, assisted by a Council and an Assembly. The former consisted of up to twelve persons, appointed by the Governor-in-Chief upon the recommendation of the deputy governor. These were invariably, according to the custom of the time, the richest and most influential of the planters and merchants of the particular island. The Council advised the deputy governor in the administration of the island, and performed certain judicial functions. Individual members acted as Justice of the Peace, took oaths, and sat in summary courts. The whole Council sat with the deputy governor as a superior court of sessions, with appeal to the Governor-in-Chief in Nevis or Antigua. Stapleton described the executive power as being in the Provost Marshall, by warrant from the deputy governor, who also signed all executions, letters of administration, probates of wills, and licences of marriage after banns.

The planters and merchants of each parish elected two representatives to the Assemblies. These made local laws. Stapleton described²⁸ the Assemblies of the Leeward Islands in the 1680s as being composed of two freeholders from each parish chosen yearly. The

²⁸ CO.153/2, folio 139: Stapleton to the Committee on 22 November 1676: [Answers to Inquiries](#) [query].

constitutional procedure for the enactment of law is familiar to us. It is the system that prevails in the British Overseas Territories in the West Indies to this day. Laws made by the Assembly were required to be assented to by the deputy governor. He was empowered to veto such laws. These locally made laws were transmitted to the Governor-in-Chief from time to time and he in turn would submit them to the legal advisers to the Committee for Trade in England. These locally made laws remained in force only for two years unless the Royal Assent was given. Annual sessions, at least, of the Assembly were a necessity in the larger islands, as financial bills lasted for one year only. Both Council and Assembly represented, needless to say, chiefly the interest of the major planters, not of the white free men, free coloureds, African slaves or small planters. None of these forms of organised government was established in Anguilla during the early period when first Abraham Howell and then George Leonard were deputy governors of Anguilla. Of them as with their successors, their ability to govern rested solely on their persuasive power and the grudging support their people gave them.