

The Economic and Military Impact of Privateers and Pirates
on Britain's Rise as a World Power

by

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ABSTRACT

Privateers and pirates were instrumental in the development of English and British colonies and territories through military support and economic enrichment. British policy was to use privateers to help break into the New World when it was dominated by Spain, and Britain's navy was no match for Spain's navy. The privateers were used to protect the colonies, like Jamaica, from Spanish invasion and to militarily weaken Spain, Portugal, and others by taking or destroying their ships. Plundering brought in substantial wealth to the colonies and the crown while working for British governors. Eventually, Britain's policy changed when it became more established in the Caribbean and the New World, and because some of its pro-Catholic monarchs made peace with Spain. Sugar production increased and there was less need for privateers. Most privateers moved to new bases in the North American colonies and Madagascar where they continued to be paid to work on behalf of others, in this case mostly for merchants and local politicians. Besides enriching the North American colonies economies through plunder, the privateers also helped protect them from the Native Americans. As pirates from Madagascar, they raided Mughal merchant fleets, bringing loot and exotic goods to the North American colonies in the seventeenth century, which also helped boost trade with Asia because colonists desired Asian goods. The pirates brought massive numbers of slaves from Madagascar to the colonies to sell. Pirates also operated in the Caribbean. There, they were beneficial to the colonies by bringing in money, yet problematic because they would sometimes raid British ships. When Britain became a global power, privateers and pirates became more of a nuisance than a help to the empire and it stopped using them. Still, in the 1800s, a privateer resurgence occurred in the United States and

these individuals and their ships served the same function as they had with Britain, helping a new power break into areas across the sea when it lacked a strong navy. Though somewhat problematic to Britain these privateers did benefit the empire by helping Spain's colonies gain their independence.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Privateering and piracy forged the early English colonies and helped give rise to the British Empire, the most powerful empire and formidable naval power in history. England had a long history of privateering and piracy that started with raids in Ireland beginning in the 16th century prior to the later English and British Caribbean colonies. The British and Irish raided each other often, and British privateers would also raid trade ships traveling between northern Europe and the Mediterranean.¹ Following these activities in Ireland, the first early privateering that had a significant impact on Britain's rise to power was the Elizabethan privateers during the late 16th century.² Well-recognized names like Francis Drake, John Hawkins, Walter Raleigh, James Lancaster, and other privateers working for Queen Elizabeth Tudor laid the foundation of early British expansion into the Caribbean by exploring and also by raiding Spanish and Portuguese territory and ships in the area. Drake and others plundered massive amounts from the Spanish and disrupted its empire, and Britain's first colony in the New World, Roanoke Island, was founded by Walter Raleigh.³ These privateers also saved England from invasion by the Spanish and helped Elizabeth's conquest of Ireland. Lancaster led some of the first British expeditions to India and the east. Clearly, these earliest privateers were valuable to England.

¹ Mark G. Hanna, *Pirate Nests and the Rise of the British Empire, 1570-1740*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 22.

² Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 21-22.

³ Raleigh Trevelyan, *Sir Walter Raleigh*. (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2002), 89.

British policy changed over the years and those changes influenced the actions of the privateers and pirates, sometimes resulting in them moving to other locations around the Atlantic Ocean and Indian Ocean to secure work. In terms of England's policy to expand its empire, it initially used privateers to help gain a foothold in the Caribbean, which started in 1655 when Jamaica was seized by Oliver Cromwell.⁴ After the island was taken most of the English troops left and privateers and pirates were what protected it. Before England established itself in this region, Spain dominated the Atlantic. To weaken Spain and to avoid an all-out war with the Spanish, and to help chisel its way into the Caribbean, England resorted to using privateers for manpower. Using privateers that were not officially part of England's navy also made it difficult for Spain to blame England for attacks and incurred losses. Eventually though, English policy changed some years later as it became more established in the area. Sugar production started, along with securing a larger naval presence for protection in the Caribbean. Plus, the later Stuart monarchs right before the formation of Great Britain were pro-Catholic and friendly to Spain and signed a peace treaty with Spain, the Treaty of Madrid in 1670.⁵ Pro-Catholic English monarchs meant the privateers would not receive letters of marque to attack Spain. Privateers could operate without England's support, making them a problem that would not easily disappear.

Following these changes in England's policy for operations in the Caribbean, privateers and pirates were needed less. Many headed to North American colonies like New York. Those were relatively new English colonies and officials living in those areas

⁴ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 102.

⁵ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 115-116.

were open to hiring privateers and pirates because they needed a larger source of income as well as being used as soldiers for protection against the Native Americans. Merchants and politicians in New York also wanted access to east Asian goods and slaves, which resulted in privateers and pirates setting up shop in Madagascar. This island was an ideal location because of its proximity to India, allowing them to more easily raid Asian ships for sought after goods. The island was also heavily populated with a largely untapped source of slaves. While many privateers moved to New York and Madagascar, some did remain in the Caribbean operating as rogue pirates out of remote colonies like the Bahamas.

During the 1800s, though, a substantial resurgence of privateers occurred in the Caribbean because Spain's New World colonies rebelled and needed help fighting against Spain. These privateers worked out of the early United States for businessmen, government officials, and wealthy landowners. These actions did benefit the British in weakening Spain in the New World. Plus, British veterans of the Napoleonic Wars served in these privateer crews.

The history of these privateers and pirates, extending over a period from the 1600s through the 1800s, including men like Henry Morgan and Bartholomew Sharp, has been written about by the individuals who lived it and researched by historians. Books and articles about privateers and pirates are generally written in two forms. One is broad, covering many topics or aspects about privateers, pirates, their activities in various locations and time frames, the other more limited or specific in content or perspective. Those in the broader grouping would include, for example, information about a number of countries and political entities such as the British, Spanish, Portuguese, Dutch, and

French, and their governmental policies and practices, geographic goals, and the like. Some of these sources may include a significant range of topics from numerous individuals (some being privateers and pirates) to seafaring travels to raids to trade. Conversely, books and articles with a more specific, limited approach might focus on only one or a limited number of countries or empires, a single or limited geographic location of privateering activities, individual pirates, privateers or groups. For example, some histories of British privateers and pirates are discussed with a certain perspective, like with historian Marcus Rediker. His books tend to have a Marxist perspective that focuses mainly on privateer and pirate “sailors,” while Mark G. Hanna’s book focuses on privateer nests without covering a lot of the economic aspects of their raids, and Jon Latimer’s book focuses almost entirely on the geographic regions of Jamaica and Tortuga. My thesis is similar to Hanna’s work in that I looked at several regions, not just one.

The focus on England for this thesis is due to several factors: the British Empire grew to become the largest and most powerful in history, of which I have a great interest in, and the majority of all privateers and pirates were from the British Isles. My study will pull together the important economic and military support those privateers and pirates provided to Britain as it expanded its global power over nearly two centuries, and how they adapted to changes in British policy over the years.

Notes On Terminology

The three groups discussed in this paper are defined for clarity - privateers, buccaneers, and pirates. The word *privateer* could have two meanings. One was a

privately-owned ship that that was authorized during wartime by a government through a letter of marque, which was a contract, to go after an enemy state's ships and colonies.⁶ The use of privateer also extended to any member of the ship's crew.⁷ Raiding and other unlawful acts were generally ignored by the hiring government. The government they worked for allowed privateers to sell their goods in normal markets rather than being forced to use black markets in exchange for providing a portion of their loot to the government. Sometimes during the wars, privateers would fight in major battles with the regular navy, like when Francis Drake was an admiral against the Spanish Armada.⁸ *Buccaneer* was basically another name for privateers, though this group tended to be wilder and, at times, participated in criminal activities like piracy. The name comes from the French word *boucanier*, which referred to someone who hunted wild animals.⁹ Originally, they were French traders living on the islands of the Caribbean. They hunted wild boar and feral cattle and smoked and traded the meat.¹⁰ They eventually became pirates when the Spanish exterminated the animals they hunted as a way to force them to leave the Caribbean. Over time they became privateers working for the British and French governments. The name buccaneer stuck with them though. In contrast, *pirates* were criminals. The definition of a pirate is someone who commits violence or robbery

⁶ Jon Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean: How Piracy Forged an Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009), 4.

⁷ Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean*, 4.

⁸ Peter Whitfield, *Sir Francis Drake*. (New York: New York University Press, 2004), 112.

⁹ Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean*, 72.

¹⁰ Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean*, 72.

by ship on other ships or settlements on land.¹¹ They worked on their own behalf and raided ships for profit. These terminologies were fluid and depended on the situation, the attacker, and who was being attacked. The person who wrote about them usually decided what they would be called.

Those being attacked always referred to their attackers as pirates even if they were privateers. This would happen because the enemy countries being attacked considered it illegal and referred to the attackers as *pirates*, while the countries sponsoring the attacks did not and instead used the term *privateers*. Something else that was problematic was that most buccaneers and privateers committed piracy on occasion when there were no privateer contracts, further leading to the interchangeable use of some terminology. The term *pirate* was most commonly used during this period. The use of any of these terms was dependent on the individuals involved, their actions at times, whose side they were on, and who was documenting their actions. They were only considered a privateer by the country who gave them a contract, everyone else saw them as a pirate. A privateer's contract could disappear at a moment's notice depending on who was in charge of the country that issued the contract. I use the term privateer more in my thesis than pirate because I focus mostly on the rise of England and Britain as powers and they worked mainly with privateers.

Additionally, for a clear understanding of this study, it is important to note that England was not called Britain until 1707 when Queen Anne of Britain instituted the Acts of Union which united the crowns of England and Scotland to form Great Britain. Even though England and Scotland shared the same monarch since James VI of Scotland

¹¹ Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean*, 4.

inherited the English throne from Elizabeth Tudor as James I of England, the two had still remained separate kingdoms with their own institutions and imperial expansion projects until Queen Anne. Further, while England was not technically referred to as the British Empire until 1707, since 1066 it possessed the characteristics of an empire because it ruled lands outside of England in France, Wales and Ireland, so it was an English Empire. According to historian David Armitage, the English crown held or claimed Wales, Ireland, Scotland, Normandy, Gascony, Aquitaine, the isle of Mann, and the Channel Islands at various times.¹² In 1655, England had conquered Jamaica, and prior to that had already controlled other Caribbean islands. So, while the term *British Empire* was not used until 1707, England had been an empire for generations and had used an imperial title. Armitage documents that England had essentially claimed itself an empire as early as the Anglo-Saxon kings, Athelstan and Edgar I, who used the title imperator.¹³

Thesis Statement

Privateering and piracy were fundamental to the imperial history of England and Britain during their rise to power and we can gain insight about their impact by studying them. Their actions, often with the approval and support of England and Britain had important consequences for the emerging empire, with geographic expansion, increasing the scope of British trade, the rise of sugar in the Atlantic, and more.

¹² David Armitage, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 27.

¹³ Armitage, *Ideological Origins*, 28.

The actions of privateering brought in massive amounts of valuables from Spanish and Portuguese colonies and ships, including silver and exotic goods, enriching England and Britain along with the colonies during the 1600s and early 1700s. Henry Morgan's raid on Porto Bello, for example, collected 250,000 pieces of eight, his raid on Maracaibo picked up 55,000 pesos worth of goods and money along with a warship, and Van Horn's raid on Vera Cruz captured 350 bags of cochineal along with jewels and plate.¹⁴ This was very important during the seventeenth century because other means of obtaining financial gain were not yet largely available for the colonies. So basically, when considering the system of economic trade at the time in Europe, every Spanish loss would have been considered an automatic gain for England. And, the colonies did need to make money for England; if not, they would receive less support from England which would leave them more vulnerable.

England was jealous of the amount of wealth Spain extracted from the New World and wanted to tap into that as well. The slave trade, for example, was relatively new to England. It started during the Elizabethan era with the Sea Dogs, particularly with John Hawkins in the 1560s,¹⁵ but did not amount to much until well into the 1600s. Its New World colonies were not buying many slaves because they were not yet growing large quantities of sugar or other goods. English and eventually British attempts to sell

¹⁴ Philip Ayres, *The voyages and adventures of Capt. Barth. Sharp and others in the South Sea: being a journal of the same: also Capt. Van Horn with his buccanieres surprizing of la Veracruz: to which is added the true relation of Sir Henry Morgan and his expedition against the Spaniards in the West-Indies and his taking Panama: together with the president of Panama's [i.e. Juan Perez de Guzman] account of the same expedition, translated out of Spanish: and Col. Beeston's adjustment of the peace between the Spaniards and English in the West Indies.* (London: P.A., Esq., 1684), 118.

¹⁵ Harry Kelsey, *Sir John Hawkins.* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2003), 13.

slaves to the Spanish colonies were blocked by Spain because it wanted to restrict trade with other nations. Transactions that did occur only happened because the English smuggled slaves into Spanish colonies, and while this was somewhat profitable, it was hindered by the fact that the Spanish often caught the smugglers. Ultimately, this ended with the Spanish asiento awarded to the British with the treaty of Utrecht that Spain signed with Britain in 1713, which permitted Britain to sell slaves and other goods to Spanish colonies.¹⁶ This provided for the rise of some capitalism, which ultimately weakened the privateers in the end.

Trade between the British East India Company and India was also limited and not yet very profitable for the British because of competition with the Dutch and Portuguese in the region. The Mughal emperors of India also restricted British access to trade in the subcontinent. This led to a privateering and pirate system that was located in the areas of the Atlantic Ocean, Indian Ocean, and Pacific coasts of Central and South America.

Some of the more significant British colonies during the late 16th century to the 18th century were the Bahamas, Jamaica, Barbados, Providence Island, and St. Christopher, as well as a number of smaller colonies. In addition to the British colonies in the Caribbean, the British privateers and pirates also eventually operated out of the thirteen colonies of North America.¹⁷ Other important places to mention in this network are Tortuga, a French colony that had many British privateers operating out of it, and Madagascar, though not a colony, it had a number of pirate settlements, like St. Mary's.

¹⁶ J. H. Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492-1830*. (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2006), 231.

¹⁷ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 144.

Sugar production was an example of a profitable venture for Britain and its colonists, though privateering activities still provided great financial support. Britain lacked an adequate number of slaves in colonies like Jamaica to make sugar production highly profitable. Jamaica's yearly exports of sugar to England by the late seventeenth century was 201,400 British pounds, on average, each year from 1698 to 1700.¹⁸ In the 1690s, pirate Henry Every made almost that much from just one raid when he attacked a Mughal fleet on the way to Mecca which yielded gold, silver and jewelry worth 155,000 to 180,000 British pounds.¹⁹ The treasure from this raid made its way into the North American colonies because the privateers and pirates of Madagascar had connections in New York and other ports where they would sell their goods and spend their plunder. Morgan's raid on Porto Bello in 1667 is another highly profitable event that enriched the British colonies, particularly Jamaica. He ransomed the town of Porto Bello for 100,000 pesos in silver and gold and along with other spoils totaling up to 250,000 pieces of eight, a considerable amount of money for that time.²⁰ While these are some very prosperous examples, as I will show in this paper, there were many privateers who conducted numerous successful raids. Collectively, the use of and actions by them "proved economically and militarily crucial to the survival of England's colonial ventures throughout the Atlantic," as noted in Hanna's book.²¹

¹⁸ Richard S. Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624-1713*. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972), 204.

¹⁹ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 189.

²⁰ Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean*, 181-182.

²¹ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 417.

Sugar production did start picking up during the eighteenth century after the prime of privateering. Privateers and pirates were some of the earliest slave traders to the colonies. The English and British used privateers and pirates to acquire slaves because they had access to slave sources and were able to bypass the Portuguese and Dutch who were the main slave traders at that time. Privateers became slave traders because many of the Spanish and Portuguese ships they captured were carrying slaves to the New World colonies and they would also take slaves from Spanish colonies they ransacked. This slave trading operation was taken to its peak with the pirates of Madagascar who took massive numbers of slaves during their slave raids on the island. The British government ultimately decided to stop using privateers after they signed a peace treaty with Spain. They then they built up sugar production which resulted in many slaves being brought to the colonies. Sugar production ultimately became the British Empire's main source of income and made Jamaica Britain's most important colony. The privateers were the reason this happened because they were what protected Jamaica and other colonies that eventually became sugar producers and supplied the colonies' income for a long time before the rise of sugar production. Once the slave numbers reached a certain level, sugar production became a viable option.²² This was when the British government forced the privateers out of the Caribbean which allowed for these large sugar plantations to start to develop. It is worth noting that privateering was preferred throughout the 17th century by common people, not wealthy plantation owners, because these individuals could profit from it, while only plantation owners made money from sugar. In addition to economic

²² Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 141.

gain, the privateers also provided security to early British colonies by fending off Spanish invasion attempts and capturing and often sinking numerous Spanish ships.

Ultimately, privateers and pirates were key to the successful rise of the British Empire's global dominance from the 16th through 18th centuries, through economic enrichment and military support and strength. They were heavily connected to policy, filling the varying needs the English and British governments, and relocating to where they were wanted or needed. This thesis will research the extent of the importance of privateer and pirate actions in fostering the survival and prosperity of Britain's New World colonies and Britain itself, particularly with regard to plunder, military raids and defense, and the trade of exotic goods and slaves. It will argue that without privateers and pirates, the British rise to power might not have been nearly as successful as it was. Starting with the Elizabethan Sea Dogs, Queen Elizabeth Tudor's reign might not have been the golden age it was without their efforts. The privateers of the 1600's were the reason Jamaica and other Caribbean colonies rose to become so key to the British. Even with the British government's policy change that forced the privateers out of the Caribbean, they ended up benefiting the thirteen colonies in the north and also turned Madagascar into one of Britain's largest moneymakers. Their legacy extended all the way to the privateers of the United States of the 1800s.

Scope of Research

Research for this paper spans from the mid-1600s through the early 1800s and analyzes privateers who served Britain and its colonies in the Caribbean, North America, Madagascar (though not a British colony, it became a base where former privateers acted

as pirates raiding Indian ships), as well as early American privateers from the United States in the early 1800s who benefitted the British.

Methodology

Research for this thesis paper consists of both first-hand accounts by privateers, pirates, and others along with modern-day secondary sources researched and written primarily by academic scholars. Most primary sources used were written by privateers and pirates of that time, who naturally had firsthand knowledge of privateering and piracy, and are from the 1600s and 1700s. I obtained these sources primarily on ASU's online databases, particularly from Early English Books Online. It is possible that some privateers and pirates may have exaggerated their actions and successes in order to appear more impressive. Some may have portrayed both themselves and others more violent and evil than they actually were to spread the mystique, scare people, sell more books, or because of feuds between each other. An example of such a feud concerns Exquemelin, a French privateer who had a habit of attacking Henry Morgan's character and accomplishments because he disliked him. Though some sources could pose concern for possible mischaracterizations and exaggerations, historians have used these sources because they consider the information reasonably accurate. The sources from privateers, themselves, give a first-hand account of what took place. When possible, I used multiple primary sources for comparison to support the reliability of the information.

A number of secondary sources have been written over the years, and more recently since 2000, about European privateers and pirates. A good place to start when introducing the body of scholarship on privateers and pirates is Marcus Rediker's

*Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750.*²³ This book is considered a classic, and Rediker is one of the foremost experts on Atlantic history, including pirates, piracy, and sailors of the Atlantic world. This work chronicles sailors and pirates as workers trying to collect a wage. Rediker noted that up until the time he wrote *Between the Devil*, most writings on sailors and pirates was highly romanticized which distorted the truth about them.²⁴ He concludes that the romanticized history is too focused on man versus nature when the history of sailors and pirates was really more man versus man.²⁵ His writing is a working class history which focuses on sailors as a group and how they worked collectively.²⁶ They helped develop the slave market as major slave traders during the 1600s and 1700s, build up British economies by bringing in large amounts of plunder to trade in the British colonies, and develop markets for exotic Asian goods since they were some of the first to bring in such goods, for example, from India. In addition to *Between the Devil*, other scholarly works introduce other broader aspects of the British Empire and its colonies. David Armitage's 2000 book, *The Ideological Origins of the British Empire*,²⁷ J. H. Elliott's *Empires of the Atlantic World: Britain and Spain in America, 1492-1830*²⁸ and Alison Games' *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion*,

²³ Marcus Rediker, *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea: Merchant Seamen, Pirates and the Anglo-American Maritime World, 1700-1750*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987).

²⁴ Rediker, *Between the Devil*, 4.

²⁵ Rediker, *Between the Devil*, 5.

²⁶ Rediker, *Between the Devil*. 6.

²⁷ Armitage, *Ideological Origins*.

²⁸ Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World*.

1560-1660²⁹ provide detailed information on British expansion and offer reasons why it expanded. These last three books were helpful for providing background information on both the English and British empires.

Two recent scholarly works on privateers of the 1600s that focus on the time period of my study include Mark G. Hanna's 2015 book, *Pirate Nests and the Rise of the British Empire, 1570-1740*,³⁰ and Jon Latimer's 2009 book, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean: How Piracy Forged an Empire*. These two books combine to provide a detailed account of privateers of the Caribbean.³¹ These two books complement Rediker's *Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea* because while they focus entirely on pirates and privateers, Rediker talks more generally about a variety of sailors including pirates. Hanna argues that as the privateers and pirates moved from one British colony to another, as well as to other locations, they were a benefit to these areas, both economically and militarily.³² Hanna shows the privateers were able to adapt to different locations by finding work through local politicians and merchants. He says the effects of privateering and piracy on the empire as a whole are that during the late 16th century through the late 17th century it provided fledgling English communities in the Caribbean with a local medium exchange, desperately needed supplies, and human cargo that would provide labor.³³ Years after, those port communities maintained that connection for safety and

²⁹ Alison Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560-1660*. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

³⁰ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*.

³¹ Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean*.

³² Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 3.

³³ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 416.

financial viability of their settlements.³⁴ Hanna also notes that sea marauding was acceptable because building empires required legal and moral flexibility.³⁵ He goes on to say that men deemed pirates in London, New Spain, and India became privateers in the colonies that were suffering economic depression and fear of invasion.³⁶ Basically, they helped areas in trouble. My thesis has a similar argument, following the privateers and pirates around the Atlantic and the Indian Ocean. However, I include additional specifics on the various captains and their raids, as well as more of a focus on Madagascar. My thesis is different from Hanna's work in that his book focusses almost entirely on the Caribbean while my study goes into more detail on Madagascar and the later pirates of the Caribbean. I also study a longer range of time from the late 1500s to the 1800s. Latimer's book, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean*, covers the privateers of Jamaica and Tortuga and looks at the topic from a military perspective, perhaps because he has both history and military backgrounds. Latimer argues that privateers were essential to the development and survival of Jamaica as a British colony.³⁷ He details how the privateers basically were its defense for many of its early years as a British colony and he describes the many raids Henry Morgan and other Jamaican privateers carried out, bringing in substantial wealth to the colony. *Buccaneers of the Caribbean* shows how the privateers

³⁴ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 416.

³⁵ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 417.

³⁶ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 417.

³⁷ Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean*, 128.

of Jamaica transformed the island where the English Commonwealth ruler, Cromwell, originally sent troublemakers, into a key British stronghold.³⁸

Scholarly articles also provide information on the privateers of the Caribbean that add to the findings of Hanna and Latimer. John A. C. Coneybeare and Todd Sandler wrote an article, “State-Sponsored Violence as a Tragedy of the Commons: England's Privateering Wars with France and Spain, 1625-1630,”³⁹ that argues that the British government dispatched privateers during their wars against France and Spain to supplement their navy. In an article by Carla Gardina Pestana, she contends that Jamaica would likely have been different without the privateers. Her article, “Early English Jamaica without Pirates”⁴⁰ argues that back when the governor of Jamaica initially invited the buccaneers there, they were brought in not for the purpose of conducting raids, but rather to supply food by hunting animals,⁴¹ which is not what most historians, including Hanna and Latimer believe. Hanna states that following England’s conquest of Jamaica, proven combatants were key to protecting the island, so privateers and pirates were allowed on the island.⁴² Latimer describes that Jamaica lured buccaneers to the island to provide defense in exchange for not getting into trouble for raiding other

³⁸ Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean*, 128.

³⁹ John A. C. Coneybeare and Todd Sandler, “State-Sponsored Violence as a Tragedy of the Commons: England's Privateering Wars with France and Spain, 1625-1630.” *Public Choice*, Vol. 77, No. 4 (1993), pp. 879-897.

⁴⁰ Carla Gardina Pestana, “Early English Jamaica without Pirates.” *The William and Mary Quarterly*, Vol. 71, No. 3 (July 2014), pp. 321-360.

⁴¹ Pestana, “Early English Jamaica,” 323.

⁴² Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 103.

groups.⁴³ My paper clearly shows, in Chapter 2, that the buccaneers were invited to fight and raid the Spanish. Both articles provide useful information that supplements my study on the privateers of the Caribbean. Coneybeare and Sandler fit in the overall historiography in that they provide an example of the English privateers fighting the French, which is different the other sources I used in my work. Pestana's work gives a unique perspective compared to most of the rest of the historiography. I agree with Coneybeare and Sandler on the connection of the British government to privateering raids, while I have a different perspective that Pestana gives of what Jamaica would have been like without privateers. Pestana is useful for comparing a different perspective to my work and other sources.

Scholarly work on later privateers and pirates detail events in Madagascar and the later Caribbean. Kevin P. McDonald's book, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves: Colonial America and the Indo-Atlantic World*⁴⁴ provides a fresh look at the connection between trade in the Atlantic Ocean and Indian Ocean with Madagascar pirates taking part in the trade, include the slave trade. McDonald argues that the pirates of Madagascar established the Atlantic Ocean and Indian Ocean trade network between Madagascar and New York, which brought a substantial amount of wealth and slaves into the northern British colonies of the New World.⁴⁵ My work also examines this trade, but further demonstrates the Madagascar pirates had the same level of impact on Britain as the early

⁴³ Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean*, 128.

⁴⁴ Kevin P. McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves: Colonial America and the Indo-Atlantic World*. (Oakland: University of California Press, 2015).

⁴⁵ McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves*, 32.

Caribbean privateers and compared the two groups; both substantially increased British colonial wealth. My research also shows that the pirates of Madagascar were more like privateers than pirates; the difference is they acquired work from merchants rather than politicians. Mark G. Hanna's *Pirate Nests and the Rise of the British Empire, 1570-1740*,⁴⁶ includes a section on the Madagascar pirates that supports the findings of McDonald, though his Madagascar section focuses more on raids and the pirates who committed them, rather than the Madagascar trade like McDonald does.

Rediker also wrote two later books which are essentially a continuation and update of his work in *Between the Devil*. These books provided useful information for my work though his first book, *Between the Devil*, I talked about it earlier in this historiography because it is one of the first well-known selections on piracy. His second book, *Villains of All Nations*,⁴⁷ provides research on famous pirates and the those who joined the crews and took part in piracy. One of his arguments is that the end of the War of Spanish Succession was a major factor to the rise of pirates in this period because it meant the privateers from the war no longer had contracts with the British government.⁴⁸ He also argues that increased trade from the Caribbean to Europe during the peace also contributed to the pirates' rise. This supports Chapter 3 in my paper on later pirates where I describe a number of famous pirates' exploits and their impact on Britain, though my paper has a wider geographic range of pirates including both the Mediterranean and

⁴⁶ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*.

⁴⁷ Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004).

⁴⁸ Rediker, *Villains of All Nations*, 19.

Madagascar. Rediker's third book, *Outlaws of the Atlantic: Sailors, Pirates, and Motley Crews in the Age of Sail*⁴⁹ in 2014, is his most recent and adds a new take on his earlier research as he argues the importance of lower-ranked pirate crew members to the impact on economic markets and that piracy is linked to the rise of capitalism.⁵⁰ The similarity between this and my work is that I also look at the impact on economies and markets, but do not go into detail on global capitalism. Rediker argues that as European rulers organized a transoceanic capitalist economy, they created new relationships among workers in their own nations and around the world.⁵¹ Piracy resulted from this cooperation.

David J. Starkey's article, "The Economic and Military Significance of British Privateering, 1702-83,"⁵² provides information on British privateering and piracy in the Caribbean region, mostly during the War of the Triple Alliance and the Revolutionary War.⁵³ The author presents information on the number of privateer ships, how many letters of marque were handed out, and some sense of the plunder taken. The overall argument of Starkey's article is that privateers supplemented the British navy in wars against Spain, how they were used for disrupting enemy commerce by capturing

⁴⁹ Marcus Rediker, *Outlaws of the Atlantic: Sailors, Pirates, and Motley Crews in the Age of Sail*. (Boston: Beacon Press, 2014).

⁵⁰ Rediker, *Outlaws of the Atlantic*, 3.

⁵¹ Rediker, *Outlaws of the Atlantic*, 7.

⁵² David J. Starkey, "The Economic and Military Significance of British Privateering, 1702-83." *The Journal of Transport History*, Vol. 9, No.1, (March 1, 1988), pp. 50-59.

⁵³ Starkey, "Economic and Military," 51.

merchant ships,⁵⁴ and how they often reused the captured ships as privateering vessels.⁵⁵ His work is key to my thesis, as my study describes the military benefit of hiring privateers to aid the royal navy as well as how Britain benefitted because of the disruptions to Spanish trade routes. My research includes a broader geographic area and lengthier time period than Starkey, and I included research from the 1500s through the 1800s from historians like Hanna and Head. This longer range of time shows how privateers and pirates adapted and changed over time depending on changes in English and British policy. Starkey fits in well with Hanna and Latimer in that his focus, like theirs, is the Caribbean. Similar to Latimer, for example, Starkey focuses more on the military impact of privateers and how the British used them to beef up their military capability during a major war with Spain. Starkey's work intersects with the larger literature on privateers and pirates during this time period in that it provides a short, but detailed, account on privateering during the War of the Triple Alliance and Revolutionary War. Starkey's work is distinguished from that of others because he provides charts with statistical information on the numbers of ships taken by the British privateers and the like.

Collectively, these sources show that privateers and pirates thrived at the time when Britain was a new sea power trying to break into the New World beginning around the late 1500s with the Sea Dogs like Drake and Hawkins.⁵⁶ As Spain began to decline

⁵⁴ Starkey, "Economic and Military," 50.

⁵⁵ Starkey, "Economic and Military," 52.

⁵⁶ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 43.

and was ultimately eclipsed by Britain's navy, it gave in and allowed Britain into the New World markets with the treaty of Utrecht in 1713.⁵⁷ This resulted in privateering and piracy becoming less important and declining over time. It also resulted in the privateers having to move around to different locations depending on where they were needed and where British policy allowed them. Historians over the years have changed what they have said about privateers and pirates. Early on, historians like Rediker have had a Marxist perspective focusing on them being workers and a group that purposefully leaves the British navy to work for themselves. While later historians, like Hanna and Latimer, focus on their connection to the development of colonies and rise of empires. Some of the more recent historians focus on their connection to trade and trade networks like McDonald does.

Historian David Head is an expert on early American privateers. His book and article, both from 2015, detail cities where privateers tended to operate from in the early United States, such as New Orleans, Baltimore, Galveston, and Amelia Island. *Privateers of the Americas: Spanish American Privateering from the United States in the Early Republic*⁵⁸ and "Slave Smuggling by Foreign Privateers: The Illegal Slave Trade and the Geopolitics of the Early Republic"⁵⁹ focus on the fact that these privateers took part in the slave trade, capturing slave ships from Spain and Portugal, so they could sell slaves in the United States. Head's book argues there was a rise of privateering resulting from

⁵⁷ Elliott, *Empires of the Atlantic World*, 231.

⁵⁸ David Head, *Privateers of the Americas: Spanish American Privateering from the United States in the Early Republic*. (Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 2015).

⁵⁹ David Head, "Slave Smuggling by Foreign Privateers: The Illegal Slave Trade and the Geopolitics of the Early Republic." *Journal of the Early Republic*, Vol. 33, No. 3 (Fall 2013), 433-462.

rebellions in Latin America.⁶⁰ These privateers continued the practices of the earlier British privateers but operated during this period out of the United States which was no longer a part of Britain but were still beneficial to Britain because their actions harmed Spain. Head's work fits into the overall historiography on privateers and pirates in that he shows what happens to them when Britain no longer relies on their services. He details how Britain's former colonies, the United States, makes use of them.

My study is influenced by the historiography of scholarly works, and my thesis's major contribution is bringing together scholarly work of others in a comparative analysis to show how privateers and pirates positively impacted Britain's wealth and military during the 1600s and 1700s. Most individual writings cover many topics such as politics, slavery and others, an example being Hanna whose book covers many such topics.⁶¹ My work limits the focus to primarily economic, military, and political actions in Britain that changed policies over time. Many authors center their work on one geographic area. Hanna and Latimer, for example, both focus primarily on the Caribbean, McDonald on Madagascar, and Head on U.S. privateers in Latin America. I bring these different geographic areas together to show how they are connected and what caused privateers and pirates to move between these areas. Changes resulting from actions like the Treaty of Madrid and peace between England and Spain ended up causing these men to eventually move north, out of the Caribbean, to find new work. Another example of this was when the East India Company forced them out of Madagascar. Scholarly books and articles cover various times as well, some being 1600s and 1700s, some being 1800s. To

⁶⁰ Head, *Privateers of the Americas*, 4.

⁶¹ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*.

conduct my analysis, I extracted useful data from the individual works to more cohesively show the impacts from the 1500s through 1800s. I also extract information from many primary sources written by privateers and others from the time period covered in my paper. Overall, my work shows how privateers and pirates were connected to English and British policy, and how they adapted and moved around as policy changed. Further, I show that even though the slave trade is often considered one of the events that replaced privateers and pirates due to its connection to sugar and the production of other goods, I explain that they were major players in the slave trade. An example of this is Hanna, who talks about the decline of the white population of Jamaica because of the influx of slaves, dropping from 12,000 in 1680 to 5,000 in 1869, while the number of slaves jumped to 25,000 by 1869.⁶² He says this is one reason for the death of Port Royal, which was the privateer stronghold on the island.⁶³ A second example is Latimer, who says the slave increase allowed for sugar production to take over Jamaica.⁶⁴ I argue sugar production is more of a replacer than was the slave trade because privateers and pirates almost always took part in the slave trade whether it be John Hawkins selling slaves to Spanish colonies, privateers of the Caribbean selling slaves they captured in raids to British colonies, Madagascar pirates selling large numbers of slaves taken from Madagascar, or the early American privateers selling slaves to New Orleans they had captured from Spanish and Portuguese ships.

⁶² Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 141.

⁶³ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 141.

⁶⁴ Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean*, 263.

CHAPTER 2

THE GOLDEN AGE OF BRITISH PRIVATEERING: EARLY PRIVATEERS AND BUCCANEERS OF THE CARIBBEAN AND THE PACIFIC, 1560-1688

Privateers and buccaneers from 1560 through 1688 helped to ensure the survival of Britain's early colonies in the Caribbean by providing military defense and intelligence, providing financial benefit through plunder, and providing support as government officials on occasion. These newly conquered Caribbean colonies, such as Jamaica in 1655,⁶⁵ were not properly maintained because Britain was caught up in wars in Europe and Jamaica was not important enough to Britain to send adequate numbers of troops for defense. Privateers became the backbone of the colonies, their main reason for survival. The privateers and buccaneers became most of the colonies' military forces and protected them from Spanish attack as the Spanish did not want other Europeans in the Caribbean. At times, they provided intelligence to the British on the Spanish and others they had gained through their travels. Before the rise of sugar production in the colonies, privateers were the main economic source to the colonies. They raided huge amounts of silver and gold and other goods from Spanish ships and then traded or sold them in the colonies. The silver and gold were used to help develop and enrich the colonies, in part with infrastructure and other local developments. The goods that were taken from the Spanish ships stimulated trade and the want for more goods, which resulted in more merchants arriving to the colonies. Privateers also always gave a cut of their take to the government they had contracted with, so there was always some financial benefit to the British. The primary sources talk about the massive amounts of plunder taken to the

⁶⁵ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 102.

colonies. These raids, along with raids by the Dutch such as those by Piet Heyn, also contributed to the weakening of the Spanish empire in the Caribbean by taking money and goods, destroying ships, disrupting their trade, and damaging Spanish colonial settlements, benefitting Britain substantially. The weakening of the Spanish empire supports how they helped the rise of the British Empire. Some privateers also became government officials in the colonies, like when Henry Morgan became the lieutenant governor of Jamaica, further helping to direct the future of the colonies. Overall, the key to these relationships between the privateers and the British was that during this period, British policy focused on establishing a foothold in the Caribbean and gaining access to the kind of wealth Spain had tapped into in the New World. Britain used the privateers to maintain new British colonies because it lacked a strong navy at the time. The privateers were also used to attack the Spanish. The British could claim they were criminals and pin the blame for raids on them. England's Parliament strongly supported this use of privateering and noted it was a "double advantage" to use them because they destroyed enemies' property and brought in wealth to the crown.⁶⁶ Parliament also saw "privateers, being encouraged by the bill, will be a means to put a stop to the French from infesting our coast."⁶⁷ They also supported the use of privateering to reclaim British ships that were captured by enemy nations.⁶⁸

⁶⁶ Anon. *Reasons Humbly Offered to the Right Honourable the Lords Spiritual and Temporal Assembled in Parliament, to Induce the Speedy Passing an Act for further Encouraging Privateers*. (London, 1695). Early English Books Online, 1.

⁶⁷ Anon., *Act for further Encouraging Privateers*, 1.

⁶⁸ Anon. *Reasons Humbly Offered Against some Clauses in the Present Bill for Encouragement of Privateers*. (London, 1695). Early English Books Online, 1.

Piracy existed for many centuries in the British Isles with some of the earliest examples occurring during the Viking Age. The Vikings not only raided the British Isles, but also settled in parts of Britain, launching raids from there. Eventually, during the Tudor period, English pirates operated out of Ireland attacking non-English merchant ships. These pirates used Ireland as their base because their activities were technically illegal.⁶⁹ The monarchy liked that they attacked enemy merchant ships so long as they were far enough away that the monarchy would not be blamed for the attacks. These pirates were the precursors to British privateers.

Eventually, during the reign of Elizabeth Tudor in the 1560s, privateering started to become an important occupation. During her reign Queen Elizabeth faced a serious threat from the Spanish because she was a Protestant. Her older half-sister, Mary Tudor was a Catholic and was married to her first cousin once removed, Spanish king Phillip II.⁷⁰ Mary started the process of making England Catholic again and had placed England under the influence of Spain. The problem occurred after she died. Elizabeth assumed control and stopped that Catholic shift, and she refused to marry Phillip II which angered him.⁷¹ The Spanish and Pope Pius V wanted to install a Catholic monarch on the throne of England, preferably Mary Queen of Scots who was Elizabeth's first cousin once removed. England's navy, however, could not match Spain's head on. To strengthen its limited military power England hired privateers and sent them out to attack Spanish ships

⁶⁹ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 21-22.

⁷⁰ Patrick Collinson, *Elizabeth I*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 17.

⁷¹ Collinson, *Elizabeth I*, 32.

and settlements in the New World, mainly in the Caribbean and South America.⁷² Privateers technically worked for the British government, but if caught, Elizabeth claimed they were wayward pirates and had no association with her. It was a good way to make money from Spanish plunder, along with weakening them, with limited likelihood of getting into trouble. Elizabeth Tudor set the tone for privateering on Britain's behalf in the future by showing that privateers could be used in areas where the British navy was not strong enough to operate effectively. She also showed that Britain could avoid trouble when attacking its enemies by using privateers and pinning the blame on them. Worth noting, too, is that Elizabeth used the privateers against Portuguese colonies as well, because Portugal was under Spanish rule at the time, and she also had them participate in attacks against the Catholic Irish,⁷³ who she saw as a possible ally of Spain.

Early British privateers of the Caribbean had a substantial impact on the rise of Britain as an empire through their contributions. Their origins lie with the Elizabethan Sea Dogs, who were the privateers of Elizabeth Tudor. Men like Francis Drake, John Hawkins, and Walter Raleigh were early Tudor privateers who laid the foundation for the later Caribbean privateers of the 17th century like Henry Morgan. Francis Drake, the most infamous of the Tudor privateers, accomplished much for England in the 16th century. These men laid the foundation in that they were the first successful privateers of England and the ones that later privateers tried to emulate. An example of this being Henry Morgan's attack on Porto Bello. Francis Drake had successfully done so, which caused

⁷² Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 47- 48.

⁷³ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 48.

him to believe he could. In terms of benefitting England's economy, Drake accomplished some of the most successful raids in the history of privateering. He sacked various towns throughout his career in the Spanish Caribbean including Panama and Porto Bello.

Captain Drake also circumnavigated the globe during which time he raided Spanish settlements on both sides of the Americas.⁷⁴ His pillages brought in massive amounts of wealth to England. During his circumnavigation from 1577 to 1580,⁷⁵ for example, he overtook one Spanish ship near Lima that contained sugar, jewels, 13 chests of plate, 80 pound weight in gold, silver of 26 tunne, and other items valued at approximately 360,000 pesos.⁷⁶ His circumnavigation also acquired massive amounts of spices from southeast Asia along with other exotic eastern goods. When he returned to England, the Queen's share from this global voyage amounted to hundreds of thousands of pounds, which was more than the monarch's normal income for that entire year, though the amount of her annual income was not specified.⁷⁷ His raids aided England militarily by causing Spain to lose many ships. Spanish towns were damaged, and Drake's raids also disrupted Spanish trade networks to the New World. He was also a key figure in the Anglo-Spanish War against the Spanish Armada helping to lead England to victory over Spain. He delayed the Spanish Armada's attack on England by raiding and sacking

⁷⁴ Whitfield, *Sir Francis Drake*, 38 and 40.

⁷⁵ Hanna, *Pirate Nest*, 44.

⁷⁶ N.M. Penzer, *The World Encompassed and Analogous Contemporary Documents Concerning Sir Francis Drake's Circumnavigation of the World*. (New York: Cooper Square Publishers, Inc., 1969), 46.

⁷⁷ Whitfield, *Sir Francis Drake*, 80.

Cadiz, a city in southern Spain.⁷⁸ This war took place during 1587 and 1588.⁷⁹ This was the location where most of the Spanish ships were assembled that would be used in the attack. Drake destroyed them. He was also one of the admirals who led the English fleet in the actual battle against the Armada after Spain had built more ships.⁸⁰ He was key to England winning the battle because he launched fire ships (ships packed with flammable material and then ignited) at the Spanish which caused their fleet to spiral into chaos. Drake also captured a number of Portuguese ships in his career and played a role in Elizabeth's wars against the Irish by attacking and massacring the families of Irish rebels hiding on Rathlin Island.

He is strong example of how important privateers were to the rise of the British Empire because not only did his raiding of Spanish and Portuguese ships bring England a huge amount of wealth, but the raids also depleted the number of ships in Spain's fleet. Drake was one of the first Englishmen to explore Asia and he acquired many exotic Asian goods for Britain, including cloves and ginger from the spice islands.⁸¹ These actions are why later privateers tried to emulate him; he did so much for England and was a legend for fighting the Spanish. Drake fit the English policy of the time, almost perfectly, because he was their most successful privateer. Elizabeth Tudor's policy was she despised the Spanish and Catholics because they were constantly trying to take her

⁷⁸ Whitfield, *Sir Francis Drake*, 105.

⁷⁹ Whitfield, *Sir Francis Drake*, 112.

⁸⁰ Whitfield, *Sir Francis Drake*, 114.

⁸¹ Whitfield, *Sir Francis Drake*, 76.

throne from her, whether through the Spanish Armada invasion⁸² or trying to replace her with her Scottish cousin. She spent her entire reign fighting the Spanish from Belgium⁸³ to the New World, and Drake was one of her operatives for doing that.

Privateers John Hawkins's and Walter Raleigh's actions added to England's prosperity. Hawkins, who was Drake's second cousin, was one of England's first slave traders to the New World, bringing in large numbers of African slaves to sell to the Spanish colonies that wanted them in 1565.⁸⁴ The Spanish government sometimes tried to block his sale of the slaves, forcing him to fight them.⁸⁵ He carried out many raids on the Spanish in the Caribbean. He also became the English navy's treasurer⁸⁶ and helped design and build a new fleet of ships for use against the Spanish in 1578.⁸⁷ The new ships he designed were smaller and more maneuverable than the Spanish ships and used a new type of canon which fired farther than that of Spanish ships. Walter Raleigh launched many raids in the Caribbean during his career and led military expeditions to Guiana in 1594.⁸⁸ The goal of the expeditions to Guiana was to search for the City of Gold.⁸⁹ Though the City of Gold was not found, the expedition did provide England with

⁸² Whitfield, *Sir Francis Drake*, 112.

⁸³ Whitfield, *Sir Francis Drake*, 80.

⁸⁴ Whitfield, *Sir Francis Drake*, 25.

⁸⁵ Kelsey, *Sir John Hawkins*, 25.

⁸⁶ Kelsey, *Sir John Hawkins*, 161.

⁸⁷ Kelsey, *Sir John Hawkins*, 168.

⁸⁸ Trevelyan, *Sir Walter Raleigh*, 206.

⁸⁹ Trevelyan, *Sir Walter Raleigh*, 206.

information on the region and angered the Spanish because they saw it as encroaching on their territory. Raleigh also led some military expeditions against the Irish⁹⁰ and helped lay the foundations for future British colonies in the Caribbean by founding Britain's first colony in the New World, Roanoke in 1585.⁹¹ These early Tudor privateers were so successful that many privateers of the Caribbean in the 17th century, like Henry Morgan, would try to duplicate or even outdo their exploits. Both of these men were key operatives to fighting Spain as well. These early Tudor privateers were well-connected, being friends with Elizabeth Tudor. As time passed, the later privateers continue to have good connections with governors and other politicians, though they did not have direct contact with the monarch as those of earlier times.

James Lancaster was yet another example of an important privateer from this early period that illustrates the importance of the Elizabethan privateers to British ascent. Lancaster was known for attacking Portuguese ships and trade routes. Spain ruled the Portuguese at the time, so these attacks were a support of English policy by weakening Spain. Lancaster's career took place toward the end of Elizabeth I's reign into James I's reign. He first gained fame as leader of a privateer expedition to the Indian Ocean that went all the way to Ceylon, raiding Portuguese ships along the way and learning much about the route to India.⁹² Though this voyage failed to garner any plunder for the crown because on the way home three ships sunk, the information he acquired on India and

⁹⁰ Trevelyan, *Sir Walter Raleigh*, 41.

⁹¹ Trevelyan, *Sir Walter Raleigh*, 89.

⁹² McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves*, 65.

trade routes in the region was valuable to Britain. In 1594, Lancaster also led one of the most successful raids ever on the Portuguese.⁹³ He had received intelligence that a huge Portuguese carrack that was carrying massive amounts of spices and exotic eastern goods was stuck in Brazil due to significant damage while at sea.⁹⁴ He led a fleet of British and Dutch privateers to attack the colony and get the ship, which they successfully plundered and captured a substantial amount of Brazilian wood as well.⁹⁵ A most important fact about Lancaster and his inclusion here is that he was a founder of the East India Trading Company and led its first expedition to India for the purpose of building its first warehouses in the east and for bringing eastern goods back home to Britain from 1591-1594.⁹⁶ He also funded most of the company's other early expeditions to the east. His impact was significant to the rise of the British Empire because the East India Trading Company made Britain substantial amounts of money and led a lot of their military efforts in India. Basically, the East India Trading Company, which handled most of Britain's trade in the East and ultimately started the British conquest of India, had its origins connected with the privateers.

These early Elizabethan privateers, like Drake, Hawkins, Raleigh, and Lancaster had several reasons for working for the English Crown. First, they believed they were fighting to protect their homeland from Spanish and Catholic aggression; England had

⁹³ Clements R. Markham, ed., *The Voyages of Sir James Lancaster, K^T to the East Indies with Abstracts of Journals of Voyages to the East Indies During the Seventeenth Century, Preserved in the India Office and the Voyage of Captain John Knight (1606), to Seek the North-West Passage.* (New York: Burt Franklin. Lenox Hill, 1970), 35.

⁹⁴ Markham, *Voyages of Sir James Lancaster*, 35.

⁹⁵ Markham, *Voyages of Sir James Lancaster*, 35.

⁹⁶ McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves*, 65.

recently become Protestant and was being targeted by all Catholic nations that surrounded them. Second, most of the privateers of this group were close friends of Queen Elizabeth and seemed to genuinely want to protect her from the Catholics. This is noted in Whitfield's book where he discusses a letter sent by Francis Drake claiming they will defend her and the true faith from the Spanish.⁹⁷ Additionally, these privateers were associates of the Lord High Admiral, Lord Charles Howard of Effingham, a cousin of Queen Elizabeth.⁹⁸ And third, these men wanted to make profits for themselves and rise in their rank. These goals, however, somewhat changed with the privateers and buccaneers that followed.

The privateers and buccaneers of the Caribbean played a major role in the rise and continuance of British power in the 17th century. Militarily, they defended the British colonies in the Caribbean against Spanish attack. These privateers also destroyed many of the Spanish ships and settlements which weakened the Spanish military's capability in the New World and financially harmed the Spanish by disrupting Spanish trade routes. Economically, they raided Spanish ships and settlements in the Caribbean and surrounding mainland, capturing large amounts of plunder that often ended up in the British Caribbean colonies. Privateers made money for themselves and colonies by smuggling slaves to the New World. In 1610, 1,540 slaves were brought to Jamaica.⁹⁹ A second example was in 1617 when privateer John Powell captured a Portuguese slave

⁹⁷ Whitfield, *Sir Francis Drake*, 114.

⁹⁸ Whitfield, *Sir Francis Drake*, 114.

⁹⁹ McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves*, 17.

ship and brought the slaves to Bermuda for first time, and by 1620, Bermuda had over 100 slaves, all delivered by privateers and pirates.¹⁰⁰ This allowed Bermuda to begin producing sugar.¹⁰¹

The 17th century period of privateering started with Oliver Cromwell, when he first captured Jamaica from the Spanish. Cromwell had initially assembled the invasion fleet for the purpose of trying to take Cuba. The problem was it was poorly equipped and with lesser-quality soldiers, some of whom were troublemakers. Military leaders back home decided to use lesser-quality soldiers rather than risk their more reliable, quality and dedicated soldiers on a long, dangerous voyage. As a result, they failed to take Cuba which was heavily fortified and had a sizable number of troops protecting it. The fleet subsequently stormed Jamaica. This action was more feasible because the island had only a few Spanish towns and almost no defenses. Cromwell had intended to use the island as a British military base and hoped to use it to capture more islands from the Spanish. During the first six years, however, the roughly 12,000 Englishmen that had settled on the island began to leave.¹⁰² By 1661, only about 3,470 remained on the island.¹⁰³ As a result, to keep their island under British control, the English allowed privateers and buccaneers to settle there, basically turning the island into a privateering base in exchange for keeping it safe from Spanish invasion. Essentially, mercenaries were fighting to keep the island under British control. It is believed that at least twelve

¹⁰⁰ McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves*, 18.

¹⁰¹ McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves*, 18.

¹⁰² Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 102.

¹⁰³ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 102.

privateer ships and over 700 privateers were protecting Jamaica instead of the British navy.¹⁰⁴ Early on, starting in 1657 through the 1660s, Spain sent some expeditions to retake the island.¹⁰⁵ They considered the entire area in the New World to be theirs, thanks to the fact that the Pope granted them all land in the New World, except for Brazil, in the Treaty of Tordesillas. Spain considered it granted to them by god and were not going to tolerate the protestant English taking an island from them even if they were not settling it much. The privateers fended off these invasion attempts and also fought troublemakers living on the island. A small Spanish resistance lived on the island as well as a maroon (escaped black slaves) resistance. When the Spanish fled the island, they released their African slaves and they formed a community in the mountains who gave the British trouble with guerilla attacks. This was the start of what could be seen as the golden age of Caribbean privateering, that is, when Henry Morgan and the other Caribbean privateers were successful. Without Jamaica, though, this prosperous golden age for English and British privateers probably would not have emerged. Jamaica was strategically very important to the privateers because, for one, it was almost in the dead center of the Caribbean making it a good launch point for raids. Another reason is that it had a number of bays available for use as ports along with terrain that was suitable for resisting attacks. Jamaica also needed people to defend it, so the British were willing to hire the privateers for that purpose. Cromwell's policy to use privateers was a way to keep his new colony, Jamaica, from being retaken by the Spanish and also to weaken Spain in the area.

¹⁰⁴ McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves*, 20.

¹⁰⁵ Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean*, 128-29.

Alexandre Olivier Exquemelin, a former privateer who wrote about privateering, noted that one of the first privateers of this period to make a name for himself and start the wave of privateering was a man from Normandy named Pierre La Grand, referred to as Peter the Great.¹⁰⁶ He became famous for a raid he committed in which he managed to capture a Spanish vice-admiral off the coast of Hispaniola with only one boat.¹⁰⁷ This impressive feat both hurt and embarrassed the Spanish. Once word of this feat spread around England, the idea of becoming a privateer to make money spread, leading to this era of privateering.

The most infamous privateer from this period, the 17th century, operating from the 1660s through the 1680s was Henry Morgan. He was responsible for some of the most successful raids on the Spanish to the benefit of the British. Originally from Wales, Morgan began his privateering career in the 1650s when he traveled from England to Jamaica as a young man trying to make a name for himself as a crew member on a privateer ship. A former privateer named Exquemelin, who sometimes served with Morgan, detailed Morgan's exploits in a book he wrote about privateers later in his life.¹⁰⁸ His writings are invaluable for learning about privateers of that time because he was one of the few privateers that actually wrote a sizable amount about privateers and

¹⁰⁶ Alexander Oliver Exquemelin. *Bucaniers of America, or, A true account of the most remarkable assaults committed of late years upon the coasts of the West-Indies by the bucaniers of Jamaica and Torguga, both English and French wherein are contained more especially the unparallel'd exploits of Sire Henry Morgan, our English Jamaican hero who sack'd Puerto Velo, burnt Panama, & c./written originally in Dutch by John Exquemelin; and thence translated into Spanish by Alonzo de Bonne-Maison; now faithfully rendered into English.* (London: Printed for William Crooke, 1684), 80.

¹⁰⁷ Exquemelin, *Bucaniers of America*, 82.

¹⁰⁸ Exquemelin, *Bucaniers of America*.

their exploits, and he served with Henry Morgan and a number of other well-known privateers. However, his writings need to be read carefully as he often interjected his coverage with his personal bias. Exquemelin specifically disliked Morgan and was known to twist facts about him and portray him as being more violent than other privateers.¹⁰⁹ He provides details about Henry Morgan's attack on Porto Bello, describing the slaughter of the Spanish troops and plunder.¹¹⁰ This attack was a military success because a lot of the Spanish troops were killed. Exquemelin noted, for example, “Hereupon, having shut up all the soldiers and officers, as prisoners, into one room, they instantly set fire unto the powder (whereof they found great quantity) and blew up the whole castle into the air, along with all the Spaniards that were within.”¹¹¹ Morgan plundered the Spaniards’ money so there was less money for Spain to pay its soldiers. Although Exquemelin does not quantify specific amounts of the loot taken, he makes it clear that the take was substantial. He also describes Morgan's attack on El Puerto del Principe along with how Morgan locked the civilians in a church and let them starve while they ransacked the town.¹¹² This is an example of a military impact because they terrorized the Spanish, killed Spanish soldiers, and destroyed a town along with a major disruption of trade and weakening of Spanish control of Native Americans in the area. El Puerto del Principe was one of the cities Spain used in its silver mining operations, meaning the destruction of the town disrupted important Spanish trade. All this,

¹⁰⁹ Exquemelin, *Bucaniers of America*, 98.

¹¹⁰ Exquemelin, *Bucaniers of America*, 94.

¹¹¹ Exquemelin, *Bucaniers of America*, 94.

¹¹² Exquemelin, *Bucaniers of America*, 84.

particularly the destruction of an entire town and important trade can cause long-term effects.¹¹³

In another primary source from 1683 that concerned the present state of Jamaica, Morgan's attack on Panama is detailed. Morgan and his men landed near Panama in 1670 and marched for three days encountering various small groups of Spanish soldiers whom they killed.¹¹⁴ Eventually, when they arrived at Panama, they had to storm some small forts outside the city and break through barricades that had been set up around the city.¹¹⁵ They garnered plunder worth 30,000 livres (coins).¹¹⁶ Prisoners were also taken from the city and they were later ransomed or sold, bringing in yet more money that was then shared with the throne. Morgan had many exploits that benefitted the British Empire.

One of the first privateer raids authorized by the British governor of Jamaica, that ultimately lead to Morgan's raids was commanded by a man named Myngs, and Morgan served in this raid. Using the excuse that Santiago de Cuba was being used as launch point to attack Jamaica, Myngs selected the port as his target as that port had been a major source of irritation to the English on Jamaica and the main base of Spanish operations aimed at recapturing Jamaica for Spanish rule.¹¹⁷ Myngs's fleet was ultimately successful and sacked the city by blowing up the walls; it would take years for the city to

¹¹³ Exquemelin, *Bucaniers of America*, 84.

¹¹⁴ Anon., *The present state of Jamaica with the life of the great Columbus the first discoverer: to which is added an exact account of Sir Hen. Morgan's voyage to, and famous siege and taking of Panama from the Spaniards*. (London: Fr. Clark for Thomas Malthus, 1683), 86-87.

¹¹⁵ Anon., *Present State of Jamaica*, 91.

¹¹⁶ Anon., *Present State of Jamaica*, 94.

¹¹⁷ Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean*, 136.

rebuild.¹¹⁸ This reduced the threat on Jamaica by the Spanish navy. This incident is a good example of the military impact of privateers and showed how important they were to the defense of Britain's colonies. Myngs was one of the major influences on Henry Morgan's early raids because Morgan learned about privateering while a member of Myngs fleet.

Morgan was able to get command of a ship of his own because his uncle was a British officer. The governor of Jamaica often chose the location of more significant raids, while sometimes privateers conducted smaller raids with less British oversight. One of Morgan's first attacks was a raid on El Puerto del Principe in 1668.¹¹⁹ He and his men stormed the city at nightfall, taking it by force and making the citizens pay a substantial ransom to avoid them being taken as prisoners to Jamaica and having their city burned, the raid acquired at least 50,000 pesos.¹²⁰ Morgan and the other privateers from Jamaica received their letters of marque and orders from the governor of Jamaica. Next, Morgan decided to target the city of Porto Bello, the terminus of the Spanish treasure fleet.¹²¹ Porto Bello was where silver taken from the mines was stored until it was picked up by the treasure fleet to be taken to Spain. For this attack, his fleet consisted of at least 12 ships with close to 500 men.¹²² Porto Bello was protected by multiple forts with cannons, so rather than attacking head on, Morgan snuck up on the Spanish using

¹¹⁸ Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean*, 137.

¹¹⁹ Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean*, 165.

¹²⁰ Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean*, 167-168.

¹²¹ Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean*, 168.

¹²² Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean*, 169.

small canoes they took during a stop in Cuba.¹²³ After capturing the town and slaughtering many citizens, Morgan convinced the Spanish governor to pay him a substantial amount to leave. In total, mule trains delivered 27 bars of silver worth 43,000 pesos, silver plate worth 13,000 pesos, gold coin worth 4,000 pesos, and 40,000 pesos worth of silver coin.¹²⁴ They were also able to secure a substantial amount of other goods from homes throughout the town. When all was said and done, the total amount of booty was 250,000 pieces of eight,¹²⁵ which made this one of the largest raids in the history of privateers. Since this expedition was authorized by the governor of Jamaica a portion of the loot went to the government. This is a great example of privateers having an economic impact because these raids were a huge success and resulted in sizable funds ending up in Jamaica and other British colonies. More information about the previously discussed attack on Porto Bello is provided by historian Mark Hanna. He wrote that in 1668, the governor of Jamaica, Modyford, sent Henry Morgan with a fleet to attack Porto Bello.¹²⁶ Modyford also instructed Morgan to torture the Spanish to admit they were planning an attack on Jamaica.¹²⁷ Spain was not actually planning an attack, but Modyford wanted Morgan to coerce a confession out of the Spanish so they had an excuse for the attack on Porto Bello. This confession would justify the privateers continuing their raiding at a time when the British government was becoming annoyed

¹²³ Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean*, 173.

¹²⁴ Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean*, 181.

¹²⁵ Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean*, 182.

¹²⁶ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 112.

¹²⁷ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 112-113.

with their attacks because some politicians back home in England were trying to negotiate peace with the Spanish. This shows privateers still needed imperial approval for their actions even though they worked more for local governors and somewhat had their own agendas. The raid ultimately acquired 75,000 pounds worth of plunder, which was more than seven times the annual value of Jamaica's sugar exports at the time.¹²⁸ Some money went to the sailors, but much went into Jamaica's economy. The majority of the sailors made 60 pounds, which was two-to-three times the annual plantation wage.¹²⁹ The comparison to sugar is useful for economic impact because it compares income from privateering to another source of income to the British government, sugar. At the time, Barbados was England's main sugar producer. Jamaica produced some sugar, but not at the level of Barbados.

The next major raid by Morgan was the on the settlement of Maracaibo, another large Spanish port. In this case, the Spanish caught wind of his attack and prepared a defense, raising a militia and arming a small force to defend the city. Ultimately, Morgan managed to overpower the militia and overtake the city. Morgan was unable to collect much of a ransom because most people had already fled into the jungle before he could capture them. He did still manage to capture a few important citizens from which he was able to collect 5,000 pesos ransom.¹³⁰ He and his men also managed to take as much as 50,000 pesos worth of silver, jewelry, silks, and other commodities.¹³¹ When exiting the

¹²⁸ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 113.

¹²⁹ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 113.

¹³⁰ Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean*, 187-188.

¹³¹ Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean*, 188.

area, they encountered three heavily-armed Spanish warships. Privateer ships, like Morgan's, were small and agile but lacked large numbers of cannons for fighting, so they could not do much against warships. The three Spanish ships included one that had 38 cannons, one with 26 cannons, and another with 14 cannons.¹³² In a smart move, Morgan used some of his ships as fire ships against the Spanish, setting them on fire and launching them at the Spanish warships. As a result, the largest of the 3 Spanish ships, the *Magdalena*, burned and sank.¹³³ The second largest, the *San Luis*, escaped, and the third, the *Marquesa*, was captured by Morgan.¹³⁴ Morgan and his men managed to recover 20,000 pesos worth of coin and bullion from the sunken *Magdalena* and made the *Marquesa* his own new flagship because of its size and firepower.¹³⁵

One of the last raids Morgan led was in 1670. The British and Spanish were finalizing a peace treaty and Morgan and his privateers were ordered to stop their attacks.¹³⁶ Morgan and his fleet were already on their way to attack Panama, so Morgan ignored the order and claimed Jamaica was still under threat as an excuse for the attack. He ended up ransacking Panama and then burning it to the ground. The raid was not as substantial an acquisition of plunder because the Spanish knew Morgan was coming and hid much of the wealth in the jungle. Including the ransacking of Panama, over the span of six years, Morgan either led or participated in the raiding of most major Spanish

¹³² Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean*, 189.

¹³³ Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean*, 193.

¹³⁴ Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean*, 194.

¹³⁵ Latimer, *Buccaneers of the Caribbean*, 194-195.

¹³⁶ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 113.

settlements in the Caribbean. The settlements included Santa Marta de la Victoria, Trujillo, Riohacha, Campeche, Santa Catalina, Grenada, Sancti Spiritus, Puerto Principe in Cuba, Porto Bello in northern Panama, Gibraltar in Venezuela, Maracaibo, the fort of Chagres, and the islands of Taboga and Taboguilla.¹³⁷ These many raids brought wealth back into the colonies and severely weakened the Spanish in the New World. The destruction of Panama was militarily important because it was one of Spain's main bases in the New World.

The privateers continued raiding for some time, but eventually the British government attempted to shut it down when the British government signed the Treaty of Madrid with Spain.¹³⁸ After undertaking that last raid on Panama, the new governor of Jamaica, Thomas Lurch, charged Morgan with launching an illegal raid. Morgan fled Jamaica and made his way to England with letters from British military officers who praised him and considered him a loyal servant to Britain.¹³⁹ He managed to get an audience with King Charles II and charmed him; the King knighted him and appointed him the new Lieutenant Governor of Jamaica in 1674.¹⁴⁰ This appointment, besides enraging Thomas Lynch, allowed some of the privateering activities of Jamaica to continue because Morgan looked the other way on the raiding and supported privateering in his position. As a result, plunder continued to make its way to the island from Spanish territories. Morgan's efforts allowed privateering to survive on Jamaica, but it became

¹³⁷ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 113-114.

¹³⁸ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 115-116.

¹³⁹ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 122-123.

¹⁴⁰ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 123.

more difficult, so some privateers moved their operations to Saint-Domingue. Those privateers who moved their operations to Saint-Domingue sailed under the French banner as a way to avoid getting into trouble with Britain for their raids, however, they still sold most of their plunder in Jamaica where it was more profitable than selling it in Tortuga.¹⁴¹ This shows how adaptable privateers were changes in political policy. Morgan, in his position as Lieutenant Governor, tried to block the increase in Jamaica's sugar production so there would be less competition to the privateers who made the island its income. Sugar production hurt privateering because it gave the pro-Catholic English monarch an excuse to try to get rid of the privateers. The British monarch at the time was trying to accelerate sugar production in Jamaica as a new source of revenue to counter that received through privateering. Monarchs in the 1680s started to accelerate the number of slaves sent to Jamaica to boost sugar production and push the privateers out.¹⁴²

One last incident from around this time was that Exquemelin was writing his book. Morgan hated the first version because it made him look like a dishonorable outlaw. He sued Exquemelin with the help of British government officials forcing him to rewrite parts of his book.¹⁴³ Morgan was able to accomplish this because he was a former lieutenant governor of Jamaica with many connections and was wealthy from sugar plantations he purchased while in his government post which afforded him status.

¹⁴¹ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 137.

¹⁴² Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 141.

¹⁴³ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 138-139.

Morgan was obsessed with making himself appear to be a gentleman and used his power to stop Exquemelin from making him look bad.

Bartholomew Sharp was another important privateer from the 17th century. The expedition he led supported the English substantially. Captains Sharp, Sawkins, and Coxon rendezvoused at Boca del Toro and then sailed a large fleet toward the province of Varien in 1680.¹⁴⁴ The English government commissioned this expedition with the overall goal of raiding and destroying Panama.¹⁴⁵ Captain Sharp's journal, which was part of William Hacke's collection (Hacke published a collection of writings by four privateers), says he landed near Panama with 330 men to sack the town of Santa Maria which was where gold was often stored before being transported to Panama.¹⁴⁶ While traveling on land to Santa Maria they encountered a Native American tribe (not identified) and made an alliance with its emperor to get aid in attacking the Spanish.¹⁴⁷ The Indian ruler provided them with 150 warriors and canoes.¹⁴⁸ While the privateers and their native allies were canoeing down the river toward Santa Maria they encountered and boarded a Spanish bark ship, deciding to use it for their attack on the city since it could carry more troops than the canoes.¹⁴⁹ When they finally reached Santa Maria, Spanish

¹⁴⁴ Basil Ringrose, *Bucaniers of America the second volume: containing the dangerous voyage and bold attempts of Captain Bartholomew Sharp, and others, performed upon the coasts of the South Sea, for the space of two years, &c.: from the original journal of the said voyage / written by...Basil Ringrose, Gent., who was all along present at those transactions.* (London: Printed for William Crooke, 1685), 1.

¹⁴⁵ Ringrose, *Bucaniers of America*, 2-3.

¹⁴⁶ William Hacke, *A Collection of original voyages...illustrated with several maps and draughts/published by Capt. William Hacke.* (London: Printed for James Knapton, 1699), 1.

¹⁴⁷ Hacke, *Collection of original voyages*, 2.

¹⁴⁸ Hacke, *Collection of original voyages*, 3.

¹⁴⁹ Hacke, *Collection of original voyages*, 10.

guards climbed on top of the city's walls and began firing on them, and the privateer vanguards charged, scaled the walls, and attacked the Spanish guards killing about 20 Spanish soldiers.¹⁵⁰ Once they took the town, Sharp and the other privateers discovered that the gold had been sent to Panama, so they set out for Panama. Something interesting that came from the attack on Santa Maria was they released the daughter of a local Native American chief who was being held captive and terrorized.¹⁵¹ This action secured aid from the natives during the privateers' attack on Panama. These natives would continue to be allies of the English and later, British privateers against the Spanish for many years because of her release.¹⁵² These natives helped in many attacks on Spanish settlements.

After further travel toward Panama, they came across and boarded two large Spanish vessels. One provided a solid haul as it was filled with valuable materials including pitch, tallow, indigo, and cotton.¹⁵³ They then boarded an Spanish bark (small ship), commanded by a former Spanish governor whom they were able to ransom for money.¹⁵⁴ In November 1680, the privateers launched an attack on the city of La Serena. They stormed it and acquired decent plunder, including wine and copper as well as taking most of the city's inhabitants captive.¹⁵⁵ While attempting to negotiate a ransom with the local governor for 100,000 pieces of eight, the governor tried to sneak an attack on the

¹⁵⁰ Ringrose, *Bucaniers of America*, 10-11.

¹⁵¹ Ringrose, *Bucaniers of America*, 12.

¹⁵² Ringrose, *Bucaniers of America*, 12.

¹⁵³ Hacke, *Collection of original voyages*, 35.

¹⁵⁴ Hacke, *Collection of original voyages*, 39.

¹⁵⁵ Hacke, *Collection of original voyages*, 43.

privateers.¹⁵⁶ This did not go well for the city. The privateers torched the city and absconded with its valuables. They attempted a raid on a Spanish colony with one of their ships and about 280 men on canoes, but they ran into three Spanish ships from Panama and a fight ensued.¹⁵⁷ Sharp was victorious and sunk the ships. He was able to defeat them because they were small Spanish ships and Sharp had more ships under his command. The privateers were often able to win these battles because they took the Spanish by surprise.

When finally arriving at Panama, Sharp and his fleet were confronted by five warships and three barks.¹⁵⁸ A fight ensued with the privateers taking the upper hand by surrounding the Spanish ships with their smaller boats. They successfully blockaded Panama and seized every ship that tried to dock with the goal of ultimately taking the city and sacking it for England. Panama was one of the biggest threats to Britain's colonies in the New World since it was a main base for the Spanish fleet. Some of the first seized were barks carrying fowl, and after eight days they captured a ship from Truxillo that carried 2,000 jars of wine, 50 jars of gun powder, and 50,000 pieces of eight meant for paying the soldiers of Panama.¹⁵⁹ Other ships were taken including one carrying flour and others carrying loot. After that, they had a mutiny on some of their boats which forced them to leave the area. The mutiny occurred because some of the privateers were unhappy with the long blockade and their inability to take the city. Sharp and his men

¹⁵⁶ Hacke, *Collection of original voyages*, 43.

¹⁵⁷ Ayres, *Adventures of Capt. Barth. Sharp*, 13.

¹⁵⁸ Ringrose, *Bucaniers of America*, 27.

¹⁵⁹ Ringrose, *Bucaniers of America*, 37.

were ultimately unable to take Panama and left the city, but they had still scored the pieces of eight haul and other valuables for England.

For a while, this group of privateers raided native settlements in South America as they sailed south of Panama. Eventually, along the coast of South America, they encountered a Man-O-War ship, boarded and plundered the vessel, and took its captain, Don Thomas D'Algodony, captive for ransom.¹⁶⁰ Next, they took a Spanish town by surprise by going through a swamp.¹⁶¹ Even though they took the town by surprise, the locals had managed to hide their riches in the jungle. The privateers went ahead and plundered foods from the town including hogs, fowl, mutton, and wine.¹⁶² The governor of the region offered Sharp 95,000 pieces of eight to leave and relinquish the town.¹⁶³ However, the ransom offer was a ploy meant to distract the privateers while the Spanish gathered forces from the hills including native fighters. Ultimately, Sharp and his men left with some loot rather than getting bogged down by fighting the Spanish. While near Puerto de Tucames, they captured the same ship that had previously been taken from Truxillo. This time around it had 21,000 pieces of eight and 15,000 more in plate aboard.¹⁶⁴ Additionally, Sharp took another nearby vessel which included some coin and

¹⁶⁰ Ayres, *Adventures of Capt. Barth. Sharp*, 23-24.

¹⁶¹ Ayres, *Adventures of Capt. Barth. Sharp*, 41.

¹⁶² Ayres, *Adventures of Capt. Barth. Sharp*, 41.

¹⁶³ Ayres, *Adventures of Capt. Barth. Sharp*, 43.

¹⁶⁴ Ringrose, *Bucaniers of America*, 158.

plate and 620 jars of wine and brandy.¹⁶⁵ Sharp eventually headed home to England following a few smaller raids.

Captain Sharp's exploits had serious military and economic impacts on England and eventually the British Empire. His many raids accumulated much wealth, some of which made it back to the English colonies. Of equal importance is that these raids weakened Spain's economy. Valuables were stolen, and cities, trade routes, and infrastructure were damaged or destroyed. England destroyed a number of Spanish forts, killing the soldiers and destroying a large number of Spanish ships that could have been used for attacking English colonies. Sharp's expedition near Panama also stirred up conflict between the Native Americans and the Spanish, which was also helpful to England. The privateers' actions instilled fear within the Spanish colonies making them less likely to attack British colonies. When Spain was weakened, the English Empire became stronger. Some distinction between Sharp and Morgan was that Sharp operated more in South America and also traveled over land more in order to attack settlements. Another major distinction between the two was Sharp's alliance with the natives. His privateers worked more often with Native Americans.

Morgan and Sharp were not the only privateers important to Britain and its stake in the Caribbean. An example is Captain Van Horn, a privateer captain from Jamaica. Though a Dutchman from the Netherlands, he worked for the British employing some English crew members.¹⁶⁶ His flagship had 50 guns; 6 of his other ships had 26 guns and

¹⁶⁵ Ringrose, *Bucaniers of America*, 163.

¹⁶⁶ Ayres, *Adventures of Capt. Barth. Sharp*, 115.

one had 40.¹⁶⁷ This is important because this was one of the largest privateer vessels identified in the sources, and this vessel and his other ships fire power helped in his successful raid on Vera Cruz. He attacked the town of Vera Cruz by sneaking into the town using canoes on a river. Most guards were killed, and homes plundered. An abundance of jewels, plate and about 350 bags of cochenelle (a valuable red dye) each weighing 150 or 200 pounds was seized.¹⁶⁸ Some townspeople were ransomed, and when divided, each privateer received 800 pieces of eight. They sold some of the plunder in Jamaica. Van Horn's raid became famous for all the plunder taken and for badly damaging Vera Cruz, a major Spanish stronghold in the New World.

Captain Cowley was yet another British privateer in the Caribbean. He was part of a British privateer voyage that circumnavigated the globe, raiding Spanish settlements in the New World along the way.¹⁶⁹ In 1683, the first ship he encountered was off the coast of Guinea. It was a large Dutch East India Company ship which they attempted to board but were driven back because it had more cannons. Shortly after the failed raid, they came across and boarded a Spanish ship and decided to use that ship from then on since it had more cannons than their own ship. The next ship encountered was near Arica Bay.¹⁷⁰ They had traveled to that area because it is where the Spanish plate fleet often docked. They boarded only because they needed to stop it from reporting their location, but it only contained some timber. Cowley's group, nearing the Galapagos in 1684, plundered

¹⁶⁷ Ayres, *Adventures of Capt. Barth. Sharp*, 115-116.

¹⁶⁸ Ayres, *Adventures of Capt. Barth. Sharp*, 118.

¹⁶⁹ Hacke, *Collection of original voyages*, 2-3.

¹⁷⁰ Hacke, *Collection of original voyages*, 8.

two islands acquiring a sizable number of cattle along with some gold and silver.¹⁷¹ This was the portion of Cowley's voyage in the Caribbean in the New World. Though not as grand in take than that of other privateers, Van Horn's and Cowley's had a similar positive effect, plunder was taken for the British and damage was inflicted on Spanish ships and settlements. In terms of why non-British privateers worked for Britain, it mostly has to do with the fact that Britain was the country handing out the most letters of marque at the time and was more than happy to use non-British crews to increase the size of its privateering fleets. The proximity between Jamaica and Tortuga was also a factor. These locations were the primary British and French privateer bases and being close in proximity to each other meant the two groups of privateers often intermingled. Sailors would move between the British and French ships depending on where the jobs and contracts were at any given time.

Some French privateers also worked for and benefitted the English. The exploits of Francis L'Ollonias are well-known in history. L'Ollonias was taken to the Caribbean as a young man to be a servant or slave.¹⁷² He escaped and later became an infamous privateer. His first raid was on Cayos, a Spanish settlement in the Caribbean, at around the same time as Morgan's raids. L'Ollonias and his crew used canoes for stealth to attack Cayos and plunder it. The Native Americans helped the privateers and provided canoes to them because they wanted to hurt the Spanish. After this raid, he was able to assemble a small fleet at Tortuga to attack the Spanish. L'Ollonias then captured a large

¹⁷¹ Hacke, *Collection of original voyages*, 12.

¹⁷² Exquemelin, *Bucaniers of America*, 1.

Spanish gunship equipped with 16 cannons.¹⁷³ The prize on board included 120,000 weight of cacao, 40,000 pieces of eight, and jewels with a value of 10,000 pieces of eight.¹⁷⁴ On their way to sell the loot, they came across another Spanish ship carrying military provisions and money that was heading to a fort and raided that ship as well. In this case, the plunder included 7,000 weight of gun powder, numerous muskets, and 12,000 pieces of eight.¹⁷⁵ L'Ollonias' later raided Maracabo, netting approximately 20,000 pieces of eight¹⁷⁶ as well as a large amount of other goods. The plunder ended up in both Jamaica and Tortuga. He was finally killed when he attempted a raid on Nicaragua. His raids damaged the Spanish navy and various settlements and provided valuable cargo to the British.

Another example of French privateers who benefited the British Empire was the expedition sent to attack Cartagena, a Spanish colony. The expedition began in 1697, sent by the French government which was allied with England at the time.¹⁷⁷ This sizable expedition with numerous commanders was launched from Toulon in southern France.¹⁷⁸ The French were allies of the British at the time as both were fighting Spain in the New World to gain territory. This fleet that was sent to attack Cartagena included both French

¹⁷³ Exquemelin, *Bucaniers of America*, 10.

¹⁷⁴ Exquemelin, *Bucaniers of America*, 10.

¹⁷⁵ Exquemelin, *Bucaniers of America*, 11.

¹⁷⁶ Exquemelin, *Bucaniers of America*, 20.

¹⁷⁷ Pointis, Jean-Bernard-Louis Desjean, baron de. *An account of the taking of Carthagena by the French in the year 1697 containing all the particulars of that expedition, from their first setting out to their return into Brest / by Monsieur de Pointis, commander in chief; illustrated with a large copper plate describing the situation of Carthagena and parts adjacent.* (London: Printed for Sam. Buckley, 1698), 1.

¹⁷⁸ Pointis, *Taking of Carthagena*, 2.

military and privateers. The privateers, some of whom were British, mustered 7 frigates with 650 privateers on board while the French brought at least as many ships, though they were larger warships with more cannons and carried over 1,000 men.¹⁷⁹ An attack on Cartagena would benefit the British because it was where many Spanish ships were docked that were used to attack British colonies. They struck the city at night to try to take it by surprise. The French leadership had some of the heaviest, most powerful warships and bombard the city as a distraction while they sent privateers on shore to surround the city.¹⁸⁰ After surrounding the city, the fleet besieged it. During the lengthy siege, the Spanish sent a number of relief ships carrying supplies to the city, but the ships were either taken or destroyed. Remember, at this point, the British and French both despised the Spanish. The fleet plundered a substantial amount of silver from Cartagena amounting to over of 40,000 crowns.¹⁸¹ Other plunder was taken, many Spanish soldiers were killed, and many of their ships were destroyed. As a last act, Cartagena was burnt to the ground.

Privateer Raveneau de Lussan also deserves discussion for his contributions. This Frenchman joined a group of free-booters who traveled to the New World. Free-booters were privateers or pirates who tended to be more wild and violent than most other privateers and pirates. Almost immediately after arriving in the New World, they began targeting the Spanish. These free-booters were French who worked with the British. Their

¹⁷⁹ Pointis, *Taking of Carthage*, 26.

¹⁸⁰ Pointis, *Taking of Carthage*, 33-34.

¹⁸¹ Pointis, *Taking of Carthage*, 107.

first raids were spent seizing pirogues which were small Spanish transport ships; one example of this was when they captured at least seven pirogues loaded with corn.¹⁸² The freebooters eventually crossed the continent through Panama to get to the South Sea. They were aided during the crossing by Native American tribes who disliked the Spanish.¹⁸³ Their plan after the crossing was to attack South American and Panamanian Spanish settlements. After crossing to the sea, Lussan and his group of free-booters joined a large privateer fleet that was assembling and included both British and French privateers. The largest ship of the fleet was a frigate with 36 cannons. They departed at night with twenty-two canoes carrying 500 men with the goal of taking La Septa, a small town near Panama.¹⁸⁴ Lussan noted that on the way to La Septa, the privateers encountered and captured two pirogues along with acquiring intelligence about La Septa from the captives they took.¹⁸⁵ They captured La Septa and plundered supplies before leaving for Panama. Their attack on Panama was resisted by a Spanish fleet in the area and brutal fighting ensued between the two groups. The Spanish started launching fire ships in hopes of driving away the privateers, but the privateers countered it by using the captured pirogues as a barrier to block the fire ships.¹⁸⁶ The privateers managed to

¹⁸² Raveneau de Lussan, Sieur. *A journal of the voyage made into the South Sea, by the bucaniers or freebooters of America, from the year 1684 to 1689 written by the Sieur Raveneau de Lussan; to which is added, The voyage of the Sieur de Montauban, captain of the free-booters on the coast of Guiney, in the year 1695.* (London: Printed for Thomas Newborough, John Nicholson, and Benjamin Tooke, 1698), 13.

¹⁸³ Lussan, *Journal of the voyage*, 16.

¹⁸⁴ Lussan, *Journal of the voyage*, 29.

¹⁸⁵ Lussan, *Journal of the voyage*, 29-30.

¹⁸⁶ Lussan, *Journal of the voyage*, 33.

capture several barks which were bringing supplies for Panama.¹⁸⁷ Though unable to breach Panama, Lussan and the fleet continued to raid small ports and other settlements near Panama. In one instance they fought and defeated three Spanish ships that tried to ambush them.¹⁸⁸ The leader of Panama offered to release some captured privateers and provide medicine for a disease that had been afflicting some of the privateers in exchange for them leaving the area.¹⁸⁹ The bishop of Panama also sent a letter using religion to stop further attacks, explaining that Christians should not attack other Christians.¹⁹⁰ The privateers' responses were to mock the letter writers. An attack did ensue at a key city named Queaquilla where they captured loot - 7 large cannons, guns, gunpowder, cacao, over 700 prisoners, pearls, precious stones including two large emeralds, large amounts of silver plate, 70,000 pieces of eight.¹⁹¹ They negotiated with the governor for a ransom for the people, town, and fort worth one million pieces of eight in gold and 400 sacks of corn.¹⁹² This was a blow to the Spanish because of the large amount of plunder and the huge ransom. This privateer raid was one of the most successful. Not only was the loot over one million pieces of eight, but the Spanish also lost many ships. While the Spanish were able to replenish their ships, it did take time to do so which caused a disruption in trade and military capability.

¹⁸⁷ Lussan, *Journal of the voyage*, 44.

¹⁸⁸ Lussan, *Journal of the voyage*, 86-87.

¹⁸⁹ Lussan, *Journal of the voyage*, 89.

¹⁹⁰ Lussan, *Journal of the voyage*, 91.

¹⁹¹ Lussan, *Journal of the voyage*, 124.

¹⁹² Lussan, *Journal of the voyage*, 124.

Irishman George Cusack was a captain who played a role in helping the rise of British power in the Caribbean. He jumped around from being a privateer or a pirate, but regardless, most of his exploits were raiding enemies or rivals of England. Early in his career he served as a soldier in Flanders. After leaving Flanders, Cusack was a troublemaker who did not like listening to orders and who served on a number of privateering British vessels. He first served a Captain North on a privateer voyage to Guinea in the early 1660s.¹⁹³ He also served on a voyage to Barbados and on other privateer vessels.¹⁹⁴ He was locked up briefly for mutiny at one point. In 1668, he ended up on the *Hopewell of Tangier*, a large vessel of 250 tons with 24 cannon that was sailing to Virginia from Cadiz.¹⁹⁵ He led a mutiny and made the ship his own. He captured other vessels with his new ship including a ship from Surinam and a Portuguese ship. He and his crew were eventually locked up. But they escaped and decided to target a ship. In 1669, they joined a large vessel from Lisbon called the *Saint Joseph*, which carried Campache wood, tobacco, cacao, other goods, and 125,000 pieces of eight.¹⁹⁶ They took the ship and sold the cargo. He made a name for himself targeting the Portuguese who, along with Spanish, were one of Britain's main rivals.

¹⁹³ Roger L'Estrange. *The Grand Pyrate: Or, the Life and Death of Capt. George Cusack The great Sea-Robber. With an accompt of all his notorious Robberies both at Sea and Land. Together with his trial, condemnation, and execution. Taken by an Impartial Hand.* Licensed Nov. 19, 1675. Roger L'Estrange. (London: Printed for Jonathan Edwin at the Sign of Three Roses in Ludgate-Street. 1676), 4.

¹⁹⁴ L'Estrange, *Grand Pyrate*, 4.

¹⁹⁵ L'Estrange, *Grand Pyrate*, 5.

¹⁹⁶ L'Estrange, *Grand Pyrate*, 15.

Another important privateer from this period was William Dampier, an interesting figure who benefited the British many times in many ways. Known for circumnavigating the globe three times as part of privateering expeditions he had one of the most extensive careers at sea and as a privateer. Prior to his first circumnavigation he served as a sailor to Newfoundland and Bantam where he learned various skills as an apprentice.¹⁹⁷ He later served in the Second Dutch War, worked on plantations, and chopped wood as a logger in Campeachy.¹⁹⁸ Working as a sailor along with other skills he acquired led to his first circumnavigation when he became a privateer. The educated Dampier wrote extensively about his first circumnavigation and his detailed writings helped make him famous.¹⁹⁹ His writings also proved to be beneficial to the British by providing large amounts of intelligence on various sea routes and different peoples he encountered, including tribes who were friendly to the British, during his travels. This voyage began when Dampier joined a ship headed to Jamaica which became part of Sharp's expedition.²⁰⁰ The privateers first attacked Porto Bello and captured a solid amount of plunder, though not as much as they had hoped because Morgan sacked the city eleven years prior.²⁰¹ After Porto Bello, they crossed Panama and attacked Santa Maria. During a later raid, and with only 68 men, they attacked and captured five large ships and three barks.²⁰² The city of

¹⁹⁷ William Dampier. *Memoirs of a Buccaneer: Dampier's New Voyage Round the World, 1697*. (New York: Dover Publications, 1968), xxii.

¹⁹⁸ Dampier, *Memoirs of a Buccaneer*, xxii.

¹⁹⁹ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 126-127.

²⁰⁰ Dampier, *Memoirs of a Buccaneer*, xxiv.

²⁰¹ Dampier, *Memoirs of a Buccaneer*, xxviii.

²⁰² Dampier, *Memoirs of a Buccaneer*, xxix.

La Serena and other cities in the region were sacked and burned. Dampier generally described Sharp's expedition as only moderately successful and overly violent. This part of his circumnavigation, though, did benefit the British in terms of the plunder brought back to Jamaica and the destruction of a number of important Spanish towns throughout Panama. Dampier eventually left Sharp's fleet and traveled with a group of French privateers for a while. After sailing to Virginia, he joined Captain Edmund Cook on his ship, the *Revenge*, which was considered to have become a pirate ship because Cook and his crew took a large Danish ship in 1683.²⁰³ Denmark was an ally of England making that a piratical act, which disgusted Dampier. Ultimately, the ship joined up with other privateer crews and formed a fleet led by five famous privateer captains by the names of Davis, Swan, Townley, Harris and Gronet.²⁰⁴ In 1685, the privateer armada raided a treasure fleet traveling from Lima to Panama. Though outgunned in terms of the number of cannons, they were successful.²⁰⁵ Like Sharp's raids, this one brought in a sizable amount into the British colonies. Dampier eventually traveled west, crossing the Pacific on one of the ships, which ended up sailing to Manila, Australia, and many other places in southeast Asia. While not successful at raiding, Dampier wrote a massive number of notes about the areas and mapped them out, information that greatly benefited the British. The information was used to plan out his expedition to Australia for the British government.²⁰⁶ That knowledge enabled the British plan new expeditions to southeast

²⁰³ Dampier, *Memoirs of a Buccaneer*, xxxii.

²⁰⁴ Dampier, *Memoirs of a Buccaneer*, xxxiii.

²⁰⁵ Dampier, *Memoirs of a Buccaneer*, xxxiv.

²⁰⁶ Dampier, *Memoirs of a Buccaneer*, xxxv.

Asia. Eventually Dampier concluded the circumnavigation voyage and returned home to England. His many records, charts, trade route information, and other details made him famous in England and benefited the British Empire.²⁰⁷ His first published writings made him famous enough that the British government chose him to command the Roebuck expedition to Australia.

Dampier's next voyage was the Roebuck expedition to Australia. Though primarily an expedition for exploration, they did do some raiding at places like Timor and Batavia in 1699.²⁰⁸ The British government funded this expedition to explore Australia because they were impressed by Dampier's writings from his previous voyage. He was given a twenty-one-gun ship called the *Roebuck*.²⁰⁹ The voyage did not go as planned. They did manage to explore and learn about western Australia, but the voyage was cut short due to a number of problems. For one, the ship he was given was poorly made and not suitable for a long voyage. His lieutenant, a man named Fisher, resisted following Dampier's commands so Dampier handed him over to a Portuguese colony to be imprisoned. His crew also mutinied later during the trip because they were suffering from scurvy and other illnesses, so they headed home to Britain before they had the opportunity to explore eastern Australia. Even worse, his ship ended up sinking and he had to get a ride home on a merchant vessel they encountered. Once home, he was court-martialed for handing over his lieutenant to the Portuguese. While this expedition had

²⁰⁷ Dampier, *Memoirs of a Buccaneer*, xxxvi, xxxvii.

²⁰⁸ Dampier, *Memoirs of a Buccaneer*, xxxvii.

²⁰⁹ Dampier, *Memoirs of a Buccaneer*, xxxvii.

problems and was not completed, it still was a benefit to the British because it provided intelligence on western Australia. The information would prove useful later when the English decided to return to Australia. Australia did eventually become a British colony.

The St. George expedition was Dampier's second circumnavigation of the globe and was another privateering adventure. The War of Spanish Succession in 1701 was the lead up to this because privateers were needed to attack the Spanish. Since Britain needed experienced privateers, it re-employed Dampier and eliminated his court-marshal.

Dampier was given two ships, the *St. George*, commanded by Dampier, and the *Fame*, commanded by Captain Pulling.²¹⁰ Initially, the expedition went well. Dampier and his men captured some Spanish vessels near Panama which provided the British with additional ships and wealth, but the expedition started incurring difficulties. The first incident was Pulling abandoning his ship. The captain who replaced him died not long after from a tropical disease. The next captain of the *Fame* marooned one of the crew members named Alexander Selkirk on an abandoned island because he warned the captain that the ship was too damaged and needed repairs. Ultimately that ship's crew was captured by the Spanish when their ship sunk off the coast of Panama. As for Dampier, his ship was badly damaged as well, so a part of the crew who blamed him for the damage left on a captured Spanish bark.²¹¹ Dampier and what remained of his crew sailed east on a captured brigantine hoping to raid some Spanish colonies in southeast Asia, but they were captured and imprisoned by the Dutch. When he finally gained

²¹⁰ Dampier, *Memoirs of a Buccaneer*, xxxviii.

²¹¹ Dampier, *Memoirs of a Buccaneer*, xxxviii.

freedom, he sailed west to England in 1707 finishing his circumnavigation.²¹² Dampier's third and final circumnavigation of the globe was part of the very successful privateering expedition of Woodes Rodgers. He was made Rodger's second-in-command because of his vast experience on the sea. This section on Dampier is connected to my argument in that he had many beneficial impacts on England and Britain. His raids during the expeditions provided military support through the capture of ships. Economic impact occurred through the plunder that made its way into England. Dampier's circumnavigations showed England a number of new trade routes, and he was one of the first privateers to raid in Asia. His voyage to Australia, among others, provided England with considerable knowledge of the Pacific. Finally, the Woodes Rodgers' expedition probably would not have been as successful without Dampier's experiences because Dampier was Rodgers second-in-command. Overall, William Dampier supports my argument.

Like the privateers discussed earlier in this study, Woodes Rodgers is the last privateer from this period included in this chapter because of his importance. He was unique compared to the privateers discussed previously in my study because although some were educated like he was, Rodgers was the only one who came from a wealthy, powerful merchant family. His wife was the daughter of a powerful British admiral, Sir William Whetstone, a connection that helped him become a privateer. He became a famous privateer for his circumnavigation of the globe with William Dampier, raiding the Spanish and Dutch along the way. This expedition was funded by the British government, wealthy merchants, and Rodgers, with the goal to attack the Spanish because Britain was

²¹² Dampier, *Memoirs of a Buccaneer*, xxxviii.

currently at war with Spain. Rodgers acquired and armed two ships for the expedition called the *Duke* and *Duchess* in 1708.²¹³ The *Duke* had thirty cannon and 117 men on board while the *Duchess* had twenty-six cannon and 108 men on board.²¹⁴ The voyage had numerous successful raids. One of their first captures was a Spanish bark carrying alcohol and 45 passengers off the Canary Islands in September 1708.²¹⁵ They kept the alcohol but ransomed the people and boat. After circling around the southern tip of South America and saving Alexander Selkirk, they captured a Spanish bark in 1709 turning it into a privateer vessel which added to their arsenal against the Spanish.²¹⁶ Shortly after, during the same year, they captured another Spanish ship full of tobacco, cacao, and other valuable materials.²¹⁷ They also captured and plundered a number of small ships and towns, often ransoming the cargo and goods for money, with one example from 1709 netting 80,000 crowns.²¹⁸ The fleet accumulated substantial amounts of money from these many small ransom payments. The Rodgers' expedition was different in that, unlike most privateers who focused on a few large targets, his success came through the plundering of many smaller ships. In the end, the expedition accumulated hundreds of pieces of eight with hardly any mutinies or trouble and was completed in 1711. This expedition provided much to the British, including economic benefits from plunder, the

²¹³ Woodes Rodgers, *A Cruising Voyage Round the World*. (New York: Dover Publications, 1970), x.

²¹⁴ Rodgers, *Cruising Voyage*, 2.

²¹⁵ Rodgers, *Cruising Voyage*, 11.

²¹⁶ Rodgers, *Cruising Voyage*, 107.

²¹⁷ Rodgers, *Cruising Voyage*, 108.

²¹⁸ Rodgers, *Cruising Voyage*, 135.

disruption of Spanish trade, and the acquisition of exotic goods brought to England. Another positive was the knowledge gained from sailing through the eastern sea. Military gains resulted from the sinking of Spanish ships including some warships. With this expedition, Rodgers became a hero in Britain. As with Morgan, the British Crown made Rodgers a lieutenant governor in 1718, but of the Bahamas, not Jamaica. His job was primarily to hunt pirates who were operating out of the islands. He did his job well due to his experience as a privateer. This was yet another benefit to Britain because he drove away pirates who were causing problems. He was appointed lieutenant governor twice in the Bahamas.

Overall, privateering benefitted the British Empire in the Caribbean. These men helped Britain protect Jamaica and their other islands from the Spanish. Their actions also weakened Spain financially through plunder and by disrupting trade routes in the New World. Furthermore, these privateers weakened Spain's military by either taking control of or destroying numerous Spanish ships, and sacking, damaging, or destroying key Spanish cities like Panama and Porto Bello and their citizens. These men also took part in the slave trade, selling slaves they had captured on raids to British colonies. Exploring for Britain was another way the privateers helped the British Empire. Two great examples were the explorations led by Dampier and Rodgers. Both explored the Pacific coast of the New World and southeast Asia bringing valuable intelligence home to Britain. All of this fit Britain's policy of the period which was to establish itself as a New World power by claiming new land and tapping into the wealth of the New World as well as weakening Spain and other European powers.

What these privateers believed they were accomplishing in relation to Britain's strategic goals can be separated into two main groups: British subjects and foreigners working for Britain. Those who were British, for the most part, seemed to want to help Britain extend its influence in the New World and damage Spain. For example, Henry Morgan's concern for Jamaica caused him to spend his entire career trying to protect it. He also worked for the governor of Jamaica in order to terrorize the Spanish.²¹⁹ Woodes Rodgers' family had connections to the British navy and believed in protecting Britain's efforts at sea, especially since he chose to go privateering because England was at war at the time with Spain and he wanted to support the war effort.²²⁰ Also, both served as lieutenant governors, and while the positions were profitable, they were also dangerous. Leaders of colonies had many enemies especially since they went after privateers and pirates. These details clearly show evidence of these men's intention to protect England. The idea of protecting England from the Catholics was still strong at this point because England was Protestant and still worried France and Spain would go after it. The non-British privateers who contracted with Britain, including Van Horn, L'Ollonias and Lussan, were in it mainly for their own financial gain, though they did have a dislike for Spain.

Privateering in the Caribbean had its downfall in the 17th century and early 18th century because of several factors. One main issue is a change in British policy toward Spain. The British monarchy decided it would be advantageous to make peace with the Spanish. Some of the later Stuart monarchs, Charles II and James II, were pro-Catholic

²¹⁹ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 112.

²²⁰ Rodgers, *Cruising Voyage*, vii.

because Spain and France helped them against Cromwell and other anti-monarchy forces in England, not to mention that they provided shelter while the royal family was in exile. The British monarchy also made peace with Spain because it hoped to trade with Spanish colonies. Once the Treaty of Madrid was signed in 1670 between England and Spain, it became more difficult for privateers to operate in the Caribbean during the 17th century.²²¹ This was because the Stuart monarchs of England increased the British naval presence in the region, installed governors in Jamaica who were anti-privateer, and stopped providing letters of marque against the Spanish. The privateers helped build the empire, but the very help they gave afforded England the power to get rid of them. A second factor was Port Royal's destruction by an earthquake in 1692.²²² This city was the main privateer stronghold on Jamaica where most British privateers lived. The earthquake wiped the port off the map for some time and killed thousands, most of whom were privateers. While this was unexpected, the earthquake did end up weakening the privateers hold on Jamaica. Third, was the rise of new forms of moneymaking for the British. Changing policy to make peace with the Spanish, the monarchy promoted sugar production and the slave trade as alternatives to privateering. Sugar production could not compete with privateering at first, but after the destruction of Port Royal, landowners were able to expand the sugar plantations, because the privateers were weakened and had trouble blocking the rise of sugar along with the fact that the monarchy was sending more slaves and resources to build up the sugar plantations. The monarchy also sent governors and other leaders who were pro-sugar and anti-privateer. For a long time, privateers had

²²¹ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 115-116.

²²² Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 142.

used their influence in the area to slow down the rise of sugar production, but after so many were killed during the earthquake, they were no longer able to block the rise of sugar. The sugar had to go through Port Royal and the privateers made this difficult. After the earthquake, though, the planters found new ports and ways to export their sugar.²²³ Yet another reason privateering in the Caribbean the 17th century collapsed was because certain privateers like Henry Morgan began helping the British eliminate the privateers. Morgan, as lieutenant governor of Jamaica, at first supported privateer work. Eventually though, as the British government paid him more and he acquired sugar-producing land, he turned on the privateers and sided with the government's push to crack down on them. The other issue was that Britain used privateers heavily when it was not established in an area, but once more established, the need for privateers declined. Privateers were used to fight and inflict damage by England when it was trying to gain a foothold in the Caribbean and could not match Spain's naval strength. Once the tides started to turn and England became stronger and more established in the Caribbean and Spain's power declined, privateers were needed less. These various issues resulted in the privateers moving to new areas like the North American colonies and Madagascar.

²²³ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 132.

CHAPTER 3

EXPANSION ACROSS THE SEAS: PRIVATEERS AND PIRATES OF THE NORTH AMERICAN COLONIES, MADAGASCAR, AND THE PIRATES OF THE LATER CARIBBEAN, 1674-1730

During the late 17th century, British monarchs Charles II and his successor, James II, started turning away from the use of privateers because British policy had changed to pro-Catholic and pro-Spanish.²²⁴ They wanted to replace privateering with sugar production because Britain needed a new method for making money and wanted the privateers to stop attacking the Spanish. Sugar was proving to be valuable, and the British were realizing Jamaica could be even more productive for cultivating sugar than earlier islands like Barbados. As a result, the privateers started moving to Britain's North American colonies to locations like Boston and Rhode Island because local merchants and politicians were willing to work with them. Some did continue raiding in the Caribbean, though, because that was where the Spanish ships were, their plunder was now benefiting and building-up these colonies farther north. They contributed to trade as well because they brought in goods which were difficult to acquire in the North American colonies. The privateers were also sometimes used as troops in the wars against the Native Americans.

Eventually, many former privateers and others (pirates and merchants) set up shop on the island of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean. From there the privateers and pirates raided Mughal and Indian merchant ships as well as Mughal ships traveling from India on pilgrimage to Mecca. These actions brought in massive amounts of loot to sell in the

²²⁴ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 122.

North American colonies, including exotic goods from Asia. A want for exotic goods in the colonies stimulated trade with southeast Asia and this trade helped make money for colonies. The raid considered by many to be the most successful ever happened in this area by Captain Henry Every when he plundered a Mughal fleet on pilgrimage to Mecca. He seized close to what would be equivalent to one billion dollars in today's money and a Mughal princess. The pirate settlements of Madagascar grew quite large as many former privateers and sailors settled there and supported the community.

During the early 1700s, at approximately the same time as that of the Madagascar pirates, a pirate boom occurred in the Caribbean. This happened because the British monarch shut down privateering contracts, so while many privateers went north, some stayed in the Caribbean and just became pirates. These pirates were also somewhat beneficial to the British. Some, in fact, like Blackbeard, became very famous raiders in history. While these pirates did raid British ships, they also captured Spanish and French ships, the plunder of which was mostly sold or traded in British colonies, particularly those the British had basically abandoned because they were difficult to maintain and protect. These privateers and pirates no longer had much of a connection to the goals of the wider British Empire, because rather than taking contracts from the British government, they would work directly for politician and merchants in the northern colonies. Overall, the privateers and pirates spread out around the world because the British cracked down on their activity in the Caribbean.

During the late 1600s, the privateers started moving from the Caribbean to the thirteen colonies area in North America. This happened because the British and other nations began efforts to end privateering in Caribbean. A new peace agreement, the

Treaty of Madrid, was drawn up between the British monarch, Charles II, and Spain in 1670. This was a massive change in British policy. British monarchs, Charles II and James II, were pro-Catholic and pro-Spain. Charles had signed the treaty of Madrid and became friendly with Spain in hopes of trading with them to make money.²²⁵ James had spent many years when he was young in exile in France where he became a Catholic,²²⁶ and he married a Catholic Italian princess. The treaty resulted in British officials in the Caribbean cracking down on privateering. This resulted in the privateers heading north to escape arrest. Once they moved north, their actions benefitted the British colonies. Many settled in places like Boston, Newport, Charles Town, New Providence, and the Bahamas.²²⁷

One such privateer was Captain Samuel Mosley. He answered a call for help from the governor of Massachusetts and assembled 110 privateers to fight native Americans who were attacking the colony.²²⁸ One of the key aspects for the privateers when they moved north was the types of colonies that existed there. There were three types of colonies in the north: crown, proprietary and charter.²²⁹ Crown colonies were a more recent development and were difficult for privateers to operate in because the king of England appointed the governors for them. Privateers avoided this type of colony because the crown-appointed governors enforced the same anti-privateering policies that were in

²²⁵ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 115-116.

²²⁶ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 179.

²²⁷ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 145.

²²⁸ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 144.

²²⁹ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 145.

place in the Caribbean. The other two were private colonies where governors were local and did not receive funding from Britain. As a result, proprietary and charter colonies were perfect for privateers. These colonies needed money because they were largely overlooked by the British government since they were not big moneymakers, but this also meant the colonies were willing to hire the privateers because the king was unable to exert much influence over them. Subjects of the colonies tended to be Protestant and did not like the Stuart monarchs who were Catholic leaning. This meant they disobeyed the orders of the Stuarts on privateering. Some of these colonies were founded by Puritans, like Massachusetts. Others, like New York, while not founded by Puritans were Protestant and still disliked the Stuarts. Massachusetts and New York are examples of these colonies. These colonies also had many Quakers who were merchants and willing to work with the privateers. Some of the privateers even married the daughters of prominent Quakers. It is worth noting that James II tried to greatly increase his control of the colonies with the Dominion of New England, a law to essentially make them one colony with one set of laws and more monarchical control. The proposed colonial change failed after James II lost his throne to William of Orange in 1688, which was a positive for the privateers since there was no additional monarchical control.²³⁰ The Dominion of New England is important because had it passed the privateers would not have been able to become very powerful in the northern colonies. Representatives of the crown who were sent to spy on the northern colonies reported seeing many privateering ships with 60 to 70 guns.²³¹ These privateers continued raiding the Caribbean. They also began targeting

²³⁰ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 181.

²³¹ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 148.

Peru because it was less fortified than the Caribbean islands. Peru was less fortified because escaped attacks by privateers before, so it was not well-fortified. Following the raids, they fled north and sold their plunder in the North American colonies which helped build up the colonies and make them more prosperous. Basically, these privateers lived in the north, but continued their raiding operations in the south. They began working more for British colonial leaders and less for the monarchy.

One early and somewhat infamous incident of this took place in 1683 when privateers from the New York area raided Veracruz, Mexico. They raided the town for four days and ransomed all prominent individuals of the city, including the governor, and seized money amounting to more than 800 pesos per sailor and a valuable capture of 1,500 slaves.²³² These privateers went north with their prizes. The slaves were valuable in the northern colonies because that area did not have many slaves and they were needed for labor and it was harder for them to acquire slaves.

Other privateering activities also benefited the northern colonies, that is, the Bahamas and the colonies to the north of it. South Carolina worked with the privateers in the slave trade. At the time, the people of South Carolina were fighting wars against the Native Americans and captured them to sell as slaves.²³³ They were sold to privateers who would resell them in the Caribbean for a profit. The Caribbean colonies were always looking for sources of slaves. This resulted in both the British colony of South Carolina and the privateers making money. The Bahamas, while technically within the region of

²³² Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 149.

²³³ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 150.

the Caribbean, was so far north that it was considered part of the northern colonies and a new privateer base.²³⁴ The privateers often facilitated trade between the Bahamas and South Carolina. Another common practice in the North American colonies had to do with silver the privateers plundered from the Spanish. Since the privateers wanted to avoid being caught with Spanish silver due to the peace treaty, they would sell the silver in the northern colonies to silversmiths who would convert it into other objects to sell.²³⁵ The privateers made money and stimulated the colonies' economies, especially because those colonies lacked access to local silver. The northern colonies also gained many slaves through the privateers who took hundreds of slaves from the Spanish, Portuguese, and Dutch. It is not known how many slaves were taken, just that it was sizable. These examples focus on South Carolina, an area that benefited from silver and slaves.

Privateers and pirates became particularly important to the northern colonies during King William's War (1688 -1697),²³⁶ which was a large conflict with the French. During the war, pirates and privateers became the defense of many of these colonies. One example of this was described by Nicholas Trott, the governor of the Bahamas. When the city of New Providence, the largest and most important city in the Bahamas, was under siege from three French ships and close to being captured, pirate Captain Every arrived on his large 46-gun ship, the *Fancy*, and drove the French away by force.²³⁷ Had the city fallen, the Bahamas might have become French territory. Many other northern governors were

²³⁴ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 147.

²³⁵ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 170.

²³⁶ McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves*, 20.

²³⁷ McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves*, 20.

connected to privateers and pirates. Governor William Markham of Pennsylvania is an example. His daughter was married to a pirate named Brown who was a member of Every's crew, which meant he received defensive aid against the French as well.²³⁸ New York was also saved from the French by Captains William Mason, Samuel Burgess, Robert Culliford, and William Kid. The conflict with the French allowed many pirates and privateers to prosper as well as provide defense and greater trade in the northern colonies.

As the privateers moved north, they also went to the new colony of New York. Merchants in New York funded and backed these men, who transitioned from being privateers to pirates because they no longer worked under government contract. They ultimately became the pirates sent to Madagascar by the merchants. The pirates were allowed in New York by its governor, Lord Bellomont, who was sent to New York by Britain to keep pirates out, but he allowed them in because the merchants paid him to do so.²³⁹ The most notorious of these merchants was Frederick Philipse, who was born in the Netherlands and migrated to New Netherland to work as a carpenter. The Dutch living in New York often were merchants who did always follow British laws. He eventually married the widow of a wealthy merchant, Margaret Hardenbroeck de Vries, and adopted her daughter, Eva, in order to keep control of her former husband's wealth and resources. He acquired valuable properties and a merchant ship through the marriage, and his wife purchased two more ships, effectively giving him a fleet. Following the English takeover

²³⁸ McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves*, 21.

²³⁹ McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves*, 40.

of New York, Philipse started building an economic empire which brought in huge amounts of wealth to both his family and the colony of New York. His ventures included fur trade, tobacco, and the sale of wheat and butter grown on his plantation.²⁴⁰ His first backing of a pirate operation in the late 17th century was when he sent a ship to salvage Spanish treasure from a sunken ship off the coast of the Bahamas. The crew decided salvaging was too difficult and instead raided the Spanish town of St. Augustine in Florida. When Philipse realized that the pirate expedition was financially profitable, he began backing additional pirate expeditions. These kinds of expeditions were common and usually sent out by the merchants and businessmen of New York. The family also participated in slave trading, salvage operations, and also hired privateers to cut logwood (an expensive wood used for building) for trading. The Philipse family funded and sent out many pirate and privateer expeditions to Madagascar and other locations looking for ways to make money. In the case of Madagascar, Philipse also supplied the pirates with resources as noted in testimony from pirate Adam Baldrige. Baldrige said that on August 7, 1693, the ship owned by Frederick Philipse, the Charles, brought goods including shoes, breeches, rum, grindstones, and cannon powder.²⁴¹

Another example was August 1695, when a ship named Katherine, also owned by Philipse, traded cargo on Madagascar to the pirates in exchange for slaves and rice.²⁴² One final example from Baldrige's testimony was on June 1697, when another Philipse

²⁴⁰ McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves*, 48.

²⁴¹ J. Franklin Jameson. *Privateering and Piracy in the Colonial Period*. (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1923), 182.

²⁴² Jameson, *Privateering and Piracy*, 183-184.

ship arrived and sold tar on Madagascar to the pirates.²⁴³ Many members of the family took part in these endeavors. His wife oversaw his first slave expedition to Africa in 1684. His oldest son, Philip, married the daughter and heir of a wealthy Barbados landowner and used her land as a base for their slaving operations and piratical activities.²⁴⁴ Philip, himself, also worked as a privateer attacking French ships off Long Island for the governor of New York. Philipse's younger son, Adolph, oversaw pirate and smuggling operations to Madagascar. After his first wife died, Philipse married the wealthy widow of a business associate, Catherine Van Cortlandt, who had inherited vast wealth from her deceased husband and father.²⁴⁵ Catherine's brothers also became important to the family. Her older brother Stephanus was mayor of New York and used his political connections to help hide their pirate operations. Younger brother, Jacobus, who married Philipse's stepdaughter, Eva, took part in some of the family's Madagascar pirate operations. In addition, Philipse's daughter, Annetje, married Philip French, who was the speaker of the assembly of New York in 1698 and eventually became the city's mayor in 1702 thereby increasing the family's political influence.

The Philipse family were not the only merchants who utilized and funded pirates for their benefit. Many other local merchants did so as well, further adding significant wealth into New York though it is difficult to find specific amounts in the sources. Giles Shelley was a merchant trader who spent many years, from 1701-1709, at sea and made

²⁴³ Jameson, *Privateering and Piracy*, 186.

²⁴⁴ McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves*, 50.

²⁴⁵ McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves*, 50.

at least two Indo-Atlantic voyages to Madagascar.²⁴⁶ He was involved in both trade and piracy in Africa and Madagascar. Over time he amassed a small fortune from smuggling and selling exotic goods and slaves into New York, increasing wealth into the local economy. Another example was Captain William Kidd. He sent two pirate expeditions to Madagascar where they plundered diamonds, calico, cash, and slaves which were brought back to New York in 1699.²⁴⁷ Other examples include Rip Van Dam and Caleb Heathcote. Van Dam served as the mayor of New York and used his political influence to send out pirate excursions in the early 1700s without causing upset to the British government.²⁴⁸ Heathcote was the partial owner and a funder of a pirate ship, the *Nassau*, which captured substantial numbers of slaves from Madagascar and brought them to New York in 1699. These many ventures benefited the British colony of New York through new wealth and slave labor.

In the late 17th century, after the privateers moved to the northern colonies, the merchants of New York started sending the privateers to Madagascar where they operated as pirates. At this point, New York was conquered by Britain and was a British colony. Baldrige was one of the first privateers to arrive at Madagascar and did so on his own without working for the New York merchants. The merchants sent privateers and pirates to Madagascar because they saw it as a new front to acquire profit. Madagascar worked its way into privateer Atlantic trade networks for several reasons. Early British

²⁴⁶ McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves*, 57-58.

²⁴⁷ McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves*, 55.

²⁴⁸ McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves*, 52.

pirate expeditions to India and to Madagascar in 1644²⁴⁹ showed the pirates that Madagascar was in a good location from which to attack Indian ships. Another opportunity was that old slave operations were discovered on the island. Furthermore, the privateers had been chased out of the Caribbean and Madagascar provided a place to stay safe from British governors. Madagascar, a large island off the eastern coast of Africa, proved to be a very profitable location for pirate expeditions for a number of reasons. One was its location. Madagascar was far from British authorities making it safer for piracy, yet it was close to the trade route between Arabia and India. At the time most of India was ruled by the Mughals, a Muslim dynasty that traded with Arabia and other Muslim states. The Mughal Empire was the richest state in the world at that time and the wealth on its trade ships was substantial. In addition, the Mughals sent fleets of ships carrying treasure and people on pilgrimage to Mecca. Another reason these pirate expeditions were profitable was because of the relatively untapped source of slaves. While people of the island were ethnically a mix of Asian and African, they were considered enough like west Africans to be enslaved by Europeans so the pirates would launch slave raids.²⁵⁰ The many tribes of the island were constantly at war with each other and the pirates exploited this for their benefit and that of their merchant backers.²⁵¹ Pirates would ally themselves with certain tribes in exchange for land that they could use to set up bases and they would also trade with the tribes exchanging guns for valuable

²⁴⁹ McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves*, 74.

²⁵⁰ McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves*, 65.

²⁵¹ McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves*, 85.

local materials and would help the tribes fight their enemies in exchange for taking the enemies as slaves.²⁵²

The event that initially led to pirates setting up shop on Madagascar was an English attempt to develop a colony on the island in 1644. The British sent three ships carrying 140 people to set up a colony on the island.²⁵³ Unfortunately for the colonists, it was a disaster from the start. They chose to set up their initial settlement in the southern part of the island and then sent a boat to search for other locations to build more towns.²⁵⁴ They discovered the French and Dutch already had outposts on the island and the British became their targets. Furthermore, they lacked enough men and guns to acquire slaves for sale. Adding to their struggles was that the British settlement was in an arid part of the island where food sources were scarce. Ultimately, nearly all British settlers died during a fight with the natives in 1646, and the few survivors fled the island to Portuguese and Dutch settlements in India.²⁵⁵ While this attempt to colonize failed, it did lead to the pirates setting up shop on the island because it provided the British with intelligence about Madagascar. The pirates were able to set up shop by forming alliances with certain tribes and trying to pit them against each other. They were able to move into an operation that was already in existence. The Arabs had a slave operation in Madagascar; the pirates simply moved in and took over the operation replacing the Muslims.²⁵⁶

²⁵² McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves*, 85.

²⁵³ McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves*, 74.

²⁵⁴ McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves*, 75.

²⁵⁵ McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves*, 77.

²⁵⁶ McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves*, 66.

Some pirates operated out of Madagascar, with some having a greater impact than others. One of the first and more infamous was Adam Baldrige, a former Caribbean privateer.²⁵⁷ When he was near the island, his ship crashed, and only he and his apprentice survived. They were taken in by a local tribe and joined them in a raid on a neighboring tribe.²⁵⁸ During the raid Baldrige captured seventy cattle and some slaves, which impressed the tribe.²⁵⁹ With the tribe's help he built the settlement of Saint Mary's, which became one of the main pirate settlements on the island. At this point in the 1690s, Baldrige was a privateer because, for a while, he had the permission of that tribe. Over time, Baldrige built a sizable pirate slaving operation. It grew when Samuel Burgess, a captain who worked for Frederick Philipse, stopped at his settlement on his way home in the 1690s from India and sold him some cannons and left part of his crew with Baldrige. Burgess told Philipse about it and Philipse started supplying and building up the operation. Philipse traded supplies like alcohol, food, clothing, and gunpowder to Baldrige and the pirates in exchange for exotic plundered goods like textiles, silks, and spices, along with slaves from Madagascar,²⁶⁰ most of which were traded or sold in New York, and further built up its economy. Baldrige ran his operation successfully for seven years, ending in 1697.

Madagascar is a good example of the pirates and privateers taking part in another moneymaking operation for Britain. The slave trade was one of the British Empire's

²⁵⁷ McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves*, 8.

²⁵⁸ McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves*, 85.

²⁵⁹ McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves*, 86.

²⁶⁰ McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves*, 87-88.

sources of income besides profiting off the raids and plunder. Slave trade is considered one of the money-making options that replaced privateering and piracy. But the case of the Madagascar pirates clearly shows how they were not replaced by it and clearly took part in the slave trade to make money. The slave trade was the main operation of the pirates of Madagascar; this operation was so successful that it was one of the things that led to their downfall because the natives became tired of being enslaved and attacked the pirates.²⁶¹

Another Madagascar pirate of importance to colonial New York was Henry Every. Unlike most of the pirates who were from the North American colonies he was from England. Every acquired his ship when he staged a mutiny on a royal navy ship called the *Charles II* and made it his own.²⁶² Every claimed that he raided in Central and South America for a while and that he chose Madagascar because an old sailor recommended it, claiming they could settle there, get supplies from the tribes, and be left alone.²⁶³ As a result, he became a pirate and sailed to Madagascar. Once at Madagascar, their early time there was troublesome. Every wrote that storms damaged their ships and rendered a small boarding boat they had useless, delaying their raids for a while in 1692.²⁶⁴ Every did not work with the Madagascar tribes; he just operated off the island.

²⁶¹ McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves*, 121.

²⁶² Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 189.

²⁶³ Henry Every, *The King of Pirates: Being an Account of the Famous Enterprises of Captain Henry Every, The Mock King of Madagascar. With His Rambles and Piracies; Wherein All the Sham Accounts Formerly Publish'd of Him Are Detected. In Two Letters From Himself; One During His Stay at Madagascar; and One Since His Escape From Thence.* (London: Printed for A. Bettesworth in Pater-Noster Row, C. King in Westminster-Hall, F. Brotherton and W. Meadows in Cornhill, W. Chetwood in Covent-Garden, and fold by W. Boreham in Pater-Noster Row, 1720), 28.

²⁶⁴ Every, *King of Pirates*, 33.

In fact, not all pirates of Madagascar worked with the tribes, and for the most part, those who did participated in the slave trade.

After this initial arrival on Madagascar, Every chose to return to England to repair his ship and acquire supplies and more ships in order to be better prepared.²⁶⁵ Eventually he put together a fleet that included 500 men, most of them from the North American colonies.²⁶⁶ One of the initial captures of this fleet was off the coast of Persia. There they captured two Persian barks which they added to their fleet.²⁶⁷ They also captured a number of ships off the coast of India. Then Every pulled off one of the most striking raids in history in 1694. Attacking a Mughal fleet on pilgrimage to Mecca, they captured two huge Mughal ships, the *Fateh Mohammed* and the *Gang-i-sawai*. This was not a merchant fleet, rather it was a fleet personally sent by the Mughal emperor to bring treasure to Mecca along with his granddaughter. The *Gang-i-sawai* was personally owned by the Mughal Emperor Aurangzeb and was filled with Arabian gold, jewels, and even had a diamond encrusted saddle. Historical writings by several sources noted in Hanna's book (a footnote) provided information on the estimated total value of ships and cargo at 155,000 to 180,000 pounds (roughly 25 to 35 million dollars today).²⁶⁸ Every and his fleet also captured Aurangzeb's granddaughter and other important Indian woman. Their fate remains unknown, but in his writings Every claimed they were unharmed.²⁶⁹ Some

²⁶⁵ Every, *King of Pirates*, 37.

²⁶⁶ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 189.

²⁶⁷ Every, *King of Pirates*, 55.

²⁶⁸ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 189-190.

²⁶⁹ Every, *King of Pirates*, 60-61.

Indian sources of the time say these women were raped and killed, and some British sources say the princess married Every.²⁷⁰ The fleet also took a Moor ship near Mangalore, and four ships near Calicut, adding even more plunder to their take. In his research, historian Mark Hanna notes that “As the story was retold in England, many were oblivious to the sheer volume of booty that left Madagascar making its way back into the coffers of merchants and governors in the North American colonies”²⁷¹ where most of the pirates in the fleet lived. Some plunder possibly ended up in the Caribbean because Every supposedly traveled to the Bahamas where he bribed the governor with 50,000 pounds to let him stay.²⁷²

Other Madagascar pirates to note include Thomas Tew and Edward England. Tew made several eastern voyages under the commission of various governors. For one, he sailed for the governor of Bermuda and returned with around 100,000 pounds worth of gold and silver taken from the Mughals.²⁷³ He did the same for the governor Benjamin Fletcher of New York, bring him roughly 120,000 pounds worth of plunder.²⁷⁴ Tew could be considered more of a privateer than a pirate, because unlike most Madagascar pirates who worked on their own or for merchants of New York, he worked for governors, British government officials. This connection between the pirates and New York was made because most of the pirates, some of whom began as privateers, who went to

²⁷⁰ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 189.

²⁷¹ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 189-190.

²⁷² Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 192.

²⁷³ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 192.

²⁷⁴ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 193.

Madagascar had operated out of New York in the past. Philipse and other New York merchants had also sent many ships to Madagascar. This connection was maintained because the New York merchants and politicians looked for ways to make money too, since New York had limited sources for making money at that time. The New York merchants also kept the pirates supplied and helped maintain their settlements. Edward England was a well-known Madagascar pirate. In one incident he found a Portuguese ship near Madagascar that was wrecked in a storm.²⁷⁵ The ship had on board the viceroy of Goa, Conde Erecira, whom Mr. England ransomed, as well as diamonds worth 4 million dollars.²⁷⁶ They also captured a Portuguese ship carrying 200 Mozambique slaves, which they sold for a sizable profit.²⁷⁷ England and his crew continued raiding the area, attacking a Portuguese fort. Eventually, England and his group left for the Caribbean.

The overall impact of the pirates of Madagascar on the British Empire was huge. The most obvious was the economic impact on the northern colonies. Most of these pirates worked for, or were from, New York and other areas in the North and supported the policy of colonial leaders which meant their plunder almost always was traded in that

²⁷⁵ Charles Johnson. *A General HISTORY of the PYRATES, from their first Rise and Settlement in the Island of Providence, to the present Time. With the remarkable Actions and Adventures of the two Female Pyrates Mary Read and Anne Bonny; Contain'd in the following Chapters, Introduction, Chap. I. Of Capt. Avery, Chap. II. Of Capt. Martel, Chap. III. Of Capt. Teach, Chap. IV. Of Capt. Bonnet, Chap. V. Of Capt. England, Chap. VI. Of Capt. Vane, Chap. VII. Of Capt. Rackam, Chap. VIII. Of Capt. Davis, Chap. IX. Of Capt. Roberts, Chap. X. Of Capt. Anstis, Chap. XI. Of Capt. Worley, Chap. XII. Of Capt. Lowther, Chap. XIII. Of Capt. Low, Chap. XIV. Of Capt. Evans, Chap. XV. Of Capt. Phillips, Chap. XVI. Of Capt. Spriggs, Chap. XVII. Of Capt. Smith and the several Crews. To which is added a short ABSTRACT of the Statute and Civil Law, in Relation to Pyracry.* Third Edition. (London: Printed for and sold by T. Warner, at the Black-Boy in Pater-Noster Row, 1725). 134.

²⁷⁶ Johnson, *General HISTORY of the PYRATES*, 134.

²⁷⁷ Johnson, *General HISTORY of the PYRATES*, 135.

region. The reason for the heavy focus on New York in my research is because it was where merchants were located who backed and funded the pirates from Madagascar. New York was also one of the newest colonies in the north which made it easier for pirates to operate with less government oversight. Many pirates were available to work, with one source indicating that the Board of Trade in London reported 1,500 pirates at St. Mary's, the largest pirate settlement on Madagascar.²⁷⁸ Though this number may have been exaggerated, it does indicate a large pirate population existed. These colonies did not have a moneymaker like sugar, so the pirates' actions were a considerable benefit to the colonies and thus, the British Empire. The raids brought gold, silver, and even diamonds from India to those colonies. Substantial numbers of slaves from Madagascar were also supplied to the northern colonies. It was one of the major sources of slaves for the northern colonies. The slave labor alone made those colonies lots of money by helping to build up their production of agricultural goods, including tobacco for example. Another important impact these pirates had on the colonies was it gave them more direct access to exotic goods from Asia, and goods like spices and silks were always in high demand with the British. These goods were especially difficult to acquire because the East India Company controlled what little trade the British had in that region. The Portuguese and the Dutch controlled most of the trade with India and southeast Asia at the time. The Dutch themselves also smuggled exotic goods to the colonies, so much so that the British government passed a series of acts to stop it, most famously the Navigation Acts. The British East India Company hated competition. However, the pirates acquired sizable amounts of those goods during raids and sold or traded them in the North American

²⁷⁸ McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves*, 83.

colonies. Besides raiding ships from Mughal India, these pirates also raided Portuguese and Dutch ships. This was beneficial to the British in that it weakened two of their major rivals at sea. The pirates also set up unofficial colonies on Madagascar. These settlements existed for many decades and provided a location where British ships could resupply. This is important considering it would be many years before the British set up a colony of their own anywhere near the region. Northern British colonies like New York clearly derived economic gain from the Madagascar pirates, in part because of the merchants who funded them. This network between the wealthy merchants of New York and the pirates facilitated the flow of money, exotic goods, and slaves into the colonies, helping to build them up. The North American colonies, particularly New York, were relatively new and still under British control, so they needed sources of income to help with their development. The pirates provided this. The slaves the pirates provided also helped increase the production of goods. The Madagascar pirate operation also provided work for many out-of-work privateers and sailors. Finally, these pirates provided military assistance when they attacked the Portuguese and other rivals of Britain in the region, disrupting Portugal's trade with India.

The pirate population of Madagascar eventually declined due to several reasons, including changes in regional powers. The East India Company was one major reason, as it was trying to establish large trade deals with the Mughal Empire and others states in India, but the pirates angered the Indians by plundering their ships.²⁷⁹ The pirates were interfering with the British policy of supporting the East India Company and trying to

²⁷⁹ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 210.

establish trade with the Mughals. So even though the northern colonial leaders worked with the pirates and saw them as a way to bring economic benefit to the colonies, the East India Company wanted exclusive control over profits from the region as they had a legal monopoly. The company pushed the English government to pressure the colonies to crack down on the pirates.²⁸⁰ The Dutch also began replacing the Portuguese as the main European power in the region.²⁸¹ The Dutch had a stronger military presence than the Portuguese; and besides sending more warships to the region than the Portuguese, they also built more forts. The Dutch began attacking the pirates of Madagascar along with threatening British operations in the region. This made it more difficult for the pirates in the region to operate. The pirates faced another issue -- conflict with the natives of Madagascar. As time went on, the native tribes tired of the pirates enslaving their people and started attacking more frequently. Even though the pirates possessed superior weapons, the tribes were sometimes victorious because of their superior numbers. These various factors led to the decline of the Madagascar pirates. This resulted in the pirates relocating to other areas of the world.

The Caribbean pirates of this later period were mostly former privateers who needed work after the violence between England and Spain had calmed. There had been a brutal war involving England, Spain, France and other European powers called the War of Spanish Succession (1701-1714). The war was fought over who would inherit the Spanish throne after its Hapsburg monarch died. The Spanish king left the throne to Philip of Anjou, a member of the French royal family, who became Philip V of Spain.

²⁸⁰ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 220-221.

²⁸¹ McDonald, *Pirates, Merchants, Settlers, and Slaves*, 66.

The French claimant was Phillip V, grandson of Louis XIV. The Hapsburg claimant was Charles VI, Holy Roman Emperor. This caused the war because the other powers of Europe feared a united French and Spanish monarchy, and because Louis XIV, Philip's grandfather, invaded the Spanish Netherlands. The war provided tons of work for the privateers. This profitable time for the privateers ended, however, when the heir to the Spanish throne, Phillip V, agreed to renounce his claim to the French throne along with the future claim of all his descendants. Phillip's nephew inherited the French throne as Louis XV. This ensured the French and Spanish thrones remained separate. The end of the War of Spanish Succession resulted in a substantial decrease in the size of the British, French, and Spanish navies and privateering contracts (letters of marque expired).²⁸² A substantial number of experienced sailors were left without work as a result, which led to an explosion of Caribbean piracy. These were pirates who operated without contracts because the war had ended, resulting in a reduction of privateering contracts from governments. The pirate community also increased because the smaller European navies struggled to counter them. Colonial leaders inconsistently enforced laws against pirates because of the money they brought into the colonies. This also added to the rise of the pirates. Sources indicate these pirates numbered between 1,500 to 2,000 in 1716-1718, and 1,800 to 2,400 in 1719-1722.²⁸³ The Bahamas became their main base because the British government only had minimal control and many local leaders supported the pirates. The main difference between these pirates and their brethren in Madagascar was

²⁸² Rediker, *Villains of All Nations*, 23.

²⁸³ Rediker, *Villains of All Nations*, 29.

that the Madagascar pirates worked for merchants while these Caribbean pirates operated privately. Even so, they were beneficial to British colonies in the Caribbean because they brought in loot to colonies, like the Bahamas, and did considerable damage to the Spanish and Portuguese. However, they were also troublesome to British policy since they sometimes would attack British ships.

Edward Teach, also known as Blackbeard, was one of the most famous Caribbean pirates of the period. He is believed to have served on a privateer vessel before becoming a pirate. He became a pirate when he allied with a pirate captain named Hornigold. While sailing together in 1717, they captured a number of vessels including a ship from Havana carrying 120 barrels of flour, a ship from Bermuda carrying wine, and one from Madeira which that carried many pounds of gold and silver.²⁸⁴ One of Blackbeard's first major captures on his own was a French guineyman, which he made his ship in 1717.²⁸⁵ He renamed the 46-gun ship the *Queen Anne's Revenge*. Using the *Queen Anne*, he targeted a number of large vessels carrying substantial loot. That same year, he seized a ship called the *Great Allen*, plundered it, set it on fire and then fought off a 30-gun Man-of-War, the *Scarborough*, that tried to counter-attack his ship.²⁸⁶ Later, Blackbeard captured many merchant ships off the coast of Honduras that were returning from Jamaica. During a future attack off the coast of Charleston, Blackbeard took a brigantine and other ships taking hostages, and managed to ransom the hostages and ships for many hundreds of

²⁸⁴ Johnson, *General HISTORY of the PYRATES*, 70.

²⁸⁵ Johnson, *General HISTORY of the PYRATES*, 70-71.

²⁸⁶ Johnson, *General HISTORY of the PYRATES*, 71.

pounds and for medicine.²⁸⁷ The primary source documented that the plunder and ransom amounted to 1500 pounds.²⁸⁸ He launched an expedition the following year to the Caribbean where he captured a French ship carrying sugar and cacao and sold it to the governor of North Carolina.²⁸⁹ These are just some of the many examples of Blackbeard's raids that brought large amounts of plunder to the Bahamas and other British colonies. As was the case with the earlier pirates of the Caribbean, Blackbeard's actions helped support these colonies with plunder. He also captured many French and Spanish ships which weakened two of England's main rivals. Blackbeard is believed to have taken over 100 ships in his time as a pirate,²⁹⁰ many of which were Spanish and French.

Bartholomew Roberts is another example of a British Caribbean pirate from this period. Some believe that between 1719 and 1722 Roberts captured more than 400 craft.²⁹¹ He became a pirate captain when the old captain of what would become his ship was killed during an attack on Guinea. Roberts began raiding and capturing many ships after becoming a pirate captain, which ultimately benefited the British. He captured a French ship and torched two Portuguese ships, and he also took a Dutch and an English ship.²⁹² The French, Portuguese, and Dutch were all rivals of Britain. After these initial

²⁸⁷ Johnson, *General HISTORY of the PYRATES*, 73.

²⁸⁸ Johnson, *General HISTORY of the PYRATES*, 74.

²⁸⁹ Johnson, *General HISTORY of the PYRATES*, 76.

²⁹⁰ Rediker, *Villains of All Nations*, 33.

²⁹¹ Rediker, *Villains of All Nations*, 33.

²⁹² Johnson, *General HISTORY of the PYRATES*, 210-211.

captures, Roberts and his crew sailed to the coast of Brazil. After exploring Brazil's coast, Roberts and his men took a Portuguese fleet by surprise. They ended up capturing a ship carrying cargo of sizable wealth, including substantial amounts of sugar, skins, and tobacco, and 40,000 gold moidores (coins), along with jewelry that included diamonds.²⁹³ They continued taking more ships from the Portuguese, a rival of Britain. Eventually, some of Roberts' men betrayed him. They stole one of his ships and went off on their own. Roberts then sailed the Caribbean taking large numbers of Spanish and French ships. One such ship carried cloves, gunpowder, and other valuable goods. During this time, Roberts fought Woodes Rodgers, who was now a pirate hunter. Roberts eventually ended up in Newfoundland where he launched a new expedition. From Newfoundland, he attacked and plundered ten French ships in the 1720s, keeping one for his fleet.²⁹⁴ Next, he and his crew sailed to the coast of Guinea where they continued raiding more ships. These examples demonstrate how Roberts' long career benefitted the British colonies. Most ships he raided were Portuguese and French, competitors of Britain, and their demise benefitted British colonies because those countries' resources were weakened. Roberts sold most of his plunder in the Bahamas, economically enhancing that colony. In this case, British subjects benefited more than the government, though the empire was still enriched. Roberts worked for his own benefit; nonetheless his actions still benefitted Britain. Roberts' raids mostly took place in the early 1720s.

²⁹³ Johnson, *General HISTORY of the PYRATES*, 223.

²⁹⁴ Johnson, *General HISTORY of the PYRATES*, 238.

Charles Vane was another infamous pirate whose antics bolstered the colonies. Vane often squabbled with Woodes Rodgers, an opponent of Vane's who had become a pirate hunter by this time. One of the first instances of this happened near Florida when Vane and other pirates captured a large quantity of silver from the Spanish in 1718.²⁹⁵ Rodgers arrived to try to capture Vane's group. Most of the pirates surrendered and were pardoned, but Vane set fire to the captured ships and escaped with plunder while firing on Rodgers' ships.²⁹⁶ Vane brought the silver from that raid to the Bahamas, his base of operations. After that, Vane and his crew went on a reign of terror where they captured ships including a sloop (a small ship for carrying cargo) from Barbados, a ship from Antigua, a sloop from Curacao, and a ship from Guinea carrying ninety slaves in 1718.²⁹⁷ Generally, Vane seemed to have targeted smaller ships which meant less profit, but it did allow him to mostly avoid the unnecessary danger of encounters with Rodgers. Overall, Vane still brought reasonable amounts of plunder into the Bahamas.

It is interesting to compare the Madagascar and Caribbean pirates to each other with regard to which group provided more benefit to Britain and its colonies, due to the contrast between the two. The Madagascar pirates were privateers who left the Caribbean because of pressure from British government while the others were privateers who went rogue and decided to tough it out in the Caribbean. Both groups were important for Britain and existed during the same time period, but generally the Madagascar pirates had a more diverse and large-scale operation. In terms of connections to the colonies, the

²⁹⁵ Johnson, *General HISTORY of the PYRATES*, 141.

²⁹⁶ Johnson, *General HISTORY of the PYRATES*, 141.

²⁹⁷ Johnson, *General HISTORY of the PYRATES*, 142.

Madagascar pirates were more profitable for them because they worked for the merchants of New York and other colonies, plus they also had connections to powerful local politicians, such as governors and mayors, making them more like privateers. This is significant because it shows the merchants believed Madagascar was a more profitable venture. The Caribbean had more sugar production now and fewer treasure ships. This allowed their operations to function better because they were better supplied and funded. The Caribbean pirates, on the other hand, lacked that level of support which decreased their opportunity to gain plunder and bring it into the colonies. Madagascar pirates also had less competition and fewer threats from European navies since they operated in the Indian Ocean where there were fewer European ships. They also had the advantage of raiding the wealthiest civilization at the time, the Mughal Empire. Another way the Madagascar pirates were able to bring more wealth into the colonies was that they took part in trading of exotic goods from Asia and ran a massive slave operation on Madagascar. The Caribbean pirates mostly raided ships and occasionally sold slaves they captured from those raids. The Madagascar pirates not only sold and traded plunder, including exotic goods the British people wanted, but they also brought substantial number of slaves, making the colonies eventually more productive. Short term the sale of the slaves was profitable, and the merchants received a part of the profit. These merchant and political connections helped protect the Madagascar pirates from British laws and they also did not tend to target British ships like the Caribbean pirates did. The only aspect in which the Caribbean pirates were more beneficial to Britain and its colonies than the Madagascar pirates was that they captured and destroyed more of Britain's naval competition because they attacked Spain, Portugal and France more. Overall, the

Madagascar operation was more successful and beneficial to the British. While this might not be the best comparison, it is true that the Madagascar pirates were more profitable and beneficial to the British colonies.

CHAPTER 4

EPILOGUE AND CONCLUSION

From approximately 1800 through the 1830s, a resurgence of privateers from the United States occurred with these early American privateers continuing the tradition of the British privateers of somewhat benefiting the British by attacking the Spanish during the Wars of Independence in Latin America and helping their colonies gain independence during the nineteenth century. At this point, the Revolutionary War had taken place, so the thirteen colonies were now independent from Britain and became a stronghold for privateers. This was the evolution of privateering over time. After the British state became dominant at sea around 1800 and no longer needed privateers, the work shifted to their former North American colonies. The United States had not yet built up a proper navy, so privateers were useful to help fill that role. The United States essentially adopted the policy Britain employed in its past, that is, using privateers to bolster their naval capability. The new United States had a similar situation Britain once had of being a new power on the world stage with a weak navy and hopes of breaking into overseas markets. Like in the earlier colonies in the Caribbean and other regions, these privateers helped develop New Orleans, Baltimore, Galveston, and other locales by selling substantial plunder to them. In the case of New Orleans, captured African slaves taken from Spanish and Portuguese ships was quite beneficial. Their actions helping with the rebellions in Central America and South American helped lead to the destruction of the Spanish Empire, allowing Britain to become the dominant empire.

This last large wave of early American privateers was during the 1790s through the early 1800s. The Napoleonic Wars resulted in the Spanish Empire's New World

holdings rebelling because these colonies had a period of time when the Spanish king was in exile and part of Spain was ruled by Joseph Bonaparte, brother of the French emperor, Napoleon. Part of Spain remained loyal to Ferdinand VII. While Spain was divided and in chaos, some colonies put in place local administrative councils called juntas. While some juntas remained loyal to the Spanish king, many rebelled. Those that remained loyal to the king faced opposition from the people of their colony. After the Bourbons got their throne back in Spain, they sent a massive army to retake control in the New World colonies. While initially successful, the rebels were more organized than the Spanish expected, and because many veterans of the Napoleonic Wars from Britain and other places joined the rebel armies as advisors, military officials and mercenary soldiers.²⁹⁸ Another issue was the rebels hired privateers from the United States and Europe to attack the Spanish and other European ships in the Caribbean. The thirteen colonies had recently gained independence from Britain and many sailors needed work as a result. The privateers worked from the United States because they were needed there and not so much anymore in Britain. These privateers, while technically no longer British, ended up benefiting Britain by weakening their rivals Spain, Portugal, and France in the Caribbean and elsewhere in the New World. Plus, there were some British sailors who took part in the privateering like Gregor Macgregor and his mercenaries. They were also similar to earlier privateers and pirates in that they worked for American, Latin American, and some British merchants and other powerful people, like politicians and smugglers. They even worked directly for the British government on some occasions. These privateers had

²⁹⁸ Head, *Privateers of the Americas*, 102, 108.

various bases similar to their predecessors, the main ones being in Baltimore, Florida, Galveston, and New Orleans. These privateers engaged heavily in the slave trade.

The New Orleans operation was centered on the Island of Baratavia; and two brothers from France, named Jean and Pierre Lafite, ran it.²⁹⁹ Baratavia was an island to the south of New Orleans surrounded by swamps, making it a perfect place for outlaws to hide.³⁰⁰ The brothers ran it like a small, independent country. Also benefiting their operation was that New Orleans was newly acquired by the United States, so it lacked government control. Governor Claiborne issued a proclamation ordering the privateers to cease their activities and all U.S. military in the area to go after them.³⁰¹ This was largely ignored because privateering was not considered a sin or crime back then by most people and business men of New Orleans worked with them.³⁰² The brothers also had a habit of playing multiple sides, sometimes working with the British or other countries. The U.S. also ignored them for a while until President Madison started receiving reports showing how large their operation was growing, one from Edward Livingston described how bold the privateers were getting, selling massive amounts of goods in the open and bribing

²⁹⁹ Head, *Privateers of the Americas*, 45.

³⁰⁰ Head, *Privateers of the Americas*, 44-45.

³⁰¹ Charles Gayarre, *Historical Sketch of Pierre and Jean Lafitte: The Famous Smugglers of Louisiana*. (Austin, Texas: The Pemberton Press, 1964), 3.

³⁰² Gayarre, *Historical Sketch of Pierre and Jean Lafitte*, 3-4.

local officials.³⁰³ Their operation initially focused mainly on smuggling. They would smuggle slaves as well as other goods privateers had captured from the Spanish, Portuguese, and others into New Orleans to sell. New Orleans landowners demanded slaves and the privateers were a good source.³⁰⁴ The brothers worked with American, French, British, and Latin American privateers. Early on, the brothers just made money as smugglers and auctioneers. In 1812, they began assembling a privateer fleet and doing raiding, not just smuggling. Their fleet included a schooner and a French privateer vessel called Diligent, which they had bought. They also converted a captured Spanish slave ship, the Dorada, into a privateer.³⁰⁵ Their fleet terrorized the Spanish taking one ship after another. They added more ships to their fleet, two Spanish schooners that they converted to privateer vessels.³⁰⁶ A letter to James Madison claimed these privateers had 400 to 700 men and many ships.³⁰⁷ These privateers sold slaves and goods to people throughout Louisiana for low prices but in large quantities to make money.³⁰⁸ One example is the governor was told 450 slaves were sold in one instance by the Laffite.³⁰⁹

³⁰³ Edward Livingston to James Madison, 24 October 1814. In *The Papers of James Madison, Presidential Series*, edited by Angela Kreider, J. C. A. Stagg, Mary Parke Johnson, Anne Mandeville Colony, and Katherine E. Harbury vol. 8, July 1814–18 February 1815 and supplement December 1779–18 April 1814. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2015), 321.

³⁰⁴ Head, *Privateers of the Americas*, 46.

³⁰⁵ Head, *Privateers of the Americas*, 50-51.

³⁰⁶ Head, *Privateers of the Americas*, 51.

³⁰⁷ James Brown and Eligius Fromentin to James Madison, October 1, 1814. In *The Papers of James Madison, Presidential Series*, edited by Angela Kreider, J. C. A. Stagg, Mary Parke Johnson, Anne Mandeville Colony, and Katherine E. Harbury, vol. 8, July 1814–18 February 1815 and supplement December 1779–18 April 1814. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2015), 269.

³⁰⁸ Gayarre, *Historical Sketch of Pierre and Jean Lafitte*, 6-7.

³⁰⁹ Gayarre, *Historical Sketch of Pierre and Jean Lafitte*, 7.

The governor tried to persuade the assembly to help stop it, but they would not vote because their constituents liked the privateers.³¹⁰ These privateers of New Orleans were a great help to the British through their capture of many Spanish ships, and goods they smuggled for the British into New Orleans during the War of 1812. They also weakened the American naval and military forces in the area, which helped the British because they were still in conflict with the United States. These privateers also negotiated with James Madison to try to continue their operations.³¹¹ It is believed these privateers made more money than the merchants of New York and Philadelphia.³¹² They made approximately \$170 per head for slaves.³¹³

Baltimore privateers ended up being similar to the Madagascar pirates in that they were funded and backed by businessmen from the city, just like the merchants of New York from before. The leader of these privateers was a man named Thomas Taylor, an American who had joined the rebel navy of Buenos Aires and was sent to Baltimore to recruit privateers to terrorize the Spanish.³¹⁴ Unlike the New Orleans privateers, the Baltimore privateers utilized their business connections to bypass the law rather than committing smuggling. They used loopholes in the law to avoid getting into trouble for bringing plundered goods into port. Rather than simply attacking Spanish colonial areas

³¹⁰ Gayarre, *Historical Sketch of Pierre and Jean Lafitte*, 9.

³¹¹ Jean Laffite to James Madison, 27 December 1815. In *The Papers of James Madison*, Founders Online, National Archives, Early Access Document, 1.

³¹² Gayarre, *Historical Sketch of Pierre and Jean Lafitte*, 10.

³¹³ Gayarre, *Historical Sketch of Pierre and Jean Lafitte*, 11.

³¹⁴ Head, *Privateers of the Americas*, 63.

in the Caribbean and South America, they also sailed out into the Atlantic ocean and captured ships that were crossing the sea between Spain and the colonies. Examples of Spanish plunder they took included a Spanish brig carrying wine, brandy, raisins, salt and about \$20,000 to \$30,000 worth of dry goods; a coastal felucca carrying tobacco, cigars and dry goods worth \$30,000, and, a Spanish schooner carrying \$16,000 in specie (coin).³¹⁵ The Baltimore privateers, due to their longer voyage home following raids, would often sell some of their captured goods to British colonies in the Caribbean so that they would have less to carry home. This provided yet another benefit to the British, just like capturing and destroying Spanish ships did. One difference between the privateers of New Orleans and those of Baltimore is that the New Orleans privateers preferred to capture slaves while the Baltimore crews preferred nabbing gold and silver bullion. Baltimore businessmen seemed to want plunder rather than slaves. Other reasons why gold and silver were preferred in Baltimore was distance and the ships being attacked. It was difficult to transport slaves the considerable distance between the Caribbean and Baltimore, and Baltimore privateers also often attacked ships that were sailing back and forth between the Caribbean and Spain which did not typically carry slaves aboard. One of the best examples of this is the Marcena Monson, which seized the Spanish Royal Philippine Company's ship, the Triton, carrying bullion worth \$1.5 million.³¹⁶ Attacks like this were done on the fringes. The businessmen in charge of this operation provided warehouses and other infrastructure for it.

³¹⁵ Head, *Privateers of the Americas*, 76.

³¹⁶ Head, *Privateers of the Americas*, 78.

The final two places to rise as privateer bases during this period were the islands of Galveston and Amelia. Galveston was a territory Spain still laid claim to, making it more difficult to stop the privateering because the area was disputed between Spain, the United States and Mexico. Amelia Island in Florida was essentially a separate country for a time after it was seized by Gregor Macgregor, a Scottish soldier working for the South American rebels. Galveston became a privateer base when a privateer named Aury seized the island for the rebels of Mexico, and after he took it the Mexicans made him governor and sent many filibusters to the territory.³¹⁷ Privateers then flocked there because as a governor, Aury could issue privateer contracts. Aury did not keep control, though, because he was not a good leader. The Laffite brothers had been on the run since the U.S. navy had destroyed their base at Baratavia after the War of 1812. Even though the brothers had been granted amnesty in exchange for helping Andrew Jackson at the Battle of New Orleans, their base was still destroyed by the U.S. Navy.³¹⁸ The US Navy cracked down on the privateers operating in the New Orleans area. An example of this was the Mexican Schooner Eagle, a privateer hunting Spanish ships that was stopped for repairs at Baratavia and was seized by the Americans causing a diplomatic incident with Mexico.³¹⁹ Mexican general Toledo had a squabble with the U.S. over it.³²⁰ They had

³¹⁷ Head, *Privateers of the Americas*, 94.

³¹⁸ James Madison, Presidential Proclamation, 6 February 1815. In *The Papers of James Madison, Presidential Series*, edited by Angela Kreider, J. C. A. Stagg, Mary Parke Johnson, Anne Mandeville Colony, and Katherine E. Harbury, vol. 8, July 1814–18 February 1815 and supplement December 1779–18 April 1814. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2015), 557.

³¹⁹ José Álvarez de Toledo y Dubois to James Madison, ca. June 1815. In *The Papers of James Madison, Presidential Series*, edited by Angela Kreider, J. C. A. Stagg, Mary Parke Johnson, and Anne Mandeville Colony, vol. 9, 19 February 1815–12 October 1815. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press), 2018, 356.

³²⁰ Toledo to Madison, 1.

pretended to work for Spain against the Mexican rebels, but in reality, manipulated the Spanish into helping them take over Galveston. They infiltrated Galveston and stirred up trouble between Aury and others who were there, and they tricked Spain into giving them a large number of ships and set up their own base on the island.³²¹ The brothers convinced privateers to leave Aury and join them. Aury finally gave up and moved to Florida. The French brothers rebuilt their old operation in Galveston becoming a scourge to the Spanish again.

Regarding Amelia Island, after Macgregor took the island with almost no resistance³²², he tried to turn it into a new country. Not only that, but Macgregor claimed he was going to try to capture east Florida and sell it to the United States for \$1,500,000.³²³ His plans failed because he lacked adequate supplies. He got lazy and stopped enforcing discipline in his soldiers causing them to turn violent on the island and do what they wanted.³²⁴ Also, his reinforcements which were supposed to arrive from the U.S. decided that since the island was taken there was no reason for them to go there and never showed, this caused panic because it was believed the Spanish were going to launch a counterattack.³²⁵ His soldiers started turning on him. Macgregor learning the

³²¹ Head, *Privateers of the Americas*, 100-101.

³²² M. Rafter, *Memoirs of Gregor M'Gregor; Comprising a Sketch of the Revolution in New Granada and Venezuela, with Biographical Notices of Generals Miranda, Bolivar, Morillo and Hore, and a Narrative of the Expeditions to Amelia Island, Porto Bello, and Rio de la Hache, Interspersed With Revolutionary Anecdotes*. (London: Printed for J. J. Stockdale, 1820), 95.

³²³ James Monroe to James Madison, 13 February 1818. In *The Papers of James Madison, Retirement Series*, edited by David B. Mattern, J. C. A. Stagg, Mary Parke Johnson, and Anne Mandeville Colony, vol. 1, 4 March 1817–31 January 1820. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009), 217-218.

³²⁴ Rafter, *Memoirs of Gregor M'Gregor*, 98.

³²⁵ Rafter, *Memoirs of Gregor M'Gregor*, 100.

Spanish had assembled a large force to retake the island pretended he was going to lead his men to fight the Spanish but instead got on one of his privateer vessel and fled, abandoning his men to fight a Spanish counterattack on their own.³²⁶ This was when Aury and the privateers, forced to leave Galveston, arrived with supplies and some ships, easily taking command and turning Amelia into a privateer base.³²⁷ Things went well for a time. The island was a good base for selling plunder the privateers took to the United States. Amelia island was used as a stopping point for slaves from Cuba being sold in the United States.³²⁸ But as in Galveston, infighting began causing trouble for Aury. Most of Macgregor's men were Americans and British so they refused to fight with the black sailors who worked for Aury, another problem was a group of British soldiers who had arrived to fight for Macgregor and started stirring up trouble.³²⁹ The British soldiers sided with Macgregor's white soldiers on the island against Aury. The Amelia Island privateer base ended when the United States stormed the island with 200 soldiers and some warships³³⁰ because they felt the privateers were becoming a nuisance, in particular stirring up trouble with the Spanish. James Madison had received many reports on

³²⁶ Rafter, *Memoirs of Gregor M'Gregor*, 107.

³²⁷ Head, *Privateers of the Americas*, 106.

³²⁸ Pseudonym: "Philanthropos" to James Madison," 6 October 1816. In *The Papers of James Madison*, Founders Online, National Archives. Early Access Document, 1.

³²⁹ Head, *Privateers of the Americas*, 107-108.

³³⁰ Rafter, *Memoirs of Gregor M'Gregor*, 113.

smuggling by Aury and decided he needed to be removed.³³¹ The United States attack was about the privateers because the Spanish were complaining to the United States about the raids. Some American politicians had the idea of helping transfer Florida to the British in hopes they could stop the privateering in the area.³³² James Madison was told this was a bad decision because the British would probably still use the privateers and it would allow British dominance in the area.³³³

Galveston suffered a similar fate. The Lafittes' operation was doing well. They essentially ran the same operation they had before, just from Galveston rather than Baratavia (near New Orleans). New Orleans officials were irritated with the privateers smuggling from Galveston. Another problem was that a large group Bonapartists arrived in Galveston and tried to set up a hideaway for exiled allies of Napoleon.³³⁴ This brought more ire from Spain, Britain, and France, all of whom saw the Bonapartists as a potential threat. In the end, Galveston was shut down due to threats by many. To avoid being captured, the Lafittes left Galveston, moving their operation down to Cuba and other areas in the Caribbean. Following its collapse, this new wave of privateering began to end. While the Lafittes did manage to briefly run their operation in Cuba by paying off

³³¹ David Porter to James Madison, 21 September 1810. In *The Papers of James Madison, Presidential Series*, edited by J. C. A. Stagg, Jeanne Kerr Cross, Jewel L. Spangler, Ellen J. Barber, Martha J. King, Anne Mandeville Colony, and Susan Holbrook Perdue, vol. 4, 5 November 1811–9 July 1812 and Supplement 5 March 1809–19 October 1811. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), 621–622.

³³² Edmond Kelly to James Madison, ca. 12 November 1818. In *The Papers of James Madison, Retirement Series*, edited by David B. Mattern, J. C. A. Stagg, Mary Parke Johnson, and Anne Mandeville Colony, vol. 1, 4 March 1817–31 January 1820. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009), 375.

³³³ Kelly to Madison, 375.

³³⁴ Head, *Privateers of the Americas*, 118.

local officials, it did not last. Just as before, they made too many enemies and the officials started turning on them when they refused to pay the officials the increasing amounts money they wanted.

These early America privateers continued doing what the earlier British privateers and pirates had done, such as targeting the Spanish and inflicting damage onto them and their resources. Britain benefitted from these privateers because a sizable number of Spanish ships were lost to the privateers and the privateers played a major role in helping Spain's New World colonies gain their independence. Britain also delighted in the trouble these privateers stirred up between the United States and Spain since both were its enemies, though damage to trade was sometimes a detriment to it. Diplomatic troubles ensued between the United States and Spain as a result. Spain mostly blamed the U.S. because many of these privateers were from U.S. locations and also sold the majority of their plunder in the United States. Britain and the U.S. had just had the War of 1812 and were angry with each other. Worth noting, too, is that the privateers would sometimes sell some of their plunder to British colonies in the Caribbean to lighten their load before heading north. All in all, they had a similar positive impact for Britain like the earlier privateers and pirates.

It is not an understatement to highlight the importance of the early American privateers on weakening Spanish control in the New World. It would have been more difficult for the independence movement to be successful without the privateers. This was because the rebels simply did not have the naval capacity of Spain. Spain's military forces were larger, better trained, and more equipped than the rebel armies. The independence movement needing privateers is not a forgone conclusion, but it would

have been more difficult without them. Privateers made up a significant portion of the rebel navies and without them the New World colonists would not have had anywhere near enough ships to fight against the Spanish navy. The wars also severely depleted Spain's wealth and the privateers plundering Spanish ships, contributing heavily to its economic decline. All these actions contributed to Spain's decision to give up on reconquering their colonies.³³⁵ Spanish armies in the New World also depended on supplies from Spain for the war effort, so privateers plundering their supplies weakened the Spanish troops who were fighting the rebels. The privateers also sold captured supplies to the rebels benefiting them. These rebellions destroyed the Spanish Empire as a significant power and made the British Empire essentially the undisputed power in the world at the time along with allowing the United States to begin its rise as a power in the region.

It is important to explain that the British did benefit in some ways from these new privateers, particularly from the damage they inflicted on Spain. However, these privateers were now becoming a problem to them as well. This had to do with the change in British policy over time. Privateers and pirates had been most beneficial to Britain when it was trying to break in to the Caribbean and other places to increase its land holdings, wealth and strength. By the 1800s, it was an established power like Spain had been, and the privateers were working for their former North American colonies doing work for them that they once did on behalf of Britain. However, these privateers did occasionally attack British ships and disrupt trade, actions that were problematic to the British.

³³⁵ Head, *Privateers of the Americas*, 122.

In conclusion, privateers and pirates from the late 1500s to the 1800s had a surprising but important impact on England and Great Britain's rise to power and in establishing the British Empire. These raiders were key to helping Britain build up its and the colonies' economies, provide protection for those colonies, and weaken its Atlantic rivals, particularly Spain. As discussed throughout this study, without their involvement, which changed (and eventually lessened) over time as the English and British altered their policies, privateers and pirates provided economic and military support that was crucial to the survival of these nations' Atlantic adventures and colonies.³³⁶ My research shows this to be the case, despite the fact that it is a challenge to show an absolute economic and military impact because of the difficulty finding certain information and data due to limited recordkeeping, and what is locatable and likely reliable, is often problematic to tally or to conclusively denote exact impact. Despite these difficulties, I did provide many examples of the importance of privateers and pirates to England and Britain.

Beginning in the 1600s, English and British policy was concerned with defeating the Spanish and taking land from it with the goal of gaining power in the New World. These governments saw privateers and pirates as a useful tool for accomplishing this. Privateers and pirates could be used for attacking enemies, with plausible deniability, and for bringing in wealth. As noted earlier in my thesis, Parliament often discussed the importance of privateers and pirates and took steps to encourage their use. The privateers went from being men the English and British used to establish themselves in the Caribbean by fending off Spanish attacks on their colonies and committing raids that

³³⁶ Hanna, *Pirate Nests*, 417.

brought in wealth for the crown, such as Francis Drake's global voyages and Henry Morgan's raids on Spanish colonies like Porto Bello and Maracaibo. The Queen's share from Drake's activities was noted as hundreds of thousands of pounds, again, more than her normal income for an entire year. Morgan's Porto Bello raid garnered 250,000 pieces of eight, a share of which added to England's coffers. Morgan's work supported England militarily a well when he destroyed a large Spanish warship and captured another during raids in Maracaibo. His support to England as a privateer over the years was appreciated; King Charles II knighted Morgan appointing him the Lt. Governor of Jamaica at one point. Another privateer, L'Ollonias, was another example of both financial and military support when he attacked a large Spanish barge and a second vessel that contained guns, ammunition, expensive cacao, and jewels along thousands of pieces of eight. Privateer Lussan and his group also illustrate the importance of this when they attacked the city of Queaquilla. The stockpile was significant and included jewels, guns, and silver plate. He also ransomed those who had been taken as prisoners for one million pieces of eight and 400 sacks of corn. Later, British policy changed a result of the Treaty of Madrid between the pro-Catholic Stuart monarchs, including Charles II and James II, and Spain, an act that designed to secure Britain's foothold in the Caribbean and end hostilities between the two empires. Charles II wanted to convert Jamaica's main moneymaking source and that of other colonies to sugar instead of one dependent on privateer and pirate plunder in an effort to remove these groups' ability to make a living.

These privateers adapted to the changes in policy and moved to other locations where the British still needed them. They went to Britain's North American colonies which had been recently established. These colonies needed money, so the privateers

continued their work of raiding others on behalf of these British colonies. The colonies also used these men, along with the slaves they captured during raids, to fight against Native Americans. With virtually no British naval presence in the area, they were also sent to Madagascar as pirates to capture slaves and plunder from Mughal ships to be sold in New York and other colonies. The pirates usually captured the Mughal ships while the ships were on pilgrimage to Mecca or trading with Mecca, which brought in considerable wealth since the Mughal Empire of India was arguably the richest civilization in the world at that time. Henry Every's attack on a Mughal fleet took what was roughly the equivalent of 180,000 British pounds, equal to about \$35 million today. Yes, these men did still work for colonial British officials and merchants, including the Quakers. Some of the privateers, instead of going north, became pirates in the Caribbean. Though hard to quantify the impact, Captain Blackbeard's capture of a massive 46-gun French warship is an example of a military-type action that benefitted the British by taking an enemy's warship out of commission. The privateers and pirates had become a double-edged sword to the British, though, sometimes being a benefit by bringing plunder into the colonies, but at other times being a nuisance when they would occasionally capture British ships. At this phase in British policy they were still used and important in developing colonies for the British. Finally, my research shows that eventually Britain, in terms of policy, arrived at a point where they no longer needed privateers or pirates for either economic growth or military support.

The overall totality of my research is that is that privateers and pirates were more than just criminals on the fringes of the English and British worlds. They were instrumental to these nations' rise to power, adapting and moving to areas where they

were needed based on government policy. My thesis shows that studying privateers and pirates is valuable in a number of ways, including their connection to imperialism, how they helped colonization through military and economic means, how they became major slave traders, how they built up trade networks, and with how they were key players in the Atlantic world.

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